

# HONESTY COUNTS! [ integrity — Proverbs 10 ]

## THIS WEEK

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? 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). 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 4 or 5 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.

Afterwards, vote with your group for who made up the most believable, yet false definition for a word.

## 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. Point out that honesty is one of the pillars of society because trust between people is essential.
2. Which of these items are the most dishonest? Which ones aren't really dishonest? Let your kids defend their ideas and decide as a group, under

which situations one of these would be considered completely dishonest. You'll probably have some disagreement here—every situation noted doesn't necessarily have a black-and-white answer.

3. What is the downside of being dishonest? What problems or consequences come from frequently lying? Most liars, cheaters, promise breakers, and thieves live in fear that they will be caught or discovered—and later may feel extremely guilty
4. How did your kids summarize this verse? Do they agree or disagree with what it says? Why? Take some time to discuss how this verse applies to your kids today.
5. How honest do your kids think they are? Are they more to the left or to the right? Do any of them formed bad habits that have left them feeling dishonest? Point out that your kids aren't alone—nobody is perfect when it comes to maintaining integrity. In fact, if any of them have rated themselves as perfect, they're probably being dishonest with themselves!
6. You may want to read these verses as a group and summarize what each passage says. Point out that God lays out the standards for integrity. He is willing to forgive all shortcomings, but he wants honesty to become the habit of their lives.

## THE CLOSE

Most junior high or middle 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.

## 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? Challenge your kids to think about these questions 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?