

POWER OF WORDS

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

SPEAK HONOR WORDS NEIGHBORS

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Exodus 20:7; Matthew 5:33-37; 12:35-37; Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 3:8-9

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help students evaluate how they speak and make sure their words honor God and their neighbors.

MEMORY VERSE

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’” (Mark 12:30-31a, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

How many times do we hear God’s name used just like any other expression? It is very common for people to use the name of the Lord in vain and not even know what they are saying. Because of this, many children have grown up hearing phrases that use the Lord’s name in vain. They probably think this is completely normal, and that is because they do not understand the significance of his name and the respect it deserves.

This lesson will help the preadolescents to understand why they should respect the name of the Lord and not use it in vain. His name is sacred and deserves all honor. The Ten Commandments prohibit the use of his name in vain. Unlike western culture, where words are not as important, the Israelites thought that their words took life after they said them.

Help the students understand that the way they speak and express themselves reflects what is in their heart.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Read Exodus 20:7. This commandment tells us clearly how God wants his children to express themselves. He warned the people of the importance of not underestimating the name of the Lord. "In vain" means that it has no value, or it is something without any importance.

In general, this commandment prohibits using the name of the Lord in an indiscriminate way. To use it in such an invaluable, false, or deceitful way attributes those characteristics to God.

The Israelites considered the name of God so holy that they never mentioned it. But they used other names to reference him, like Adonai or Jehovah. The high priest mentioned God's name only one time per year when he blessed the people on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:27).

Matthew 5:33-37; 12:35-37. In New Testament times, the people used the name of God to make oaths valid. For this reason, Jesus prohibited that use as well. He wanted them to remember that the name of God is sacred and holy, and that all of us would be judged for the words we used.

Read Ephesians 4:29 and Colossians 3:8-9. Paul expanded on this idea in his letters to the Christians that they should respect their brothers with their words.

Paul urges us to remove dishonest words from our vocabulary, including things like curse words, being sarcastic, complaining, insulting and making comments that hurt another's self-image.

But it is not enough to refrain from saying mean things. Proverbs 15:23 says, "How good is a timely word!" The Bible urges us to minister to others through the way we speak. When our words build others up, we are honoring God.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

What kind of words do you use?

Write on the board the following list of words, in pairs and underneath each other:

Nice – bad; pretty – ugly; respectful – disrespectful; good – bad; agreeable – disagreeable; cheerful – angry; happy – sad.

Then, hand out paper so that they can write down simple sentences with these words. Ask some students to read their sentences. Together, analyze how people respond to our words. For example, "you look nice" and "you look bad" are phrases that are alike, but there is just one word that is different. Determine how people react to hearing them.

Use Student Activity Sheet #315-A to discuss with the students "What does the Bible say about the things I say?"

Say: "Many times, we speak without thinking, and we hurt those who we are talking to. Today we will study how important it is to honor God with our words."

TEACH THE LESSON

Tell the students: "In our last session we studied the first commandment that told us to prioritize God and honor him above all things. In today's session, we will study another important commandment."

Divide the group into three teams and assign each team the following questions.

Team 1: What does the third commandment tell us about how we should respect God? (Exodus 20:7)

What did the Hebrews call God?

What does "Jehovah"/ "Yahweh" mean?

Team 2: What did Jesus tell people about taking God's name in vain? (Matthew 5:33-37; 12:35-37).

In what ways do people today use the name of God in vain?

Team 3: What did Paul tell the Christians about the way they spoke? (Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 3:8-9)

In what way do people misuse words today?

Indicate to the students that they should read the suggested Bible passages to answer the questions.

When they are done, ask them to share their answers. If necessary, expand on the answers the students gave.

CONNECT THE LESSON

Choose some activities to connect the lesson. Evaluate your words. Use the top portion of Student Activity Sheet #315-B to help the students evaluate how the words they use. If time and language allow have them solve the following crossword puzzle. If it is not possible to do the puzzle, complete the exercise as questions and answers, e.g. Question: "What are words that are said with the intention of hurting someone?" Answer: "Insults."

Solve the crossword puzzle

One more time, divide into small groups or pairs to solve the crossword puzzle on the bottom portion of Student Activity Sheet #315-B. This activity will serve to review some of the incorrect ways to use language that we use most often.

Check that they have the correct answers:

Horizontal

Words that are said with the intention of hurting someone (insults)

Intense emotion caused by something negative (anger)

Negative commentary about another person (criticism)

Indecent and obscene (vulgar)

Expression of discontent (complaint)

Vertical

Act of lying to hurt someone's reputation (slander)

Rumor about someone (gossip)

Cruel joking to offend or hurt someone (sarcasm)

Disdain or lack of appreciation for someone or something (contempt)

Indignation and uncontrollable anger (rage)

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

Ask who remembers the memory verse. Give everyone an opportunity to say the verse. Bring it written on a piece of cardboard and cut it up, word by word. Give each child a piece of cardboard and have them organize themselves so the verse is in the correct order. Have them repeat it aloud together and then let them say it from memory. Relate it to today's lesson.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Guide the students in "A prayer about the words I use." (It is found as Student Activity Sheet #315-C in OPTION 3.)

TEACHER: Father, we know you want our conversations to be pure.

STUDENTS: Help us to keep our language clean, avoiding bad words.

TEACHER: We know you do not want us to lie.

STUDENTS: Help us to always tell the truth.

TEACHER: Remind us that your name is holy.

STUDENTS: Help us to respect your Holy name.

TEACHER: We often hear humiliating words and know that they cause harm to others.

STUDENTS: Help us to use our words to encourage others.

ALL: We want to speak in a way that glorifies you.

TEACHER: The Bible tells us that we must honor the name of God.

ALL: "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name."
(Exodus 20: 7)

TEACHER: The Word of God tells us to encourage others with our words.

STUDENTS: "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen." (Ephesians 4:29).

ALL: God, help us to honor you with the words we say. Amen

Encourage

Encourage the group to always give thanks to God for the gift of language, and ask him to help us honor him with the use of our words.

Invite

Stress the importance of attending the next session, and mention some things that can draw their interest. If there are new students in attendance, make sure to visit them or call them this week.