

Words from the Heart

By RLD Team

for use as
STEP 1

**Lesson 3****Focus:**

Your words reflect what's in your heart.

Lesson 3**Bible Basis:**

Proverbs 16:16-24, 27-28

Lesson 3**Memory Verse:**

The mouths of the righteous utter wisdom, and their tongues speak what is just. The law of their God is in their hearts; their feet do not slip.
—Psalm 37:30-31

Students will explore how the way we say things impacts others and will begin to think about the importance of communicating well.

Materials:

- Whiteboard and markers (or a blank document with screen-sharing options)

As teens enter, ask them to share a time when communication went wrong for them. Maybe autocorrect made them send the wrong text message or maybe they sent a message to the wrong person. Maybe when they were using voice texting they were misheard. Maybe when they were younger, they used a word without knowing what it meant. Share your own example too.

Communication fails happen to the best of us! We say what we don't mean all the time! Even if we get the words right, sometimes we don't communicate what we meant to. I'm going to give you a sentence. Let's come up with as many ways as we can to say the sentence so that it communicates something different each time. For example, if I said "I love you" in a nice voice, that means something different than if I say "I love you?" as a question. It can mean something different still if I say it sarcastically.

Write the following sentences on the board, one at a time. If your class is meeting online, you can type these into a document while you share your screen. Once you've written a sentence, let your students say it with as many different inflections as possible.

1. Where are you going?
2. Are you going to wear that?
3. I think you're really smart.
4. Well, ok then.

➤ **What struck you about this activity?** (Accept all reasonable answers. Some may say that it's amazing how many different things one sentence can mean or be reminded how easily what they say can be misunderstood.)

➤ **We had the benefit of seeing each other's faces and hearing inflection in voices for this activity. What could happen if you texted someone one of those sentences?** (It could be misunderstood very easily.)

Even when we're trying to be kind and respectful, what we say can be hurtful if we're not careful. That's even more true when we're not being careful about how our words might make others feel. The Bible has a lot to say about how our words impact others. Let's take a look.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

Words from the Heart

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STEP 4 

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Materials:

- Paper
- Pens/pencils

Ask one student to reread today's memory verse (Psalm 37:30-31).

If you are meeting online, invite students to bring a piece of paper and writing utensil with them to class. The "notes" section of their phone can also work.

As Christians, our goal is to become more and more like Jesus as we grow in faith. As our hearts change, our words and actions change too. Now that we've studied what God's Word has to say about our words and actions and we've practiced responding to situations in a godly manner, how will you apply this in your lives?

Distribute paper and pens/pencils to students. If you are meeting online, have students make sure those items are ready. Ask each student to write down a recent interaction they had that didn't reflect what they'd like to be coming out of their hearts.

As I read the following questions out loud, think about the interaction you wrote down. Write or draw your thoughts to these questions.

- **Are there people in your life who have received less than kind communication from you?**
- **How might you move to a place of kindness in that relationship?**

Next, ask your teens to flip over their paper and reflect on how they would like to react differently in the future, based on what they now know about their words reflecting what's in their hearts. When everyone is finished, ask them to pair up with a partner. They may share the situation they just reflected on or share with their partner one interaction they'll have this week in which they can reflect God's love more clearly than they did last week.

As our hearts towards other people change, our words and actions towards people also begin to change.

End by praying for God's love to soften every heart more and more so that your hearts and your words align with His will.

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