



the family values toolkit

For Children Ages 14 to 18

This Month's Featured Value Is: **Honesty**

Honest people consistently hold themselves to a high standard of truthfulness. They communicate in an open, upfront way; they do not lie, steal, cheat, or manipulate information to conceal it from others. However, an honest person may occasionally tell a "white lie" to protect another's feelings.



What Can Parents Do to Nurture This Important Value?

First, Set Goals:

Reinforce earlier lessons about honesty and emphasize how adults follow the dictates of their conscience in everyday life.

Teenagers' ability to consider issues and events from multiple viewpoints helps them recognize how destructive dishonesty can be. They are aware, for example, that cheating on a test means betraying the teacher's trust and defrauding the other test-takers, as well as failing themselves.

Nevertheless, a teenager's drive for honesty may be compromised by his or her need for peer approval. Shoplifting is a big problem largely because kids this age feel pressured to do whatever their friends are doing, even if they know it's wrong. Parents, you can have a vital role in modeling honesty, from talking frankly about how you deal with tricky ethical ambiguities at work or with others in your community, to admitting when you've been less than perfect in the past, and sharing why you feel it's important to keep striving to do the right thing.

Next, Take Action! Try These Activities:

- ✓ **Talk to your kids about playing by the rules**, and strongly discourage them from sneaking into or renting R-rated movies or playing video games rated too mature for their age. Explain that not only are there reasons why these rules are put into place to begin with, but that it is dishonest to deceive others about your age.
- ✓ **Hold yourself to a high standard of honesty.** Kids this age are highly attuned to parental hypocrisy.
- ✓ **Point out examples of dishonesty and honesty in public life**--crooked business people who go to jail, whistleblowers who tell the truth.
- ✓ **Remind your child about the consequences of cheating in school, taking things from stores or from other kids.** Explain that permanent marks on school and legal records can follow dishonest acts.

Then, Report Back!

Share your stories of success, your challenges, and overall experiences with others in our community @

responsibilityproject.com/familyvalues

Get Next Month's Value @ beliefnet.com/values