

TRUTHFULNESS

Australian Supplement to the Character First Education Curriculum

I Will:

- Tell the truth
- Encourage others to tell the truth
- Not cheat or steal
- Admit when I am wrong
- Not exaggerate to make things seem different than they really are



Definition

Earning future trusts by accurately reporting past facts

Illustration

Early settlers long thought that the ferocious screams of Tasmanian devils were demons haunting the rugged forest. However, Tasmanian devils are actually marsupials about the size of a large house cat. Despite their habits of being a scavenger, Tassie devils demonstrate remarkable truthfulness through their voice and body language when communicating to other devils. See the nature story to find out how these creatures communicate using truthful actions.

John Flynn's vision to bring medical assistance to the harsh Australian outback had never been undertaken on such a big scale. Therefore, he had to make sure that he truthfully communicated his dreams without exaggerating or making things sound different to what they really were. Read the history to see how his truthfulness helped save a remote community in the Kimberley region of Western Australia.

Truthfulness in Nature

The Tasmanian Devil

It is a dark night with only a sliver of moon in the black velvet sky, sprinkled with sparkling stars. Scurrying through the pitch-black Tasmanian forest is a small creature, about the size of a large housecat. It is covered in a layer of coarse fur so jet-black that it completely blends into the forest of its habitat.

Can anyone guess what it is? Yes, it's a Tasmanian devil. It was native to the mainland of Australia only a few thousand years ago, but now is found only in the small southern island state of Tasmania. This mysterious creature is most often the first animal that comes to peoples' minds when they hear the name Tasmania.

After sleeping all day, the Tassie devil sets out under the cover of darkness in search of

food. Nocturnal devils have a terrific sense of smell. They sniff the air to find their meal, which includes wombats, platypus and wallabies. They also eat carrion, the dead flesh of other animals.

This helps clean up the forest and aids in preventing the spread of disease, which has earned them the nick name "nature's clean-up crew."

Tassie devils eat their prey in groups, noisily ripping apart their food and, sometimes, fighting if there isn't enough of it to go around.

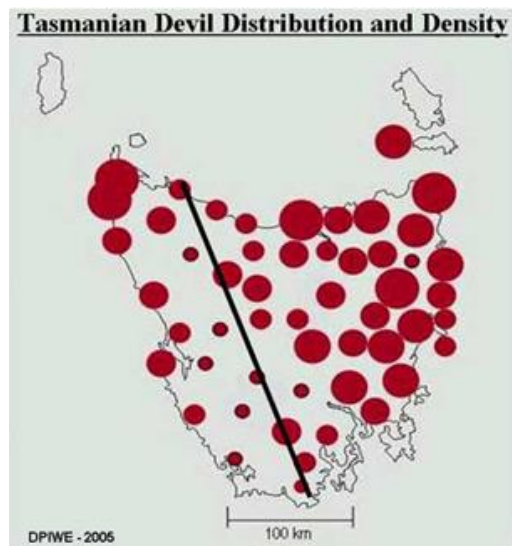
The dominant animals are the first ones to eat, showing their dominance by using body language, sounds and smells. Devils don't hide their feelings, but always tell the truth. Other



devils can tell what another is going to do just by looking at its body, and by hearing and smelling. In the same way, it is important for us not to hide things from others, but to tell the truth and admit when we're wrong.

Tassie devils are best known for their obnoxious screams, which petrified the early European settlers into thinking that they were savage creatures, like lions or tigers. They use their vocalisations to communicate to each other, because devils don't hide their feelings; they tell the truth! Tassie devils have eleven vocalisations from soft barks





Devils are highly adaptable and are found throughout most of Tasmania in varying density

Devils can live from coastal through to alpine environments

● Density of Devil population

to snorts, from monotone growls to the familiar full-fledged, spine-chilling screams that they're best known for! When angry, they give a fearsome growl to alert other devils that they mean business! A devil's sneezing noise calls another animal to fight, similar to people using the horn or bugle to call others to help fight.

Tasmanian Devils also communicate by using their bodies. They have been shown to have 20 different postures that sends messages to other devils. This is like the way our facial expressions send messages to other people.

If a Tasmanian devil yawns, it is scared or upset and, if it is very excited or stressed, its ears flush with blood, causing them go red. Even the way they hold their tails, sends a message.

When they are excited, they will hold their tails up, and when they mean business, they hold their tails almost

vertical. Remember, Tasmanian devils always tell the truth!

Marsupials store fat in their tails, so a fat tail indicates that the devil is healthy, while a thin, mangy tail that means that the animal is malnourished.

Sometimes, Tassie devils emit scents that send messages to other devils as well. When they are calm, they don't smell, but if they are excited, their body releases a powerful, stinky scent! Remember, Tasmanian devils

don't hide their feelings; they always tell the truth!

Although it comes naturally to the Tasmanian devil, it takes a lot of courage for us to be truthful, especially when we've done something wrong and there could be consequences. However, usually we end up in *more* trouble if we *don't* admit when we're wrong and lie to cover up. Remember, Tasmanian devils don't hide their feelings; they tell the truth!

Tasmanian devils communicate with each other by using truthful body motions and scents.



Truthfulness in Australian History

A Hospital for Halls Creek

John Flynn stared at the newspaper head line and slumped into his high-backed leather chair. A wave of empathy washed over him.

It was August 1917. The story was about a young stockman named Jimmy Darcy, who had been thrown from his horse while droving in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. His mates had made a desperate rush to Halls Creek, 70 kilometres away, but the doctor that dashed up from Perth arrived too late. Jimmy had died.

It was tragedies like these that provoked a special urgency in John to help fix the lack of medical facilities in the outback. "It shouldn't have happened," he told everyone he met. "Brave men like Jimmy Darcy shouldn't die because there is a lack of medical facilities in the outback. It is up to us to help them."

A pioneer family of the outback



Did you spot the "I will"? John encouraged others to tell the truth in standing up for the needs of the people in the outback.

John passionately urged his Board of the Australian Inland Mission (AIM) to take immediate actions towards the needy pioneers.

"Let's not shift the responsibility elsewhere when we can do something about the problem ourselves," John stated.

Did you spot the "I will"? John didn't want to cheat the pioneers out of assistance when he knew that he could help them.

The residents of Halls Creek wrote a letter asking if John could supply medical help to the settlement. "The Darcy incident is but one of many that have occurred here," the letter said.

Once the residents had raised enough money for the cottage

hospital, John looked for a willing nursing sister and companion to work in Halls Creek. Sister Muriel Rogasch and Miss Madigan enthusiastically stepped forward.



When John saw Sister Rogasch and her friend off at Adelaide train station, he told about the problems they were likely to face in the Kimberley.

"It's one of the roughest areas to work," he said. "You'll be isolated during the month of the 'big wet' season. You'll have to 'make do' with whatever circumstances you find yourselves in, not to mention food shortages and lack of equipment..."

"I'm ready, Mr Flynn," Sister Rogasch said determinedly. "I look forward to the challenge."

"That's wonderful," John said, his eyes twinkling behind his round-rimmed spectacles. He couldn't make the reality of the outback sound bigger and better than what it really was.

Did you spot the "I will"? John didn't exaggerate to make things sound different to what they really were.



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The roads were rough and rutted. The car bounced like a bucking bull, throwing the ladies this way and that. "Motoring in the Kimberley is a severe form of punishment," John Flynn had told them before they left.

"He was telling the truth there," Sister Rogasch thought.

Did you spot the "I will"? John told the truth about life in the Kimberley.

Despite their cramped arms and legs, the two ladies arrived in Halls Creek in time to save the store manager's life.

Sister Rogasch and Miss Madigan then diligently set to work establishing the cottage hospital. The nurses provided invaluable help

during a bout of fever. Not only did the hospital provide medical assistance, but it became the centre point of the town. A library and tennis court were set up, and it became a common meeting place for community events.

One day, while Sister Rogasch and Miss Madigan were busy cleaning the rooms, a man strolled in. He looked around at the tidy beds and the sparkling clean windows.

"What a job you've done," he observed. "I often thought that city people had no feeling toward their rough cousins in the outback. But thanks to the hard work of John Flynn and

you nurses, I can see that I was wrong."

Did you spot the "I will"? The man admitted when he was wrong.

Thanks to the foresight of John Flynn and the courage of Sister Rogasch and Miss Madigan, Halls Creek didn't see a disaster like that of Jimmy Darcy ever again.

John Flynn's truthfulness as he conveyed his ideas of medical assistance to the pioneers of the outback equipped him to go on to establish a wireless network through the bush and the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

Fred McKay, who took over as Chairman of the Flying Doctor when John died in 1951, remarked of John Flynn, "He was no pretender. He was a gifted story teller, and his yarns always got the point of sharing his ideas about what makes life real."

References:

John Flynn: Of Flying Doctors and Frontier Faith
Ivan Rudolph
Central Queensland University Press

An AIM nursing sister at Halls Creek

The journey to Halls Creek took several weeks. When Sister Rogasch and Miss Madigan arrived at Port Wyndham, the local policeman rushed up to them with an urgently telegram.

The store manager had been shot and was seriously wounded. "We were going to travel by horse and buggy," Sister Rogasch said to the policeman. "Is there any faster way of reaching Halls Creek?"

"I'll see what I can do," he replied.

An hour later, a car pulled up. Sister Rogasch and Miss Madigan piled their bags up and zoomed off for Halls Creek, 250km away.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service today still helps people of the outback today.



Project Ideas

Language

Do a definition scramble.

Memorise a famous quote or Bible verse relating to truthfulness - e.g. "The Lord detests lying lips, but He delights in men who are truthful." Proverbs 21:

Look at antonyms of truthfulness - e.g. white lie, exaggerate.

Write notes of truthful praise to another student in the class.

Maths

Bring in an assortment of grocery items and round their price to the nearest 20c. How much money would be gained or lost? How truthful were the marketers? Draw a chart to show your answers.



Science and Technology

Study the Tasmanian devil - its lifecycle, breeding, habitat, etc.

Society and Environment

Look at truthfulness in advertising and the media. Many times the media stretch the truth or only report half of the story. Analyse what is truth and what isn't.

Study John Flynn's Australian Inland Mission (AIM) and Royal Flying Doctor and the benefits it brought to the pioneers of the outback.



Visit an RFDS base.

Health

It is important to pursue a healthy lifestyle. In what ways can you be truthful to your own body by eating healthily, exercising regularly, etc.

The Arts

Dramatise a scenario where truthfulness is not exemplified through gossip or a lie. Highlight how that can harm others.

John Flynn

What tragedy prompted John Flynn to do something about the lack of medical facilities in the outback?



What was the name of John Flynn's mission?

In which town was the hospital built?

List two ways John Flynn demonstrated TRUTHFULNESS:

1.

2.

How can YOU show truthfulness...

At home?

At school?

TRUTHFULNESS

Earning future trusts by accurately reporting past facts.

