



March 2011



Help Kids Use Positive Language

As the Bible describes in James 3, the tongue may be small, but it can do an awful lot of damage. Unfortunately, name-calling, cursing, bickering, whining, and putdowns find their way into most homes. Yet our words also have the power to heal, mend rifts, encourage other people, and praise God. Proverbs 25:11 (NIV) compares well-chosen and well-timed words to “apples of gold in settings of silver.”

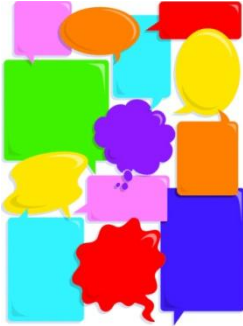
This month’s newsletter explores ways to get your children talking in positive, God-pleasing ways. Use these tips to get started:

Walk the walk, talk the talk. Kids are listening, so watch your own language and model appropriate talk—even when you think little ears aren’t listening.

Teach children how to apologize. Hurtful words can’t be “unsaid,” but people can offer heartfelt apologies and change their ways. Offer examples of how to say sorry, and remember to seek children’s forgiveness when you mess up.

Listen up! Proverbs 10:19 contains valuable advice that often goes unheeded: “Be sensible and keep your mouth shut.” Help children understand the importance of stopping to think before you speak. When in doubt, it’s always better to seal your lips rather than say something you may regret.

Praise God throughout the day. Talk frequently about how good God is and thank him for his many blessings. Share favorite Bible passages, pray with one another, and brainstorm ways you can serve God and other people. When we focus on God and good words, our mouths and lives will bear good fruit.



PowerSource



Ask God:

1. To help you and your kids use positive, God-pleasing words.
2. To guard your tongue from temptations to curse or use his name in vain.
3. To help your family members use words that uplift one another.

Parenting Insights

These guidelines from *Children’s Ministry Magazine* describe how profanity affects children:

Ages 2 to 5

Preschoolers simply repeat what they hear, so try to limit media exposure. Don’t react to foul language with shock or anger; calmly explain that those words hurt people’s feelings.

Ages 6 to 9

Explain that words are “bad” when they’re used to hurt others. Also explain that misusing God’s name is disrespectful. Tell children we can use God’s name to praise him or pray to him.

Ages 10 to 12

Preteens use profanity to get a reaction from adults and to impress friends. Let them know that obscene language and gestures aren’t acceptable, and teach them discernment to censor their own language.

Say What?!

The use of profanity among young children is on the rise, according to researcher Timothy Jay. Kids no longer learn curse words from peers at school; instead, they hear them at home. Nearly two-thirds of surveyed adults said that despite prohibiting their children from swearing at home, they break their own rules regularly. This double standard confuses and irritates kids, most of whom say they’re frightened when their parents curse.

(www.livescience.com, www.findarticles.com)

OpenTheBook

**"Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them."
Ephesians 4:29**

Words are powerful. God tells us to use language to build people up, not tear them down.

Teachable Moments

- 1. "Cheer"ful Words**—As a family, come up with catchy cheers for praising God. Also create a personalized, encouraging cheer for each family member.
- 2. It's All in the Delivery**—When speaking, watch your tone and delivery. Say some words short, or staccato, and draw out others. You can also vary the volume. These changes will keep your words interesting to children and just plain fun.
- 3. Sign Up**—Children love to learn sign language, so use motions to reinforce Bible lessons. Check out a library book or video about sign language. Learn how to sign phrases such as "Jesus loves me" or "Jesus is our healer."



- 4. Out-of-This-World Names**—Help children come up with creative names for God that describe what he's done for us, such as heart-fixer-upper, happily-dappily-loveful, sunny-joy-rageous.



"So commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these words of mine. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are ON THE ROAD, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up." Deuteronomy 11:18-19, NLT

Explore children's thoughts about words by asking these discussion questions:

1. Why are words so powerful? How does it feel to know that you can help or hurt someone just by what you say?
2. What do our words say about us? What do they say about God or our relationship with him?
3. Why can it be so hard to tame our tongue? How can we help each other remember to use positive, kind language?
4. What words best describe how you feel about God, and why?

Family Experience: What's the Word?

Use these devotional ideas to get your family talking about language—and how we use it.

Picture This—Use word pictures to verbally illustrate Bible truths. For example, discuss the importance of having clean thoughts and using clean words, based on 2 Corinthians 10:5 (NIV): "We take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." Talk about a lasso and how it's used. Give each family member a small piece of rope and let them tie a lasso. Then discuss what it would be like to "lasso" a bad thought or word.



Speak Up!—Emphasize that God wants us to communicate and work together—even when we all seem to be speaking different languages. You'll need a bunch of toilet paper rolls, clear cellophane tape, and a slip of paper for each family member with one of these directions written on it: "Say the opposite of what you mean," "Remain silent and use no body language," "Gesture with your hands," "Ask questions," and "Talk in baby talk." Have each person take a slip and keep the directions secret. Say: "You have to build a tower as high as you can in three minutes. You're allowed to communicate only the way your slip of paper instructs." Afterward, ask: "How did it feel to communicate this way? Have you ever felt like that in our family? Explain." Read aloud Genesis 11:1-9. Ask: "Why do you think God confused the people's languages?" Say: "God doesn't want us to rebel like the people in our story. He wants us to communicate well with our family members and work together." Close in prayer, asking God to help you all speak in kind, helpful ways.



What's Playing at the Movies

Movie: *Rango* (March 4)

Genre: Animated comedy

Rating: G

Cast: Johnny Depp, Isla Fisher, Abigail Breslin

Synopsis: In this computer-animated film from Industrial Light & Magic, Rango, a pet chameleon, ends up in the Old West town of Dirt. He tries to be the "good guy" hero, although his predecessors have fallen short.

Discussion Questions: How successful are you at being "good"? What gets in the way of your best efforts to follow rules and set a good example? Read aloud Romans 7:19-20. Why can't we be perfect? How does it feel knowing that Jesus was perfect and died in our place?



What Music Is Releasing

Artist: Francesca Battistelli

Album: *Hundred More Years*

Artist Info: The 25-year-old singer-songwriter grew up in a musical family in New York City. Her soulful pop sound includes traces of jazz and R&B. Battistelli is married to percussionist Matthew Goodwin, and the couple became parents last fall.

Summary: In this follow-up to her major-label debut *My Paper Heart*, Battistelli explores friendship, family, and God's faithfulness. In "This Is the Stuff," she explores life's craziness and frustrations. "In the middle of my little mess," Battistelli sings, "I forget how big I'm blessed."

Discussion Questions: When does your life feel crazy or messy? What can make you forget about God and how much he loves you? Read aloud John 1:16. What are some ways God has blessed you? How can you use those blessings to bless other people?



What Games Are Out

Title	Content	Rating & Platform
<i>Angry Birds</i>	In this popular puzzle game, players launch birds, via slingshot, at pigs. It's spreading to more formats and merchandise, with a possible TV series or movie down the road.	E; PlayStation 3, phone app, Windows, Mac (soon coming to Wii and more)
<i>Scripps Spelling Bee</i>	Users practice their spelling words while increasing their vocabularies. A dictionary offers definitions and pronunciations.	E; Nintendo DS
<i>PokePark Wii: Pikachu's Adventure</i>	Players compete in skill games in 14 different levels. Also contains an in-game economy based on berries that players can "cash in."	E; Wii

GAME RATINGS KEY: EC=Early Childhood, E=Everyone (ages 6+), E10+ (ages 10+), T=Teen (ages 13+)



Culture & Trends

What's happening right now that may affect your children and family:

- Young stutterers are encouraged by the film *The King's Speech*. "I'm not stupid," says an 11 year old who's stuttered since preschool. (AP)
- The popularity of cell-phone cameras has hospitals re-evaluating delivery-room rules. Some expectant parents are fighting restrictions via online petition. (New York Times)



Quick Stats

- One in seven new marriages is between spouses of different races or ethnicities. (Pew Research Center)
- Nearly one in 10 kids who plays video games is at risk of addiction. (Pediatrics)
- A study saying working parents have 90 minutes of free time a day is news to many stressed-out folks. Author Susan Bartell suggests using kids' activities for down time and social time. (moms.today.com)

