

IDEA #100**Honesty Skit**

OVERVIEW: Students perform a skit showing how honesty benefits both the truth-teller and the listener.

PREPARATION / MATERIALS:

- one photocopy of the skit for each student

PROCEDURE:

Select students to read the lines and act out parts in a play. Assign the following roles, bringing up a new cast with each scene to include as many youngsters as possible.

Comfort is

no criterion

of truth.

— Unknown

• Chris

• Sylvia

• Alberto

• Mr. Mayland

— SCENE I —

(Three students are playing ball. They have two balls and are throwing them to each other. One misses, and the ball goes flying through the window of Mr. Mayland's house. A brief panic ensues.)

Alberto: Oh, no! Sylvia, you broke Mr. Mayland's window.

Sylvia: I just threw the ball. You were supposed to catch it, and you missed. It's your fault!

Chris: Maybe Mr. Mayland isn't home. He's such a grouch!

Sylvia: Look! Here he comes, and he's mad! Let's run! He can't catch us.

Alberto: He knows us, and he's seen us already. We're in big trouble.

Chris: I've got an idea! We still have my ball. Let's tell him we saw another — a stranger — throw a ball at his window and then run. We'll say we were tossing this one back and forth when we saw him.

Alberto: I don't like this. I'm worried this may not work out.

Sylvia: Me too, but Mr. Mayland is really mean. He'll probably hit us if he knows we did it.

Mr. Mayland: All right, who did it? I want to know who broke my window! You kids are a public nuisance, and now look what you've done. You're going to be sorry!

Chris: Not us, Mr. Mayland. Look! We still have our ball. It was this other kid. He was wearing a blue shirt. We don't know who he was, but he threw the ball at your window and ran that way. He was tall and had brown hair.

Mr. Mayland: Maybe I can catch him.

(Mr. Mayland runs off in the designated direction, leaving Alberto, Chris and Sylvia relieved and staring after him.)

Sylvia: Wow! That was close.

— SCENE II —

(Several minutes later the youngsters are watching Mr. Mayland return from his fruitless search for the "other kid" who broke his window.)

Chris: I'm not feeling good about what we did to Mr. Mayland.

Alberto: I know. I'm sorry we broke his window, too. It was just an accident.

Sylvia: Me too. I'm the one who threw the ball *and* I went along with the story we told him. I don't like Mr. Mayland because he's always lecturing us and thinks we're no good. At first I was relieved that we weren't in trouble. Now I feel like nothing we did was right, especially the lying.

Chris: What do you think we should do?

Sylvia: I broke the window. I'm going to go tell him what I did and say it was my idea to lie to him. I'll tell him you guys aren't to blame — just me.

Chris: No way. I'm going with you.

Alberto: Me, too. He's going to be really mad, but at least we won't be lying anymore. It *was* an accident. Let's hope he believes us now.

Chris: I'm sorry, guys. My idea was stupid, and now we're in real trouble. Let's go get it over with. Do you think he will try to hurt us?

— SCENE III —

(They walk up to Mr. Mayland who is staring at his broken window. He looks disgusted and discouraged.)

Sylvia: Mr. Mayland?

Mr. Mayland: What do you want? I didn't find that guy, and now I'm stuck with this mess. You youngsters are always around when there are problems.

Sylvia: (clearing her throat) Uh, we did it.

Mr. Mayland: What?

Alberto: (rushing his speech) We did it. We're sorry. It was an accident. I missed the ball when it was thrown to me. We didn't try to damage your house.

Chris: Please, Mr. Mayland, please don't be mad. We lied about the other guy because we were afraid of you. We're sorry.

Mr. Mayland: (looking sternly at the youngsters) You *should* be afraid. I'm very mad about this, but I'm glad you were brave enough to tell the truth after all. Now, what are you three going to do about this?

Sylvia: Money's tough in my family. I have about \$2 saved that I could give you.

Alberto: We don't have much money either, and my mom's car just broke down. But I have \$2 or \$3, too.

Chris: I also have some money saved. But not much.

Mr. Mayland: Great! \$6 or \$7 won't cover the cost of replacing my window.

Sylvia: I broke the window. I could do extra things around your house for you until I've made up the difference.

Mr. Mayland: If you're going to break my window then lie about it, why should I trust you in my house.

Alberto: We could all help. We were all in this together. We could mow your lawn

and do other chores outside your house. We could bring our own lawnmower. We'd be careful.

Mr. Mayland: I don't know.

Sylvia: Please, Mr. Mayland. We feel badly about what we did. We're not bad kids. We'll even do some weeding too.

Mr. Mayland: All right. Let's see how trustworthy you really are. Since you broke my large, double-pane, plate glass window, you can each pay me \$2 *and* do two hours of gardening each Saturday morning for the next three weeks.

Sylvia: Three weeks! Okay, we'll do it. Are you going to tell our parents?

Mr. Mayland: No. I'm trusting you to do that. If you really mean it when you say you're sorry, then you'll also have the integrity to tell your families. I'll be expecting you next Saturday.

(The kids leave.)

Mr. Mayland: (Shaking his head) That was dumb on my part. I'll never see the money, and they'll probably get their parents to get them out of the mowing.

— SCENE IV —

(The three are raking the yard and putting piles of weeds in a garbage bag.)

Sylvia: This is the last week. I didn't realize Mr. Mayland's yard was so big.

Chris: Me either. But at least we showed Mr. Mayland we can keep a promise. Remember that look of surprise when we showed up at his door the first weekend to do the yardwork? That was the first time I'd ever seen him smile.

Alberto: That was great! Between that and giving him his money, we had him so surprised he could hardly talk. I think we even surprised him by doing a nice job on the mowing, and pulling all his weeds.

Chris: It's nice to think he is probably realizing we really are sorry about his window and that we're not so immature and irresponsible — when we give our word, we mean it. My dad was angry when I told him about the window and our lying, but he said he was proud of us for having the courage to admit it and try to make up for it.

Sylvia: Yeah, same with my parents.

Alberto: It was hard to tell my mom, but I feel good to get it off my chest. I can see how in the long run it's better to be honest all the way around.

Sylvia: I agree. And I'll be more careful about where I play so I don't damage anything else. You know, Mr. Mayland really isn't such a bad guy. I liked talking to him last week when he came out to work with us. Did you know he collects all kinds of fossils and loans them to museums all over the country?

Chris: Really? Yeah, he does seem nicer now. I guess we just never took the time to get to know him. We should visit more with him. He's all alone. Hey, I have another idea!

Alberto: Please! Not like the last one.

Chris: No, I'm never going to lie like that again. I was thinking . . . why don't we go next Saturday and work in his yard just because we care?

Sylvia: That's not a bad idea. Imagine what his expression will look like this time!

(They exit, class applauds, and all actors return to stage for bows.)

Contributed by Vicki Mirabal, Chelwood Elementary School teacher (Albuquerque, NM).

IDEA #120**Preparation, Perseverance,
Patience ... and Butterflies**

OVERVIEW: Students discuss the metamorphosis of a caterpillar into a butterfly and create a butterfly garden as an exercise in preparation, perseverance and patience.

PREPARATION / MATERIALS:

Consult books on the life cycle and habitats of butterflies, or visit these useful online resources: *The Butterfly Website* (www.butterflywebsite.com), *Ask Jeeves for Kids* (www.ajkids.com), *The Butterfly Pavilion and Insect Center* (www.butterflies.org) and *Insect Lore* (www.insectlore.com).

- flowers to plant
- planting trowels
- empty milk jug
- scissors
- (optional) drawing paper and markers for students to make charts, diagrams, etc.

SETTING: Outdoor area protected from the wind, with moist soil and plenty of sunlight.

PROCEDURE:

Begin by discussing how responsible people approach a task. Write these words on the board: *preparation*, *perseverance* and *patience*. Explain these terms and discuss the importance of taking a long-term look at a project — preparing an area to make it easy for things to fall into place, persevering to get the job done, and being patient about reaping the rewards of your labor.

Offer the example of how teachers teach a lesson: they first must prepare by doing research, by organizing the material, making handouts, etc. Then they must teach it, persevering even when they find it difficult to reach some students. If their first attempt at explaining something doesn't work, they have to come up with a second, and maybe even third or fourth lesson, incorporating new ways to present and share the information. They may have to add certain details to help students understand the subject.

Next, use the caterpillar-to-butterfly metamorphosis as an example. Explain how the caterpillar must prepare by finding the right environment for the metamorphosis

*If you want
the rainbow,
you gotta put
up with the
rain.*

— Dolly Parton
20th century
American
entertainer

to take place. (Most caterpillars are specific about the plants they feed on, so female butterflies must find a suitable caterpillar food plant on which to lay their eggs. Also, there must be enough sun, not too much wind, etc.) Photos and diagrams may help you illustrate this. Once the caterpillar hatches from an egg, it must prepare for the metamorphosis by consuming enough nutrients and finding a safe environment for the process to take place. Explain that the caterpillar has only a limited time to do this, so it must work hard and persevere if resources are not immediately available. Finally, encased in its cocoon, it must be patient for the process to reach completion.

You might provide reading and writing assignments to familiarize students with the butterfly, then present the task of preparing a garden for butterflies. Find a sunny, moist area that is protected from the wind. Have students plant different types of flowers and plants that provide food, shelter, and can act as a host for an adult female butterfly to lay eggs. To provide a drinking-water source for butterflies, cut the tops off a few milk jugs and fill them each with one to two inches of water.

After you've created the garden, tell the students that it is time for them to demonstrate patience, as they wait for butterflies to come. If the garden succeeds in attracting caterpillars and butterflies, offer the students time to observe the behavior and growth of the creatures. If no caterpillars or butterflies are found, discuss the need to accept circumstances that are not ideal. Assess why the butterflies did not come and offer students the chance to display their perseverance by taking measures to improve, or even replant, the garden.

Things

work out best

for those who

make the best

of the way

things work

out.

— Anonymous