



The Honest-to-Goodness Truth

Patricia C. McKissack , Giselle Potter (Illustrator)

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If telling the truth is the right thing to do, why is the whole world mad at Libby?

The Honest-to-Goodness Truth Details

Date : Published January 1st 2003 by Aladdin (first published 2000)

ISBN : 9780689853951

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Format : Paperback 40 pages

Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Realistic Fiction, Cultural, African American, Fiction, 2nd Grade, 1st Grade, Historical, Historical Fiction

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From Reader Review The Honest-to-Goodness Truth for online ebook

Anne says

Someone once shared with me that they teach their kids to ask themselves if something is "true, kind, and necessary" before saying it out loud. This is a great book for opening that conversation with kids!

Andrea Jeter says

Text-to-teacher connections

This book is a great example of honesty and having great friends. Students can write in their own words what does it mean to them to be honest. Do they feel like it is ever okay to lie even if it is just a small one? After discussion about their responses I will write and explain why it is always important to tell the truth. When is the appropriate time to be honest and why you should never lie.

(NS) Lisa says

Libby's lie to her mother came out so easily, "like it was greased with warm butter". After spending the day on the porch for lying, Libby decides to tell nothing but the truth. Her truth-telling goes overboard, causing loss of cherished friendships both young and old. Her strict enforcement of her own rule soon lands her in deep water. She alienates a host of people: her best friend by publicly pointing out a hole in her sock; a classmate by tattling on him; and a neighbor by critiquing her garden.

Children will sympathize with Libby as she struggles to figure out that even though it's always wrong to tell a lie, there's a right and a wrong way to tell the truth. This would be a wonderful story to read in the beginning of a school year when you are battling students who are tattling on each other all the time.

This story would be appropriate for students in kindergarten through second grade.

Melki says

Libby Louise learns the difference between always telling the truth, and being "too truthful."

"The truth is often hard to chew. But if it is sweetened with love, then it is a little easier to swallow."

Wonderful illustrations by Giselle Potter.

Betsy Owens says

The message of this book is very good. The author does a great job of creating realistic situations where Libby tells too much truth. Through her actions and her mother's wisdom, she begins to understand that truth must be presented in the right way, with the right attitude, and for the right reasons.

Lauma says

This is a multi-cultural story that draws upon the African-American lifestyle in the rural south, written by an author who has been the recipient of an NAACP Image Award, Newbery and Coretta Scott King Awards.

It is a witty and touching story about a girl named Libby who learns an important lesson about honesty. When her mom catches Libby in a lie that "slid out of her mouth, like it was greased with warm butter", Libby vows never to lie again. She learns, however, that there's a right and wrong way to tell the truth. Her mom explained, "Sometimes the truth is told at the wrong time or in the wrong way, or for the wrong reasons. And that can be hurtful. But the honest-to-goodness truth is never wrong." This story conveys this important lesson in a very gentle and sympathetic manner.

The folk art style of illustrations and homespun language give an authentic flavor to this story. Libby's emotions feel genuine as her friends and family help her realize that the truth is easier to swallow if it is sweetened with love.

Recommended for children ages 6 to 9, it could be a useful book choice for lessons on character development, writing style, and related social studies units.

Luisa Knight says

I was five. And I still remember that conversation so vividly.

A little old lady had stopped me in the hall of our church building. "What's your name?" she asked.

"I'm Luisa," I said. Remembering my mom's coaching on politeness and how you don't just answer a question but ask it back, I replied, "What's your name?"

"I'm Mrs. Bell." The lady smiled. Apparently my mom's advice was right. I was making an impression. "And how old are you?" she asked.

"I'm five years old." I smiled and I remember feeling so proud of this very grown-up conversation I was having with an adult. "How old are you?"

You can of course guess what happened! With a humph from the lady, my magical grown-up moment ended. "You do NOT ask a woman how old she is." And with that, she walked off, leaving me standing in the hall bewildered.

It was only after I found my mom and told her what had happened that I got the situation understood. Oops. It was a lesson that I filed away neatly in my mind; neatly and not too far back though, as I referenced that file often. "Don't ask them the age question," I remember chanting to myself whenever I entered into a conversation with a lady.

And that's my story.

This book is similar but instead of a lesson in politeness, it's a lesson in truth and how some truths should be told carefully or sometimes not at all. Great material for a discussion with your child!

Ages: 4 - 9

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Kia M. says

This is a good book to read to your students when teaching them the importance of honesty. It can also teach them that sometimes the truth doesn't need to be spoken, especially if it is rude and hurtful to others.

Ch_beth Rice says

The Honest to Goodness Truth was written by Patricia C. McKissack. It tells the story of Libby Sullivan who lies for the first time to her mother and not only is punished for it but feels quite guilty. As a result, Libby vows to always tell the truth. After telling the truth about everything from holes on socks to late homework, Libby's friends become angry with her and she tries hard to understand why telling the truth turned out to be a bad thing. After being told some hurtful truth from a neighbor, Libby finally learns a lesson and makes amends with the people she hurt. This is a good story that teaches a real life lesson of how and when to tell the truth. I like this story for 2nd, 3rd and perhaps even 4th grade students as it can inspire some interesting conversations about lies and telling the truth. The author uses some good vocabulary (such as commence and quivered) that may be new to students. Overall, a nice story readers can relate to well.

Lisa Skripps says

In The Honest-to-Goodness Truth, Patricia McKissack introduces readers to the lovable character of Libby Louise Sullivan. When we meet Libby, she is running out of her house to go meet a friend. Her mother catches her and asks her if she had fed the horse. Libby lies to her mother and is caught. Her mother explains the importance of ALWAYS telling the truth. As the story goes on, Libby has a hard time trying to figure out that while it is wrong to lie, that there is a right and wrong way to tell the truth to people. For example, Libby tells her neighbor that her garden looks like a jungle when she is asked if she likes it.

McKissack's story is definitely one that children will be able to relate to, as most of them have the same difficulty when learning to tell the truth. Even as I read the book, I found myself feeling Libby's frustration and confusion as she tries her very best to be a good person, only resulting in her friends getting mad at her. I like the fact that McKissack allowed Libby to learn her lesson, and by the end of the story she had patched things up with all of her friends.

Lori says

I would love to read this before introducing the Think Before You Speak Poster

T = Is it true?

H = Is it helpful?

I = Is it inspiring?

N = Is it necessary?

K = Is it kind?

Lynn Davidson says

Libby was told not to lie, and to always tell the truth. Not understanding that the way she told the truth was hurting people she had to figure out what telling the truth really meant.

Heidi says

Ages K-4

Libby's story begins when she tells her mother a lie about feeding their horse. 'Ol Boss, and her mother scolds her for lying. Libby vows never to lie again, and begins pointing out embarrassing truths to everyone she meets. Through Libby, McKissack artfully makes the distinction between hurting someone's feelings and telling "The Honest-to-Goodness Truth" without sounding preachy. Giselle Potter's skinny-legged illustrations match perfectly with the text and rural setting, harkening back to the past while remaining relevant.

Amy Layton says

Libby's mom told her to privilege the truth, and so Libby does. Unfortunately, she tells the truth a little too loudly and a little too often and she doesn't know why her friends don't want to be around her anymore. Knowing when to tell the truth is a nuanced lesson that this book teaches very well through a variation of illustrative design and narrative. This book is therefore suitable for both public and school library settings, in that it's suitable for personal reading and for sharing out loud. Perfect for kids who are learning the distinctions of new social settings and for those who enjoy realism. Great for grades 2-4.

Review cross-listed [here](#)!

(NS) Panagiota Angelos says

The story begins by Libby being caught telling a lie to her mother. After being punished, Libby vows to never tell a lie again. But her new plan gets a lot of people angry with her and Libby doesn't understand why. For example, when her best friend, Ruth Mae, shows off her new Sunday dress, Libby publicly points out she has a hole in her sock. Or when her classmate Willie tells her he didn't do his homework, Libby freely shares this information with the class and their teacher. Libby continues to tell the truth until everyone around her is angry at her. That is until she gets a taste of her own medicine.

Immediately while reading this book I thought this would be perfect for younger elementary school students who have difficulty telling the difference between telling and tattling. Libby's mother says it best, "Sometimes the truth is told at the wrong time or in the wrong way, or for the wrong reasons. And that can be hurtful. But the honest to goodness truth is never wrong." Tattling can be a huge problem in the younger grades and this book can be a great tool to address the issue.
