

# FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

for use with  
Program 1

## The TRUST Connection

In the Video Series



Created and Produced by  
Elkind+Sweet Communications, Inc.  
in association with Character Counts!  
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## HOW TO USE THIS VIDEO

**Use in classrooms, libraries, youth groups, or view it at home.**

This video, along with the facilitator's guide and website, is designed to help teachers engage students in classroom discussion and other activities leading to deep, meaningful reflection about the kinds of people they are and want to be.

### **Have a great discussion!**

Thoughtful, reflective discussions are essential to getting the most out of these videos. You will find some very fruitful facilitation techniques, including **Socratic Method**, at our special character education website at [www.goodcharacter.com](http://www.goodcharacter.com). The questions in this discussion guide begin on page 9.

*www.goodcharacter.com* provides a wealth of helpful material including questions, assignments, and activities for special topics such as **sports, workplace readiness**, and others. Please utilize this very valuable resource.



## WHAT IS TRUST?

**In this program trust means:**

- 🍏 Being honest. Don't lie, cheat, or steal.
- 🍏 Being reliable. Keeping your promises and following through on your commitments.
- 🍏 Having the courage to do what is right, even when it is difficult.
- 🍏 Being a good friend by showing you are trustworthy.



## PROGRAM CONTENT

**J**udy, a thirteen year-old, is creating a video blog focusing on character. Judy's assigned topic is "trust." By looking in on Judy's blog, we see how young people experience trust as a fundamental issue in their relationships with family and friends. We listen in on several discussions among young people that focus on lying. The young teens define a lie while they tell us some of the biggest lies they've ever told. They also point out how lying can destroy trust and what it feels like to attempt to earn back trust when the bond has been broken. In a dramatic skit Judy has us imagine a situation where someone might lie to fit in and what can happen when the lie escalates out of hand.

### **PART I THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUST IN OUR DAILY LIVES.**

Judy starts her blog by showing us a dramatized sequence about the importance of trust in our daily lives. She asks us to imagine living in a world where we can't trust anybody. She shows us a boy attempting to cross a busy street and a girl ordering a hamburger in a restaurant in order to point out that "when you think about it, it's amazing how much trust we put in other people." She observes that, unless we trust other people, we won't be able to do those simple things in life.

### **PART II TEEN DISCUSSION: WHAT DOES TRUST MEAN TO YOU?**

Judy then asks what trust is and why it is so important in our relationships. That question leads us into a discussion with five kids who are 12 and 13 years old. Judy asks these young teens a series of questions.

Here are some of the students' responses to the question "What does trust mean to you?"

- Trust is a bond that allows two people to feel more comfortable with each other.

- Trust is when you can count on someone to do something for you. And someone can count on you to do something for them . . . like keeping a secret.

- I can trust someone only if I believe in them and they believe in me the same amount. I couldn't trust someone unless I knew they wanted me to do my best and that they're there for me.

- Having a friend that you know and feel will understand your problems is almost like having a psychiatrist.

- I don't know why my friend lied when she told me she had the same sneakers I had.

**Judy: What is a lie?**

- Avoiding the truth . . . that's sort of a lie.

- Some people think it's a lie when you just don't say anything. That's not really a lie, that's avoiding the answer. My kind of lie is when you ask someone directly and they don't answer truthfully.

**Judy: What is a white lie and have you told one?**

- A white lie is something that's not really hurting someone.

- I told my mom once that I was going to Hebrew school. But I got there late because I hung out with my friends too long.

**Judy: What's the biggest lie you've ever told?**

- I said I slept at a friend's house. We did whatever we wanted for three days while his parents were out of town.

- I told my mom I was in math after school when I was really at the movies with friends.

- I was younger and told everyone I had two older brothers named Richard and something else. I was desperate to fit in. When they found out, they laughed it off. But after you've lied and people find out, you have a guilty feeling you carry around with you.

Here a girl tells a story that has caused her a lot of pain. She will refer to this incident later in the video.

- When my parents were gone for their anniversary in Mexico, my friends talked me into using our house for a sleepover. All my friends lied to their parents. Then my parents found out because one friend said she was at my house, and her parents called. So, when my mom called me and told me directly what she had heard, I told my parents the whole story. Then I told my friends they'd better tell their parents the truth before my parents do. My parents still mistrust me. When something like that happens, you have to have "that big talk." And it's scary and awkward. My dad asked, "How do we know we can trust you again? You've lost our trust. How do we know what privileges we can give you now?"

### **Judy: Why do you lie?**

- Teens lie out of fear and out of wanting people to like them. You can't fit in if you're extremely different. And there's no way to cover up being different without lying.

- I lied to fit in once. I was rejected as a geek at my old school, so I lied saying that I had seen a movie or had a certain pair of shoes. Stupid things really. But, in a way, it helped me feel like I wouldn't be targeted and pinned down and teased even more than I already was.

**Part III**  
**SKIT: SNOWBALLING LIES.**

Judy picks up on the phrase “lied to fit in” and decides to examine it. We see the following scenario dramatized:

Imagine that you are the new kid at school, and basketball tryouts are after school all week. Since you’re quite tall, several of the regular players ask you to try out for the team. But you have a deep dark secret—you are a terrible basketball player, and if you go to the tryouts you will simply embarrass yourself. But rather than tell these kids the truth you decide to make up an excuse. Unfortunately your excuse launches you on a series of snowballing lies from which there is no escape and inevitably leads to a painfully embarrassing result.

**PART IV**  
**TEEN DISCUSSION: LOSING AND REGAINING TRUST.**

The students then continue their discussion, launched by their consideration of the concept of “lying to fit in.” Here are some of the kids’ thoughts:

- When you lie to be cool, you’re going to get found out. Lying is not such an easy thing to do when you are trying to trick or deceive someone. I got found out and I didn’t like the rest of the school year. No matter what I did, people didn’t believe me. Even if I didn’t like them, it still feels bad to have someone not believe you.

- It can seem good at the time. But if you keep building up lies, they are going to topple over on you.

**Judy: When has someone lied to you?**

- I told my friend that another girl was mean. Then my friend told that girl what I had said. It was the worst feeling. Then I lied and said I didn’t say it. I just should not have gossiped.

- I was way into Yu-Gi-Oh cards. It was my life. My friend stole one. It hurts because you make friends by trusting people. You think of people getting mugged and stuff, but when your friend does something like that, the bond you think you have is broken.

**Judy: How do you regain trust?**

- If you've broken the bond of trust once, it's hard to repair it. All you can do is say, "sorry" – ask for forgiveness, But you won't ever have the trust back to the full extent.

- I start by not lying and giving in to peer pressure or friends trying to talk me into doing stupid things. As you mature more, you realize what things are really dumb.

**Judy: Do your parents trust you?**

- Trust is a big deal with parents and children. As you get older, you want to be more independent, but you can't do that if your parents can't trust you. You lose all your privileges.

- If I tell a white lie, then I might lose my privileges; but otherwise they trust me.

- My parents don't trust me. I can't even hang out with my friends. In elementary school I used to get good grades and do my work. But when I got to middle school all I wanted to do was hang out with my friends and my grades dropped and I lost my parents' trust. I abused the responsibility they gave me.

The discussion concludes with the girl who earlier had told of lying to her parents when they were out of town. She now comments, "I don't know what it would be like to get the trust back. A period of time goes by and I start to get the trust back, and then I do something stupid again. So, I still haven't gained my Dad's trust back. You always lose something when you do something

stupid. And that's all that teenagers do. So even if it's a little thing, you still lose their trust."

## **PART V**

### **CONCLUSION.**

Judy ends the video with the following observation: "A wise philosopher once said, 'I'm not upset that you lied to me. I'm upset that from now on I can't believe you.' It seems like the real problem with lying is not the lie itself, but the way it wrecks our relationships with other people.

Everyone wants to trust and be trusted. But trust has to be earned. And like everything else in life, making that happen is up to each and every one of us."

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### *Questions to ask before showing the video.*

1. How do you know when you can trust someone?
2. What part does trust play in your relationships with your friends and family? How would these relationships be affected if you found out someone was lying to you?
3. Can you imagine starting a friendship with someone you didn't trust? What would that be like?
4. What are the benefits of being a trustworthy person? How do you benefit from the trustworthiness of others?

### *Questions to ask after showing the video.*

1. What does trusting somebody mean?
2. What do you look for in someone so you know you can trust him/her?
3. What makes a person trustworthy?
4. What does trust have to do with the quality of someone's character?
5. How do you define a "lie"?
6. Is it ever okay to lie? When would that be?
7. What is a white lie? Is there any difference between a white lie and any other kind of lie? When have you told a white lie? What was the situation?
8. Some people say that simply avoiding the truth isn't really a lie. What do you think?

9. What is the biggest lie you've ever told? Would you do it again? Why/why not?

10. In the discussion about telling lies, one girl says her parents still mistrust her after her big lie. She says that her dad asked how he could know he could trust her again. Can you come up with an answer to that question?

11. If your friends were here right now, would they say you were trustworthy? What would your parents say? Are you more trustworthy with your friends or with your parents? Do you think your parents should trust you automatically? Why, or why not?

12. Have you ever lost the trust of someone you cared about? How did it make you feel? How is your relationship with that person now?

13. The young people talking listed fear and wanting people to like them as reasons to lie. Have you ever felt that way? What other reasons do you feel people have for lying?

14. Have you ever lied to fit in? Did it help you fit in? If not, what happened?

15. During the dramatized skit Judy has us imagine a story about boy who lied to fit in with some basketball players. We see how he gets further and further stuck in his chain of lies. Do you sympathize with him? Have you ever told a small lie that led to another and then got out of hand?

16. Have you ever been lied to by someone you care about? What did that feel like?

17. What advice would you give to someone who wants to earn back your trust?

18. What qualities in one's character are needed to regain trust? What qualities in one's character are needed to trust someone again after he/she has broken your trust?

19. Can your parents trust you? Why or why not? What role does trust play in your relationship with your parents? Have your parents talked to you about trust? How important is it to you and your parents?

20. One of the last things Judy says in her blog is that the real problem with lying isn't the lie but the way it wrecks our relationships with other people. What does she mean by this? Do you agree with her?

*For questions relating to **special topics such as sports, workplace readiness, etc.**, visit [www.goodcharacter.com](http://www.goodcharacter.com)*

## WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Judy begins her blog by having us imagine living in a world where you can't trust anybody. She shows two examples that illustrate her point. These include crossing the street and ordering food at a café. Write about another example that shows how important trust is in our daily lives.
2. Write about the importance of honesty and trust in making our society work.
3. Describe an important relationship in your life right now. What role does trust play in that relationship? How did you earn each other's trust?
4. Write about a time when you saw somebody lie. What was the situation and how did it feel to witness it? What did you do? Would you do the same thing again?
5. Write about a time when you were lied to. How did you feel? What did you need from that person to trust him/her again?
6. In the video, one girl talks about "that big talk" you have to have with your parents after you've been caught lying and how it's awkward and scary. Write about a time when you had to have that talk. What was it like? What did your parents say? What parts of what they said did you agree/disagree with? Did that talk change the direction of your relationship with them?
7. Write about the role guilt plays in lying. In the video, one kid says that "after you've lied and people find out, you have a guilty feeling you carry around with you." Do you agree with that? If so, in what way?
8. Write about a time when you told a lie that got out of hand. What happened and how did you undo the damage?

## GROUP ACTIVITIES

1. Have students break into pairs and share with each other either a time they lied or a time they were lied to. Have each student describe the main emotion they felt as a result of it. Come back together as a group and list in two columns the emotions for both lying and being lied to. Compare and discuss the list and its impact on our relationships with others.

2. In order to help us think about how much we rely on trust to make things work in our communities, Judy had us imagine a world where we couldn't trust anyone. What are some examples of how your school relies on trust to make things work as a community?

3. As a group, come up with a list of examples of things that might occur in your school that would violate the trust of its community? Now, break into groups. Have students come up with what they think might prevent that violation from happening and what would be needed to repair the harm done in each example?

4. As a class, come up with two lists: one list of ways trust is essential in our personal lives and a list of ways trust is essential in society. What are the personal responsibilities we have to make the first list work, and what personal responsibilities are needed to make the second list work? How are your responses similar and different?

**goodcharacter.com**

[www.goodcharacter.com](http://www.goodcharacter.com)

**This content-rich website is loaded with free resources to help you do the job!**

*Please visit this website to find:*

- \* **Facilitation techniques** for conducting meaningful, productive classroom discussions, including **Socratic Method**.
- \* **Additional discussion questions, writing assignments, and learning activities.”**
- \* **Opportunities for your students** to become involved in activities and issues relating to the topics in these videos.
- \* **Links** to key character education organizations and resources.
- \* **Articles** and other writings on educating for character.
- \* Special discussion guide supplements for use with **sports programs, workplace readiness programs**, and other areas of special interest.
- \* **The Daily Dilemma** - an ongoing series of moral and ethical discussion starters from the case files of Charis Denison.

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This video series was produced in association with  
**CHARACTER COUNTS!**<sup>sm</sup>

The CHARACTER COUNTS! coalition is a consortium of the nation's largest and most influential educational and youth-serving organizations united in one overriding mission: strengthening the character of America's youth.



**CHARACTER COUNTS!**  
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