



... overcomes fear.™

PHOTOS SPEAK M1



LOST SIGHT, BUT FINDS HIS WAY

IMAGINE

Photos positively represent Jake Olson

... one day you can see the blue sky, the sunshine and your family and friends. Then the next day, it's dark, you can't see anything! Images of your family and friends exist only in your memory. Would you have the courage to try to do your best without being able to see? Jake Olson did. At age 12, he completely lost his sight to cancer. From the time he was a baby, Jake demonstrated courage in all aspects of his life.

Jake was diagnosed with cancer in both of his eyes when he was just 8-months old. Because of cancer, he had his left eye removed when he was only 1-year old. Even with just one eye, he was a very active boy. He loved to play football. Jake grew up in southern California., He was a big University of Southern California (USC) fan. Jake and his family attended church with many Trojan players and coaches. The football team learned about Jake's love of USC and his battle with cancer. They took Jake in as one of their own. He attended practices, was in the locker room, rode the team bus, and attended their games.

Jake showed true grit in continuing to battle cancer. He continued to live and play flag football. He beat cancer eight times. When Jake was 12, he learned he had to also have his right eye removed. Jake said, "What makes us different is how we face our challenges and fears. Whether we do it with a positive or negative attitude. Are you going to let the situation beat you, or are you going to beat the situation?"

After losing his second eye, Jake returned as the snapper on his flag football team. Later he tried out for his high school football team. That was much more difficult. At first, Jake wasn't very good. But showing his grit and courage again, he practiced drills over and over. Jake got better and became the best snapper,

so he snapped in games. When he graduated high school with honors, he knew he was headed to USC.

Jake arrived at USC on a scholarship for physically challenged athletes. He received a phone call from the head football coach. Jake was offered a spot on the team as a back-up snapper. For two years he practiced but didn't play. Jake said, "I'm a competitor. I like to prove to myself and others that just because I can't see doesn't mean that I'm not going to play football." In the first game of his junior year, he got his big chance to snap for an extra point! He did it perfectly.

Jake's courage, grit and gratitude are evident in how he lives his life and talks about it. "Even though cancer took my eyes, it didn't take my will to go on in life and be the best I can be." How can you use courage in your life to overcome struggles by trying your best and write your own best *True Success*™ lifestory?

QUESTIONS LEAD TO UNDERSTANDING M2/5

1. In what ways do you think Jake showed courage? Why do you think that?

2. What motivated Jake to keep going after his dreams?

3. How can you learn from the courage and responsibility Jake showed? What obstacles do you have in your life that you need to face with courage?

Copyright © 2020-21, TrueSuccess® Inc., TrueSuccess Elementary SEL/Character Planner