

TEACHING ABOUT HONESTY

A SAMPLE LESSON FROM *LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE UNCOMMON FRIENDS**

Read the following story to students:

Harvey Firestone, inventor and producer of tires, first met Jim Newton in Fort Myers, FL during the late 1920s at Thomas Edison's winter home. He questioned Mr. Newton about his nearby Edison Park Housing Development and asked how he was able to continue the development when there was a depression and people did not have money to buy property. Mr. Newton explained that he bartered much of the land for goods and services. He told Mr. Firestone, "When we sold those lots, we promised to put in sewers, paving, street lights, and so on, to finish the job. I wouldn't feel right about breaking the promises I made." There was a moment of silence. Mr. Firestone replied, "I respect that kind of integrity. That's the way I try to operate my business. I believe fundamental honesty is the keystone of business."

A few years later, Firestone hired Jim Newton and he became the national sales manager for the Firestone Company. He insisted on learning the business from the ground up, spending time in garages, changing tires, and talking to customers while he learned the business of selling tires. On several occasions, Mr. Newton had the offer to do business "under the table" and to gain more profits for Firestone. However, he believed in honesty and refused to operate that way. Mr. Firestone backed him up and said to him, "You lose some and you win some, but stick to honesty no matter how much you need the business. Keep pitching, Jimmie."

Suggested Activities:

- Have students ask their parents or other adults to tell them about a time when someone impressed them by being honest.
- Ask students to think about a time when they were dishonest and if they did anything to make it right again. Pair students up to share this experience and tell how they felt. Then have them share a time when they were honest and how it felt.
- Abraham Lincoln was called Honest Abe. Why? Research other famous people who were known for their honesty.
- Discuss/Debate: Do you think people were more honest 100 years ago? Why or why not? Is honesty always the best policy? Is it ever ok to not be totally honest? Why or why not?
- Writing prompts:
 - Point of view: Pretend you are a business leader. How important is honesty and how can it help your business succeed or fail?
 - Write a letter: If Mr. Firestone wrote a letter recommending Jim Newton for a promotion, what might he write?
 - Write about why honesty is an important quality if one is to be successful.

**This sample lesson can be adapted for any grade level/content area including ESOL and ESE. It is correlated with the Sunshine State Standards in Language Arts (LA.A. 1.2.4, LA.B.2.2.3 and Social Studies (SS.A 1.2.2, C.2.2.2) as well as many other SSS. This is an abbreviated version of this lesson. The complete lesson is available in the curriculum notebook.*

THE UNCOMMON FRIENDS FOUNDATION CHARACTER EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The entire notebook of 20 character education lessons/activities is available for purchase (\$35 each) as well as a supplemental DVD to accompany these lessons (\$10). Both can be purchased on the Uncommon Friends Foundation website: uncommonfriends.org

For more information about the Uncommon Friends Foundation's Character Education Program or training session details, go to: www.uncommonfriends.org or contact Dr. Patricia Archambault at 337-9504 or charactered@uncommonfriends.org