



3.06.11/James 3:2-12 Taming the Tongue

Materials:

Copy paper (one for each child)

Opening Activity

Who can think of a time when someone said something to you that wasn't very nice? What did they say? How did that make you feel? Who can think of a time when someone said something very nice to you? What did they say? How did that make you feel? Explain to the children that their words can have a good effect on other or a bad effect on others and in this lesson we will learn how God can use our words to encourage one another.

Read James 3:2-12

For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body. If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things.

How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

Discussion:

Explain to the children that everyone is sinful. In this passage James is telling us that because our hearts are sinful, the things we say are sinful. Explain to the children that Jesus died on the cross to destroy sin and to free them from these sins. Tell them that when we believe in Jesus, we are free from being controlled by a sinful heart. When we believe in Jesus, we are given a new heart, and God's Holy Spirit lives in us and uses our tongues for blessings, praise, encouragement of others, and more great things!

Question 1

According to James 3:8, "...no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison." What is our hope if this is true?

Jesus' death and resurrection free us from this "restless evil." Because Jesus died and came back to life to destroy our sins we are now able to use our tongue for "praise" and "blessings"; God gives us His Holy Spirit so that our tongues will be used for praise and blessings!

Question 2

What are some ways your words have shown that you need Jesus to live in you?

Allow the children to share ways they have sinned with what they have said.

Question 3

Since Jesus has died and come back to life to destroy our sin win us back to Him, how can we respond to our sin?



If we are saved by God, then His Spirit lives inside of us and encourages us to seek forgiveness when we have sinned against one another, both from the people we've sinned against and from God.

Passage Activity:

Discuss with the children how the Bible says that the tongue can be used in two different ways. Ask them if they can tell you the two different ways their words are used according to James. Give each child a piece of paper. Have them fold the paper in half. Along the fold of the paper have the children draw a cross. Explain to the children that the cross symbolizes Jesus' death on the cross and His resurrection (coming back to life) to free people from sin. On one side of the cross have them draw a picture of the sinful ways our words are used. On the other side of the cross have them draw a picture of how God uses our words if we have hope in Jesus.

Wrap Up:

Pray with the children encouraging them to confess their sins and be forgiven. Remind them that when Jesus died on the cross and came back to life He destroyed sin for them. Close in prayer with a confession time (individually, or as a group, depending on everyone's comfort level). Acknowledge that on our own we will always fall short of God's standard of perfection but that when God's Spirit lives inside of us, our words can be loving words of blessing and praise! Remind the kids that if anyone would like to know more about what it means to believe that Jesus is Lord and that He came back to life to save us, encourage them to ask their parents to tell them more about this!