



INTEGRITY | WEEK 1 | OCTOBER 1, 2023

Elementary Lesson

Just the Way You Are

Monthly Virtue: Integrity—Choosing to be truthful in whatever you say and do

Bible Story: Just the Way You Are (A Tree and Its Fruit) • *Luke 6:43-45 (John 15:1-17)*

Key Question: How do you want people to describe you?

Basic Truth: I am loved by God no matter what so I can be confident that God knows who I am.

Memory Verse: Anyone who lives without blame walks safely. But anyone who takes a crooked path will get caught. *Proverbs 10:9 (NIRV)*

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

God is always good. Since the very beginning, God has been faithful and true. If God makes a promise, God keeps that promise. We are created in God's image . . . and when we live with integrity, we reflect God's integrity. When Jesus lived on earth, He lived a perfect life and showed integrity in ways we can't because of our sin. Jesus makes it possible for us to live as new creations. Through the Holy Spirit, we are being transformed into people of integrity. Who we are in private should match who we are in public. When we trust in God, we can make the wise choice and be truthful in whatever we say and do.

Key Question: How do you want people to describe you? For preteens who are just becoming aware of how they relate to other people, it's important for them to understand how their actions impact others. We hope this question will lead to a discussion about how being a person of integrity can affect the way others relate to us.

We kick off this series in **Luke 6:43-45**, where Jesus used the example of a tree to teach His followers a lesson about integrity. Jesus said, "A good tree doesn't bear bad fruit. And a bad tree doesn't bear good fruit." Jesus was saying that what's on the inside matters most and influences who you are on the outside. The best way to live a life of integrity is to stay connected to Jesus.

Pre-Service Check List

- HUDDLE AS TEAM → You're in this together! Pray together and talk about the activities for the day.
- PLAY MUSIC
- PUT OUT TOYS → A welcoming environment is important! We want it to be obvious from the moment kids walk in that they belong HERE!
- PUT ASIDE DISTRACTIONS
- ENGAGE WITH KIDS

Morning Flow

Doors
Open
9:15/11:00

Large Group
Starts
9:35/11:20

Small Group
Starts
10:05/11:50

LARGE GROUP

COUNTDOWN AND WELCOME (3 Minutes)

(VIDEO: COUNTDOWN, SLIDE: KIDCITY EXPECTATIONS)

LGL: “Welcome everyone! I’m so glad you are able to come hang out with us in KidCity today. My name is [INSERT NAME]. We are going to have a lot of fun today, but before we do let’s go over these announcements/KidCity Expectations.

(5th SUNDAY FUNDAY) “What holiday is coming at the end of this month? That’s right, 5th Sunday Funday! Oh, and it also happens to be Halloween...but that means that you and a friend get to come to church in your costume! If you’re really cool, you and your friend will have coordinating costumes. Like Batman and Robin or Snow White and the Seven Dwarves! Whatever you come up with, please no full-face masks, props, or scary costumes. I get frightened easily! MOST importantly of all, you need to invite your friend to church! That’s what 5th Sunday is all about!

(SLIDE: BAPTISM) *(Said on the fourth weekend of the month only)* “Today are baptisms at Hope. Baptism is a way of telling the world that you love God and have made the decision to follow Him with your life. It’s a big deal! Is there anyone here who is getting baptized today? *(Pause and if someone is, go ahead and give them a high five and get the kids to clap).* Awesome!”

(SLIDE: KIDCITY EXPECTATIONS) “Now, let’s quickly go over our KidCity Expectations (rules) so we can make sure that we make the most of our time today: *(Don’t dwell on these too long, but make sure you review them briefly so we can set everyone up for success.)*

1. Be Kind
2. Be Safe
3. Have Fun

LARGE GROUP GAME (4 Min)

WHERE IN THE WORLD OF DISNEY?

(No Supplies)

I’m so happy to see all of you here today. We have a high-octane thrill ride of a day planned for you here at KidCity. We’re talking about how we should be DRIVEN by our relationship with Jesus. And that means we should be driven by integrity.

(SLIDE: VIRTUE) Integrity is choosing to be truthful in whatever you say and do.

“It means that you live your life in a truthful way, wherever you are and whatever you do. Sometimes in life, we might be tempted to act differently depending on who’s around us. Sometimes it might seem like we can get ahead by not telling the WHOLE truth. But integrity means that we choose to live truthfully, no matter what.

We will talk more about that later, but for now, let's play a game! I need you all to go ahead and get into small groups. If you don't know who your small group leader (SGL) is, that's ok, just get into a group.

(SLIDE: WHERE IN THE WORLD OF DISNEY)

(SLIDES: #'s 1-7)

HOW TO PLAY:

- **GET INTO GROUPS:** Have groups nominate a spokesperson for their group. When it's time to answer, that person will be the one to answer.
- **SHOW THE SLIDES:** Show the slides one by one. There is a picture of a place from a different Disney movie (like a house in Mulan or a room from Toy Story) and the answer on the next slide. As soon as you show the slide, say GO and groups have a chance to guess. They guess by having the spokesperson stand. The first person to stand gets to answer. If it's wrong, go to the next.
- **SLIDE ORDER:** Toy Story, Mulan, Monster's Inc, Inside Out, Beauty & the Beast, Lilo and Stitch, A Bug's Life (if the game is going too long, just cut some).

You really know your Disney! Now, let's all jump up on our feet and get ready to sing.

WORSHIP (6-7 Minutes)

(VIDEO: JOY, READY SET MOVE)

BIBLE STORY (12 Minutes)

(No Supplies)

When I'm out driving on the highway, I can't help but notice all of the different types of vehicles. Big trucks, small cars, and everything in between. I always wonder what the big semi's are hauling though. Every big truck is carrying different things – different goods. While all the trucks carried goods, not all trucks carried desirable goods. I don't know a single person who wouldn't stand in line at an ice cream or snow-cone truck for a cold treat on a hot day; and I'm sure many of us have waited at the door for the delivery truck to arrive with a much-anticipated package. However, I don't know of anybody who enjoys driving behind a fertilizer truck or enjoys the smell of a trash truck.

"If you were to have full access to the contents of one of these trucks, which one would you choose? *(Allow response.)* I find it so interesting most of the room would prefer to dig into the ice cream truck or the delivery truck! Why? Because of the good stuff it contains.

"Obviously, the goods placed inside a vehicle, whether desirable or undesirable, are the items that come out. What if this was true about us as well? What if the stuff we consume—whether it's movies, music, YouTube videos, books, friendships, sports—determines if you make wise or unwise choices with your actions? Let's think about this: Can the videos we watch or the people we have around us affect the way we treat others, speak to others, or love others? Are we filling ourselves with good things that will help us to become the person we actually hope to be? The person God wants us to be?

“These are great questions. Thankfully, we have a great place to look for answers—the Bible! In the Bible, we find the authors have a lot to say about this topic. What God inspired them to write can give us a better understanding of how our surroundings can affect how we live. Let’s get into one of those moments now!

(VIDEO: BIBLE STORY – 5 MIN)

The crowd walked away understanding that their words and actions reveal the good or bad they’ve chosen to invest in. Jesus’ words were applicable to the crowd that gathered around Him, but they’re also important for each one of us. If we’re in a healthy place—connected to Jesus—good things will come out of us! Who you are, your beliefs and motivations, and how you’re doing inside will always come out.

“The evening before Jesus was arrested and died, He told the disciples something incredibly important for this discussion. Jesus said,

Open the Bible to John 15:5 (NirV) and read.

“I am the vine. You are the branches. If you remain joined to me, and I to you, you will bear a lot of fruit. You can’t do anything without me.”

“In other words, fruit won’t grow unless it’s connected to a branch! And that branch must be attached to the big vine!

“When God created us, we were designed to be connected to Jesus—the vine! We grow in our relationship with Jesus by studying what Jesus said with other friends who also follow Jesus. We can pray to God and discover more about what God wants for our life by reading the Bible. On top of that, as we follow the Holy Spirit inside of us, we become like good branches producing good fruit. Others can see Jesus through our words and actions.

“The great news is that you get to choose which kind of tree you want to be! The key to being a good tree producing good fruit is choosing to follow Jesus and then staying connected to Him!

“However, if we’re connected to Jesus, this doesn’t mean you’ll never say or do something hurtful. We are human, after all. But it does mean that you are storing up God’s goodness to be shared with those around you. God can help you choose words that are loving and actions that are kind, just like Jesus’. Mistakes will happen. But when we mess up, it’s important we remain in Jesus and go right to Him for help and forgiveness.

Remember this...

(SLIDE: BASIC TRUTH) ‘I am loved by God no matter what so I can be confident that God knows who I am.

This means that I don't have to try to pretend to be someone I'm not. God knows you inside and out and loves you right where you are. But He loves you so much that He doesn't want you to stay there. He wants you to always be growing closer to Him and producing good fruit!

Let's take a look at the Key Question and answer it with the person next to you.

(SLIDE: KEY QUESTION) 'How do you want people to describe you?

Have kids turn and talk to their shoulder partner for 60 seconds. Your KQ slide on Playlister will keep track of time for you. While kids are talking, walk around and listen in to what they are saying and give prompts if needed. Don't try to resolve anything, kids will have a further discussion within their small group time.

Ok friends, come back together in 3, 2, 1....

I heard some great ideas floating around. You are going to have more of a chance to talk about this in small group time, but for now let's pray and dismiss.

Dear God, we want to be truthful with our whole lives. And we need your help to do that. We are so thankful that we can trust you no matter what. Please work in our lives on the INSIDE so that we can show your love to everyone on the OUTSIDE. Help us stay connected to you so that we can live each day with integrity. We love you, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

DISMISS TO SMALL GROUPS

SMALL GROUP

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Kids learn best through play and through conversation. Both are equally important, so be sure to give time to both!

KEY QUESTION (K-5th)

(No Supplies)

Spend some time coming together and talking about the Key Question. There aren't any right or wrong answers, but use this time to help kids have a discussion about what they just learned and encourage them to grow in their faith. Try to keep the conversation spiritually based. Why does what we are talking about matter in light of what God has done for us?

Key Question: How do you want people to describe you? *(Answers will vary: someone who makes wise choices, someone who comforts you when you're sad or going through a hard time, someone who is dependable, etc.)*

How can you demonstrate integrity with your actions and words? *(Answers will vary: don't say mean things even when others are, keep your promises, clean up trash even if it's not yours, etc.)*

GOOD FRUIT, BAD FRUIT (K-5th)

(**"Good Fruit Bad Fruit"** Activity Pages, Floor Tape, Bibles)

What You Do:

- Look up Luke 6:43-45.
- Call on volunteers to read the verses aloud to the group (or SGL reads).
- Ask:
 - According to these verses, what kind of fruit does a good tree produce? What kind of fruit does a bad tree produce?
 - What does this have to do with integrity? *(Share that integrity is choosing to be truthful in whatever you say and do.)*
 - Who do we need to stay connected to in order to live with integrity?
- Put a tape line down. At the top of one side put the picture of the good apple and the picture of the rotten apple on the other.
- Read the examples/scenarios below. Kids will need to decide if that action leads to GOOD fruit or BAD fruit (is this good for me in the long term? Is this a wise choice?). Kids will choose what they think by jumping on the side they think the answer is.
- Read one at a time:
 - Reading your Bible at least once a week (good fruit)

- Telling God what's going on in your life. (good)
- Breaking a promise (bad fruit)
- Go to church (good)
- You're in a not-great situation where you don't know what to do. You go ask an adult for help figuring out how to get out in the best way possible. (good)
- You are caught in a lie. You try to talk your way out of it. (bad)
- You are caught in a lie. You admit that you lied and apologize for the hurt you caused. (good)
- Your friend is being nasty to you. You don't say anything about it, but you keep a grudge against them in your heart (bad)

What You Say:

"Just like a good, healthy tree bears good fruit and a bad, unhealthy tree bears bad fruit, we can only live with integrity and do good when we stay connected to Jesus! But how do we do that? How do you stay connected to someone you can't see with your eyes? We can stay connected to Jesus by practicing these faith skills! We can HEAR from God by reading the Bible. God's word shows us who God is and how Jesus lived and treated others!

"We can PRAY and talk to God. God hears us whenever we pray, and we can share everything that's on our minds. We can TALK about God with others! In fact, one way we get to do that is here in our small group every week! And we can LIVE a life that honors God by living in a way that honors God.

"When you practice these faith skills, they'll help you stay connected to Jesus so you can be truthful with your whole life."

GOOD FRUIT, BAD FRUIT: EXTENSION (K-5th)

("Abide" Activity Page – 1 per kid, Markers/Crayons, Bible)

What You Do:

- Give out the activity page and markers/crayons.
- Explain that you are going to read **John 15:1-17** slowly. As you read, kids should draw what they visualize.
 - *If you lead K-1st, you may need to show them how to draw a vine.*
- Allow kids to share what they drew.
- Send the paper home with them.

FINAL ACTIVITY: Biblical Literacy (K-5th)

("Match Verse Relay" - 2 sets cut apart, Masking Tape, 2 Matchbox Cars, Memory Verse Poster)

What You Do:

- Review the memory verse together.
- Split your group into 2 teams and then split those teams in two (doesn't have to be even).
- Have half of Team #1 sit on one side of a gap and the other half of Team #1 sit across from them – facing them. Do the same for Team #2

- Give one side a stack of the Memory verse cards and a car with a tape loop on top.
- On 'GO', teams will put one card on top of the car, secured by the tape, and roll the car towards their teammate on the other side. That teammate will retrieve the card and roll the car back. After each kid touches the car, they will go to the back of the line. That way every kid has an opportunity to roll the car.
- Once all of the cards have been transferred to the other side, teams can work on putting the verse in order. First to put it in order wins!

PRAY

"God, thank you so much for the wonderful friends who we get to know. Please help our friends continue to grow in their relationship with you. Help us make the right choices so we can also be good friends to others and help us choose your friends carefully. Most of all, thank you for giving us Jesus who is the best friend of all. We love you, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."