

# Speaking Wisely

## Lesson 13



**Scripture:** Proverbs 11:13; 16:24, 28; 17:9; 26:20

**Bible Memory:** Ephesians 4:29

**Focus:** ♥ Speak wisely.

### Heart to Heart Teacher Devotion

The average human utters roughly 25,000 words a day. Consider what portion of those many words is pure and holy, building others up. In the area of speech, we must depend on God's grace as we seek to place our tongues under His control. Pray that you will ♥ speak wisely and be a good example for your students as they listen to your speech both in and out of the classroom.

## Lesson 13 at a Glance

### 1 FOCUS IN

Use one or more of these activities to help students explore how harmful gossip is.



Game

**Quick Step**  
Gossip Charades



Food

**Option**  
What's in It?

### HeartShaper Materials

- none
- none

### Other Materials

- 2 slips of paper, pencil, 2 Bibles, 2 phones
- packaged cookies, water, cups, napkins, whiteboard, dry-erase marker

### 2 EXPLORE HIS WORD

Use these activities to help students understand what the Bible says about gossip.



Discuss

**Bible Exploration**  
Proverbs 11:13; 16:24, 28; 17:9; 26:20



Bible Memory

**Bible Memory**  
Ephesians 4:29



Bible Skills

**Optional Bible Skill Builder**

- *Activities* for lesson 13
- *Resources* sheets 5–8
- none

- Bibles, whiteboard, dry-erase markers, pencils
- Bibles, reusable adhesive, self-stick notes, pencils
- Bibles, 3 Bible concordances, paper, pencils

### 3 MAKE IT REAL

Use one of these activities to help students discover ways to not gossip but speak wisely.



Game

**Quick Step**  
Engage the Brain!



Listen

**Option**  
A Day in the Life

- *Activities* for lesson 13
- *Resources* CD

- whiteboard, dry-erase marker, pencils
- CD player

### 4 LIVE IT OUT

Use one of these activities to help students choose to not gossip but speak wisely.



Pray

**Quick Step**  
Speaking Wisely



Craft

**Option**  
The Gossip Stick

- *Activities* for lesson 13
- none

- pencils
- craft sticks, rulers, fine-tip permanent markers, Bible

## Focus In (10-15 minutes)

- 1** Use one or more of these activities to help students **explore how harmful gossip is.**

### Welcome

- Welcome each student warmly by name.
- Early arrivers will enjoy doing one or more of the additional activities described on the unit page.

### Quick Step Gossip Charades

Before class, write the message in the narrow column on two slips of paper.

Divide the class into two teams. Have the teams line up. Tell preteens that they're going to play a game of Gossip Charades. SAY: **Here's how to play: The first person will silently read the message and then turn around and tap the person behind him. That person opens his eyes. The first person is to use motions and the props provided to silently act out the gossip. Then that person turns around and does the same. You must keep your eyes closed until you are tapped.** Begin the game. When finished, have the last person in each line act out the message, and then have the first person in each line act out the starting message and tell what the message was.

ASK: **How does this game remind you of gossip?** Accept responses.

SAY: **The message got twisted really fast. No one was getting the story from the original source. The message changed from person to person, getting more twisted and tangled as it went. That's what happens when we gossip. What may start out as a set of facts or a true story can quickly change as it's passed from person to person. Let's dig into God's Word and see what it says about gossip and how we can ♥ speak wisely.**

### Option What's in It?

At the beginning of class, share the snack with your students. As they eat, discuss these questions.

ASK: **What ingredients do you think were used to make this snack?** As kids give ideas, write the ingredients on the board. You could also have a volunteer read the ingredients from the package label.

On another section of the board, write items such as chicken livers, bread mold, cow tongue, and so on. Point to the new list.

ASK: **How would knowing that the snack had these ingredients in it change how you enjoyed the snack? How would knowing some ugly gossip about someone change how you felt about that person?** (I might not want to be around the person. I might not like the person.)

SAY: **Gossip is harmful. Let's dig into God's Word and see what it says about gossip and how we can ♥ speak wisely.**

## Focus

♥ Speak wisely.

### Materials

2 slips of paper, pencil,  
2 Bibles, 2 phones



### Message

He doesn't read his Bible, but he does use his phone.

### Teaching Tip

If you have a small class, don't break into teams.

### Materials

packaged cookies (or  
another snack), water,  
cups, napkins, whiteboard,  
dry-erase marker



Some preteens who function on a more concrete level may believe that the fake ingredients are in the snack. Be clear that these are not the actual ingredients.

## Focus

♥ Speak wisely.

# Explore His Word (25 minutes)

**2** Use these activities to help students **understand what the Bible says about gossip.**

## Bible Background for the Teacher

King Solomon, who is known for his wisdom, wrote most of the book of Proverbs. He obtained his wisdom because he asked God for it (1 Kings 3:9). The theme of the book of Proverbs is living life with simple, practical wisdom—the kind that comes from God.

Nearly every nation in ancient times had a collection of proverbs, or wise sayings, for living. Proverbs, in general, were object lessons based on, or using, comparisons or analogies. The purpose of the proverbs was to help people choose the best course of action in particular situations. First Kings 4:32 tells us that Solomon spoke 3,000 proverbs.

Like other portions of the Bible, Proverbs emphasizes that the tongue is very powerful, but potentially dangerous. Today's lesson focuses on five of these proverbs. Proverbs 11:13 contrasts a gossip with a "trustworthy person." A gossip can't wait to share secrets that should be kept; he is despised in society because he cannot be trusted. Proverbs 16:24 says that pleasant words are good for us and, like a delicious treat, they "taste" good. They can even help us feel better. The "perverse person" to which Proverbs 16:28 refers is someone who overturns the truth. Such a person cannot whisper lies and still maintain friendships.

Proverbs 17:9 addresses the practice to forgive and forget. Friendships will not last unless understanding and discretion are present; repeating the news about a wrong separates friends. An easy-to-understand word picture is included in Proverbs 26:20. This proverb can be summarized as follows: "To end a fire, quit adding wood; to end an argument, stop gossiping."

### Materials

Bibles, whiteboard, dry-erase markers, *Activities* for lesson 13, pencils



### Note

The Scripture text is provided on the *Resources* CD in both the *New International Version* and the *King James Version*, if you want kids to read from the same Bible version.

## Bible Exploration Proverbs 11:13; 16:24, 28; 17:9; 26:20

Ask students to turn in their Bibles to Proverbs 1:1-3. Have volunteers read the verses aloud.

**ASK: Why did Solomon write his proverbs?** (to help people get wisdom, discipline, and understanding; to help people do what's right)

**SAY: Proverbs is a practical book helping us know how God wants us to live. And that includes the topic of gossip and speaking wisely.**

**ASK: What is gossip?** (spreading information about others, spreading rumors)

**SAY: Solomon lets us know that there are right ways of speaking and wrong ways of speaking.** Draw a line down the middle of your board. On one side write "Right" and on the other side write "Wrong." Ask preteens to turn to Proverbs 11:13. **Raise your hand when you hear either a right way to speak or a wrong way to speak.** Have a volunteer read the verse aloud. Call on someone with a raised hand to tell what he heard that is a right way to speak. Call on someone else with a raised hand to tell what he heard that is a wrong way to speak. Then let those preteens write those things on the board.

Have preteens turn to Proverbs 16:24. **SAY: Again, raise your hand when**

**you hear either a right way to speak or a wrong way to speak.** Have a volunteer read the verse aloud. Call on someone with a raised hand to tell what he heard that is a right way to speak. Call on someone else with a raised hand to tell what he heard that is a wrong way to speak. (There is nothing “wrong” in this verse.) Then let the preteen write the good way to speak on the board.

Do the same with the other proverbs: 16:28; 17:9; and 26:20. Then draw students’ attention to the “Wrong” side. SAY: **For those of us who believe in God and follow Him, we’re not to gossip, betray a confidence, or repeat what we hear.** Draw students’ attention to the “Right” side. **Instead, God wants us to be trustworthy, keep secrets, be gracious when we speak, show love, and forgive those who wrong us.**

Distribute the leaflets, and have students look at the activity Take a Deep Dive. Have a volunteer read number 1. Have preteens turn in their Bibles to Proverbs 11:13, and have a volunteer read the verse aloud. Then ask preteens how they would answer the question. Then do the same for the other two questions. (Answers: Proverbs 11:13—If someone knows that you are a person who tells secrets, he probably won’t feel confident sharing his problems with you. Proverbs 16:28—This can cause hurt feelings and can make the person feel betrayed. Proverbs 17:9—Telling others about someone’s mistakes embarrasses the person and makes her want to give up.) SAY: **God knows how harmful gossip is. That’s why He tells us to avoid it and to instead speak gracious words. God wants us to ♥ speak wisely, and that includes not gossiping. Let’s discover some practical ways we can do that.**

## **Bible Memory** Ephesians 4:29

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

Continue to display the Ephesians 4:29 poster on a wall or bulletin board. Also be sure to display the Bible Memory posters from the previous units. Have preteens find Ephesians 4:29 in their Bibles, and have a volunteer read the verse aloud.

ASK: **How would you categorize gossip—wholesome talk or unwholesome?** (unwholesome)

**What kind of words should come from our mouths?** (helpful words, words that build others up, words that benefit others)

Give each preteen a few self-stick notes. Tell them to write on each note something helpful they could say to someone, or something they could say that would build someone up or benefit someone, and stick it by the poster. When preteens are done, read the notes they’ve written. SAY:

**What you’ve written would please God because God cares about how we speak. He doesn’t want His followers to gossip or tear others down. God wants His followers to ♥ speak wisely.** Lead preteens in saying the Bible Memory together.

Have volunteers lead the rest of the class in saying the Bible Memory from the previous units.

### **Teaching Tip**

If you have a large class, separate the class into three groups and assign each group one of the questions to answer.

### **Materials**

Bibles, *Resources* sheets 5–8, reusable adhesive, self-stick notes, pencils



### **Note**

The Bible Memory in the *King James Version* is included on the *Resources* CD.

### **Optional Bible Skill Builder**

Print and use the *Resources* CD Optional Bible Skills 13 printable file.



## Focus

♥ Speak wisely.

# Make It Real (10–15 minutes)

**3** Use one of these activities to help students **discover ways to not gossip but speak wisely.**

### Materials

whiteboard, dry-erase marker, *Activities* for lesson 13, pencils



### Proverbs

Better to be safe . . . than sorry!  
Strike while the iron . . . is hot!  
If you can't stand the heat . . .  
    get out of the kitchen.  
There is nothing new . . . under  
    the sun.  
The grass is always greener . . .  
    on the other side.  
Don't bite the hand . . . that  
    feeds you.  
No news is . . . good news.  
You can't teach an old dog . . .  
    new tricks.  
The pen is mightier . . . than the  
    sword.  
A penny saved is . . . a penny  
    earned.

### Materials

*Resources* CD track 4, CD player



### Write on the Board:

Before You Speak—Think!  
T . . . is it True?  
H . . . is it Helpful?  
I . . . is it Inspiring?  
N . . . is it Necessary?  
K . . . is it Kind?



Consider showing a photo of a girl to represent Emma so that preteens have a visual to help them focus.

### Teaching Tip

If you have a small class, stay together as one group and have volunteers share what they think the preteens did.

## Quick Step Engage the Brain!

Divide the class into two teams. SAY: **Let's engage your brains by playing a game. I'm going to say part of a proverb. These aren't proverbs in the Bible, but other proverbs, or wise sayings. Your team will work together to come up with the second part of the proverb. For a correct answer, you get 10 points. If a team's answer is incorrect, the other team can steal and earn the points.** The proverbs are in the narrow column. Continue playing as you have time. Ask students to stay in their teams.

Have students turn in their leaflets to the activity Before You Speak—Engage the Brain! SAY: **It's good to have a plan in mind so you won't gossip but ♥ speak wisely. One great idea is to think before you speak! You can ask yourself these questions: Is it true? helpful? inspiring? necessary? kind?** Assign each team one of the situations in the leaflet. They are to read the situation and decide what the preteen in the situation can do to not gossip but ♥ speak wisely. Encourage the teams to come up with at least a couple of ideas that the preteens can do. When the teams are ready, have a volunteer from one team read its situation. Then ask a volunteer on that team to share what they came up with. Then let the other team do the same.

ASK: **What are some other things you can do to not gossip but ♥ speak wisely.** (remember that God doesn't want us to gossip, think about the proverbs in the Bible about gossiping, remember that gossip can cause hurt feelings, think of something nice to say, ask God for help)

## Option A Day in the Life

Before class, write on the board what's in the narrow column.

SAY: **It's good to have a plan in mind so you won't gossip but ♥ speak wisely. One great idea is to think before you speak! You can ask yourself these questions: Is it true? helpful? inspiring? necessary? kind?**

ASK: **What are some other things you can do to not gossip but ♥ speak wisely.** (remember that God doesn't want us to gossip, think about the proverbs in the Bible about gossiping, remember that gossip can cause hurt feelings, think of something nice to say, ask God for help)

SAY: **Think about these things as we listen to a day in the life of a preteen named Emma.** Divide the class into small groups, and start the recording. Play the first part; then pause the recording. **In your groups, come up with what you think Emma did.** When the groups are ready, let preteens share what they think she did. Do the same for the other four parts.

SAY: **Let's remember what God says about gossip and how He wants us to ♥ speak wisely.**

# Live It Out (10 minutes)

- 4 Use one of these activities to help students **choose to not gossip but speak wisely.**

## Focus

♥ Speak wisely.

### Quick Step Speaking Wisely

SAY: **God created us with the ability to make choices. Whether or not to gossip is a choice we face a lot. God cares about how His followers speak. He doesn't want us to gossip or tear others down. God wants Christians to ♥ speak wisely.** Have preteens turn in their leaflets to the activity Speaking Wisely. Read the instructions, and give preteens time to do this.

When students are done, ask them to gather for a time of prayer. Tell preteens that you'll lead them in a directed prayer. You'll pray a thought and then pause as they silently pray the same thing. PRAY: **Dear God, we come once again to you in prayer.** Pause. **It's so good to know that You care about us and can help us.** Pause. **Please help us to not gossip.** Pause. **Help us to think before speaking.** Pause. **Help us to say only words that are true.** Pause. **Help us to say only words that are helpful.** Pause. **Help us to say only words that are inspiring.** Pause. **Help us to say only words that are necessary.** Pause. **Help us to say only words that are kind.** Pause. **God, we love You, and we want to say only the things You want us to say.** Pause. **In Jesus' name, amen.**

### Option The Gossip Stick

Give one craft stick to each student. Tell students to use markers to write the words "Gossip Stick" on one side of the stick. On the other side, students can use rulers to measure off and draw short lines every 1/4" down the length of the stick. Tell preteens to use this stick throughout the week. Every time they gossip or say something unkind or hurtful to someone else, they should color in one segment on the stick.

Read Proverbs 26:20 aloud. SAY: **Without wood, the flame of a fire will go out. Gossip is what fuels the flames of quarreling. At the end of the week, check your gossip stick. Hopefully, you won't have enough of the stick colored in to fuel a fire! Be sure to ask God to help you ♥ speak wisely every day.**

Have preteens gather for a time of prayer. Encourage volunteers to pray sentence prayers, asking God to help them as they choose to not gossip but ♥ speak wisely.

### Materials

Activities for lesson 13, pencils



### Materials

craft sticks, rulers, fine-tip permanent markers, Bible



### Live Wire

Distribute *Live Wire* to students before they leave. They will enjoy the articles, puzzles, and other features included in this fun student magazine.

Be sure parents know about the *Faith & Family* pages available online to print and use with their children at home. Go to [www.heartshaper.com](http://www.heartshaper.com).

