

Alley SG—January 23rd, 2022

Today's Bible Story: Blank Space (Choose Your Words Carefully) • *Proverbs 12:18*

Today's Key Question: How can words make things better?

Today's Bottom Line: Think before you speak.

Monthly Memory Verse: His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life. (2 Peter 1:3a NIV)

1. Verses to Take with You

What You Need: Bibles, paper (2 per group, per service), pens, clear tape (1-2 rolls per group), clipboards (if needed, 2 per group)

What You Do:

- Form two groups.
- Give each group a Bible and a sheet of paper. (*If you don't have a table or other hard surface on which kids can write, attach the paper to a clipboard.*)
- Give each kid on the team a pen.
- Assign one group to look up Proverbs 15:1 and the other James 1:19b (beginning with the word, "Everyone."). If kids need help finding the verses, direct them to the Table of Contents in the front of their Bibles.
- Invite teams to write out their verse by letting one kid use their pen to write the first word then passing the paper to the next kid who will use a pen to write the second word and so on. Continue until the verse is completed.
- Bring the kids together and ask them to share their verses with each other by reading from their papers.
- Discuss the verses together.
 - What do these verses say about the way we use our words?
 - When you're trying to choose your words carefully, how do these verses help you know what to say and what not to say?
- Ask kids to look at their team's verse then find the words they wrote.
- Allow each kid to tear off a piece of the verse containing one word they wrote that they feel is most important to the meaning of the verse. If the word they want to use has already been torn off in a section by a previous kid, they can remove it from that portion already torn off.
- Invite kids to share their words and why they chose them.
- Instruct them to tape their papers back together the best they can.
- Ask:
 - In what ways does your torn and taped paper remind you of the effect words can have on us?
 - If you've said something you regret, what can you do to make things right again?
- Remind kids that self-control is all about taking time to THINK before we say or do something. We can't take back words once we say them, but if we play them in our head first, we're more likely to hear how they sound and stop ourselves before we do damage.

2. Bible Story Extension

What You Need: Bible, Scrabble® letter tiles (2 sets per Group)

What You Do:

- Form two teams of kids within your group.
- Give each team a Bible and a set of Scrabble letter tiles.
- Invite someone on each team to look up and read Proverbs 12:18 to the others.
- Challenge teams to race to spell out answers to the following questions. They can use their Bible to find answers and the correct spelling. After each question, return the tiles to the pile and mix them in.
 1. Words that pierce like swords come from the mouths of what kind of people (reckless)
 2. What do the words of the wise bring? (healing)
 3. What body part is mentioned in this verse to refer to the things we say? (tongue)
 4. What type of people speak words that bring healing? (wise)
- Ask:
 - When do words “pierce like swords” and hurt us?
 - When is it hard to control the things you say? (*Help kids think about situations other than when they feel angry. Guide the conversation toward the area of “thoughtless” words such as when they tell jokes or make fun of someone, are showing off or trying to be cool. bragging, swearing, drawing attention to themselves, etc.*)
 - What needs to happen in order for a thoughtless person to change and become wise?
 - What does it look like to THINK before you SPEAK?
- Ask each team to spell out types of words that bring healing. Examples could include praise, encouragement, respectful, kind, truth, helpful, polite, etc.
- After two minutes, invite teams to share the words they spelled.
- Challenge teams to one final race to spell out “self-control.”
- Close with a reminder to kids that their words are very powerful. It’s up to them to choose how to use them.

3. Words are Powerful!

What You Need: Note cards, pen

What You Do:

- Give each kid two note cards and a pen.
- Tell kids that they are going to think about the power of their words. Just like we learned today to “Think before we speak”, **God wants us to use our words carefully because they are powerful!**
- Ask them to write a descriptive sentence of ten or more words on one of the note cards. Their sentence can be about anything from describing their dog to what they ate for breakfast yesterday. The main thing is that they use a lot of descriptive words in their sentence. For example, *A purple bird ate large seeds from a tree near the water.*
- Make sure kids don’t let others know what they are writing about.

- Ask kids to use the second card to write the same sentence but replace four key words with a blank space. Tell them to choose words that would change the sentence completely if replaced with a different word. For example, the sample sentence above might look like this: *A purple_____ ate large _____ from a _____ near the _____.*
- Bring kids together and sit in a circle.
- Collect the note cards kids filled out first with their completed sentence and let kids keep the fill-in-the-blank cards.
- Direct kids to pass their cards to the left once if your group is five kids or less and twice if more.
- Let kids check to make sure they don't have their own card then tell them to read the card to themselves then fill in one of the blanks with a word of their choosing.
- Pass the cards again and repeat until all of the words are filled in. Check at the start of each round that kids do not have their own card. They can fill in the same card more than once as long as it's not their own card.
- When finished, take turns reading the card they are holding then compare it with the original from the stack you collected earlier to see how closely the sentences match.

What You Say:

"What a difference one word can make, right? The words you chose to fill in the blanks changed the sentence completely. That's how powerful words can be." As followers of Jesus, it is important for us to remember to use our words to build others up, encourage them, tell them about Jesus, and speak life into them. We can be like Jesus with the words that we say!"

3. Take a Snapshot

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Sit in a circle.
- Explain what an "idiom" is. (*An idiom is a common phrase which means something different from its literal meaning but can be understood because of the way it is commonly used.*)
- Give an example of an idiom that you think most of the kids would understand such as, "beat around the bush" (*meaning, to avoid talking about something important*) or "on cloud nine" (*meaning, being very happy*).
- Explain that you'll read some idioms that are about words and speech. You'll pause after each one for them to tell you what they think the idiom mean.
 - "speak volumes" (*to represent/display*)
 - "speak out of turn" (*to say something inappropriate*)
 - "on speaking terms" (*meaning, to have a friendship with someone*)
 - "so to speak" (*that an expression is not literal*)
 - "speak well/ill of" (*compliment/criticize*)
 - "speak the same language" (*to agree or think alike*)
 - "speak up" (*to talk louder*)
 - "speak out" (*to make public an opinion or complaint*)
 - "speak your mind" (*to say what you are thinking or believe*)
 - "speak for yourself" (*say your own opinions*)
 - "spoken for" (*taken, claimed, belonging to someone*)

- “speak up for” (*to defend someone else*)
- Challenge kids to take turns suggesting some word pictures by completing the following starters that convey the power of words:
 - Their words hit me like . . .
 - Gentle words are like . . .
 - Sharp words are like . . .
- If time allows, ask kids to share about a time when someone’s words made things better.
- Ask, “How can God help us choose to use our words carefully?”

5. Make it Personal with Prayer

What You Say:

“Dear God, You have told us that our words are important because our words show others what is in our hearts. Please help us to choose our words carefully so that we can show each other love and healing with the words we use. We pray that You would remind us of this throughout the week. Amen.”