



# Current Affairs Assembly

KS3 Active Citizens – Character and integrity

Assembly



## What is truth?

### Aim:

- To consider our attitude to honesty and telling the truth
- To reflect on some of the Bible's advice for honest living

### Introduction

#### When does he tell the truth?

*Pose the following logic problem to see whether pupils can work out the answer:*

My next door neighbour lies a lot. In fact, he only tells the truth on one day a week! One day he told me, "I lie on Mondays and on Tuesdays."

The next day he said, "Today is either Thursday, Saturday or Sunday."

The next day he said, "I lie on Wednesdays and Fridays."

On which day of the week does my neighbour tell the truth?

(If day 1 is the truth, it cannot be Monday or Tuesday (from statement 1), or Wednesday, Friday or Saturday (because statement 2 must be false) – however that would make statement 3 true, and would mean he had told the truth twice in the week.)

(If day 2 is the truth, day 1 would be either Wednesday, Friday or Saturday, which again would make statement 3 true and would mean he had told the truth twice in the week.)

(Therefore day 3 must be the 'truth day'. This must be either Monday or Tuesday (in order to make statement 1 false). However, to make statement 2 false, day 3

True

False

cannot be Monday.



Therefore the day my neighbour speaks the truth must be Tuesday.)

### Looking Deeper

#### What do you think?

Is it ever right to tell lies? We often talk about white lies, bluffing, exaggeration, giving half-answers, gossip and rumours – are these alright in certain circumstances or do they count as being dishonest? What about a workman who underestimates the cost of a job so that he gets the work rather than it going to a competitor, or the fact that we tell children about Santa Claus, the Easter bunny or the tooth fairy – are these lies?

Sometimes it is very difficult to work out what the truth is – when Jesus was standing trial before the Roman Governor, Pilate, he claimed that his mission in life was to testify to the truth, but Pilate showed quite a modern attitude when he asked, 'What is truth?' (John 18:37-38)



In literature, there are many examples of people who told lies and suffered as a result, two of the most well-known being *Pinocchio* (the puppet who came to life, whose nose



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grew longer whenever he told a lie) and *The Boy who cried 'Wolf!'* (about a boy who lied so often that when he told the truth he was not believed. However, generally it seems that these days people feel that little lies that do not hurt anyone do not matter.

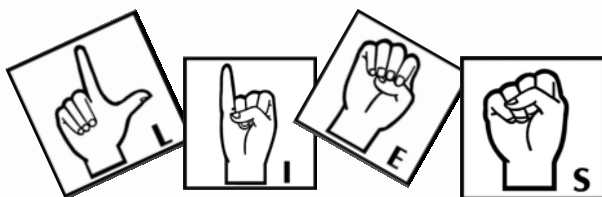
This attitude was reflected by would-be councilor Ashley Waterhouse when he tried to take part in a radio phone-in about honesty in politics this week. He phoned in using his own name, but was told that he could not take part because he was a candidate in May's election. So, he phoned again calling himself 'Paul'. His voice and number were recognized and several times he was asked whether he was a candidate for the election, or whether he was Ashley Waterhouse and he denied it.

When asked why he had done this, Ashley Waterhouse explained, 'At the end of the day we all make mistakes, don't we? As the joke goes, "How can you tell a politician is lying? Because he moves his lips", as I am now.'

He offered to resign as candidate for the election, but his party chairman rejected his resignation, saying, 'I think it was a genuine mistake, I don't think it was deceit and lies. I just think he wanted to get his point over and I think it was the only way he could see to do it.'

(Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-derbyshire-12968538>)

Ask pupils what they think about this – was it deceitful, or did the desire to put his point across justify the means?



## Reflection

### Living truthfully

Many major religions teach that lies and deceitfulness are vices and truthfulness and honesty are virtues. In the Bible, truth in both our words and the way we act is required, as shown in Psalm 15 in the Old Testament section of the Bible:

GOD, who gets invited to dinner at your place?

How do we get on your guest list?

"Walk straight,  
act right,  
tell the truth.

"Don't hurt your friend,  
don't blame your neighbour . . .

"Keep your word even when it costs you,

make an honest living,  
never take a bribe.

"You'll never get blacklisted if you live like this."

However, King David, who wrote this poem recognized that it was impossible to live up to God's standards of honesty, and in another poem he asked for God's help when he wrote in Psalm 51:

"God, what you are after is truth and sincerity deep down inside me.

Purify me from sin and I will be clean  
Wash me and I will whiter than snow."

## Prayer

Lord God,  
Sometimes it is very hard to live honestly and we are not sure what is the right way to behave. Please help us to be honest in our relationships and friendships and please forgive us when we go wrong.  
Amen

## Keywords

Truth, honesty, lies, deceit