

White Lie to Kind Truth

This is the first lesson of the Integrity unit. The focus during this lesson is honesty as a building block for integrity. Students will examine common white lies told to “help others” and work to change them into honest, yet gentle statements.

Integrity Sub-Concept(s)

Kindness

Lesson Timeframe

45 minute

Required Materials

- ☐ “White Lie to Kind Truth” handout (see below)

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:

- Utilize caring and kindness to develop honest alternatives to deceptive actions.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the term “white lie” and explain how it is a form of dishonesty.

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

- Divide the class into groups with students of varying abilities.
- Read the white lies aloud before splitting up into groups; explain any confusing concepts for English Language Learners



Share

5-7 minutes

We have spent the first half of our school year learning about respect, caring, and inclusiveness. Let's take some time to talk about what that looks like in our classroom.

- Caring: How have you cared for others in our classroom?
- Gratitude: How have others shown gratitude to you when you have treated them with kindness?
- Inclusiveness: What is one way you have used inclusiveness to make a new friend?

All of these actions require us to be honest about how we treat others and how they affect us.



Inspire

What is Honesty?

5-7 minutes

Explain that Honesty means being truthful in our words and actions. Telling the truth can be difficult at times. It can be very tempting to tell stories to get out of trouble or avoid consequences when we have done something wrong. However, this is actually a form of dishonesty. Remember: your words have power! Every time you tell the truth, you earn a small amount of trust from others. When people trust us, they can count on us in both little situations and big situations alike. If you get into the habit of always telling the truth with little things, you will find it easier to tell the truth when bigger topics come up! Honesty is the best policy.

Can Lying Be a Good Thing?

10-12 minutes

Have you ever heard the term “white lie”? A white lie is often told when you don't want to hurt someone's feelings. Maybe a friend gets a new haircut and you don't like it. You tell them it looks nice because you don't want them to feel bad. Although your intentions are to be kind, you are still actually lying! Let's watch this short video to check in with other children about honesty:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzTltBI99Lw>

Note: if you are unable to watch this video, simply skip this part.

After watching the video, guide a discussion using the following questions:

- Have you ever told a white lie to protect someone's feelings?
- Have you ever told a white lie to avoid getting into trouble?
- What can happen after you tell that first white lie? (You wind up telling more, etc.)



Empower

15-20 minutes

Since our goal is to be kind and caring individuals, we need to work on making sure we are honest with our words, even when we are tempted to tell “white lies”. Explain that students will divide into small groups and work on changing white lies into kind yet honest answers.

- Divide up into groups of 3-5.
- Pass out the “White Lie to Kind Truth” handout to each group.
- Explain that each group will work to rewrite each white lie so that it tells the truth. The goal is to use kind words in an honest way. Although it may be difficult to tell the truth in some of these situations, practicing now can help you to avoid white lies.
- Allow 10 minutes for the groups to rewrite each white lie.
- Reconvene as a class and read each white lie aloud. Have every group share their honest and kind rewrite.



Reflect

3 minutes

Ask the students the following questions to evaluate their understanding about honesty.

- *How did it feel to change these white lies into kind truths?*
- *Which white lie was the hardest to change and why?*
- *How would it feel to hear a kind truth versus a white lie?*
- *Have you ever suspected that someone was telling you a white lie so they wouldn't hurt your feelings?*
- *How did that affect your ability to trust them?*

Remember, honesty means you are telling the whole truth all the time. Sometimes this means we need to use kind truths instead of white lies. Keep practicing when you have opportunities. If you make honesty your policy, people in your life will know they can always count on your words and actions!



Extension Ideas

- Have students repeat “White Lie to Kind Truth” activity with a loved one at home. Read the answers aloud as a class and compare answers!
- Write the word honesty on the board with each letter going down. As a class, brainstorm ways you can show honesty through your community.

RAK Notebook Prompt (See RAK Notebook Project in the Respect unit for more details)

- Draw a small circle inside your book. Write the following white lie in the middle- “I can’t find my work.”
- Add rings around the circle and add additional white lies in each ring. Color each ring a different color using colored pencils.
- Do your white lies seem to grow in complexity?
- What is happening to your ball?
- Answer the following questions below your circles: How can one white lie turn into a major moment of dishonesty?



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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/>

White Lie to Kind Truth

Situation	White Lie	Kind Truth
Your friend gets a haircut. He asks you what you think. You don't really like it.	I really like your haircut!	Example: Wow, look at your hair! It's so different/shorter/longer, etc.
You are invited to a playdate and can't come because you were already invited to someone else's house. You don't want to hurt your friend's feelings.	My mom won't let me come over; sorry.	
You got all the answers correct on your math test. Your classmate missed some and is sad.	Don't feel bad, I didn't do so well myself.	
Your mom asks you if you finished your homework. You actually forgot it at school.	I'm all finished mom!	