Integrity

This is the second week of our Integrity unit. Students will expand their understanding of integrity and explore how to rebuild broken trust.

Begin the unit with the whole class lesson and then aim to complete at least two of the mini lessons with your students throughout the week. Each mini lesson is designed to present elements of the main lesson in new and engaging ways.

Main Lesson

Whole Class Lesson
30 minutes

START HERE

Rebuilding Trust
Students will complete a simple science experiment to illustrate the concept of rebuilding broken trust. (*See page 2 for lesson details.*)

Mini Lessons

For Small Groups
15 minutes

The Teacher's Perspective
Divide into groups of 4-6. Each small group will identify one common frustration teachers have with their students as it relates to honesty and integrity. Discuss why this frustration might exist and how you as the teacher would confront it. Provide at least 2 possible consequences for this behavior. Make sure you are able to justify this decision.

For Partners
15 minutes

Blinded Walk
Divide the class into pairs. Each pair will take turns guiding their blindfolded partner throughout the classroom, ensuring their safety from obstacles in their path. The goal is to successfully guide your partner throughout the classroom without them bumping into or tripping over anything! Emphasize that each seeing person is being trusted with their partner's safety. Switch roles and repeat.

For Individuals
15 minutes

My Ability to Trust Again
Reflection: Write about a time when someone had broken your trust and you were able to rebuild it again. How did that person gain your trust back? How were they able to show you with their actions that they were trustworthy?

Technology-Focused
15 minutes

Integrity Tweets
Watch the following video about texts from adults showing a lack of integrity https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wxK5RI5xkYk. Divide the class into small groups and discuss one of the tweets. How did the adult lack integrity? What was a better, honest option?

Rebuilding Trust

Students will complete a simple science experiment to illustrate the concept of rebuilding broken trust.

Lesson Timeframe
30 minutes

Required Materials
❏ 2 clear containers
❏ A coffee filter
❏ Water
❏ Index cards
❏ Pencils

Standards Map
This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, International Society for Technology in Education Standards, when applicable, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the Standards Map for more information.

Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Explore the concept of trust and how to rebuild it even after it has been broken.
- Identify areas of struggle as it relates to integrity and create a plan for increasing integrity on a personal level.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Being a teacher requires a higher-than-normal degree of integrity. In fact, it can sometimes feel like we are under the microscope; our students are watching us, their families are watching us, and our community is watching us. We often can't go to the grocery store or out for dinner without being recognized (or cornered!) Our middle school students are especially perceptive and look to their teachers for how to act, think, and relate. If you are feeling like there is too much pressure on you, remember that you are also an individual. You get to live your life as you choose to and you do have a life outside of school. Honor your free-time, your family, your hobbies, and your "me-time". Teachers are often held to a very high standard without necessarily receiving the respect, pay, and prestige the position and the individual deserves. Reclaim your personal integrity by feeding your mind, body, and soul with good things that are separate from the job. If you are at your best, then your students will be at their best, too.

Share

3-4 minutes

Think back to last week. How would you explain the connection between honesty and integrity? Invite Student Responses.

Inspire

4-6 minutes

Last week we explored the connection between honesty and integrity and the possible external negative consequences when we compromise ourselves with choices that do not line up with these concepts. This week our focus expands to include the concept of building broken trust.

Think back to our definition of integrity: "Doing what you know to be right and kind in all situations."

This definition does not leave room for the "gray area" of bending the truth. When we are true to ourselves and really take a hard look at the choices we make when we are alone or when no one is directly there to hold us accountable, we know immediately if we are acting with integrity. Every person is tempted to cut corners for a variety of reasons; maybe they are tired, they don't enjoy the assignment, or they are late. However, when we choose a life of integrity, we must aim to make consistently honest choices on a daily basis.

But how can I be honest and act with integrity 100% of the time? You can't. We are all human and we all slip up on occasion!

These slip-ups break down the trust others have in us. Little by little, they trust us less, giving us less freedom and watching us just a little closer than before. It may be tempting to assume that once this trust is broken it can never be repaired. Some people continue to make extremely dishonest choices simply because they fear they can never go back to being trusted again. THIS IS NOT TRUE. Although it takes a great deal of work to rebuild the trust that was lost through dishonesty, it can be rebuilt. Each honest choice you make repairs a little of the damage. Over time, this behavior is noticed the same way the prior negative behavior was. People may be hesitant at first to offer that trust back, but when you change your actions to reflect doing what you know is right and kind in every situation, trust can and will be restored over time.

It is NEVER too late to change. If you find yourself making dishonest choices or living a life that compromises integrity, there is always room to make a change. Look at your life and ask yourself: how can I make just one positive choice to increase my personal level of integrity?

Empower

15 minutes

Explain that the class will now complete a simple science experiment to illustrate how lies work and how building back trust is possible, albeit difficult. Patience is key!

Directions:

PART 1

- Using a clear container, have a volunteer fill it halfway with water.
- Explain that this container represents a person's level of integrity. We all start off with pure intentions and a completely honest and kind conscious. However, we are faced with choices, sometimes very difficult ones, every day of our lives.
- Each choice we make can either help us to stay honest and full of integrity, or it can cloud our focus by making a poor or dishonest choice.
- To illustrate, you will read a series of questions aloud. An honest choice that demonstrates integrity will result in a spoonful of salt in the container. A dishonest choice that lacks integrity will result in a spoonful of dirt in the container.
- Read each question aloud. Ask the class to answer yes or no to illustrate showing integrity (remind them that the meaning is acting in a way you know to be right and kind in all situations).
  - There are fresh baked cookies on the counter and no one is in the kitchen. One of the cookies broke and a piece fell onto the counter. Is it okay to eat that cookie?
  - Your parents tell you to finish all of your homework before going online to play games with your friends. You have a simple math assignment you need to complete, but you can probably finish it on the bus in the morning. Is it okay to play your game?
  - Your friend invites you over to her house. Your parents have told you you can only go if there is an adult supervising you. Your friend's brother just turned 18 last weekend, but no one else is home. Is it okay to go to her house?

- After all of the questions have been answered, examine the water by stirring it well and holding it up for the entire class to see. As a class, examine what the cloudiness represents. What happened to the person's integrity when they decided to make dishonest choices?

PART 2

- Using the second, empty container, explain that the class will now examine what happens when we make changes to increase our personal integrity.

- Place a coffee filter on top of the opening of the container. Explain that this filter represents the ability to rebuild trust with others.
- Read each scenario below and have a volunteer pour the cloudy water through the filter and into the fresh container.
    - There are fresh baked cookies on the counter and no one is in the kitchen. One of the cookies broke and a piece fell onto the counter. You pick it up and put it back on the plate.
    - Your parents tell you to finish all of your homework before going online to play games with your friends. You have a simple math assignment you need to complete. You are tempted to wait until the morning, but crank through it quickly, only losing 10 minutes in the process.
    - Your friend invites you over to her house. Your parents told you you can only go if there is an adult supervising you. Your friend's brother just turned 18. You decide to call home to check in and see if he counts under their "adult" policy.
- After all of the questions have been answered, examine the water again. Discuss how much clearer it is in comparison with the first bottle. Where did all the dirt from the lies and deceit go when you changed your behavior to focus on honesty and integrity?

Reflect

5-7 minutes

Provide each student with an index card. On it, have them write out one example of how they can rebuild trust with someone in their lives that they struggle with. This could be someone they don't trust OR someone they have broken trust with. Use these cards to assess their level of understanding around this concept.