

Tower of Trust

“A lie has speed, but truth has endurance.”

- Edgar J. Mohn

Overview: Children learn about building trust by citing ways they can earn it. They then illustrate these ideas on index cards which are affixed to small boxes to build a “tower of trust.”

Preparation/Materials:

- one index card for each child
- small boxes or other cube-shaped items to use as building blocks (one for each child)
- tape
- enough crayons for all the children to color at the same time

Procedure:

Ask the children: *If your mom asks you to pick up your toys, can she count on you to do it? Wait for responses, then ask: Can she count on you to pick up those toys, even if she isn't looking?*

Field their comments, then explain what it means to have good character: *People with good character do good things, even when their parents aren't looking. When you do good things over and over again, even when parents and teachers aren't looking, you earn trust. Nobody is trusted automatically. When your parents and teachers realize that you have a habit of doing good things without being asked, then they will let you do more things on your own. What are some things you can do to show your parents you can be trusted?* Solicit answers and praise the students for their good ideas.

Distribute index cards and crayons to the children and have them draw pictures of themselves doing the things they mentioned. Allow a few minutes for the children to draw and color, then ask them to share their pictures with the rest of the group.

Say: *These are good examples of ways to earn trust. Let's use them to make a "trust tower."* Tape each card to a building block (cut the cards to reduce their size if necessary), and carefully stack them to form a pyramid-shaped tower. Tell them that building trust takes several good examples like the ones on the blocks.

When you've completed the tower, say: *It has taken a long time to build your parents' trust in you. But, it doesn't take long at all to destroy the tower of trust. What if you tell your parents you picked up all your toys, and they find them under the rug?*

What will that do for the trust you've built? When one of them says it will damage it, affirm this and illustrate how it weakens trust by carefully pulling a block from the tower.

Ask: What if you tell your parents that you ate your green beans and then she finds them wadded up in your napkin? What will that do for the trust you've built? Again, illustrate how it weakens trust by pulling another block from the tower.

Ask: What if you tell your parents that you will wear your coat when you're

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outside and then she sees you playing with only a t-shirt on? What will that do for the trust you've built? Pull another block from the tower.

Continue with examples until your tower crumbles. When it falls, tell students: *Now it's even harder to build trust because we have to clean up all of this mess before we can get started building again!*

Conclude the activity with a discussion, asking students questions such as:

- *Will you keep this tower in mind to help you remember to build trust?*
- *What good things are you going to do to build trust with your parents? Your teachers? Your baby-sitters? Your brothers and sisters?*
- *Say: Remember to keep doing good things to build trust even when no one is looking.*

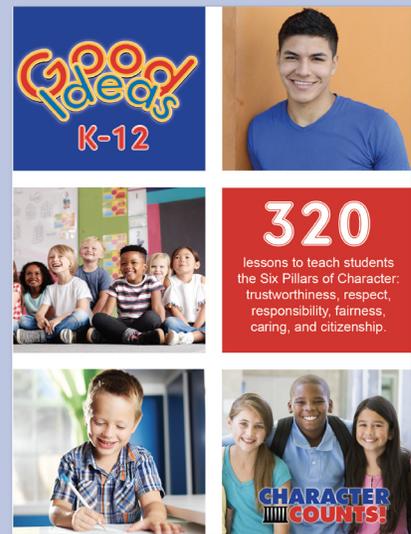
Adapted from "Exercising Character" lesson plans and activities by Peggy Adkins (Josephson Institute of Ethics, Los Angeles, CA), 1995.

Good Ideas

This lesson is published in our [Good Ideas lesson plan book](#).

It is written for grades K-1 but can be adapted to fit your elementary school grade level needs.

[See a sample of other Good Ideas lessons.](#)



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