



the family values toolkit

For Children Ages 8 to 10

This Month's Featured Value Is: **Honesty**

Honest people consistently hold themselves to a high standard of truthfulness. They communicate in an open, upfront way; they do not lie, steal, cheat, or manipulate information to conceal it from others. However, an honest person may occasionally tell a "white lie" to protect another's feelings.



What Can Parents Do to Nurture This Important Value?

First, Set Goals:

Help kids develop a more sophisticated understanding of honesty.

By this point, children recognize truthfulness as a moral standard. Classmates and teammates expect honesty from one another, and children who are caught in a lie ("You did so take Scott's water bottle--we saw you!") can face ridicule and contempt from their friends.

At this age, children are sometimes urged by their parents to tell a "white lie"--for example, to tell Aunt Ruth they like the sweater she gave them even if they didn't. Such demands indicate that complete honesty can sometimes be hurtful. It's time to teach kids to distinguish between dangerous lying (cheating on a test) and hurtful truth-telling ("Your haircut is ugly!").

Next, Take Action! Try These Activities:

- ✓ **Explain that complete honesty can sometimes be hurtful**, and urge your kids to think about how their comments might make someone feel.
- ✓ **Play "Phony? Phooey!"** *Materials: Real and artificial fruit; basket.* Start by putting several pieces of real and artificial fruit in a basket. Have each family member reach in without looking, and take the first piece of fruit they touch. When everyone has a piece, let those with the real fruit eat, while the others watch. Now discuss: How did it feel to receive the "false" fruit, while others enjoyed the "real" fruit? What would it be like to try to eat the "false" fruit? Would it taste as delicious as it looks? What are some times when you have said something that sounded true, but wasn't? When are some times that others have lied to you? How did it feel?
- ✓ **If your child is caught in a lie, create appropriate consequences.** For example, if she has taken cookies without your permission and then lied about it, take away all cookie privileges for a week. If he stole money from you or a friend, make him "earn" it back by doing chores, raking leaves, or taking out the garbage.

Then, Report Back!

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