

Defining Honesty and Integrity

This lesson has several visual elements to help explain what honesty and integrity mean. Students will have an opportunity to see integrity in action through an object lesson and will apply their definitions to a series of quotes.

Integrity Sub-Concept(s)

Kindness

Lesson Timeframe

25-30 minutes (without the optional Empower activity)

Required Materials

- “What Do Honesty and Integrity Mean?” activity sheet, one for each student
- Writing Utensils
- Poster paper
- Two bags of M&Ms (one that contains the expected candy and one that contains something else like beans, rice, or something unexpected) -- requires preliminary preparation on the part of the teacher
- Bowls to empty bags
- Lesson Prep for Teachers: Seven Ways to Build Strong Character and Integrity in Children
<https://raycenter.wp.drake.edu/2020/12/09/seven-ways-to-build-strong-character-and-integrity-in-children/>

Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.



DESIGNATED BY CASEL
AS A RECOMMENDED PROGRAM
FOR SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING.
See last page for details.

Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Define honesty and integrity.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Integrity is defined as acting in a way you know to be right and kind in all situations. As teachers, we are held to a level of integrity that is unprecedented in any other profession. Not only are our reputations built on our level of professional integrity with what we teach and how we teach it, but we are a physical example of integrity for dozens of students every school year. What promises do you make for your students each year? How do you infuse integrity into how you teach, how you plan, and how you follow through? The teacher connections in this unit will focus on simple, yet effective ways to embody integrity from the top down. This week our promise is an overarching promise we all start with at the beginning of the year, but can lose focus on during this time! Promise #1: “I, _____(insert name) will focus on my students.” Let’s be honest. No one chooses teaching for the summer vacation. You are here because of the students. As this semester comes to an end and grades, parent teacher conferences, and staff meetings begin to cloud your vision, take a step back and remind yourself of the first and most important goal you have: your students. How can you start and end each day with this simple statement?

Tips for Diverse Learners

- Show a movie clip, drawing, comic strip, or other visual images that model for them how people’s qualities on the inside connect with their outside actions. For example, someone who is thoughtful, kind, and brave stands up for others who are being picked on or bullied. Be sensitive to students for whom this is a challenge where they may want to be kind or loving or have integrity but are still developing the strategies to consistently “do the right thing.”
- Create their own drawing, comic strip, or other visual of how our feelings on the inside connect with the way we act. Consider providing die cut people shapes and having students write how they show (or try to show) integrity on the inside and the outside.
- Focus on one quote from the activity sheet. Or, they could work in groups of three, with each student answering questions about one quote and then share responses.



Share

5-7 minutes

In this Unit, we are talking about what it means to have integrity. Take out your journals (or another piece of paper, if students aren't keeping journals) and write down what you think the definition of integrity is.

Give students 3-5 minutes to do this.

Then, show "Integrity for Kids": https://youtu.be/PSHh_P9Mq7E

If you can't watch the video, you can print the transcript or summarize all of the main points from the video: having manners, doing what is right not what is easy, standing up for what you believe in, making decisions based on honesty, etc.

After watching the clip (or discussing the main points), have students compare their definitions with what they heard. How are they the same? How are they different?



Inspire

5-7 minutes

Take out the two bags of M&Ms. One should be filled with M&Ms as expected; the other you should have emptied prior to class and filled with something else, such as small stones, rice, beans, etc.

When you buy a bag of candy at the grocery store, what do you expect to find in the package? What should it look like? What quality?

Allow students to respond. Then open the two bags and pour the contents into two bowls.

Are you surprised by what you see? How would you feel if this happened to you?

Allow students to respond.

Just like this bag of M&Ms, what is on the inside of us needs to match what is on the outside. No one wants to buy a bag of M&Ms and find _____ on the inside. People want to be with someone who is genuine or is what they seem to be. This is called having integrity and being honest. We are going to talk about that today.



Empower

10-15 minutes

Hand out the “What Do Honesty and Integrity Mean?” activity sheet and have students complete independently or with a partner.

Then, divide students into small groups and have them discuss their responses. Ask for volunteers to share their definitions of honesty and integrity and how they show honesty and integrity.

Write their responses on a poster sheet to reference throughout this unit (hang the poster up in the classroom for the duration of the unit) and add the following to the definitions as necessary:

- **Honesty:** Being honest is being open, trustworthy, and truthful. When people are honest, they can be relied on not to lie, cheat, or steal. Honesty is telling the truth. It is admitting mistakes even when you know someone might be angry or disappointed. Being honest means that you don't pretend to be something you are not. With honesty, you can trust things to be as they appear.
- **Integrity:** Integrity is standing up for what you believe is right and living by your highest values. No matter where you are, who you are with, or what you are doing, you will act in a way that you believe to be the best way to act. It is being honest and sincere with others and yourself. You are a person of integrity when your words and actions match. You don't fool yourself into doing what you know is wrong.

Optional Arts Integration (additional 15 mins): Create groups of four and ask students to think about a situation that shows honesty and a situation that shows integrity. Ask students to act out the situation in mime and ask the class to guess whether the mime illustrates integrity or honesty.



Reflect

5-7 minutes

Being honest and having integrity are two values that are deeply important. When we are honest, other people are able to trust and rely on us. It's important to also have honesty with ourselves and stay true to our own values and beliefs. When we have integrity, we stand up for what we believe is right. That is the kind thing to do for yourself and others. This is part of self-care and self-respect.

To gauge understanding of the material, choose from either the evaluation or reflection questions as discussion, writing, or journal prompts. Consider providing additional time for deeper evaluation and reflection as needed.

Evaluation Questions

- *What does it mean to be honest?*
- *What does it mean to have integrity?*
- *What actions show honesty and integrity?*

Reflection

- *Draw a time you showed integrity and did the right thing when no one was watching.*
- *Is there ever a time when you should not be honest? Why?*
- *Why do you think honesty and integrity are important?*



Extension Ideas

- Students can take the activity sheet home and discuss the third quote they didn't select with their family. They can write their responses together and a parent or guardian can sign it and students can bring it back for the next day's morning meeting.



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AS A RECOMMENDED
PROGRAM FOR SOCIAL
AND EMOTIONAL
LEARNING.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has been reviewing evidence-based SEL programs since 2003. Kindness in the Classroom® meets CASEL's SElect Program and is included in the CASEL Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs.

Kindness in the Classroom® met or exceeded all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL programming. Kindness in the Classroom® received CASEL's highest designation for high-quality SEL programming.

<https://casel.org/guide/kindness-in-the-classroom/>

What Do Honesty & Integrity Mean?

Name

Return by

Directions: Choose TWO of the quotations below and answer the questions:

“INTEGRITY IS DOING THE RIGHT THING, EVEN WHEN NO ONE IS WATCHING.” – C.S. LEWIS, AUTHOR

Do you agree with this quotation? Why or why not?

What does this quote mean to you?

“INTEGRITY IS TELLING MYSELF THE TRUTH. AND HONESTY IS TELLING THE TRUTH TO OTHER PEOPLE.” – SPENCER JOHNSON, AUTHOR

Do you agree with this quotation? Why or why not?

What does this quote mean to you?

“HAVE THE COURAGE TO SAY NO. HAVE THE COURAGE TO FACE THE TRUTH. DO THE RIGHT THING BECAUSE IT IS RIGHT. THESE ARE THE MAGIC KEYS TO LIVING YOUR LIFE WITH INTEGRITY.” – W. CLEMENT STONE, AUTHOR

Do you agree with this quotation? Why or why not?

What does this quote mean to you?

