



TODAY'S SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

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

"God's power has given
us everything we need
to lead a godly life."
2 Peter 1:3a, NIV

HOST SUPPLIES

- Volunteer
- Bucket of Adjective – Script
- Bucket of Adjectives – Adjectives
- Sand Bucket

STORY SUPPLIES

- Small Group Leader
- Volunteer
- Notecards
- Sharpie
- Two jars or containers
- Tape

PRELUDE: Setting the tone for the experience

See the **Getting Ready** pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today. In the **Prelude** folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

SMALL GROUP

15
MIN

SOCIAL: Providing time for fun interaction

Just for Fun
Opening Activity

LARGE GROUP

35
MIN

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Invite Challenge

- This is a **NEW YEAR** and people are ready to start some new habits
- Our challenge is for you to think of someone you can invite in the month of January to come with you to church

MONTHLY WORSHIP LINEUP:

Week 1 - This Is Living & Way Maker
Week 2 - There's Nothing That Our God Can't Do & Graves Into Gardens
Week 3 - The Best Is Yet To Come & Way Maker
Week 4 - Might Get Loud & Graves Into Gardens
Week 5 - Real Love & Way Maker

SMALL GROUP

25
MIN



WEEK
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PRELUDE

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WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

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MONTHLY LIFE APP

Self-control—Choosing to do
what you should even when
you don't want to

BASIC TRUTH

I need to make the wise choice.

LARGE GROUP

ENGAGE KIDS' HEARTS THROUGH A DYNAMIC AND INTERACTIVE BIBLE STORY, WORSHIP, AND PRAYER EXPERIENCE IN A LARGE GROUP SETTING.

AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS STUDENTS ENTER.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP

WORSHIP

Worship Leaders enter

WORSHIP LEADER: "Hello, friends! This is our time to sing and praise God together.

AUDIO: Might Get Loud

AUDIO: Graves Into Gardens

Host enters . . .

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): COUNTDOWN (30- OR 60-SECOND VERSION)

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME

WELCOME

Host has lots of energy as he or she welcomes everyone to [Name of Environment]. Host is relatable and inviting. Host can talk about something that happened culturally throughout the week like a big sports game, movie opening (latest Marvel movie, etc.), a viral video on YouTube, etc. Host tells them how excited he or she is that they're there and briefly runs through what they can expect. This is especially helpful for first-time guests to make them feel like they know what's happening.

OPENER

HOST: "Hey, everyone! Welcome! Whether you're here for the first time or you're an old pro here at [Name of Environment], we have a fantastic morning planned for you! All month long we've been talking about what it takes to discover self-control—choosing to do what you should even when you don't want to. Self-control can take a lot of practice, for sure. Even adults have a hard time with it."



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“Have you ever driven with your parents and noticed how other people can easily lose their self-control? I mean, just have your parents sit at a stoplight for about five seconds after it turns green. See how quickly people behind you lose their self-control! Actually, don’t do that . . . that probably won’t end well. *(Pause.)* Anyway!”

“At your age, I’m sure you’d agree that one of the hardest things to control sometimes is your mouth. Sometimes it just too easy to just blurt out the first thing that pops into your head!”

“Choosing the right words—or wrong words as the case might be—can make a huge difference. That sounds like a game to me. Who wants to play?”

Choose a volunteer to join you at the front.

“I have a script here that I’d like you to read. No tricks, no twists, just a simple paragraph. Go ahead and give it a try.”

Hand the volunteer the script and have him or her read it aloud.

HOST: “Not bad! Now, I said earlier that words are important, right? Things can take a way different turn if you don’t use the right words. This time around, you’ll read the same paragraph, but some adjectives are missing. Don’t worry, though, some volunteers can get you the adjectives you’ll need from this Bucket of Adjectives here in order to fill in the blanks. As you read, point to one of the volunteers and they will read the adjective for you. Let’s try!”

Choose nine kids to come up and choose a word from the Bucket of Adjectives. Have them stand in the order they choose them. They’ll need to pay attention for when the reader calls on them for their word.

HOST: “That was amazing. Can you give a hand to everyone who helped out today?”



25 MINUTES

COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

COMMUNICATOR: “Welcome to my favorite time of the week, kids! Honestly, I love being a part of this learning and discovering with you because I get just as much out of God’s Word as you do. Sometimes I’m the one learning new things, not just teaching!”

“This week just might be the most important one for you because it deals with something that is one of the hardest things to master for everyone everywhere. But before we get too far into it, let’s do a bit of an experiment.”

“In just a moment, we’ll put a random word up on the screen. When you see it, say the very first word that pops into your head. It’s called ‘Word Association,’ and it can be pretty fun!”

“We’ll do the whole group together at the same time for the first few! Don’t be shy—shout out the first word that pops in your head!”

Show the first three words on the screen one at a time. Take time in between each word to acknowledge words that the kids shout out.

SLIDE: WORD SLIDE 1: BALLOON

SLIDE: WORD SLIDE 2: PIZZA

SLIDE: WORD SLIDE 3: PENCIL

“Not bad! Now let’s pair up. This time let’s see if the words you shout out match!

Show the next words, pausing to ask if partners match words. For a few of the words, ask the partners to talk to one another telling why they thought of that particular word—if they don’t match.

SLIDE: WORD SLIDE 4: FOOD

SLIDE: WORD SLIDE 5: FAMILY

SLIDE: WORD SLIDE 6: WORK

SLIDE: WORD SLIDE 7: PLAY

SLIDE: WORD SLIDE 8: DIFFICULT

SLIDE: WORD SLIDE 9: SCHOOL

SLIDE: WORD SLIDE 10: HAPPY



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TENSION

COMMUNICATOR: "That was great! Playing a word association game can be fun, but it can also be interesting to discover what words pop into our minds without really thinking about them. But I guess that's like life, isn't it? Sometimes we choose our words carefully, like the moments when we're asking our teacher for extra credit. Other times our words just seem to come out without any thought at all, like when we stub our toe on the kitchen table. This doesn't just happen when we're alone, either; sometimes there's a person on the receiving end of our thoughtless words. In a moment, we've hurt someone and our relationship with them."

"I just keep wondering why we aren't able to think before we speak every time we speak? Why do we speak without thinking? Why do we just say whatever pops into our heads without thinking of other people first? Why do we say things that can ruin a friendship or a conversation in just a few words?"

"These are great questions for us to think about today. We say this a lot, but it's worth repeating. When we have big questions, the first place we should look is the Bible. In fact, several of the people who God inspired to write the Bible had a whole lot to say about the way we use our words. Let's check out one of those right now that we find in the book of Proverbs."

TRUTH

COMMUNICATOR: "Now, a good portion of Proverbs is full of the wisdom of someone who to this day is considered one of the wisest men who ever lived. His name was Solomon. He was King David's son. Now, Solomon didn't always get it right, but God gave him some wisdom that's definitely worth checking out. Like this idea we find in Proverbs 12:18."

Open the Bible to Proverbs 12:18 (NirV) and read.

SLIDE: PROVERBS 12:18

"The words of thoughtless people cut like swords. But the tongue of wise people brings healing."

On the surface, this seems pretty straightforward. Thoughtless words hurt. Wise words heal. But there's so much more than that packed into this little verse."

"Words are powerful. A single word can end a friendship, a single word can make someone believe a lie, and a single word can cause people to stop trusting you. Let me give you an example, but I need a Small Group Leader who's a pretty good actor to help me out.

Ask a willing volunteer to join you at the front and hand them the card that reads, "No matter what the Communicator says, respond to them by thinking everything they say is completely uncool and doesn't matter to you." (Optional: Use the Host instead of a SGL or rehearse this ahead of time)

(To Volunteer) "Don't show the card to anyone, just read it for yourself. This is how you must react to whatever I say. You can talk back to me, answer my questions, and have a conversation, but the whole time you have to act like what's on the card. Got it? Good!"



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“Okay! Now, pretend that [Name of Volunteer] and I are friends. We hung out and started a conversation like this.”

Walk a little bit away from the volunteer, then “re-enter” the scene, acting as if you’re friends. Allow space in between your lines for the volunteer to react. You can use the suggested paragraph below, or something similar.

COMMUNICATOR: “Hey, there! Did you hear what I got for Christmas? A new phone! It’s so sweet! I even got a cool case so it doesn’t get scratched or broken, isn’t that so cool? I also got socks from my grandmother. They have Marvel characters on them! What did you get for Christmas?”

You can add to the conversation, giving the volunteer ample opportunity to act like everything you say is totally uncool.

“Can anyone guess what was written on [Name of Volunteer]’s card?”

Take a few answers.

“Yeah. They spoke to me as if everything I said was totally uncool. It was like they didn’t care about anything I was saying. When that happens to you, it can make you feel like you don’t matter. Thankfully, [Name of Volunteer] isn’t like this in real life. They’re actually pretty great! Thanks, [Name of Volunteer], you can grab your seat.”

“Let’s read that verse again.

Open the Bible to Proverbs 12:18 (NirV) and read.

SLIDE: PROVERBS 12:18

“The words of thoughtless people cut like swords. But the tongue of wise people brings healing.”

“Words can cut like swords. And even the way we say those words can hurt pretty badly, too. Honestly, sometimes words hurt way more than an actual physical cut. They cut more deeply than you could ever imagine. Unfortunately, sometimes it’s just too easy for those hurtful words to pop into our heads, and without thinking, we speak those words and people get hurt. But when it comes to showing self-control and making wise choices about words, it’s good to remember something we say around here a lot.”

[Basic Truth] I should treat others the way I want to be treated. This is actually something Jesus taught about. How we respond to others should be how we’d want them to respond to us. Let’s see how this might work.”

“I’ve got two jars here. One is labelled ‘Help’ and one is labelled ‘Hurt.’ I’ll need someone who is good at charades to help me out with this part!

Choose a willing volunteer.

“Let’s see how many of these we can get. I’ll say something, and you pick a word out of the ‘Hurt’ Jar, act it out, and see if the group can guess what your word is!



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Say the following three statements and have the volunteer pick and act out three phrases from the 'Hurt' Jar.

"I really like pepperoni on my pizza!"
"I just got a Switch Lite, it's so cool!"
"I got an A on the test!"

'Hurt' Jar Phrases

I'm So Bored
I Don't Care
Gross!

"Funny how all of these had an eye roll in them. I think some of you have perfected that move. Can you see how those things don't help, literally, at all? Let's change it up. Now choose things out of the 'Help' Jar and act these out the same way!"

Say the following three statements, and have the volunteer pick and act out three phrases from the 'Help Jar.

"I really like pepperoni on my pizza!"
"I just got a Switch Lite, it's so cool!"
"I got an A on the test!"

'Help' Jar Phrases

That's Amazing
You're Really Cool
Let's Be Friends and Hang Out

"Simple, I know, but even the simplest of words can help. Listen to the back half of that verse again: *'The tongue of wise people brings healing.'* Your words can encourage and comfort. They can speak truth and bring wisdom. They can actually make people feel like they matter.

"And there's a reason we've been doing a lot of acting today, kids. How many of you know that your actions can betray your words? You can say one thing, but your body language can tell a completely different story. If you truly want to make someone's day, if you really want to help and not hurt, look for ways to match your positive words with genuine actions!"

APPLICATION

COMMUNICATOR: Let's check out Proverbs 12:18 one more time.

SLIDE: PROVERBS 12:18

"The words of thoughtless people cut like swords. But the tongue of wise people brings healing."

"If you don't engage your brain before you speak, you could really hurt someone. Your words are powerful—sometimes more powerful than you realize. They can help or hurt, and you get to choose how to use them."



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“The next time your mouth is moving fast-forward and you’re about to say something hurtful, switch to slow motion. Think about how your words are going to affect other people. If you can’t think of any healing words to say . . . press the mute button.”

LANDING

COMMUNICATOR: “As you head to Small Groups, think about this question:

SLIDE: KEY QUESTION

“How can words make things better?” Or better yet, how can YOUR words make things better? What things can you think of to say to someone else to lift them up and not tear them down? Our words are so often quick and thoughtless, and they can hurt someone else’s feelings in an instant. How can we stop that from happening? You’ll talk more about this in Small Group, but before you head out, let’s pray. Let’s ask God to help us hit the pause button before we say something we regret. Let’s also pray for opportunities to tell others words that will lift their spirits, not tear them down. Let’s pray.”

Communicator leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard. After prayer, Communicator dismisses kids to Small Group.

AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS THE KIDS EXIT.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP