



# The Name She Chose

She had been given names by other people her whole life. When at last she could choose her own, she chose *Truth*.



HONESTY · WEEK 3 OF 4 · REAL PEOPLE

## A QUICK NOTE TO PARENTS

## Before you read together

This week honesty steps out of story and into history, in the life of a real woman named **Sojourner Truth**. She was born into slavery in New York around 1797 and given the name Isabella. She never learned to read or write a single word. And she became one of the most powerful truth-tellers her country ever produced.

A gentle heads-up: this is a true story, and part of it is the hard truth of slavery. We tell it plainly but carefully, at a level made for ages 8–12 — enough for a child to understand why her choice of a name mattered so much, without frightening detail. Read at whatever pace fits your family.

**WHAT IT TEACHES**

Honesty can be more than something you *do* — it can be who you decide to *be*. She built her whole identity on it.

**HOW TO USE IT**

Read both story pages together, do the copywork, then talk it over. About 15 minutes.

**ONE TIP**

Before you begin, ask your child: “If you could choose any name for yourself — a name that told people what you stand for — what would it be?” Then read, and see what she chose.

THIS IS TRUE HISTORY · NEW YORK, ABOUT 1797–1828

## Isabella

The girl who would one day name herself Truth was born into slavery in New York State, more than two hundred years ago, and given the name Isabella. She was *owned* — the way a person can own a table or a horse — and while she was still a child she was sold away from her family, for about a hundred dollars together with a flock of sheep. She was bought and sold more than once. Her first language was Dutch, because the people who owned her spoke it. She never had a single day of school, and she never learned to read or write.

Slavery told a lie — the biggest lie of its whole time — that some people were property, and not really people at all. Isabella grew up surrounded by that lie. But she knew, the way you know the sun is warm, that it was not true.

New York was slowly ending slavery. Isabella's owner promised to free her a year early, and then broke his word. So one morning near dawn she simply *walked away* — carrying her baby daughter — to a family who took her in and, when her old owner came looking, paid to make her free. She did not run in the night and hide. She walked, in daylight, to freedom.

Then came the bravest thing yet. Her little boy, Peter — only about five — had been sold away against the law, all the way south to Alabama. Isabella did something almost no formerly enslaved woman had ever dared: she went to court. She stood in front of a judge and told the plain truth of what had been done — and she won. Peter came home. It was one of the first times a Black woman took a white man to court in America and won.

*(The story continues on the next page.)*

## TRUTH · FROM ABOUT 1843 ONWARD

# Truth

For years, Isabella had carried other people's names and other people's lies about who she was. Then, when she was about forty-six, everything changed. She had become a deeply religious woman, and she felt — as clearly as a voice — that God was giving her work to do: to travel, and to tell the truth.

So she gave herself a new name. Not the name of an owner. Not the name she was born under. A name that said exactly what she meant to do with the rest of her life. She would be **Sojourner** — which means a traveler, one who does not stay put — and **Truth**. Sojourner Truth. She explained that she was to journey up and down the land, showing people what was right and what was wrong, and declaring the truth to them.

And that is exactly what she did. She could not read the Bible, so she had children read it aloud to her, and she kept it in her memory. She could not write her own story, so she spoke it out loud and a friend wrote it down into a book — *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth*. She stood up in front of large, sometimes unfriendly crowds — a tall woman who had once been treated as someone's property — and told the plain truth: that slavery was wrong, and that women and Black Americans were fully people, deserving to be free and equal. Some in the crowd laughed. Some tried to shout her down. She kept telling the truth anyway, town after town, for the rest of her long life.

She never got rich. She never learned to read. But she took the truth for her very name and carried it across a whole country — and today, long after the people who once owned her are forgotten, the world still remembers the woman who called herself Truth.

**REAL PEOPLE, REAL COST**

Nora risked ten dollars for the truth. Sojourner Truth risked being laughed at, shouted down, and worse — every single time she stood up. Honesty is not always cheap. She decided it was worth her whole name.

## TALK IT OVER

## Three questions, no wrong answers

1. Isabella had been given names by the people who owned her. Why do you think choosing her *own* name — and choosing “Truth” — mattered so much to her?  

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2. She could not read or write, yet she became famous for telling the truth. What does that tell you about where honesty actually lives — in books, or in a person?  

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3. Telling the truth cost Sojourner Truth comfort and safety, over and over. Is there a truth that’s hard for you to tell? What makes it hard — and what might make it worth it anyway?  

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## COPYWORK

Copy the line below in your best handwriting. Old words, worth keeping.

*“Buy the truth, and sell it not.”*

— PROVERBS 23:23 (KJV)

## WHERE THE TRAIL GOES NEXT

## Your turn is coming

A girl at a counter. A set of ancient scales. And a woman who took Truth for her name and never sold it back. That's honesty from three directions — a story, a root, and a real life. Next week, the trail turns toward *you*.

**Next week on the trail:** Practice Week. One honesty challenge, one printable tracker, and seven days with your name on them — the week where reading about honesty turns into living it.

### There was a real boy behind a real counter.

On the American frontier, a young store clerk realized he'd taken a few cents too many from a customer — and walked miles in the dark to give it back. Another day he'd weighed the tea a little light, and walked that back too. The neighbors began calling him a name he never asked for. What honesty cost him, what it won him, and the week-long challenge that goes with it: that's **Constellation Trail Unit Two: Honesty** — the second star of the constellation.

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