



WEEK TWO – OCTOBER 2024 – PRETEEN

Bible Story: *These Words* | Proverbs 12:18

Key Question: *How can your words change things?*

Memory Verse: *“God’s power has given us everything we need to lead a godly life. – 1 Peter 1:3a (NirV)*

Virtue: *Self-Control – Choosing to do what’s best, even when you don’t want to*

Basic Truth: *I need to make the wise choice*

Series Overview: There are a lot of choices that we need to make in life. Some of those choices can help us grow and shape us positively. Others can pull us in different directions, leaving us struggling to figure out which choice is best. What do we do when we’re confronted with all of these choices? Do we rush ahead? Or do we pause and let God lead us toward the best way to act? Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit. It’s one of the ways we can tell that God is transforming our lives and that we’re growing in our faith. Thankfully, we don’t have to find self-control on our own. When we follow Jesus, God’s Spirit is with us and helps us make the wise choice.

Bottom Line: How can your words change things? Have you ever said something mean to someone and didn’t mean it, but it was too late to take back the words you said? Maybe it took a while to rebuild that trust, or maybe you lost the relationship. Our words have the power to cause pain or bring healing. Because our words hold that much power, the way we use them can make all the difference. We hope this question helps preteens to remember to think before they speak.

9:05 - 9:20 | 11:05 – 11:20 | EARLY ARRIVERS ACTIVITY

Opening Small Group Activity

Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

What You Need: “Ventriloquist” Activity Page

What You Do:

- Welcome kids by name as they arrive with a fist bump or high five
- Divide the kids into two teams.
- Ask if kids know what a ventriloquist is and invite responses. (*A person who can speak without moving their mouth so that their words seem to come from somewhere else such as a puppet they are holding.*)
- Explain that teams will take turns choosing one kid to read a phrase as if they were a ventriloquist for their team to guess the phrase.
- Choose one team to begin.
- Give one of the cards from the “Ventriloquist” Activity Page to a kid on that team.
- Inform kids that no one else can see the card.
- Prompt the “ventriloquist” to say what is written on the card without moving their lips at all.
- Challenge the remaining kids on that team to guess what the “ventriloquist” is saying.
 - If they do so in 20 seconds, they earn a point for their team.
 - If they run out of time, the challenge goes to the other team. If that team also fails to guess the card correctly, give the answer and move on to a different card.
- Repeat as time allows or after using each of the cards from the “Ventriloquist” Activity Page.
- If time allows, vary the game by asking the “ventriloquist” a question. If their team correctly understands the answer, they earn a point.

- Choose simple questions such as the following:
 - What is your favorite animal?
 - If you could choose any snack to eat, what would it be?
 - What do you like to do in your spare time?

What You Say:

““It can be a little hard to communicate if your mouth is shut, but there are times when it’s wise for us to do so. The key is to know if it’s a wise choice for us to speak or if it would be better to wait. *[Transition]* Today we’ll discover some wisdom about using our words.”

9:20 - 9:50 | 11:20 – 11:50 | LARGE GROUP

Large Group Overview: In Week 2, we head to Proverbs 12:18, where Solomon spoke about the power of words. He said, “The words of thoughtless people cut like swords. But the tongue of wise people brings healing.” Thoughtless, mean, and hurtful words can cause harm like a sword! But on the flip side, when we ask God for wisdom and speak intentionally with kindness, love, and care, the words we say can bring healing.

9:50 – 10:10 | 11:50 – 12:10 | SMALL GROUP

Take a Snapshot

[Live For God | Application Activity]

Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Need: notecards, paper, and pens

What You Do:

- Ask kids how they would finish the following sentence: “Before I speak, I should think about whether my words are . . .”
- Write each of their ideas on separate sticky notes or notecards and place them in view of all the kids.
 - If needed, lead the kids toward ideas such as: encouraging, nice, kind, true, necessary, polite, respectful, healing, etc.
- Give each kid a paper and pen.
- Invite everyone to create a short acronym or abbreviation that will help them remember to think before they speak and to choose their words carefully.
- If needed, review the abbreviation format of an acronym and give some examples such as:
 - UPS (*United Parcel Service*)
 - ASAP (*As Soon As Possible*)
 - LOL (*Laughing Out Loud*)
- Encourage creativity, but if needed, provide the following examples to get kids thinking:
 - TB4S (Think Before You Speak)
 - THINK (Speak words that are **T**True, **H**elpful, **I**nspiring, **N**ecessary, **K**ind)
 - FLAP (Are the words a **F**act? **L**oving? **A**ffirming? **P**olite?)
- ***[Make it Personal] Participate in this activity by creating your own acronym then share with the kids some situations when it will be a helpful reminder for you to think before you speak.***
- Remind kids that when they follow Jesus, God sends the Holy Spirit to live with them and gives them the strength to choose their words with kindness and compassion.

Discussion Questions

[Talk About God | Bible Story Review]

Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: N/A

What You Do:

- **Ask:**
 - Just because something is true, does it mean it is okay to say it? Why or why not?
 - How do you decide if something is necessary to say or if it's better to leave it unspoken?
 - Does it change when you're talking to someone who's younger than you? How about someone who is older?
 - How can your words change things?

Make It Personal With Prayer

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Need: N/A

What You Do:

- Use the prayer starter sentences below to close in prayer.
- Encourage kids who are comfortable praying out loud to take turns finishing the sentence in a short prayer.
- Allow time for silent prayer as well before moving on to the next prompt.
- Prayer Starters:
 - God, you are . . .
 - Thank You, God, for . . .
 - Help me to . . .
 - Guard my mouth this week when . . .
- Close your group time in prayer.