

Integrity

This is the third week of our Integrity unit. Students will apply their understanding of integrity and practice perseverance in a context of honest choices regardless of temptation or frustration.

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 Small

Students will examine the connection between integrity and perseverance and work on breaking up career goals into positive, honest, and manageable steps. (See page 2 for lesson details.)

Mini Lessons

For Small Groups
15 minutes



Perseverance in Teamwork

Divide into groups of 4-6. Explain that each group will create their own invention that helps students complete their homework more quickly. The group must select 3 items from the classroom to use to create a model of their invention. Encourage each group to use perseverance and avoid loopholes as they work together to accomplish their goal.

For Partners
15 minutes



Examination of Print Media

Divide the class into pairs. Provide each pair with one current magazine aimed at teens. Each pair must identify one ad that is misleading. What message is being sent? How could the marketing department tweak this so it still sells, but does so in an honest, integral manner? Share your ad and answers with the class.

For Individuals
15 minutes



Letter to Self

Using the following prompts, write a letter to yourself. What do I want to be remembered for after I'm gone? Am I living in a way that encourages this type of memory? If not, how can I change? If so, how can I expand on my actions?

Technology-Focused
15 minutes



Truth in Headlines

Using the Internet, read headlines aloud and analyze them as a group. Are they honest, slightly misleading, or flat out lies? If time allows, rewrite the most misleading ones to reflect what the stories are truly about!

Start Small

Students will examine the connection between integrity and perseverance and work on breaking up career goals into positive, honest, and manageable steps.

Lesson Timeframe

30 minutes

Required Materials

- Paper
- 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:

- Examine their current decision making process as it relates to challenging goals.
- Practice making choices that reflect what they know to be right and kind.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Being a teacher often means you put others' needs before your own. This is a noble act but one that can slowly whittle away at our personal identities. Part of integrity, as you have been teaching your students, is about honesty; making honest decisions, especially when given more convenient or desirable options. Today, think honestly about the choices you make each day. Do you make decisions that serve your students only or do they serve you and your professional needs, too? Do you make choices largely based on pressure from administration or parents or colleagues? Or, do you stand up for what you believe to be right and kind? If an honest reflection reveals that you make decisions based on the influence of or for the benefit of others, while forsaking what you know to be a better choice, what can you do today to make small changes in your decision-making habits? How can you honor your good ideas, experience, and expertise and still work for the good of your students and the school? This might require having some courageous conversations which can be difficult, but they are worth having. Start today.



Share

3-5 minutes

We are halfway through our unit on integrity. We have covered the connection between honesty and integrity and how we have more control over decisions than we might have initially thought. This week our focus shifts to that of perseverance and the importance of incorporating integrity into our overall goals, whether big or small.

What does perseverance mean to you? (Invite student responses.)



Inspire

4-6 minutes

Many of us think of common phrases such as, “Never give up!” or, “Just keep trying!” This is a terrific place to start when exploring this concept. For this unit, the definition of perseverance is to keep trying, refusing to give up, even when something is difficult. This can be extremely difficult when your goals seem far off and unattainable. At this point in your middle school experience, many people expect that you have a fairly clear view of where you want to go and what you want to be in life. However, saying you want to be a doctor and actually sitting down and writing out all of the steps it will take to achieve this goal is very different.

It takes perseverance to accomplish goals of this magnitude. However, that overwhelming feeling of panic and doubt that frequently fills teens when they try to figure out every little step of how they are going to reach the lofty goals they have established in their lives doesn't have to take over. Some people even abandon their dreams because they can't break it down into a manageable series of doable steps.

The world is big on achieving your dreams and reaching for goals that might feel impossible when you first start out. However, we must also make sure that we keep honesty and integrity at the forefront of our path towards achieving our goals. There are many people in the world that have accomplished their dreams, but have done so through dishonest ways that required them to compromise their integrity. Our goal here is to become a kinder, more honest person through each goal we achieve. Remember that the definition of integrity is doing what you know to be right and kind in all situations. If we keep that in our minds as we persevere towards our goals, we will be less likely to try and achieve those goals in a dishonest manner!



Empower

15 minutes

Explain that the class will now play a game to examine large, life-changing goals and work together to establish the initial 5 steps that can be taken toward moving just a little bit closer to that dream.

1. As a class, brainstorm career goals that people have. The classic, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” question can be asked. However, you may ask a broader question, such as, “If you could be anything, what would it be?” Select 3-5 career goals for this activity. If desired, save the list and repeat the game with the other goals throughout the year to reinforce the skill over time.
2. Divide the class into small groups. Give each group one of the career goals. Brainstorm the first five steps a teen could take towards this goal. Have one person record the steps and have another share the steps with the class as a whole.
 - a. Example:
Becoming president of the United States.
Step 1 might be to learn about how our government works.
Step 2 might be writing a letter to the current president.

3. Have each group share the career goal they were given and the steps they identified. As a whole group, discuss how to accomplish each step while remaining honest and practicing personal integrity.



Reflect

5-7 minutes

As a class, discuss the temptation to be dishonest in the steps you take towards a larger goal.

- If given the opportunity, how would you respond to someone offering you an “easier” way to reach your goal?
- Why is the “easy route” frequently not the “best route”?
- What can you do if your initial attempt to accomplish your goal doesn’t work?
- Who can you turn to if you feel unprepared or overwhelmed with the goal you wish to accomplish?