

# HONESTY COUNTS! [ integrity — Proverbs 10 ]

## THIS WEEK

For many teens, integrity is a foreign concept with few role models. It's a lost value in their culture, where doing the right thing is dwarfed by the need to do whatever it takes to get ahead. The integrity of young teens is challenged—and compromised—daily. Will they be true to their word? Will they cheat at sports, games, or schoolwork? Will they deceive others to get out of trouble? Will they embellish events to increase their social stature? The battle to live a life of integrity never ends. Naturally, God sets high standards for integrity. But as high as they are, they are achievable and rewarding—especially when living with integrity becomes a habit.

## OPENER

Play a few rounds of Balderdash! In this adapted version of the board game, Beyond Balderdash, make a list of nonsense, very obscure words—but real words nonetheless. (Just look in a dictionary, you'll find some!) A few examples from Dictionary.com ([www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)) might be—

- Coquette—a woman who flirts with a man
- Defenestration—an act of throwing someone or something out of a window.
- Doppelganger—a ghostly double.
- Fop—a man who is much concerned with his appearance.
- Restate—to move like a reptile; slither.
- Triskaidekaphobia—fear of the number 13.

You can either play as a large group or split your group up into small groups of four or five people per group. A player in each group begins by choosing a word from the categories, including words, people, objects, or any other one you want to include. All of the other players then write down a bluff, false answer to the word in the hopes of fooling each other. Shuffle the real answer in with all of the other players' phony answers and read each one aloud. A group scores points for guessing the real answer—and for also duping their peers into believing their answer is correct. Each person's task is to create a false definition for the word. Encourage your kids to try to make it sound realistic—and to be creative.

## THE DISCUSSION, BY NUMBERS

1. Let your group point out the obvious—why they wouldn't trust a doctor who cheated through medical school. Throw in a few more examples, such as a president who lied to get into office, an athlete who set a world record while using illegal drugs, or a police officer who took bribes from rich crooks.
2. Allow your group to explain why some of the actions listed are dishonest or not. Be prepared to discuss what could be said that would be

gentle (but still honest!) in some of these situations. Allow for some disagreement here—every situation noted doesn't necessarily have a black-and-white answer.

3. What is the downside of dishonesty? Most liars, cheaters, promise breakers, and thieves live in fear that they will be caught or discovered. Fear and guilt are not fun feelings. What do dishonest people worry about, if anything?
4. Talk about the value of a mind and heart at peace. Is there safety or security in being honest? Why or why not? What do your kids think the author means in this passage?
5. God has definite ideas and standards for integrity—but he's set a high standard because he values honesty. He does forgive human shortcomings, but he also expects that people will live lives of integrity.

## THE CLOSE

Your high schoolers know that honesty really is the best policy—even when it's painful. Take some time to talk about the pros and cons of honesty—why do some people think it's easier to lie? Why is it sometimes more hurtful or harder to tell the truth? Why is dishonesty promoted in culture sometime? And why do dishonest people get away with so much? Take some time to talk about these and some other issues with your group. They may have some other moral issues and questions that they'd like to mull through with the group. Challenge them to think through their actions and words—and to see how truthful their actions are compared with their words.

## MORE

- Where do your kids see dishonesty in the media? You may want to bring in a few clips of a few movies or TV shows. What do these clips deal with? What are the causes and consequences of lying? Are these examples of big lies or little ones—and is there a difference in these? Talk with your group about honesty on the Internet and in the movies. How is dishonesty glorified or promoted? How do commercials play into dishonesty? Challenge your kids to think about these questions as they watch and listen to the media through out the week.
- Ask your kids to look at some of the following verses from Proverbs on honesty—11:1, 11:3, 11:8, 12:5, 12:13, 12:19, 12:22, 14:5, 14:25, 16:13, 20:7, 20:10, 20:17, 20:21, 21:3, 21:6, 28:18, and 28:23. What do these proverbs say about the virtue of honesty? And how can your kids apply these verses in their lives today?