

STICKS AND STONES . . .

by James P. Reeves

PURPOSE

To point out that we can be cruel not only physically but also verbally; to help youth understand what the Bible has to say about verbal cruelty; and to show how to be honest and open without being unkind.

PREPARATION

Gather Bibles, pencils, chalkboard and copies of the quiz in the "Meat" of the Meeting.

OPENING

Form groups of twos or threes. Ask the youth to finish this sentence, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words . . ." Ask them not to use the well-known ending "but words will never hurt me."

An alternative would be a "graffiti" board with the title on a chalkboard or large paper. Instruct the youth to take turns writing answers under the title.

Discuss the graffiti and responses, then tell the young people the purpose of the meeting. Invite them to share times when they have been verbally cruel to others. Have there been times they have been hurt by others? What are some early memories of name-calling?

THE "MEAT" OF THE MEETING

Have everybody split into groups of four. Pass out the quizzes.

Positive Effects of Our Words

No. Proverbs	Questions
1. 12:25	An _____ word can help an anxious person.
2. 17:27-28	No matter how you look at it, restraint is _____.
3. 20:3	It is an _____ not to fight.
4. 12:22	A truthful person is a _____ to God.
5. 15:1	A soft _____ turns away wrath.
6. 28:23	Correction is much better than _____.
7. 10:20	A good man is _____ listening to.
8. 11:12	A good man holds his _____.
9. 15:23	It is wonderful to say the _____ thing.
10. 15:4	Gentle words cause _____.
11. 21:23	A person who guards his mouth keeps out of _____.
12. 21:15	A good man loves _____.
13. 16:24	Kind words are like _____.
14. 19:11	A wise man restrains _____.
15. 12:18	Words of the wise _____.

Negative Effects of Our Words

No. Proverbs	Questions
1. 14:23	Talk brings _____.
2. 6:12	A _____ man is a liar.
3. 18:1	A _____ man quarrels.
4. 26:28	Lying and flattery _____ others.

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| 5. 26:23 | Pretty words may hide a _____ heart. |
| 6. 18:6-7 | The lips of a fool bring _____. |
| 7. 12:19 | Lies are soon _____. |
| 8. 17:9 (25:24) | _____ hurts friendships. |
| 9. 18:2 | A rebel wants to _____. |
| 10. 11:13 | A gossip spreads _____. |
| 11. 29:5-6 | Flattery is a _____. |

Positive Answers

1. Encouraging
2. wise
3. honor
4. delight
5. answer
6. flattery
7. worth
8. tongue
9. right
10. life
11. trouble
12. justice
13. honey
14. anger
15. heal.

Negative Answers

1. Poverty
2. wicked
3. selfish
4. wounds
5. wicked
6. fights
7. exposed
8. nagging
9. yell
10. rumors
11. trap.

The puzzle questions have been designed from The Living Bible ver-

sion. Allow the groups to work on their own to finish. If you want, you can create competition to see who can finish first, but do not do so unless each group has a Living Bible version.

RESPONSE (OR CLOSING)

Review the answers. Ask the youth what they learned and have them summarize their findings. How can we be honest and open without being cruel? What does the Bible have to say about verbal cruelty?

Close in prayer asking God to guide us in our daily lives and to help us live as he wants.