

WEEK  
**FIVE**  
JULY 2022

LARGE GROUP  
**PRETEEN**

## TODAY'S SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

### TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

#### Under Control

Taming of the Tongue  
James 3:1-6

### TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

What can happen when  
you lose control?

### TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

God gives you the power  
to have self-control.

### MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

"God began a good work in  
you. And I am sure that he  
will carry it on until it is  
completed. That will be on  
the day Christ Jesus returns."  
Philippians 1:6, NIV

### HOST SUPPLIES

- Blurt! Phrases and Answers (printable)

### STORY SUPPLIES

- Two adult volunteers
- A baseball cap
- A backpack

### 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

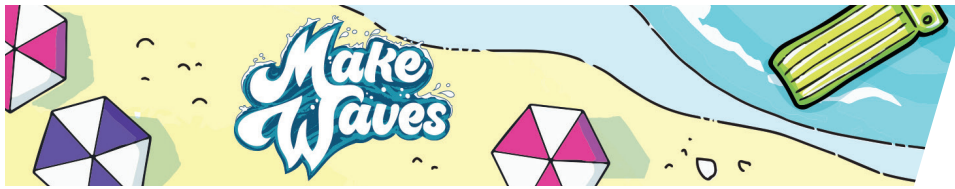
**35**  
MIN

- SUMMER IS HERE!!!!

- MAKE WAVES Ñ What you do today can change the world around you
  - All month long, we will be talking about what it would look like if we could CHANGE the world around us
  - To MAKE WAVES means that we are being intentional about what we do each day because it can have bigger effects than we could ever imagine

#### MONTHLY WORSHIP LINEUP:

- Week 1 - This is Living & Good Grace
- Week 2 - Let Go & Graves Into Gardens
- Week 3 - Never Gonna Stop Singing & Who You Say I Am
- Week 4 - Real Love & Waymaker
- Week 5 - The Best Is Yet to Come & Good Grace



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SOCIAL

STORY

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GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

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## MAKE WAVES

What you do today can  
change the world around you.

## 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:**

**AUDIO: THE BEST IS YET TO COME**

**AUDIO: GOOD GRACE**

*Host enters . . .*

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

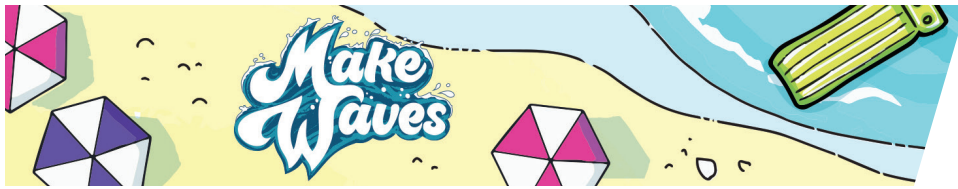
**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME**

## 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 is happening culturally or currently, the latest video game or movie launches, and so on. Host tells them how excited they are 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:** "Hard to believe we've made it to the end of July! Hopefully you've had a chance to hang out with some friends and enjoy time together during this time of year! Today we have a great game that you can play with friends no matter what time of year it is. We call this BLURT!"



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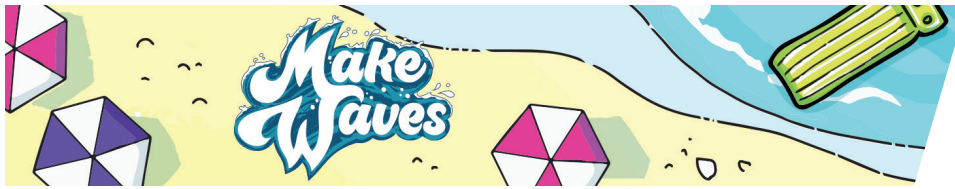
**SLIDE: "BLURT!"**

"Have you ever been with a group of friends, something happens, and you want to just blurt something out? Maybe you want to be the funniest one or the one with the best comment or comeback. So you just shout out whatever. That's what BLURT is all about! Are you ready to play?"

"Here's how it works: I'll read a phrase and you all try to blurt out the answer. Simple. No other rules, no score keeping, just shouting! But here's the twist—it's you against your neighbor. Turn to a person next to you, and see who can blurt out the answer the fastest! Are you ready? Let's go!"

*Play the game by reading the phrases found on the "Blurt Phrases and Answers". Once finished, have the kids high-five one another and continue.*

"Brilliant! You're all fantastic at shouting things out!"



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## COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

*Communicator enters*

### INTRODUCTION

**COMMUNICATOR:** “Hello, everyone! So you’re probably aware of this whole thing called ‘social media,’ right? I’m not gonna ask if you’re on social media because you’re probably all too young anyway, but we all know people in our lives who enjoy their share of TikTok videos, Instagram Reels and Photos, Facebook posts, and let’s not forget our favorite YouTube friends. So question: do you think that social media has influenced or changed, the way we talk to one another? (pause) Yeah, I think so, too. Before we dive into what we’re talking about, I’d like to try a little experiment.

“Find a partner, a friend, someone you’re sitting next to, and face him or her. It doesn’t have to be a weird staring contest; it’s just so you can see each other’s answers. This is called ‘Word Association.’ I’m going to say a word, and you are going to say the first word that comes into your head, no thinking about it, just blurt it out. I want to see how many times your words match! Ready? Let’s try!

### Word Association List

Beach  
Fire  
School  
Friend  
YouTube  
Avengers  
Music  
Cookies  
Sharp  
Hand  
Cold

“Did anyone end up blurting out the same word? Were you surprised at what words were blurted out by your partner?”

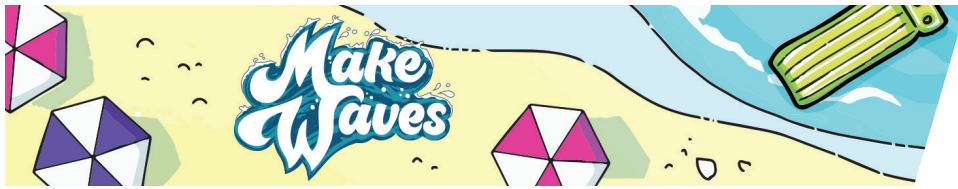
*Pause for responses.*

### TENSION

**COMMUNICATOR:** “It’s funny, but I feel like this is what happens a LOT on social media. People just respond with the first thing that pops into their heads. It’s like their brain doesn’t even engage or get in the middle, they just react and hit send. Boom. Done.

“But this isn’t something that just happens in a phone app. I could happen through a text message. It could happen in a note passed in class. It could even happen in a face-to-face conversation! Just think for a bit about how many fights between friends could’ve been avoided if they each just paused a moment before responding?

“Unfortunately, we’ve all been guilty of just saying the first thing that comes into our heads. So the question is: How in the world do we control that? How many times have we offended someone else, completely killed the



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conversation, or stressed a friendship because our words got the better of us? Or maybe we said something that was meant to be funny but it came off as insulting?

“But that’s not what I meant! I was just kidding!”

“Can we even have self-control over the words we say?”

“This is a HUGE question. Words are so important. This is the type of question that if you figure this out, if you let God’s Spirit help you in this area, it will save you from a TON of stress and frustration and heartache. And what’s great is that one of the writers in the Bible addressed this—a guy named James wrote about this very thing over 2,000 years ago. Let’s see what he had to say!”

## TRUTH

**COMMUNICATOR:** “We find this in James 3. James was actually Jesus’ brother, and over time, James came to believe that Jesus is God’s Son. James saw that the power of God’s Spirit was with Jesus, and James himself experienced that power after Jesus was taken up to heaven.

“James wrote this to Jewish Christians of the time who were scattered all over the Middle East. And he gave them some hard truth.

### SOCIAL MEDIA FEED SLIDE #1

“My brothers and sisters, most of you shouldn’t become teachers.”

Ok, whew. Imagine if you got that on your social media feed or as a text message or a note written to you in class. ‘Hey, I hate to say it, but you shouldn’t try to tell anyone else what to do.’ You might respond with:

### SOCIAL MEDIA FEED SLIDE #2

“It’s a knee-jerk reaction kind of thing, isn’t it? You read something without any context, make an assumption, then fire off a response. Look at the next few posts, and maybe that might change your response:

### SOCIAL MEDIA FEED SLIDE #3

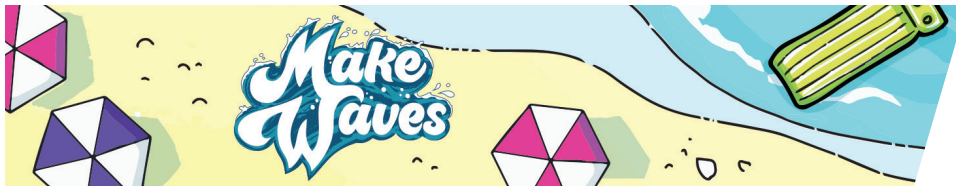
“That’s because you know that those of us who teach will be held more accountable.”

### SOCIAL MEDIA FEED SLIDE #4

‘All of us get tripped up in many ways.’

“Oh. Okay, hang on. He’s saying that teachers will be held to a higher standard and that since we get tripped up, since we’re human and we make mistakes and mess up, maybe we should rethink being in a position of authority . . . because I think we’re all aware that EVERYONE is under a microscope.

“Especially teachers and people in charge. Even today, I should take James’ words as a gentle reminder that what I do, what I say, even how I say it has a huge impact on others—case in point, lots of young people like you.



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“So, after reading that next bit, maybe your next response would instead be something like this:

**SOCIAL MEDIA FEED SLIDE #5**

“It doesn’t take a lot to change your response, guys. Just a simple pause before you hit send.

“Another place where things can test your self-control and your reactions, is when you’re chatting or talking on headsets while playing video games. Sometimes the chat is so incredibly toxic that it’s hard to stand. Everyone you play is coming up with creative ways to insult your mom.

“Let’s say you’re playing a game online and you just defeated someone—and then you get a message that reads:

**ONLINE GAME SLIDE #1**

“So, of course, you would reply:

**ONLINE GAME SLIDE #2:**

“And then this:

*Quick succession of slides.*

**ONLINE GAME SLIDE #3**

**ONLINE GAME SLIDE #4**

**ONLINE GAME SLIDE #5**

**ONLINE GAME SLIDE #6**

**ONLINE GAME SLIDE #7**

**ONLINE GAME SLIDE #8**

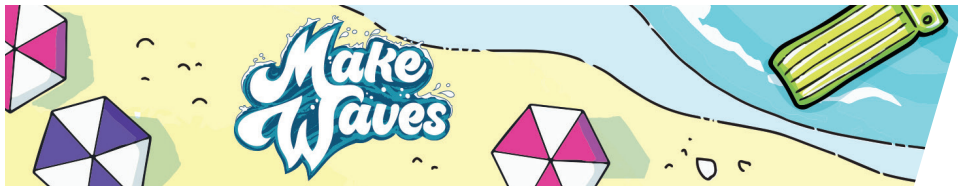
“Well, that escalated quickly. Yep, conversations like that pretty much devolve into what every online chat devolves into . . . a contest to see who can insult each other the best using words none of us should ever use.

“I’ll be honest, online chat can be the worst. It’s ruined all sorts of games. You can’t play anything without some toxic player emoting or jumping on you after they defeat you.

“If we’re talking about controlling your words or controlling your knee-jerk reactions, James shared an interesting way to put it. Take a look.

*Open the Bible to James 3:3-5 (NIV) and read.*

“We put a small piece of metal in the mouth of a horse to make it obey us. We can control the whole animal with



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*it. And how about ships? They are very big. They are driven along by strong winds. But they are steered by a very small rudder. It makes them go where the captain wants to go.'*

"Here's the important part. James wrote,

*"In the same way, the tongue is a small part of a person's body. But it talks big.*

*"It talks big. If a bit in a horse's mouth controls where the animal goes and if a small rudder controls what direction a big ship sails, then James was saying that something as small as our tongue controls where we go and what direction we sail. Our tongue can determine whether the conversation goes in a good direction or a bad direction. Our tongue can control whether we calm a situation down or make it worse.*

*"It. Talks. Big. And your tongue can change the direction of your day, your week, even your relationships and your entire life!*

*"Kids your age, I've noticed, have a specific way of talking to one another—it's almost like who can insult the other one better. But honestly, who wants to have conversations like this?"*

*Two adult volunteers enter, one with a baseball cap turned sideways, and the other with a backpack. They act like they're in middle school.*

**MIDDLE SCHOOLER 1:** "What's up, nerd."

**MIDDLE SCHOOLER 2:** "Woah! It spoke!"

**MIDDLE SCHOOLER 1:** "Oh, sorry, was I supposed to be offended?"

**MIDDLE SCHOOLER 2:** "Dude, I could throw an insult that was better than that one in my sleep."

**MIDDLE SCHOOLER 1:** "Aww . . . you're so cute when you're trying to understand things."

**MIDDLE SCHOOLER 2:** "Somewhere . . . out there . . . there is a tree that is producing the oxygen that you're breathing right now. I think you owe it an apology."

**MIDDLE SCHOOLER 1:** "I'd punch you, but that would be animal abuse."

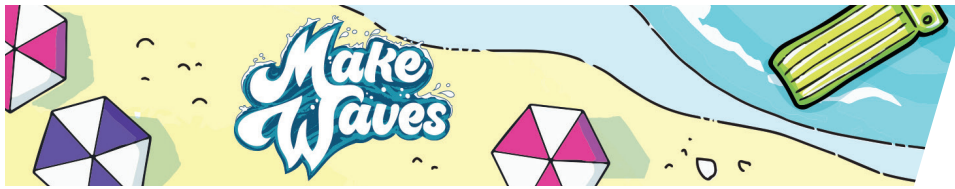
**MIDDLE SCHOOLER 2:** "Sorry, I didn't get that . . . I don't speak 'ugly.'"

**MIDDLE SCHOOLER 1:** "Listen, I can get plastic surgery for my ugliness, but unfortunately you are gonna be stupid for eternity."

**MIDDLE SCHOOLER 2:** "And you wonder why you're still single."

**COMMUNICATOR:** *(to the Large Group)* "Yeah, it's clever, yeah, it's witty, but it's not very nice."

**BOTH MIDDLE SCHOOLERS:** "But we're just kidding!!"  
*Volunteers exit stage.*



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**COMMUNICATOR:** “Well, here’s the thing. You might be kidding, but the other person doesn’t know that. They might actually get their feelings hurt. What’s kidding to you might actually seem like bullying to someone else. And it doesn’t matter how fire your comment or comeback is, when that’s a fire that can cause a whole forest to burn. When you drop a ‘sick burn’ on someone, it can actually cause harm. James even wrote about it, listen:

*Open the Bible to James 3:5a-6 (NIV) and read.*

*“Think about how a small spark can set a big forest on fire. The tongue is also a fire. The tongue is the most evil part of the body. It makes the whole body impure. It sets a person’s whole way of life on fire. And the tongue itself is set on fire by hell.*

“Well, that escalated quickly. But you know how quickly things can turn if you say the wrong thing, send the wrong text, or make the wrong joke.

“Your tongue, your words, your reactions, they all can either build someone up or burn someone down.

## APPLICATION

**COMMUNICATOR:** “The one thing, if you remember anything from today, is that your tongue talks big. We really need to work to stay in control of our actions and, more importantly, our words. Your tongue is a small thing, but wow, does it have a huge impact.

“So, stop and think before you speak. Stop and think before you hit ‘send.’ Ask God to help you choose your words carefully. God’s Spirit can help you stay in control! Even in those times when you don’t want to . . . when you’ve got the “perfect” comeback, or the “perfect” comment to a post online . . . self-control is choosing to do what you should even when you don’t want to.

## LANDING

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

### SLIDE: KEY QUESTION

**“What can happen when you lose control?”** Think about the times when you mouthed off or said or texted something you shouldn’t have. Think about how you had to go back and apologize or how you felt when the other person’s feelings were hurt. How can you stop that from happening again? You’ll dig into this more in your Small Group, but before you head out, let’s pray and ask God’s Spirit to help us control our mouths and what we say. 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 STUDENTS EXIT.**

**SLIDE: THEME**

**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP**