

KIDS *of*
INTEGRITY

Honesty



Can you tell the difference between real diamonds and fake? Visit a jewellery store and find out! Or sprinkle pepper on water to learn how lies distance us from God. Maybe you'll even catch the candy sneak in a lie!

Review these ideas – plus plenty more – to help your children:

- recognize the difference between reality and make believe
- tell the truth at all times
- practice honesty in all things.

This lesson also helps curb exaggeration and stealing.

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Parents' prayer

Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, asked Jesus, "What is truth?" Perhaps Pilate encountered so much deception in his interactions with others, he had begun wonder if truth could even be defined. Still today, we frequently face the temptation to misrepresent the truth. As you begin this study on honesty with your family, prepare your heart by praying through this sample prayer, or by praying through some of the Bible verses provided in the "Scripture-guided prayer for parents" section.

Sample prayer

Lord God, You speak the truth and declare what is right (Isaiah 45:19). I praise You, God of Truth, author of the book of truth (Daniel 10:21, Psalm 31:5). Thank you for guiding us into all truth through Your Spirit of Truth (John 16:13). Your Son Jesus is full of grace and truth. He is the way, the truth and the life (John 1:14; 14:6). In a world that claims there is no such thing as truth, You are the ultimate standard of truth.

Your Word tells us how much You abhor dishonesty (Psalm 5:6)! Lord, I don't want falsehood to hinder my prayers; rather, I desire to be one who speaks the truth from my heart so I can enjoy being in Your presence (Psalm 15:1-2, Psalm 101:6-7). In humility, I ask Your forgiveness for the times I have been less than entirely honest. I consider myself to be completely honest in the big things and almost pride myself in being honest in the little things, too. Pride precedes error and it is so easy to slip up on half-truths, exaggerations or with embellished truths. Please send Your Spirit to guide me in all I say and do. I want to be a reflection of You.

I thank You for blessing my children, _____ and _____, with _____ (list character qualities relating to honesty). Impress on them 1 Peter 3:10-12 which states, "...Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." Please inspire my children to be people who refuse to speak anything but the truth. May they choose lives of righteousness and integrity so You can allow them the privilege of

entering Your presence and the blessing of answered prayer (Psalm 24:3-4, Psalm 34:15).

Satan will come to my children and tell them it is okay to tell a little lie, that lying is acceptable because “everyone does it” and that no one will find out about their lie. Please send Your angels to remind _____ and _____ how much You detest lying lips and how much You delight in people who are truthful (Proverbs 12:22). Give them the strength of character to tell the truth despite expected punishment or pressure from peers. I pray that they will share David’s prayer of Psalm 119:29-30: “**Keep me from deceitful ways; be gracious to me through Your law. I have chosen the way of truth; I have set my heart on Your laws.**”

I ask that our family will be characterized by integrity. May we highly esteem truth-telling and be known as those who can be trusted to tell the truth, regardless. Thank you for Your promise to watch over us when we choose the path of righteousness for our lives (Psalm 1:6, Psalm 25:20-21). Amen.

Scripture-guided prayer for parents

Pray through one or more of the selected Scriptures under each heading. Focus on listening to God and allowing His Spirit to direct you as you pray.

Character focus

Begin by letting God know how much you appreciate that He is the God of Truth.

Psalm 33:1-5 | Isaiah 45:18-19 | John 1:14 | John 14:6 | John 16:13

Heart search

Acknowledge where and how you are tempted to be dishonest.

Psalm 24:3-4 | Psalm 26:2-4 | Psalm 101:7 | Proverbs 24:12 | Zechariah 8:16-17 | Colossians 3:9-10

Gratitude

Thank God for ways you have seen honesty exhibited in your family.

Family requests

Ask God to inspire you and your children to be passionate about telling the truth.

Psalm 25:4-5 | Psalm 51:6 | Psalm 119:29-32 | 1 Corinthians 13:6 | Philippians 4:8

Kids talk with God

Just as you taught your children language skills through continual interaction, you can teach your children to have constant dialogue with God by leading them in brief but frequent prayers throughout the day.

These sample prayers will help you lead your kids in asking God to enable them to be honest in their speech and behaviour. If your kids are ready to begin formulating their own prayers, see the verses under “Scripture-guided prayer for children” for inspiration.

Sample prayers

God, please help me to be a boy/girl who always tells the truth. Help me to tell the truth even when I think I will be punished if I admit what I have done. Amen.

God, I know you delight in people who tell the truth. Please help me to be someone who You can delight in. Amen.

Dear God, I have disappointed You, my mom and dad, and myself by not telling the truth about _____. Please forgive me and send Your Holy Spirit of Truth to guide me into all truth (John 16:13). Amen.

Dear God, if there are things I have said that are untrue, please remind me so I can tell the truth instead. Amen.

Dear God, if I am tempted to lie, please help me to listen to Your voice which will say “Tell the truth.” Amen.

Dear God, please forgive me for I have not been truthful. I am sorry because I know You hate it when people lie. Please help me to tell the truth so You can delight in what I say (Proverbs 12:22). Amen.

Scripture-guided prayer for children

If your children prefer to say an original prayer, these Scriptures will help. Choose one verse under each heading and help your children pray based on the verse you read. Encourage them to listen to God and allow His Spirit to guide them as they pray.

Character focus

Begin by letting God know how much you appreciate that He is the God of Truth.

Psalm 33:4 | Isaiah 45:18-19 | John 14:6

Heart search

Acknowledge where and how you are tempted to be dishonest.

Psalm 15:1-2 | Proverbs 12:22 | Proverbs 24:12

Gratitude

Thank God for ways you have been honest.

Personal requests

Ask God to inspire you, your siblings and your parents, to be passionate about telling the truth.

Psalm 25:4-5 | Psalm 119:30,32 | 1 Corinthians 13:6 | John 16:13

Speak a blessing

Psst! This is a reminder! Are you complimenting your children for the progress they are making in the area of honesty? Here are some ideas you can use to encourage and motivate them.

- I know _____ is honest. He/she is a boy/girl who tells the truth.
 - Even when it is hard to be honest, _____ is.
 - I know that I can trust what _____ says. He/she is careful to tell the truth.
 - There is no question in my mind. I know what _____ says is the truth.
 - God delights in you _____, when you tell the truth and so do I.
 - _____ can be trusted to tell the truth.
-

Memory verses

Do your children make good decisions when you're not around? By memorizing Scripture together, you'll help your kids understand that God's Word will give them life-long guidance. Choose a verse that they can learn in a pre-determined period of time. Aim to review the verse at least once every day.

Psalm 5:6 "You destroy those who tell lies; bloodthirsty and deceitful men the Lord abhors."

Psalm 15:1-2 "Lord, who may dwell in Your sanctuary? Who may live on Your holy hill? He whose walk is blameless and who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from his heart"

Psalm 51:6 "Surely You desire truth in the inner parts; You teach me wisdom in the inmost place."

Psalm 101:6-7 "My eyes will be on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with Me; he whose walk is blameless will minister to Me. No one who practices deceit will dwell in My house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in My presence."

Psalm 119:29-30 "Keep me from deceitful ways; be gracious to me through Your law. I have chosen the way of truth; I have set my heart on Your laws."

Proverbs 6:16-19 "There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers."

Proverbs 10:9 "The man of integrity walks securely, but he who takes crooked paths will be found out."

Proverbs 12:19 "Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment."

Proverbs 12:22 "The Lord detests lying lips, but He delights in men who are truthful."

Proverbs 19:9 "A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who pours out lies will perish."

Proverbs 24:12 “If you say, ‘But we knew nothing about this,’ does not He who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not He who guards your life know it? Will He not repay each person according to what he has done?”

Proverbs 26:18-19 “Like a madman shooting firebrands or deadly arrows is a man who deceives his neighbor and says, ‘I was only joking!’”

Proverbs 26:28 “A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin.”

Zechariah 8:16-17 “‘These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to each other, and render true and sound judgment in your courts; do not plot evil against your neighbor, and do not love to swear falsely. I hate all this,’ declares the Lord.”

1 Corinthians 13:6 “Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.”

Ephesians 4:25 “Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.”

Philippians 4:8 “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.”

Colossians 3:9-10 “Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.”

1 Peter 3:10 “For, ‘Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech.’”

Kick-off craft

Underscore the importance of honesty by helping your children each create a personalized “certificate of authenticity” that verifies that they speak the truth. Have your children complete this project early in your study on honesty, so you can refer to it often in the days ahead.

Certificate of authenticity

Directions

- Using thick cardstock, write at the top of each page “Certificate of Authenticity.” Just below this write, “This certificate tells us that what _____ says is true.” Also include your selected memory verse on the certificate.
- Provide materials and allow your children to decorate their certificates, creating a border with gold or silver foil paper strips, lace, glitter, buttons or other fun embellishments.
- While your children are working on their certificates, explain that just as we delight in beautiful things, God delights in us when we tell the truth.
- After the certificates are completed, admire your children’s creations and let them know you are pleased with such beautiful artwork. Use this as an opportunity to speak a blessing – letting them know how pleased you are to have children who always tell the truth.

For the duration of the time that you are focusing on honesty, give each child a smiley face sticker to add to their certificate whenever they tell the truth. Let them know that the happy face represents God smiling when they are truthful.

Bible stories

Select a few of the following stories to help impress on your kids just how much God hates dishonesty. If the Scripture readings are too complex for your children to understand, you may wish to use the summary provided under “key concepts.”

The story of Achan

Read Joshua 7, and Psalm 86:5-6,11.

Questions for discussion

1. Have you ever taken something that didn't belong to you?
2. How did you feel?
3. Did you give it back?
4. What did Achan do?
5. What happened to Achan?
6. Even if you think no one is watching when you take something that does not belong to you, who always sees you?

Key concepts

When the Israelites conquered Jericho, Achan disobeyed God by keeping some of the gold and silver from Jericho for himself. Achan hid what he had stolen and tried to cover up his sin.

God dealt with Achan severely because God hates dishonesty! But as much as God hates lying and stealing, He will forgive you when you are truly sorry about what you have done. Mom and Dad will also forgive you when you repent of wrongdoing.

Ananias and Sapphira tell a big lie

Read Acts 5:1-11.

Questions for discussion

1. What did Ananias and Sapphira do?
2. What happened to Ananias?
3. What happened to Sapphira?

4. Certainly lying to God is a dangerous thing to do. Do you think that lying to anyone is a good thing to do?
5. Do you think God only cares about big lies or do you think He cares about little lies, too?
6. What would you think if you saw one of your friends die because they had lied to God?
7. What happened to the other people in the story after Ananias and Sapphira died?

Key concepts

Ananias and Sapphira tried to deceive God by lying. They said they had given God's people all the money they received for selling a field, when in fact they had kept some of the money for themselves. But God knows everything and sees everything so it is impossible to trick Him. God put Ananias and Sapphira to death for lying. When the people saw it, they began to understand how much they should respect God and be truthful. God does not like it when we lie to Him or to anyone else.

Like father, like son

Read John 8:44-47, Psalm 33:4 and Titus 1:1-2.

Questions for discussion

1. Who is your father?
2. How are you like him?
3. How would you like to be like him when you get older?
4. Would you rather have an honest or a dishonest father?
5. What does the Bible say about God and truth?
6. Can we say the same thing about you as we can say about your Heavenly Father?

Key concepts

Satan is called the “father of lies.” You cannot trust or believe anything that Satan says or does. God only speaks what is right and true and it is impossible for Him to lie (Hebrews 6:18). God can be trusted.

Honest people can be trusted. Dishonest people cannot be trusted. Even though your father is an honest person, you must decide for yourself whether or not you will be trustworthy. There will be many times in your life where you will have to choose to be like your Heavenly Father who speaks only truth, or choose to honour Satan by lying.

Abraham hides the truth

Read Genesis 20:1-28.

Questions for discussion

1. Have you ever told most of the truth, but missed part of the truth?
2. Why did Abraham lie?
3. What did God do?
4. Is it ever okay to lie, even to protect yourself?
5. Instead of lying to protect himself, what should Abraham have done?

Key concepts

When Abraham moved to Gerar, he told the people that his wife Sarah was his sister. This was only half of the truth. (She was, in fact, his half-sister – they had both had the same father.) Abraham did not tell the whole truth because he was afraid that if the people knew that Sarah was his wife, someone would kill him so they could have his beautiful wife. He decided to tell them that Sarah was his sister so they would treat him well.

The king wanted Sarah for himself, but God warned him in a dream that Sarah was already married, so the king gave Sarah back to Abraham, along with many gifts. God chose to protect Abraham, even though he didn't tell the whole truth. Abraham should have trusted that God would protect him, even if he did tell the truth about Sarah being his wife.

God cares for the righteous

Read Psalm 52:1-7.

Prior to reading the psalm, explain the history behind it to your children. David was running away from King Saul because he was afraid that Saul was going to kill

him. Saul had turned away from following God. God had chosen David to take Saul's place and this angered Saul. While David was hiding from Saul, he wrote this psalm.

Questions for discussion

1. Has anyone ever made you scared when they chased you?
2. Would you have been scared if you were David?
3. Why was David confident that the Lord would protect him?
4. Has anyone ever told a lie that got you into trouble?

Key concepts

David was confident that God would care for him because he was righteous. He believed that God would destroy the evil people who were chasing him and who loved falsehood (lies) instead of truth.

It is easy to be afraid of people who lie or do other bad things. When you are tempted to be afraid of those who do wrong, remember this psalm of David and be confident, as David was, that God will care for you.

God destroys dishonest people

Read Jeremiah 5:1-3,12-17.

Note: The content in this story may be frightening for a young child.

Questions for discussion

1. What does God look for?
2. What makes God angry?
3. What did Jeremiah tell the people God would do to punish them for their dishonesty?

Key concepts

God was looking for honest people in the city of Jerusalem, but there weren't any – not even one. So God decided to bring their enemies against them to destroy their city, their crops, their flocks and herds, and even their families. God doesn't like lying at all!

Micaiah prophesies the truth

Read 1 Kings 22:1-23,29-37.

Note: This is a long story that contains references to blood and death. You may want to read it ahead of time and paraphrase it for your children, or use the summary in the “key concepts” below.

Questions for discussion

1. What did most of the prophets tell the king of Israel (King Ahab)?
2. What did Micaiah tell King Ahab?
3. Why didn't Ahab like Micaiah?
4. What happened to Micaiah when he told the truth?
5. What happened to king Ahab in the battle?
6. Who told the truth?

Key concepts

The king of Israel (Ahab) and the king of Judah (Jehosaphat) were considering going to war together. Jehosaphat agreed to go if they first asked for God's direction. Ahab brought together many prophets and asked them if he should go to war. (A prophet is someone who speaks the word of God, as directed by His Holy Spirit).

Unfortunately, none of the prophets that Ahab asked were honest prophets. These dishonest prophets spoke their own words instead of God's words and told the kings they should go to war because the Lord would help them win the battle.

Jehosaphat recognized that these men were not true prophets and asked if there was a prophet of the Lord they could ask. Ahab said there was a prophet named Micaiah, but Ahab didn't like to listen to him because Micaiah never prophesied anything good about Ahab. Finally, Ahab did ask Micaiah if he should go to war.

Micaiah said, “Go, you will be victorious.” Then Ahab said, “I really want to hear the truth.” Then Micaiah told him the truth – that Israel would be like a flock

of scattered sheep without a shepherd if they went to war. Micaiah also prophesied that a spirit would entice Ahab into battle by putting a lying spirit into the mouths of the prophets.

Ahab did go into battle. He disguised himself as a regular soldier, but he was still killed in the battle, just as Micaiah had prophesied.

Remember that people will not always like it when you tell the truth, especially if you say things they don't want to hear. But it is important to speak the truth, no matter what others want you to say. Micaiah was even put into prison for speaking the truth. God is pleased when we speak the truth.

A false prophet tells lies

Read Jeremiah 28.

Questions for discussion

1. What lie did Hananiah tell?
2. What did Jeremiah say about truth?
3. What did Jeremiah prophesy?
4. What happened?
5. Who knows if someone is telling the truth?

Key concepts

The prophet Hananiah told the Israelites some good news, but unfortunately it wasn't true. He said God had told him that within two years' time, some of their people who had been captured and taken as slaves to Babylon would be released from captivity and allowed to go back to Jerusalem. But God knows who is speaking the truth and who is lying. God showed Jeremiah that Hananiah was telling lies, and He punished Hananiah severely. In Proverbs 19:5, God's Word says, **“A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who pours out lies will not go free.”**

Lies are never worth it

Read 2 Kings 5:19-27.

Note: To understand the preceding events, review 2 Kings 5:1-16. Explain to your children that after God

healed Naaman of his leprosy, Naaman offered Elisha a gift of thanks. Elisha would not take the gifts, but his servant Gehazi had a different idea.

Questions for discussion

1. Why did Gehazi go back and see Naaman?
2. What did he tell Naaman?
3. Was this true?
4. What did Elisha ask Gehazi?
5. What did Gehazi tell him?
6. What was the punishment that God provided for Gehazi?
7. Is it ever worth telling a lie to gain something?

Key concepts

God used Elisha to help heal Naaman of his leprosy. After he was healed, Naaman was so thankful, he offered Elisha a gift, but Elisha refused to take it. Later, Elisha's servant, who was named Gehazi, ran after Naaman and pretended that Elisha had changed his mind and did want a gift after all. Naaman happily gave Gehazi silver and clothing. But God showed Elisha everything that had happened, and how Gehazi had lied. The punishment for his deceitfulness was the dreadful disease leprosy – the very thing Naaman had been healed of. Gehazi not only lost the trust of his master, but he also lost his health.

Before we tell lies to get something we want, we must remember that lying will not please God or our parents. It is not worth gaining any material possessions if it means we lose the trust of others and cause God to be disappointed with us.

Creative discipline

There's no avoiding it – telling the truth can have negative consequences. It's no wonder kids are tempted to "adjust" the truth. Here are some ideas that will help you express love to your kids by helping them to understand that dishonesty is very a serious issue.

For a hard-lined approach to lying

Biblical basis

Proverbs 6:16-19 "There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers."

Suggested disciplinary action

When your child is "caught in a lie," place a small drop of horseradish on your child's tongue. Explain to your child that God detests lying and so do you! Inform them that the detestable taste of horseradish will help them remember how much God detests it when people are dishonest.

Affirmation

Pray with your child through Psalm 119:29-30: "Keep me from deceitful ways; be gracious to me through Your law. I have chosen the way of truth; I have set my heart on Your laws." Further affirm them by saying that you know they will tell the truth in the future and be a delight to God, and to you.

For a "softer" approach to lying

Biblical basis

Proverbs 19:5 "A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who pours out lies will not go free."

Suggested disciplinary action

When your child is caught telling a lie, remove a specific "freedom" or privilege that your child enjoys, such as choosing the food they eat or the toys they can play with. Or restrict computer and/or television viewing privileges.

Use the extra time you have gained doing "character-building" activities, such as taking a walk and observing bugs caught in spider webs to illustrate how lies can "trap" you. (See the **hands-on options**

section for more information on the “lie trap” exercise.)

Affirmation

Explain to your child that choosing to lie makes a person miserable because when we lie, we live in fear, waiting to find out when the lie will be uncovered. Direct your child to Psalm 119:30,32, which says, “I have chosen the way of truth; I have set my heart on Your laws . . . I run in the path of Your commands, for You have set my heart free.” Explain that “living free” means always telling the truth, so we can live free from the fear of our lies being discovered.

Pray with your child and have them pray in agreement with you, letting God know that they are choosing the path of truth because they want to be free.

Hands-on options

How many times have you begun to share an important truth with your children, only to watch their eyes grow dull and their attention begin to wander elsewhere. It’s distressing, isn’t it? These simple activities will keep their eyes sparkling and their interest engaged while you explain the importance of being honest. Choose just one or two ideas that will appeal to your children.

Truth champions

creative crafts

“Champion” truth in your home by honouring truth-telling. First, read about the armour of God found in Ephesians 6:10-18. Then help your children make a belt of truth they can each wear. To make the belt, simply cover a cardboard strip, or an existing belt, with tinfoil and/or duct tape.

Talk about how speaking the truth wins the battle for Jesus, who is Truth, rather than Satan, who is the father of lies (John 14:6, John 8:44). Emphasize that when we tell the truth, we show we are on God’s team, not Satan’s.

Relevant Scripture

Ephesians 6:10-18.

John 14:6 “Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”

John 8:44 “[Jesus said] ‘You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.’”

An honest kid

any time

Share with your children this true story about a seven-year-old boy named Tanner Munsey. Tanner’s reputation for being honest earned him a mention in the “Scorecard” column in the July 10, 1989, issue of *Sports Illustrated* magazine.

During a T-ball game in Wellington, Florida, Tanner attempted to tag a player leaving first base. When the umpire called the player out, Tanner immediately informed the umpire that he hadn’t managed to tag the runner.

Two weeks later, Tanner encountered the same umpire in another T-ball game. This time, Tanner was playing short-stop and tagged a runner as they approached third base. When the umpire called the player safe, Tanner didn’t say a word, but the umpire noticed his surprise at the call.

“Did you tag the runner?” she asked Tanner. When Tanner affirmed that he had, the umpire changed her decision and called the player out. When the coaches and other parents protested, the umpire stood by her decision, informing them that she had learned to trust Tanner, because of his honesty.

To read the original article, visit <http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/vault/article/magazine/MAG1068563/3/index.htm>

Relevant Scripture

Proverbs 20:11 “Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right.”

Real vs. make believe exercise

drive time or any time

Whenever you read your children a story, ask them if it was “real” or “make believe.” Children can be very perceptive, but it is good to give them an opportunity to confirm their judgement. While driving, tell your children stories and have them practice discerning whether the stories are factual or fictional.

Travelling tales and tails

drive time

While you are driving in the car, tell your kids something false, such as “Hey, look at that horse running down the road.” Do it again a few blocks later, and yet again another few blocks down the road.

Questions for discussion

When the kids begin to comment on your dishonesty, use the following questions as a guideline to initiate discussion:

- Did you think it was funny when I mentioned the horse?
- Would it be funny the second time?
- What if I told you untrue thing like that all the time?
- Did you stop believing me about the horse?
- If you tell stories that are not true, even just to be funny, will other people trust what you say?
- Can you think of a dangerous situation that might arise if people realized that they can't trust what you say?

Relevant Scripture

Proverbs 26:18-19 “Like a madman shooting firebrands or deadly arrows is a man who deceives his neighbor and says, ‘I was only joking!’”

Certificate of authenticity

drive time or any time

Visit a jewellery store with your children. Compare both real and artificial pearls, diamonds, gold and/or silver.

Explain that sometimes it is not obvious – even to an expert – if precious metals and stones are authentic (real), or merely imitations of the real thing (fake). Tell your children that when you buy the real thing, the jeweller gives you a “certificate of authenticity” to prove the article is genuine. (If you request it, the store’s assistant may be willing to show you a certificate of authenticity.)

Questions for discussion

Review these questions to further the discussion on real (God-made) versus synthetic (man-made) jewels and metals:

- Sometimes people cannot tell the difference between real and artificial jewellery. Who always knows the difference? (Psalm 90:8, Ecclesiastes 12:14)
- When we use our mouths to speak truth or falsehood we can sometimes fool people, but who can we never fool? (Psalm 139:4)
- Can we say the same thing about your words that God says about His own words? (Isaiah 45:19)

Relevant Scripture

Psalm 90:8 “You have set our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your presence.”

Psalm 139:4 “Before a word is on my tongue, You know it completely, O Lord.”

Ecclesiastes 12:14 “For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.”

Isaiah 45:19 “. . . I, the Lord, speak the truth; I declare what is right.”

Party time!

fun with food

Have a truth-telling party! Make the theme “Love rejoices in truth – and so does God” (1 Corinthians 13:6, Proverbs 12:22). You can keep your party simple by adding ice cream at the end of your suppertime meal, or celebrate to the max with

balloons, a special dessert, party hats, honoured guests and party games.

Whichever approach you take, make it clear that you are celebrating because you are a family who tells the truth. See the **hands-on option** entitled “Jujube® sneak” and “sweet detectives” for some other ideas to incorporate into your party.

Relevant Scripture

Proverbs 12:22 “The Lord detests lying lips, but He delights in men who are truthful.”

1 Corinthians 13:6 “Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.”

Jujube® sneak

fun with food

Set a bowl of candy on the table after a meal. Have one parent sneak a handful of candy and hide it while the other parent is looking the other way or has left the room.

When the other parent returns, they are to ask, “Hey, has someone taken some candy?”

The candy sneak then asks the kids if he/she should confess that they took the candy. If the kids counsel the parent to tell the truth, everyone gets to share the candy. If your children advise the candy sneaker to lie, then no one gets any.

Questions for discussion

Use the following verses to share a Biblical perspective with your children:

Proverbs 19:9 “A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who pours out lies will perish.”

Proverbs 28:13 “He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.”

Proverbs 24:12 “If you say, ‘But we knew nothing about this,’ does not He who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not He who guards your life know it? Will He not repay each person according to what he has done?”

Psalm 139:1,4 “O Lord, You have searched me and You know me. . . . Before a word is on my tongue You know it completely, O Lord.”

Sweet detectives

fun with food

Set out a variety of treats on the table. Some good ideas include melted marshmallow, icing sugar, pudding, Oreo cookie crumbs and melted chocolate with pretzels to dip in.

Have all but one person exit the room. The remaining person may sample one of the treats. (With younger children it is wise to have an adult stay to supervise quantities.) When he/she has sampled one treat, he/she calls the others back in.

Invite the others to guess which treat has been sampled. Note any deceptions the “sampler” has used, such as spilling some extra crumbs on the table to make others believe that they had actually sampled that treat. Take turns until everyone has had a chance to be the sampler at least once.

Reviewing the following questions will help you share the concept with your children that no matter what we do, God is always watching. Take time to explain that even if we conceal our sin from others, God knows what we have done. Let your children know that concealing truth is still considered lying. Choose one or more of the verses listed below to pray in closing.

Questions for discussion

- How could you tell what treat had been sampled?
- Even if we guessed wrong, who knows exactly what the sampler ate?
- Who, other than the supervisor, knows how much the sampler ate?
- Have you ever tried to cover up the truth only to find out that some little clue led your parents or teacher to the truth?
- Is it wrong to try and cover up the truth, even if you don't say anything?

- Can you lie without saying anything at all?
- Even if your parents or teachers never know what you have done wrong, who knows?

Relevant Scripture

Psalm 51:6 “Surely You desire truth in the inner parts; You teach me wisdom in the inmost place.”

Psalm 101:6-7 “My eyes will be on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with Me; he whose walk is blameless will minister to Me. No one who practices deceit will dwell in My house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in My presence.”

Psalm 119:29-30 “Keep me from deceitful ways; be gracious to me through Your law. I have chosen the way of truth; I have set my heart on Your laws.”

“Oh yucky!” exercise

fun with food

Assemble some foods that your children detest – foods so “yucky” they wouldn’t even want to try tasting them. Have some of their favourite snacks available too.

To demonstrate how much God hates lying, ask them if they would like to eat any of the detestable foods. Obviously, the answer will be an emphatic, No! Explain that God detests lying even more than they hate the “yucky” food.

Read the verses listed below. Close by letting your children have one of their favourite treats and explain that, just as they delight in their favourite food, God delights even more so when they tell the truth.

To further reinforce this lesson, give each child one of the preferred snacks whenever you observe them telling the truth.

Relevant Scripture

Proverbs 6:16-19 “There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.”

Proverbs 12:22 “The Lord detests lying lips, but He delights in men who are truthful.”

Zechariah 8:16-17 “These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to each other, and render true and sound judgement in your courts; do not plot evil against your neighbor, and do not love to swear falsely. I hate all this,” declares the Lord.”

Pure truth

science with a twist

For this experiment, you will need a small bowl of water, a peppershaker, cotton swabs (the double-ended stick swabs), liquid dish detergent and some additional water.

- Prior to beginning the experiment, coat one end of the cotton swab with dish detergent. Leave the other end free of soap. Mark the soapy end in a way that only you will know which end it is.
- Shake a generous amount of pepper onto the surface of the water in the bowl. Explain that the pepper represents people.
- Tell your children that the cotton swab represents God. Put the non-soapy end of the swab in the water and move it around to let some pepper gather on it. Explain that when we are truth-tellers, God will allow us to come into His holy presence.
- Next, tell your children that the people in the bowl have been lying. Ask them to list some ways the people could be telling lies. Then place the soapy end of the cotton swab in the bowl and watch the pepper flee! Explain that when we have been lying, God doesn’t want us in His presence, nor do we feel comfortable coming to talk with Him until we have confessed our sin.
- Add some extra water to the bowl. As you do so, explain that when we ask God to forgive our sins, He washes our sins away. (Adding the extra water causes the pepper to scatter across the water’s surface again.)
- Finally, using the non-soapy end of the cotton swab, swish the cotton swab through the pepper,

showing that the pepper no longer “runs away” from the cotton swab. Emphasize that after we have confessed our sin, God welcomes us back into His presence.

Relevant Scripture

Psalm 24:3-4 “Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false [or swear falsely].”

Psalm 101:6-7 “My eyes will be on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with Me; he whose walk is blameless will minister to Me. No one who practices deceit will dwell in My house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in My presence.”

The lie trap

getting into nature

Head outdoors with the kids and hunt for a spider’s web. Watch how a bug becomes entangled in the web, or catch a fly and put it in the web to see what happens. (If it is winter, search online for a video clip or rent a DVD on spiders instead.)

The more the insect struggles, the more entangled it becomes. If you are fortunate, you might even see the spider come and wind the bug up in more sticky thread. Explain to your kids that Satan is like that spider. He wants us to be people who do not tell the truth and become entangled in lies.

Questions for discussion

Ask your children these questions while you are web-watching:

- Is the bug happy?
- Do you think the bug wishes it had never flown into the web?
- Will it ever get out?
- Who could get it out?
- If you lie, who can help you get out of it?
- Have you ever lied? Did you end up wishing that you never had?

- If you do get trapped in a lie, who should you go to for help?

Relevant Scripture

John 8:44 “[Jesus said] You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

Honest scales

science with a twist

This exercise is a hands-on illustration of Proverbs 16:11-13. You will need an ice cream stick or a ruler, a large, cylindrical felt-tipped marker or dowel, 15-20 pennies and tape.

- Use the ice cream stick or ruler as the beam of your balance scale. Tape the marker or dowel to a table and place the beam across it.
- “Weight” one side of your scale by taping some pennies together, then taping them onto one end of your balance’s beam. While you are doing this, explain to your children that in Bible times, weights were used to balance the scales and help weigh out oil, spices, perfumes and other items people wanted to purchase.
- Pretend that your five pennies represent five pounds. Place the “five pounds” of pennies on one side of the scale and balance cereal or nuts on the opposite side of the scale.
- Explain that dishonest people would pretend their weight weighed a certain amount, but it was actually lighter. Every time someone thought they were getting five pounds of wheat, or something else, they would really receive less because the seller used “dishonest” measuring weights.
- Read Proverbs 16:11-13, then discuss the questions below while role-playing making various purchases.

Questions for discussion

- Who would you rather make your purchases from – someone with honest weights or dishonest weights?
- Who values honest boys and girls, men and women?
- Would you prefer to have honest or dishonest friends?
- In what ways can we have dishonest scales in our lives? (For example, shoving toys under the bed instead of cleaning them up, by throwing toys in random bins instead of where they belong or by saying you have vacuumed the floor when you only went over parts of it so your chores could be done quicker.)

The Bible says that kings value honest men. Encourage your children by telling them that you, as parents, also delight in children who tell the truth. Assure them that when they tell the truth, the disciplinary measures will be lighter than if they were to try to cover up their wrongdoing. Emphasize that future teachers and employers also will value students and employees who are people of integrity. People who can be trusted to be honest are valued highly everywhere!

Relevant Scripture

Proverbs 16:11-13 “Honest scales and balances are from the Lord; all the weights in the bag are of His making. Kings detest wrongdoing, for a throne is established through righteousness. Kings take pleasure in honest lips; they value a man who speaks the truth.”

Recommended resources

For a list of children’s stories that reinforce the theme of this lesson, consult the home page for the **honesty** lesson at Kidsofintegrity.com.