

A game of honesty and lies

Lesson plan description

Students will identify and recognise attributes that we as a society see as desirable in individuals, such as honesty and integrity. To demonstrate that dishonesty carries consequences, students will use their findings to develop a set of 'integrity questions' as the basis for a game of snakes and ladders.

Year levels

Middle Childhood (8–11 years)

Duration

Approximately 50 minutes

Explicit values focus

- Honesty and Trustworthiness
- Integrity
- Respect
- Responsibility

Key Learning Areas

- English
- Civics and Citizenship

Lesson plan

Getting started

Activity 1: The boy who cried wolf

Read a version of the story, 'The boy who cried wolf'. Discuss the moral of the story in terms of telling the truth. Lead discussion with students to draw out the following ideas.

- Telling lies may eventually destroy one's credibility.
- Individuals sometimes lie to cover up mistakes or an offence.
- Individuals may lie to protect the feelings of others.
- Individuals may lie out of fear.
- Lying might be necessary or good in some situations.

Have students work in small groups to identify and list which values are being addressed in this story.

Discovering

Activity 2: What do you do when no-one is watching?

Ask the students to role-play or discuss the following scenario: a child buys a drink and notices that the shopkeeper accidentally gives them too much change. Their parent is present, but is distracted. Each group decides what is to happen, and acts out what the child does. Do they tell the shopkeeper and give the money back? Do they take the money and not tell anyone? Do they tell their parent?

Groups report back to the class on what they decided and on the reasons for their choices.

- What are the main values that are being tested here?
- Would it make a difference if they take the money to buy something they need?
- What if they take the money to give to someone who needs it?
- What does it mean to the shopkeeper if the money is taken?
- What would the child do if they got caught by the shopkeeper or the parent?
- What are the consequences of each action taken and how might it make each person feel?
- Does it make a difference to your behaviour if someone is watching?

Bringing it together

Activity 3: Snakes and ladders

Students work as a class to establish ten 'honesty or integrity' questions to be used on cards for a snakes and ladders game. They should come up with two possible answers for each question: one that demonstrates integrity or honesty and one that doesn't. Answers determine whether they go up a ladder, or down a snake.

Give students several scenarios which focus on a dilemma where players have to make a considered value judgement, and ask them for examples as well. Encourage diversity in the issues addressed on the ten cards. Scenarios should be situations or events that are within the students' experience so that they can draw on their personal values and attitudes for their responses.

Following are some initial examples with possible answers.

- 1) You find the answers to the class test you are having on Friday. Do you:
 - a) return the answers to the teacher without looking at them, or
 - b) study the answers to get a good score on the test?
- 2) All your friends think it's funny to call a classmate by a horrible name that the child hates. Do you:
 - a) tell the child that 'it's just a joke' and call the child by the name too to make your friends laugh, or
 - b) tell your friends that you feel it is mean to use put-downs and it is against your school's values?
- 3) You are playing a game with your friend and another child. You see your friend cheat so that they can beat the other child. Do you:
 - a) tell your friend that they are not playing fairly, or
 - b) say nothing?
- 4) Your parent does not allow you to eat chocolate before dinner. Your friend gives you a chocolate bar after school. Do you:
 - a) eat it secretly before dinner so your parent doesn't know, or
 - b) show it to your parent and ask if it is okay if you can eat it later?
- 5) You break your little sister's toy when you are mucking around. Do you:
 - a) tell your parent that you did it, or

b) tell your parent that your little sister did it?

Ask students to comment on the effectiveness or limitation of having only two answers. Some limitations may include: that there is not always a right answer or a wrong answer in such dilemmas, or that there may be more than two answers.

If the students don't bring it up themselves, point out that if they played the game a couple of times, they would quickly learn the answers to get up the ladders and avoid the snakes. Discuss with the students the idea that it is possible to learn from mistakes in life.

Ask students to select one of the honesty and integrity questions, decide which is the answer reflecting honesty or integrity, and write down the reasoning behind this decision in their own words and using 'values' words.

Set aside time at a later date for students to play the snakes and ladders game in small groups.

Notes for teachers

Playing snakes and ladders gives students an opportunity to explore the values implications around honesty and integrity and to apply their reflection in action.

Use a snakes and ladders board and the 'honesty and integrity' cards created earlier. If a player lands on a snake or ladder square, another player turns over a card and asks the player the question on the card. If it is a ladder square and the chosen answer reflects honesty or integrity, the player goes up the ladder; otherwise they wait on the square until their next turn. If it is a snake square and the chosen answer reflects honesty or integrity, the player waits on the square until their next turn, but if they choose the 'dishonest' option, they slide down the snake.

Snakes and ladders is thought to be based on an old Indian game which was used for moral instruction in Hindu teaching.

V&A (Victoria and Albert Museum)

www.vam.ac.uk/images/image/29178-popup.html