James

Lesson 3: Watch Your Mouth

**Lessons in this series:** [1](http://www.teensundayschool.com/45/lesson/youve-got-issues.php) [2](http://www.teensundayschool.com/51/lesson/my-favorite.php) **3**[4](http://www.teensundayschool.com/64/lesson/the-time-of-your-life.php) [5](http://www.teensundayschool.com/65/lesson/must-be-the-money.php)

LESSON OBJECTIVES  
Goals

1. To help students understand the importance of the things they say  
2. To challenge students to think through the responsibility of controlling their tongues

Topics

Lying, Purity, Responsibility, Self-Control

Scripture Memorization

James 3:10

OPENING PRAYER (5 to 10 minutes)

GROUP BUILDING (10 minutes)

To begin with today, we’re going to play a game of Fact or Fiction. I need two contestants. Can anyone here touch their tongues to their nose? (Hopefully you’ll be able to find 2 people that can. If not, just pick 2 people who are brave enough to try and call them up front.)

It’s good that you two can touch your tongues to your nose, because this game of Fact or Fiction has to do with the tongue. I’m going to read a fact. If you believe it’s true and a fact, then I want you to touch your tongue to your nose. If you believe it’s false, or fiction, just keep your tongue in your mouth. Whoever gets the most right wins. (a sucker would make a good prize) Okay, get your tongues loose…here we go:

**True or False?**1. Every person has a unique tongue print*(True)*2. All of your estimated 10,000 taste buds are located on the tongue *(False)* - they’re also on your cheeks, lips, etc.  
3. Close to 50 percent of the bacteria in your mouth lives on the surface of your tongue *(True)*  
4. If a human tongue was proportioned the same way as a chameleon, a person who was 5 ft. tall would have a tongue over 7 feet long *(True)* -the chameleons tongue is 1.5 times the length of it’s body  
5. In Tibet, it’s bad manners to stick out your tongue at guests (*False)* -it’s considered good manners

Let’s give our players a hand! Maybe you think that’s enough learning for one day, but I actually want to teach you some more about the tongue. Instead of focusing on its physical characteristics, I’d like to look at some of its spiritual forces.

GETTING STARTED (5 minutes)

**Discussion Questions:**1. What’s the most embarrassing thing you’ve ever said?  
2. What’s the most hurtful thing you’ve ever said?  
3. What’s the nicest thing someone has said to you?

DIGGING IN (20 minutes)

Let’s read James 3:1-12. What we want to try to do is count the amount of times that James mentions the tongue. Every time we read something that the tongue is or something that the tongue does, make note of it. When we’ve finished reading, we’ll expand upon them. (If everyone can do it without becoming too preoccupied, you can also have them stick out their tongues when the tongue is mentioned.)  
  
**Read James 3:1-12**How many times did you count? *(7)*

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| **Stuff the Tongue Does:** • Is small but makes great boasts *(verse 5)* • Corrupts the whole person *(verse 6)* • Can set the whole course of a person’s life on fire*(verse 6)* • Is itself set on fire by hell *(verse 6)* • Can’t be tamed by man *(verse 8)* • Is a restless evil, full of deadly poison *(verse 8)* • Can be used to praise God and curse men *(verse 9)* |

**Discussion Questions**  
1. What are the three images that James uses to illustrate the tongue? *(bits, rudder, sparks)*2. What do those three things have in common? *(They are small but influence something large.)*

The tongue, James says, is the same way. It is relatively small, but it controls us.   
  
3. Do you see that playing out in real life, that the tongue influences us so greatly?

MAKING IT REAL (15 minutes)

There is no doubt that the tongue is a powerful thing. Wars have been started and ended with words. Friends are made and lost with words.

**Discussion Questions**  
1. Why do you think words carry so much power?  
2. Why do you think it is so easy to use our tongues for good or evil?  
3. How should a Christian control his or her tongue according to James?

**Read Colossians 3:17.**

We often think that the things we do demonstrate our faith. But Colossians associates the two together, and says that both should glorify God. We all need to watch our mouths, because what comes out of them affects people and either honors or dishonors God.

CLOSING PRAYER (3 minutes)

To finish up, I want to pray that you might take these commitments seriously. Your words can make a world of difference in your faith and in other people’s lives. Let’s pray.