

# Communication

**Dear Facilitator:** You are beginning a new section of the Family Leadership Initiative curriculum which will be focused on family behavior.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson.

This lesson will help participants to:

1. Communicate clearly.
2. Listen intently.

This lesson focuses on the message of Proverbs 15:28, which talks about the importance of thinking carefully before we speak.

During the lessons on family behavior, you will add a statement each week to the Family Commitment Statements.


Our hope is that you will repeat each of these statements weekly.

This week's commitment statement is: I commit to communicating clearly and effectively to build family relationships that are strong and healthy.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

*Blessings*

## Welcome *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Over the past few weeks, we have talked about family identity, our roles as parents and children, and how important it is to build our family team. (Share House Diagram and explain.)

We are now going to further explore how God's idea of family is built on a foundation of faith.

As we cover our families in prayer and believe what God says in the Bible, we are building a Christian home.

We all have the responsibility to consider our actions and take responsibility and ownership for those actions.


During the next several weeks, we will be talking about some practical behaviors that will help us support each other as families.

**Discuss:** As you think about what we have discussed and learned about your family's identity and roles the past few weeks, write down a couple of things that have helped you in your family. Would anyone be willing to share?

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Communicate clearly.
2. Listen intently.

## Introduction *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Tonight, we are going to talk about communication. We will discuss the difference between what we mean to say, what we really say, and how the message is interpreted by the receiver. Sometimes what the speaker intends to say does not match with what the receiver interprets.

During dinner, we are going to play a game that many of you may have played before.



**Share:** Before we do, I want to share a story with you about communication in my family.

(Share a story of a time when what you said was misunderstood and resulted in a mess.)

## Family & Table Talk 20 minutes



**Say:** At your tables we are going to play a game called “Telephone.”

One person begins by whispering a phrase to the person on his or her left. That person whispers the message to the next person and so on. The last person to receive the message announces it to the group.


1. How much or how little did the communication change?
2. Why do you think that happened?

*After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.*

*As you begin this portion of the evening, explain that each time you will start with the overview and then the lesson time.*

*Notes*

<i>40 minutes</i>	
<h1>Parent Training</h1>	
<i>Behavior</i>	<b>COMMUNICATION</b>

 **Say:** The Bible says in Proverbs 15:28, “The heart of the righteous weighs its answers, but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil.”

To “weigh” our answers, meaning to think carefully about how we speak, we are going to study a diagram to better understand how communication works.

When thinking about communication, keep the following in mind:

1. Are you saying what you mean to say?
2. How are you saying it?
3. How is it being heard?

There are many things that can get in the way of communicating clearly. Our tone, body language, and emotions can get in the way of the message.

It is my responsibility to “own” or be responsible for my communication and the impact it has on others.

Our family commitment statement tonight is: I commit to communicating clearly and listening carefully to build healthy and strong family relationships.

Wouldn’t it be great if everything we said or thought was perfectly understood by others in our family?

Let’s look at the Family Communication handout and talk about what it means.

The channel is the way we send the message to the person or receiver. The channel can be anything from a text, email, letter, talking in person, or talking on the phone.

Within the channel and the communication system there is “noise” which affects how the receiver decodes or interprets that message. Noise can be feelings, activities that are taking place around us, or other things that distract the sender and receiver.

When the message is decoded or interpreted by the receiver, there is usually a response which goes back through the channel. The response is received by the original sender and decoded through all the noise.

It's easier to understand than you may think.

Tonight, we are going to learn a few techniques to help us become better senders and receivers. Before we do, let's talk about a couple of things and get your thoughts.

## DISCUSS

- How can emotions be noise in the system?
- What are different channels or means to communicate?
- How do you select what is best for the situation?

The goal of communication is not to win or lose. The goal of good communication is to understand and connect better with one another.

Good communication helps us hear the meaning behind the words that are spoken. As a sender of a message, it's important learn to do the following:

**1. Say what you mean.**

**Example:** Instead of coming home and saying, "This house is always a mess," say what you mean such as, "Sam, it makes me upset that when I come home the house is messy. Will you please pick up the toys on the floor before you go to bed?"

**2. Watch your body language and tone.**

**Example:** Your nonverbal communication (body movements) and tone of voice (loudness/softness, harshness/gentleness) should agree with the message.

**3. Express emotion appropriately.**

**Example:** Think about how the receiver will receive a message. If you are angry, it won't work to say, "I'm not angry." However, it may also not work to scream, "I'm angry!"

The best communication is when your words, body language, tone, and emotions all agree.

If we are the receiver of a message, it is helpful to make sure we understand and hear what the sender

is communicating. Here are a few things we can do:

**1. Stop.**

**Example:** Give full attention to the sender—get off your cell phone!

**2. Listen.**

**Example:** Give eye contact, and really try to listen to the words that are being said.

**3. Ask.**

**Example:** Ask questions to clarify, and make sure to understand what the sender is saying. “Are you saying that you need me to help take care of the house? Are you tired when you come home?”

The best response is to stop, listen, and ask questions before we respond with our opinions and feelings.

Ask the audience to share examples of a time when they communicated something and their body language, tone, or emotions didn’t agree with what they said. Or share a time when they neglected to stop, listen, and ask.

It’s important to learn to say, “I was wrong” or “I am sorry” when you say the wrong things in the wrong way. Some of us speak our minds and should listen first and put more thought into our communication.

Other people feel that what they have to say doesn’t matter or isn’t important, but they should speak up more quickly about their thoughts and feelings.

All of us should remember to be willing to adjust our expectations appropriately and even laugh together about things that may not be as important as we originally thought they were.

Let’s watch this skit and see what happens.

Thirty-Second Skit

1. Start with a 30-second skit with a family arguing, fussing, and not communicating well. Scenario: Mom and Dad had a tough day at work and come home to no dinner or a messy house with kids creating “noise” in the system.

2. Give prepared labels (Dad, Mom, Son, and Daughter) to volunteers and ask them to wear the labels and pretend to be that person in the skit.
3. Instruct the audience before the skit participants come out to think of ways to improve this communication based on what we are learning.

After 30 seconds of acting, ask the actors to freeze in place.

Communication conflicts are not bad, but the way people talk to each other can be hurtful or helpful.

People are not born knowing how to solve conflicts in a positive way; they must learn and practice good communication skills.

Like most new skills, it is awkward at first, but good communication skills help families develop good leadership.

Let's repeat our family commitment statement: I commit to communicating clearly and listening carefully in order to build healthy and strong family relationships.

## SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.

Our objectives were to:

1. Communicate clearly.
2. Listen intently.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?



## Scripture SUPPORT

### **Psalm 19:14**

*May the words of my mouth  
and this meditation of my heart  
be pleasing in your sight, LORD,  
my Rock and my Redeemer.*

### **Proverbs 13:3**

*Those who guard their lips  
preserve their lives, but those  
who speak rashly will come  
to ruin.*

### **Matthew 12:34**

*...For the mouth speaks what  
the heart is full of.*

### **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.*

### **1 Peter 3:8**

*Finally, all of you, be like-minded,  
be sympathetic, love one  
another, be compassionate  
and humble.*

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

# Student Training

*Behavior*

**COMMUNICATION**

## Objectives

- Help children to be aware of the importance communication plays in our lives.
- Help children to be aware of appropriate use of communication.
- Help children to be aware of what the Bible says about communication.
- Help children to be aware of the power of the words they speak.
- Help children to be aware that facial expressions and body language are part of communication.
- Help children to be aware of the way they are using their words.

Today we're going to talk about what the Bible says about communication. Communication is sharing thoughts, ideas, feelings, or information. Good communication is very important to all people. Of all the creatures God created, He only gave humans the ability to communicate using words. The ability to use words to communicate is a powerful gift from God. In the Bible, God also gave us lessons about how we are to use this special gift. As Christians we should use this gift to be a blessing to everyone that we meet.

The main way we communicate is with our words and with our actions. The first place we learn to communicate is within our family. When you were just a baby, you

learned very quickly to communicate by crying or screaming to let your parents know you were unhappy or uncomfortable.

This let them know that you were hungry, you needed to have your diaper changed, or you just wanted to snuggle and be held. When you were happy or satisfied you let them know by smiling or just being calm or maybe making sweet gurgling baby noises. This manner of communicating was okay when you were a tiny baby, but because parents knew you needed to use the appropriate way to express your thoughts, ideas, and feelings, they soon began to teach you basic words. They taught you how to use words to ask for what you needed or wanted and how to get their attention when



you were unhappy or uncomfortable without crying or screaming. Your parents also helped you learn how to use words when you wanted to let them know when you were happy, tell them about something you were learning, or ask them questions about a new experience.

Your parents were the first to use words to teach you and encourage you. As they taught you, they showed their patience and love for you while using their words. They were teaching you that positive communication helps to nurture and lift others up. It is important that we do the same for family members and others. We can start by listening carefully to one another when sharing thoughts and feelings. Then you will have a better understanding of one another as you work together.

Another important part of communication that we must remember is using our words to express good manners. “Please” and “thank you” can take you far in life. Also, it is important to apologize when we have hurt or disappointed someone. Often, a sincere “I’m sorry” is all it takes to heal the situation (1 Peter 3:8).

Along with using our words to communicate, we also use our facial expressions and body language—the way your face looks when you are talking or the way your body is either relaxed, excitable, or tense. Your words and the look in your eyes and on your face also communicate what you are trying to say.

God wants us to lead healthy, enjoyable, and peaceful lives. In the Bible, He tells us about the importance of our words, whether we live a life filled with goodness and peace or a life filled with trouble and distress.

Proverbs 13:3 says, “Those who guard their lips preserve their lives, but those who speak rashly will come to ruin.”

The Bible tells us that our words are so powerful that they have the ability to make things better or worse. The words that come from our mouth show what is truly in our hearts (Matthew 12:34). Our words have the power to encourage others or put them down.

It is important that we ask ourselves how we are using our words when we are communicating with others. Are the words that come out of your mouth filled with love or hatred, meanness or kindness, encouragement or discouragement? God holds each one of us accountable for the words that come out of our mouth.

Psalm 19:14 says, “May the words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.”

I believe that it would be wise for all of us to pray this scripture often. In praying this, we are asking God to help our hearts and thoughts be filled with things that are pleasing to Him, so that the words that come out of our mouths would make Him happy and proud of us.

Good communication between people is very important in our world today. That is why the Bible has a lot to say about how we use our words. God’s Word is very clear to instruct us on how we are to speak to and treat one another. One way we can be careful about the words we speak is to simply think before we speak. We can ask ourselves the following questions: Am I saying what I mean to say? Do I choose my words accurately to state the message I am speaking, or do I add harsh words?

Do my words match my body language and facial expressions? (Am I saying I am not angry, but my face is frowning, and my eyes are glaring?) How does my voice sound? (Is it calm and settled or agitated and angry?) Finally, how is my message being heard? (Does it feel like it is seeking to make the situation better or worse?) It is important to say exactly what you mean, to watch your facial expressions and body language, and to keep your voice level calm.

Another way we can improve our communication skills is to remember to say to others only what we would want them to say to us and in the way we would want someone to say it to us. When it is our time to receive a message, we need to stop what we are doing, give the person our attention and eye contact, and listen carefully. We should not be thinking about what

we are going to say back. Then ask any questions necessary to help you understand the message they are giving you.

Ephesians 4:29 says, “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.” As Christians, God has given us the command to use our words to make the world better by speaking to teach and solve problems, to bless and encourage others, to create and express ideas, to share positive uplifting information, and to tell others about the good news of Jesus Christ.

## **DISCUSS**

- Lead children in a discussion about the importance of communication.
- Lead children in a discussion about what the Bible tells us about the power of our words.
- Lead children in a discussion about how facial expressions and body language play an important part in communication.
- Lead children in a discussion about how our words can either help us live a life of goodness and peace or a life filled with trouble and distress.
- Lead children in a discussion about how the Bible tells us we are to speak to one another.

*Notes*



# Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

## AGES 4-11

### **Have children view YouTube:**

<https://youtu.be/3RjRZ9jMfs0>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

Tell the children that they are about to play a game called “Telephone.” Have the children get in a circle. Tell the children that you are going to whisper a message into someone’s ear. Then, that person will whisper in the ear of the person next to them to deliver the message, and that person will do the same, and so on and so forth. The hope for the game is that the message the instructor sent out through the circle is the same when it gets back to the instructor.

## DISCUSS

This game reflects how listening carefully is an important part of communication.

## AGES 12-16

### Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/WER63AY8zB8>

(If not possible, do activity without video.)

The instructor should explain to the children that they will have to form a team based on the instructions that you shout out. For example, some instructions could include, “Get into a team with people who watch some of the same TV programs as you or have on the same shoe brand as you,” or “Get into a team with people who like similar types of music.”

This will cause children to have to walk around and ask questions and communicate with peers.

## DISCUSS

- Talk with the children about how this activity encouraged them to communicate.
- How could they learn to open and communicate more effectively in situations in the future?

*Notes*



**CHALLENGE QUESTION**

AM I USING MY WORDS TO ENCOURAGE  
OTHERS AND LIFT THEM UP?

**CHALLENGE COMMITMENT**

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO  
TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE  
QUESTION THIS WEEK?



**AFFIRMATION** *Have children repeat:*

*I use my words to  
be a blessing to others!*

# FAMILY IS GOD'S IDEA

