

Integrity

Grades 9-12

Segment Summary:

When Nate Brazil threatened to shoot one of his teachers, his friend Michelle Cordovez dismissed his threat as a joke and didn't tell anyone. Nate turned that threat into a reality, and now Michelle lives with the guilt of knowing she might have saved a life if she had broken her silence.

It was the last day of school, and Michelle Cordovez and her friend Nate Brazil were sent home early for throwing water balloons. On their walk home, Nate told Michelle that he had a gun and that he planned to shoot a teacher. Knowing that Nate was angry about being disciplined, Michelle thought he was just blowing off steam. She didn't take the threat seriously, and she didn't mention it to anyone. Later that afternoon, Nate returned to school and fatally shot a popular teacher. Michelle still regrets not telling someone about Nate's threat, and she realizes she might have prevented a great deal of pain and suffering if she had confided in someone. She now eases her own sadness and tries to make a difference in other students' lives by talking about the importance of taking every violent threat seriously. While this tragedy will always be an unpleasant memory, Michelle takes comfort in the fact that she has broke her silence and now has the opportunity to encourage others to break their silence.

Discussion Questions:

1. In your opinion, does Michelle have integrity? Why or why not?
2. Nate was angry about being sent home from school early. What is your normal reaction when someone disciplines you at school? Do your reactions vary depending on the teacher and the situation? Explain.
3. Do you think that keeping Nate's threat a secret was a malicious gesture or an innocent oversight on Michelle's part? Explain. What's the difference between the two?
4. How far would you go in order to keep a friend's secret? Would you tell a parent or teacher if your friend brought cigarettes to school? What about a pocket knife? What if your friend came to school drunk or high? What if your friend were selling prescription drugs or other illegal drugs at school? What if your friend brought a handgun or a homemade bomb to school or another public place?
5. Think about your answers to question 4. How do you decide when to tell and when to keep a secret? What criteria do you use?
6. Suppose you decided to tell an authority figure about a friend who threatened someone at school or in your community. Whom would you tell and why?
7. Do you feel safe at home, at school and in your community? Why or why not?
8. What can you do to make your home safer? What can you and your classmates do to make your school safer? What can you do to make your community safer?
9. Nate told Michelle that his mother didn't know he had a gun. Do you know someone now or in the past who withheld dangerous information or possessions from his or her parents? How was the person able to conceal his or her secret? What could his or her parents have done to expose this dangerous secret?
10. Does hearing Michelle's story affect your attitudes about keeping secrets, reporting threats or telling on friends? Why or why not?

Vocabulary Words and Definitions

Compromise (v.)

Definition: to harm or damage something in some way, possibly by behaving in a way that does not match a legal or moral standard

Context: Kalli compromised her candidacy for class president by looking the other way when her friends stole supplies from the school store in exchange for their votes.

Cynical (adj.)

Definition: unwilling to believe that people have good, honest or sincere reasons for doing something

Context: Many people today refuse to vote because they are cynical and don't believe any elected official will be honest while in office.

Implement (v.)

Definition: to put a project, plan, campaign, etc., into action

Context: Yori's first step in implementing her campaign is to hang posters throughout the school.

Integrity (n.)

Definition: the quality of being honest and of always having high moral principles

Context: Jake demonstrated integrity when he refused to allow his younger sister to turn in one of his term papers as her own.

Lapse (n.)

Definition: a period of time in which someone chooses the wrong thing to do or when something is allowed to become worse

Context: Eira suffered a lapse of judgment when she decided to throw a party while her parents were out of town.

Legacy (n.)

Definition: something someone does or says that impacts others and is remembered long after death **Context:** As a member of her high school's championship softball team, Zarifa left behind a legacy of strength, honor and determination when she graduated.

Motivate (v.)

Definition: to make a person want to achieve something and make him or her willing to work hard in order to do it

Context: The program aims to motivate students to stay in school by teaching them skills that they can apply in real-life situations.

Performance enhancer (n.)

Definition: an herbal stimulant, a supplement or a drug used to increase an athlete's physical ability, sometimes resulting in negative health side effects

Context: The NFL banned the stimulant ephedra as a performance enhancer because it has been linked to heart attacks, strokes and seizures in healthy young people who use it.

Reputation (n.)

Definition: the opinion that people have about a particular person or thing because of past experiences

Context: David earned a bad reputation by harassing weaker students on the school bus.

Steroid (n.)

Definition: a chemical compound produced in the body; also given as a drug by doctors for injuries and used illegally by people participating in sports to improve their performance

Context: Under extreme pressure to make the all-star team, Aleisa began using steroids in order to gain an edge over the other gymnasts.

Source: *Longman Advanced American Dictionary*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited. 2000.

Activity: Don't Say That! – Vocabulary Taboo

Objectives:

Students will be able to

- Identify the definitions of vocabulary words
- Relate additional words to the meanings of vocabulary words
- Express the meanings of vocabulary words using novel language
- Determine the meanings of vocabulary words based on novel language
- Demonstrate speaking and listening skills

Materials:

- 20 index cards per group
- Highlighters, pens, pencils
- Timer or watch with second hand
- **Integrity Vocabulary Words and Definitions** handout

Procedure:

The meaning of a word is far more than the definition in a dictionary. It is also what the word means to an individual and how he or she expresses it to others. In this activity, students have the opportunity to find new and creative ways to express the meanings of their vocabulary words to their teammates. The only hitch is they can't say the words most commonly associated with the vocabulary word.

1. Begin by reviewing the vocabulary words and meanings on the **Integrity Vocabulary Words and Definitions** handout.
2. Divide the class into groups of four, and hand each group 20 index cards.
3. Instruct each group to write one vocabulary word on the top of each of the first 10 cards (use the lined side) and highlight it. On the remaining 10 cards, students should decide on additional, new terms that they encountered either from the **Connect with Kids** video segments or lessons.
4. Assign students to work together to identify the five most common words associated with each vocabulary word and then list the five words below the appropriate vocabulary word on each index card.

Example: Snow – white, ice, melts, Frosty and winter

5. After students complete their index cards, have them switch with another group. Then within each four-person group, divide students into pairs (two pairs per group).
6. Explain to students the rules of the game:
 - a. Choose one pair to start the game. The other pair will divide the responsibility of monitoring the answers and keeping score.
 - b. Shuffle the cards and divide them evenly (10 cards per pair).
 - c. For the pair who plays first, one student will call out words associated with the vocabulary word, without using the common words listed as clues, while the other student tries to guess the vocabulary word.

Note: If the student uses one of the common words, the pair must skip that word, put it in the discard pile and move on to the next word.
 - d. The pair will have 30 seconds, timed by the teacher, to go through as many of the 10 cards as possible.
 - e. When time is called, the scorekeeper should tally the points for the first pair. Each word guessed correctly counts as one point.
 - f. Now let the second pair play using its stack of 10 cards. The first team will assume the monitoring and scoring responsibilities.
 - g. The second pair should have 30 seconds in which to play. Afterward, the scorekeeper should tally the points for the second pair. The team within each group that has the most points wins.

Source: *Taboo* board game. Hasbro.