TO TELL THE TRUTH

“Who did this?” asked my teacher. Thirty children tried to think about not only what they had done, but also what our teacher may have found out. “Who did this?” asked my teacher once more. She wasn’t really asking, she was demanding an answer. She seldom became angry, but she was this time. She held up a piece of broken glass and asked, “Who broke this window?” “Oh, oh,” I thought. I was the one who broke the window. I had not done it intentionally. It was caused by an errant throw of a baseball. I was working on my knuckleball. It needed more work. Why did it have to be me? It wasn’t really my fault. If I admitted guilt, I would be in a lot of trouble. How would I be able to pay for a big window like that? I didn’t even get an allowance. “My father is going to have a fit,” I thought. I didn’t want to raise my hand, but some force much stronger than I was pulled it skyward. I told the truth. “I did it.” I said no more. It was hard enough saying what I had. 100 Moral Stories 61 www.islamicoccasions.com My teacher went to one of our library shelves and took down a book. She then began walking towards my desk. I had never seen my teacher to strike a student, but I feared she was going to start with me and she was going to use a book for the swatting. “I know how you like birds,” she said as she stood looking down at my guilt-ridden face. “Here is that field guide about birds that you are constantly checking out. It is yours. It’s time we got a new one for the school anyway. The book is yours and you will not be punished as long as you remember that I am not rewarding you for your misdeed, I am rewarding you for your truthfulness.”

"Do not be like persons on whom advice has no effect; they require punishments to improve them. A sensible man acquires guidance through advice, while brutes and beasts always improve through punishments." Imam Ali (AS)