

Integrity

This is the third week of our Integrity unit. Students will apply their understanding of integrity and practice perseverance in a context of honest choices regardless of temptation or frustration.

Begin the unit with the whole class lesson and then aim to complete at least two of the mini lessons with your students throughout the week. Each mini lesson is designed to present elements of the main lesson in new and engaging ways.

Main Lesson

Whole Class Lesson
30 minutes



Breaking It Down

Students will examine the connection between integrity and perseverance and work on breaking “impossible” goals into positive, honest, and manageable steps. (See page 2 for lesson details.)

Mini Lessons

For Small Groups
15 minutes



Overcoming Struggles

Divide into groups of 4-6. Give each small group a pile of index cards and a roll of duct tape. Instruct them that they must create a vehicle using only the materials provided. Discuss the issue of perseverance after all the groups are finished. Were you tempted to find a loophole in the rules provided to accomplish your goal and win?

For Partners
15 minutes



Common Goal

With a partner, identify one shared goal you have at school (better grades, quality friends, etc.) Create a step by step list of how to accomplish this goal together. How can you help each other persevere and achieve this dream together?

For Individuals
15 minutes



Hill of Perseverance

Pick one goal you would like to accomplish in your life (it can be big or small). Draw a simple hill and write the easy steps at the bottom and the harder ones towards the top. On the right side of the hill, write all of the positive ways you will feel and things that will happen once you reach your goal at the top!

Technology-Focused
15 minutes



Goal Tracking Tools

Divide the class into small groups. What tools are online to help you stay on track with your goals? Explore different options and select one that caters to a visual, auditory, or kinesthetic learner. Present your findings to the class!

Breaking It Down

Students will examine the connection between integrity and perseverance and work on breaking “impossible” goals into positive, honest, and manageable steps.

Lesson Timeframe

30 minutes

Required Materials

☐ Ball or other soft object

Standards Map

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

Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Examine their current decision making process as it relates to challenging goals
- Practice making choices that reflect what they know to be right and kind

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Being a teacher often means you put others’ needs before your own. This is a noble act but one that can slowly whittle away at our personal identities. Part of integrity, as you have been teaching your students, is about honesty; making honest decisions, especially when given more convenient or desirable options. Today, think honestly about the choices you make each day. Do you make decisions that serve your students only or do they serve you and your professional needs, too? Do you make choices largely based on pressure from administration or parents or colleagues? Or, do you stand up for what you believe to be right and kind? If an honest reflection reveals that you make decisions based on the influence of or for the benefit of others, while forsaking what you know to be a better choice, what can you do today to make small changes in your decision-making habits? How can you honor your good ideas, experience, and expertise and still work for the good of your students and the school? This might require having some courageous conversations which can be difficult, but they are worth having. Start today.



Share

2-3 minutes

We are halfway through our unit on integrity. We have covered the connection between honesty and integrity and how we have more control over decisions than we might have initially thought. This week our focus shifts to that of perseverance and the importance of incorporating integrity into our overall goals, whether big or small.

What words or phrases come to mind when you hear the word “perseverance”?



Inspire

5-7 minutes

When we think of perseverance, we might be taken back to the simple phrases of our childhood, “Never give up!” or, “Just keep trying!”. This is a terrific place to start when exploring this concept. For this unit, the definition of perseverance is to keep trying even when something is difficult, refusing to give up. This can be very challenging when you are trying to accomplish something that has many, many steps, or is extremely challenging. In addition, that temptation to skip steps, choose dishonest methods to achieve something, or accomplish your goals without focusing on your personal integrity increases when something is extremely difficult.

Think back to when you learned how to read. For some of you, this goal doesn't feel that big. Perhaps reading came easily to you or you don't remember exactly HOW you learned because it just came to you. For others, learning how to read was a HUGE goal that took many, many different approaches and might have felt impossible at times. However, all of us made it here. We all persevered and were able to become readers (even if it's not your favorite activity!) and are able to eventually do things that require reading like getting your driver's license.

The world is big on achieving your dreams and reaching for goals that might feel impossible when you first start out. However, we must also make sure that we keep honesty and integrity at the forefront of our path towards achieving our goals. There are many people in the world that have accomplished their dreams, but through dishonest ways that required them to compromise their integrity. Our goal here is to become a kinder, more honest person through each goal we achieve. Integrity is defined as doing what you know to be right and kind in all situations. If we keep this in our minds as we persevere towards our goals, we will be less likely to try and achieve those goals in a dishonest manner!



Empower

15 minutes

Explain that the class will now play a game to break down seemingly impossible goals into bite size steps that are much more manageable.

1. As a class, brainstorm goals that seem impossible and overwhelming to accomplish. Write these ideas down on the board.
2. Select 2-3 goals for this activity. If desired, save the list and repeat the game with the other goals throughout the year to reinforce the skill over time.
3. Using a ball (or some other small object that can be tossed), work your way throughout the room tossing the ball to a new person. They will identify one small step towards accomplishing the first goal identified.
Example: Becoming President of the United States. Step 1 might be to learn about how our government works. Step 2 might be writing a letter to the current president.
4. Continue tossing the ball and adding steps until the goal is reached. Do not worry if certain steps are skipped. The point of the game is to illustrate how even “impossible” goals can be broken down into small steps.
5. Repeat with the next goal until every person has had a chance to identify one or more steps during the game.



Reflect

5-7 minutes

As a class, discuss the temptation to be dishonest in the steps you take towards a larger goal.

- If given the opportunity, how would you respond to someone offering you an “easier” way to reach your goal?
- How could you investigate this offer to see if it comes from a place of kindness and integrity?
- What can you do if your initial attempt to accomplish your goal doesn't work?
- Who can you turn to if you feel unprepared or overwhelmed with the goal you wish to accomplish?