

1 CHARACTER



Trustworthy

February 2006

Trustworthy: to be worthy of confidence.

“Honesty is telling the truth. Integrity is doing what we say we will do.”

—Steven Covey

Nearly 50 years ago, when I was in third grade, I vividly recall my entire classroom being decorated during the month of February with paper hearts, patriotic symbols and child-drawn pictures of Abraham Lincoln and George Washington. My teacher purchased perfectly cut black silhouettes of these two revered presidents and placed them above the chalkboard in a conspicuous, commanding place. We stared at the presidents daily as we celebrated their birthdays throughout the month with song and story.

This was the year I really learned about “Honest Abe” and the “Father of our Country.” Do you remember Lincoln’s familiar story about honesty? It seems that a woman overpaid at the general store where Abraham Lincoln was working. When the store closed, Lincoln walked several miles to return the change to her.

Another story about Lincoln that I heard later in life describes a more “grown-up” scenario of his honesty and trustworthiness. It appears in the book *Dare to Be True*:

While living in New Salem, Lincoln and a partner bought a general store and attempted to run it as a profitable business. But owing to unwise investments and general mismanagement, the store finally “winked out,” to use Lincoln’s own phrase. Not long thereafter his partner died, leaving the unfortunate Lincoln with what he called the “National Debt.” But unlike many others who went bankrupt in frontier ventures and skipped town to escape their creditors, Lincoln promised to repay every cent he owed. He fulfilled this promise even though it took him more than fifteen years to retire the debt. When Abraham Lincoln made a commitment, his word was good as gold.

Perhaps you also remember the famous story about George Washington and the cherry tree. Young George was given a shiny new hatchet and decided to test it on his father’s prize cherry tree. When his father saw the tree, he said, “George, who cut down my cherry tree?” George

bowed his head and said, “I cannot tell a lie. I did, Father.”

Ironically, in recent years the story of Washington and the cherry tree has been reported to be a fabrication by a well-meaning historian. While the story may never have occurred, it still carries a good message.

In the years since third grade, I have learned much about Lincoln and Washington and still believe them to be great men who were honest and trustworthy. But, I have also learned that I don’t have to search historical figures for examples of these two virtues. Although dishonesty seems rampant today, honesty lives within families, neighbors, and friends. Small and simple stories about honesty should be celebrated and shared. May I share two with you?

Recently a relative of mine found it necessary to return an item to a large chain store in Orem. He apologized for not having a receipt but indicated that he had purchased the item on sale. The clerk gladly refunded his money in exchange for the item and then replied, “Thank you for your honesty. Most people buy items on sale and then try to return them for full price.”

Years ago I had a student in my fourth grade class at Lindon Elementary. He received a prize at the end of the school year for achieving a goal he later tearfully admitted he hadn’t completed. He wanted to make things right, so he returned the prize. Then he and his mother worked out a plan to complete the goal over the summer months. When this young boy returned to my classroom in the fall, his countenance immediately told me that he was now prepared and eager to receive his “honestly earned” prize. The real prize in this story was not the one that awaited him on my shelf, but the lifelong virtue his mother helped him move toward – honesty.

True heroes of honesty surround us. Celebrate them. Tell their stories. Small and simple things can make all the difference!

Mary Hansen
Lindon Resident

“A few honest men are better than numbers.”
—Oliver Cromwell

“Truth has no special time of its own. Its hour is now - always.”
—Albert Schweitzer,
“Out of My Life and Thought”

“Plato is dear to me, but dearer still is truth.”
—Aristotle

“Trust is basic, at the very core of life. If you don’t trust people, it’s my opinion that you are not trustworthy and assume others aren’t.”
Hyrum Smith, chairman and chief executive officer of Franklin Covey

Book List

Horton Hears a Who

by Dr. Seuss

A Bargain for Frances

by Russell Hoban

illustrated by Lillian Hoban

True Stories about Abraham Lincoln (pages 18 and 22)

by Ruth Belov Gross

The Berenstain Bears and the Truth

by Stan and Jan Berenstain



Family Activities

-Galileo Galilei was born on February 15, 1564. He was an Italian physicist and astronomer whose ideas opened a road to the scientific revolution. Because his scientific writings were so different from current theory, he was brought to trial and sentenced to permanent house arrest. He became a symbol of the struggle for the freedom to expand known knowledge. **What lengths are we willing to go to for the causes that we champion?**

-It's cool to be trusted. Acknowledge those times when your child fulfilled his obligations (homework, chores) particularly if he was not reminded. Children develop moral confidence when their positive actions are appreciated and praised. No success is too small to be noticed.

-Make a book about being trustworthy. Each person could make a page illustrating an answer to "Being trustworthy means. . ."

-Make a list of the benefits of being trustworthy.

Solving Youth's Problems Through Character Education featuring Dr. Lynn Scoresby

Dr. Lynn Scoresby will be the guest speaker at the Parent Outreach Seminar held at Oak Canyon Junior High School on **February 16th at 6:30pm.** Dr. Scoresby will speak about using character traits to solve discipline problems in group settings such as the family or classroom. He will present practical skills for applying character education towards the resolution of every day behavioral problems. This free seminar will be helpful to all who work with youth in the home, school or community.

Kid's Corner

When I was 8, my mother asked me to do some chores before we left on vacation. I hurried through getting ready and got into the car. My mother asked me while we were driving if I had remembered to feed the chickens. I had forgot! I did not want to cause trouble and so I did not tell the truth. I told her the chore was done. We continued on our vacation and I forgot about it. When we got home, we discovered that the chickens had not been well cared for. I had not followed through or was trustworthy in my assignment. I also had not been honest and had to tell my parents the truth after hurting the animals. I learned from that experience to be trustworthy and to do what I said I would do and to always tell the truth, regardless of the consequences. You just feel better about yourself when you are honest.

By Courtney
Northridge Elementary

We, at Character Connection would like to focus on helping parents access character materials by using the web site located at www.lindoncharacterconnection.com. If you are interested in receiving a monthly reminder of the character traits and access to resource materials, please e-mail your address to arlainea@isquaredinc.com

Character Connection is a not-for-profit organization encouraging the enhancement of character development in our community. We are accepting financial support. If you can help please send contributions to:
Lindon Character Connection
c/o Alpine Foundation
575 N 100 E
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(You may also give your donation to any executive board member.)

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