



Faith Adventures Youth Resource



Free to use – please acknowledge when using beyond local church children's and youth work so others can find and use the resource themselves.

Embedded in Faith Adventures: Children Together, this youth resource is intergenerational in nature and designed to foster God-connection in church, home and beyond.

For guidance on the purpose of the resource and how to use it as a launch pad for your engagement with children and families, please use this link: www.bit.ly/How-To-FAYR

Title: Ephesians 4:29

Theme: Kind words are a blessing

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Introduction: What would be helpful to know in my planning?

Our new theme for the 4 sessions in February is 'wise words' This is also the yearly theme within children, youth and intergenerational discipleship. The themed resource will be available soon and has a very intergenerational flavour. Therefore, we have tried, where possible to ensure all areas of this session can be used or slightly adapted for intergenerational contexts.

The book of Ephesians is a collection of letters written by Paul to the church of Ephesus. They describe how we as a people should always aim to be united in Christ and invites the church to encourage unity through reconciliation across ethnic boundaries and holy conduct in everyday relationship

Wise words is not only used to describe wisdom that people share with their words but also being considered and kind with the words we use with each other. In fact the Bible passage says words can be a blessing from one person to another.

The children's rhyme 'sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me' is not true. Words can be very damaging, and this is what Paul was trying to convey. There is quite a

trend now for affirming slogans on clothing, especially the hoodies you can get that say 'If you are reading this....' This session looks at how we can be honest and authentic while remaining kind. Words have the power to break people or to build them up. This session looks at how we can be honest and authentic while remaining kind.

Be aware of those who have only known mean and unkind words, this can be a very emotive session for them.

Together – prayer and games

Let's start our time with God and each other well

Use this opening prayer or encourage young people to open the session with a prayer of their own.

All mighty God,

Be with us as we learn more about you through stories and people in the Bible.

Help us to walk in your way and follow your path.

Be with us as we make decisions that affect our lives, and the lives of those around us.

Amen

Alternatively, you may join with the widgit prayer found in the Faith Adventures: Children together or else the Lord's Prayer found at the end of this session.

Active game- Wise words parachute game

What you need:

- parachute or if you do not have a parachute, you can use a fitted sheet instead
- red and green balls

Everyone should hold the parachute at about waist height.

Place an even amount of red and green balls on the parachute.

The green balls represent the good words we use; the red balls represent the hurtful words we use.

Alternatively, you can use soft and lightweight items, such as beanbags, small plastic balls or ping pong balls.

The aim is to keep the green balls on and pop the red balls off.

In life we should be aiming to only include the green type of words in our life.

Quieter game – Jenga

You will need:

- Jenga set - use big garden version for an intergenerational feel
- red and green stickers – have more green stickers available

What you do:

Place red and green stickers onto the Jenga blocks. Red stickers indicate unkind, words, green stickers represent words that build people up.

Play Jenga in the usual way, except ask those present to only remove the bricks that contain red stickers. When the block is removed, change the sticker on it from red to green before placing on the top of the stack.

This game should help show that unkind words bring people down.

Experience – Bible story and songs

Hear, watch and sing the Bible story

This link takes you to Ephesians 4: 29 in the Easy to read version

<https://bit.ly/Ephesians429>

You may wish to research different versions of this reading on www.biblegateway.com
Recommended versions to try are NRSV, Easy-to-read, The Message, NIRV

²⁹ When you talk, don't say anything bad. But say the good things that people need—whatever will help them grow stronger. Then what you say will be a blessing to those who hear you.

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Watch: Build Up Vs Tear Down, Ephesians 4:29 – Our Daily Bread Ministries

<https://youtu.be/ezuelJrWC9k?si=6aokITxtj2VLLZrF>

Questions:

- What opportunities do you have to encourage others over the next week?
- I wonder why people feel the need to use unkind words directed at others?

Listen: Kind Words - Claudia Robin Gunn

https://youtu.be/WiDLIucDw_I?si=yMgjRlbzbm_RuUaT

This song helps us to reflect on the impact that our words can have.

- How do the different phrases make you feel?
- What words could you use to be encouraging and supporting to others?

Explore – ways into the theme

Ideas and activities to explore this week's Bible passage together

A new way to explore the theme

This is a new way to explore the Bible passage and the theme for this week.

Alternatively, you may wish to use the Explore section from this week's Faith Adventures: Children Together to guide your exploration of the theme this week.

Words matter

Get those gathered to look at a Shakespearean insult generator like: [Shakespearean Insult Generator - GeneratorMix](#) have some fun generating insults. Then ask those gathered to create some positive, affirming phrases.

Modern parables

This section includes references to TV programmes, films, books, TED talks, TikTok etc aimed at this age group that will have been widely seen, or where a clip is available to use as a stimulus for discussion. You may also enjoy the picture book recommended for Faith Adventures: Children Together and explore the relevance of the story to the theme of the session in more depth – young people and adults are often well tuned in to the deeper meanings in materials aimed at younger people and the authors are often very aware of the adults reading the books to or with younger ones.



Liar, liar. This film is about a young boy who makes a wish that his dad can only ever tell the truth and the consequences that follow that wish.

https://youtu.be/dAE7uOO_4v4?si=3vq7y6RluXgo6I7O The pen is blue by Movies.

Jim Carrey doesn't have any choice over his words, but we do. God wants us to be honest but also kind.

- I wonder how we tell the truth without being hurtful to others.

Group discussion

- How can you be honest but not rude with your words?
- Can words make you feel better?
- Can we say good words in a way that still hurts people?
- Is prayer the only way we can bless people?

Personal reflection

- I wonder what the impact of kind words on you
- I wonder what the impact of hurtful words on you

Express – prayer and creative activities

Praying together: enabling your group to respond spiritually

Praying together

Prayers Respond to the theme by writing or saying a short prayer. Alternatively use the creative prayer from *Faith Adventures: Children Together* for this session or use the prayer activity below. Alternatively light a candle and play some music while you listen and talk to God together.

Word Cloud Prayers

You will need:

- magazines or newspapers
- scissors
- glue
- large sheet of paper.

Invite participants to search the newspapers and magazines for **positive words or phrases** and stick them onto the large sheet to create a word cloud. As it grows, pause to look at the words and pray for people and situations they remind you of.

You could use a word cloud generator online and create your own word cloud there, many headlines can be accessed online but be mindful of ensuring you are not reading fake news!
<https://www.freewordcloudgenerator.com/generatewordcloud>

You may notice negative words too. Reflect on how they make you feel. Pray for those hurt by unkind language and say sorry for times when your own words may have caused harm.

Finish by looking at the completed word cloud. Read some of the words aloud and close with a simple prayer inspired by Ephesians 4:29, asking God to help us use words that build others up and bring kindness and grace.

Lord, you know how powerful words can be —
they can build someone up or tear them down.
Help me use my words with care,
to speak truth with kindness,
to encourage instead of embarrass,
to stand up for people instead of joining in the gossip.

When I'm angry or hurt,
teach me to pause before I speak,
and to choose words that heal, not harm.
Let what comes out of my mouth show what's in my heart —
your love, your grace, and your goodness. Amen.

Responding together

This is an opportunity for a social justice challenge, some research, craftivism, or a craft or STEM activity. You may have a specific activity chosen but free choice is also an option.

Here are some suggestions for this week's theme. Choose whatever will work best for your group.

Mean what I say

Use this famous quote said by Humpty Dumpty and the link below to discuss what words mean in your community. Your conversations may revolve around such things as manipulation to seek approval, negging, slang words and generational words.

"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less,

<https://www.socratic-method.com/quote-meanings/lewis-carroll-when-i-use-a-word-humpty-dumpty-said-in-rather-a-scornful-tone-it-means-just-what-i-choose-it-to-mean-neither-more-nor-less>

Describe a time when your words have been misinterpreted.

Could you, as a group, come up with a new word/phrase to describe kind words. Have some biscuits and icing, edible letters, strawberry laces or similar to decorate a biscuit with that word. Try using it in other places, you never know you may start a trend!

Challenge

Discipleship doesn't stop when you walk out of the church door – it is a part of everyday life. Take a challenge with you and try to make it part of your week.

You may think of your own suggestion of what you as an individual or a group might do in the coming week in response to what you have explored today. If not here are some suggestions:

- Use one of the “conversation starter” questions or the question below to talk with someone of a different generation or from a different setting and share your questions, thoughts, insights together. **What's the kindest words someone has said to you?**
- Research something suggested by JPIT, Resources (jpit.uk) *Commitment for Life* cforl.co.uk
- Could you share a text, voice message, meme or clip to express some kind words to another. Aim to send one to a different person each day over the course of a week.

Thank you for exploring the **Ephesians** passage with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing sharon.lloyd@urc.org.uk or by sharing it on www.bit.ly/FACT_FB



The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread

and forgive us our sins As we forgive those who sin against us

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory

For ever and ever. Amen

