**October 31st, 2021: Pre-k thru 2nd grade sunday school
PUTTING JESUS FIRST lesson 1: with our words** *By Becky Ray*

***In this lesson, children learn how God wants us to control what comes out of our mouths so we can use our words for good and not hurt others. Our words need to reflect the love of Jesus.***

 **WORSHIP TIME AND BIBLE VERSE:**

**“With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings." James 3:9a NIV**This verse reminds children that with our mouths we can say nice things and praise God but at the same time we use our mouths to speak bad about others, and we use them to hurt and bring people down. We need to find a way to always speak kind words.

**BIBLE STORY**

Gather the children around you in preparation for story time. After the introduction, read James 3:9-10. Then, read the story, *Be Careful Little Tongue,* that follows before going to the discussion questions.

**Introduction:** What we say is very important. Our words can hurt people, or make them feel good. Raise your hand if you like to hear somebody say something good about you. Okay, now raise you hand if you like to hear somebody say something bad about you. You see, out of the same mouth, we can do both. Listen to what the Bible says in the book of James:

**Read James 3:9-10**"With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be." NIV

**STORY: OH BE CAREFUL LITTLE TONGUE
*A young girl learns to be careful with what she says, so her friends won't be hurt by her words.***

**S**usan wanted to go outside to play, but it was a very cold day. Her mommy said no for the third time. What was Susan supposed to do? She was so bored and really wanted to have fun! Maybe she could invite her friend Tracy to come over and play. Tracy’s mommy always stayed at home just like her mommy, so she thought this would be a great idea, especially since she couldn’t go outside.

Susan’s mommy talked to Tracy’s mommy, who said they would be coming over as soon as they finished cleaning Tracy’s room. Susan thought about how exciting it would be to have Tracy come over and play dress up, make things with playdough, and have a tea party. They would have so much fun together.

Finally, it was time for Tracy to arrive. Susan opened the door to let her friend in the house and they ran off to her bedroom, leaving the mommies by themselves. The two little girls had so much fun picking out costumes and pretending they were in a fashion show. They dressed up with beautiful gowns, sparkly shoes, and tiaras fit for princesses. Then they paraded down the hall to show their mommies.

When they were going back to choose another outfit, Tracy noticed that Susan’s hair got really messy when she took off her tiara. Tracy said, “Susan, I think your hair looks very ugly! You should brush it or something.”

Susan didn’t know why Tracy was telling her such a mean thing, because her mommy had just brushed her hair that morning. She simply said, “I think my hair looks fine, let’s play something else now.”

Tracy wasn’t ready to stop talking about Susan’s hair. Instead, she continued to say mean things to her. Susan was very sad that her friend would be talking like that so she ran to her mommy and started crying on her shoulder.

“What is wrong dear? Why are you crying?” asked Susan’s mommy.

“Tracy says my hair is ugly, and that it looks like I never brush it. She said that she thinks my hair is stinky,” sobbed Susan.

Tracy’s mommy looked right at Tracy and asked her if it was true that she said such mean things to her friend. Tracy said she did, but that it was all true.

You see, Tracy was using her words in a bad way. She was not saying nice things to her friend and she ended up hurting Susan’s feelings. Susan’s hair was a bit messy because it got messed up when she took off the tiara, but her hair was not ugly or stinky. It was just a little messy. Tracy needed to learn that in order to keep friends, she must use her words in a nice way. She must learn that we have to be careful how we say things so we don’t hurt anyone’s feelings.

Tracy had a talk with her mommy. After a short time, she came back to Susan and said she was sorry for saying such mean things. She decided to say something nice instead, and they were able to continue playing. Tracy learned a valuable lesson that day. She learned to be careful what she says to her friends, so she will not hurt them with her words.

**THE END**

**Discussion Questions:**1. What is an important part of our body that can be used to hurt people or be nice to them? *(Tongue.)*
2. Was Tracy using nice words or mean words with her tongue? *(Mean words.)*
3. Can you lose a friend when you say mean things about them? *(Yes.)*
4. Who wants us to be careful with our tongues? *(God.)*
5. What did Tracy learn to do after she was told that she hurt her friend’s feelings?*(She said sorry and then used nice words.)*6. How can we show the Love of Jesus when we talk with others? *(Allow for discussion.)*

 **FUN TIME: USING WORDS IN A KIND WAY (Materials: paper bag, glue stick, paper strips with kind and unkind words printed)**

***Children learn they can choose what they say to others, but their words can be kind or unkind.***

#### PREPARATION: Before class, create a paper bag puppet like the example shown above. Be creative and add as many features or decorations as you like. Then, print out the kind and unkind phrases, and cut out each one into thin paper strips.

#### WHAT YOU WILL DO: Start by gathering the children around you and talk with them about how God wants us to put Him first with our words by saying things that are kind to others. Place all of the paper strips near you, and read the first situation. Then read both responses that correspond to that situation. The children must decide which response is kind, and which one is unkind. After they choose the kind response, glue that strip of paper onto the mouth area of the puppet (see example). Then read the next situation and repeat until all of the paper strips with kind words only are glued onto the puppet. When finished, remind the children again how important it is to choose to say kind words instead of unkind words.

**Situations
1.  Sam is four years old, and is drawing a picture of a dog. His picture is very good for his
     age, but you think it needs a lot of work. You can choose to say two things:**           a.) I think you picture is nice.    b.) You really need to fix that dog's head. It's too big!**2.  Christy got a hair cut after school. When she came back to school the next day, she wore
     a brand new bow, but her hair was a little poofy. What would your choice be?**             a.) Your hair looks like a scared cat!    b.) Is that a new bow? I like it a lot.**3.  A new kid comes to your Sunday school class and you notice that he has very big teeth.
     You get to choose what the nice thing to say would be:**                               a.) I like your smile.   b.) Your teeth are too big.**4.  Your friend has said something mean about you to some other kids, and your feelings are
     hurt. What are you going to say when you see your friend again?**      a.) I don't like you anymore.   b.) I don't like how you hurt my feelings, but you're still my friend

### WHAT YOU WILL SAY:

God wants us to put Him first with our words. When we talk with our family, our friends, or anyone for that matter, we should choose words that are kind, not words that are hurtful or mean. Everyone has a choice in what they say. We really need to speak kindly, even when we really want to say something mean. God is hurt when we choose to be mean to others, and our friends might not want to be with us if we say mean things to them. Just think about what you would do if someone said something mean about you. It would hurt you a lot, and God doesn't want that to happen. So let's choose to use our words in a way that would make God smile!

**GAME: GOD SAYS… (Materials: none)
*A fun game similar to Simon Says that will help the children learn to put Jesus first.***

**WHAT YOU WILL DO:** Have all the children line up facing you. Explain that this game is like "Simon Says," except it will be God Says. This simple game will show the kids that when God says, we have a choice to do what He says and put Him first or not do it and lose our chance.

**WHAT YOU WILL SAY:** In the Bible, God asks us to do many things and sometimes we obey and sometimes we don’t. We are going to play a game to see if we can listen to what God says, and then do what He asks. The only way you can do anything in this game is if you hear me first say, "God Says." If you do not hear me say "God Says," and you do it anyway, you will be out of the game. So let’s start. *(You can use any of the following phrases or you can make up your own.)*

*God says, "Lift your hands toward Heaven."
God says, "Shake your neighbors hand."
Jump up and down
God says, "Say hello to your neighbor."
God says, "Tell a friend good-bye."
Run to the table
God says, "Tap someone’s shoulder."
God says, "Shout, 'Hallelujah!'"
Sit on the floor
Shout out your first name
God says, "Put your hands together and pray."*

 **PRAYER/SNACK:** Start by praying to God and thanking Him for guiding us each day. While enjoying a snack, talk about how we can put Jesus first with our words, by saying good things to others and about others. What are some examples of kind words that we can use when we speak? Brainstorm with the children. For example: nice, pretty, honest, loving, kind, talented, smart, caring, friendly, etc.

**CLOSING SONG: BE CAREFUL LITTLE TONGUES**

***A song about how we can please God by being careful with what we say. Sung to the tune,“Oh Be Careful Little Eyes.”***

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| **SONG LYRICS**Little tongues, oh little tongues, Be aware;That the hurt from your words, You should spare.For the Father up above, Is counting on us now,To be careful with the words, That we share.*(repeat several times)* |

**Top of Form**

**What We Learned:** Today your child learned how to put Jesus first with words. We say a lot of things throughout the day and sometimes these words can be mean or hurtful. God wants us to use our words to honor Him and to make others happy. He doesn’t want us to hurt the people around us by saying hurtful things. Not only does this push them away, but it also makes God sad. (Scripture used: James 3:9-10)

**Words to Remember:** "With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings." James 3:9a NIV Practice this verse several times with your child during the week. This will not only help your child to remember the verse, but also it will help to reinforce what he or she learned during class.

**Suggested Parent/Child Activity:** Everyone has moments when we say things that we wish we had not. Whenever your child uses his or her words in a mean manner, have him or her ask for forgiveness and then write a note or draw a picture to give to that person describing three nice things about the other person. This is a simple thing, but it will show that we can learn to use our words in a nice way.

**Daily Prayer:** Dear Lord, Thank You for forgiving us even when we say mean things. Help us keep from using our words to hurt others, and to use our words instead to show how other people are special to us and to You. Let our hearts be filled with Your love, so we can speak to others in a loving way. Amen.