

# Taming the Tongue

TONGUE • LECTIONARY 24 • YEAR B

JAMES 3:1-12

PreK-  
K



24

## What's happening in this story?

James was most likely written at a time when churches were expanding from small house churches to more noticeable communities within cities and towns. When believers behaved badly, neighbors noticed, and the witness of the church was damaged. James directs readers and hearers to consider their own behavior and make practical, concrete changes to demonstrate that their faith matters to the community and world. The lectionary selection highlights the damage that poorly chosen words and uncontrolled speech can do.

## What does this story mean for kids?

Kids will take away the idea that their words are powerful and that God wants us to use our words responsibly. Remind kids not to speak badly about others, *and* to speak well of others. Kids can use their words to uplift others. Another approach would be to consider that on occasion, the things we say are misinterpreted or misrepresented. Kids may wrestle with the idea that sometimes, even when they mean well, their words still might hurt someone's feelings.

## What is the lectionary connection?

The Season after Pentecost is connected to growth in faith, church, and Christian life; all are themes in James. Encourage opportunities for kids to practice good speech habits and avoid those James warns about.

## AGE LEVEL TIP

Kids this age are learning that their behavior has consequences. Help them reflect on times when words have hurt their feelings and remember times when they may have hurt others, even if it was unintentional.



## GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Scissors
- Glue sticks
- Crayons
- Construction paper (cut into quarters)
- Pencils

## LESSON SUPPLIES

- Handheld mirror
- Plastic cup

WHIRL SUPPLIES • WHIRL STORY BIBLES • DVD • FLOOR MAT • LEAFLETS

## Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

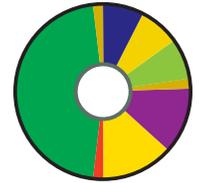
Encourage kids to act out things that tongues can do. Lick a lollipop. Sing a song. Whisper. Click. Shout! Wiggle them. Roll them up. Stick them out. **What else can we do with our tongues for fun?**

## Invite kids to sit around the Floor Mat.

What season is it outside? Do you know the church has seasons too? But the season in the church now isn't fall; it's called the Season after Pentecost!

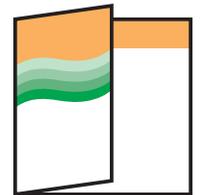
Point out the season (Season after Pentecost), color (green), and icon (footprints). **During the Season after Pentecost, we learn how God wants us to live. The Season after Pentecost is a time to grow together as the church. Today's story is about a letter writer who wanted his friends to treat each other with love and gentleness instead of arguing and acting angry.** Hold up the plastic cup. **Let's pretend this cup is filled with kindness. Take turns pouring a little kindness from the cup for a friend.** Give each kid a chance to pretend to pour from the plastic cup onto the Season after Pentecost section of the Floor Mat.

Hold up the mirror. **Today's story talks about tongues! Let's pass around the mirror. When it gets to you, look at yourself and stick out your tongue!**



## Pass out leaflets and crayons.

Today's Bible story tells us that something small can be used to control or steer something big. Look at the horse on your leaflet. These are the reins and the harness. The harness holds a little bar in the horse's mouth called a bit. If you pull the reins one way or the other, the horse can tell which way you want to go. The leaflet has photos of some other things that we can steer and some things that we can't. Point to the things we can steer. Put a big X over the things we can't steer. Collect their leaflets until Respond.



## Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

The kids in our video today exaggerate a story. Let's see what happens when something small turns into something big because of a few little words.

View Episode 1, "Robo Monty," on the Whirl Year B Fall PreK–Grade 2 DVD.

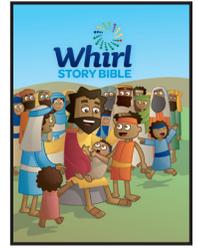
Ask kids these questions about the video:

- What little thing happened to Monty in the beginning?
- Why did Clara and Victor call him "Robo Monty"?
- What did Mimi do when she heard about the accident?
- What do you think the kids learned about using words carefully?
- Share a time when people misunderstood something you said.



## Pass out Whirl Story Bibles to kids.

**Let's find our story today!** Help kids find "Small but Mighty" on page 498. Start by pointing out the graphic that shows the footprints in the green circle for the Season after Pentecost. Before you read, invite kids to look for the different expressions on the faces of the followers of Jesus.



Read the story and Ada and Otto's questions and comments on each page.

## Ask these questions after you read the story:

- What were people doing that made the follower of Jesus want to write the letter?
- What part of the body is this story about?
- What should we do when we hurt someone's feelings?
- What are some words we can use to be kind to each other?
- What are some words we can use to praise God?

## Play together!

Invite kids to face a partner. Show the Whirl Story Bible pictures of angry faces on page 499. **We're going to rap together. Make an angry face while doing the first three angry actions I call out. Then make a happy face and copy the happy action I make.**

**Hands on hips!**

**Cross your arms!**

**Point! Point! Point!** *(pause)*

**Share with others!** *(Hold palms of hands open.)*

**Love one another!** *(Put both hands over your heart.)*

**Praise the Lord!** *(Raise hands to the sky.)*

**Now jump to another partner, and we'll rap again. Say it with me this time.**

### BIBLE BIT

- By talking about bad behavior within the early church, James admits the reality of sin and the need for the daily practice of forgiveness.

### WATCH IT AGAIN

- If you watch the video again, count together the number of times the kids get the wrong idea or hear the wrong things.

### OUR CHURCH

- Practice sharing the peace or another greeting that is done in your church. Talk about when the greeting happens and why.

# RESPOND 10

## Pass out leaflets, scissors, construction paper, and glue sticks.

Unfold and tear off leaflet square.

1. **We are going to make “kindness” sandwiches. Let’s start by getting the bread ready.** Show kids how to fold their squares in half (against the existing fold) and then in half again to form a sandwich flap where they will insert their sandwich “toppings.”
2. Read the words on the strips on the back leaflet panel to the kids. **These are all kind words we share with others. We’ll put them in our sandwiches.**
3. Invite kids to cut the word pieces apart and glue them to quarter sheets of construction paper.
4. **Choose colors of paper that match things you want on your sandwich. What sandwich food would we use yellow for? Maybe cheese or mustard? How about brown? Or green? What do you love to eat on your sandwiches?**
5. **When your ingredients are ready, you can stuff your sandwich with kindness.**
6. **What other kind words could we add to our sandwiches? What kind words do we use with our friends and family? What kind things could we do for others this week?**

# LAUNCH 10

## Circle up with kids for a quick review.

Today’s Bible story was about using kind words when speaking with others. We want to be good friends and remember to say we’re sorry when we make a mistake or hurt someone’s feelings. Share a time when you would use one of the sandwich phrases. Take time to hear kids’ responses.

## Pass out leaflet panels and pencils.

The leaflet has a letter that starts with the words, “Dear Friends.” Use your pencil to trace the rest of the words in the letter. It says, “Choose kind words.” That’s what God wants! Sign your name at the bottom.

## Send kids out.

Pass the mirror around the circle again. **This time when you look at yourself, say, “I see someone Jesus loves!”**

Pray together: **Dear God, help us remember to speak kindly to others. Thank you for sending Jesus to show us how to choose loving words. Amen.**

Thank kids for using encouraging words with each other today. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.