

Pennies of Honesty

This is the first lesson of the Integrity unit. At this age, the concept of integrity can be difficult to understand. As such, the focus will be on learning about honesty and perseverance. We lay the foundation for integrity by discussing how we build positive reputations through kind, caring, fair, inclusive, and honest behaviors and actions. This lesson will focus specifically on honesty, dishonesty, and the concept of “reputation.”

Integrity Sub-Concept(s)

Kindness

Lesson Timeframe

30-40 minutes

Required Materials

- Print out or smart board projection of the [Honesty Story: Six Pennies](#)
- One penny for every student
- Tape for each penny

Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.



DESIGNATED BY CASEL
AS A RECOMMENDED PROGRAM
FOR SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING.
See last page for details.

Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Define honesty, dishonesty, and reputation.
- Evaluate the historical impact of honesty in Abraham Lincoln’s life.
- Use a visual cue as a reminder to be honest.
- Review the primary themes from previous units: caring, kindness, inclusiveness, and fairness.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Integrity is defined as acting in a way you know to be right and kind in all situations. As teachers, we are held to a level of integrity that is unprecedented in any other profession. Not only are our reputations built on our level of professional integrity with what we teach and how we teach it, but we are a physical example of integrity for dozens of students every school year. What promises do you make for your students each year? How do you infuse integrity into how you teach, how you plan, and how you follow through? The teacher connections during this unit will focus on simple, yet effective ways to embody integrity from the top down. This week our promise is an overarching promise we all start with at the beginning of the year, but can lose focus on during this time! Promise #1 is, “I, _____(insert name) will focus on my students.” Let’s be honest: no one chooses teaching for the summer vacation. You are here because of the students. As this semester comes to an end and grades, parent teacher conferences, and staff meetings begin to cloud your vision, take a step back and remind yourself of the first and most important goal you have: your students. How can you start and end each day with this simple statement?

Tips for Diverse Learners

- Encourage advanced students to draw a connection between honesty and fairness. (For example, is “finders, keepers” really fair?)
- You can use reading groups to read the story together or with a teacher’s helper if the class is at this level of reading proficiency.
- Use props to help demonstrate the story for visual learners: 6 pennies, tea, and a map to demonstrate how far Lincoln walked.



Share

5-7 minutes

We have spent the first half of our school year learning about respect, caring, and inclusiveness. Let's take some time to talk about what that looks like in our classroom.

Caring: How have others cared for you in our classroom?

Kindness: How do we show kindness for others in our school?

Inclusiveness: What is one way you have used inclusiveness to make another person feel welcomed or a part of your group or activity?

All of these actions require us to be honest about how we treat others and how others affect us.



Inspire

What is Honesty?

5-7 minutes

For this unit we are going to talk about honesty. When you hear the word honest, as in someone is an honest person, what does that mean?

Invite student responses.

Good. That means, the opposite of honest is dishonest. This is when we do not tell the truth; when we lie. Even if we are lying just a little, we are still being dishonest. We can also be dishonest if we simply fail to do the right thing. For example, let's say I bought a hamburger at a local restaurant. The hamburger cost \$5.00 and I gave the clerk \$10.00. How much change should I get in return? Right. \$10.00 minus \$5.00 is \$5.00. But, what if the clerk gives me a 10 dollar bill instead of a 5 dollar bill? What is the honest thing to do?

Invite student responses.

What is the dishonest thing to do?

Invite student responses. *Right! So, even if I didn't tell a lie, exactly, not giving back the extra money is dishonest.*

Sometimes being honest is really hard. We are afraid that we'll get in trouble, or get someone else in trouble, or maybe we simply don't want to do something we know we have to, so we make up a story to try and get out of it. Or maybe we think that getting that extra few dollars in change was just plain lucky and we deserve to keep the extra money even though it doesn't belong to us. But, we often get in more trouble when we lie and we can disappoint those around us when we lie, breaking their trust in us.



Empower

15-20 minutes

One of the big benefits we experience when we are honest is that people trust you. Being honest also helps you be kind, caring, fair and inclusive. Many years before Abraham Lincoln became our 16th president he worked at a small store in his hometown. He sold goods and managed money. Sometimes he had to make choices that tested his integrity and honesty. We are going to read a short story now that explains how Abraham Lincoln was honest.

Read, or have strong student readers read, *Honesty Story: Six Pennies*:

<https://www.ypwkids.com/wp-content/uploads/Curriculum/Values/Honesty/AbrahamLincolnStory.pdf>



Reflect

5 minutes

What did Abe do that showed honesty?

What did other people in his community think of him?

Have you ever found something that did not belong to you and you gave it back to the owner or gave it to someone (like an adult) who could help find the rightful owner? Or, did you keep it (“finders, keepers”)? Why did you make this choice?

We will talk more about honesty in the next lesson. For now, I am going to give each of you a penny and a piece of tape. I want you to tape the penny to the top of your desk. Whenever you are in a situation where you have to choose between doing the honest right thing and doing a dishonest thing, I want you to think of this penny and think about what Abraham Lincoln did to earn his nickname Honest Abe. Let this penny remind you to be honest, even if it feels like a hard thing to do in that moment.

Remember, every day, when you are kind, caring, inclusive, fair, and honest, you are building a strong reputation for yourself and that is one of the most valuable things you can have!



Extension Ideas

- Have students draw a large penny outline based on the penny taped to their desk. Tell them to take their penny drawing home and think about different ways they can do or show honesty (at school, at home, in their community), and have them write those things, or draw pictures of them, inside or around the outside of the penny. They can share these with their families or bring them back to share at school.
- For a fun art or even math extension, have students do “penny rubs” on paper and create designs that represent honesty to them.
- Show (or read) *Howard B. Wigglebottom and the Monkey on his Back*: <https://youtu.be/xrPxwBCjaeY>
This story does a good job showing everyday situations where students in this age range may feel compelled to be dishonest (often to get out of trouble, to avoid trouble for someone else, because they don't want to do something, etc.). The story also reinforces the idea of “choice” and that we are honest or dishonest by choice (and not at the fault of someone else). You could have students articulate a different honest choice for each of Howard's dishonest choices.
- Look into Lincoln's choices as president. Did his actions remain honest? If so, how? If not, what could he have done differently? As a group, discuss ways to remain honest even as situations get more challenging.



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LEARNING.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has been reviewing evidence-based SEL programs since 2003. Kindness in the Classroom® meets CASEL's SElect Program and is included in the [CASEL Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs](#).

Kindness in the Classroom® met or exceeded all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL programming. Kindness in the Classroom® received CASEL's highest designation for high-quality SEL programming.

<https://casel.org/guide/kindness-in-the-classroom/>