

# The Lie Snowball

This is the first lesson of the Integrity unit. At this age, the concept of integrity can be difficult to understand. As such, the focus will be on learning about honesty and perseverance. This lesson will focus on identifying honesty and dishonesty and speaking up when we have told fibs so they do not become great big lies.

## Integrity Sub-Concept(s)

Kindness

## Lesson Timeframe

45 minutes

## Required Materials

- White, Red, Blue, Green, and Yellow Clay/Playdough
- A knife
- The Little White Lie* by Lisa Rose (attached)

## Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.



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AS A RECOMMENDED PROGRAM  
FOR SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING.**

See last page for details.

## Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Utilize caring and kindness to develop honest alternatives to deceptive actions.
- Practice showing honesty in social situations.
- Understand how to speak up when we have told a white lie.

## Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Integrity is defined as acting in a way you know to be right and kind in all situations. As teachers, we are held to a level of integrity that is unprecedented in any other profession. Not only are our reputations built on our level of professional integrity with what we teach and how we teach it, but we are a physical example of integrity for dozens of students every school year. What promises do you make for your students each year? How do you infuse integrity into how you teach, how you plan, how you follow through? The teacher connections in this unit will focus on simple yet effective ways to embody integrity from the top down. This week our promise is an overarching promise we all start with at the beginning of the year, but can lose focus on during this time! Promise #1 is, “I, \_\_\_\_\_(insert name) will focus on my students.” Let’s be honest. No one chooses teaching for the summer vacation. You are here because of the students. As this semester comes to an end and grades, parent teacher conferences, and staff meetings begin to cloud your vision, take a step back and remind yourself of the first and most important goal you have: your students. How can you start and end each day with this simple statement?

### Tips for Diverse Learners

- Use simple drawings and hand motions to act out each little white lie during the story.
- If you have time, create picture cards to illustrate each lie.
- Cut up and roll flat each piece of clay used for the activity to help students with manual dexterity struggles.



## Share

3-5 minutes

*We have spent the first half of our school year learning about respect, caring, and inclusiveness. Let's take some time to talk about what that looks like in our classroom.*

- *Caring: How have others cared for you in our classroom?*
- *Gratitude: How have we shown gratitude towards others that have treated us with kindness?*
- *Inclusiveness: What is one way you've used inclusiveness to make a new friend?*

*All of these actions require us to be honest about how we treat others and how they affect us.*



## Inspire

### What is Honesty?

3-5 minutes

Explain that Honesty means being truthful in our words and actions. Telling the truth can be difficult at times. Telling stories can be fun and it might be tempting to make up stories when someone asks you questions about your homework or why your sister is crying. Remember: your words have power! Every time you tell the truth, you earn a small amount of trust from others. When people trust us, they can count on us in both little situations and big situations alike. If you get into the habit of always telling the truth with little things, you will find it easier to tell the truth when bigger topics come up! It's always bEST to be honEST.

### Honesty in Action

5-7 minutes

*Let's take some time to brainstorm what exactly honesty looks like. Divide your board (or a piece of large paper) into a T-chart. Label the two sides: Words and Actions.*

- *Words: Honesty means you only say things about people that are true. Telling lies about others or speaking unkindly hurts their feelings. It also takes away the trust others have for us and they might not want to spend time with us.*
  - Ask students for some examples of times they have used honesty with their friends. Write them down on the T-chart.
- *Actions: Honesty means you make honest choices as well. When you break something, do you own up to your actions and tell the truth? Are you willing to face the consequences even if it means getting in trouble?*
  - Ask students for some examples of times they were honest about a bad choice they made. Write them down on the T-chart.



## Empower

20 minutes

*Have you ever heard of the expression, “It’s just a little white lie”? It means that you are lying, but it’s about something small. Some people think that this type of lie is no big deal. However, little white lies often build on top of each other until you have a whole lie snowball! Today I will read a story about the little white lie that grew and grew until it became a HUGE lie.*

Each student will get a small white ball of clay. Emphasize that this is the little white lie in the story they will hear. Give each table/group 4-5 different colors of clay in addition to the little white ball. Explain that every time they hear another little lie, they will cover up their ball with a different color of clay. As they do this, their lie snowball will grow and grow.

- Read the story below. After every white lie, pause and let the children have a chance to cover their little white lie clay ball with another color of clay. Make sure they are alternating colors.
- After the story is finished, use a knife to cut each student’s lie snowball in half. Emphasize just how much the lie grew from the tiny white lie that started.
- Count the number of layers and remind the students that this is the number of extra lies the girl had to tell because of her “little white lie”.



## Reflect

5-7 minutes

Ask the students the following questions to evaluate their understanding about honesty.

- What was the original white lie Lisa told?
- How many lies did she have to tell to cover up her initial lie?
- What happened to the lie snowball as we added more clay?
- What happens to a “little white lie” when you start covering it up?
- Do you think a “little white lie” should count as a real lie? Why or why not?
- How could Lisa be more honest next time?
- What would have happened if Lisa had been honest from the beginning?

Remember, honesty means you are telling the whole truth, all the time. It also means you are willing to fess up to a little white lie instead of adding more lies on top of it to cover it up. It is bEST to always be honEST. It is never too late to tell the truth!



## Extension Ideas

- Create a bulletin board of Honesty. Have children tell you times that they were kind and practiced honesty during the day; write those things on sticky notes. Add the notes to the board to see how honest the class can be. You can also add sticky notes as you “catch people” being honest.





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Kindness in the Classroom® met or exceeded all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL programming. Kindness in the Classroom® received CASEL's highest designation for high-quality SEL programming.

<https://casel.org/guide/kindness-in-the-classroom/>

# The Little White Lie

By Lisa Rose

Once there was a little girl named Lisa. She really enjoyed playing outside and climbing trees all day long. One day, she asked her mother if she could play outside. Her mother agreed, but she reminded her not to climb the smallest tree in the backyard. It was too small for climbers.

Lisa went out back and began playing a pretend game of fairies. She pretended to live under the largest tree, gathered food from the bottom of the medium sized tree, and then needed a place to call home. She tried and tried to climb the two bigger trees, but she was just too small. She looked longingly at the smallest tree.

"I'll just climb it very carefully. Mommy won't mind as long as I don't hurt the tree," thought Lisa. She gingerly climbed the tree, being extra careful not to hurt any of its small branches. However, it wasn't long before she was caught back up in her pretend fairy game and forgot all about how fragile the young tree was. Just as she was jumping off the tree to escape a fairy-eating ogre, Lisa heard a SNAP. The branch on the small tree had broke.

Just then her mother came out and asked what Lisa was doing. "Oh, just playing fairies," Lisa answered.

"Oh no, what happened to the branch on the smallest tree, Lisa?" asked her mother.

"I have no idea Mommy!" Lisa lied. Lisa knew this was not the truth, but she was worried about getting in trouble. Hadn't her mother told her to stay off the smallest tree?

- Make a small white ball to represent Lisa's little white lie

Lisa's mother looked a bit confused. "I wonder what happened to it?" she wondered. "Did you see any animals near it Lisa?"

"Yes, actually I did," Lisa lied again. "Now that I think about it there was a rather large squirrel jumping on it."

- Cover your little white snowball with red clay.

"Oh really, wow that must have been very interesting my love! What did the squirrel look like?" asked her mom.

"He was grey, with white speckles all over him. He was the most beautiful squirrel I have ever seen!" Lisa lied again. She seemed to be lying for no reason now. Why was she making up this silly story? *Oh, well,* thought Lisa. *It's too late now. I guess I'll just hope my mommy doesn't ask me anymore questions.*

- Cover your red snowball with blue clay

Lisa's mother was very excited about her squirrel spotting. Apparently it was a rare type of squirrel that the local zoo had been trying to save. Her mother ran inside to call the zoo and report what Lisa had seen in their backyard. Lisa began to feel a little sick to her stomach.

Later on that evening, a zookeeper from the zoo came by to interview Lisa about the squirrel. "Do you think you could draw a picture of what exactly you saw?" the zookeeper asked.

"Um...sure" Lisa hesitated. Should she really be drawing something she didn't see? It was too late now. She drew a picture of a squirrel.

- Cover your blue snowball with green clay

"Holy Guacamole! That is the rare Speckled Grey Flying Squirrel of North Carolina! We thought this squirrel was extinct!" exclaimed the zookeeper. Lisa was getting a bit dizzy. Maybe she should tell the truth. Then again, she would be in HUGE trouble if she spoke up now. She decided not to say anything. "Do you know what extinct means little girl?"

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Lisa nodded. “Yes, it means that all of that type of animal have died and there are no more left.” gulped Lisa. This little white lie was growing out of control!

Well, since you have seen it in your very own backyard, we can take it off of the extinct list!” shouted the zookeeper. He immediately placed a call to the local newspaper to report the exciting news. A reporter came out that very night and took Lisa’s picture for the article.

“Can you please describe what you were doing when you spotted the Speckled Grey Flying Squirrel of North Carolina?” asked the reporter.

“Um...er...well...I was playing fairies in my backyard and it just sort of came jumping out of nowhere, like it was flying.” Lisa lied yet again.

- Cover your green snowball with yellow clay

The reporter looked a bit disappointed with her story, but she assumed Lisa was just nervous because it was all happening so quickly. She promised to send them a copy of the article and she and the zookeeper left together.

Lisa felt a big knot growing in her stomach. She couldn’t handle the guilt any longer. She walked into the kitchen to talk with her mother. “Mommy, I need to tell you the truth.” said Lisa. “I never saw that squirrel in the tree. I was the one who actually broke the branch on the smallest tree. I disobeyed you and now the tree will die!” Lisa fell into her mother’s lap and began crying loudly.

“Oh, Lisa. The tree will not die, we can help the branch heal by taping it back up. We can also help it heal by caring for it and using kind words to encourage it to grow. But Lisa, you have to do a lot more than just apologize to me. The newspaper is about to run a false article about the squirrel and the zookeeper is preparing a place for it.” Lisa looked up at her mom.

“Will you help me call them?” she asked. “I will tell them the truth right now so my little white lie can stop growing.”

Lisa’s mother smiled and picked up the phone.

THE END