

Integrity

This is the third week of our Integrity unit. Students will apply their understanding of integrity and practice making choices that truly represent what they know to be right and kind.

Begin the unit with the whole class lesson and then aim to complete at least two of the mini lessons with your students throughout the week. Each mini lesson is designed to present elements of the main lesson in new and engaging ways.

Main Lesson

Whole Class Lesson
30 minutes



Making Choices

Students will examine the different types of possible choices in high pressure situations and discuss the possible outcomes of each option. (See page 2 for lesson details.)

Mini Lessons

For Small Groups
15 minutes



Marshmallow Towers

Divide into groups of 4-6. Each group will need one box of toothpicks and a large cup of marshmallows. Pass out toothpicks to 2-3 people in each group and marshmallows to the others. Explain that each group has 5 minutes to work TOGETHER to create the tallest freestanding tower. Everyone must participate. Explore the challenge to cheat, take over, and exclude some people as a means to win.

For Partners
15 minutes



Integrity Across Subjects

With your partner, choose one subject in school and make a list of tempting areas to “bend the truth” or ignore the rules. How can you use honesty and integrity to check yourself and stay true to doing what you know to be right and kind? (Answers may include: googling math answers, using online summaries for a book, etc.)

For Individuals
15 minutes



Letter to Self

Using the following prompts, write a letter to yourself. How do I want my friends and family to describe me when they talk about me as a teenager? Am I living in a way that encourages this type of memory? if not, how can I change? If so, how can I expand on my actions?

Technology-Focused
15 minutes



Fact or Fiction?

Divide the class up into small groups of 2-3. Give each group a simple topic to research related to your class (science, math, language arts, etc.). Have them choose 2 websites, one that is the most factual and one that appears misleading and possibly dishonest. How were you able to tell the difference? What resources can you use to determine if a website demonstrates integrity?

Making Choices

Students will examine the different types of possible choices in high pressure situations and discuss the possible outcomes of each option.

Lesson Timeframe

30 minutes

Required Materials

☐ Internet access for [video clip](#)

Standards Map

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

Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Examine their current decision-making process among peers and in high pressure situations.
- Practice making choices that reflect what they know to be right and kind.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Being a teacher often means you put others' needs before your own. This is a noble act but one that can slowly whittle away at our personal identities. Part of integrity, as you have been teaching your students, is about honesty; making honest decisions, especially when given more convenient or desirable options. Today, think honestly about the choices you make each day. Do you make decisions that serve your students only or do they serve you and your professional needs, too? Do you make choices largely based on pressure from administration or parents or colleagues? Or, do you stand up for what you believe to be right and kind? If an honest reflection reveals that you make decisions based on the influence of or for the benefit of others, while forsaking what you know to be a better choice, what can you do today to make small changes in your decision-making habits? How can you honor your good ideas, experience, and expertise and still work for the good of your students and the school? This might require having some courageous conversations which can be difficult, but they are worth having. Start today.



Share

3-4 minutes

Think about the past week. What are some examples of easy choices you had to make? (Invite student responses.)

Now, think hard: What is one example of a tough choice you had to make? (Invite student responses.)



Inspire

5-7 minutes

We have been working on the concept of integrity and how that expands our understanding of honesty. As we get older and have more freedom and opportunities (sports, extracurricular activities, clubs, etc.), we are also faced with more and more difficult choices to make. Some choices are quick and easy, like deciding what time to get up and what to have for dessert; others are much harder and have long term consequences, like deciding who to hang out with and what to spend your money on.

Let's watch this video by Kid President to explore our power in the choices we make. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdsCUEXLE-Y>

When you were faced with a tough decision, did you act impulsively, do nothing, or spend some time really thinking about which option was best?

Making tough choices can be extremely difficult. It is very tempting to make impulsive decisions without thinking about consequences, or being too scared to make a choice and simply following the crowd. However, both of those options don't allow you to decide based on honesty and integrity.



Empower

15 minutes

Explain that the class will now explore the consequences of making impulsive choices, following the crowd, and deciding with integrity. Read the scenario below. Divide the class into small groups. Have each group discuss the outcome for each type of choice using the questions provided. Allow 3-5 minutes per scenario for group discussion and then reconvene to share in the whole class setting. It will be interesting to see how different people view the same scenario!

Scenario: Shoplifting

You and several friends walk down to the gas station. Your friend realizes they left their money at home, but they really want a pack of gum. You have a large coat on and can easily place the gum in your pocket.

Impulsive Choice: When no one is looking you pocket the gum.

Follow the Crowd Choice: You do nothing and your friend pockets the gum in their coat.

Integral Choice: You tell your friend it's not worth the risk. You walk back home for the money.

Questions:

- What might happen if you decide to steal the gum? (caught/not caught)
- If you are caught, what consequences might happen? (arrested, parents notified, court, etc.)
- If you are not caught, what kind of person might your friends assume you are? (liar, thief, willing to go against rules)

- What might happen if your friend decides to steal the gum? (caught/not caught)
- If they are caught, what consequences might YOU have? (guilty by association, same legal problems, etc.)
- If they are not caught, what kind of person might your friends assume you are? (easily swayed, follower, don't care about rules, etc.)
- What might happen if you stand up to your friend? (they might laugh at you, ditch you etc.)
- If they refuse to walk back home with you, what choice do you have? (leave without them, do nothing)
- If you leave without them, what kind of person might your friends assume you are? (someone who values honesty, a loser, etc.)
- What's more important: your reputation with your parents/legal system/community OR your reputation with people that tried to get you to shoplift?



Reflect

5-7 minutes

As a class, discuss the importance of making choices that TRULY reflect what you believe to be right and kind. Sometimes this means your choices might not match up with the choices of your friends or classmates, and that's okay. This week try to make choices that you feel confident about every time. If you find yourself second guessing a group decision or feeling pressure to do something that feels wrong or "off", allow yourself time to really think about the choice before diving in!