PRACTICING HONESTY

SEARCHING FOR THE TRUTH

ED U. GATOR HELPS A FRIEND

A GREAT MILITARY LEADER
Since the beginning of time, people have searched for the “honest truth.” For thousands of years, great thinkers called philosophers have discussed and debated the truth. Scientists and researchers have conducted millions of experiments to find out the truth. Police officers and detectives work 24 hours a day to locate clues to “uncover” the truth.

Why so much fuss about the truth? Because the truth is very important to everyone. Telling the truth is very important, too. And telling the truth is a big part of what makes us good human beings. If we are honest with each other we become responsible, dependable and trustworthy. We show the world that we respect ourselves and respect others. As you can see, practicing honesty goes a long, long way!

What’s the best way to practice honesty? One way is to never tell lies, never cheat and never steal. But sometimes it’s hard not to tell a small lie, cheat a little bit, or steal a little something. But you know what? Those are the easy ways out. Cowards lie, cheat and steal. Being honest takes courage and integrity! Are you ready to be an honesty hero? Good for you!

Another way to practice honesty is to stay true to yourself. Do you know what that means? It means that no matter what somebody tells you to do, you do what you know is right. So, believe in yourself and never stop practicing honesty and seeking the truth!

VOCABULARY:
Discuss: to talk about something.
Debate: to talk about different points of view.
Researcher: someone who studies a subject in depth.
Experiment: a test to examine something.
Integrity: The quality of having strong values.

ACTIVITY:
Think about the last time you almost told a lie, but decided against telling it. What made you change your mind? How did you feel when you told the truth? How do you think you would have felt if you had lied?
SCALA LEARNS TO BE TRUE TO HERSELF

I, friends. Ed here. My new neighbor Scala has been having a tough time at Gatorsville Park School. She’s kind of shy, and doesn’t have many friends. We talked one night last week, and she said, “I just don’t fit in.”

I tried to give her reasons to feel better, telling her that sometimes it takes a while to make good friends. But I don’t think it helped very much.

Last Saturday, Scala went to the Mudville Mall with Jonelle Jinx, a gator from her class. When Scala got home and came over, I barely recognized her! She had gotten her hair cut really short, and had a bright green streak down the middle of her head. She was wearing some strange silver and black clothes, too, which made her look like a creature from another planet! Scala also was wearing some shiny boots, that were about six sizes too big. She clumped into my house and played this awful new CD by a group called the Leaping Lizard Tongues. It just sounded like a bunch of noise to me!

Scala sat on the edge of our couch. She didn’t look very happy. Then she said, “Well, what do you think about my new clothes and my new hair and my new CD?”

So I said, “Scala, would you like me to be honest with you?” She nodded yes. I told her that I wasn’t too crazy about any of it. Then I asked her why she decided to buy all the new stuff. She said she thought the kids at school would like her better if she dressed like they did and listened to the kind of music they did. I asked her if Jonelle Jinx was one of her new friends.

“I thought she was,” said Scala, “but when her other friends showed up at the mall she just ignored me.”

Then I told Scala how much I liked the “old” Scala, and how I thought she wasn’t being true to herself by changing her whole appearance to try to fit in. She said, “I think you’re right.” She went home and changed into her favorite old sweatshirt and a pair of jeans. She took a shower and washed the green streak out of her hair. Then we walked down to the music store where they buy used CDs, and she traded the Leaping Lizard Tongues for a new jazz CD by one of her favorite guitarists. While she was looking through jazz CDs she ran into Beatrice, another gator from her class. It turns out Beatrice loves jazz music too! So Scala and Beatrice talked for an hour while I just stood around tapping my tail. But I was happy for Scala, because I think she may have finally found her first real friend. And she did it while being true to herself.

QUESTIONS

1) Why was Scala having a tough time at Gatorsville Park?

2) What did Scala do to try to make friends?

3) How did Jonelle Jinx treat her at the mall?

4) What did Ed think about Scala’s new stuff?

5) What did Ed mean by “true to yourself”?

6) What did Beatrice and Scala have in common?

7) What do you have in common with your best friends?
JOIN THE SEARCH FOR THE TRUTH!

Directions: In the block below there are lots of letters. Hidden in those rows of letters are the following words:

HONESTY    TRUTH    TRUSTWORTHY    RESPONSIBLE    DEPENDABLE

See how many you can find, and draw a box around them.

HONEST PERSON = GREAT INDIVIDUAL!

Directions: Being honest helps to make you an all-around great individual. Write a few words about how honesty relates to the following:

being trustworthy ____________________________

being dependable ____________________________

being responsible ____________________________

doing the right thing ____________________________

helping others ____________________________

respecting others ____________________________

respecting yourself ____________________________
IN THE NEWSPAPER

Directions: Look through the advertisements in a newspaper. Advertisements are what companies use to convince you to buy their products or services by getting you to believe in what they are selling. Try to make up a product or service that you could sell, and, with the help of an adult, write your own ad. Remember, it’s important to be truthful and honest about what your service or product can do!

A "TRUE" FRIEND!

Directions: Think of one of your friends who is especially honest, trustworthy and dependable. In the space below draw a picture of him or her, and then write a short paragraph about what makes that person a true friend.
When Justin was a small boy, he spent most afternoons with his grandmother, Rosie. Rosie was a wise old woman. She believed that honesty was the most important quality in a human being. She said it didn't matter how much money you have, or how big a house you live in, as long as you're honest. She said she had had the good fortune of knowing a few honest people in her life, people who would never think of telling a lie. These were people who Rosie said she could trust with all her heart.

Rosie often told Justin that she believed he was an honest person. She hoped he would grow up to be responsible and trustworthy. On Justin's twelfth birthday, Rosie gave him a special present. It was a small wooden box. When Justin tried to open it, he found it was locked. "What is this?" Justin asked.

"It's an honesty box," replied Rosie.

"How do I open it?" asked Justin.

Then Rosie placed a silver chain with a tiny key around Justin's neck. She said, "Promise me you'll open this on only one occasion: if you're ever tempted to tell a lie. Then open it and tell your lie to the box." Justin made the promise and put the small box in his front pocket.

Justin thought about the honesty box many times over the next few years, but he never had any reason to open it. He never became wealthy, but he lived a good, honest life. One day, Justin met a beautiful young woman. During the time they spent together the young woman asked Justin where he lived, and how he made his living. Justin grew silent. He feared that this woman would leave him if she knew how small his house was, and how little wealth he had in the world. For a moment, he thought he would lie, and make up a story about his grand house in the country and his enormous riches. Then he remembered the honesty box. "Will you excuse me for a moment?" he asked the young lady. Justin stepped behind a tree and pulled out the box. He slipped the silver chain off his neck and placed the tiny key in the lock. He opened the box and, to his surprise, found only a tiny mirror inside. He looked into the mirror and saw his reflection. Then he told the mirror his lie. Justin hated what he saw in the mirror. It was not the face of the honest and good man he had known his whole life. He closed the box and returned to the young lady.

"I am a simple man," he said, "I live in a small cottage and I have very little money."

The young lady smiled. "None of those things matter to me," she said, "because I think you're a prince!"

And the following week the two were married and lived happily, and honestly, ever after.

— By Ned Andrew Solomon
Colin Powell is one of this country's greatest military leaders. His parents immigrated to the United States from Jamaica, and Powell was born in New York City in 1937. He served as a cadet in the Reserve Officers Training Corps while attending the City College of New York, and spent two separate tours of duty in the Vietnam War. After the war, he held several important and responsible positions in the military, and quickly gained an honorable reputation. He was so well regarded for his knowledge and abilities, President Reagan asked him to be the nation's security advisor in 1987. In 1989, he was promoted to four-star general, which is an amazing distinction! He became the first black officer to hold the nation's highest military post: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He later played an essential role in the wars in Panama and the Persian Gulf, which was also known as Desert Storm. Powell has always been highly respected for his honesty, integrity and trustworthiness. He has become one of the best-loved figures in America, and is a great role model for young people all over the world. Because he has proven to be so responsible and dependable, many people were hoping he would run for president of the United States. But Powell declined the offer, choosing instead to stay close to his family and friends.

VOCABULARY:
- Military: having to do with the armed forces.
- Immigrate: to move from one country to another.
- Honorable: honest and decent.
- Reputation: recognition by other people.
- Regard: to show respect for.
- Security: the condition or feeling of being safe.
- Advisor: a person who gives advice or opinions.
- Distinction: honor.
- Decline: refuse.
**TIPS**

1. Honesty is a trait that covers a wide range of positive behaviors, including respecting yourself, respecting others, acting responsibly and dependably, and making the right choices. If you encourage honesty in your child, you are promoting wonderful characteristics that will come in handy in all of your child's social interactions.

2. Another aspect of honesty is being true to yourself. You've probably worked hard to instill in your child positive values and a strong moral belief system. As your child gets older, he/she will become more susceptible to the influences of peer pressure. Find ways to remind your children to be true to themselves, to guide them toward the right choices.

3. Be aware of how you model honesty and integrity at home. Do you ever make “little white lies” to your friends or to your children to ease out of difficult situations? Little white lies are dishonest, no matter how you rationalize them, and they send the wrong message to your impressionable kids.

4. How much do you value honesty? Consider how you would react if your child did something wrong, but admitted to it. The balance you create between the reprimand for the action, and the praise for the honesty, might insure the future lines of communication staying open.

**FAMILY ACTIVITY**

Here’s an entertaining way to approach important issues, such as honesty, responsibility and making the right choices. As a family, play a game of “What Would You Do If...” Try to think of some situations that might lead to good discussions, and put them down on index cards. An example might be, “What would you do if you saw someone cheating on a test?” or “What would you do if you found somebody’s wallet?” Let each family member pick a card from the pile, and take turns giving answers. You may be surprised at how your children would react in these situations, and they may learn some positive problem-solving techniques from you.

**RESOURCES**


**FAMILY PLEDGE CARD**

Our family has completed the Family Page together.

________________________________________
Child’s name

Family members:

__________________________    ___________________

__________________________    ___________________

School: ___________________________

Teacher/grade: ___________________________

For more information about Project: Solution, call 726-8918 or 1-800-351-1227, ext. 8033 or 8918.