



A FEW WORDS TO THE LEADER

Eleven-year-old Nicholas is an aspiring cartoonist. His fertile imagination brings McGee to life. This cartoon character is Nick's sounding board whenever a decision between right and wrong has to be made. McGee's prodding is often less than helpful as he and Nick encounter unique adventures.

In this episode, Nicholas has moved to a new town and is trying to make friends in the neighborhood. On the first day in his new school, he gets pressured into letting a little lie go uncorrected. The story spreads that Nick bravely confronted an elderly neighbor who children believe is mean and evil. As the lie grows, so does Nick's popularity. He fails to stop the lie because it seems harmless enough. Then the lie suddenly turns ugly and the consequences are devastating, leading Nicholas and McGee to confront the value of being truthful and kind.

Like Nicholas, every child faces situations when a little lie looks harmless, even attractive. Without intending to be deceitful, a child will "fudge the truth" in an attempt to:

- *win friends*
- *earn rewards*
- *avoid penalties*
- *excuse mistakes*
- *gain respect*
- *achieve a desirable goal*

This session will help children identify the damage that lies do to people and the importance of truth and kindness in all relationships.

Because children learn through many channels (and different children learn best in different ways), truly effective teaching should involve a full spectrum of learning approaches. While "The Big Lie" is an exciting story in itself, this leader's guide suggests a variety of learning approaches that can reinforce the impact of the video and help greatly in accomplishing the objective of the lesson.

KEY VALUE

While overlooking a little lie once in a while may appear harmless enough to a child, the child and others can easily be hurt as a result. This lesson is intended to communicate the value of being truthful and kind in all relationships.

Materials Needed:

- "The Big Lie" video
- Print-outs of activities included after the lesson pages.
- Chalkboard and chalk or large poster paper and markers. Paper, scissors, pencils.
- Backpack, pillow case, or shopping bag and items to be placed in them (see page 11, "A Heavy Load".)

KEY BIBLE VERSES

- *"Never forget to be truthful and kind. Hold these virtues tightly. Write them deep within your heart." Proverbs 3:3*
- *"Telling lies about someone is as harmful as hitting him with an axe, or wounding him with a sword, or shooting him with a sharp arrow." Proverbs 25:18*
- *"Stop lying to each other; tell the truth, for we are parts of each other and when we lie to each other we are hurting ourselves." Ephesians 4:25*

Leader's Note:

Older Children (grades 3-6) are becoming capable of understanding honesty as a character trait, not just as a response to a specific situation. They can take into account more subtle and complex factors.

Younger Children (grades 1-2) see honesty and dishonesty mainly in terms of their observable consequences. If there is an obvious and direct negative result to a lie, the younger child finds it easy to see the lie as wrong. This child finds it difficult to understand inner motives and complex results



SESSION OBJECTIVE

As a result of this session, children will understand the importance of telling the truth, even when it is difficult.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome the group with enthusiasm by saying something like: *"It's really great to see you all here! I know we're going to have a wonderful time together watching McGee and Nicholas in action and then talking about their experiences. How many of you have seen at least one of the McGee and Me! videos?"* Have them raise their hands. *"You know how exciting they are! Those of you who have never seen one are in for an exciting adventure! But before we see the first one, I have a couple of contests for you."*

"FIND THE HIDDEN WORD"

On the chalkboard or a large sheet of poster paper mounted on the wall, show the following sentences that you have previously written with the appropriate words underlined.

"I like to keep my little lice alive by feeding them slippery limes. Do you believe me?"

Tell everyone to read the sentences and to look carefully at the underlined words, and explain that each of the underlined words contains the same hidden word although other letters may be in between. Then see who can find the hidden word.

- *NOTE: The hidden word is "lie". For younger children, give the following clues one at a time until someone gives the right answer: it has three letters; the letters are in the correct order; it begins with L, it is the opposite of "truth."*

"FIND THE LIE"

Congratulate the group on finding "Lie," then explain that you are going to read two situations where statements are given. Their job is to listen carefully and tell you which statements they think are probably false and which ones are probably true.

READ THE FOLLOWING SITUATION ALOUD:

At school, kids are telling about what they did during their summer vacation.

- **Mary says:** *"On our family vacation, we went to Disney World. "*
- **Josh says:** *"On vacation, I took a ride on the space shuttle. "*
- **Corey says:** *"Last summer I saw the Statue of Liberty. "*

Ask which person (or persons) they think was telling a lie. After they answer, ask which persons (or person) they think were telling the truth.

NOTE: The statement by Josh will receive the most votes for a lie.

Then ask why someone would tell a lie in that situation (Answer: to impress someone.)

READ THE FOLLOWING SITUATION ALOUD:

Mrs. Johnson hears a crash in the kitchen. Rushing into the room, she sees a vase on the floor in a thousand pieces, and Jason is standing there. She asks Jason what happened. Jason thinks about what he could say.

He could say:

- *"The dog knocked it over, and then I let him outside. "*
- *"We were playing football inside, and the ball hit it. "*
- *"I don't know. The wind must have blown it off the table. "*

Ask which of those statements they think is probably true and which ones are probably lies. (Answer: the middle one is probably true.)

Ask why someone might tell a lie in a situation like that. (Answer: to protect himself—to avoid being punished.)

Ask for other reasons that kids might tell lies. (Possible answers: to earn rewards, to win friends, to look good, to excuse mistakes, etc.)

NOTE: Have younger children simply spot the "lie" in each situation instead of having them decide who was telling the truth. Then ask them why a person might tell a lie in a situation like that.

"THE BIG LIE"

Introduce "The Big Lie" episode of *McGee and Me!* by saying something like: *"In this story a boy named Nicholas and his cartoon friend McGee cause all kinds of trouble without really meaning to. All Nicholas really wants to do is make friends in his new school, but somehow he ends up letting a lie spread through the school—a lie that really gets out of control."*

SHOW THE FIRST PART OF VIDEO:

ACT ONE: Nicholas goes off to his first day in a new school with his cartoon friend McGee urging him to try to make a big first impression. Nick endures bad first experiences with the school's coach and the neighborhood bully. Nick (prodded by McGee) then tries to impress Louis with his bravery by exploring a mysterious old house, but he falls through rotten boards into a cellar filled with caged animals.

ACT TWO: Nick and McGee escape the cellar and the old Indian who lives there. The next morning Louis questions Nick about terrible atrocities said to go on inside that house. In his desire to win Louis's friendship, Nick lets Louis believe he saw evidence of the Indian's cruelty. At school the story spreads, making Nick a hero, the Indian a savage villain, and the neighborhood bully jealous of Nick's notoriety. Later Nick discovers the truth about the old Indian and begins to realize how wrong he has been to let the lie spread.

STOP THE VIDEO AFTER THE MUSIC AS THE CAMERA FADES FROM NICK'S SKETCH OF THE FACE OF JESUS.

PLAY
Part 1

VIDEO PRESENTATION -
15 MINUTES



"LET'S TALK ABOUT IT"

Ask children to respond to these questions to help them evaluate Nick's actions so far and to think through why telling the truth would have been far better for everyone involved.

1. *What was the lie?*
2. *How did it get out of control?*
3. *Why didn't Nicholas tell everyone the truth?*
4. *Who was hurt by the lie?*
5. *What might have happened if Nicholas had told the truth?*
6. *For those of you who haven't seen this before, what do you think happens next in the story?*

NOTE: For younger children, eliminate questions 2 and 5.

If children's comments indicate that any of them did not notice, or misunderstood, some facet of the story, it will be helpful for you to clarify what really was said or done. But try not to add "editorial" comments or to draw conclusions during this discussion. The idea here is to draw out what the children are thinking and feeling about what Nicholas has done and to nudge them to try to evaluate his behavior.

If children express conflicting ideas, simply accept the diversity with a comment such as, *"We don't know if Nicholas was thinking that way, but that could be a reason why someone would not tell the truth."*

After taking a few answers to the last question, say: *"Let's find out."*



"THE BIG LIE"

SHOW REMAINDER OF VIDEO.

**VIDEO PRESENTATION-
10 MINUTES**

ACT THREE: Nicholas arrives too late to stop Derrick and his gang from damaging the old house. Feeling deep remorse over the consequences of not telling the truth, Nicholas goes to work trying to clean up the damage. As he works, he and McGee reflect on "how much lying, even a little lie, really hurts."

"WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?"

Turn off the video and get the six **Bible Verse Word Cards**. These should be printed from the PDF at the end of this file and cut beforehand.

Say something like: *"At the beginning of the story, Nicholas read a verse in the Bible that says, 'Never forget to be truthful and kind.'* (Show Truth and Kindness cards in one hand.) *'Hold these virtues tightly. Write them deep within your heart. '"*

Ask these questions:

"How could somebody hold tightly to truth and kindness?" (Possible answers: make a choice to be truthful and kind; look for ways to speak the truth and do kind acts; always think about truth and kindness; etc.)

"What do you think made Nick forget to be truthful and kind? Why did he let go of them?"

NOTE: Give younger children possible answers for each questions.

After several children respond, pick up other cards one at a time and comment: *"Nicholas really wanted to make FRIENDS, have the kids RESPECT him, become POPULAR at his new school, and have FUN. But in trying to get these other things, he forgot to hold tightly to TRUTH and KINDNESS—he did not choose to do things that are true and kind. "* As you pick up the other cards, let the TRUTH and KINDNESS cards slip from your hand.

Hold all the cards in one hand and say something like: *"Of course it is possible to hold on to TRUTH and KINDNESS while having FRIENDS, RESPECT, POPULARITY, and FUN. But there will be times when you may lose the last four things if you do what is right. When you are tempted to let go of TRUTH and KINDNESS, remember God's instructions that we read in the Bible to 'hold on.' God knows what's best for us."*

"TO TELL THE TRUTH"

Explain that because this session has been about telling the truth, you want to see who can tell the truth about each item you mention. You will say something like: *"Tell me the truth about _____ (a thing, person, or idea)."* Students should then stand if they have something to say. Then you should point to them one at a time and have them tell something true. Here are some statements to use:

- ***Tell me the truth about this chair.***
- ***Tell me the truth about the ceiling.***
- ***Tell me the truth about this room.***
- ***Tell me the truth about the weather.***
- ***Tell me the truth about McGee.***
- ***Tell me the truth about the world.***
- ***Tell me the truth about friends.***
- ***Tell me the truth about me.***
- ***Tell me the truth about God.***
- ***Tell me the truth about telling the truth.***



NOTE: If you have less than an hour for the session, move the first game along quickly (perhaps even skipping a statement or two), making sure that you get to the last two statements.

NOTE: These statements progress from concrete to abstract. Children will have to think more about their answers to the last two questions.

BIBLE VERSE GAME

Print the pages at the end of this PDF of the verse cards for Proverbs 3:3—"Never forget to be truthful and kind. Hold these virtues tightly. Write them deep within your heart"/ Cut the pages into separate word cards. Mix up the cards and then have children put them in the correct order. Do this a couple of times with different children each time. Then lead the group (or volunteers) in repeating the verse from memory.

NOTE: For younger children, use just the first phrase of this verse, "Never forget to be truthful and kind."

"TRUTHFUL AND KIND" (7 minutes—grades 3-6)

Write the letters to "truthful" vertically on the a blackboard or poster sized sheet of paper.

T
R
U
T
H
F
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L

Then see how many ways to be truthful and kind children can give beginning with each of the letters on the board.

Note: these should be phrases or sentences, and only the first letter of the first word should begin with the letter (e.g., "Thank Mom for her hard work"; "Really mean what / say"; "Understand my brother"; "Tell my friend something good about him"; "Help my sister"; etc.)

"BIBLE SEARCH" (7 minutes-grades 3-6)

Make sure everyone has access to a Bible. Have them work individually or in pairs. If you have a number of visitors who aren't familiar with the Bible, pair them with someone who is.

Call out Bible references on "truth" and "kindness" (one at a time) to look up and read aloud. When a person (or one person in the pair) finds the verse, have him or her stand. But don't have him or her read the verse until everyone else has found it. The first person to stand and read the verse is awarded points. After each verse is read, emphasize what it teaches about truth and kindness. Afterward, total the points and announce the winning person or team.

Note: If your group has kids who are very quick at finding verses and could dominate the competition, explain the rule that anyone who gets three right has to "retire at the top. "

Here are some possible references to use:

TRUTH

Proverbs 12:17
John 16:13
2 Samuel 7:28
Proverbs 12:19
Isaiah 45:19
Psalm 12:6
John 14:6
add others

KINDNESS

Proverbs 19:22
Matthew 5:7
1 Corinthians 13:4
Ephesians 4:32
Galatians 6:10
Colossians 3:12
add others

NOTE: You don't have to use all these verses. Cut off the contest if it begins to drag. Also, you may want to discuss some of the verses, asking the kids for examples from their experience (e.g., "Who do you know who does what this verse says?")•

"TRUTHFUL AND KIND WORDS" (5 minutes-grades 3-6)

Print a copy of the "Person List" (found at the end of this PDF) for each child. If you don't have tables, make sure the children have something hard to write on.

"Person List"

- Family
- Friends
- Neighbors
- Kids at school
- Kids at church

Distribute the "Person lists" and pencils. Tell the children to write one name in each category. After everyone has finished, have them write one kind thing to do for and one truthful thing that they could say about each person.

Then have them circle the one they will do that week. Have them take these papers home and do the action they circled.

NOTE: If kids have trouble thinking of kind and truthful statements, give them some suggestions. For example, they could write . . . Family: Mom—thank her for the good meal; Friends: Mary—tell her that she played well at the piano recital; Neighbors: Mrs. Smith—tell her that her flowers are pretty; Kids at school: Joe—compliment him on the good basketball game he played; Kids at church: Brenda—compliment her on her new hair style.

"HOW LIES HURT" (8 minutes—grades 1-2)

Distribute paper, scissors, and pencils or felt-tip markers (and a pattern arrow for younger children to trace). Remind children that Proverbs 25:18 says telling lies is like shooting someone with arrows.

Tell everyone to cut out at least one big, thick arrow. Then have them write on each arrow one word or two that tells how lies hurt people. Give them the following suggestions that they can use or they can think of their own:

- ***they get in trouble***
- ***they think wrong things***
- ***their feelings get hurt***
- ***they lose friends***
- ***people think wrong about them***

Afterward, have them display and explain their arrows.

NOTE: Because many of these children may have difficulty writing words, print the key words on the board and circulate among the children, answering questions and helping them write. Also, this should be done at tables, and with a large group you will need one teacher/aide for each 6-10 kids.

"TELLING THE TRUTH" (10 minutes—grades 1-2, 3-6)

Read the following situations one at a time. (Ask the questions at the end of each one.) These situations build from simple to complex and from concrete to abstract.

- *McGee is playing baseball with some friends. He hits the ball and breaks a Window in a store. Everybody else runs away. The owner of the store asks McGee what happened. What do you think McGee says? (After a few answers . . .) What could McGee say to tell the truth?*
- *Nicholas is selling magazine subscriptions to raise money for school. Walking home one day, he passes a store and decides to buy some candy using some of the magazine money. When he gets home with candy hanging out of his pocket, his mother asks where he got the candy and the money. Why might Nicholas be tempted to lie? (After a few answers . . .) What could he say to tell the truth?*
- *Before school, on the playground, a group of Nicholas's friends are talking about all the gross movies they've seen. Nicholas hasn't seen any of them because he thinks they're stupid and his parents won't let him go to them. In the middle of the conversation, Louis asks Nicholas what movies he's seen. What do you think Nicholas might be tempted to answer? (After a few answers . . .) What would he say to tell the truth?*
- *In English class, the teacher returns the tests the class took last week. On Nicholas's test she wrote "100%, A+." After looking over the test, however, Nicholas sees that she missed two questions that he had wrong. What should Nicholas do with the test? (After a few answers . . .) Why would it be difficult to tell the truth? Why is it important that Nick tell the truth?*

"A HEAVY LOAD" (7 minutes-grades 1-2, 3-6)

Beforehand, get a backpack (a pillow case or shopping bag will also work well) and gather a group of items that can be placed in the backpack at the appropriate time. These items could include shoes, books, pieces of wood, etc. Also, choose a young person who will act well in front of the group. Explain to him/her that he/she will wear the backpack and should bend over a little bit every time someone puts something in it.

Bring your volunteer to the front of the room and put the backpack on his or her back. Place the pile of items on the floor in front of him or her. Explain that you want volunteers to come forward one at a time, to pick up one of the items, say a lie that they heard in the video (or somewhere else) that the item can represent, and then put the item in the backpack. For example, they could say something like: *"This represents Nicholas's lie about what he saw in the house."*

With each added lie, the person bends over more and more. After everything has been used, ask the group what this illustrates. (Answer: how lies pile up and weigh us down). Explain that our lies do that to others and to ourselves. Then take the load off the child's back and thank him/her for helping out.



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Proverbs 25:18

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“Person List”

Write one name in each category, then write one kind and truthful thing about each person. Circle the action that you will do next week.

Family () _____

Friends () _____

Neighbors () _____

Kids at school () _____

Kids at church () _____



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