

TEXT Exodus 20:7,16; Psalm 34:1-6; James 4:11

OBJECTIVE The students will understand that God wants us to honor and glorify Him with the words we speak and to be careful of what we say about others.

MEMORY VERSE Speak not evil one of another. — James 4:11

Be Careful Little Tongue

MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

SPEAK — Right index finger, pointing to the left, is held before the mouth and rolled forward in a circular movement.

NOT — Shake head No.

EVIL — With hands in front of face, palms out, forcefully brush an imaginary object to the right. Look as though you hate the object.

ONE OF ANOTHER — Point to others.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

Three boys reciting the memory verse is the visual display of this week. (See pattern at the end of this lesson.) Cut the picture apart on the heavy black lines. Display the three pieces, one at a time, as your students study the verse together.

BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction: Make a big pile of dots with a paper punch as explained in In-Class Activities. Explain to your class that these dots represent words. Blow on them to show the effect of saying something hastily. It is difficult to retrieve them all!

Progression of events:

1. God gave the Children of Israel two specific Commandments concerning their tongue.
2. The first was that they should not take the name of God in vain. That means we should not swear or use God's name in slang expressions or foolish talking.
3. Another Commandment told them that they should not bear false witness. We must be careful to always speak the truth.

Climax: God's rules concerning the tongue were very important in that day, and are just as important today.

Conclusion: Our words can honor God's name, encourage others, witness for Christ, etc. But they can also dishonor God and bring ruin to ourselves and others. It is imperative that we be careful what we say.

Response: Your students will be able to explain the two Commandments regarding our speech, and to give examples of ways the tongue can be used for good or evil.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Jesus said, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matthew 12:37). The way we use our mouths is of supreme importance. Our words can be a powerful force for good. With our words we can honor God's name, give praise to Him, encourage others; or with our words we can dishonor God and bring ruin to ourselves and others. The Bible is full of references to our words and how we use our tongues (mouths, lips). Especially enlightening on this subject is the Book of Proverbs. For examples see Proverbs 4:24; 6:17,19; 10:11,18-20,31,32; 11:9,13; 12:6,13,17,18,22,25; 13:3; 14:3,5,23,25; 15:1,2,4,7,23,26,28.

As James said, "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man" (James 3:2). And David prayed, "Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips" (Psalm 141:3).

The Lord taught His disciples to pray, "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." The name of God is not to be needlessly or irreverently used but held as supremely sacred. As the third Commandment states, the one who dishonors the name of the Lord will not be held guiltless.

God also requires His children to be impeccably honest. God is a God of light (1 John 1:5) and truth, and as His children we are to display His character. The Lord hates a lying tongue and a false witness. Proverbs 6:17,19

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Explain to your class that Proverbs 16:24 tells us that, "Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones." Make a set of the Sweet Words bees and honeycomb for each child (see Patterns). Cut out the bees and have the children place each bee in its matching cell on the honeycomb. Each time they hear or say one of those words or phrases they should have that bee "fly" to a flower. When that word is used again the bee should fly back to its cell on the honeycomb. It will be fun to see how often the words are really used. Tell the children that whenever they see a bee they can pretend

that it is carrying kind words. Remind them that if we are kind in all we say, God will be pleased. And we will help others to feel good too.

Show the children the parrot finger-puppet (see Patterns). Tell them that parrots are famous for repeating what people say. Then use the boy and girl finger-puppets to represent an older child and a younger child. Demonstrate how the words an older child says are often repeated (or parroted) by younger children. Explain that younger children think that since an older one says something, it must be true or all right to say. So everyone, even the teachers and parents, must be very careful to give honor and glory to God in everything they say.

God doesn't like lying, even little "white lies." The following demonstrations show how even a little falsehood can be bad:

—One-half teaspoon of salt ruins a glass of Kool-Aid.

—A little onion on a chocolate-chip cookie ruins it.

—Black pepper sprinkled on a soda cracker spread with peanut butter ruins it also.

Just so, a little of the wrong thing can ruin a good thing. A little lie puts sin in one's heart and ruins it.

Make a big pile of dots with a paper punch. Explain to your class that the dots represent words. Blow on them to show the effect of saying something hastily. It is very hard to pick up all the dots and put them back into a pile! It is also difficult to make right unkind or hasty words, so we should be careful what we say.

Explain to your students that one of the best ways to honor God with our words is in prayer. Then we can ask Him to help us each day to say and do only what is good and what will please Him. Give each student a cutout of praying hands (see Patterns), then together in class, write a short prayer for God's help and blessing.

QUESTIONS

Who has control over our tongues?

Why do you suppose some people take God's name in vain while others praise His name? Why the difference?

Sometimes it is best to be quiet. Talk about times when we should not talk.

What does it mean to gossip? Does it hurt anyone? How do you feel when you hear gossip? How do you feel when you gossip? How do you feel when someone gossips about you?

How does what we say show what we have in our heart?

How can words hurt? Can something you say hurt as badly as if you hit someone? How?

Does it hurt anyone if you tell a little lie? How can a lie hurt someone if they never find out you've told it?

How do you feel when someone has lied about you?

When a person gets saved, what should he do about any lies he may have told?

Who sees and hears everything we do and say? What will He do with the lies we tell if we don't ask forgiveness?

PRESCHOOL SUGGESTIONS

Make a set of finger puppets to help you present some mini-dialogues illustrating proper and improper use of the tongue (see Patterns). Make up some situations for finger puppets Sassy Sally and Sweet Susie, and Lying Larry and Truthful Tom. (Be sure to use other names if you have a Sally or Larry in your group.)

Make happy and sad face puppets on Popsicle sticks, with a happy face on one side and a sad face on the other side (see Patterns). Give one to each child. Tell your class that you are going to say some things and they should listen carefully. If the words you say make them feel happy, they should hold up the side with the happy face. If the words make them feel sad, they should hold up the side with the sad face.

Make a copy of the face with one slit cut out for the mouth and another for words (see Patterns). Fasten the strip that has the mouth and words to the back of the face so they show through the slits when turned. Use this as a teaching tool to illustrate our feelings when we say bad things and when we say good things.

Do the work sheet regarding telling the truth, giving each student a copy (see Patterns). Ask your class, **What do you think the boy is asking his mother?** ("May I have a cookie?") Have each child color the plate of cookies. **How many cookies did the mother tell her son he could have?** (One.) Have each child hold up one finger. **How many cookies did the boy take?** (Two.) Have each child hold up two fingers. **Mother asked, "How many cookies did you take?" What answer is the truth?** (Two.) **The boy said, "Two." Mother was happy her son told the truth.** Repeat Bible Words aloud with the children. Have each child turn his paper over. **Will you tell the truth to your family and friends? Draw people you will tell the truth to this week.** Have each child draw people.

REVIEW IDEAS

Create a review to be shown with an overhead projector. Choose several characters from throughout the Primary Pals Patterns. Prepare a dialogue as you show pictures of children in some situations that could lead to saying the wrong thing. Then show a child speaking in a way that honors God and others. For example, a picture of two friends together. One friend is picking a fight. The other child gives a soft answer that stops the fight. Another

example would be when someone is talking bad or gossiping about another friend. Instead of contributing to the gossip, the other child says something nice about the person.

On a chalkboard or flip chart make up a conversation that two youngsters are having about someone. Omit all the adjectives and maybe some verbs. List possible choices to fill in the blanks — good and bad.

COORDINATING SONGS

- “Oh, Be Careful”
- “Two Little Hands”
- “My Tongue” — Lillenas

- “Alleluia”
- “Set a Watch” (401 Choruses)
- “Be Careful What You Do” — Singspiration
- “Praise Him, Praise Him”

SUPPORT MATERIAL

- Doing Right Makes Me Happy — Happy Day Book, Standard Publishing
- Jimmy and the White Lie — by Bartholomew, Concordia
- Bad Mouth Christopher — by Bartholomew, Concordia
- The Last Lie — by D. J. Windom, Concordia
- Let’s Talk About Lying — by Joy Wilt Berry, Grolier Enterprises, Inc.

MEMORY VERSE SONG

Speak not e - vil. Speak not e - vil. Speak not e - vil one of an - oth - er.

Speak not e - vil one of an-oth - er. James four: verse e - lev - en.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

