



## YOU WILL NEED ...

- ☐ blindfolds (long dark socks and large safety pins will do)
- ☐ *The Boy Who Cried Wolf*, Tony Ross, 1985, optional



## READING

### John 13:4-5, 12-17

[Jesus] got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.... After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one

(cont.)



## OPENING

Light a candle and quietly ponder the flame as a symbol of the "Light of Truth." Light helps us to see, both in the sense of visualizing what is real and in the sense of understanding what is true.



## PRESENTATION OF THEME

Both George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, great U.S. presidents, were known for their honesty. There is the well-known story of how George Washington cut down one of his father's favorite cherry trees and when asked about it replied, "I cannot tell a lie. I did it." Abraham Lincoln was known as "Honest Abe" due to his reputation for fairness and honesty as a lawyer. Tonight we're going to explore what it really means to be *honest*—the costs and rewards of this virtue.

### Reading:

John 13:4-5, 12-17 or  
*The Boy Who Cried Wolf*



## FAMILY RESPONSE

To take a trust walk the family divides into pairs (oldest person with youngest, next oldest with next youngest, etc.). If there is an uneven number, one group may include three people. Partners choose one to be the leader and one to be the follower. The follower puts on a blindfold and sits down.

**Common instructions:** In a minute, the leader will *gently* pull the blindfolded follower to his or her feet and *carefully* lead the follower around the house or yard. The leader's job is to introduce the follower to many interesting and varied objects and sensations in the environment.

**Secret instructions:** While the followers are still seated and blindfolded, call aside the partners who will lead and instruct them to incorrectly identify about half of the objects they ask their partner to touch, for instance: "This [rock] is a ball." Or "This [apple] is an orange."



another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."

After the trust walk, discuss the following questions:

- ◆ What did it *feel* like being blind? Did you feel safe? Did you trust your leader?
- ◆ What did it *feel* like to be the leader and to have the responsibility for your partner's safety?
- ◆ If you were blindfolded, were you aware that your partner was lying? If you were, how did that make you feel about your partner?
- ◆ If you were the leader, how did you feel about knowingly telling an untruth? Was it hard?

**NOTE:** Make sure that very young children are told that the only reason the leader was allowed to lie was that we are pretending in order to learn the difference between truth and lies. In real life, lies and dishonesty are wrong.

**Say something like:** Lies are wrong not only because they are untrue, but also because they hurt people and relationships. It's hard to trust a person who has lied to us. Has that ever happened to any of us?

Even though lying is hurtful and wrong, most people have been tempted not to tell *the whole truth* at least once. Usually that's because we're afraid. We're afraid that we'll be punished or someone won't like us if we tell the truth. The truth is that in the long run we will get into bigger trouble and people will like

us even less if they know they can't trust us to tell the truth. For example, if I lied about stealing some money from my boss, not only would I have to pay the money back, but I would probably lose my job too.

Close the session by asking each leader to briefly take his or her partner back to the objects that were not identified correctly and correct the lies.



## TREAT

Serve cherry pie (or anything with cherries) in honor of George Washington.



## AGE ADAPTATION

For very young children, use puppets to act out the legend of George Washington's honesty.

Teenagers can delve into the finer points of honesty, such as *integrity*. Lying doesn't always require words. It can be done by acting contrary to our beliefs or by omitting information. Discuss the following questions:

How do you feel about "socially convenient lies"?

Do you agree that "the truth is always friendly"? Can you think of any situations in which not telling the truth would be permissible?

How "clean" (totally truthful) do we expect our leaders, elected officials, executives, to be?

Is cheating on taxes okay if you're poor but not okay if you're rich?

Should a terminally ill person be told the truth about how long she or he has to live?

Should a president lie to an enemy about the strength of his or her army or plans for an invasion?

Have you ever been untrue to yourself? Have you gone against something in which you believed, perhaps to be popular or to avoid embarrassment?



## RELATED READING

*Lizzie Lies a Lot* by Elizabeth Levy (junior novel). Delacorte, 1976.

*The True Francine* by Marc Brown. Little, Brown and Co., 1981.

—Susan Vogt