

Honesty

Being Truthful
In Words
And Actions

CHARACTER *Connection*



“Character is doing
the right thing when
nobody’s looking.
There are too many
people who think that
the only thing that’s
right is to get by, and
the only thing that’s
wrong is to get
caught.”

-- J.C. Watts

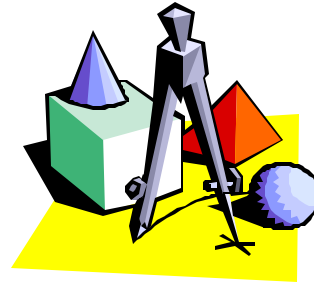
October Character Connection Theme: Honesty

Definitions

Honesty means integrity, trustworthiness, truthfulness, sincerity, fairness in dealing, and the “absence of fraud, deceit, and dissembling.” Honesty, honor, and integrity are all nouns that “denote qualities closely associated with moral excellence.”¹

Here are some ways to be honest:

- *Say what you mean and mean what you say.
- *Make promises you can keep.
- *Admit mistakes.
- *Refuse to cheat, steal or lie.
- *Tell the truth.



Quotes

“A straight line is shortest in morals as well as in geometry.” —Rahe²

“I hope I shall always possess firmness and virtue enough to maintain what I consider the most enviable of all titles, the character of an honest man.” –Washington³

“If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.” –Mark Twain⁴

“All other knowledge is hurtful to him who has not honesty and good-nature.” –Montaigne⁵

“Truth never damages a cause that is just.” -- Mahatma Gandhi⁶

Activities

****Before class, prepare enough small samples of sugar water for all but one student in the class. Prepare one sample of slightly salty water. (It should not look different from the sugar water.) Pass the samples of water to the class and one by one ask what each tastes. *Talk about being honest with yourself and others despite peer pressure. Sometimes being honest means standing up for what you believe no matter what others say.***⁷

****As a class, memorize a stanza from “Truth Never Dies:”⁸**

Truth never dies. The ages come and go.
The mountains wear away, the stars retire.
Destruction lays earth's mighty cities low;
And empires, states and dynasties expire
But caught and handed onward by the wise,
Truth never dies.

It answers not. It does not take offense,
But with a mighty silence bides its time;
As some great cliff that braves the elements
And lifts through all the storms its head sublime,
It ever stands, uplifted by the wise;
And never dies.

Though unreceived and scoffed at through the years;
Though made the butt of ridicule and jest;
Though held aloft for mockery and jeers.
Denied by those of transient power possessed,
Insulted by the insolence of lies,
Truth never dies.

As rests the Sphinx amid Egyptian sands;
As looms on high the snowy peak and crest;
As firm and patient as Gibraltar stands,
So truth, unwearied, waits the era blessed
When men shall turn to it with great surprise.
Truth never dies.

¹ from The American Heritage Dictionary

² The New Dictionary of Thoughts, page 276

³ The New Dictionary of Thoughts, page 276

⁴ <http://www.quoteland.com/quotes/topic/156.html>

⁵ The New Dictionary of Thoughts, page 275

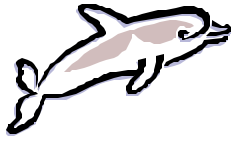
⁶ <http://quotations.sm.to/>

⁷ idea from Oak Canyon Jr. High School educator

⁸ poem submitted by P.G. High School PTA/Character Connection representative (from The Book of Virtues)

**The Litmus Honesty Test: Cut several ½ inch strips of blotting paper. Dip them into purple cabbage water and let them dry. Now, when dipped in acidic lemon juice (or dishonest acts) the prepared strip of paper will turn pink (from embarrassment.) Baking soda water (alkaline) will show the true blue color of honesty on the prepared strips. *Sometimes we may think that we are honest, but it is not until we face trying situations that our true colors show.*

Stories



The Dolphin and the Monkey (an Aesop fable)



A monkey was traveling by ship from one country to the next. One day he climbed the mast of the ship to get a better view. Unfortunately, as he was looking at the ocean, a big wave crashed into the boat and the monkey was thrown into the water. He frantically called for help, but no one on the boat heard him yelling. The boat sailed on. A dolphin, seeing his predicament, swam underneath the monkey, lifted him onto his back and swam toward land.

The monkey began to talk to the dolphin about how important he was. “Everyone on this island knows me. In fact, the king of this island is one of my closest friends. I am sure to have a fine welcome when I get to shore.”

The dolphin listened politely, and looked wonderingly at the shore of the island. There were no animals, no people, no houses or palaces and not even a wisp of smoke to be seen. He placed the monkey on the shore, and then swam quietly away, leaving the boastful monkey to himself.

Your lies will always be discovered.

Honesty Rewarded

In an AP article, the Deseret News reported that on her return flight from a five-week vacation in Greece, Viki Koutsis lost her bag containing valuables and her driver’s license. Later, Cruz Escobar, from El Salvador, found a bag containing \$20,000 in gold, diamonds, pearls, and a driver’s license while cleaning a Swissair jet. She did not hesitate about what to do. Using the driver’s license, the owner was contacted and the property was all returned. Cruz commented in Spanish, "I felt sorry for the woman who had lost it. . . I always believed what my mother taught me, that you should never keep something that doesn't belong to you." For her honesty, Cruz’s employer gave her \$100, and Viki rewarded her with a hug and \$300.⁹

Colton once said, “Honesty is not only the deepest policy, but the highest wisdom, since however difficult it may be for integrity to get on, it is a thousand times more difficult for knavery to get off; and no error is more fatal than that of those who think that virtue has no other reward because they have heard that she is her own.”¹⁰ *Sometimes honesty brings rewards of riches or recognition, but more often the rewards are not readily apparent. What are the less visible rewards of honesty?*

Writing or Discussion Topics

**It is said that Abraham Lincoln walked 2-3 miles to return an overcharge of 6 ¼ cents. When he discovered that he had shorted a customer’s half pound of tea by 4 ounces, he shut his store and carried the added measure to his customer. Another time, Abe worked for 3 days “pulling fodder” for his neighbor to pay for the book, Life of Washington, that was damaged while he borrowed it.¹¹ *Is it easier to be honest in small matters or large? How is honesty, even over small matters “really worth it?” Explain J.P. Senn’s quote: “Money dishonestly acquired is never worth its cost, while a good conscience never costs as much as it is worth.”*

**Read about Laura’s cousin Charley and his “wolf crying” in chapter 11, “Harvest,” of Little House in the Big Woods. Three times Charley had laughed when Pa and Uncle Henry had rushed from their work to “rescue”

⁹ “Airliner cleaner shines with honesty,” Deseret News, August 26, 1999

¹⁰ The New Dictionary of Thoughts, page 276

¹¹ submitted by P.G. High School PTA/Character Connection representative (from The Book of Virtues)

him. The fourth time Charley had hollered and jumped up and down for help, Pa and Uncle Henry had not come to his aid. Ironically, that was the time Charley was being stung by yellow jackets. Pa commented, “It served the little liar right.” Laura “didn’t understand why Pa had called him a little liar, She didn’t understand how Charley could be a liar, when he had not said a word.”¹² *How would you have explained Pa’s comment to Laura? Why is honesty more than words?*

**In a poignant short story, “The Necklace,” Guy de Maupassant writes of a young woman who borrows a necklace from a rich friend. Unfortunately, she loses the necklace. Without telling the owner, she replaces it with what she hopes is an identical necklace. *Read the story, then discuss how the ending would have been different if honesty had been uppermost in the young woman’s mind. What are borrower’s responsibilities, particularly in the case of lost or damaged items?*

** The Honesty plant (*Lunaria annua*) is a biennial that grows 1½ - 3 feet in partial shade. It has pink, white, or purple blooms in the spring or summer. The flowers become silvery, paper-like seedpods. In fact, the plant is named “Honesty” because the seeds can be seen through the pods. The pods are used in floral and dried arrangements.¹³ The oil in the seeds may soon be used to combat multiple sclerosis.¹⁴ It is said to flourish under the care of the very honest gardener. *Compare the honesty plant to honesty as a character trait. How do other character traits make it difficult or easy to be honest?*

Role Plays

**Candace must have her mother’s initials on her homework. She comes home and does her homework at the table while her mother is fixing dinner. Dinner is ready and Candace puts her homework away and starts to set the table. At school the next morning Candace realizes that although her homework is done, she does not have her mother’s initials. Candace is just learning cursive and she know that initials would be easy to write. *What should Candace do?*

**Shawn’s mother has asked him to watch his 2-year-old brother, William. She reminds Shawn that William must not have peanuts and that they must not watch T.V. She leaves. First William is content to play with his blocks, but Shawn wants to watch that show that his friends have been talking about. He turns the T.V. on (just for a moment, he thinks. . .) Meanwhile, William gets hungry. He goes to the kitchen, pulls the peanut butter from the cupboard, opens the lid and sticks his finger in and starts licking. Shawn glances up from the T.V. and notices that William is gone. He turns off the T.V. and rushes to find William. What a mess! Shawn quickly cleans William up, then gets a book for them to read together. In walks Mom. “So, what have you been doing while I was gone?” she asks. *What would you say if you were Shawn? When is telling the truth hard? What might be the consequences of dishonesty in this example?*

Book List

The Empty Pot by Demi

A Day’s Work by Eve Bunting

Passage to Freedom by Ken Mochizieki

The Children’s book of Virtues

“The Honest Disciple” page 70

“The Indian Cinderella” page 88

“The Boy Who Cried Wolf” page 100

“The Honest Woodman” page 101



November: **Citizenship**

December: **Peace**

January: **Responsibility**

February: **Forgiveness**

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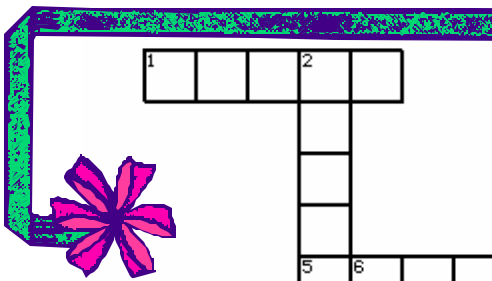
¹² Wilder, Laura Little House in the Big Woods. New York, Harper & Row, 1971

¹³ <http://homearts.com/affil/gardb/plants/lunaannu.htm>

¹⁴ <http://www.csl.gov.uk/ienica/data/honesty.htm>

Honest

Name _____



ACROSS

1. Conformity to knowledge, fact, actuality, or logic
4. Deserving or winning respect; creditable
5. Consistently telling the truth; honest
9. Close adherence to a strict moral or ethical code
11. Faithfulness to obligations, duties or observances; loyalty
14. The quality of having the appearance of truth or reality, often applied to effective artistic representation
17. Warranting trust; dependable; reliable, faithful
18. Enduring or repeatedly demonstrating truth
19. Not lying, cheating, stealing, or taking unfair advantage

DOWN

2. Firm reliance on the integrity, ability, or character of a person or thing; confident belief; faith
3. Legally or ethically accountable for the care or welfare of another
6. Implies a decision to commit oneself to another and to accept the consequences in case of failure
7. Open and sincere in expression; straightforward
8. Directness of manner and expression
10. Not feigned or affected, true, not hypocritical
12. Stresses sincerity and honesty in the sense of refusing to evade issues or to distort one's true thought
13. Moral soundness, especially as it is revealed in dealings that test steadfastness to truth, purpose, responsibility, or trust
14. Truthfulness in expressions
15. Proven integrity
16. Forthrightness, openness and outspokenness

fideli-ty
truth
sincere
trust
frank
reliance
veracity
honor
truthful
verity
responsible
honorable
honest
candid
integrity
verisimilitude
trustworthy
probity
straightforward
candor

