



Empowering families.
Fighting Duchenne.



THE RED BALLOON

TEACHING DUCHENNE MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY IN THE CLASSROOM

Recommended as a classroom activity for World Duchenne
Awareness Day (September 7)

INTRO: Begin by asking kiddos to either say out loud, or write down the first words that come to their head when you say the words, 'Strong and Strength.'

Part 1: Show them the Red Balloon.
+Ask, "What is this?" Tell me more about it."
**It's red, It has helium, Its medium size, its the shape of...*

Part 2: Have students recall the words said about strength,
+Ask: "Did anyone say/write a Red balloon when we thought about strength? Any ideas on why a red balloon can represent strength?"
**Allow time for students to think and respond*

Part 3: Have the students stand up.
+Say: "Let's take a break from thinking for a minute and stretch out our bodies."
**Have students complete a variety of silly tasks such as: Reach up high, hop like a frog, pretend to clean your armpits, scratch that annoying itch in the middle of your back, jog in place.....*
+Ask: "Does anyone know what in our body allowed us to do all those movements?"
**Muscle*
+Ask: "Did anyone write down the word 'muscle' at the beginning when we talked about strong/strength?"
+Say: "Ok so that's good, we know that muscle and strength go together, but what about this red balloon? Any other ideas on why I have this, and why we are talking about strength and about muscles?" (You can always encourage more thought and responses by telling them you have a special prize, like red balloon, if they can guess how it all goes together).

Part 4: Have the students sit back down.
+Say: "Today is World Duchenne Awareness Day. But wait, what does that have to do with a Red balloon, it would make more sense if today was Strong Red Balloon Day wouldn't it?"
+Ask: "Does anyone know what Duchenne is?"
- If you have the book Dan and DMD, you could read it here.
- If not you can go on explaining with your own words/pictures.

"Duchenne is a muscle disease. Duchenne is not like a cold, you can't catch it if you know someone with Duchenne, it is a disease some people are born with. Someone who has Duchenne has muscles in their body, they just don't work quite like yours or mine In fact, they work just the opposite. As you grow bigger, your muscles grow strong. As a person who lives with Duchenne grows up, their muscles get weaker. "



+Ask: "Can you think of some things that might be difficult if your muscles were weaker?"
**All those silly things we did when we stood up. Even standing up. Someone with Duchenne may not be able to really run or jump, they may use a power wheelchair to help them get around, or special robot arms to help them eat.*

PAY IT FORWARD WITH FUNRAISING

When a child is diagnosed with Duchenne, it can be a scary and overwhelming time for parents and guardians. On top of it all, they must also worry about explaining to their young child exactly what Duchenne is and how it will impact them. While telling a child about a rare disease is never easy, and we hope that our free resource, Dan and DMD, will help parents and guardians as they prepare to talk to their children about Duchenne.

Not only is Dan and DMD a great resource for families, but it is also helpful for their friends and peers. Schools, communities, churches, and doctors' offices are among the many places where Dan and DMD can make an impact spreading knowledge and awareness of Duchenne.

Help become one of the many that make a difference by fighting Duchenne together with us this year. Below we have listed some ways the school, grade or classroom can get together and make an even bigger impact on Duchenne. For more information, please contact info@jettfoundation.org.

- **World Duchenne Awareness Day RED DAY: September 7th**
- **Go! For Duchenne .1k**
- **Change that makes Change**
- **Bake Sale**
- **Dress Down for Duchenne**

Part 5:

Review, recap, and wrap up

+Say: "So today I'm carrying this red balloon to tell others about a special little boy I know named _____, who was born with Duchenne. Today this red balloon reminds me that there are people that are different than me, and that I should love and help them in anyway I can."

+Ask: "Last question I have for you, can a boy like Fritz, or someone who has a muscle disease, still be strong?"

**allow students to answer, encourage them to explain their answer, how or why?*

+Say: "Did you know strength is actually MORE THAN MUSCLE? All those things you wrote down/or we talked about at the beginning, those are all things that have to do with strength. But strength is so much more than running fast, or being good sports."

+Ask: "There is more to strength than just muscle.....does anyone have any ideas of ways we can all have strength, even people whose muscles don't work quite right?"

**allow students to share ideas*

+Say: "Did you know you are strong when ...

-you are kind. Kindness takes a lot of strength.

-you help a friend. Helping others takes a lot of strength.

-you are a listener, Listening takes a lot of strength.

-you share your toys, Sharing takes a lot of strength."

+Say: "So today, when you see this red balloon, remember special people like Fritz, who live with Duchenne. Remember that we are all different, and that there are people that don't have muscles that don't work quite like yours, but most importantly, remember we can all be strong because strength is more than muscle, and there are SOOOOO many ways that you can be strong, and share your strength!"

Part 6:

Have kiddos complete the phrase...**Strength is more than muscle, strength is...**

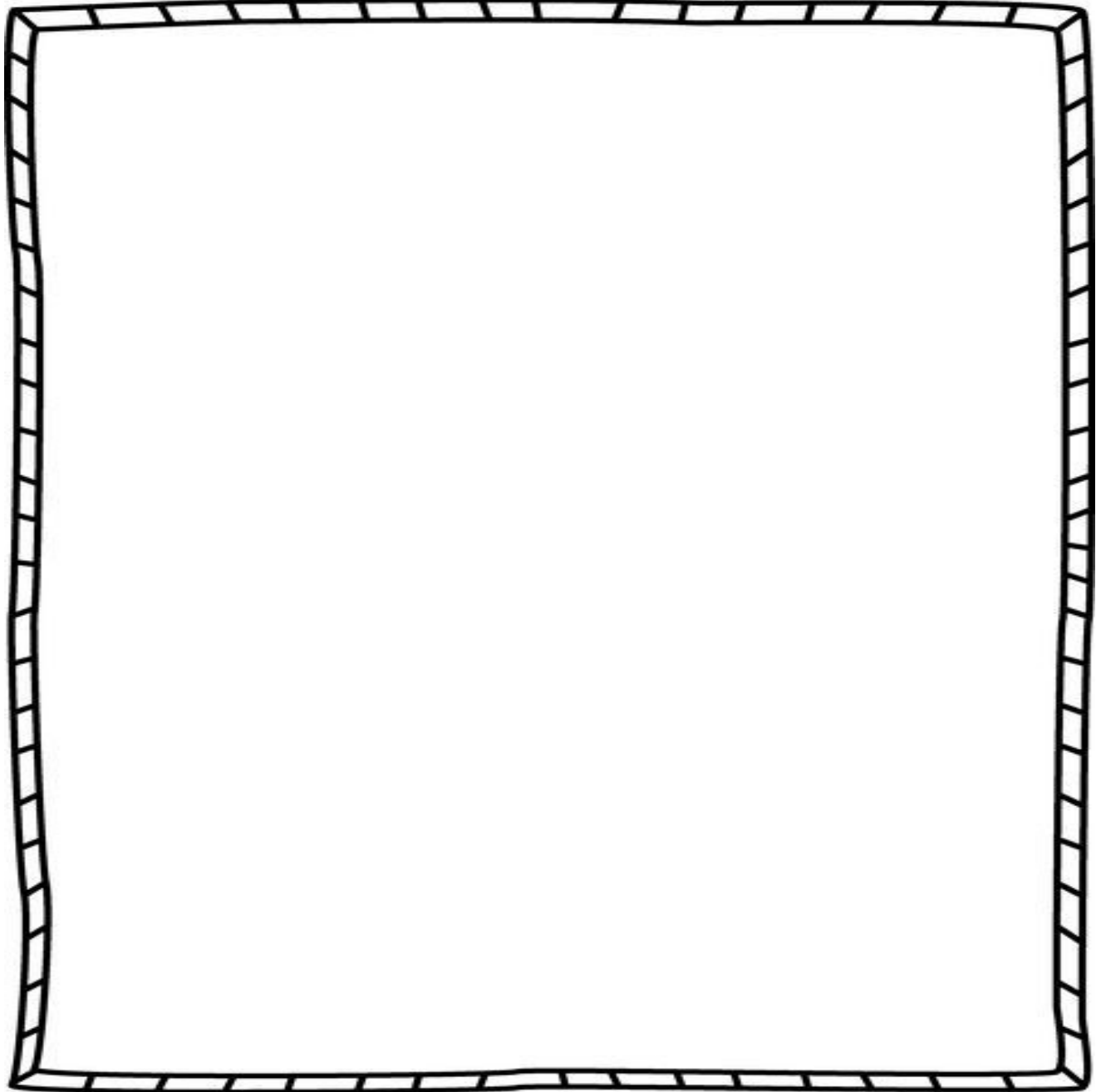
**give the students time to think about their answer, tell them you are going to go around the room fast and when you point at each student they are going to share their answer.*

**students can also complete the attached coloring sheet to express what they think strength is.*

COURTESY OF OUR FRIENDS FRITZANDFRIENDS.ORG

**STRENGTH IS MORE THAN MUSCLE,
STRENGTH IS...**

Color a picture below of what strength is to you!



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