

Calvary Chapel  Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY BASKETBALL DEVOTIONS

10-18 year olds

Week 5

Taming the Tongue

Taming the Tongue

The objective is the goal or main teaching point of this week's study. If you convey one thing to your players, make it this.

Read this passage aloud to the kids, as it will be the focus of this week's study. Each week's memory verse will be in bold.

Our lessons for our older age groups are designed to be more discussion-based. This section is for the coach to read ahead of time so that he/she understands the goal of the discussion and is able to direct the conversation.

Objective This lesson will look at James 3 to study both good and ways to use the tongue.

Scripture Passage:

"If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body... For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. **Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.**"

James 3:2, 7-10 (Memory Verse, James 3:10, in bold)

Coaches Guide

In James 3:2-12, James tells us that the most powerful part of the body is not the arms, legs, brain, or heart, but the tongue, because we use our tongues to speak. The way we use our words matters to God and can have major consequences either for good or for evil. As believer, it is important that we keep our tongue under control to honor the Lord.

The problem is, controlling the tongue is difficult to do. Humans have found ways to tame wild animals so that they can do work or even perform tricks for us, but verse 2 says only a perfect person can control their tongue completely. All of us fail in one way or another.

There are many good uses of the tongue. We can worship God, tell the truth, encourage, give thanks, pray, and more with our words. There are also many ways we can sin with our tongue, including lying, gossip, complaining, criticizing, teasing, cursing, and inappropriate talk. We use the same mouth for both of these things, and in verses 9-10 James points out the hypocrisy of doing both, comparing it to fountains that bring forth both fresh and bitter water.

Taming our tongues means both eliminating sinful speech in our lives and replacing it with good uses of the tongue. In fact, it's difficult to do one without the other. The bad news is that verse 2 says only a perfect man can control his tongue. The good news is that we know that Perfect Man: Jesus! He can help us to use our words to honor and obey Him and remove sinful speech from us.

Team discussion gives questions to ask your team in order to discuss today's topic. Use the information from the coaches guide to steer the conversation toward the biblical truth.

"On the Court" gives some in-game situations where today's lesson can be applied, while "Off the Court" gives examples from everyday life. Encourage them to do the things you listed during the game today.

These are some final notes/goals to accomplish this week. These are not meant to be read, but are instructions for the coach.

Team Discussion

1. What do you think is the most powerful part of the body? Why? Read James 3:2-12. What answer does James give? What does he mean by "the tongue"? Do you struggle to control the things you say?
2. What are some examples of sinful ways to use the tongue? What are examples of good ways to use it? Which of these things is hardest for you?
3. How does James compare our mouths to a fountain in verses 9-10? What is the problem with using our mouths for both good and bad? What is the solution to this problem?

On the Court

- The same mouth that we use to pray with the refs and other team at the beginning of the game should not be used to taunt or complain to them during the game.
- After a good play, use your mouth to give glory to God, not boast in your achievement.
- Thank the coaches, refs, and parents/guardians who make you playing basketball possible.

Off the Court

- Use your words to build others up, not tear them down.
- Whenever you are tempted to use your mouth to complain, instead give thanks for what you do have.
- Use respectful words when speaking to adults.
- The best thing you can do with your tongue share your faith with others.

The Game Plan

1. Review last week's memory verse, James 2:1 (NIV). Give a ticket to any player who can recite it.
2. Learn and memorize James 3:10 with your team. Encourage them to practice the verse over the week.
3. By now you probably can identify areas your team needs to work on in regards to speech. Focus on one area today and evaluate how you did after the game.