

LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION



OVERCOMING
OBSTACLES®

ELEMENTARY LEVEL

3-5: Integrity





OVERCOMING OBSTACLES®

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Overcoming Obstacles is a nonprofit education publisher that provides **free life skills curriculum to educators globally**. Our comprehensive K-12 curriculum covers more than 30 critical life skills through fun and engaging activity-based lessons that help you teach your students skills like communication, decision making, empathy, coping, goal setting, respect, conflict resolution, and problem solving.

Our curriculum consists of **hundreds of lessons** that help you create an active learning experience for your students through role-playing, group activities, reflection assignments, journal prompts, discussions, and more. Because of its modular format, you can either teach the curriculum from beginning to end or select specific lessons that best suit the needs of your students.

And it is all available free, now and forever.

Since 1992, Overcoming Obstacles has been taught by over **160,000 educators** in all 50 states and in 140 countries, improving the lives of more than **40 million young people**. Our entire curriculum is available in Spanish as well as English, and the student activity sheets have been translated into more than 20 languages.

The following is a sample lesson from our life skills curriculum. You can download all of the other Overcoming Obstacles lessons for free at **www.overcomingobstacles.org**.

LESSON **5**
INTEGRITY

Standards Addressed

Students will learn to take responsibility for their actions.

Students will understand the importance of responsibility, dependability, integrity, and effort in school and at home.

Students will understand consequences of decisions and choices.

Students will interact with others to explore ideas and concepts, communicate meaning, and develop logical interpretations through collaborative conversations; students will also build upon the ideas of others to clearly express one's own views while respecting diverse perspectives.

Students will summarize key details and ideas to support analysis of central ideas.

Students will write explanatory/informative texts that develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.

Objectives

- Students will define the word integrity and explain why showing integrity is an important life skill.
- Students will identify ways in which they can show integrity in school, at home, in the workplace, and in the community.
- Students will discuss the benefits of showing integrity.

Materials Needed

“Sample Quotes about Integrity” activity sheet (“Starter”)

Two pieces of chart paper, one labeled as “CHOICE 1” and the other as “CHOICE 2,” and markers (“We Do”)

“The Integrity Challenge Scenarios” activity sheet (“We Do”)

Starter (20 Minutes)

Ask students what they think the word integrity means, and write student responses on chart paper. Then, place students into small groups and assign each group a famous quote about integrity. (See “*Sample Quotes about Integrity*” activity sheet.) Direct students to discuss what they think the quote means.

Have each group share their quote with the class and discuss their thoughts as to the meaning of each quote. As a class, define integrity by drawing on all quotes shared with the class. Write the class-made definition on a chart. (*The definition should be something similar to “total honesty, always doing the right thing, being fair, respectful, and trustworthy.”*)

Teacher Presented Knowledge/I Do (10 Minutes)

With the students’ help, generate a list of behaviors of someone who demonstrates integrity in a classroom, in a job, in a family, in sports, and in the community. Record student responses either on an anchor chart or board.

Guided Student Practice/We Do (20 Minutes)

Place two pieces of chart paper (*one labeled “CHOICE 1” and one labeled “CHOICE 2”*) on opposite sides of the room. Tell students, “You are going to participate in an ‘integrity challenge.’ To play this game, you need to listen carefully to what I’m about to read to you. After each scenario that I read, you will make a decision about which choice you would make if you were in the scenario. If you think you would do the first choice, then walk to the ‘CHOICE 1’ side of the room. If you think you would do the second choice, then walk to the ‘CHOICE 2’ side of the room.” Direct students to quietly stand in the middle of the room to begin the activity.

Read the examples from “The Integrity Challenge Scenarios” activity sheet. After each is read and the students have made their choices, analyze, with the class, which choice shows the most integrity. Ask one student from each side why he or she made that choice. Then, ask students to think about which choice enables them to be the most honest with themselves and others, and is the most fair and responsible choice. Guide students to realize which choice shows the most integrity and why. (*An alternative way to implement this activity is to have students divide a blank sheet of paper in half and to label one side “CHOICE 1” and the other “CHOICE 2.” You can call out the scenarios and have students check which choice they would choose on their own papers. This way, students will not be influenced to make a choice based on a classmate’s decision or be embarrassed by a choice they make.*)

Student Independent Practice/You Do (20 Minutes)

Have students choose a quote from the “Starter” activity that they particularly liked. Then, have students think of a person from their own lives, pop culture, or history who is the essence of a person with integrity. Direct students to independently write a paragraph explaining how their chosen person displays integrity in his or her life and the character traits this person possesses that reveal integrity. *(You may want to provide students with a copy of the “Sample Quotes about Integrity” activity sheet so they can see all the quotes.)*

Closure (10 Minutes)

End the lesson by allowing students to share parts of their paragraphs. Finally, remind students that integrity means total honesty. It is doing the right thing when no one is looking. Integrity is the foundation of good leaders. It is composed of many other powerful life skills, including honesty, patience, responsibility, and accountability.

Questions for Assessment

1. How would you define integrity?
2. How can you keep your integrity?
3. Who is a person you know who displays integrity? How does he/she display integrity?
4. How can you display integrity in the classroom or at home?

Lesson Extensions

Art Extension

Have students bring in pictures of people they feel lead lives of integrity, quotes about integrity, newspaper clippings about integrity, etc. and make an “Integrity Collage.”

Drama Extension

Students can role-play situations involving a decision that forces them to choose between integrity/honesty or dishonesty.

ELA Extension

Have students write about a time they demonstrated integrity or a time someone they know demonstrated integrity. Have volunteers share their work with the class.

Literature Extension

Tell students that they are going to listen to the story about a boy in Los Angeles named Francisco who is faced with a challenging situation. Read the story *A Day's Work* by Eve Bunting. Direct students to listen for examples of characters showing integrity and characters who are dishonest. After the reading, ask students to share examples of integrity and dishonesty from the story. Then, as a class, discuss the consequences, both positive and negative, that each character faced. *(To spark discussion, ask questions such as: Why did Francisco tell Ben that Abuelo is a gardener? What happens to Abuelo and Francisco's work? How does Ben react? What does Francisco have to give up as the “price of lying”? Why does Ben respect Abuelo at the end? How does Abuelo show integrity?)* Ask students what they think was the moral or lesson of the story. Finally, ask students, “Why do you think it is important to show integrity?” Discuss.

Social Studies Extension

Students can choose a famous historical figure who lived a life of integrity and research his or her life. They can write a biography about their chosen person and/or create a presentation that explains the person's historical significance and how the person lived a life of integrity.

Technology Extension

Download the “Interactive Marble Jar” for a SMART Board or Promethean board. Each time a student reports another student displaying an act of integrity, add a marble to the “Interactive Marble Jar.” When the marble jar fills to the top, give the class a reward of some kind.

SAMPLE QUOTES ABOUT INTEGRITY

“Real integrity is doing the right thing, knowing that nobody’s going to know whether you did it or not.” —Oprah Winfrey

“Integrity is choosing your thoughts and actions based on values rather than personal gain.” —Unknown

“Whoever is careless with the truth in small matters cannot be trusted with important matters.” —Albert Einstein

“The time is always right to do what is right.” —Martin Luther King, Jr.

“Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching.”
—C. S. Lewis

“Wisdom is knowing the right path to take...integrity is taking it.”
—Unknown

“It is not what we profess in public, but where we walk and what we practice in secret that gives us integrity.” —Sir Francis Bacon

“Being honest may not get you a lot of friends, but it’ll always get you the right ones.” —John Lennon

THE INTEGRITY CHALLENGE SCENARIOS

Read these scenarios to your class. Students are to choose what they would do for each scenario and go to the corresponding side of the room—1 or 2.

1. Your friend has come over, and you are both on your mom’s computer. Your friend wants you to go to a website that you know your mom does not want you to visit. However, your mom has run over to your neighbor’s home for a few minutes, so you and your friend are alone. Would you...

Choice 1: ...visit the website? Your mom is not home now, and she may never know you visited it.

Choice 2: ...tell your friend that you should go to another website or do something else? You will get in trouble if you visit the website.

2. You did not find the time to study for your vocabulary test, and your grandmother told you that you must get an “A” on the test to go to the mall with her this weekend. During the test, you notice that you can easily see the answers of the student who is sitting next to you. Would you...

Choice 1: ...cheat off the student’s test? You know she studied and probably has the correct answers!

Choice 2: ...choose to do your own work? You may not get an “A,” but you didn’t cheat.

3. You saw your best friend steal some money out of the backpack of another student in your class. Would you...

Choice 1: ...report what you saw to your teacher? You know your friend may be mad, but the student in your class now doesn’t have money for lunch.

Choice 2: ...not say anything? You weren’t the one who stole the money!

Integrity Third Grade—Fifth Grade

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

“Overcoming Obstacles kept me out of trouble by teaching me how to make good decisions. The goal setting lessons **taught me how to hold on to my dreams, work hard and take steps each day to reach my goals.** These skills taught me to be positive, follow my heart, and do what I know is right.” – McKenley Dieudonne, former Overcoming Obstacles Student

“It is said that homeless students are falling off the educational map, but programs like Overcoming Obstacles were created to rectify such problems and eliminate the cycle of homelessness, incarceration, poverty, and victimization. Thank you for recognizing that we have not fallen off the map, because **through Overcoming Obstacles, we are bettering ourselves.**” – Orayne Williams, former Overcoming Obstacles Student

“In one year, **our school went from an F grade to an A grade,** and we attribute quite a bit of that to being able to teach our children the Overcoming Obstacles life skills program.” – Dr. Yvonne Commodore, Principal

“**Overcoming Obstacles literally changed the culture of the school** in the last three years. We see students who are respectful, not only among themselves but to their teachers. And we found that our discipline rate for piddling things has gone down about 65%.” – Mary Runyon, Principal

“Because of Overcoming Obstacles, I have the skills that are letting me move ahead in my life. **Overcoming Obstacles taught me about time management and setting goals.** I did not know about these skills before, and that is the reason why I was not doing well.” – Adam Nour, former Overcoming Obstacles Student

“When I learned about Overcoming Obstacles and life skills, that was a turning point for me. I began to gravitate towards positive things and people in my life and realized that **I was capable of following my dreams and making them flourish.**” – Rosa Basil, former Overcoming Obstacles Student

HIGHLIGHTED RESULTS

Since its founding in 1992, Overcoming Obstacles has been used by over **160,000 educators** from around the world and in all 50 states to help more than **40 million students** improve their academic achievement, graduate from high school, prepare for college and careers, and more.

In 2017, an online survey was conducted among educators on the effectiveness of the Overcoming Obstacles curricula. Results include:

- **99%** said **they would recommend Overcoming Obstacles** to a fellow educator
- **98%** said that Overcoming Obstacles **benefitted their students overall**
- **96%** said it **helped students cope with stress**
- **96%** stated Overcoming Obstacles **improved student-to-student interaction**
- **92%** stated Overcoming Obstacles **helped with classroom management**
- **80%** noted Overcoming Obstacles resulted in **improved grades**

In 2016, the Riley Institute at Furman University issued a survey to educators on Overcoming Obstacles impact on student development. Results include:

- **90%** reported that it helps students develop **decision making skills**
- **89%** reported that it helps students experience **improved life opportunities**
- **89%** reported that it helps students **contribute to their communities**
- **88%** reported that it helps students develop **communication skills**
- **88%** reported that it improves students' **problem-solving skills**
- **86%** reported that it helps students with **setting goals**
- **85%** reported that it **engages students** in their classroom
- **84%** reported that it helps students **resolve conflicts**
- **81%** reported that it helps students **remain in school**




NATIONAL
DROPOUT
PREVENTION
CENTER

In 2013, the **National Dropout Prevention Center** awarded **Overcoming Obstacles** its Crystal Star Award of Excellence in **Dropout Prevention, Intervention, and Recovery**.

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