



September 2008

# Character Council Educator Quality of the Month Truthfulness

**Truthfulness:**  
**Earning future trust by  
accurately reporting past facts.**

## I will:

- tell the truth
- encourage others to be truthful
- not cheat or steal
- admit when I am wrong
- not exaggerate to make things seem different from what they are

Everyone is familiar with George Washington and the cherry tree, the Boy Who Cried Wolf, and some of you may know “A Big Fat Enormous Lie” by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat but how well has America learned the lessons they teach? There are all kinds of lies-little white lies, lying by omission, gossiping behind people’s backs, and even huge whopper lies! The press surrounds us with reports of business executives and politicians lying regularly. George Washington said, “Honesty is the best policy”. This month be more aware of the value of truthfulness that Washington espoused and encourage others to do the same.



☺ **Hide-a-Lie** Take a container (plastic bucket, cooking pot, or large beaker) and fill it with at least eight inches of water. The container should be at least six to eight inches wide. Take a quarter or large bingo chip (something that will sink), and place it in the center on the bottom of the container. Take ten pennies or smaller bingo chips (anything smaller that will also sink) and tell a student to drop them from two inches above the surface of the water. Count how many small items made it on top of the larger object. Collect the smaller items from the bottom and let the other students take turns. Calculate the percent of smaller items that made it on top of the larger object. How hard was it to hide the larger object? Relate this to how hard it is to hide a lie once it is told. How many other lies do you need to tell to cover up one lie? How many lies do you have to remember to keep the first lie believable? How much control do we have over how one lie spreads? Wouldn’t it have been easier to tell the truth in the first place? How does being honest make us more trustworthy?

☺ **Whopper** Pass out a Whopper candy to each child in the class and encourage them to eat it. Once they’ve eaten the candy, ask for it back. This demonstrates how hard it is to take back a lie once it is told. (Remember when: Back in the day, when someone told a big lie, they told a ‘whopper’...) Ask the students to come up with their own slang for the word ‘lie’. Why is it important to tell the truth? What does it feel like when someone spreads gossip about you? If the story is true, but not complimentary, is it still gossip? What will you do the next time someone spreads gossip to you? What will you do the next time you want to lie? How will you encourage others to tell the truth?

☺ **Baloney!** This is a common card game, also known as Cheat to those who play Neopets, or I Doubt It or B.S. to most others. Have students break up into groups containing an odd number of students and give each group a deck of cards. The object of the game is to get rid of all your cards. The entire deck is dealt to the group, and whoever has the Ace of Spades begins play. The first student can lay down Aces. They announce how many ‘Aces’ they are laying face down into the discard pile in the middle. The student may lie about how many cards of their number they are putting down. Once the cards are down, any player can challenge their claim. The cards are turned over and, if they are caught lying, they have to pick up the entire discard pile into their hand. A time limit can be set, or the game can be played until a student wins by running out of cards in their hand. Who had the best ‘poker face’? Who was really bad at lying? How easy was it to lie the first time? The last time? How did it feel to get caught? What will you do the next time you are tempted to lie?



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