



## **GOD IS HOLY!** Watch Your Language!

August 19, 2023

### **1 PREPARING**

#### **A. THE SOURCE**

**Exodus 20:7 (NIV)** • “You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.”

**Matthew 12:36 (NIV)** • “But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken.”

**James 3:5, 6, 9, 10 (NIV)** • “The tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one’s life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. . . . With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God’s likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be.”

**Matthew 5:33-37 (CEV)** • “You know that our ancestors were told, ‘Don’t use the Lord’s name to make a promise unless you are going to keep it.’ But I tell you not to swear by anything when you make a promise! Heaven is God’s throne, so don’t swear by heaven. The earth is God’s footstool, so don’t swear by the earth. Jerusalem is the city of the great king, so don’t swear by it. Don’t swear by your own head. You cannot

make one hair white or black. When you make a promise, say only ‘Yes’ or ‘No.’ Anything else comes from the devil.”

(See additional passages in student material.)

**Our High Calling, p. 235** • “Christ treats anger as murder. . . . Passionate words are a savor of death unto death. He who utters them is not cooperating with God to save his fellow man. In heaven this wicked railing is placed in the same list as common swearing. While hatred is cherished in the soul there is not one iota of the love of God there.”

#### **B. WHAT’S TO BE SAID ABOUT “GOD IS HOLY!”**

Swearing doesn’t seem like such a big deal these days. Using God’s name and other casual swear words has become so widely accepted that it’s almost impossible to turn on the TV without hearing curse words. Many young people don’t think their choice of language matters. Can words hurt? What difference does a little word make? Moving beyond the third commandment, what about swear words that don’t use the name of God—why are they wrong?

#### **C. WHERE WE’RE GOING WITH “GOD IS HOLY!”**

As a result of this lesson we would like the students to be able to:

1. Articulate why the name of God demands

- respect.
- Analyze the reasons that profanity in general is inappropriate for the Christian.
  - Make a commitment to stop using profanity.

#### D. MATERIALS NEEDED

**Connecting** • Bibles, student lessons, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk.

**Applying** • Paper, markers.

## 2 BRIDGING

### A. THE WEEK IN REVIEW

**Allow 10 minutes at the beginning of class for students to:**

- Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.
- Engage in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief highlighted this week.
- Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.

### B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults at [www.realtimefaith.net](http://www.realtimefaith.net))
- >> Service projects reports

## 3 BEGINNING

**NOTE TO TEACHER:** Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word.

### A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

**Get ready** • Ahead of time, select one member of your class who will be there early and who is fairly self-confident, but don't tell them what you're going to do.

**Get set** • As class begins, start finding ways to use the class member's name as a "swear word" in much the same way people use God's name ("Oh my Kim!" etc.) and in other ways that might be offensive ("That was a really Kim thing to do," when you've done something wrong, etc.).

**Go** • After this has been going on for long enough that everyone notices your unusual speech patterns, stop and ask "Kim" how it feels to have their name used in this way. Did it make the person feel disrespected or disliked?

**Debriefing** • **Ask:** How do you think God feels when we use His name carelessly? How does casual use of God's name show disrespect?

### B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

**Get ready** • Ask class members to estimate how many swear words they hear in an average day (including school, other public places, TV, and other media).

**Get set** • Have students share their estimates. Some will probably be much higher than others.

**Go** • Discuss what makes the difference—why are some people exposed to much more swearing than others (whom you choose to hang around with, what you choose to watch/listen to, etc.).

**Debriefing** • **Ask:** How do you feel when people swear around you? Does it offend you, or do you hardly even notice? If you're in the "don't even notice" club, is that a bad thing? Why or why not? What might it suggest? (You're accepting the world's standards instead of God's.)

## C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

**In your own words, share the following comparison:**

What does the sound of your own name mean to you? A friend can say it in a way that's warm and caring. Your mom can say it in a tone that's full of love—or she can call out your full name, first, middle, and last, in that voice that tells you you're really in trouble. Someone who hates you and has no respect for you can use your name so it almost sounds like a curse word.

What does God think when He hears us use His name? What does He think of the way we talk when we're carrying His name to the world? (Remember, if we call ourselves Christians, we're labeling ourselves with the name of Christ.) Our words matter to God—and they matter to the people around us. Swearing may seem like no big deal to us, but the Bible makes it clear that the words we use are a very big deal to God!

## 4 CONNECTING

### A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

**Present the following ideas in your own words:**

Do our words count? Of course they do. Everything counts when we're living our lives as citizens of God's kingdom on earth. If our attitudes are different, and our values are different, and our actions are different—shouldn't our words be different too?

Ask class members to read the Bible texts found in Wednesday's activity section of the student lesson. For each text, ask students to suggest a few words we can draw from that text to tell us what our speech should be like. Write the words on a board at the front of the room. When the list is complete, **ask: How does the language you hear on television or in the movies measure up to that standard? What about the language used in the lyrics of your favorite songs? How about the language you**

**and your friends use in conversation?**

### B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

**Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath's section of the lesson.**

**Ask: How do you think Jordan felt about his language after he realized that the woman knew him from church? What do you think the woman thought of him? Why might the swearing change the way she saw him? Should it make a difference? How does the language we use affect the way people think of us? If we are God's kingdom agents in this world, how can we best represent His kingdom in our speech?**

### C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

On a board at the front of the room, make three headings:

1. Types of Swear Words
2. Reasons People Swear
3. The Bible Says . . .

Under the first heading, list some of the more common words used in cursing, then ask the class members to suggest different categories of swear words commonly used. There will probably be some giggling and embarrassment around this as kids say, "You want us to say curse words in Sabbath School?" but assure them that it's perfectly possible to talk *about* swearing in this setting, even to give examples where necessary, without being offensive. The most obvious category is the use of God's or Jesus' name and variants of it. Other categories include curse words with a religious basis—these are more common in other languages (e.g., French) than in English, but the use of "hell" and "damn" as swear words ties into their religious meaning. A final category might be swear words relating to sexuality and the body.

**Ask: When we think about what these words mean, can we see why they're**

**inappropriate for a Christian young person? What about “mild” swear words, such as “gosh” and “gee” instead of “God” and “Jesus,” or “heck” and “darn” in place of “hell” and “damn”? What about other substitute expressions, such as “rats,” “fudge,” or “shoot”?**

Under the second heading, encourage class members to brainstorm about the reasons that people use swear words (e.g., anger, insulting others, trying to be funny or look cool, habit, etc.).

**Ask:** How are Christians to deal with the emotions and situations we’ve listed when they happen to them? What are better ways to express strong human emotion than by using swear words? What’s wrong with, for example, cursing at a person when you’re angry at them?

For the third heading, break students into smaller groups with an adult facilitator, if possible, and assign each group a couple of the Bible texts from the students’ and teachers’ lesson to read. As they look at their texts, ask them to see if anything in those texts relates to the kinds of swearing and reasons for swearing that you’ve listed on the board. Bring the whole group back together and list the references of the Bible texts in the third column. As class members share what they learned from each text, draw a line from the text reference to the relevant points in the first two columns (e.g., reading Exodus 20:7 should lead to a direct line from that text to the category of swear words based on God’s name).

## 5 APPLYING

### A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Break the class into smaller groups and supply paper and markers. The goal is to design a simple, eye-catching, easily understandable “NO SWEARING” sign (in the style of the familiar No Smoking and No Parking signs: a symbol with a circle around and a line through it). After

allowing five to 10 minutes for each group to make their sign, bring everyone back together and show the signs. Have the class vote on which is their favorite and hang that one on the door of your Sabbath School room (of course, if you have more than one door, you can choose more than one sign). Brainstorm with the kids for ideas of where the other signs might go (at school, in your room at home, etc.) and challenge someone in each group to take a sign with them and post it somewhere.

**Debriefing • Ask:** If we’ve chosen not to swear, how should we react when others around us swear? How could you encourage a “profanity-free zone” around you without just being pushy and holier-than-thou?

### B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. When you hear other people swear a lot around you, how does that influence your own speech? Are there polite ways to ask others not to swear in your presence?
2. What’s the harm in “harmless” swearing (e.g., mild swear words, swearing used for humor rather than in anger, etc.)?
3. Do people have a right to judge you as a Christian by the way you talk? Why or why not?
4. If swearing is such a habit that you don’t even think before you do it, what are some ways to make yourself stop and think so you can break that habit?

## 6 CLOSING

### SUMMARY

**In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:**

“It’s no big deal!” you may hear people say about profanity. But there’s a sense in which *everything* is a big deal to a citizen of God’s kingdom. Not because we have to earn our way into heaven by being good, or because God’s going to sentence us to eternal death

because we used a curse word. We're saved by God's grace. But our words, like our actions, show others that God's grace is at work inside of us. Other people judge God's kingdom and His power in our lives by the way we live, the way we act—and the way we speak. God has asked us repeatedly in the Bible to guard our tongues and watch what we say. He commands us to keep His name holy and not use it lightly,

but He also asks us to beware of “careless talk” that would cover many other kinds of swearing. ***Remember God is holy and should be worshipped and honored. And everything that pertains to Him (creation) should be respected as well.***

Let's plan to live—and talk—like citizens of God's kingdom!



## STUDENT LESSON

### **GOD IS HOLY!** Watch Your Language!

August 19, 2023

#### Sabbath **FOR STUDY**

- » **Memory Text:** “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain” (Exodus 20:7, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 2, The Trinity:** “God, who is love, is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 66-69

#### **WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE!**

Jordan is a good Christian. He really loves the Lord and wants to follow Him. Jordan’s dad is a minister, and Jordan likes being involved in church youth activities, especially when he can sing solos in church and at other events. When he’s singing, Jordan really feels on fire for God.

Some of Jordan’s friends aren’t active, churchgoing Christians, but they’re cool with his Christianity, and they don’t hassle him. One day Jordan is in a store with some friends. One of the guys is looking for some new athletic shoes, and the others are just hanging out and talking. Jordan accidentally leans back on a display and knocks a whole bunch of shoeboxes to the floor. He says a couple of bad words. Embarrassed, Jordan scrambles to stack up the boxes as his friends laugh and insult him about how clumsy

he is. He shoots some insults back at them. Just at that moment the saleswoman comes along to see why these guys are making so much noise. “Don’t worry about the boxes; it was an accident,” she says. “But please keep your voices down and watch your language in here.” She says it nicely, and they say, “Sorry, ma’am,” and start to move toward the door. But then the saleswoman notices Jordan.

“Hey, I know you,” she says. “Your dad is the pastor at my sister’s church. We went there for that big youth rally last month, and you sang that beautiful song—‘I Pledge Allegiance to the Lamb.’ I enjoyed that so much.”

The saleswoman holds Jordan’s eye for a long moment, and Jordan would like to sink through the floor. He knows he has let himself, his parents, and God down. He feels bad because this woman knows he is a Christian.

Jordan wishes he could hit the rewind button, go back a few minutes and change his reaction to knocking down the stacked shoeboxes and be a better example.

#### Sunday **RESPONDING**

- » Read 1 Peter 3:9, 10.
- » Perhaps some of your friends like to use bad language. You try to set a good example because you don’t think it is right for a Christian to use bad language. One day as your friends are all slinging insults and rude comments at one another, one friend notices

you're keeping quiet. "Hey, hold it, everyone," he says. "We got the preacher here now. We need to watch our language!" How do you respond? Would you say, "Thanks, guys, I appreciate it if you wouldn't talk this way"? How do you think your friends would respond?

## Monday BIBLE ANSWERS ON THE TRINITY

1. Unscramble the word below to find out which heathen king acknowledged and praised (number 2) God.
2. Fill in the missing words to find out what he said.
3. Unscramble Revelation 4:11 (NKJV), to find out who is worthy and why they are worthy to receive glory and honor.
4. Fill in the blanks and answer this question: Whom are we to look to?
5. Fill in the blanks to identify the Trinity.

1. razzendahcubEN \_\_\_\_\_

2. "And at the end of the time I, \_\_\_\_\_, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ Him who lives \_\_\_\_\_: For His \_\_\_\_\_ is an \_\_\_\_\_ dominion, and His \_\_\_\_\_ is from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_" (Daniel 4:34, NKJV).

3. created You were for and are power Revelation worthy created they O You exist and all by Lord will glory 4: to and Your receive 11 honor and NKJV things

4. " \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_, and be \_\_\_\_\_, all you ends of the earth! For I am \_\_\_\_\_, and there is \_\_\_\_\_" (Isaiah 45:22, NKJV). Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

5. "The grace of the \_\_\_\_\_, and the love of \_\_\_\_\_, and the communion of the \_\_\_\_\_ be with you all. Amen" (2 Corinthians 13:14, NKJV).

## Tuesday REFLECTING

- » Read James 3:5-10.
- » "Sticks and stones will break my bones, but words will never hurt me." Have you ever heard this saying? It's true that words are powerful. Anyone who's been on the wrong side of a name-calling bully or had a so-called friend insult you to your face knows that. What about swear words? We all know they're supposed to be bad, wrong, or dirty—but why? We live in a world where "everybody's doing it," and Jesus' name is just as common as "Oh, wow!" What is the impact of using such language? Does it really matter what we say? Absolutely!
- » It matters because we represent God's kingdom in this world, and everything we say or do reflects on Him. Rather than being the casual word we use when we drop a book on our feet, the name of God is the banner we march under, the label we're known by. That means we shouldn't use God's name in a casual way. He is holy, and anything relating to Him should be revered, respected, and honored. Any language that is degrading, insulting, or offensive shouldn't be heard on the lips of one who is a citizen of God's kingdom.

## Wednesday BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Look up the following texts. In them you will find answers to the questions below.

Exodus 20:7 (NIV)  
Matthew 12:34-37 (*The Message*)  
James 3:5-10 (NIV)  
Ecclesiastes 5:2 (NIV)  
1 Peter 3:10 (NIV)  
Psalm 19:14 (NIV)  
Colossians 4:6 (*The Message*)  
Revelation 19:1 (NKJV)

1. If you would love life and see good days, what must you do?

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2. Will God hold anyone guiltless who misuses His name?

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3. What should the goal of our conversation be and do for others?

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4. In God's sight, what should our words be?

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5. How many words should we use?

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6. Who does glory, honor, and power belong to?

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7. How are the tongue and fire alike?

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8. In the day of judgment, what are the two things that can happen to you because of the way you used your words?

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## Thursday CONNECTING

- » Read Psalm 19:14.
- » Review the memory text.
- » If you've made the commitment to be part of God's kingdom, then God expects your speech to reflect that. If you are using God's name in vain and swearing, you can make a commitment to keep your language uplifting and reflective of the values of God's kingdom.
- » If you exposed yourself to friends who swear, if you listen to TV and music that's full of swear words, it will be difficult not to use those same words yourself. You want to be sure to surround yourself with wholesome and uplifting friends and material.
- » Think about the words you hear in the media and what they really reflect. You love Jesus—why use His name only as a curse or an exclamation? What about words such as "gee" (for Jesus) or "gosh" (for God)? They may be shortened versions of the real words, but everyone knows exactly what they reference. God is holy, and everything about Him and His creation should be referenced with respect and honor. Don't allow yourself or others to degrade something you hold in reverence. Don't allow your words to reflect anger, hatred, or insults. Clean up your act, and clean up your language. Fill your mind with God's words, and let your words show that you're His child.



Friday  
**APPLYING**

- » Read Ecclesiastes 5:2.
- » Think about the way you talk. Is swearing a problem for you? If it is, and you'd like to change that, choose the words you want to stop saying and write them on the lines below. Then write a sentence prayer to God asking for His Spirit to stop you and remind

you before you speak these words.

- » Maybe you don't swear. Good for you! Are there other things in your speech (unkind words, quick temper, gossip) that need to be changed? Or maybe you want to use your words in more positive ways (encouraging others, saying kind things). On the lines below, write a sentence or two asking God to help you make these changes.

<b>1.</b>
<b>2.</b>
<b>3.</b>

