

BIG MOUTH



1. Write three common slang phrases you or your friends use a lot (keep it clean!) and define them.
2. Share a few of your experiences below.
A time when you felt hurt by something someone said about you.

A time when you said something you wish you never said.

A time when you thought something bad about someone else instead of saying it.
3. In your own words, what does this verse say about your language?
"But no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison." (James 3:8)
4. Which of these scenarios would you consider the **most hurtful** to others? Why?
 - Reaming out a sibling
 - Making a snide comment to your mom
 - Swearing after you stub your toe
 - Teasing a classmate about their clothes
 - Telling a teacher that you hate the class
 - Laughing at someone's mistake
 - Calling someone a loser
 - Giving your boyfriend or girlfriend the silent treatment
 - Cussing out a teammate
 - Making fun of someone's looks
5. Finish these sentences based on what the verses have to say.
Proverbs 13:3 It is important to think before I speak, because—

James 3:5 My mouth can get me into trouble, because—

2 Timothy 2:16 I want to please God with the words from my mouth, because—

BIG MOUTH | t a m i n g t h e t o n g u e |

THIS WEEK

Teenagers hear harsh gossip, abusive words, and vulgar language everywhere. In fact, most of your kids would consider this normal in society. Certain words are built into our society's vocabulary—it's unavoidable to hear them in movies, on TV, on the radio, in songs, and in our schools. Unfortunately, your kids are able to list words that they hear used everyday—some that are shocking to hear used among middle schoolers. This TalkSheet will help you discuss the relationship between the Christian faith and the words that they speak.

OPEN

Your kids maybe don't realize how much negative language they use. Most of the time it's subconscious—they don't intent to hurt others with our language. Other times they do. No matter what, they've got to monitor the way they speak and the things they say.

Pick a word that is commonly said among your group—not a swear word, just any word that they use a lot. All different youth and groups of kids have slang words or phrases that they use. Pick the word and write it on a whiteboard or a place where the kids can see it. If, during this TalkSheet, someone says the word or words that you chose, have your kids call each other on it. Decide a lighthearted (yet funny) consequence for using this word in the discussion—maybe getting squirt with a water gun or having someone hit a buzzer. Challenge your kids to pay close attention to how they speak and the words they choose. How many times did they call each other on this word? How hard was it for them to keep track of the things they said? It's hard to monitor our tongue! They use some words without even thinking—including words or language that's crass or mean. This goes for all kinds of swear words, gossip, cut-downs, jokes, and other words that hurt others.

THE DISCUSSION, BY NUMBERS

1. As for your kids to share some slang expressions and explain them. Do they know how the expression got started?
2. Ask the group to share their experiences. Point out how easy it is to get into trouble with what they say. What's worse—saying something bad or thinking it?
3. Words can be deadly and can cause great pain to others. Like physical cuts, hurtful words take time to heal. Our tongue is a weapon—it can hurt others, cause problems, and even destroy relationships. God even warns us about it in the Bible.

4. Decide as a group which one is the worst and why. Who is hurt most in these situations? Which ones can your kids relate to the most?
5. Ask the kids to read their sentences. How do these verses apply to their lives? What can they do as Christians when they are surrounded by negative language? How does loving God affect the way that they treat and speak to others?

THE CLOSE

Blaise Pascal once said, "Cold words freeze people and hot words scorch them, bitter words make them bitter and wrathful words make them wrathful." On the other hand, kind and thoughtful words do wonders. Christians should be generous with them.

Challenge your kids to hold each other and their friends and family members accountable for their language. If your kids struggle with using certain words, have them find a friend or parent that can call them on it. Swearing is like a bad habit—it can be broken. It takes self-control, which other people can help you with. Have them set a personal goal of how they are going to change their language.

Finally, challenge your kids to find one person who they've hurt by their language and apologize for their hurtful words. Communicate how important it is to ask for forgiveness and heal our relationships with others. Take a few minutes to pray with your kids, asking for God's forgiveness and help to control our tongues.

MORE

- How often are swear words really used? Have the group check it out for themselves. Ask each of your kids watch a TV show or movie during the week and keep track of how many times swear words or vulgar language were used. Have them write down the words and how many times they were said. Compare the results the next week. What shows or movies had the most? How did the language fit in with what was going on in the story? What result did the language have, if any?
- Ask your kids to look in their CDs for song lyrics with negative language or swear words and bring them next time. Be careful which ones you read aloud, if you decide to do it. Point out how easy it is to listen to the music and not pay attention to the language. How does listening to music with certain language affect how they think? How does it affect our attitudes and how they treat others?