

21. *Black and White*

What's wrong with a little white lie?

Our students live in a world where a small, practical, moral compromise is acceptable, and so is a big one so long as you don't get caught. Today I stood up the strongest boy in my class and said a little tiny sin is like a tread of cotton. I tied it around his arms, which were by his side. He broke it easily and raised his arms on my direction. But playing with sin, skating about on the edge of the precipice with small sins, hastens the day of a fall into real darkness. I said that the boy keeps telling little practical white lies to support his friends and others-altruistic white lies. For each lie I tied a bit of cotton thread about his arms. When a reasonable number were tied about his arms and torso, I asked him to raise his arms above his head. He was unable to do this. He was bound. Unlike Samson bound with materials he could easily break, my student was stunned that he couldn't break the cotton.

Children learn to tell white lies from their parents. Research suggests, most children are told 3, 000 white lies as they grow up ranging from Santa stories to covering answers to questions put to parents when they don't know the responses.

Jesus said, ***I am The Truth***, (John 14:6). This puts a premium on truth, and it means as teachers we have to be cautious about what we say. Other religions allow members to be expedient about the truth. Christians are not given this option. In the presence of students, we are bound to find ways to respond that don't involve white lies. This means we need to seek God every day for discernment and the gift of responding lovingly and tactfully without failing to speak the truth, (John 16:13). Our words have power. We don't want to add to the thousands of little white lies our students experience-we need to demonstrate our integrity so that our talk matches our walk.

Love rejoices with the truth, (1 Corinthians 13:6). We want excellence in academics but also moral excellence. May your students and colleagues say of you: *you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth* (Matthew 12:14).

a little white lie

Only a little excuse
A convenient white lie