

# Honesty

## Vs. Deception

**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

**FEATURES**

<b>No Matter How You Say</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quotes</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Curriculum Connection</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Model</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Team-Building Activity</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Family Activity</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Crosky's Corner</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Character in the Classroom Continuously</b>	<b>11</b>

## Being truthful in what I say and do

Picture water as it ripples from a central spot. Being honest resembles those ripples. When we are honest today we set ourselves up for being believed in the future. Each honest act builds our future credibility ripple by ripple.

When we operate in a manner that is consistent with our core integrity, we are true to ourselves and honoring our values. We become consistent and predictable, just like the ripples in the water. The more consistent we are with our core, the more we reveal that core to others. The more we act with integrity, the more we reinforce that core.

Honesty builds relationships and links us to each other just as the ripples build out from the center. Deception, on the other hand creates distance and can sever relationships.

This month, practice honesty and watch it ripple.

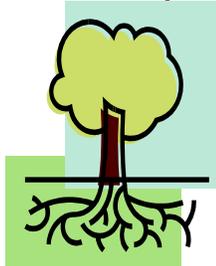

**IN THIS ISSUE**

Button, Button, Who's Got the Button	5
Truth-tionary	5
Cover-Up	6
Tower of Flour	6
Whoppers	7
Baloney	7

# No Matter How You Say It

## ↻ ↻ Go to the Root ↻ ↻

The word honesty is from the from Latin *honestas*. The original sense was 'respectability', later 'decorum, virtue, chastity'. Can you see how being honest gives one respectability?



Honestidad - Spanish

Ehrlichkeit - German

Honnêteté - French

Onestà - Italian

## Sign Language

Check out the following website for the American Sign Language interpretation of

Honest <https://www.handspeak.com/word/search/index.php?id=1047>

Dishonest <https://www.handspeak.com/word/search/index.php?id=1269>

Can you see how honesty looks like a straight line - no deviations?

From Miriam Webster ([www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com))

### Synonyms

integrity, probity, truthfulness, veracity, verity

### Antonyms

deceit, deceitfulness, dishonesty, lying, mendaciousness, mendacity, untruthfulness

### Related Words

honor, honorableness, incorruptibility, rectitude, righteousness, right-mindedness, scrupulosity, scrupulousness, uprightness, artlessness, candidness, candor, forthrightness, frankness, good faith, guilelessness, ingenuousness, plain-spokenness, sincerity, straightforwardness, dependability, reliability, reliableness, trustability, trustiness, trustworthiness, accuracy, objectivity; authenticity, correctness, genuineness, truth, credibility

*“People will accept your idea much more readily if you tell them Benjamin Franklin said it first.” -David H. Comins*

## Character Quotables

“Honesty is always the best policy.”

~George Washington

“Whoever is careless with the truth in small matters cannot be trusted with important matters.”

~Albert Einstein

“Three things cannot be long hidden: the sun, the moon, and the truth.”

~Buddha

“The truth is incontrovertible. Malice may attack it, ignorance may deride it, but in the end, there it is.”

~Winston Churchill

“If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.”

~Mark Twain

“Truth is the property of no individual but is the treasure of all men.”

~Ralph Waldo Emerson

“The goal of education is the advancement of knowledge and the dissemination of truth.”

~John F. Kennedy

“I never did give anybody hell. I just told the truth and they thought it was hell.”

~Harry S. Truman

“By and large, language is a tool for concealing the truth.”

~George Carlin

“Rather than love, than money, than fame, give me truth.”

~Henry David Thoreau

“Half a truth is often a great lie.”

~Benjamin Franklin

“The object of the superior man is truth.”

~Confucius

“Peace if possible, truth at all costs.”

~Martin Luther

“Truth is like the sun. You can shut it out for a time, but it ain't goin' away.”

~Elvis Presley

“I believe there's an inner power that makes winners or losers. And the winners are the ones who really listen to the truth of their hearts.”

~Sylvester Stallone

“There are only two people who can tell you the truth about yourself - an enemy who has lost his temper and a friend who loves you dearly.”

~Antisthenes

## Curriculum Connection Science

Lions speak the truth with their body language. Unlike tigers and other large cats, lions don't hide their feelings. They use their tail, mouth and posture to let others know exactly what they intend to do. If a lion's tail is hanging down in a long flowing curve and the tip points upward, they are giving you a friendly greeting. If the tail sticks straight out and the tip switches back and forth, he could be looking at you as his dinner! What other animals tell you what they are feeling with their body language?



## Katie Davis, Model of Truthfulness

In December of 2006, 18-year-old Katie Davis from Brentwood, Tennessee, traveled to Uganda for the first time. She was immediately captivated with the people and the culture.

In the summer of 2007, Katie returned to Uganda to teach Kindergarten at an orphanage. She was shocked to see the number of school-aged children not in school. Most schools in Uganda are privately operated and therefore require school fees for attendance, making poor children unable to afford an education.

Katie decided to start a child sponsorship program, matching orphaned and vulnerable children who are unable to afford schooling with sponsors all over the world. A gift of \$300 will provide allowance for one child to go to school, providing school supplies, 3 hot meals each day, spiritual discipleship, and medical care. Originally planning to have 40 children in the program, the program sponsors over 600 children today.

Shortly thereafter, Katie established a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization called Amazima Ministries International. The organization seeks to meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the people of Uganda who need it most. In the Lugandan language, Amazima means "truth." Also, Katie became a mother for the first time in January of 2008 to three orphaned girls. She has since adopted more girls bringing the total to 13 adopted daughters.

One of the many other programs she developed was designed to help the women in the Karimojong village provide for their families. She initiated a vocational program to teach these women to make unique Ugandan magazine bead necklaces. They are also taught money management skills. The necklaces made by the women are purchased and sold in the United States.

The programs that Katie has created are her way of being true to her core. She firmly believes in helping those who are in need.

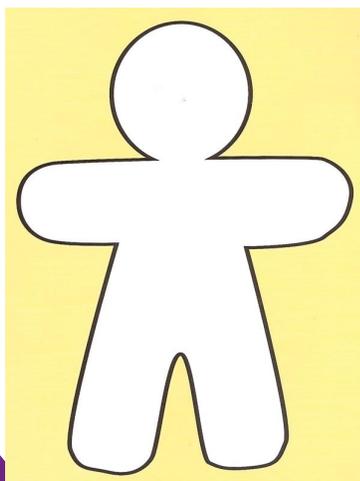
To learn more about Katie and Amazima visit: <http://amazima.org/>



## Team-Building Activity

Building a culture of good character requires building the class into a community. Here is this month's teambuilding activity:

Me



Give each one an outline of a human body or have each one draw one themselves. Inside the head area, have them write/draw one thing they would like to do when they grow up/get older. On the hands have them write/draw something they like to play. On the stomach they should write or draw something they like to eat. On a foot they should write/draw someplace they want to visit. Once they are all finished, have them share with everyone or you can break them into small groups and have them share in the groups. When they have finished sharing, point out that there were similarities and differences in what we like. It is nice to find someone who likes something that you do but having a variety of preferences in the group makes the group more interesting.



## Button, Button, Who's Got the Button?

Seat the group in a circle. Choose one person to be "it" first. This person stands in the middle of the circle. Provide a button to one person in the circle. Instruct the person who is "it" to close their eyes while those who are seated pass the button around the circle. You can play music or set a timer. When the timer goes off, have all those seated to pretend to be hiding the button in their hands. The person who is "it" can open their eyes. The group then chants to the person who is "it" the game title - "Button, Button, Who's Got the Button?". The person who is "it" gets three guesses as to who they think has the button. If they are right, that person is now "it" and they get to take the vacated place in the circle. If they are wrong, you get to pick a new person to be "it". Once you have played the game several times, discuss how it felt to pretend you had the button or how to pretend you didn't when you really did. Whenever we are not being true, it feels uncomfortable. Learn to recognize these signs. Whenever we are uncomfortable with a situation, it is a good sign that it is somewhere we shouldn't be or something that we shouldn't be doing.



## Truth-tionary

To prepare for this game make some cards with phrases that depict a scene where a child has to decide to tell the truth such as spilled milk, broken crayon, not emptying the trash can, forgetting to make your bed, not doing homework, etc. The game is played like Pictionary, using the cards as the drawing suggestions. Divide the group into two smaller groups and have them compete against each other. Provide a space on a chalk board or a white board for them to use for their drawings. Pick one team to go first. One person from that team comes forward, selects a card from a face-down stack. They have 3 minutes to draw something so that their team can guess what scenario is on the card. Be sure that both teams know what kinds of phrases they are trying to guess. The person who is drawing is not allowed to say anything until someone guesses the correct answer. Once the answer is given or time is up and the answer revealed, have a short discussion on the example that was drawn. Why is being honest the right thing to do in each instance? Be sure to include that the more you tell the truth, the more trust you build.



## Cover-Up

For this activity you will need a container about 4 -6 inches in diameter and no taller than 8 - 10 inches. Fill it with about 6 inches of water. If you have a large group you may want to divide into smaller groups and provide each group with the same set-up. Place the container in the center of the group. Have someone drop a nickel into the container, aiming to get it as close to the center as possible. Explain that the nickel is like a lie that you tell. Now give pennies to the others in the group. Each person has to try to cover up the lie (the nickel) by telling other smaller lies (pennies). How many pennies does it take to cover the nickel completely? How difficult is it to cover the lie when you don't have a lot of control over where the pennies land? How is that like lies that you tell to cover your tracks?



## Tower of Flour

You will first need to spread newspaper over the area for this demonstration. Place the dime in the center of the bottom of a plastic cup. Pour flour into the glass being sure to pack it in firmly. Place the paper plate on top of the glass and turn them over together on the newspaper. Tap the glass gently, and carefully lift it off. The flour should remain standing in the shape of the glass with the dime on top. Explain that the dime represents the character quality of honesty. Let the group take turns slicing some of the tower away with a plastic knife but keeping the tower intact. This represents what happens when we tell lies. Our reputation is weakened. Others will not trust or respect us, and eventually the tower of trust falls. Notice how each time more flour is removed the dime's position becomes more precarious. Continue until the dime drops in. Ask the group what does the tower falling signify? (losing all trust).



# Whoppers

Pass out a Whopper candy to each child in the class and encourage them to eat it (being mindful of allergies, of course). 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, I Doubt It or B.S. Have the group break up into smaller 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 any number of Aces. They announce how many 'Aces' they are laying face down into the discard pile in the middle. The player to their left goes next with twos and the next person has threes and so on continuing around the circle until you get back to the Aces. Since you won't always have the cards that are assigned to you, you are allowed to lie about all or some of the cards you are discarding. You are not allowed to pass if you don't have the correct cards. Once the cards are down, any player can challenge the claim by calling "Baloney". The cards are turned over and, if they are caught lying, they have to pick up the entire discard pile into their hand. If they are telling the truth, the challenger gets the cards in 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?



## For the Family

We are studying the character quality of **Honesty**: Earning future trust by accurately reporting past facts.

To practice Honesty I will:

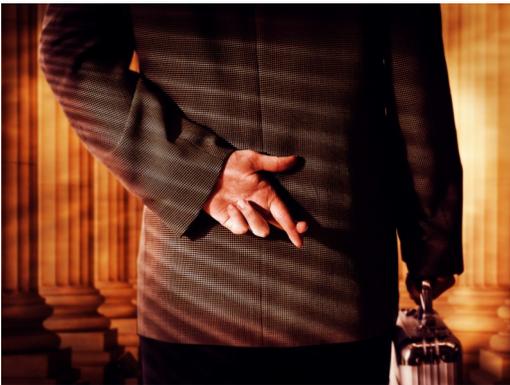
- tell the truth
- encourage others to be truthful
- not cheat or steal
- admit when I am wrong
- not exaggerate to make things seem different from what they are



### Family Activity:

#### Tall Tales

For this activity, gather the family together and tell a story about something that really happened to you. Pepper the story with 5 lies or exaggerations. You can decide how obvious you want to make them. They can be anything from encountering a bear, to changing the color of a well-known object. Ask the family to hold any comments or questions until you are finished with your story. Once you have finished ask if they have any questions. If they didn't notice the lies, then tell them that you included a number of lies and can they figure out what they were. When they have discovered all of the untruths in your story ask them how it felt to be lied to. Was the story believable? Do they feel gullible? How do they think it would feel to be caught in a lie? How would they feel about a friend if that friend lied to them? The next time they are tempted to lie or stretch the truth, ask them to remember this story.



Other ways to teach character in the home:

- Display the character quality and definition in a prominent place such as on the refrigerator or let each child decorate it for their bedroom door.
- At the dinner table ask if anyone noticed anyone (not just family members) demonstrating the character quality (or not demonstrating it).
- Point out news stories where character was or was not involved.
- Review the "I wills" and see if there are specific actions you can add to this list.
- During car trips, challenge the kids by describing scenarios and having them identify if it describes being the quality or being the opposite.
- Praise with character by recognizing the character quality involved rather than the achievement.
- For more ideas visit [www.charactercincinnati.org/education.php](http://www.charactercincinnati.org/education.php)

OK, Time for a True/False quiz to recognize Honesty.

True/False: If you are swimming, you have to wait an hour after eating or you'll get cramps and drown.

True/False: Keep unused batteries in the refrigerator to prolong their lives.

True/False: Sugar causes hyperactivity in children. <https://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=52516>

## Croskey's Corner

The answers are all “False” or at least highly debated. These beliefs are old “wives” tales, or what would now be called Urban Legends. For further information on these, check out <https://www.snopes.com/>

You may or may not agree with the above statements. (If you want to get teachers - or parents- riled up, ask them on the day after Halloween or Easter whether candy causes increased hyperactivity!) Not unlike UFO sightings or miracle cures, legends entice us to be believers, and to pass them on as true. Also, legends may be attractive because they are really just well-constructed stories. I'll bet you know a story teller; a charismatic person who enjoys the conversation spotlight. A story teller hooks the listeners, leads them along, and delights or surprises them with the ending. The joy of a story well-told comes from the pictures created, the pretending they afford, and the possibilities which are conjured by the telling. With story telling, taking the trip is often as much fun as reaching the destination.

When I was a kid, one expression that our parents used to describe us NOT telling the truth was to say we were “telling stories.” The message from this turn of a phrase was that a “story” was an untruth. OK, I admit a story may be true, or false, or a mixture. But you might readily agree that one can convince a lot more listeners with a story than one can by showering an audience with facts. Stories may be more powerful than data, yet those stories that are false can lead others to act based on lies. That brings us to the Character Quality of Honesty, and its opposite, Deception.

Dan Ariely, a behavioral economist whom I have written about in the past, tells the story of a locksmith, a philosopher-tradesman, really. The locksmith believes that one percent of people will always be honest and never steal. Another 1% will always be dishonest and always try to pick your lock and steal your television; locks won't do much to protect you from the hardened thieves, who can get into your house if they really want to. The purpose of locks, the locksmith said, is to protect you from the 98% of mostly honest people who might be tempted to try your door if it had no lock. Ariely has research to suggest that our approach to the Truth is proportionately about the same. Most people are a little dishonest, he says, in his latest book, *The Honest Truth About Dishonesty: How We Lie to Everyone---Especially Ourselves*. He conducted a research study in which subjects had to take a test, then report on how many answers they got right, with the knowledge that they would be paid a dollar for every correct answer. When the subjects believed that they would be the only ones who knew their exact score, they tended to cheat and report higher scores than they actually achieved. When the subjects earned tokens which could immediately be turned into dollars, even more people cheated. So, the indication is that many, if not most of us, are at least somewhat Untruthful. <http://danariely.com/2012/05/26/why-we-lie-from-wsj/>

You are thinking, “OK, Bill, what you are saying is, people tell little lies and sometimes big lies. What else is new?” My guess is that the idea that humans tend to stretch the Truth, combined with the idea that we love to hear stories, suggests that people are likely to tell exaggerated or even made up stories to make a point. Then add this to the mix: Research tells us that we remember a concept better when we have an emotional reaction to it. Doesn't a story help you generate feeling for the topic? When I was a young driver, seat belts were just starting to be standard equipment on cars. I was a casual belt “clicker.” But one day, I watched as a car in front of me got “T-boned” by a car from a

Bill Croskey is a retired  
school psychologist  
from the Loveland City

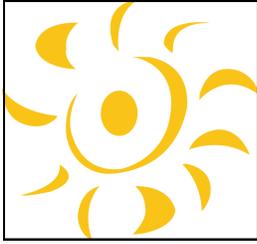
side street. It was a chilly December, but as I drove by the scene, I saw the driver who'd been hit stretched out, half-naked, on the pavement, his clothes ripped off as he was thrown through the windshield. Clearly he had not been wearing his seat belt. All the data about seat belts saving lives had registered with me. But the story I saw unfold made me a life-long seat belt user. I tell that story to others, hoping to convince them to use their belts. Thus, love of stories + tendency to exaggerate + emotional teaching power of stories = stories being a strong force for good - or not. This applies to school.

## Croskey's Corner

Here is a current example. Many of us know a situation where a student was retained, and found more school success after repeating a grade in school. Yet the research on retention is overwhelming! Retained students are more likely to be from a minority group, be male, more likely to drop out of school, have a late birthday, be delayed in development, have attention problems, live in poverty or in a single-parent household, have parents with low educational attainment, have parents that are less involved in their education, or have changed schools frequently. Yet because of the power of anecdotes shared by educators or family friends, we tell a convincing story about a person who was seemingly helped by a retention, and talk parents into holding their child back. This may be story power misused.

Teachers are faced with this dilemma of the power of stories in another way. You are in a battle for the brain power of your students. Brain power for students is like purchasing power for consumers. The student and the consumer have only so much time, and space, and credit (or thinking effort) to “spend” on a purchase. These two types of purchases come together with TV ads. A company that places ads wants TV viewers to spend money on its product. The advertising company promoting the product usually wants the consumer to spend little or no brain power on the message. If the consumer spent more brain power, he or she would probably spend less money because the arguments made for buying are so flimsy. The less thinking the better. Same with video games or entertainment TV: not much thinking need be spent here, but a lot of money, or time. But school requires a lot of thinking to be expended. In this way, teachers are competing for the attention and interest of their students. And dry facts, data, logic, and complicated arguments may lose the audience. So, teachers are tempted to resort to the TV ad approach and tell a story which intrigues the student, but may not help them advance their understanding of the skill or concept.

Stories are more fun to listen to than a string of facts. We like stories and want to believe them. Yet they may be less than truthful, exaggerated, appeal to emotions but not intellect, and may discourage critical thinking. Facts and data can be crucial in helping student to make judgments, to analyze, and to draw conclusions. Therefore, maybe we are OK in doing both in school. Searching critically for the truth and story telling may each have a role in helping us reach students. When we want to encourage imagination and growth, we may choose story-telling. When we want to help a student acquire or advance in a skill, we may need to provide the facts and the skills for the student to grow. Is it oversimplifying to say that life divides into “What to think?” and “How to think?” situations? In that case, facts and stories have the potential to lead to the path of wisdom and more truth - just from different from different starting places.



**The Character Council of Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky**

P.O. Box 33144  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45233

Mary Andres Russell, Executive Director  
E-mail: [mrussell@charactercincinnati.org](mailto:mrussell@charactercincinnati.org)

**[www.charactercincinnati.org](http://www.charactercincinnati.org)**

Written by Jill Tomey,  
Character Education Consultant

© 2018 Character Council of Greater Cincinnati &  
Northern Kentucky

The 49 Character Qualities are adapted from Character First! materials and are used with permission.

Use of external website links in our articles does not imply endorsement of the site, its content or the views and opinions of the external Web site's sponsoring organization. Please use your own discretion when using material from these links.

**Character...It Starts With Me!**

## Character in the Classroom *Continuously*

There are many ways that you can teach the Character Quality of Month. Here are just a few suggestions:

- Ask students to make posters to hang in the classroom or around the school.
- Challenge students to find quotes, news stories, current (or classic) songs or movies that portray the character quality of the month. Be sure to share these with the class and “archive” these to use in future years.
- Add the character trait of the month to the spelling word list. (Even if it is posted in the classroom to copy!)
- Offer for students to make a video or write a rap that demonstrates the Character Quality of the Month.
- If you teach younger students, see if you can “borrow” some older students to lead your students in an activity or switch the roles and have the younger students “teach” a rhyme to the older students.
- If you teach older students, you can be the initiator in the previous activities.
- Invite local business leaders or small business owners to talk about the importance of a character trait. If you teach older students, aim to get a representative from a business that typically hires teens so that they can relate the importance of good character when applying for and *keeping* a job.
- Men and women in uniform usually make impressive guest speakers. Police departments, fire departments and military recruiting offices are usually willing to come into a classroom. Do not be afraid to give them specific requests or guidelines for speaking so that it is pertinent to the lessons of the month.
- Always have a generic character activity planned and ready to go that you can use as filler when you have time to kill or that a substitute teacher can use in your absence.