Lesson Plan: “I Believe in Being Honest”

Objectives:
- Talk about being honorable/honest in all you do even when others persecute you.
- Emphasize that being dishonest can trap us if we do not repent.

Reinforces Principles of:
- Honor/Honesty

Each lesson contains 5 timed activities:

(Choose the activities that fit your family’s schedule. Additional resources are provided as extra time may be available.)

Reverence Time: Song, prayer, scripture and video clip
Lesson Time: Lesson summary and points to ponder
Story Time: Story
Activity Time: Object lesson or activity
Treat Time: Prayer, theme related recipe & music video
Approximate Time: 5 minutes

Sing Together: Children’s Songbook #149, “I Believe in Being Honest.”
If you wish to have an online music file to accompany you visit:
http://www.lds.org/churchmusic
(Note: Navigate to the Interactive Church Music Player where you can listen to and print Church hymns and children’s songs.)

Prayer:

Scripture Time: Philippians 4:8

8. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Video Clip: Watch chapter 10 from The Complete Learning System Marco Polo DVD.
Lesson Summary:

“Surely no more important work is to be done in this world than preparing our children to be God-fearing, happy, honorable, and productive.” James E. Faust, Ensign, Oct 2005 © Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved.

What does it mean to be honorable? (Discuss ideas.)

“An honorable person is one who is truthful; free from deceit; above cheating, lying, stealing, or any form of deception. An honorable person is one who learns early that one cannot do wrong and feel right.” Ezra Taft Benson, New Era, Jul 1984 © Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved.

To have the attributes that President Benson listed requires a person to be honest in all that they do, honest with themselves and honest with Heavenly Father.

Did Marco Polo’s father teach him to be honorable? (Yes.)

“Being honest often requires courage and sacrifice, especially when others try to persuade us to justify dishonest behavior. If we find ourselves in such a situation, we can remember that the lasting peace that comes from being honest is more valuable than the momentary relief of following the crowd.” True to the Faith (2004) © Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved.

Have you ever been accused of being dishonest when you were being honest? (Discuss ideas.)

There were many people who thought Marco Polo was being dishonest about his journey to China and laughed or persecuted him for it. Like Marco Polo, there were many people who did not believe Joseph Smith, “...and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; and while they were persecuting me, reviling me, and speaking all manner of evil against me falsely for so saying, I was led to say in my heart: Why persecute me for telling the truth? I have actually seen a vision; and who am I that I can withstand God, or why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen? For I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it; at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation.” (JS-H 1:25)

Why were both Marco Polo and Joseph Smith willing to endure persecution and even give their lives if it meant being dishonest? (Discuss ideas.)

Does the Lord bless us for being honorable? (Discuss ideas.)

President Hinckley taught, “Those who are living the principle of honesty know that the Lord does bless them. Theirs is the precious right to hold their heads in the sunlight of truth, unashamed before any man. ...Brothers and sisters, the Lord requires his people to be honest. May we desire with all our hearts to be honest in all our relationships and in all the things that we do.” Gordon B. Hinckley, Liahona, Jun 1993 © Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved.
Points to Ponder:

What does it mean to be honest with yourself? (Discuss ideas.)

“I believe the best test of our integrity and honesty is when we personally enforce in our own lives that which ultimately cannot be enforced. There are so many aspects of being honest and of living the gospel that simply cannot be enforced in our lives by anyone else. You and I bear the responsibility to become people of integrity and honesty—people who are true and trustworthy when no one is watching and when no one else is around.” David A. Bednar, New Era, Oct 2005 © Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved.

Is it important to be honest in little things as well as big things? (Discuss ideas.)

“If we are sensitive to our relationship to the Savior, we must be honest in little things as well as the big. We should always remember that we are never alone. There is no act that is not observed; there is no word spoken that is not heard; there is no thought conceived in the mind of man that is not known to God. There is no darkness that can conceal the things we do.” Howard W. Hunter, New Era, Feb 1978 © Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved.

How does being dishonest make you feel? (Discuss ideas.)

There are countless stories about people who have taken something that didn’t belong to them or done something that was dishonest. It could be something as small as a glass or towel from a hotel room, a dime from their mother’s purse or cheating on an exam in grade school. But the one thing they all have in common is suffering with guilt because they did not repent.

There are others who make excuses for their dishonesty, but to Heavenly Father, there are no acceptable excuses or reasons for being dishonest. If there are ways in which we have been even the least bit dishonest, we need to repent.

“Repent, Repentance: A change of mind and heart that brings a fresh attitude toward God, oneself, and life in general. Repentance implies that a person turns away from evil and turns his heart and will to God, submitting to God’s commandments and desires and forsaking sin. True repentance comes from a love for God and a sincere desire to obey his commandments. All accountable persons have sinned and must repent in order to progress toward salvation. Only through the atonement of Jesus Christ can our repentance become effective and accepted by God.” Guide To The Scriptures. The Official Scriptures of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints © 2006 Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved.

How can we become trapped by dishonesty? (Discuss ideas.)

An example of being trapped by dishonesty is when we tell what might seem like a little white lie. That little lie often leads to another and another, becoming bigger and bigger. It then becomes harder and harder to remember what lies you have told. You soon become trapped by your lies and dishonesty.

Quote: “It is not above and beyond the call of duty to be honest. Being honest is our duty.” Marvin J. Ashton, New Era, Sep 1983 © Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved.
Mother pushed the grocery cart through the slushy parking lot with Jackson hitching a ride on the end.
“Look, Mom. It’s so cold I can see my breath,” Jackson said, blowing into the frigid air.

“Just be careful you don’t put your tongue on the shopping cart like your Grandpa did when he was a little boy,” Mother laughed, “or it might just get stuck there!”

When they reached the car, Mother and Jackson quickly began loading the groceries into the car.
“Oh, dear!” Mother exclaimed, picking up a bag of onions from off the bottom of the cart. “I don’t think the checker saw these.” Mother quickly scanned her receipt. “Nope. They’re not on here,” she sighed.

“Sweet,” Jackson exclaimed, “Free onions!”

“What do you mean free onions?” Mother asked.

“It’s not our fault the checker missed them,” Jackson rationalized.

“Oh, I see. Since it’s not our fault, it’s okay to be dishonest.”

“Come on, Mom. No one will ever know we didn’t pay for them. Besides it’s just a little bag of onions,” Jackson scoffed. “Let’s just go home. It’s freezing out here,” he said before climbing into the car.

Mother climbed into the driver’s seat and handed the bag of onions to Jackson. Silently she prayed for Heavenly Father’s wisdom. Without saying another word, Mother started the car, turned on the heat and drove to a dark secluded spot in the alley behind the store. When Mother turned off the headlights they were engulfed in the darkness of the winter night.

“Jackson. Can you see the bag of onions in your hands?” Mother asked.

“It’s so dark I can’t even see my own hands,” Jackson reported.

“But you know the onions are there, right?”

“Of course. Even if I couldn’t feel them, I’d know they were here by the smell.”
“Oh, dear,” Mother worried aloud. “Even if no one saw us take them, the smell might give us away.”

“What are you talking about?” Jackson queried.

“We just stole a bag of onions! I don’t want us to get caught and go to jail. Do you?”

“Jiminy, Mom. No one’s going to send us to jail. It’s not like we took them on purpose.”

“It’s not?” Mother asked. “We both knew we didn’t pay for them. So, we did take them on purpose. Didn’t we?”

Jackson sat quietly as Mother’s words sank in.

“But, then again, it’s just a small bag of onions,” Mother continued. “And onions don’t cost very much. It’s not like we stole something big or expensive,” she confessed. “Not this time, anyway, but you can’t tell anyone. Not even Dad. We’ll have to lie to protect ourselves.”

“We’re not going to steal anything else,” Jackson worried. “Are we?”

“Why not? It was so easy. We didn’t even get caught. Unless,” Mother whispered anxiously, “Jackson, do you think it’s dark enough that Heavenly Father didn’t see us steal the onions?”

“He saw,” Jackson answered quietly. “He sees everything.”

“That does complicate things. Doesn’t it?” Mother asked. “What should we do?”

“We should go back to the store right now and pay for the onions,” Jackson answered.

“That would be the honest thing to do. It certainly would clear things up with the store, but there’s someone else we need to clear this up with, too. Isn’t there?”

“It’s Heavenly Father,” Jackson answered. “We need to repent and ask Heavenly Father to forgive us.”

“You’re right, Jackson!” Mother said, as she pulled the car around and headed back towards the store.

“Mom, you weren’t really going to steal the onions, were you?”

“Jackson, I want you to remember, there isn’t anything worth having in this life, if it keeps us from returning to our Heavenly Father with honor.”

“I’ll remember, Mom,” Jackson promised. “Boy, you sure taught me a lesson.”

“Well, to be honest, I didn’t do it on my own, Jackson. Heavenly Father helped.”

by Margie Nauta Lee © 2008 Living Scriptures, Inc.
What you need: A copy of the “Being Honest” activity (artwork included with this lesson), a self laminating sheet, scissors and tape. Note: Artwork will not work if it is not laminated on at least one side. You can substitute 1/2-inch curling ribbon in place of the artwork and the laminating sheet or use a purchased Chinese Finger Trap.

Preparation
1. Print out the artwork.
2. Follow directions to create a “Chinese Finger Trap.”

Activity: (Younger children will need help from an older sibling or parent.)
1. Explain: When the Polos returned from their travels to Asia, Europeans had never seen many of the things the Polos told them about. The Polos were laughed at, ridiculed and accused of being dishonest. Although some people enjoyed hearing the stories they still didn’t believe them.

2. Ask: Have you ever seen a giant orange cat with black stripes like Marco Polo saw? (Yes. A tiger.) Ask: Do you think Marco Polo was telling the truth about his trip to Asia? (Discuss ideas.)

3. Explain: There are still people today who question the truthfulness of Marco Polo’s stories. Yet, like Joseph Smith, Marco Polo never denied what he had seen, because his father had taught him the importance of being honest when he was young. Even when with the prospect of being killed, both Marco Polo and Joseph Smith remained honorable.

4. Ask: Is it important to always be honest? (Discuss ideas.)
“The motto, ‘Return with Honor,’ can be applied to each of us on our eternal path of progression. Having lived with our Heavenly Father and having come to earth, we must have determination to return with honor to our heavenly home.” Robert D. Hales, Ensign, Jun 1999 © Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved.

5. Explain: If we commit one dishonest act and do not repent, we often continue being dishonest to avoid being caught, thus we become trapped in our dishonesty.

6. Ask: Why would being caught for being dishonest be better than continuing to be dishonest and becoming trapped? (Discuss ideas.)

7. Use the “Chinese Finger Trap” and examples to demonstrate how being dishonest can trap us and how repentance can set us free.
Directions for a “Chinese Finger Trap”
1. Cut out the four strips of paper and laminate.
2. Tape the ends of one orange strip to one black strip.
3. Tape the ends of one black strip to one orange strip.
4. Tape each pair to the opposite sides of the top of a pencil.
5. Create a round braid by braiding: orange over black, orange over black, black over orange, black over orange, to get a lattice effect.
6. When you reach the end, trim ends of ribbon and then tape together as you did in steps 2 and three.
7. Remove tape that is holding the top to the pencil and remove pencil.
Chinese Finger Trap “Dishonesty” Demonstration

1. Explain: While taking a spelling test Kathy copied answers off of her friend’s paper without her knowledge.

2. Ask: Was she being honest? (No. Put one finger in the end of the Chinese Finger Trap. Explain: Kathy has started to become trapped in her dishonesty.)

3. Explain: After the teacher corrected the papers, she noticed that both girls misspelled words the same. After class she asked them if they had cheated. Both girls said no.

4. Ask: Was Kathy being honest? (No. Put another finger in the other end of the Chinese Finger Trap. Kathy is now completely trapped by lying to cover up the cheating. Pull your fingers apart to try and remove them from the trap.)

5. Ask: Now that Kathy’s trapped how can she become free? (By repenting. Emphasize that even if we don’t get caught when we are dishonest we are still trapped in our sinful habits unless we repent.)

7. Explain: To repent Kathy needs to:

   A. Recognize/feel sorry for cheating and then telling the lie. (Release tension on the trap by pushing your fingers together.)
   B. Ask Heavenly Father to forgive her and for His help to become honest. (Use a free finger or thumb to release one of your fingers from the trap.)
   C. Right the wrong by telling her teacher the truth and apologizing to both teacher and friend for cheating. (Use a free finger or thumb to release your other finger from the trap.)
   D. As Kathy works on her relationship with God, He will help her to change her heart and remain free from the dishonesty trap.

Blessings that come from being Honest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You will be closer to Heavenly Father by being honest.</th>
<th>You will be blessed with peace of mind for being honest.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Return to Heavenly Father with honor.</td>
<td>You will form good habits to keep your word and tell the truth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You will live an honorable life by keeping the commandments.</td>
<td>You will keep your name and honor bright.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believing in and being honest will bring you joy.</td>
<td>Your honesty will allow you to be unashamed among men.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You will behave honorably even when others persecute you.</td>
<td>You will not be trapped by dishonesty.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Blessing Cookies

2 large egg whites
1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
3 tablespoons vegetable oil
8 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 1/2 teaspoons cornstarch
1/4 teaspoon salt
8 tablespoons granulated sugar
3 teaspoons water

Print out and cut the fortune papers.
Preheat oven to 300 degrees F.
In a medium bowl, lightly beat the egg white, vanilla extract and vegetable oil until frothy, but not stiff.
Sift the flour, cornstarch, salt and sugar into a separate bowl.
Stir the water into the flour mixture.
Add the flour mixture into the egg white mixture and stir until you have a smooth batter.
Place level tablespoons of batter onto a greased cookie sheet, spacing them at least 3 inches apart.
Gently tilt the baking sheet back and forth and from side to side so that each tablespoon of batter forms into a four inch circle.
Bake 14 - 15 minutes, until the outer 1/2-inch of the cookies turn golden brown and they are easy to remove from the baking sheet with a spatula. Working quickly place a blessing in the middle of each cookie and then fold the edges together to form a half circle. Then gently fold the cookie into a half moon shape, with the seam side facing out. Place finished cookies in the cups of a muffin tin until they cool, so they will keep their shape.

Treat Time: Give each family member a Blessing Cookie. Read them out loud and discuss why good blessings come from being honest. Having a relationship with Heavenly Father has both spiritual and practical blessings.

Closing Prayer and blessing on the food.