

Integrity

This is the first week of our Integrity unit. Students will focus on integrity and how it connects to the familiar concept of honesty.

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



Levels of Honesty

Students will explore the concepts of integrity and honesty by analyzing honesty within a variety of tempting situations. (See page 2 for lesson details.)

Mini Lessons

For Small Groups
15 minutes



Flawed Fables

Divide the class into groups of 6-8. Give each group a simple children's fable. As a group read the fable, identify all the lies told, and discuss the ultimate fate of the central character because of these lies. Examples of fables you may use include "The Boy Who Cried Wolf", "Pinocchio", and "Little Red Riding Hood".

For Partners
15 minutes



How Many is Too Many?

With a partner, discuss the following question: How many lies do you get to tell before you are considered a liar? Explain your answer with the class.

For Individuals
15 minutes



Personal Reflection—Truth Triumphs

In your journal, detail a time when you were able to tell the truth even though you knew you would be in huge trouble. What was the reaction you received when you told the truth? How might things have been different if the other person found out without you telling them.

Technology-Focused
15 minutes



Technology and Integrity

What is your goal in what you share? Do you show the good, the bad, and the ugly or is it only what makes you look good? Do you alter your pictures or leave things out to make yourself seem better or cooler? Guide a discussion within small groups around this topic.

Levels of Honesty

Students will explore the concepts of integrity and honesty by analyzing honesty within a variety of tempting situations.

Lesson Timeframe

30 minutes

Required Materials

- Whiteboard for each student OR blank paper for each student
- Whiteboard markers (if needed) or pencils/markers

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:

- Explore the connection between honesty and integrity and how that affects their decisions personally
- Celebrate the courageous acts within their personal lives

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Welcome to the Integrity Unit! This can be a challenging unit because “integrity” feels like a big, complex concept to both kids and adults alike! However, in this unit, we define integrity as acting in a way you know to be right and kind in all situations. This actually makes the concept quite simple. As your students get older and have more responsibilities, they may find it hard to think about what is right and kind in every situation; neurologically, they aren’t always capable of making a good choice here. Their judgement is underdeveloped and often clouded by social pressures. You have a great opportunity to help them hone their integrity skills.

You can do this by honing your own integrity skills. When faced with a task, do you complete it fully or take a short-cut? If students push your buttons, do you respond with kindness or with curtness and sarcasm? Is there bureaucratic “red tape” in your job that frustrates you and makes you look for loopholes? If you feel your integrity slipping at certain points of the year, like end-of-term, state testing, holiday seasons, or mid-year, because you are busy or burnt-out, take some time for self-care and hit your integrity reset button. Talk with a colleague about your experiences or frustrations and brainstorm strategies to get back on track. You won’t be the only one with these feelings and working through them to maintain a high level of integrity in your work will be a great model for students.



Share

3-5 minutes

In this unit, we will explore the concept of integrity and how it expands on our understanding of honesty. Specifically, this unit dives deeper into the connection between personal integrity and kindness and how leading a life of integrity can not only help us make better choices, but inspire others to do the same!

The concept of integrity overlaps heavily with the familiar concept of honesty. For this unit, the definition of integrity is acting in a way you know to be right and kind in all situations.

Let's discuss this further. How does integrity connect with honesty? (Invite student responses.)



Inspire

4-6 minutes

At this point in your life you are being given more and more responsibility; however with that comes more freedom!

We all long for that freedom we did not have in elementary school.

But freedom also allows opportunities to stretch the truth, ignore different aspects of directions you are given, and pick and choose areas of importance to you (even when adults expect you to do everything discussed, regardless of your opinion on the subject!).

The biggest temptation in all of this is to ignore areas that we know will most likely go undetected or unnoticed. Teachers, parents, and coaches are frequently busy and have given you a certain level of trust based on your age and previous behavior. They expect you to complete tasks without having to inspect every little detail.

The temptation to “cut corners” only grows as you get older and are given even greater freedom and responsibility. If you commit to leading a life of integrity now, when you are young, it will become a habit that guides you for the rest of your life.

What are some situations that might test your integrity? (Invite student responses.)



Empower

15 minutes

Explain that the class will now play a game to explore the connection between honesty and integrity and how that affects our everyday lives. The teacher will read a series of statements aloud to the class. After each statement, students will rate it based on its “level of honesty”.

Directions:

- Students will need a whiteboard or a blank piece of paper folded into 6ths for this activity.
- As you read off a statement, each student must rate the statement using a scale of 0-5, with 0 being completely dishonest and 5 being completely honest. (Example: cheating on a test is a 0.)
- Have students hold up their rating after they have made their choice.
- Select several students to explain their rating and their reasoning behind it (Example: cheating on a test is a 2 because their neighbor might have allowed them to look so it’s not completely their fault or cheating on a test is a 0 because it is completely dishonest and never acceptable. Answers will vary heavily based on your class.)

Statements:

- You cheat off of a neighbor’s test.
- You allow someone to cheat off of your test.
- You mop the floor with a sponge instead of with the mop your father requested.
- You come home 8 minutes late according to your phone, but the house clock says you are on time and you don’t get in trouble.
- You find \$10.00 on the ground in a store at the mall. You decide to keep it since there is no one around you.



Reflect

5-7 minutes

As a class, discuss the concept of honesty and how it often feels “flexible”. Explain that honesty is actually very concrete; you are either telling the truth or not, the choice is yours. However, it is NOT always easy. Sometimes we cut corners, bend the truth, and avoid fessing up to misdeeds because we are fearful of the consequences.

This week, make a commitment to examine your level of personal integrity. Are there areas that are more tempting for you to ignore the rules, bend the rules, or even intentionally break them? Try to make a change during one situation that reflects a higher level of integrity, even if it seems silly or unimportant to you. Discuss your choice with a trusted adult. How did you feel when you chose the honest choice, even when no one was watching you?