



SELF-CONTROL | WEEK 3 | JANUARY 16, 2022

4th-5th Lesson

Blank Space

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

Bible Story: Blank Space (Choose Your Words Carefully) • *Proverbs 12:18*

Key Question: How can words make things better?

Bottom Line: Think before you speak.

Basic Truth: I am loved by God no matter what so I can love God, love others, and love life.

Memory Verse: “God’s power has given us everything we need to live a godly life.” 2 Peter 1:3a (NIRV)

**KID CONNECT:
5 MINUTES**

**LARGE GROUP:
25 MINUTES**

**SMALL GROUP
25 MINUTES**

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

We trust God no matter what. Even when we face unexpected circumstances, we can respond to them with self-control. We can trust that we don't need to rush in or take matters into our own hands. We can trust that God is working.

Self-control is a Fruit of the Spirit. As we follow Jesus throughout our lives, the Holy Spirit transforms us and helps us live more like Jesus. We can follow His example and choose to do what we should do—instead of what we want to do. The Holy Spirit can give us the power and wisdom to show self-control.

Key Question: How can words make things better? Preteens are at the phase when they don't always think before they speak. We hope that they will discover how their words have the power to make a situation better or worse. As we help focus on the positive ways they can use their word, we pray they'll start to understand how God can help them make wise choices with the words they use.

In week three we discover more about **Proverbs 12:18**. Solomon talks about the power of our words. We want kids to learn that by choosing the right words in a difficult situation, those words can bring healing to the situation.

Bottom Line: **Think before you speak.** When faced with a stressful situation, it can be too easy to blurt out the first thing that pops into our heads. However, thoughtless words can cause situations to get worse. We hope kids will learn to think about the words they use with others. We pray the words they use will help others and point them to Jesus.

KID CONNECT

WELCOME TIME

(VIDEO: INTRO MUSIC)

Play intro music and greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group.

OPENING ACTIVITY:

(No Supplies)

During this time, concentrate on getting to know your group and building a relationship between you all. Create a place where they feel like someone knows them and that they belong. A great way to do that is to pull them into an activity (coloring, LEGOs, etc.) and ask them questions. Here are some suggestions:

- What are some highs/lows from your week?
- What do you like to do for fun?
- If you could ride on any animal, what would be the most fun/most difficult?
- Do you have any siblings/pets? What are their names?
- If you could build anything, what would you build?
- What is the worst smell in the world?

LARGE GROUP

COUNTDOWN AND WELCOME

(VIDEO: COUNTDOWN, SLIDE: KIDCITY EXPECTATIONS)

Show the countdown video as you transition to Large Group. Set it to end as the session begins. *The Large Group Leader has lots of energy as he or she welcomes everyone to KidCity. The LGL is relatable and inviting. LGLs can talk about something that happened culturally throughout the week like a big sports game, movie opening, a viral video on YouTube, holiday, etc. The LGL 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.*

LGL: "Welcome everyone! I'm so glad you are able to come hang out with us in KidCity today. My name is [INSERT NAME]. We are going to have a lot of fun today by playing a game, singing some incredible songs that worship God, and then we are going to hear an amazing true story from God's Word, the Bible.

“But first, let’s quickly go over our KidCity Expectations (rules) so we can make sure that we make the most of our time today: *(Don’t dwell on these too long, but make sure you review them briefly so we can set everyone up for success.)*

1. Be Kind – We need to be kind with our words and actions to our friends, leaders, and the space that we are using.
2. Be Safe – Make wise choices with your actions and words.
3. Have Fun – Participate in what we are doing! It’s no fun just sitting there...”

5th SUNDAY FUNDAY ANNOUNCEMENT

(SLIDE: 5TH SUNDAY FUNDAY, PARTY MUSIC)

“Before we play a game, I have a VERY exciting announcement. You may not know this, but four times a year it just so happens that instead of there being 4 Sundays in a month there is a bonus 5th Sunday. Well, we’ve decided that on those special 5th Sundays we are going to throw a party in KidCity!

(SLIDE: 5TH SUNDAY FUNDAY) “We are going to have lot of fun playing games that we don’t normally play, you will have the chance to win awesome prizes, and have a whole day focused on fun. You will want to invite your friends! It’s going to be a blast.

“Why am I saying all of this? Well, January happens to be the first month that has a 5th Sunday...so get ready to party at the end of the month! We want you to invite your friends that don’t come to Hope KidCity to come that day. In fact, if you bring a friend, you both will get a special prize. You don’t want to miss it!”

LARGE GROUP GAME

BUCKET OF ADJECTIVES

(Script, Paper Adjectives, Bucket)

LGL: “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.

“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.

LGL: “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.

LGL: “That was amazing. Can you give a hand to everyone who helped out today? Now, let’s use some amazing words to give praise to the amazing, almighty, wonderful God this morning. Let’s worship!”

WORSHIP

(VIDEO: NOT AFRAID, ALIVE)

INTRODUCE THE SESSION

(SLIDE: LIFE APP, WORD ASSOCIATION SLIDES)

(No Supplies)

“That was some great dancing and singing! Before we get started, let’s review the definition of our Life App this month.

(SLIDE: LIFE APP) “Self-Control is choosing to do what you should do even when you don’t want to.”

“This is my favorite time of the week! 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.

(SLIDES: BALLOON; PIZZA; PENCIL)

“Not bad! Now turn to the person next to you. 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.

(SLIDES: FOOD; FAMILY; DIFFICULT; HAPPY)

“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...let’s watch the So&So Show.:

BIBLE STORY

(VIDEO: SO & SO SHOW; SLIDES: KEY QUESTION, BASIC TRUTH)

(VIDEO: SO & SO SHOW)

“Our words really are a gift from God! Have you ever thought about it that way? I mean, think about how you feel when someone says something kind or encouraging to you. Think of how great you feel when someone makes you laugh! Think about when someone comforts you when you’re sad. It makes you feel so much better to know that they care.

“Those are some great examples of words that heal. Unfortunately, we also know what thoughtless words can do. They can really hurt! They can cut like a sword.

“Words are powerful. That’s why it’s important that we learn to use self-control and choose our words carefully and think before we speak.

“As we read in James 1:19 . . .

Open the Bible to James 1:19 (NirV) and read.

“Everyone should be quick to listen. But they should be slow to speak. They should be slow to get angry.

“Our words can hurt or help, and WE get to choose how to use them. The really great news is that God is always there to help us make the wise choice. Our Basic Truth says this..

(SLIDE: BASIC TRUTH) “I am loved by God no matter what so I can love God, love others, and love life.

“Our words can be used to love God – like saying, ‘God, thank you for...’. Our words can be used to love others, like what we just learned about. Finally, our words can be used to love the life that God has given us. What I mean by that is, sometimes, without even realizing it, we can actually use words that hurt ourselves! We can say negative things like, ‘I’ll never be able to understand this, I should just give up’ or ‘Maybe people will like me more if I act in a certain way’. The problem with that is, when we say negative things about ourselves, we are forgetting that God has made you by purpose for a purpose, and He loves you just as you are right now! Remembering that will help you love the life that God has given you.

Our preteens are starting to compare themselves to their peers and seek their approval. This can cause them to not love the way that God has made them and wish that they were somehow ‘different’. Gently remind them that they don’t have to change anything about themselves to be loved and valued by the Creator of the Universe, and they can find joy and peace in how He made them – by purpose and for a purpose in His big story.

“So 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 might affect other people. And if you can’t think of any healing words to say . . . press the mute button.

“As you head to your 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? Before you go talk about that in small groups, let’s go over our monthly verse.

MEMORY VERSE

(SLIDE: MEMORY VERSE)

“God’s power has given us everything we need to lead a godly life. (2 Peter 1:3a, NirV)

“Let’s pray.

PRAYER

“God, thank You for giving Solomon such great wisdom! What he said is true: our words can be hurtful or they can bring healing. We know that if we don’t stop to think, we can easily say something that hurts someone and makes them feel sad or upset. Please give us the self-control to think before we speak . . . so our words will always help and bring healing. We love You, God, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

DISMISS TO SMALL GROUPS

SMALL GROUP

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JUST A SNAPSHOT

(No Supplies)

What You Do:

- Sit in a circle.
- Explain what an “idiom” is. (*An idiom is a common phrase which means something different from its literal meaning but can be understood because of the way it is commonly used.*)
- Give an example of an idiom that you think most of the kids would understand such as, “beat around the bush” (*meaning, to avoid talking about something important*) or “on cloud nine” (*meaning, being very happy*).
- Explain that you’ll read some idioms that are about words and speech. You’ll pause after each one for them to tell you what they think the idiom mean.
 - “speak volumes” (*to represent/display*)
 - “speak out of turn” (*to say something inappropriate*)
 - “on speaking terms” (*meaning, to have a friendship with someone*)
 - “so to speak” (*that an expression is not literal*)
 - “speak well/ill of” (*compliment/criticize*)
 - “speak the same language” (*to agree or think alike*)
 - “speak up” (*to talk louder*)
 - “speak out” (*to make public an opinion or complaint*)
 - “speak your mind” (*to say what you are thinking or believe*)
 - “speak for yourself” (*say your own opinions*)
 - “spoken for” (*taken, claimed, belonging to someone*)
 - “speak up for” (*to defend someone else*)

- Challenge kids to take turns suggesting some word pictures by completing the following starters that convey the power of words:
 - Their words hit me like . . .
 - Gentle words are like . . .
 - Sharp words are like . . .
- If time allows, ask kids to share about a time when someone’s words made things better.

VERSE TO TAKE WITH YOU

(Bibles, Paper – 2 per group, Markers, Clear Tape)

What You Do:

- Form two groups.
- Give each group a Bible and a sheet of paper. *(If you don’t have a table or other hard surface on which kids can write, attach the paper to a clipboard.)*
- Give each kid on the team a fine-tip marker in a different color.
- Assign one group to look up Proverbs 15:1 and the other James 1:19b (beginning with the word, “Everyone.”). If kids need help finding the verses, direct them to the Table of Contents in the front of their Bibles.
- Invite teams to write out their verse by letting one kid use their marker to write the first word then passing the paper to the next kid who will use a different colored marker to write the second word and so on. Continue until the verse is completed.
- Bring the kids together and ask them to share their verses with each other by reading from their papers.
- Discuss the verses together.
 - What do these verses say about the way we use our words?
 - When you’re trying to choose your words carefully, how do these verses help you know what to say and what not to say?
- Ask them to look at the verses and choose a word that they think is the most important to the meaning of the verse (it’s ok to have more than one answer).
- Have teams pass their papers around and make one tear (depending on the size of your group, you may need to have the paper go around again).
- Instruct them to tape their papers back together the best they can.
- Ask:
 - In what ways does your torn and taped paper remind you of the effect words can have on us?
 - If you’ve said something you regret, what can you do to make things right again?
- Remind kids that self-control is all about taking time to THINK before we say or do something. We can’t take back words once we say them, but if we play them in our head first, we’re more likely to hear how they sound and stop ourselves before we do damage.

DISCUSSION

Ask the following questions and lead the group to discuss:

- What’s a good test to use in deciding what we should or should not say? Is your test different when you’re talking to someone who’s younger than you? How about someone who is older?
- Just because something is true, does it mean it is okay to say it? Why or why not?

- How do you decide if something is necessary to say or if it's better to leave it unspoken—even if it's true?

PRAY AND DISMISS

(Preteen Devotionals - 1 per kid)

What You Say:

“Dear God, we are so thankful You want to use our words to make a huge impact in the world around us! God, just like the words in our stories were what made the stories so funny, remind us that the words we choose each and every day are what make our real-life stories awesome, too! Please show us how to have self-control with our words. Let Your Holy Spirit remind us of the power we have within us and that we can always choose to ***[Bottom Line]*** think before you speak. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen!”

Pass out the Devotionals to each kid. If there's spare time, encourage kids to start looking over it and point out how it relates to today's lesson.