

SABBATH SCHOOL

Jr. High School Sabbath Instruction Program — Teacher's Outline

Level J • Unit 4 • Week 1

TRUSTWORTHINESS

OBJECTIVE:

To learn the importance of being trustworthy and that, if we've been untrustworthy, we must rebuild trust by earning it.

DEFINITION:

To be trustworthy: Be honest. Don't deceive, cheat or steal. Be reliable—do what you say you'll do. Have the courage to do the right thing. Build a good reputation. Be loyal to family, friends and Church.

INTRODUCTION:

Do you enjoy cooking? How about eating?

Isn't it frustrating to spend hours cooking and then have your meal be devoured in 15 minutes? All that hard work of cooking is gone in 15 minutes!

LESSON:

There is something else that you spend a long time at and in one quick moment—in one stupid mistake, in one single act—it can be gone. And that is TRUST. All relationships are built on trust, and in one moment of unfaithfulness, trust can be destroyed. And if you ever destroyed somebody's trust in you, then you know that it takes a season to rebuild. So today, we want to look at the season of rebuilding trust. Maybe if we can see how difficult it is to rebuild, then we will be careful not to destroy the trust others have in us.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 (New Living Translation): "There is a time for everything, a season for every activity under heaven."

Verse 3: "A time to kill and a time to heal. A time to tear down and a time to rebuild."

Trust can be built. It can be broken down. And it can be rebuilt. But it is easier to build trust than it is to **rebuild** it.

Acts 12:25 (NLT): “When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission in Jerusalem, they returned to Antioch, taking John Mark with them.

John Mark, or simply Mark, was Barnabas’ nephew. Barnabas and Saul (Paul) trusted John Mark.

Discussion:

- As a general rule, should we start off trusting people and stop trusting them only after they prove they are not trustworthy?
- Or should we be cautious and not trust them until they prove themselves worthy of trust?

Do: Divide students by their opinion and have them defend their position.

Acts 13:13 (NLT): “Now Paul and those with him left Paphos by ship for Pamphylia, landing at the port town of Perga. There John Mark left them and returned to Jerusalem.”

John Mark just took off in the middle of the trip and left Paul stranded!

William Barclay in his commentary says: “He may have gone home because he was scared to face the dangers of what was notoriously one of the most difficult and dangerous roads in the world, a road hard to travel and haunted by bandits. He may have gone home because it was increasingly clear that the leadership of the expedition was being assumed by Paul, and Mark may have felt with disapproval that his uncle was being pushed into the background. He may have gone home because he did not approve of the work which Paul was doing . . . Chrysostom—perhaps with a flash of imaginative insight—says that Mark went home because he wanted his mother!”

Discussion:

- List the people who were hurt by Mark’s untrustworthiness.
- When you are untrustworthy (for instance, by lying or stealing), who are the people hurt by it? For example, a girl caught shoplifting and arrested—who are all the people affected by the shoplifting?
- Give an example of someone who violated your trust. How did it affect you? Was it hard to trust them again?

Back to the story of John Mark.

Acts 15:36-41 (NLT): “After some time Paul said to Barnabas, ‘Let’s return to each city where we previously preached the word of the Lord, to see how the new believers are getting along.’ Barnabas agreed and wanted to take along John Mark. But Paul disagreed strongly, since John Mark had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not shared in their work. Their disagreement over this was so sharp that they separated. **Barnabas took John Mark** with him and sailed for Cyprus. **Paul chose Silas**, and the believers sent them off, entrusting them to the Lord’s grace.”

On this journey, Paul does not trust John Mark because he abandoned him on the first trip.

Discussion:

- Who do you think was right—Paul or Barnabas?
- Do you think it was fair that Paul did not want to take John Mark?
- If you want someone to trust you, who has the most responsibility—you or the other person?
- Once trust is broken, what can you do to get it back?
- Should just apologizing be enough?
- Should a second chance be automatic?

If we have broken a trust, we often demand that trust be reestablished. But trust **can only be earned**. When we have broken a trust, we have damaged a relationship and no amount of words is going to reestablish the trust. Trust must be **earned**.

Discussion:

If a person is untrustworthy in one area of his or her life, is he or she probably untrustworthy in others? For example, what if a young person said this to his parents: "I know I should have told you I went out partying with my friends rather than telling you I was going to the movies. But, believe me, nothing happened."

Luke 16:10-12 (New International Version): "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?"

If you have been betrayed, forgiveness and encouragement is necessary to break the cycles of untrustworthiness. Consider again Acts 15:39: "Barnabas took John Mark with him and sailed for Cyprus." Barnabas forgave and encouraged Mark!

On the other hand, if you have been untrustworthy, do not demand trust—EARN IT!

How did John Mark earn Paul's trust? He remained faithful to Barnabas on the second journey—in other words, he earned it.

Much later on, Paul, in discussing his situation, writes:

2 Timothy 4:11 (NIV): "Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because **he is helpful to me** in my ministry."

God entrusted John Mark with the writing of one of the gospel accounts of the Bible—the book of Mark.

CONCLUSION:

Here are three principles about trust.

1. Trust is a precious commodity and we must treasure it. It takes years to develop trust. However, it can be destroyed by a single self-centered act.
2. When we do something to violate the trust that others have in us, we must seek to restore it. Trust can only be restored by complete honesty.
3. Trust must be **earned**, it is not simply granted.