

# Practicing Truthfulness

## STEP 1 Life Need (5–10 minutes)

- Identify subtle lies in a story.
- ☐ *Bible Adventures* p. 1, pencils

## STEP 2 Bible Learning (15–20 minutes)

- Bible Study:** Discuss Christ's description of the basis of truth and lies.
  - ☐ *Bible Adventures* pp. 2–3, Bibles, "Ten Commandments" Teaching Aid
- Bible Review:** Play a game to review some important words from the unit.
  - ☐ "Whiz Word," Teaching Aid—assembled before class, "Game Instructions" Teaching Aid—photo-copy before class, paper fastener, whiteboard and marker or paper and pencil, dictionary
- Optional:** Act out the story of Jesus and His confrontation with the Pharisees.
  - ☐ *Optional materials:* simple costumes and props

## STEP 3 Bible Application (5–10 minutes)

- Finish a story that shows how one lie can lead to another.
  - ☐ "It's Up to You" Teaching Aid—separate cards before class

## STEP 4 Life Response (about 5 minutes)

- Memory Work:** Ask God for help to be honest.
  - ☐ *Bible Adventures* p. 4, pencils
- Optional Activity:** Prayer journal assignment

## Memory Verse

"Speak the truth to each other."  
—Zechariah 8:16

## Bible Basis:

God commands people to tell the truth (Exod. 20:16). Jesus discusses the origin of truth and the origin of lies (John 8:12–47).

## Bible Truth:

Truth comes from God, so He desires His people to be truthful.

## Lesson Aim:

That your students will desire to live a life of truthfulness.

## Understanding the Bible

This week we take a look at God's commandment about telling the truth.

In John 8:12–47, Jesus was speaking to a religious audience—especially the Pharisees. He told them that the reason they were having difficulty understanding His truth was that they wanted to do the desire of their father, the devil. Since the devil was a liar and had no truth in him, the Pharisees were likewise affected, because they were the devil's children.

One characteristic of the devil is his opposition to truth. This appears clearly in the account of the first temptation in Genesis 3:1–5. Here Satan not only lied to Eve, but he also accused God of being a liar.

Jesus' statement about His audience's being the children of the devil is best understood in light of 1 John 3:7–10 and Romans 5:12, 19. The verses in Romans tell us that Adam's sin—a result of the temptation of Satan—has resulted in making all of Adam's descendants sinners. Accepting Christ as our Savior frees us from this heritage and the bondage to sin.

1 John 3:7–10 teaches the need to be born again in order to have God as our Father and to be free from the compulsion to disobey.

—continued on next page

☐ indicates items you will need to prepare before class

## Understanding the Bible —cont'd

John 8:12-47 instructs us to be truthful in all things. This passage also states that the very ability to be truthful and receptive to truth depends on having God as our Father! The only way to have God as our Father is to put our faith for salvation in Christ.

Numerous commands of Scripture require Christians to be truthful. One of the Ten Commandments and several other verses directly command us not to lie (Exod. 20:16; Eph. 4:25; Col. 3:9). We are also commanded to be like our heavenly Father, who is perfectly truthful. To practice untruthfulness is to be like Satan, rather than like God. The command to love others (Rom. 13:8-10; Eph. 4:15; 1 John 3:18) necessarily includes truthfulness. To tell untruths about others is to sin against God.

## TIPS

### Classroom

**These tips may help you give your students an appreciation of the value of truthfulness.**

- “Lies in Disguise,” found on page 1 of *Bible Adventures* and used in this week’s lesson, can be helpful in identifying subtle forms of lying. This mystery uses language and situations familiar to your students.
- If you have a student who tells “big stories,” help him see that this is a form of untruth. You may want to take him aside and talk to him privately about this habit.
- You may want to point out that friendship is often determined by trust and truthfulness between friends.
- Remind your students that we can always trust God to tell the truth and keep all His promises. He is our example.

## PRESESSION ACTIVITIES

Choose from these activities for your students to do as others are arriving.

■ Have the students make up and/or illustrate stories in which everything is exaggerated and outlandish. For example: a boy who is so tall he bumps his head on airplanes, or a girl who can run so fast she races in the Indy 500 and wins.

□ paper, pens

■ To show your students how even small lies can make a difference, play a form of the game “telephone.” Use a simple sentence with words that can be changed easily such as “The fat, black cat ran into the house.” Have the class sit in a circle. Whisper your sentence to the first person. He in turn will change just one word of the sentence and then whisper his version to the next person. The sentence will continue this way until it reaches the last person—with one word being changed each time. The last person will repeat the sentence he heard. This ending version can then be compared to the original sentence.

■ For Worship Time, use songs for this quarter on the DisKit CD from the *Upper Elementary Creative Teaching Aids* packet.

□ DisKit CD, CD player



## Understanding Your Students

Most preteens are discerning enough to distinguish truth from falsehood, and to distinguish different shades of truth. However, there may be varying degrees of truthfulness practiced among children this age. Some are strictly truthful; some try to tell the truth but admit moments of failure;

some tell only what they consider “stories”; some tell whoppers to make impressions on people; some try to avoid telling a lie by saying nothing.



## STEP 1

Life Need  
(5–10 minutes)

## Lesson Aim:

That your students will  
desire to live a life of  
truthfulness.



**Objective:** That your students will recognize that half-truths, exaggerations, and alibis are subtle lies.

**Materials:**

□ Bible Adventures p. 1, pencils

To prepare students for the Bible study on truthful living from Exodus 20:16 and John 8:12-47, preteens will discuss lying versus telling the truth.

Do you like mystery stories? How good are you at solving mysteries? Can you recognize a criminal even when he's disguised? Lies are a bit like criminals. They can be disguised too. You will have an opportunity to play detective today and see how many lies you can uncover.

Have students turn to page 1 in Bible Adventures. Choose someone to read the paragraph at the top of the page.

- ▶ **What is an exaggeration?** (*It's an overstatement, a stretching of the truth, something blown out of proportion.*)
- ▶ **How would you define a half-truth?** (*This is something that is only partly true or gives only some of the facts.*)

Ask a volunteer to read Margie's version of what happened. Her story is found in the Detecto machine on the right side of the page. Let your students mark the disguised lies according to the directions at the bottom of the page.

- ▶ **What were some of the disguised lies you found in Margie's story?** (*Margie stopped to play ball instead of coming straight home. Margie broke the window. The man was angry at her for breaking his window. The man didn't chase the children.*)

Now let's see how good you are at detecting the specific kinds of lies.

- ▶ **What are some of the exaggerations?** (*The man was mean and the dog tore open the bread and eggs.*)
- ▶ **How about half-truths or things Margie left out of her story?** (*Margie played ball, broke the window, and ruined the bread and eggs when she dropped the bag.*)
- ▶ **Why did Margie tell such a story?** (*She did it to cover up her own misdeeds and to excuse herself. Margie was probably afraid of being punished. Margie blamed others.*)
- ▶ **What do you think might happen when Margie's parents find out the truth?** (*They may not believe her anymore; she will have to pay for the broken window; perhaps they won't trust her to run errands.*) When someone is in the habit of telling lies, people don't believe what he says even when he's telling the truth.
- ▶ **Why do people lie?** (*They are being selfish or lazy, exaggerating the truth for attention, or are afraid of the consequences of their actions.*)
- ▶ **Is it easier to lie or tell the truth? Why?**
- ▶ **When was a time you had courage to tell the truth in a difficult situation?**

Jesus knew how easy it is to fall into these sneaky kinds of lies. So He spoke to us about our need to be truthful. Let's study what He said about being truthful.



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Options for Steps 1 and 4.  
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## STEP 2

### Bible Learning

(15–20 minutes)

### Bible Basis:

God commands people to tell the truth (Exod. 20:16). Jesus discusses the origin of truth and the origin of lies (John 8:12-47).

**Objective:** That your students will learn what Christ taught about the basis of truth and lies.

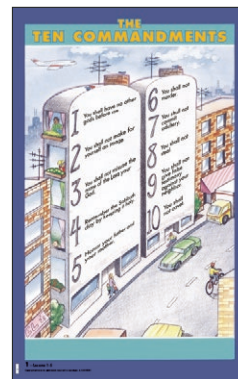
#### Materials:

- ☐ Bible Adventures pp. 2–3, Bibles
- ☐ “Ten Commandments” Teaching Aid
- ☐ Optional materials: simple costumes and props
- ☐ “Whiz Word” Teaching Aid—assembled before class, “Game Instruction” Teaching Aid—photocopy before class, paper fastener, whiteboard and marker or paper and pencil, dictionary

#### Bible Study

Have your students open to pages 2 and 3 of *Bible Adventures*, “Truthful Living.” Ask for a student volunteer to read the opening paragraph. You can read the footnote (number 1) to the class. Add any other background information that you desire. The Pharisees are depicted as Jesus’ arch rivals and were known for their strict adherence to not only Moses’ laws, but also to other rules they had added over the years. Also point out “The Ten Commandments” Teaching Aid and the ninth command to not give false testimony against your neighbor.

After you have finished the introduction, have your students look up John 8:12-13. Ask a volunteer to read the verses. Then discuss the following questions. The second footnote follows the first question.





 **What did Jesus call Himself?** (*The Light of the World.*)


 **Why didn’t the Pharisees believe Him?**  
(*They told Him he was acting as His own witness.*)

Ask your students to put this in their own words or to give an example of someone testifying on his own behalf. Then move on to the next transitional paragraph, asking a student to read it aloud.

Choose a different student to read the first section of Scripture Spotlight, John 8:31-33. Then discuss these questions.

 **What do you think Jesus meant by “the truth”?** (*This is a tough question. Your students may say truth is not telling a lie. Help them go beyond that idea to understand that Jesus is talking about knowing God and seeing that Jesus is the way to salvation.*)


 **How can the truth set us free?** (*If we obey Jesus’ teaching, we can know the truth and be free from sin.*)

 **Name a time when telling the truth has set you free.** (*Students may recount a time when they were tempted to lie but told the truth. They may have been rewarded, or they just may have felt a big relief at not having to maintain a lie.*)


Have a volunteer read the next section of Scripture Spotlight, John 8:34-36.

BIBLE STUDY BASED ON EXODUS 20:16; JOHN 8:12-47

# TRUTHFUL LIVING



<sup>1</sup>Pharisees studied God’s law and decided how it should be kept. They tended to believe they were better than those who didn’t, or couldn’t keep all their interpretations of the law. Many Pharisees were good, God-fearing men. Nicodemus and Paul were Pharisees.



<sup>2</sup>The Bible often uses images of light and darkness to picture Jesus’ power over evil and sin.

*They answered him, “We are Abraham’s descendants\* and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?”*

**Read John 8:12-13. What did Jesus call Himself? Why didn’t the Pharisees believe Him?**

Jesus continued to talk about Himself and His heavenly Father. He spoke boldly because He was sure of His relationship with God. More and more people began to believe that Jesus really was the promised Savior.

**Scripture Spotlight**  
John 8:31-36  
*“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*

**What do you think Jesus meant by “the truth”? How can the truth set us free? Name a time when telling the truth has set you free.**

*Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”*

**What were the Pharisees slaves to? How could Jesus set them free?**

The Pharisees said they were children of God because Abraham





was their father—their ancestor. But Jesus said that if they were God's children they would love and believe Him, because God sent Him. If they were God's children, they would hear what God says just as Abraham did.

**Read John 8:44. Who did Jesus say was the father of the Pharisees? Why? What did Jesus call the devil?**

The Pharisees could find no fault in Jesus. But they refused to believe He was the promised Savior. By doing that, they didn't believe God's truth.

**Look up Ephesians 4:25 and 1 John 3:18-19. What do these verses tell Christians?**

Sometimes it can be frightening to tell the truth. If we do, we may get in trouble, or others may not like us. But the Bible makes it clear that God always tells the truth and keeps His promises. As Christians we want to be like Jesus and His Father, God.

**Read Exodus 20:16. Restate this verse in your own words. When is it hardest for you to be truthful?**



<sup>3</sup>Jews, and Pharisees in particular, thought of Abraham as their spiritual and earthly father.



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▶ **What were the Pharisees slaves to?** (Sin.)

▶ **How could Jesus set them free?** (If they believed in Jesus, they would become God's children.)

Have students read through the next paragraph silently. When they have finished, ask a volunteer to look up and read John 8:44 from the Bible.

▶ **Who did Jesus say was the father of the Pharisees? Why?** (Jesus told them their father was the devil, because they were doing what the devil does.)

▶ **What did Jesus call the devil?** (The father of lies.)

Read aloud this transitional paragraph from *Bible Adventures*, reprinted here: **The Pharisees could find no fault in Jesus. But they refused to believe He was the promised Savior. By doing that, they didn't believe God's truth.** Then have two students look up Ephesians 4:25 and 1 John 3:18-19 from the Bible. Ask a student to read each passage.

▶ **What do these verses tell Christians?** (Ephesians tells us to be sure we don't hurt other Christians by being untruthful. First John 3:18

says that true love must be real and take action.)

Have a volunteer read the concluding paragraph to the class. Reiterate the idea that God is always truthful and faithful, and that God's children follow in His footsteps. Then have them look up Exodus 20:16. Ask for volunteers for the first question.

▶ **Restate this verse in your own words.** (Allow as many as possible to answer.)

▶ **When is it hardest for you to be truthful?** (Students will tend to answer in third person terms applicable to others their age. Such responses might be: When you get caught doing something wrong; when you and a sibling get in trouble; when your parents say no and you want them to change their minds; when you lie and need to cover it up.)

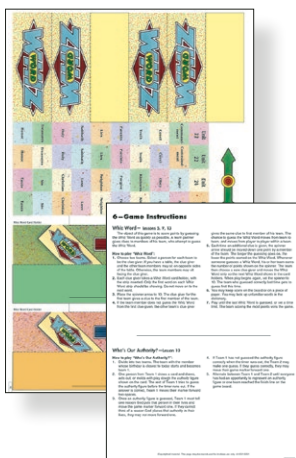
## Bible Review

Use the "Whiz Word" Teaching Aid to review facts from previous lessons this quarter. Before class assemble "Whiz Word" according to the directions on the teaching aid. Photocopy the "Game Instructions" sheet. Set out the spinner and clues for Lesson 5. After playing the game, ask this question:

▶ **How does following the Ten Commandments help you be truthful?**

## Optional Activity

If you have the space and time, act out the Bible story. Simple props like bathrobes, sandals, and towel headdresses would make good costumes.



# STEP 3

## Bible Application

(5–10 minutes)



**Objective:** That students realize that telling one lie can lead to another and affect the outcome of a situation.

### Materials:

- “It’s Up to You” Teaching Aid—separate cards before class

To reinforce the importance of telling the truth, use “It’s Up to You” Teaching Aid.

This is a choose-your-own-ending type of story. Students will listen to the beginning of a story, then decide whether or not the main character will choose to make truthful choices. Each choice will direct them to a different card, resulting in multiple endings to the story.

Before class, separate the cards. Display the cards. **These cards contain a story about a girl named Ashley who faces several difficult choices about being truthful. What happens to Ashley is up to you.**

Shuffle the cards and distribute them so that everyone has about an equal number. If time is short you may want to read the cards and let the students make a choice. Emphasize that it’s safe to explore both good and bad choices since this is an imaginary situation.

Whoever received Card 1 will begin reading the story aloud and then decide between the numbered choices at the bottom of the card. The person holding the card with that number will continue reading the story, then choose between the numbered choices at the bottom of his or her card.

After finishing the story once, the person holding Card 1 will read the last paragraph of that card and read the choices once more. You may proceed in this manner until students have completed the story in three, four, or more ways.

- ▶ **What general conclusions can you draw about what happened when Ashley lied or tried to cover up the truth?** *(One lie usually resulted in another lie. Trying to cover up the truth usually resulted in making the whole situation worse.)*
- ▶ **Why should she have told the truth, then, if it didn’t get her out of trouble?** *(Ashley made a bad choice at the beginning of the story; the consequences she had to pay were a natural result of that choice. The consequences of lying or trying to cover up were much worse than when she told the truth.)*
- ▶ **How does telling a lie affect the final outcome of a situation?**

## STEP 4

Life Response  
(5–10 minutes)

### Bible Truth:

Truth comes from God, so He desires His people to be truthful.

**Objective:** That your students will ask God for help to be honest at all times.

#### Materials:

☐ Bible Adventures p. 4, pencils

#### Memory Work

Have students turn to page 4 in *Bible Adventures*. Our Key Verse today is “Speak the truth to each other,” Zechariah 8:16. This means being honest in all kinds of situations, even though at times it is hard to tell the truth.

As you mark these truth tests, be honest with yourself. These matters are between you and the Lord. You won’t be asked to tell what you marked. They are to help you see areas where you may need God’s help. Allow time for students to study the three situations they may be able to relate to in which it could take courage to be truthful, then have them rank their difficulty. Have them complete the section, “A Prayer for Passing Marks.” Encourage students to sit in different areas around the classroom to provide some privacy. Gather students back together when they are finished.

 **Being truthful has its own rewards. When people know that we always try to be honest, they trust us. Look over the situations on this page.**

**What are some other benefits of being honest?** *(You can make new friends; you can help people live better lives; you could get a reward; your parents and other people will have confidence in you.)*

Being truthful at all times is difficult. We need God’s help to do it. If we sin, we need to confess our sins, and God will forgive us. God will help you to be truthful.

#### Closing Activities

Close the class with a prayer that summarizes the commandments studied during this unit. You may make up your own prayer or use this one: Dear God, we have been studying Your commandments, and we need Your help to follow them more closely. Please guide and help us as we put You first in our lives, keep Your day special, and honor our parents. Turn us aside from greed and help us to be honest at all times. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

#### Optional Activity

In your prayer journal, write your memory verse and any situations you encounter this week when it is difficult to be truthful. Ask God to give you the courage to be truthful. Write praises to Him for the courage He gives to tell the truth.

