

Date Used: _____

Group: _____

HONESTLY

Topic: Honesty

Purpose of this Session:

It is important to discuss honesty with young people because during adolescence, dishonesty becomes more than just "telling lies". Children tell fibs and lie to get what they want, but adolescents begin to wrestle with the issue of honesty as a *value*. They must decide whether or not they will choose to be a completely honest person.

To Introduce the Topic:

A good lead-in is to play the game "Whopper". Have the students write three statements about themselves, two of which are true and one of which is not. The rest of the group members try to guess which of the three is a lie. If the students choose two truths that *sound* like lies and a lie that sounds plausible, they will be successful at fooling the group.

Another idea is to conduct a "lying contest". Have a contest to find out who can tell the biggest lie. After each student has told his fib, vote on the best "tall tale". Give a prize to the winner, or announce you will present a new car to the owner, then later admit you lied.

The Discussion:

Item #1: The main focus of this item is "trust". Who do we trust to tell us the truth? If there are those on the list the students perceive as dishonest, ask them why. It will probably be due to a past experience with dishonesty. Trust takes time to develop and we destroy it when we are dishonest with each other.

Item #2: Allow enough time for the group to share and discuss their opinions. You may want to discuss "white" and "black" lies, asking the students to give examples of each and why they feel they are permissible lies or not. You may want to discuss the kind of lies that are considered "good" — such as telling someone they look nice when they don't, or lying to protect a friend from harm. Is this right or wrong?

Item #3: Ask the students to share their rankings and to give reasons for their choices. There may be considerable difference of opinion here, so allow time for debate.

Item #4: This "Tension Getter" will give you a true-to-life situation to discuss with the students. Ask them to decide what Natalie should have done and what she should do now. Ask them to consider all the possible consequences of this kind of dishonesty. Even though Natalie "got away with it", there is no way of knowing what might happen as a result. On the other hand, everyone knows the result of being completely honest.

Item #5: These scriptures examine different aspects of honesty. Discuss each one as you study what God has to say about honesty.

To Close the Session:

Summarize what has been discussed. Focus some of your concluding remarks on the consequences of honesty and dishonesty. Being dishonest is like playing with dynamite. It can blow up in your face. Help the students understand one lie tends to lead to another. "Oh what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive!" Being consistently guilty of misrepresentation can destroy your reputation and your sense of self-worth. Being consistently guilty of misrepresentation can destroy your reputation and your sense of self-worth. One of the key characteristics of a Christian is honesty and being trustworthy. Jesus said "I am the truth" and we need to imitate Christ by being truthful people. Remind your students God will forgive them for past untruths.

Outside Activities:

Invite the students' parents to a youth group meeting for a panel discussion on honesty. Have them share instances when they were not completely truthful as teenagers, and what happened as a result. Insist on complete honesty! Have them discuss how they deal with dishonesty now, at home or at work.