

Junior Soldiers

Unit 10 : Lesson 3



Being Trustworthy!

PURPOSE : For the children to explore and understand what it means to be people of integrity—showing goodness, honesty and being true.

‘Pray for us. Our consciences are clear, and we always try to live right.’

Hebrews 13:18 (CEV)

Consider & Prepare

Read:

Integrity means treating people fairly and honestly (Deut 25:15, Proverbs 16:11–13)

Integrity is giving your word and keeping it (Exodus 8:28–32)

Integrity will protect you (Psalm 25:21)

How can integrity protect us? (Psalm 25:21, Proverbs 2:7–8, 10:9, 11:3, 13:6)

Integrity is more valuable than riches (Proverbs 28:6)

The Lord will test and judge your integrity (1 Chronicles 29:17, Psalm 7:8)

The Lord hates lies and lack of integrity (Zechariah 8:16–17)

It may be difficult to maintain your integrity (Job 2:3, 2:9, Proverbs 29:10)

Your character can be corrupted by bad company (1 Corinthians 15:33)

Integrity will be rewarded (1 Kings 9:4–5, Nehemiah 7:2, Psalm 41:11–12)

Your integrity should set an example (Titus 2:7)

After surveying thousands of people around the world and performing more than 400 written case studies, James Kouzes and Barry Posner identified characteristics most desired in a leader. In virtually every survey, honesty or integrity was identified more frequently than any other trait.

That makes sense, doesn't it? If people are going to follow someone, whether into battle or in business or ministry, they want assurance that their leader can be trusted. They want to know that he or she will keep promises and follow through with commitments. Promises and commitments are significant, although, these days, it seems they have become optional. We often seem more concerned with convenience and performance. We give lip-service to the importance of character, but we have the idea that when things get tough, the rules can be changed and commitments and covenants may be discarded at will.

The Bible makes clear just how important our covenants are. Throughout the Scriptures, God focuses on the fact that he is a God who makes and keeps his covenants and can be trusted (1 Chronicles 16:15; Psalm 105:8). God can be trusted because he is trustworthy. That's the point: it always comes down to the issue of character, not just words. Biblical integrity is not just doing the right thing; it's a matter of having the right heart and allowing the person you are on the inside to match the person you are on the outside.

Perhaps a good word to think of is 'consistency'. God is totally consistent. His actions and behaviors always match his character and nature. And his goal for us is nothing less. Christ's objective for his disciples is to make us disciplined people. In the words of John Ortberg, 'Disciplined people can do the right thing at the right time in the right way for the right reason.' Just like God.

To read more, go to <http://bible.org/seriespage/integrity>

'In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.' Titus 2:7-8 (NIV)



What you will need:

For 'Connecting In'

- Computer and data projector to play clip
- Three soft items that can be thrown

For 'The Main Thing'

- White board or butchers paper for brainstorming activity
- Whiteboard markers or textas
- Bibles

For 'Tying In'

- White board or butchers paper for brainstorming activity
- Whiteboard markers
- Copy of the Junior Soldier promise
- Goop ingredients: 1 cup cornstarch, ½ cup water food colouring (optional)
- Bowl, spoon.
- Tarp or drop sheet
- High bouncy ball for each child

For 'Home & Beyond'

- Print off the 'Home & Beyond' cards for each child.



Connecting In

Integrity clip...

You might like to watch this great song clip about integrity as a 'Connecting In' activity or at some other point throughout the lesson.

If you don't have access to the internet to use this clip, try teaching the children this chant with the words from the clip. Try setting a rhythm by hand clapping or foot stomping.

*Say what you mean, mean what you say.
For people of integrity that's the only way!
All kinds of people are counting on you,
To do what you say, when you say what you'll do!*



Link... 'What a cool song with some very important words.

- I wonder how these words make you feel.
- Are they important to you?
- Do you like it when someone follows through with what they say they are going to do?
- Do you follow through and say what you mean and do what you say?

Today we are going to explore what it looks like to be a trustworthy person as well as look at what the word 'integrity' means. God gives us a great example of following through with his promises, we can see this time and time again in the Bible; I think we could safely say that God can be trusted and is full of integrity.'

Does your 'yes' mean 'yes'?

Get the children to stand in a circle and put three items in the middle that can be thrown: three different coloured soft balls or three small soft toys would work. Ask each child to pick one item that they will not catch during this game, don't tell anyone which item that will be.

Start throwing (underarm) the items around the circle by calling out someone's name and them replying 'yes'. You must say 'yes' to every item but you can't catch the item if it is the one that you have chosen not to catch throughout the game. When it drops, the person who threw it to you must come and pick it up and find someone else to throw it to.

This will be a little crazy at times with children and items flying everywhere. Stop after a few minutes. Ask the children:

- What did you like about the game?
- What didn't you like? (*People saying 'yes' then not catching it.*)

Play it again with everyone being able to catch everything. Ask the children again;

- Which game ran more smoothly? Why?

Link... 'Today we have had some fun playing a game that helps us think about following through with what we say. It was frustrating when people did not catch the item even when they said 'yes'. This happens with people around us all the time when they don't follow through with things they have said they will do: it is very frustrating and makes you stop and think twice before you ask them to do something for you next time.

- Do you like it when someone follows through with what they say they are going to do?
- Do you follow through and say what you mean and do what you say?

Today we are going to explore what it looks like to be a trustworthy person as well as look at what the word 'integrity' means. God gives us a great example of following through with his promises, we can see this time and time again in the Bible; I think we could safely say that God can be trusted and is full of integrity.'

The Main Thing

What is integrity?

→ I wonder if you know what the word integrity means?

In the dictionary, it says the word integrity means:

- The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness.
 - The quality or condition of being whole or undivided; completeness.
- I wonder what that looks like in a person.
→ Do you know someone who fits this description? Who, and why do you think of them?



Integrity brainstorm...

Use butcher's paper or a whiteboard to brainstorm the following question.

We have just had a look at what the dictionary definition is of integrity but I am wondering if we could do a brainstorm together of what that might look like in people: what sort of behavior would you see if you said that someone is a trustworthy person or who has integrity?

Maybe it's a person who:

- Keeps their promises
 - Does what they say they are going to do
 - Tells the truth
 - Plays fair
 - Encourages you
 - Takes time to listen to you
 - Speaks well of others
 - Has a positive attitude
 - Is consistent with their behavior and attitudes
 - Includes others
 - Is reliable
 - Is loyal
 - Is helpful and cooperative
 - Is responsible
- Would you trust people who showed behaviours like these?
→ I wonder which of these behaviours might describe you.
→ I wonder if there is anything on the list that you would like to be better at.

'Well, we have had a brainstorm together and shared some examples what we have seen in other people. Let's have a look together at some scripture and see how well our list measures up with what the Bible has to share with us.'

Integrity search...

'The Bible is God's Word and should be a guide for how we live, what we think and what we say. As followers of Jesus and Junior Soldiers, we have made a promise which is based on the Bible. To be children of integrity we should aim to keep our lives in line with these promises we have made.'

Divide your group into small groups and assign a couple of the scriptures below for each group to explore. When they have had a look at what the scriptures tell us ask the children to come and highlight or circle the words on the list that go with the scripture they have just looked at.

- Integrity means treating people fairly and honestly (Deut 25:15, Proverbs 16:11–13)
- Integrity is giving your word and keeping it (Exodus 8:28–32)

- Integrity will protect you (Psalm 25:21)
- How can integrity protect us? (Psalm 25:21, Proverbs 2:7–8, 10:9, 11:3, 13:6)
- Integrity is more valuable than riches (Proverbs 28:6)
- The Lord will test and judge your integrity (1 Chronicles 29:17, Psalm 7:8)
- The Lord hates lies and lack of integrity (Zechariah 8:16-17)
- It may be difficult to maintain your integrity (Job 2:3, 2:9, Proverbs 29:10)
- Your character can be corrupted by bad company (1 Corinthians 15:33)
- Integrity will be rewarded (1 Kings 9:4–5, Nehemiah 7:2, Psalm 41:11–12)
- Your integrity should set an example (Titus 2:7)

- Who do you know whom you would describe as a person of integrity?
- What sets this person apart from other people?

‘The Bible has thousands of people mentioned in it, some are good examples of integrity and some, sadly, are not. We can learn from all people: from good people we learn what to do, from not-so-good people we can learn what not to do. While there is value in reading all parts of the Bible, when it comes to learning how to live with integrity our best example is Jesus. Jesus never lied. Jesus never said he would do something and then forgot. Jesus could be trusted. Jesus didn’t allow his character to be corrupted by others, and certainly not by Satan.

‘We are so lucky to have the Bible to rely on and learn from when it comes to character formation and learning how to live. But the lessons in the Bible cannot just jump into your brain while you’re sleeping! You need to read it. It’s one of God’s greatest gifts to us, and we always want to open gifts, don’t we?’



Tying In

Goop talk...

First, mix together one cup of cornstarch with ½ a cup of water in a bowl. Stir the mixture with a spoon. You could add a few drops of food colouring just for fun. It’s important to have it just the right consistency. It should be thick enough to hold together as a ‘glob’ but fluid enough to drip when you hold it still. You may have to add a few drops of water at a time until you get it right, as you knead it in your hands. It would be best to get the consistency right before you start the activity.

Talk about the word integrity. Go over what you have learnt about integrity: it means being whole or complete, to be upright and in perfect condition, being completely honest. Now, pick up the glob you have made and start talking about it as if it were a child. As you shape it into a ball with both hands, talk about the things in a child’s life that moulds their character, the things that will turn them into a productive, happy, and well-rounded person. Talk about the qualities that will eventually shape their personality and form their value system, e.g. Junior Soldier promise, school rules, family rules, parents love and input etc. Explain that having integrity is one quality that will keep them whole, complete, well-rounded and happy. As you talk about these things, keep patting the ‘goop’ ball with your hands to keep its shape round.

Some examples of how a child can show integrity in his daily life are working hard at school and doing homework, being loyal and dependable to family and friends, avoiding the temptation to lie or cheat, being fair and honest in their sports activities, and obeying parents and teachers, keeping their Junior Soldier promise or other promises to God.

At some point during this activity, stop pat the ball with your hands and hold it still in one hand with the palm facing up and your fingers slightly spread apart. When you do this, tell the child there will be

times in life when we let down our guard, relax our standards, get tired, or for some other reason weaken and make some unwise choices such as telling a lie to get what we want, cheating on a test or use bad language that hurts others.

As you continue to hold the 'goop' ball still, explain that if we allow these weaknesses to become habits and let them develop over time, they can have a negative effect on our individual growth and cause our 'well-rounded' (ball shape) character to sink and droop. By this point, the 'goop' ball will have lost its shape and be oozing out through your fingers, sagging and dripping to create a mess below.

- I wonder if you think that once you have integrity, you will always have integrity.
- Do you think there are some things that can stand in our way of making good choices?
- Are there people who you think can help you be a trustworthy person? Who?

Give each child a high bouncy ball and tell them that it is to remind them of their integrity. While it is whole and round and perfect, it can reach great heights. But when it has a big chunk missing, it can't reach its full potential. With the help of a loving Saviour who will hold them in his hands, they, too, can reach great heights as children of integrity.

Prayer...

Pray as each child holds onto their bouncy ball, asking that God would continue to help each of them to be true to what they say and be trustworthy people, following God's great example of keeping his promises.



Home & Beyond

Print off the 'Home & Beyond' cards attached. The children might like to keep these in their journals or notebook where they could write or stick the challenges, reflect, answer questions or complete activities each week.

Five Key Words...

- During the week, write down five key words about your personality or character that your family members or Big Bud would use to describe you.
- Ask them what being trustworthy or having integrity means for them.
- Pray and ask God to help you do what you say and say what you mean.

