

The  
Virtue Chronicles

*Truthfulness ~ Honesty*

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## *How a Little Lie Grew*

*"Master, we know Thou art a true speaker."*

What a wonderful tribute the Pharisees paid to our Lord when they said these words! How nice it would be if the same could be said about us!

So many boys and girls have the habit of lying. It should be overcome because it is a dangerous habit. The most dangerous thing about a lie is that it grows in the telling. Each time it is repeated it becomes worse. Here is an example of how a lie can grow and grow with each person who repeats it.

Some neighbours of a certain Farmer Jones came to tell him that Johnny Williams had taken a whole wagon-load of apples out of his orchard.

"Who told you?" the farmer asked.

They said that they heard it from Johnny Flannelmouth.

Farmer Jones went around to see Johnny Flannelmouth. He asked, "Did you see Johnny Williams steal a wagon-load of apples out of my orchard?"

"Goodness, no," said Johnny Flannelmouth. "What I heard was that he took a wheelbarrowful. Jimmy Gabbygut told me about it."

The farmer went to see Jimmy Gabbygut. "Did you see Johnny Williams take a wheelbarrowful of apples out of my orchard?"

"Goodness, no," said Jimmy Gabbygut. "All I said was that he took a pocketful of apples. Gertie Garrulous told me."

The farmer went to see Gertie Garrulous. "Did you see Johnny Williams take a pocketful of apples out of my orchard?"

"Goodness, no," said Gertie Garrulous. "I said he took one of your apples. Lizzie Longtongue told me about it."

The farmer went to see Lizzie Longtongue. "Did you see Johnny Williams take an apple out of my orchard?"

"Goodness, no," said Lizzie Longtongue. "Johnny was talking to me the other day and said that your apples were ripe and it was about time somebody picked them"

That is the way it is with a lie. We can do great harm without meaning to just because we are careless in what we say. A very simple rule to get and keep in mind early in



your life is this: If you cannot say anything good about a person do not say anything at all. Telling lies makes us very unlike Our Lord, to Whom even His enemies had to say, "Master, we know Thou art a true speaker."

*"You shall not steal. You shall not lie, neither shall any man deceive his neighbour." ~  
Leviticus 19:11*

*"But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, they shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." ~ Apocalypse 21:27*



## Match The Moral Virtues to The Capital Sins

1. Humility
2. Liberality
3. Chastity
4. Meekness
5. Abstinence
6. Zeal
7. Brotherly Love

1. Sloth
2. Anger
3. Covetousness
4. Pride
5. Lust
6. Gluttony
7. Envy

~Answers on the last page~



*I must every day  
Be sure that all I say  
Is pure and true.*

*Thou hatest all the work-  
ers of iniquity: thou wilt  
destroy all that speak a  
lie. ~ Psalms 5: 7*

## *St. John of Kenty's Love for the Truth*

St. John of Kenty made three pilgrimages to Rome during the course of his life. He was accustomed to make them on foot, carrying what provisions he might need for his journey in a sack upon his shoulders.

On one of these pilgrimages he was attacked by robbers while passing through a lonely forest. The robbers took possession of everything they could find upon him, and before departing they asked him if he had anything else which they could take.

He said that he had nothing else, and that they had taken everything from him. They then allowed him to depart in peace.

But he had not gone forward many steps when he suddenly remembered that he had a few pieces of gold, which had been sewn into his clothes, that he might have something to help him in any necessity that might arise. He at once retraced his steps, and, overtaking the robbers, he cried out to them that what he had said was not the truth, for he had suddenly remembered that he had a few golden coins sewed into his garments, and he began to look for them, that he might give them to the robbers.

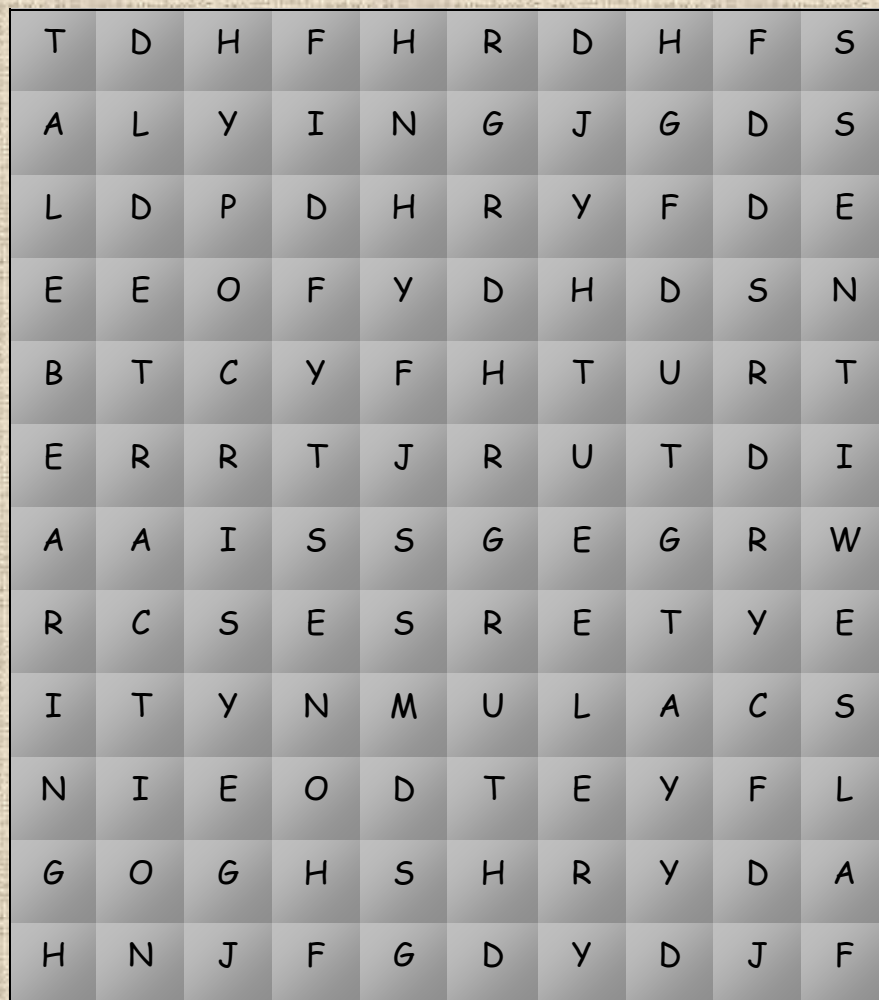
But they, unaccustomed to such delicacy of conscience, were filled with a respect for the old man, and not only refused to take the coins, but even restored to him everything they had previously taken from him.

*Wherefore, putting away lying, speak ye  
the truth, every man with his neighbour;  
for we are members one of another. ~*

*Ephesians 4: 25*



## Word Search



Word List:

Lying	Hypocrisy
False Witness	Talebearing
Calumny	Detraction
Truth	Honesty

~Answers on the last page~



269. Catechism Question from *The Highway to God*:

When does a person commit the sin of calumny or slander?

*A person commits the sin of calumny or slander when by lying he injures the good name of another.*

## *St. Vincent de Paul Calumniated*

St. Vincent de Paul, that holy man who is worthy of the admiration of all ages, did not escape the consequences of malignant tongues.

A certain judge, in whose house he lodged, having lost four crowns, accused the Saint of being the thief. The Saint's reply was an assertion of his innocence, leaving it to God to prove this in His own good time.

The judge, however, still considered him the guilty one, and spoke of him as such among his friends and acquaintances, who believed what he told them.

St. Vincent, little concerned about the matter, allowed the calumny to be carried from mouth to mouth without saying anything else in his defence but the words he had already spoken: "I am innocent. God knows I am innocent, and that is enough for me."

For the long space of six years this unjust suspicion hung over him, until God in His own good time manifested his innocence, which brought the Saint greater renown than he ever before had obtained. The guilty one acknowledged his sin, and exonerated the Saint from all blame. The people who had hitherto believed the calumny craved his forgiveness, and published on every side the sanctity of St. Vincent.

*"But I say to you, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who persecute and calumniate you." ~ Matthew 5:44*

# Memory Gems

I have often repented of having spoken,  
but never of having kept silent.

~ St. Arsenius

There's nothing so kingly as kindness,  
And nothing so royal as truth. ~ Alice Cary

“You shall not steal. You shall not lie, neither shall  
any man deceive his neighbour.” ~ Leviticus 19: 11


A FALSE WITNESS  
SHALL NOT BE  
UNPUNISHED: AND HE  
THAT SPEAKETH  
LIES, SHALL PERISH.

~ PROVERBS XXI:28





## Truthfulness

Today I shall speak to you about something that is very important, something that boys and girls should learn while still very young. If this lesson is well learned, it will help to make your life better and happier. I am going to speak to you about being truthful. What does being truthful mean? Can any one tell me? Yes, being truthful means telling the truth; it means not telling lies. Truthfulness is a beautiful virtue. Every person ought to be truthful. How we love a little girl that always tells the truth! What a manly little fellow is the boy that does not lie! Boys and girls that tell the truth at all times will grow to be men and women whom every one will love and respect.

### *Why We Should Be Truthful*

No one thinks much of a person that tells lies. A lie is an ugly thing. A lie is a sin, because by telling a lie, we hurt God. God is truth. He hates everything that is not truth. Therefore God is greatly displeased by untruthfulness. Each time you tell a lie, even if it be only a very small one, you thereby displease God. God hates lying. The devil is called the 'father of lies' because he told the first lie.

You see, then, my dear children, why you should be careful to tell the truth always. A lie, no matter how small it may be, is a sin, and a sin offends God. God has been so good to you that you should try to please Him in every way you can. If you are careful you will not find it hard to tell the truth. Often think of Jesus during the day. Think what He would do if He were in your place. Jesus was always truthful. He wishes you to follow His example in this as well as in other things.

Many children seem to think it only a little thing when they tell a lie. They do not think of what they are doing when they tell an untruth. I am going to ask you to be very careful today and to watch over yourselves, so that if you are tempted to tell a lie, you will not do it. But should it have happened that a lie slipped out before you noticed it, ask Jesus to forgive you. Also promise Jesus that you will try to keep from doing anything that will lead you to commit this sin. For today, remember that God sees you everywhere; that He knows your thoughts, and that He wishes you to be truthful at all times.

Continued on the next page:

**Practice:**

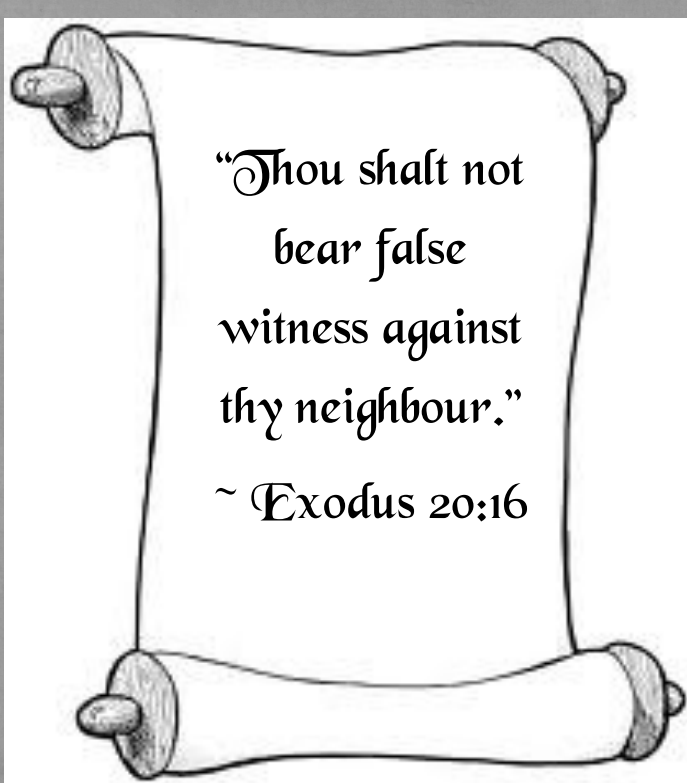
- 1 I will watch myself today that I may not tell an untruth.
2. If I have been careless and have told a lie, I will tell Jesus that I am sorry.

Always tell the truth, my boy,  
Never tell a lie.  
You can keep from doing wrong,  
If you only try.

266. Catechism Question from *The Highway to God*:

What does the eighth commandment forbid?

*The eighth commandment forbids lies, rash judgement, detraction, calumny, and the telling of secrets we are bound to keep.*

A black and white line drawing of a scroll, partially unrolled, with wooden rollers at the top and bottom. The text is written in a stylized, calligraphic font on the unrolled portion of the scroll.

“Thou shalt not  
bear false  
witness against  
thy neighbour.”  
~ Exodus 20:16

“The lip of truth shall be  
steadfast for ever: but he that  
is a hasty witness, frameth a  
lying tongue.” ~ Proverbs  
12:19

“Lying lips are an abomina-  
tion to the Lord: but they that  
deal faithfully please him.” ~  
Proverbs 12:22



## The Fall of the Christian Religion in Japan

In the days when the first Christian missionaries went to Japan to preach the Gospel to the natives, certain merchants from Holland went to the Emperor and told him that the only aim that these missionaries had was to bring the Portuguese and the Spaniards into the country, that in time they might take possession of it and add it to their dominions.

This great calumny was the source of the ruin of religion in that Empire, and the cause of a great persecution which was raised against the Christians who dwelt in it.

At that time there were 400,000 Christians in Japan; forty years afterwards there was not even one to be found in the whole Empire. This was the result of a lie which was raised by the cupidity of these merchants, who wished to be the only ones who would have a right to come into the country. What an account they shall have to give at the Day of Judgment of the words which brought so great a calamity on the Church, and caused the ruin of so many souls!

268. Catechism Question from *The Highway to God*:

When does a person commit the sin of detraction?

*A person commits the sin of detraction when, without a good reason, he makes known the hidden faults of another.*

“He that gathereth treasures  
by a lying tongue, is vain and  
foolish, and shall stumble  
upon the snares of death.” ~

Proverbs 21:6



## The Nobleman's Death

History informs us that a certain nobleman, much given to the vice of detraction, was admonished in his dying moments to make his Confession and to think seriously of the salvation of his soul; but he replied that he could not prevail upon himself to do so, and, notwithstanding the many and urgent entreaties of his friends, he remained obstinate to the last.

Then, putting out his tongue, and touching it with his finger, "This wicked tongue," said he, "is the cause of my damnation," which words were no sooner pronounced than he expired, thus leaving an awful lesson to all who are addicted to this fatal vice.

## The Flying Ox

One day a friend of St. Thomas of Aquinas cried out to him by way of amusement: "Thomas, look at the flying ox."

St. Thomas looked around him in astonishment to see where that strange animal was, but, of course, could not see it anywhere.

His friend then began to laugh, and said to him that he was surprised to see that he was so credulous.

But the Saint replied: "It is much easier to believe that an ox could fly than a Christian could tell a lie."

## Unscramble the Words

- |                 |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. NLYGI        | 2. DNEOTIRTRCA    |
| 3. UMNLAYC      | 4. HRAS TJUNDEGME |
| 5. DESRLAN      | 6. TSREEC         |
| 7. TSRSUETNHLFU | 8. OGO D MENA     |
| 9. PIOSONGN     | 10. TCYHIRA       |



- |          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____  |
| 3. _____ | 4. _____  |
| 5. _____ | 6. _____  |
| 7. _____ | 8. _____  |
| 9. _____ | 10. _____ |

~Answers on the last page~

### Word Bank:

- |                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Good Name     | 2. Charity      |
| 3. Calumny       | 4. Slander      |
| 5. Secret        | 6. Snooping     |
| 7. Detraction    | 8. Truthfulness |
| 9. Rash Judgment | 10. Lying       |



## St. Philip and The Lady

One day a lady went to confession to St. Philip Neri, and accused herself of speaking about her neighbour's faults and failings.

The Saint said to her: "Do you often commit this fault?"

She answered: "Yes, Father, it is a habit with me."

The Saint, from his great experience of guiding souls, saw that this bad habit had been acquired more by want of reflection than by malice, and he thought of how he could most easily correct her. To do this more effectually he imagined that the best thing to do in the first place was to enlighten her on the terrible consequences arising from her unfortunate evil habit.

"My dear child," began the Saint, "your sin is indeed great before God, but the mercy of God is much greater still. With a strong resolution on your own part, and by fervent prayer to God, I feel confident that you will easily soon triumph over this evil inclination."

Then he imposed upon her this penance: "Go to the market-place where fowls are exposed for sale; purchase one that has recently been killed, and which has still its feathers unplucked; then, going out of the city, you will walk for a considerable distance along the road, plucking the feathers all the time and throwing them away from you as you go along. When you have plucked off all the feathers, even to the smallest, return to me that I may see whether or not you have obeyed the orders I, the priest of God, have given you. That shall be the first part of your penance; I will then tell you what next to do."

The lady, as well can be imagined, was utterly astonished at this command of the priest, but knowing his reputation of being a Saint, and that he must have some good reason for so acting, did not hesitate to obey.

Continued on the next page:



Continued from last page

"My Father," she replied, "I will do as you have ordered me."

She then went to the neighbouring market-place, and having bought a fowl, she went to the outside of the town and began to pull off the feathers and to cast them from her, according to the instructions she had received. The wind, which was blowing violently at the time, soon scattered them in every direction.

When she had faithfully executed St. Philip's order, she at once returned to him, carrying with her the fowl to show him that she had done so, and also very desirous to know why he had given her so strange a penance.

"Ah," said the Saint on seeing her return, "you have done well. But I said there was still another part of the penance yet to be performed; when you have accomplished it, you shall be cured of your habit of detraction."

The woman expressed her readiness to comply with this also, though still at a loss to know what it all meant.

"You will go now," said the Saint, "and gather up one by one the feathers you have scattered to the winds. See that you do not neglect to gather every one of them."

"But that is quite impossible, my Father," she answered. "How could I pick them all up, since the strong wind has blown them away far and near?" How could you possibly imagine that I could do this?"

"I well know, my child, that you cannot do this. Well, then, keep this in mind: that the words of detraction you have uttered are like unto these feathers; when once you have uttered them you cannot possibly recall them; they are borne in every direction by the tongues of those to whom you have spoken them. Be careful, then, for the time to come, and keep a guard upon your tongue. Go now in peace, and sin no more."

This example was a lesson for that lady. May it be one for you also, my child. Watch over every word you utter, for remember that it is Jesus Christ Himself Who says that for every idle word we utter we shall have to give an account at the Day of Judgement.

## The Lying Tongue

... 1. Lying is opposed to truth, consequently to "the God of truth" (Ps. 30:6). "I am the truth" (John 14:6), says the Son of God of Himself. "For this was I born, and for this came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth" (John 18:37). On the other hand, the Holy Scripture calls the devil the father of lies; so that he who is in the habit of lying are children of the devil.

2. It is never lawful to tell a jocose lie. It is forbidden, under pain of grievous sin; to take away a man's life, yet I may do so in self-defense. But not even to save my life would it be lawful for me to tell a lie. Stealing is forbidden under pain of grievous sin; yet under certain circumstances I may, without sin, take what belongs to another, namely, if I am in extreme necessity and have no other means of preserving my life. But it never would be lawful for me to procure necessary sustenance by telling a lie. But, you will ask, is lying, then, worse than murder and theft, since the latter are sometimes lawful, but the former, never? No; by murder, we mean taking away a man's life unjustly, an act that is always sinful, and can never become lawful. Theft means taking away another's property unjustly, which is always sinful, and can never become lawful. Therefore, to take away a man's life or his property unjustly is certainly a greater sin than to tell a simple lie. The idea I wish to convey to you is this: Under certain circumstances God can give me the right over the life or property of another, so that if I kill a man I shall not be guilty of murder, or if I take my neighbour's property I shall not be guilty of theft. On the other hand, God can never give us a right to tell a lie, nor can He counsel, much less command, or approve of, lying. As God can never under any circumstances make blasphemy or idolatry lawful, so can He never make even the smallest and most advantageous lie lawful.

3. It is foolish, then, to say that by concealing the truth by a trivial lie one can often do a great deal of good or avert some misfortune, or prevent himself or others from being put to public shame; and that under such circumstances lying is lawful, especially when it does no wrong or harm to others. Again, there are some who maintain that they must often tell a lie in their families for the sake of preserving peace; for if they told the truth they would give rise to quarrel-



ing, dissension, and hatred, which might be the occasion of many grievous sins. If you, by telling a trivial lie, could put an end to all the wars that devastate so many countries, and are the cause of so many fearful sins, and if you could thereby restore peace to the whole world, it would not be lawful for you to tell a lie; much less for the sake of preserving peace in a house-hold. And if you could save your own life, or that of another, by telling a lie, you must rather sacrifice your own life, or that of your neighbour, than be guilty of the lie; much less, then, is lying lawful merely for the sake of some temporal profit.

4. What a divine work it is to gain a soul! If it were necessary thereto that all men should sacrifice their worldly goods, their honour, their comfort, their lives even, they should all joyfully make that sacrifice for the sake of gaining one soul for God and for heaven. And yet, if you could gain all souls by one small lie, it would not be lawful for you to tell that lie, no, that lie would be a sin. The reason of it is clearly laid down by St. Paul: "Let us not do evil that there may come good." (Romans 3:8) Let those who imagine that lying is sometimes necessary make a note of that. I have told lies, they say, but I cannot help it. It was for the sake of preventing quarrels at home, or to keep my husband from drinking too much. No; it is never necessary to commit sin, and therefore it is never necessary to tell a lie. From this it is evident that there is no excuse for those who order their children or domestics to lie for some trivial reason, telling them to say, for instance, that their masters or parents are not at home; or who lie by way of a joke, or for the sake of amusement.

5. But, some will say, am I, then always bound to declare the truth to every one who asks me? By no means; that is not at all necessary, nor would it be always advisable. For there are circumstances in which I might commit a grievous sin by making known the truth; for instance, if I reveal an important secret, or disclose anything injurious to my neighbour's good name, or to the charity I owe him, even if I am asked to make the disclosure. It is one thing not to disclose the truth or to lie; the former I may often be bound to do, the latter can never be lawful. Therefore, when such indiscreet questions are asked or when by concealing the truth I can prevent sin or hinder people from quarreling, I must either hold my tongue or refuse to answer, or I must go away or otherwise show that I do not wish to answer, or I must give an evasive reply, or an-

such a way as to leave the other in doubt as to whether I mean yes, or no. Once for all, to speak deliberately against one's knowledge is a lie, and that is never lawful, no matter what advantage may be derived from it.

I conclude with the words of St. Paul: "Wherefore, putting away lying, speak ye the truth, every man with his neighbour; for we are members one of another" (Ephesians 4:25), and we must deal uprightly with each other. "Let your speech be yea, yea, no, no" (Matthew 5:37), as our Saviour tells us, and speak candidly without deceit, and you will have God as your friend, and men, too, will be your friends when they know that you are truthful. Amen.

## St. Firmus of Africa

St. Firmus, who was Bishop of Africa, concealed in his house through charity a man whom the Emperor wanted to put to death.

The messengers of the Emperor, hearing that the Bishop knew where the man was, went to his house and asked him to inform them of it.

"I cannot answer you," replied the Bishop, "because I must not tell a lie, not may I inform you where the man is."

They urged him to tell them, but he always refused. They even put him to the torture to force him to tell them, but he still was silent. They then threatened him with death, but he answered: "I know how to suffer and die, but I do not know how to day one word against the truth or against the charity due to my neighbour."

They then take him before the Emperor, where he spoke with the same firmness. The Sovereign, admiring his great piety, sent him away, and also, for his sake, pardoned the unfortunate man whom the Bishop had concealed.



## Problem Questions

1. A friend of yours is passing notes to others and does not pass them to you. You feel sure that she is telling things about you. Are you justified in drawing such conclusions? What sin do you commit? Can you give other examples of rash judgement?
2. A boy in your class has been found guilty of stealing. A few days later you miss some money out of your desk. You and your classmates conclude that the same boy stole your money. What should you do about it? Discuss fully.
3. Your mother sends you to the door to tell an agent that she is not home. Should you obey?
  - a) Must children obey their parents in all things? Can you give an example of a case in which a child does not obey its parents?
4. The teacher leaves the classroom and asks all the children to keep on working quietly. As soon as she is out you turn around and laugh and talk. When she returns you quickly get back to your work. Is there any wrong in that? What should you call such an action?
5. You have a chance to look into your book during examination. May you do so?
6. The girl sitting behind you in school does not know her lesson. You can help her out by opening her book and placing it so that she can see the lesson. May you help her? Who do you think would be wronged more by such an action, the teacher or the girl?
7. You play sick so that you don't have to go to school. Is there any wrong in that?
8. Elsie has a new dress. She asks you how you like it. You do not like it at all, but do not wish to hurt her feelings. How would you answer her?



9. Your friend Margaret tells you a secret and asks you never to tell. You promise. Must you keep your word?
10. Your chum received a letter which she does not show you. You go to her desk later and read the letter without her consent or knowledge. Had you a right to do so?
11. A boy asks where you are going. You tell him you are going to the North Pole. Is that a lie?
12. You listen with pleasure to an evil story about someone else. Do you commit any wrong?





## The Emperor and the Innkeeper

The Emperor Rodolph was one day at Nuremberg, and, as was the custom at that time, those who had any grievance used to go to him for redress.

On this occasion a merchant went to him, and reported that, having come into that city on business, he went to one of the chief hotels, and as he had in his possession about two hundred marks of silver in a leathern sack, he confided it to the care of the innkeeper during the time he was to remain in his house, that he might put it in a place of safety. At the same time, thinking that a man in his position would never yield to the temptation of dishonesty, he did not ask him for a receipt.

When the time came for his departure, he went to the innkeeper and asked him to give him his money, as he was now about to leave the city.

The innkeeper looked at him in surprise, and declared that he had never seen the sack nor the money; and as the merchant had no letter, he found it impossible to prove that he had given him the money. He also informed the Emperor that, being one of the chief citizens, the innkeeper had been chosen to be one of the deputation which was to come that day to offer him the homage of the people.

The Emperor told him to hide himself somewhere where he might be within call, and that he would see what he could do for him.

Not long afterwards the members of the deputation arrived, and the Emperor talked familiarly with each of them, inquiring their names and their professions. When he came to the innkeeper, he said to him in a jocular manner: "I admire your hat very much. Will you give it to me in exchange for mine?"

The innkeeper was only too delighted to do so, thinking that he was indeed highly favoured. Not long afterwards Rodolph left the room, telling

the guests to wait till his return. He met one of the officers of his suite near the door, and said to him: "Run as fast as you can to such and such a hotel, and tell the landlady to give you immediately the leathern sack which her husband has hidden, for it is much needed at the present moment. And as a sign that the case is urgent, show her this hat, and she will immediately recognize it as his."

The officer did as his master had commanded, and went to deliver his message. The woman, seeing her husband's hat, and knowing that no one but themselves knew about the stolen money, thought that her husband had sent for it, and gave it to the messenger without any hesitation, who carried it to the Emperor.

As soon as he received it he returned to the audience-chamber, and calling to his side the guilty innkeeper, and having also sent for the merchant, he related before the company the whole story. The innkeeper at first answered in indignation that the story was made up to injure his reputation. Then the Emperor, raising up his hand, in which was the leathern sack, showed it to him, and to all those who were present. The innkeeper was struck dumb with astonishment, which was only increased when the Emperor related the manner in which the sack had come into his possession.

The Emperor then gave him a severe reprimand, and ordered him to pay a very heavy penalty. The action thus exposed brought down on him the indignation and scorn of the citizens, and he was obliged to flee from the city as soon as possible.





## Activities Answer Key

Answers for 'Match the Moral Virtues to the Capital Sins' on Page 4:

- |                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Humility       | 1. Sloth        |
| 2. Liberality     | 2. Anger        |
| 3. Chastity       | 3. Covetousness |
| 4. Meekness       | 4. Pride        |
| 5. Abstinence     | 5. Lust         |
| 6. Zeal           | 6. Gluttony     |
| 7. Brotherly Love | 7. Envy         |

Answers for 'Word Search' on Page 6:



Answers for 'Unscramble the Words' on Page 14:

- |                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. LYING          | 6. SECRET       |
| 2. DETRACTION     | 7. TRUTHFULNESS |
| 3. CALUMNY        | 8. GOOD NAME    |
| 4. RASH JUDGEMENT | 9. SNOOPING     |
| 5. SLANDER        | 10. CHARITY     |

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