

# HONESTY

## BIG IDEA

Honesty mean being straight and honest with others and doing what is right. This trait will allow us to earn trust by being accurate with facts and situations.

## MEMORY VERSE

Proverbs 12:17  
An honest witness tells the truth,  
but a false witness tells lies.

## • PREPARATION & MATERIALS •

## BIBLE LESSON: MIME

- Optional - use a pot, soil and seed to illustrate the story as it is being told.

## GAME

- No materials needed

## WORKSHEETS

- Photocopies of Coloring Sheet (1 per child)

## CRAFT

- Colored plastic cups
- Clear plastic cups
- Potting soil (or regular dirt if in an international location.)
- Vegetable seeds such as peas or beans.
- Push pins
- Permanent markers
- Stickers



# HONESTY

## LESSON

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There was once an Emperor from China who had no children and who wanted to choose someone honest and wise to rule after him. So he invited hundreds of children from across the kingdom to come to the palace where they were surprised to hear the Emperor declare that he was going to choose one of them to be his heir.

He gave them all a seed and said they were to go home to their villages, plant the seed in a pot and tend it for a year. When they returned, the Emperor would judge their efforts and choose his successor...

Amongst the chosen children there was a boy named Ling who received his seed and returned home to his village. His mother helped him choose a pot and he carefully put some soil into it. His whole family were very excited and felt so proud that Ling had been amongst the chosen children.

Ling was a careful and serious young man and he chose the best position for his pot to get lots of light and he watered it every day. He knew from his wise parents the importance of patience, so he sat and imagined the life in the seed beginning to awaken. He visualized the light pouring down on the seed and tried to imagine the fresh green shoots that he soon would see..... But as the weeks passed, there were, sadly, no signs of life in Ling's pot.

The weeks passed and still Ling continued to water his pot regularly and send loving thoughts to the seed. His family watched and supported him, giving him encouragement so that he wouldn't feel too down about the lack of growth. 'Perhaps its sending down very strong roots first', they said to give him hope; 'have trust that it will all work out ok.....' but still, after many weeks.... nothing!

They began to hear rumors about the seeds that had been given to children in other parts of the kingdom – how luscious the growth was, what succulent leaves, what unusual varieties, what exotic flowers! But poor Ling still had nothing growing in his pot. Yet Ling didn't give up... he continued to water his pot every day, and to pray for its growth and keep hopeful, though he couldn't help at times feeling just a little despondent. His family were so disappointed too—they didn't like to see Ling so sad. 'We know that you have tried so hard Ling', they said. 'It's not your fault that the seed hasn't grown.' 'God sometimes has other plans', his mother gently said. And his whole family sent their prayers to ask for their help. 'Not our will dear Father God – but yours...'

Finally the whole year passed and it was time to return to the palace to show what each had grown and for the emperor to decide on the new heir. Ling was now very anxious as his pot still showed no signs of life. "What if they punish me? They won't know that I've watered it every day, they'll think that I'm lazy."

His mother looked him in the eye and explained that whatever the consequences were, he

had to return and show the Emperor his lifeless pot. 'We know that you have done everything you possibly could have done,' she said. 'Sometimes things just don't work out as we would like, but there's no shame in that. We believe in you. We know what a kind, patient and dedicated young man you are. Now you just stand tall in front of that emperor, and feel proud in your own heart that you did what you could.' And with that every member of his family gave him a big hug.

So Ling and the other children entered the great hall of the palace. By now, some of the plants were looking magnificent and the young people were wondering which one of them the Emperor would choose. Ling couldn't help feeling embarrassed as the others looked at his lifeless pot and laughed. His heart was pounding in his chest but he took a few deep breaths to steady himself and remembered his mother's words. Thinking of the loving support of his family, he tried to stand tall. Without him realizing it, there was a certain nobleness in his bearing as he stood there behind his lifeless pot. His true, shining spirit was gently aglow.

Finally the Emperor came out and started to make his way along the rows of young people and their pots, looking at the many impressive trees, shrubs and flowers that were on display. The boys all puffed their chests out and tried to look as regal as possible, hoping that they would be chosen as the heir to the empire.

Then the Emperor came to Ling. He slowly looked down at the pot...then he slowly looked up at Ling. He raised his eyebrows. "What happened here?" he asked. "I watered the pot every day, but nothing ever grew." Ling muttered rather nervously. "Hmmpmph" said the Emperor and moved on.

After an hour or so, the Emperor finally finished his assessment. He stood in front of them all and congratulated them on their efforts. "Clearly, some of you desperately want to be Emperor and would do anything to make that happen, what magnificent plants you have grown! But there is one young man that I would like to point out as he has come to me with nothing.' He pointed to Ling, to step forward. "Oh no," thought Ling. He walked slowly to the front of everyone in the grand hall, holding his barren pot. The Emperor held up the pot for all to see and everyone laughed.

Then the Emperor continued, "A year ago, I gave you all a seed. I told you to go away, plant the seed and return with your plant. But the seeds that I gave you all were boiled until they were no use and wouldn't grow, but I see before me hundreds of plants and only one barren pot. Now what do I make of that!" There was silence in the grand hall.

'Honesty, integrity and courage are more important values for leadership than proud displays, so..... I now declare that this young man here will be my heir.'

Ling was astonished – he just couldn't believe what he was hearing. But it was true – and many years later Ling did indeed become the Emperor of all China.

One thing he never forgot in his long and wise reign over his country was the quiet support of his family – he used to say that their love and their belief in him were the roots of his invisible seed – they gave him the strength to stand in front of everyone with the empty pot and hold his head high. And holding fast to the truth, which they had gently encouraged him to do, enabled him to be one of the wisest and most dearly loved leaders the country has ever seen.

### LESSON OPTIONS

- *Optional - use a pot, soil and seed to illustrate the story as it is being told.*
- *Shorten the discussion time or discuss fewer questions*

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### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is honesty?
2. Where did Ling learn about honesty?
3. What other noble attributes did Ling practice?
4. Why did the other children bring plants, trees and flowers?
5. Why did the Emperor give the children boiled seeds?
6. What are some situations where it's hard to choose honesty over deceit?

# HONESTY

## CRAFT & GAME

### • CRAFT •

#### OBJECTIVE: PLASTIC CUP GREENHOUSE

Kids will create and decorate a mini greenhouse.

#### MATERIALS PROVIDED BY EM

- Scissors, staplers, hole punches

#### DIRECTIONS

- Punch a dozen small holes in the bottom of the colored plastic cup.
- Decorate colored cup with permanent markers or stickers
- Fill colored cup 3/4 full of soil
- With a finger poke 3 holes into the dirt up to the first finger joint.
- Place a seed in each hole and cover with soil
- Pour a little water on the soil
- Place clear cup upside down on top of the colored cup

#### MATERIALS BROUGHT BY TEAM

- Colored plastic cups
- Clear plastic cups
- Potting soil (or regular dirt if in an international location.)
- Vegetable seeds such as peas or beans.
- Push pins
- Permanent markers
- Stickers

#### EXAMPLE



#### CRAFT OPTIONS

- *Decorate paint pens or glitter pens*
- *Plant flower seeds*

### • GAME •

#### OBJECTIVE: FOLLOW THE LEADER

Try and follow everything the leader does.

#### MATERIALS BROUGHT BY TEAM

- No materials needed

#### INSTRUCTIONS

- Choose who will be the leader. All the other children playing will line up behind the leader in single file.
- The leader leads the group in any direction they want and tries to make up funny things for everyone to do after him.
- Ideas – skip, turn in circles, summer sault, crab walk, climbing obstacles, etc.
- If any player messes up or refuses to follow the leader, they are out. The last one standing is the new leader.

#### VARIATIONS

- Set time limit so everyone gets a chance to be the leader.
- Break a large group into several smaller groups.
- Whisper several directions to the leader to carry out.

