

Faith, Fight, Finish: Dakota Prescott Finds Strength Through His Own Adversity to Advocate and Care for Others

This lesson can be presented over 1-2 sessions. Instructors should feel free to use whichever discussion questions and activities you think best for your class or group. We advise giving students the sheet with the definitions of the virtues before the discussion questions.

Lesson Goals

Help students...

- appreciate how family support shapes us into the people we become.
- look for inspiration from others, both those close to our lives and celebrities, who serve as models of how to live out the virtues.
- practice having faith in our own hard work, determination, and abilities.
- have a sense of personal commitment to a spirit of “fight” and “finish” in having the determination to work towards and to achieve our goals.
- be resilient in looking for ways to adjust to and recover from personal setbacks.
- see how we can learn from setbacks and even use these experiences as opportunities to help ourselves and others.
- see the value in being authentic, in being honest with our feelings and asking for help when we need it.
- realize who are the people and resources that are available to us if we are struggling emotionally or in other ways.
- become inspired to make the world a better place than we found it, through small and larger acts of reaching out to others.

Highlighted Virtues / Character Traits

Authenticity: being true and honest about who we are, our emotions, and our experiences, both to ourselves and to others. By being authentic we are able to acknowledge our weaknesses, have the strength to ask for help, and create opportunities to connect with others.

Determination: firmness of purpose; complete commitment to achieving a goal

Faith: a firm belief or confidence in something or someone, especially in ourselves, even when there is not yet proof

Family Dedication / Support: complete dedication for the well-being of other members of our family, physically, emotionally and spiritually, motivated by love

Hope: confident expectation of achieving a goal or wish; hopes are realized in building a strategy to achieve a goal and then implementing the strategy

Resilience: the ability to recover from, or adjust to, change and difficulties; choosing to use setbacks as an opportunity to learn and grow.

Leader Introduction:

As we celebrate Black History Month, it's good to look to the past for inspiration as well as to those living today who serve to inspire us through their accomplishments and most importantly through their work with helping others. The Walter Payton Man of the Year award is a great opportunity to do this as it is awarded each year to an NFL player who like Walter Payton, the famed running back of the Chicago Bears, excels athletically and in service to others. This year's recipient is Dakota Prescott. Prescott is the Dallas Cowboys famous quarterback who has overcome significant personal obstacles, and is using what he learned and experienced from his family's tragedy to help others similarly in need. Let's watch a film from the Payton Man of the Year ceremony and learn about Prescott's life and work.

Lesson Videos: (Start at 4:36)

<https://youtu.be/0GungPI50YY>

Leader Summary:

Prescott shows us the value of family dedication and support and living with a sense of faith and determination as we strive to be resilient and deal with the obstacles in our lives. Prescott also shows us the importance of being authentic. We can do this by being honest about our struggles, and especially by reaching out to others for help. Let's discuss how Prescott's story can help us approach personal adversity and offers us hope.

Discussion Question Options: *(discussion prompts / answers are in parentheses)*

Before beginning our discussion, let's read over the virtues and their definitions, found in the online lesson as a separate document.

1. Prescott said in accepting his award, "My mother was and still is my moral compass". What does a moral compass mean for us and how does it come into play in our lives?
2. Prescott' mother wanted her struggle with cancer to be an inspiration for her son Dak to strive to achieve his dreams, saying to Dak "let me be your story." Who can we look to in our world today for inspiration? Let's discuss examples of those who inspire us in a positive manner from the world of celebrities in sports, entertainment & national political leaders, our local school & community leaders and finally some examples from our families. (This is also a journal writing option below)
3. Prescott said some of his mother's last words to him and his brothers were to live by the motto - **Faith, Fight and Finish** – that became the name of Prescott's charity. Let's discuss what each of these three words mean to us, and feel free to share a specific story if you think it helps to get your point across.
4. Prescott speaks about how he wants the personal tragedy of his brother taking his own life to serve as a means of saving the lives of many other people. What did Prescott say he wishes his brother would have done differently?
(To let others know that he was emotionally hurting after his mother died and to ask for help.)

We list the virtue of **authenticity** as being the key to this and define authenticity as being true and honest about our emotions and our experiences, both to ourselves and to others. By being authentic we are able to acknowledge our weaknesses, have the strength to ask for help, and create opportunities to connect with others.

Within our community, who can we ask for help and honestly share our feelings with when we are struggling? In answering this question let's think about each area of our lives.

(parents and siblings, teachers, counselors at school, coaches, friends who we can trust for good advice, leaders in our religious communities)

In looking over our list of all the people we can go to for help, is it encouraging that if we need help, it is there for us?

Do you think as a community of students, staff, teachers, counselors, coaches and administrators we are doing enough to affirm each other and offer opportunities for students who are struggling to receive help? In what ways do you think we can improve?

Just in case you or someone you know needs this in the future, Prescott's charity was part of the movement to get one simple phone number established for anyone to call at any time that will offer help and referrals if you are experiencing emotional distress. The number is 988. Please remember 988.

5. How do the virtues of **faith** and **hope** help us to deal with and overcome difficult times? (Having trust in ourselves, trust in the support of others and being confident that we can make it through the challenges of life all help us to keep going, and to figure out how to manage and / or overcome challenges and obstacles.)
6. Prescott said, "Through adversity we find our strength." Do you agree with this statement and if yes let's share some stories of this from our own life or others.
7. How did Prescott talk about the poverty he experienced as a child and the role of his family in living through poverty? (Prescott said even though they were poor, he and his brothers never wanted for anything; because of his parents support and dedication he really had everything he needed)

What does Prescott's happiness as a child, despite being poor, tell us about what is and what isn't really important in life?

(Family support and love for others is far more important than material wealth.)

8. Prescott said we are called to "make our world a better place than we found it". Do you agree that we each have a responsibility to do this, why or why not?

Journal Writing Options

- 1 Prescott' mother wanted her struggle with cancer to be an inspiration for her son Dak to strive to achieve his dreams saying to Dak "let me be your story." Write a short essay on who you look to for inspiration? The person or people you choose can come from the world of sports, entertainment, a national political leader, our school, local community leaders and from your own family.
- 2 Prescott said some of his mother's last words to him and his brothers were to live by the motto—Faith, Fight and Finish— that became the name of Prescott's charity. Write out what each of these three words means to you and especially what they mean in relation to a goal you are striving to achieve, or an obstacle you are working to overcome.

Extended Activity:

Ask students to go to Prescott's Faith Fight Finish website
<https://www.faithfightfinish.org/>

Ask students to either individually, or as small teams, pick out one of the "Shining a Light" stories (bottom of the home page) or one of the 4 missions of the foundation to personally write an essay or create a team presentation. Each essay or presentation should outline the specific need the foundation is addressing, how they specifically have / are helping to address the need and a discussion of the virtues reflected by the foundation's work.

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