

Take a Stab at Kindness

Theme: Talking kindly to and about others.

Things You'll Need:

- Gallon freezer bag(s).
- Small rocks, marbles, or something similar to fill about half of the bag. *Important Note - make sure the objects are bigger than the holes you are going to poke into the bag.
- One or two small, sharp objects with which to puncture the bag. Nail, pencil, or something similar. The holes need to be big enough to allow water to escape, but small enough to keep the rocks or other hard objects inside.
- Pitcher of water.
- Box of standard band-aids.
- Towels for cleanup.

Advanced Prep: This lesson is fairly easy, but you may want to test it out beforehand to make sure you pull it off.

- Fill the storage bag about half full of the hard objects.
- Poke some holes in the sides and bottom of the plastic bag with the nail. Plenty of holes, may 10+, but make sure they are spread out.
- Grab a full pitcher of water and pour it into the bag. A second person is advisable for this part of the lesson. One person holds the bag and the other pours. The bag should turn into a fountain spouting the water all over the place. This is ideal.

Activity: First, carefully choose where you want to perform the activity. Towels will come in handy for this reason, but if your family wants to crowd around a bathtub, that works too.

Invite the kids to take turns using the nail to poke holes in the bag of rocks. Remember to take the bag back before any of its contents actually drop out of the bag. Now hold the bag up and ask the kids some questions.

- It felt kind of good stabbing the bag like that, didn't it?
- Even with all that stabbing, how many rocks did we lose? None, right? The bag is still holding all the rocks just fine, right?

Let's see what kind of shape this bag is REALLY in. I'd like one of you to hold the bag open with both hands. This is where you pour the water in and get to choose if you want to torture your kid, or just get them a little wet. If you want to soak them, have them sit down and hold it, if not, let them stand. Either way is perfectly fine. Lol Also, this is where you will need the towel or if you want to have a bucket nearby to drop the bag of rocks in that would be a solid plan too.

Okay, so it didn't look like we did all that much damage at first, but in reality, we made a pretty good mess of the bag, didn't we?

Lesson:

- Can any of you share a time you really were hurt by something somebody said to or about you? It could have been me, a friend, a coach, a teacher, or maybe some kid who you can't stand. How did you feel?
- Did you show how much it affected you, or did you try to cover it up by ignoring the comment or laughing it off?
- So, in reality, even though we may not act like the comments had a lasting effect, they did. Do I have that right?

Sometimes we're like this bag of rocks. We look like we're holding it all together, but in reality, we're full of holes. The hurtful things people say actually do cause damage.

- Is it possible that we do the same things to others?
- Is it possible that we make hurtful, unkind comments to others, and they cover it up with a laugh or by seeming to ignore it just so we don't know how much our comment hurt them?

Why do we say things that hurt others? Sure, sometimes we may not realize what we said hurt someone or was unkind, but other times we say things because we know it is going to really upset them. Other times we just want to make ourselves look good or better than someone by putting them down. Sometimes we say things for revenge. Keep this in mind as we read the next verse...

If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless. James 1:26

What does the verse say about your Christianity if you're not mindful of what comes out of your mouth? Where do you find it to be really difficult to watch what you say? Here is another verse.

Watch your tongue and keep your mouth shut, and you will stay out of trouble. Proverbs 21:23

Okay, now we are going to try something...take this box of bandages and do your best to patch up the holes.

Give them a few minutes to complete this task.

So, even if you put a bandage over every one of these holes, the bag will likely still leak...and it will look like a mess.

Optional - Try the activity again with the bandaged bag to prove your point.

Alright, the intent of the bandages are to repair the bag...and sometimes we try to patch up the damage we do to others by apologizing, writing a card, or even giving a gift. The truth is, and you know this is right, that you can't usually fully heal those wounds. It's nearly impossible to fix the hurt that we cause with our tongues.

Kids, we've all experienced the pain or embarrassment of something said to us that was unkind, rude, or really, really mean. Let's make sure we aren't doing the same to others...even if we feel like they deserve it. We don't know what they are going through.

- As Christians, the things we say and do should be kind.
- When we are kind and thoughtful with our words, it helps keep ourselves from troubling situations and helps us live at peace with others.

Some people make cutting remarks, but the words of the wise bring healing. Proverbs 12:18

According to this verse, if we watch what we say we are being wise, and our words may actually help people! Our words can encourage and heal others.

- Does that sound like the kind of people we want to be, with God's help?
- How can we do that at home? With friends? At school? At church?

Wrapping It Up:

Let's read another verse:

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

Wouldn't it be awesome to be known as a person that helps and encourages others rather than a person that hurts people by their careless words?

Optional, but it's a good reminder...or maybe come up with another way to accomplish this part of the lesson.

I'd like each of you to take one of these rocks. Keep it in your pocket, backpack, on your dresser, etc... Somewhere that you will see it often. Let's use it as a reminder that what we say to other people really matters. Let it help us remember to use our words to uplift and encourage others instead of hurting people. Remember, "the words of the wise bring healing."

Shoemaker, Tim. *The Very Best, Hands-On, Kinda Dangerous Family Devotions* (p. 63). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.