object lessons

Use one or more of these simple science experiments, nature observations or treat ideas to illustrate the concept of honesty. They’ll help reinforce your lessons by providing your kids with emotional, tactile and kinaesthetic experiences . . . and they’re fun, too.

“Oh yucky!” exercise [fun with food]

Assemble some foods that your children detest – foods so “yucky” they wouldn’t even want to try tasting them. Have some of their favourite snacks available too.

To demonstrate how much God hates lying, ask them if they would like to eat any of the detestable foods. Obviously, the answer will be an emphatic, No! Explain that God detests lying even more than they hate the “yucky” food.

Read the verses listed below. Close by letting your children have one of their favourite treats and explain that, just as they delight in their favourite food, God delights even more so when they tell the truth.

To further reinforce this lesson, give each child one of the preferred snacks whenever you observe them telling the truth.

relevant Scripture

Proverbs 6:16-19 “There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.”

Proverbs 12:22 “The Lord detests lying lips, but He delights in men who are truthful.”

Zechariah 8:16-17 “These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to each other, and render true and sound judgement in your courts; do not plot evil against your neighbor, and do not love to swear falsely. I hate all this,’ declares the Lord.”

pure truth [science with a twist]

For this experiment, you will need a small bowl of water, a peppershaker, cotton swabs (the double-ended stick swabs), liquid dish detergent and some additional water.

- Prior to beginning the experiment, coat one end of the cotton swab with dish detergent. Leave the other end free of soap. Mark the soapy end in a way that only you will know which end it is.

- Shake a generous amount of pepper onto the surface of the water in the bowl. Explain that the pepper represents people.

- Tell your children that the cotton swab represents God. Put the non-soapy end of the swab in the water and move it around to let some pepper gather on it. Explain that when we are truth-tellers, God will allow us to come into His holy presence.

- Next, tell your children that the people in the bowl have been lying. Ask them to list some ways the people could be telling lies. Then place the soapy end of the cotton swab in the bowl and watch the pepper flee! Explain that when we have been lying, God doesn't want us in His presence, nor do we feel comfortable coming to talk with Him until we have confessed our sin.
Add some extra water to the bowl. As you do so, explain that when we ask God to forgive our sins, He washes our sins away. (Adding the extra water causes the pepper to scatter across the water’s surface again.)

Finally, using the non-soapy end of the cotton swab, swish the cotton swab through the pepper, showing that the pepper no longer “runs away” from the cotton swab. Emphasize that after we have confessed our sin, God welcomes us back into His presence.

_relevant Scripture_
Psalm 24:3-4  “Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false [or swear falsely].”

Psalm 101:6-7  “My eyes will be on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with Me; he whose walk is blameless will minister to Me. No one who practices deceit will dwell in My house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in My presence.”

_the lie trap [getting into nature]_
Head outdoors with the kids and hunt for a spider’s web. Watch how a bug becomes entangled in the web, or catch a fly and put it in the web to see what happens. (If it is winter, rent a DVD on spiders instead.)

The more the insect struggles, the more entangled it becomes. If you are fortunate, you might even see the spider come and wind the bug up in more sticky thread. Explain to your kids that Satan is like that spider. He wants us to be people who do not tell the truth and become entangled in lies.

_questions for discussion_
Ask your children these questions while you are web-watching:

- Is the bug happy?
- Do you think the bug wishes it had never flown into the web?
- Will it ever get out?
- Who could get it out?
- If you lie, who can help you get out of it?
- Have you ever lied? Did you end up wishing that you never had?
- If you do get trapped in a lie, who should you go to for help?

_relevant Scripture_
John 8:44  “[Jesus said] You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

_honest scales [science with a twist]_
This exercise is a hands-on illustration of Proverbs 16:11-13. You will need an ice cream stick or a ruler, a large, cylindrical felt-tipped marker or dowel, 15-20 pennies and tape.

- Use the ice cream stick or ruler as the beam of your balance scale. Tape the marker or dowel to a table and place the beam across it.
- “Weight” one side of your scale by taping some pennies together, then taping them onto one end of your balance’s beam. While you are doing this, explain to your children that in Bible times, weights were used to balance the scales and help weigh out oil, spices, perfumes and other items people wanted to purchase.
Pretend that your five pennies represent five pounds. Place the “five pounds” of pennies on one side of the scale and balance cereal or nuts on the opposite side of the scale.

Explain that dishonest people would pretend their weight weighed a certain amount, but it was actually lighter. Every time someone thought they were getting five pounds of wheat, or something else, they would really receive less because the seller used “dishonest” measuring weights.

Read Proverbs 16:11-13, then discuss the questions below while role-playing making various purchases.

questions for discussion

- Who would you rather make your purchases from – someone with honest weights or dishonest weights?
- Who values honest boys and girls, men and women?
- Would you prefer to have honest or dishonest friends?
- In what ways can we have dishonest scales in our lives? (For example, shoving toys under the bed instead of cleaning them up, by throwing toys in random bins instead of where they belong or by saying you have vacuumed the floor when you only went over parts of it so your chores could be done quicker.)

The Bible says that kings value honest men. Encourage your children by telling them that you, as parents, also delight in children who tell the truth. Assure them that when they tell the truth, the disciplinary measures will be lighter than if they were to try to cover up their wrongdoing. Emphasize that future teachers and employers also will value students and employees who are people of integrity. People who can be trusted to be honest are valued highly everywhere!

relevant Scripture

Proverbs 16:11-13

"Honest scales and balances are from the Lord; all the weights in the bag are of His making. Kings detest wrongdoing, for a throne is established through righteousness. Kings take pleasure in honest lips; they value a man who speaks the truth."