

LESSON 01

The Power of Words

Teacher Overview

After years of working with young people we are still amazed at some of the things that come out of their mouths. It is natural for young people to say the first thing that pops into their heads without even thinking about it. They do not understand that what they say truly has an affect on their lives and those around them. The goal of this week's lesson is to make students aware of the power of their words and to challenge them to bring their words into agreement with God and His Word. In each segment of this lesson students will be encouraged to think before they speak. Students will explore God's Word to see what He has to say about the power of words. As young people begin to guard their words and speak God's Word in their everyday lives, they will experience a higher life.

Study the reference scriptures this week, and meditate on the Power Verse, Proverbs 18:21. Monitor your own words. Let your students know what happened when you changed your vocabulary (if necessary). If you have this area under control, think back to a time when you didn't, and reflect on the changes that have taken place since you began to speak God's Word in your own life.

Your challenge this week is to enable young people to leave your class having an understanding of the power of their words. You may not get them to change everything they say within a week, but you can get them to start thinking about what they say. You will sow the seed to cause them to desire and commit to speaking God's Word as eternal words of life into the situations they face.

Everything You Need for This Lesson:

- ☆ 2 blindfolds
- ☆ 2 pieces of candy
- ☆ stepladder
- ☆ index cards, one per student
- ☆ can labeled "Can It!"
- ☆ 2 signs saying, "Blessing;" and, "Cursing"
- ☆ Take-Home Challenges, one per student

Key Word

Words

Power Verse

The tongue has the power of life and death. —Proverbs 18:21a

Key Scriptures

- ☆ Genesis 1:3, 9, 24; 30:11:1–9
- ☆ Proverbs 18:21
- ☆ Matthew 18:19

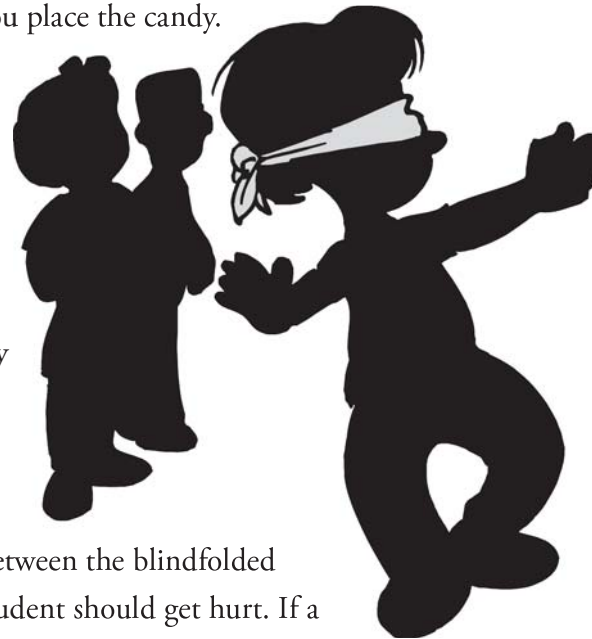
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Getting Started:

Who Are You Listening to?

Organize two teams of two. One student will be blindfolded, and the other student will observe where you place the candy.

The object of the game is for the student who saw the candy placement to guide the blindfolded student to the candy. The student who can see cannot touch the other student; he can use only words to guide his partner. The first student to reach his candy wins.



Make sure there is nothing between the blindfolded student and the candy. No student should get hurt. If a student is getting off course, step in to help him get on track.

See how important the words we hear direct our lives. We will hear the opinions of many people throughout our lives, but only God's Word should direct us.

Praise and Worship

Play some of the songs on the CD that comes with this curriculum, or praise and worship music of your choosing. Encourage the students to praise and thank the Lord with their words.

Announcements

This is the time to recognize birthdays and other important events in your students' lives. Ask them what they remember from previous lessons.

Props

2 blindfolds and 2 pieces of candy.

Bible Lesson:

The Tower of Babel

Do you think it really makes a difference if the words we speak are in agreement with God's Word? *(Allow students to respond.)*

Listen to this retelling of scripture, and hear what happened when a group of people agreed with one another. After listening, take time to think about the power we have when we speak words that are in agreement with God.

(Four students should be sitting, while one is standing and acting out telling the others about something exciting. The four students should act as if they really like the idea.)

When all humans still spoke the same language, people traveled to a plain in Shinar and settled there.

Then they said to one another, "Let's build a city and a tower, and let's make a name for ourselves."

(The four students should make an assembly line. Each one mimes that he is holding something, then adding to it, and then passing it along to the next student. The fifth student, who represents the tower, should stand before the ladder, next to the last student in the assembly line. As the last student in the assembly line mimes adding his part, he should then place it in the hands of the fifth student. As items are placed on the fifth student, he should slowly begin climbing the ladder. This routine is repeated as the lesson is told.)

The decision to stay in one place was a direct refusal to obey God's earlier command to go out and fill the earth. Also, the tower was not designed to worship God; instead it was to bring glory to the people, once again going against God and His Word. The people had come up with a plan that went totally against God's Word. God saw that the people were one and had come into agreement with one another to disobey Him and His Word. Because God knew the power of agreement and the power of words, the Lord looked upon the city and tower that these people had agreed to build, and He said, "Behold, the people are organizing as one

Scripture Reference

Genesis 11:1-9

Props

Stepladder.

Preparation

Select four students to play the part of workers. Select a fifth student to play the part of the Tower of Babel.

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group, and since they all speak the same language, nothing they imagine to do will be held back from them. Let us go down and confuse their language, so that they cannot understand each other's speech." And the Lord mixed up their language, causing them to stop building the city.

Why couldn't they build the city and the tower? *Because they could not speak words of agreement.*

(The students in the assembly line should act confused. They should stop working together and mime arguing. They should act frustrated and walk away in different directions. The fifth student is left standing alone beside the ladder.)

Therefore the name of that city became "Babel," which means *confusion*; because there the Lord multiplied their language on the earth, causing the people to scatter abroad.

(The fifth student who represents the Tower of Babel should lay down the ladder.)

Wow! This story shows that if we all get together saying the same thing, nothing (even if it is a bad thing) will be impossible for us. Do you see how important words are?

Let's look at two important scriptures. *(Have a student read Matthew 18:19 and Genesis 11:6.)*

The Bible is filled with God's word, and God's words are life-giving. What He says about you is far more powerful than what your teachers, friends, media, or anyone else says. This week's lesson is designed to challenge you to start speaking words that agree with God's Word. When you do, you will see your life and God's purpose for your life, and you will go to a new level.



Video Lesson:

The Power of the Tongue

(Insert the DVD provided with this curriculum.)

Life Application Lesson:

What Did You Say?

(Tell the students that you will be telling a story about a girl named Susan.)

Susan woke up one morning and began her day with prayer. She asked God to bring her blessings that day. She started to get ready for school. As she was getting ready her mom asked if she had finished all her homework for that day. Susan said yes even though she knew she still had some math work to do. *(Have the student in the middle pull the student with the Cursing sign toward him a little.)* Susan quickly hopped on the bus and headed to school. She sat next to her friend Jessica. A new girl came on the bus. The new girl was wearing a bright green and red dress. As the girl passed, Susan said, "I didn't realize the circus exploded," and all the other kids on the bus laughed. *(The middle student pulls the Cursing student a little closer.)* When Susan arrived at school she saw Beth. She hated Beth, so she turned to Jessica and said, "You know, I heard nobody saw Beth this summer because she was grounded for stealing." *(The middle student should pull the Cursing student a little closer.)* Susan went to math class and did not hand in her homework assignment. Mr. Simmons, the math teacher, was upset with her, and he told her that if she didn't start turning in her homework he would have to talk to her mother. Susan mumbled to Jessica, "I knew I was going to get in trouble because Mr. Simmons hates me." *(The middle student should pull the Cursing student all the way in.)* Mr. Simmons heard Susan, and he gave her a detention. As Susan sat in detention she was pretty upset. She had prayed for blessings, but she felt like all God did was make her day bad.

(Explain that some Christians complain because they don't think God does anything for them even though they prayed for it.) Sometimes our experiences have nothing to do with God. He has given us power to bring blessings and curses into our lives.

We can take five minutes and pray for something, but if we spend the rest of the day stopping blessings with our words, we will never see our blessings come to pass. If what we say is important, then we need to know what God says.

Props

DVD that comes with this curriculum, rope, 2 pieces of candy, 2 signs: one that says, "Blessing," and one that says, "Cursing"

Preparation

You will need three students. One student should hold the sign that says *Blessing*. Give candy to the child with the *Blessing* sign, and have him hold one end of the rope. The second student should hold the *Cursing* sign and the opposite end of the rope. The third student holds the middle of the rope.

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Power Verse Pledge

Read along with the DVD our Power Verse this week and the pledge that follows. *(Continue playing the DVD that comes with this curriculum as students read along.)*

From this day forward I will speak only words that are in agreement with God's Word. I will guard the words that come out of my mouth and protect what comes into my heart. I will do things that I think are pleasing in God's sight.

God has given me the choice to speak words of life or words of death, words that bless or words that curse. I choose to speak words of life.

I make a commitment to place a guard over my mouth. I will speak only words that agree with God's Word. I will not be moved by circumstances, feelings, negative emotions, or by what others think or say. I am who God says I am. I can do what God says I can do. I can have what God says I can have. In Jesus' name, amen.

(Divide students into small groups.)

The tongue has the power of life and death.
—Proverbs 18:21a

Small Group Activity:

Props

Index cards (one per student), and can labeled, "Can It!"

Can It!

Give each student an index card. Students are to make a list of things they have been told they cannot do, such as succeed in school, get good grades, ride a bike, etc. Pass a can around that says "Can It!" Have each student place his or her card in the can, representing the burial of the things they cannot do. Remind the young people that *words are creative forces that release or bind people.*

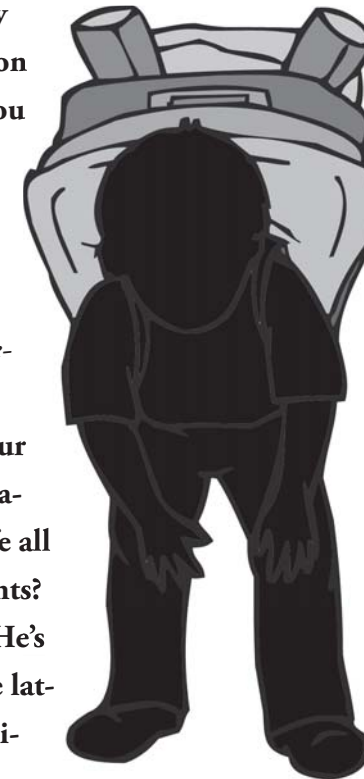
Who would like to share one thing that you buried?

What changes will you make in your life now that you have buried those things?

Object Lesson:

Weight Down!

Negative words can be like a weight. You may not see the affect of your words, but the person you spoke to or about will remember what you said. If you speak negative words, they will carry, or remember, them for a long time. For example, if you said, "What a klutz!" *(place heavy item into backpack), or, "She's so not stylish," (place another heavy item into backpack), or, "What a geek!" (place another heavy item into backpack).* The person who hears your words receives them, whether positive or negative. How would you like to walk through life all the time with this backpack and all its contents? What if you spoke positive words, such as, "He's so good at math!," or, "She always knows the latest fashions." Shouldn't you rather speak positive words according to what God says about people? He created us, and He died for us. Wouldn't you rather people speak positive words about you?



Closing

Remember this week that your words speak blessing or cursing. Try to speak only blessings. God will bless you as you bless others with your words.

Check out these verses: *(Distribute Take-Home Challenges, one per student.)*

At our next meeting, I want to hear what you discovered as you concentrated on the words you speak.

Props

Backpack and heavy items (several small weights, such as bag of potting soil, liter of soda, etc.)

Preparation

Choose a volunteer to wear the backpack as you place the heavy items into the backpack.

Props

Copies of Take-Home Challenge, Lesson 9