**Topic: Honesty**

**Bible: Proverbs 12:22 & Colossians 3:9-10**

**Activity: Truth or Lie**

Break up into small groups. Give each preteen a 3x5 index card and a pen. Instruct each preteen to write a story that actually happened in their life. As they write their story, explain that they should add in a few details that ***DID NOT*** really happen. Let each preteen share their story with the group. After they’ve finished, the group should guess which parts were true and which events were false.

*\*For a simple version of this game: have preteens write 2 true statements and 1 false statement about themselves. Have each preteen to read their 3 statements and allow the small group to guess the truths and the lie.*

**After the activity, say**: Was it hard to detect some of the false statements from others? It’s not that easy to always tell if someone is telling you the truth, is it? Have any of you ever been lied to? (Pause for responses) How did it make you feel? How did it affect your relationship with that person? (Pause for responses)

Here’s an even bigger question, have any of you ever told a lie? How do you think that lie made others feel? Nothing good comes from lying. It hurts others, and it inevitably ends up hurting you.

Lies really damage our relationships with others. They destroy the trust that friends have in one another, and it’s hard to keep a friendship with no trust. How do you think God reacts to lies? Have you ever thought of the way He feels about lies? Lying does the same amount of damage to our relationship with God. If you don’t believe me, just look at the story of Ananias and Sapphira. Open your Bibles to Acts 5.

**Read Acts 5:1-11**

Ananias and Sapphira were doing what should’ve been a good thing, right? They were giving to the church to help the poor. And yet, God didn’t accept their gift. Why? (Allow preteens to give the answer *“because they lied”*) Ananias and Sapphira lied about the amount of money that they received for the land, and they kept some of it for themselves. Notice what Peter said to them, “You have not lied to men but to God.” Peter was pointing out that their lie was a sin against God.

The story of Ananias and Sapphira is not meant to make you feel like if you tell a lie that you’re going to drop dead right there! That’s not the point of the story. But the story does show us how lying can hurt others and hurt our relationship to God.

**Proverbs 12:22** says, “The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful.” The word “detests” literally means that it makes God nauseous and sick. It is like a foul taste or odor to Him. God is perfect, and He cannot lie. When we lie, we are acting as the direct opposite of who God is. He is truth, and we are liars. The Bible tells us that the two can’t go together. God ***detests*** lying lips!

But look at the second part of this verse. It says, “but he delights in men who are truthful.” What a difference! He *detests* lies, but he *delights* in truth. The word “delights” means that God is pleased and satisfied with us when we are honest. Our honesty is a way that we show God to the world.

Colossians 3:9-10 says, “Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.” As Christians, we have been called to live differently than the world. Jesus Christ has changed us from the inside out and made us to live in a way that represents God. This means that we are called to be men/women “who are truthful.”

We’re going to spend some time talking about honesty in our small groups. I want you to really think about any dishonest things that might be hurting your relationships. You’ll have a chance to ask God for forgiveness and help in those areas at the end of small group time.

**As a small group, discuss HONESTY using the following questions:**

* What are some reasons that people lie?
* Do you think it’s ever okay to lie? What would make it okay?
* What was the problem with Ananias and Sapphira’s gift to the church?
* Why do you think they lied about the money?
* What was the consequence for the lied by Ananias and Sapphira?
* What are some consequences that you might face for lying?
* How does lying affect your relationship with others? With God?
* Read the Scripture passages and explain what they saying about honesty:

**Exodus 20:16**

**Proverbs 4:23-27**

**Proverbs 6:16-20**

**Proverbs 10:9**

**Proverbs 19:5**

**Proverbs 12:22**

**Proverbs 25:18**

**Luke 16:10**

**Philippians 4:8**

**Colossians 3:9-10**

**1 Peter 2:12**

**Small Group Activity: Give It to God**

For each small group, provide a shoebox or coffee can and a few slips of paper for each preteen. Explain to preteens again that dishonesty hurts our relationships with others and with God. The best way to move forward is to confess those things to God and ask for His help and forgiveness. Give preteens some time to write down 2 or 3 lies that they have told. They may want to write them in code or fold their slips over if they’re worried about others seeing what they’ve written. After they’ve finished writing on the slips of paper, lead the group in a prayer to ask God for forgiveness and guidance for these things. Place all the slips of paper into the shoebox and remind preteens that they can give those things to God and look to Him for help with being an honest friend.