

# Lindon CHARACTER *Connection*

Trustworthy

February 2010



**Trustworthy: to be worthy of confidence.  
“Honesty is telling the truth. Integrity is doing what we say we will do.”**

—Steven Covey

## *Reprint of Character Connection Article from February 2006*

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*

“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

“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

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

## 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”**  
by Ruth Belov Gross

**“The Berenstain Bears and the Truth”**  
by Stan and Jan Berenstain



## Family Activities

*–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.*

*–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?*

Laura Clement

## Kid’s Corner

Reprint of Article from February 2006

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  
of Northridge Elementary School

We, at Character Connection, would like to focus on helping parents access character materials by using the web site located at [www.lindoncharacterconnection.com](http://www.lindoncharacterconnection.com).

Lindon  
Character  
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