

Goals

The next four lessons deal with the topic of communication—how to communicate well with others and what happens when there is a lack of communication. Students will begin to clearly see the importance of communicating well with the Lord and with others. At this age, J2 students have a tendency to misuse their words, especially towards their parents. They will be prompted to think about how they treat their parents and how to speak wisely.

They will also be prompted to think about the importance of maintaining a close relationship with the Lord and with church members. Often, a lack of communication causes conflicts to arise. Students will learn how to manage conflicts as well as how to avoid them.

unit
2**Teacher Devotional**

Communication is the secret to getting to know people. We often emphasize to our students the importance of communicating with their parents and with the Lord, but do we put this into practice ourselves? How often do we commune with the Lord? What do we commune with Him about? Do we simply ask Him to guide our lesson? Or do we go deeper in our walk with Him and ask Him to show us His will? In addition, we claim to know our students, but how often do we talk with them on a personal level? Can we claim to truly know them? We need to make it our goal to personally know our Savior on a more intimate level and also to know our students as individuals. So, stretch out your hand and reach out to the Lord and to your students!

Establish a Personal Relationship with the Lord

“Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.” (2 Thess 3:5)

Lesson 4

Communication

Listed Scriptures

Mt 12:31–37; 15:11; Jas 3; Prov 17:23f, 27–30; 21:23; 25:11; 26:20; 29:11; 29:22

Lesson Aim

- 1) To know what good communication between family members, friends, church members entails.
- 2) To be watchful, honest, and sincere with our words.
- 3) To determine to speak wisely.

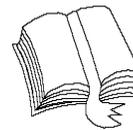
Memory Verse

“But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” (Mt 12:36f)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Daniel 10–12

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D

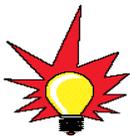


The scriptures offer plenty of advice regarding our speech. In James 3, the author reminds us how the tongue, even though it is a little member, can boast great things (3:5). Indeed, whatever comes out of our mouth defiles us (Mt 12:36f) and portrays our inner-most thoughts.

Often we bless God with our mouths, but not long after, we use our mouths to curse others. Should this be so? “Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening?” (Jas 2:9–12). Of course, this should not be the case. We need to learn to use our lips to glorify our Lord only: “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him” (Col 3:17).

The book of Proverbs also has many wise sayings regarding our speech. It teaches us that “the heart of the wise teaches his mouth, and adds learning to his lips” (Prov 16:23). If we have the Lord’s wisdom, we will know how to speak with wisdom. If not, our mouths will become our destruction (Prov 18:7). Indeed, what comes out of our mouths can either destroy or benefit us. We need to be watchful with our words, because by our words we will be justified, and by our words we will be condemned (Mt 12:37).

W A R M U P



Make sure everyone has a partner. Give each pair a plain sheet of paper. Then have one of the pairs fold and tear the paper, giving instructions to his/her partner to repeat his/her actions. Let the partner know that he/she may not ask any questions during this activity. As the first person folds and tears the paper, the partner will do his/her best to copy the instructions. After numerous instructions, have the two unfold their papers and compare them. They’ll probably look like snowflakes! Ask them to note any differences in the unfolded papers.

Once the activity is over, ask: What made this activity difficult? How does it illustrate the importance of communication? (Because they were unable to ask questions, they didn’t know what each was doing. When you don’t talk, you can’t understand what’s going on; people who don’t talk get wrong messages; communication is a two-way street.) From this activity we see that without two-way communication, people often get wrong messages—just as we ended up with different papers in the activity. Both parties benefit only when they talk openly.



Part 1

Careful or Careless Communication?

“Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!” (Jas 3:5). Our speech is vitally important in our relationships with both God and people. What comes out of our mouths can either bring benefit to ourselves and others, or it can have the adverse effect and destroy ourselves and others. Let’s look into the importance of being vigilant with our words.



A. Careful Communication

Why is good communication important? What are the elements of good communication? The tongue is indeed very powerful. Proverbs 10:19 tells us “In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise.” If a person speaks too much, he cannot avoid offending someone with his words or exhibiting his own foolishness. That is why people say that you can never trust speech. Therefore, we should always guard our speech, lest we unwittingly offend through our lips.

a. Words Can Act as Medicine for the Sick (Prov 12:18; 12:25; 16:24)

Appropriate words at the appropriate time can comfort, support and cheer the needy. When Hannah was praying earnestly to the Lord, she received the encouragement of the priest Eli and returned home comforted and full of joy (1 Sam 1:17f). Likewise, the power of our Lord Jesus’ words were evident when He affirmed, “Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you” (Mt 9:2).

b. The Pronouncement of Life or Death is by the Tongue (Prov 18:21)

Some people can commit murder by their words. That is why in Proverbs 15:4 it tells us that “a wholesome tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.” Nabal, for example cursed David and mis-treated him. Eventually, he was struck down by God and died (1 Sam 25:10–38). We can thus see the effect and power our words can have on others.

c. A Word Can Make or Break a Nation

There is a saying that a word can bring something good, but a word can also turn something bad. In the Bible, it records how Rehoboam caused the division of the kingdom of Judah through his foolish words (2 Chron 10:13), and Queen Esther was able to deliver the Jews of all the regions of the Persian Kingdom because of the words that she spoke at the appropriate time (Es 7:3–10). Our words can therefore have great impact on those around us.



B. Careless Communication

We have looked into the importance of communication and how it can have adverse effects on others. Let’s now look into what is regarded as careless communication and its effect on others. “Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps

his soul from troubles" (Proverbs 21:23).

a. Idle Talk and Gossip (Prov 14:23)

Idle talk or gossip is what is said behind someone's back. In any social body where there are a number of people, there will be instances where some members talk about other members. This kind of talk will often lead to misunderstanding, bad feelings, and people getting hurt (2 Thess 3:11). As it says in Proverbs 14:23, "idle chatter leads only to poverty." We should therefore not waste our time in this, but spend our time more meaningfully in doing more of what pleases the Lord. Idle talk, gossip and rumors exist because of the unbridled tongue. Where they exist, friendship is being torn apart, innocent hearts are being hurt, and trust and confidence are being replaced by suspicion and apprehension. Ephesians 4:29 reminds us to "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth." We need to speak the truth with love and sincerity. If we are in a conversation that turns to gossip, change the subject. Otherwise, excuse yourself from participating in something that could be hurtful to another person—and to you.

b. Falsehood and Lies (Prov 30:8)

Ananias and Sapphira lied and tried to deceive the Holy Spirit. Consequently, they died (Acts 5:1–10). Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, lied because he wanted to own the riches which were presented to his master. As a result, he and his family were afflicted with leprosy (2 Kgs 5:27). The Bible specifically tells us that a lying tongue is an abomination to the Lord (Prov 6:17, 19). We must therefore remove all falsehood and lies from us. In addition, we are told that the devil is the father of lies (Jn 8:34). Thus, those who love to tell lies will not be able to enter the heavenly kingdom.

c. Angry Words (Tit 3:9; Mt 5:22)

When the Israelites were in the wilderness they complained angrily to Moses. They demanded meat to eat and so offended God that He sent a plague to destroy the people (Num 11:1). Angry words will not solve anything. There is no point in getting angry with God, blaming Him and losing faith in Him. When we encounter difficulties, we must learn to continue to trust and believe in Him and know that it is His will. Then, certainly, God will open a way for us. Paul reminds us in Ephesians 4:26 to "be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil."

d. Boasting (Jas 4:16)

King Nebuchadnezzar was walking on his rooftop one day surveying his

land. He began to boast about all that he had achieved. Eventually, he was cursed by being turned into a wild creature and living as one of them. It was only after he learned how to be humble and to render praises to God, that he was restored (Dan 4:30–37). Often it is all too easy to feel proud and boastful when things go well and everything is going according to plan. This error occurs because we forget to give all glory to God. As a result, our words have become our own stumbling block (Prov 16:18; 18:12).

e. Cursing and Slandering (Eph 4:31)

Miriam was cursed by God to become leprous because she slandered Moses her brother (Num 12:1–10). Elder James tells us that using the same tongue to praise God as well as to curse others is not right (Jas 3:9–10). Even when the archangel Michael was contending with the devil over the body of Moses, he did not dare to say a reviling word against Satan, so he merely said, "The Lord rebuke you!" (Jude 9). Thus we need to be careful not to allow slanderous words or curses to come from our mouths.

f. Obscene Language (Eph 5:4)

Paul reminds us in Ephesians 5:4 that we should not take part in foolish talking, nor coarse jesting. Instead, we should let thanksgiving and praises come forth from our lips. Living in this world today, it is not easy because our friends may be swearing or using obscene language all the time. Even on the television, we often hear a lot of unwholesome language. We need to ask the Lord to help us, to wash our minds and hearts of all filthiness so that we will not have a tendency to speak such foul language.



Part 2

The Art of Careful Communication

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold, in settings of silver" (Proverbs 25:11). Having looked into careful communication, let us now look into when and how we should communicate.

a. Speak in the Right Setting and at the Right Time (Prov 15:23)

The right word at the right time may reap good results. It could prevent someone from a bad ending or even change the course of events. For example, when we see our fellow believers straying from the correct path, then it may be the time for us to say something to try to stop them. We will not be trying

to offend them because our purpose is to help and encourage them.

b. Say Good Words to Edify Others (Prov 16:24)

False praise is hollow but a sincere word of encouragement can have a resounding effect on the hearer. Words of exhortation can bring good things to the hearer whilst words of praise and thanksgiving to God can recall the great love of God. As Ephesians 4:29 reminds us, "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers." In order to be able to edify and encourage others through our words, we must base our speech on the scriptures. The words of our Lord God helped Jesus Christ overcome the snares of the devil. Likewise, we should let the words of God dwell abundantly within us. We should always meditate on them and receive His spiritual wisdom. Understand the will of God, and through our words be a mutual help and encouragement to each other in the Lord.

c. Speak Words to Preach the Gospel (Tit 2:7–15)

Due to the words of a little maidservant, the commander Naaman was able to go to Israel and find a cure for his leprosy. Not only that, he also had a chance to know the Lord God (2 Kgs 5). Through the words of Philip, Nathanael came to believe in the Lord Jesus and became one of His disciples (Jn 1:48–51). Thus, we can see that if we tell about the grace of our God and bear testimony for Him, we can preach to others (Rom 10:14). As long as we are willing and God works with us, the effect of what we do will be revealed, and we can lead others to Christ (1 Cor 9:16–18).

d. Speak with Care and Sincerity (Jas 3:6–8)

The Lord reminds us in Matthew 5:37 to "let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one." We need to be sincere with our words, allowing our speech to always be with grace and seasoned with salt (Col 4:6). As Christians, we should carefully guard our minds and speech. It is easier for us to sin in speech than in behavior. We must, therefore, not become stumbling blocks and offend God.



Part 3

Do Not Gossip

The book of Proverbs offers several verses on the subject of gossiping. Proverbs 11:13 says, "A talebearer reveals secrets" and "separates close friends" (16:28).

Proverbs 18:8 also says, "The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, and they go down into the inmost body." When we say mean things about others, we're inflicting emotional pain on them. As Christians, we're supposed to honor God in all areas of our lives. Talking negatively about friends or strangers does not show Christ's unconditional love. So what should we do when we encounter gossip? Here are three suggestions.

Teaching Tips

Ask students for their opinions before providing the following answers.



A. Pssst...Did you know...?

a. Speak Out

Kindly but firmly tell your friends gossip is hurtful and that no one benefits from it. Speak to them out of truth and love (Eph 4:15; 2 Cor 1:18f), not as if you are telling them off, but admonish them with the words of God. You will be pleasantly surprised by their reaction!

b. Be Positive

Turn the conversation around by saying something nice about the person being talked about. Or perhaps you could say, "Well, we don't know if this is true. Let's not talk about it because it's unfair to that person." Then change the subject completely. Your positive outlook and wise words will have a positive impact on those who are speaking negatively.

c. Walk Away

Don't be part of the problem by sticking around to listen. If they are unwilling to change the subject after you have gently reminded them, then walk away from it. Don't be involved in non-edifying conversations. Remember the Lord's command, "You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people" (Lev 19:16) and "Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles" (Prov 21:23; 6:16–19; 20:19).



B. Can You Keep a Secret?

What happens when a friend tells you something and you are just dying to share it with others? What should you do then?

a. Resist the Urge

Your friend confided in you, not the entire church congregation. Don't break his/her trust, even if it's for something as apparently good as a prayer request. Remember, "In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise" (Prov 10:19). Also, "A talebearer reveals secrets, but he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter" (Prov 11:13).

b. Pray

Get on your knees and do as your friend asked—talk to God. Tell Him the situation. Then let God deal with it: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Phil 4:6).

c. Talk to Your Friend

Ask your friend if he/she would like you to share his/her prayer concern with anyone else, and if so, who? Talk to him/her before you disclose any personal information. He/She will greatly appreciate it. Moreover, if he/she gave you the go-ahead to share it with others, you will feel more comfortable about sharing it.



C. When You've Been Hurt

Unfortunately, we've all been guilty of gossip at one time or another—intentional or not. And we've all been victims of it too. But how should we react when we discover that someone, whether a trusted friend or not, has been saying mean things about us? Yes, it hurts, but have hope. There are several things we can do.

a. Go to God

Talk, cry, scream—whatever it takes to resolve your hurt. Just hand it over to Him. Let God know how you feel, how much you're hurting. He understands and He listens (Ps 56:8). Entrust everything to Him, and He will bring it to pass according to His will and time (Prov 20:22).

b. Forgive

This is not easy to do, but it is vital that you do it. You can only do this by the grace of God (Mt 6:14–15). First, forgive in your hearts whoever has hurt you. If you find this hard to do, ask God to instill in you a heart of forgiveness. Then ask God for guidance and healing.

c. Confront

When your emotions are under control, tell the person or people who hurt you how their words made you feel. If necessary, rehearse what you'd like to say beforehand. If you think you might lose your cool, express your feelings in a note or e-mail. Then tell them you forgive them. Hopefully, this will help you move on with your friendship. But remember not to be harsh with your words. Be gentle as a dove. And don't forget to pray before you approach them!

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING



1

What are the benefits of careful communication?

2

Out of the six points under "Careless Communication," is there one which you think is the most harmful? Why or why not?

3

Why do we need to speak good words to others?

4

How do we learn to speak with care and sincerity?

LIFE APPLICATION



Part A: When Words Hurt

The following are some case studies of how members have been hurt because of people's words. Read each case carefully and then answer the questions that follow. Give advice to the people involved.

Case 1:

Kylie was a warm, friendly and sociable youth. She was actively involved in church work, including teaching religious education classes. Very sadly, some-

thing unpleasant happened in her private life which involved a few church members as well. Soon after, she began to complain that gossip about her was going around in church. Even long after the event, she continued to think others were still talking about it. One day, she decided that enough was enough. She no longer comes to church. It has been more than three years.

Questions to think about:

1. Why do you think that Kylie thinks that members were gossiping about her?
2. What do you think would be the best methods to counsel Kylie?

Case 2

Although Terry and Adam were never the best of friends, they had never had any serious arguments with each other after many years together in church. On one occasion, Terry said something, intending it as a joke. Adam, however, did not see it as a joke. A great misunderstanding ensued. Later, they talked the matter over and reconciled. However, their relationship became strained. Both felt they had better talk less to one another for fear of any future misunderstanding.

Questions to think about:

1. Do you think that they had both truly forgiven one another?
2. How could their relationship be repaired?
3. What advice would you give to both of them?

Case 3

Amanda was among a group of church friends whom she had not seen for almost a year. They were all gathered together at Lucy’s house to eat, chat, and have fellowship. As they chatted, Amanda noticed that the conversation was beginning to turn into gossiping. Lucy started to talk about one sister in church who, she had heard, was dating a gentile. Amanda was feeling very uncomfortable and wasn’t sure how to react.

Questions to think about:

1. What could Amanda do in this situation?
2. How could she tell Lucy not to spread rumors?

Case 4

Jeannette was quite upset! She felt that her mother wasn’t encouraging at all. Each time she phoned home from college, her mother never had anything encouraging to say at all. She would always scold her, or tell her to watch how much she’s spending. Even if she didn’t think she was doing anything wrong, her

mother always seemed to manage to belittle her. Jeannette felt both sad and angry. She feels that because of her mom’s attitude she can’t share anything with her.

Questions to think about:

1. What advice would you offer to Jeannette to help improve her relationship with her mother?
2. What advice would you offer to Jeannette’s mother?

Part B: Wise Words

Under what circumstances and in what situations might you tend to be rather abrupt with your speech? Write down the circumstance or situation, think of some concrete ways you could tackle it, and provide some Bible verses to help act as a reminder. An example has been given. Be prepared to share your thoughts with the class.

Situations when I may be hasty with my words	Ways to overcome	Bible verse(s)
When I am angry	Count to ten before saying anything. This will give me time to reflect on the situation and think clearly, before I speak.	“Be angry, and do not sin...” (Eph 4:26; Prov 29:22)
Other Examples		
Other Examples		

Part C: Words of Advice

We have looked into how the Scriptures offer great words of wisdom regarding how we should communicate. In the Bible study section, we looked in detail as to how we can avoid gossiping or what we should do when we become the victim of gossips. Now it’s your turn!

The book of Proverbs has many great wise sayings. Your task is to prepare some advice (1–2 minutes) to share with the class. With a partner, choose a topic regarding speech and offer some solid biblical advice from the book of Proverbs. An example is given below:

Topic: Do Not Argue

"The beginning of strife is like releasing water; therefore stop contention before a quarrel starts" (Prov 17:14). We know that we need to be watchful with our words. But often, when opinions differ, we find ourselves getting into a heated debate. King Solomon offered us some sound advice when he stated that we need to stop contention before a quarrel starts. Once strife starts, it is like releasing water – it will flow out unceasingly. In addition, if we stop ourselves before contention starts, it is an honorable act "since any fool can start a quarrel" (Prov 20:3). Let us be wise Christians and prevent arguments before they start. If we do this, it is commendable before the Lord.

REFLECTION & PRAYER



*Sing hymn 400: More Like Jesus Would I Be.
We need to be imitators of Christ in all aspects of our lives. We need to ask Him to dwell in us, so that we will be more like Him everyday, in deed and word. May the Lord help us to understand the importance of our speech and learn to use it wisely, so that all those who love God can be greatly benefited through our words. Let our words always be seasoned with salt so that they can move and encourage others and give glory to our heavenly Father.*

Lesson 5

Honor and Obey

Listed Scriptures

Ex 20:1–17; Eph 6:1–3; Lev 19:3; Deut 5:16, 33; 1 Tim 5:4; Prov 23:22–24

Lesson Aim

- 1) To know that honoring our parents is the commandment with promise.
- 2) To learn how to honor and obey our parents through examples set by biblical characters.
- 3) To brainstorm specific ways to honor our parents.

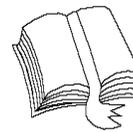
Memory Verse

"Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." (Eph 6:2–3)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Hosea 1–3

BIBLE BACKGROUND



Out of the Ten Commandments, eight start with "You shall not" or "You shall have no." These are all statements forbidding us to carry out a certain act. If we do not follow these commandments, we will be punished. However, two of the Ten Commandments do not start with "You shall not." The first one, recorded in Exodus 20:8 states "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy." This commandment begins with "Remember..." and even tells us why and how we should go about observing it. It is a commandment with blessing because the blessings are there for us. The Sabbath is a holy day, filled with God's abundant grace. The other is recorded in Exodus 20:12 and it says, "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you." This is a promise. A promise means that we have not physically received anything yet, but if we do it, or if we follow the commandments, we will receive blessings.