

# Integrity (Grades K-5)



## **Character Education Objective:**

- Students will discuss the impact of integrity in decision making and consistency of their beliefs and actions.

## **Content Objective:**

- Students will create a way to check decisions against their defined values.

## **Language Objective:**

- Students will share out ideas about how they make decisions when the stakes are high.

## **Purpose:**

Students are constantly confronted with decisions throughout the day. Some will have little to no impact in their life, but

others will drastically change the course of their world. There is no real way to tell which decision will matter, so it is important to confront each decision with a plan of action. When it is easier to follow and take the path of least resistance it takes moral courage to do the right thing. But how do students know what the right things is? Once students define their values, it is easier to check decisions against them to determine what the right thing to do is. This lesson will help students with a quick list of things to think about to make sure there is integrity in the decisions they make.

## **Lesson**

- Watch “Making Tough Choices with Kid President” (7 mins)
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdsCUEXLE-Y>
- As a large group, use the following discussion prompts: What are impulsive choices? What happens when you don’t do anything when a decision needs to be made? How does following others change how you make decisions? What does it mean to be someone others want to follow? (5 mins)
- The Kid President shares a way to check your decisions against your beliefs. Instruct the students to get with a partner (this can also be done in a small group lead by an instructor). Ask them to talk with their partner about the following questions:
  - What do I care about in my family, school and community?
  - What is important to me?
  - How do I want others to treat me and my friends/family?
  - How do people act in the kind of world where I want to live? Now read the students the following scenario: You are doing a graded assessment in class when you notice your friend peaking over at your paper. You know that your friend has had a hard time understanding the subject and you have been helping her study. You want her to do well, but she is cheating off of your paper. What do you do? Ask the students to discuss the following questions about the scenario with their

partner: What would happen if you told the teacher your friend was cheating? What would happen if you did not? Which decision is easier? Which choice would help make the world more like the one where you want to live? What would your choice be? Why? (10 mins)

- Ask students to share out how they made their decision (5 min)

**Conclusion:** Sometimes the decision making process is quick and we don't always have time to make a long, drawn out decision. Quickly checking your decision based on how they fall in line with your beliefs is a helpful tool. You need to take a quick second to think "Is this helping create the kind of world where I want to live?" This will help guide your decision making when it matters the most. (3 min)

### **Family Connection**

Encourage families to watch "Making Tough Choices with Kid President" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdsCUEXLE-Y>

Give the following prompts to discuss as a family:

- What are the values in our home?
- What is the type of world our family wants to live in?
- What happens when our decisions help build that world? What happens when they do not?
- How can our family make sure our decisions and values match?

Learn more about character education.

---

# Trustworthiness Through Organization (Grades 6-12)



## Character Education Objective:

- Students will discuss the impact of disorganization in their lives and in the lives of those who count on them

## Content Objective:

- Students will explore ways to become more organized to help them remain trustworthy and accountable to their commitments

## Language Objective:

- Students will share ideas about what it looks, and sounds like to be trustworthy and organized

## Purpose:

School is back in session, and students are lining the halls and classrooms in anticipation of another year of learning. The hallways smell of freshly sharpened pencils and glue, and the agendas are sparkling with white space. Soon, calendars will begin to fill up, to-do lists will start to take up more

space, and the students and families will become overwhelmed with commitments. After all, students are busier today than they have ever been and are struggling with balance. Therefore, this lesson will focus on tips for students to demonstrate trustworthiness through organization. Learning to prioritize and organize are vital to keeping commitments and maintaining a character of trustworthiness.

## Lesson

- Watch video: "Organization for the Chronically Disorganized."
  - <https://youtu.be/ENF8090oJvM> (5 mins)
- Consider the following quote and discussion questions independently, and then with an elbow partner (5 mins)
  - What does this quote teach about the impact of your habits
  - What does this quote say about being trustworthy in your commitments?
  - How does this quote relate to prioritizing and organizing things in your life?

Watch your thoughts; they become words.

Watch your words; they become actions.

Watch your actions; they become habits.

Watch your habits; they become character.

Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.

- Productive Group Work: Students complete a chart paper with ideas for one of the following questions. (5 mins)
  - What are some ideas you have about getting or staying organized this year?
  - What are some ideas you to focus on being more trustworthy in your commitments through organization?
- Gallery Walk (2 mins)
  - Students will put a colored sticker next to an

idea that they think will help them to be more trustworthy and organized.

- Reflection Journal (Independent task) (2 mins)
  - Write in planner cover or text to someone who can hold you accountable.
  - I will be trustworthy because I will (Fill in blank with what you will do to be more organized).

## **Family Connection**

- Tech Support
  - Download the COZI App
  - Share calendars to help organize and determine the level of commitments in the household
- Pillar Time
  - Share ways to stay organized and have a weekly meeting to declutter backpacks, and calendars
  - Declutter/Organize a room together\
  - Create a drop zone for backpacks for the school year
- Dinner Discussion
  - What does it mean to be trustworthy in your family?
  - What is one area of your lives / home do you want/need to organize?
  - How do you feel when you are organized?

Learn more about character education.

---

# **Summer Reading List (K-5)**

Head to the library and look for these great books!

---

# **Summer Reading List (Grades 6-12 Students and Educators)**

Check out our book list for teens and educators.

---

# **Conversation Starters for Families**

Use these questions to talk to your kids about character.

---

# **The ABCs of Good Character**

# The ABCs of Good Character

**A** Ambitious

**B** Brave

**C** Civil

**D** Dependable

**E** Empathic

**F** Fair

**G** Grit

**H** Honest

**I** Integrity

**J** Justice

**K** Kind

**L** Loyal

**M** Mercy

**N** Nurturing

**O** Optimistic

**P** Perseverance

**Q** Questioning

**R** Respectful

**S** Service

**T** Trustworthy

**U** Understanding

**V** Versatile

**W** Wise

**X** eXcited

**Y** Be Yourself

**Z** Zealous



Learn more about character education.

---

## Integrity (Grades 6-12)



**Character Education Objective:** Provide students with an Integrity in Action Checklist, which serves as a decision-making model. Students have the opportunity to practice utilizing the checklist on relatable, hypothetical scenarios.

### Core Alignment:

**HS** – Demonstrate leadership skills, integrity, ethical behavior, and social responsibility while collaborating to achieve common goals.

**MS** – Essential Concept and/or Skill: Demonstrate leadership, integrity, ethical behavior, and social responsibility in all environments.

### Lesson:

*Optional Activity – Integrity Ball (Need small object that can*

*easily be thrown or caught)*

## Directions

1. Have students get in groups of 8-15 (10 is ideal) and stand in a circle (about a foot apart)
  1. Space can be a complication in this activity. It is ok if there are desks and tables in the middle of the circle. Also, you can adjust the group size as needed to accommodate for space limitations.
2. Each group gets an object to throw around the group
3. The ball is tossed around the group using the following rules:
  - No one can speak or make a sound of any kind
  - No one is allowed to move except to throw or catch the ball
  - No one may make a bad throw or catch
  - Each individual interprets these rules as they see fit. If you feel you break one of these rules, you must step back from the circle and sit down.
  - No one can decide for anyone else if a rule is broken, even if you think someone should be out.
4. After playing one round (approx. 3 minutes or until only one person is still standing) tell students to think about how their classmates played the game. Did they interpret the rules the same way you interpreted the rules? Are you going to adjust the way you play the game in round two?
5. Play a second round with the same rules.
6. Ask students to raise their hands if they feel like they followed the rules. Then ask students to raise their hand if they feel like there was someone in their group who did NOT follow the rules. Typically, everyone thinks THEY followed the rules, and everyone thinks that SOMEONE ELSE did not follow the rules. Ask students how that could happen?

7. Ask students if they played the second round differently than the first round. Did anyone think to themselves, “well if I had known I could get away with that...?”

Process the Activity – You can’t have a little bit of integrity; you either have it or you don’t. When you are looking to others to see what you can get away with, that’s a time when you need to ask yourself some questions to make sure you are making the right choice, not just the easy choice.

*Start Here if Not Using Optional Activity*

We all make hundreds of decisions each day. Sometimes determining the right choice is easy, but on occasion we have to make a decision where the right choice either isn’t as clear, or is otherwise difficult to make. Ask students to share an example of a difficult decision they have made.

In these moments, we sometimes look around to see what others are doing and what we can get away with, like in the Integrity Ball game. A better idea is to have a strategy that helps us make the right decision. The tool we use to help us make hard decisions is call the Character in Action Checklist: Six Pillars.

## CHARACTER-IN-ACTION CHECKLIST: SIX PILLARS



When faced with a choice or dilemma, consider the following:

Would my decisions pass each of these tests?	Yes	No
<b>Trustworthiness Test:</b> Would my words and actions be honest, sincere, and reliable?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Respect Test:</b> If the situation was reversed, is this how I would want to be treated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Responsibility Test:</b> What would be the consequences of my words and actions and would I do the right thing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Fairness Test:</b> Would this be fair to everybody involved in and affected by my actions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Caring Test:</b> Would my words and actions express compassion and kindness?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Citizenship Test:</b> Would I want to live in a world where everybody did this?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**What if it's still not clear what to do?**

1. Stop!
2. Think it over some more.
3. Seek additional insight from individuals whose integrity you respect.

Adapted from Lickona & Davidson (2005).

The Character in Action Checklist: Six Pillars consists of nine questions that when applied to a difficult decision can help us determine the right choice to maintain our integrity and trustworthiness. Practice applying the questions to the hypothetical situations below.

*(Facilitator Note: Sometimes you must play Devil's Advocate to help students practice using the checklist. For example, most students know that if someone gives them incorrect change, they should give the change back. Thus, a follow-up question is sometimes in order, "Does anyone know a person who might not give the change back? What would they say to justify their decision? Does that justification pass the checklist questions?)*

Hypothetical

1. Jimmy is at a special matinee movie where the tickets

are \$6.00 each. He gives the box office cashier a ten-dollar bill. The cashier is very busy and gives Jimmy \$14 in change (she thinks Jimmy gave her a twenty-dollar bill). What should Jimmy do?

2. Your best friend Ashley is failing her Language Arts class. If she doesn't do very well on the final test, she may have to go to summer school and miss a vacation trip that you had planned together. A week before the final test, another student, Calvin, offers her a stolen copy of the final test. Ashley isn't sure what to do and asks you. What do you tell her?

- Samantha tells you that she was in a loud argument with Jessica at school on Friday and got a three-day in-school suspension. If Samantha tells her folks about the suspension, she'll be grounded over the weekend and will miss the big school dance. If she doesn't tell her folks, they'll get a letter from school on Monday. Samantha was going to the dance with you and asks what she should do. What do you tell her?
- Your math teacher allows you to grade your own paper. If you give yourself credit for an answer that should be marked wrong, you will get a higher final grade in the class. Would you?

### **Parent Connection:**

Encourage parents to watch this short video with their kids.

After watching the video, parents and students should write three commitment cards to one another. Parents keep the cards of their children, and kids keep the cards of their parents. When the promise is filled, the card is returned. (Note: you can order promise cards from Because I Said Would if desired, but it is not necessary. Any notecard will suffice).

Learn more about character education.

---

# Integrity (Grades K-5)



## **Character Education Objective:**

Teach students the impact of the truth in relationship and provide a checklist around integrity as a decision making model for difficult situations while building those relationships.

## **Core Alignment:**

**K-2:** Essential Concept and/or Skill: Learn leadership skills and demonstrate integrity, ethical behavior, and social responsibility.

**3-5:** Essential Concept and/or Skill: Practice leadership skills, and demonstrate integrity, ethical behavior, and social responsibility in all activities.

## **Lesson:**

*Trust Tower*

Preparation

1. Think of three simple tasks your students can complete with minimal adult supervision and take about one to two minutes to complete.
2. Build a tower on your desk with three blocks and have a few extra blocks available.
3. Have another adult in the classroom prepared to do the tasks with the students. Prepare the second adult by sharing both the tasks and the role of the second adult in the room.

## Directions

1. Share with the students that you are going to trust them to complete some tasks. Spend a few minutes talking about what trustworthiness looks and sounds like.
2. Show them the trust tower you built. You say that trust is built by showing someone over and over again you are trustworthy, like blocks in a tower, getting taller each time you show that trait.
3. Explain to the students that you will give them the instructions for the first task and then close your eyes because you trust that they will complete the task.
4. Give the instructions for the first task and close your eyes. The second adult in the classroom will do the task with the children.
5. Open your eyes and ask if the task was completed. They will say yes and congratulate them on building trust by adding a block to your trust tower.
6. Give the instructions for the second task and close your eyes. The second adult in the classroom will not do the task and be very over the top and dramatic about so the students see.
7. Open your eyes and ask if the task was completed. The second adult should be very loud in saying yes. The students will either call out the adult or the adult may need to confess. If no one calls out the adult for not being truthful then simply question out loud "I wonder

if anyone saw that she was not trustworthy?"

8. Take one block off your trust tower. Tell the students when trust is broken it starts to break down the trust tower and the trust in your relationship with another person.
9. Give the instructions for the third task and close your eyes. Again, the second adult in the classroom will not do the task and this time will also encourage other students to not complete the task.
10. Open your eyes and ask if the task was completed. Again, make sure the second adult very loudly says yes. The students may call out the adult and other students (ignore these, as you do not want to call out individual students in a group) who did not complete the task. If not, the second adult should confess, but not point out any individual students who followed along.
11. Take another block off the truth tower and focus on the second adult's lie. Mention that when one person lies, it often shows other they can get away with it. Sometimes the trust tower falls really quickly when we see others lying and getting away with it.
12. Encourage the students to look at the trust tower now and how broken the trust is in the classroom. Ask the question "how do you build trust?"
13. For each answer the students give that show trustworthiness, add a block and talk about the power of the choices they make each day. It's easy for the tower to break down, but it takes work to build it back up, especially when we watch others around us "get away" with breaking trust.

### *Character-In-Action Checklist*

The right and wrong choice is not always as clear as students think it will be. Share an example where you had to make a hard decision where the choice was not easy. Ask students to think about how they would figure out the right thing to do



when it was a hard decision and ask them to share ideas.

Most likely, they will share ideas like ask an adult or a trusted friend. In these times, we sometimes look around to see what others are doing and what we can get away with, just like with the last task in the Trust Tower. A better idea is to have a strategy that helps us make the right decision. The tool we use to help us make hard decisions is call the Character in Action Checklist: Six Pillars. (See below)

The Character in Action Checklist: Six Pillars consists of nine questions that when applied to a difficult decision can help us determine the right choice to maintain our integrity and trustworthiness, especially as we build relationships like the tower. You may need to spend some time explaining or giving examples, depending on the development level of your students. You may modify to fit appropriately. Practice applying the questions to the hypothetical situations below.

## CHARACTER-IN-ACTION CHECKLIST: SIX PILLARS



When faced with a choice or dilemma, consider the following:

Would my decisions pass each of these tests?	Yes	No
<b>Trustworthiness Test:</b> Would my words and actions be honest, sincere, and reliable?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Respect Test:</b> If the situation was reversed, is this how I would want to be treated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Responsibility Test:</b> What would be the consequences of my words and actions and would I do the right thing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Fairness Test:</b> Would this be fair to everybody involved in and affected by my actions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Caring Test:</b> Would my words and actions express compassion and kindness?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Citizenship Test:</b> Would I want to live in a world where everybody did this?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**What if it's still not clear what to do?**

1. Stop!
2. Think it over some more.
3. Seek additional insight from individuals whose integrity you respect.

Adapted from Lickona & Davidson (2005).

*(Facilitator Note: Sometimes you must play Devil's Advocate to help students practice using the checklist. For example, most students know that if someone gives them incorrect change, they should give the change back. Thus, a follow-up question is sometimes in order, "Does anyone know a person who might not give the change back? Why do you think they would see that as an ok choice? Does that reason pass the checklist questions?)*

### Hypothetical

1. Jimmy is at a grocery store where the candy bars are \$1.00 each. He purchases one and gives the cashier a five-dollar bill. The cashier is very busy and gives Jimmy \$9.00 in change (she thinks Jimmy gave her a ten-dollar bill). What should Jimmy do?
2. You and your best friend Ashley go to a play center. The larger play structure has a sign that says "8 Years and

Older Only.” Ashley is still 7 years old but says “who will know?” What do you say to Ashley?

3. Samantha tells you that she did not complete her homework for today and will be grounded by her parents for the missing assignment. If Samantha tells them about the assignment, she’ll be grounded tonight and she will miss a birthday party. If she doesn’t tell them tonight, then they’ll get an email in a few days about the missing assignment. Samantha wants to go to the party and asks what she should do. What do you tell her?
4. Your class is taking a math test when another teacher shows up at the door. Your teacher’s back is turned and in a deep conversation with this other teacher. Your friend Michael is having a hard time in math and is really trying hard for a better grade. He asks if you can him the answer to question number 6. What do you do?

### **Parent Connection:**

As young children development telling the truth can be a difficult skill and there will be slip ups by all children. It’s important that we celebrate telling the truth.

Encourage families to create a plan at home for encouraging telling the truth. Create a sticker chart, track with marks on a calendar or collect items in a jar for every truth told. Understanding that even when children make a mistake, that if they respond with the truth that it should be praised. The best way to build a skill is repetitive practice and praise the behavior you want to see around that skill. Celebrating the successes of truthful moments will help build this crucial character trait.

Learn more about character education.

---

# **Books to teach trustworthiness**

Check out these books for K-12 students to help teach trustworthiness.

---

## **Does it pay to be ethical?**

When we're faced with a challenge, our first inclination is to take the easy route to address it. But in doing so, some people discount the impact of those actions in the long term.