



Cheat Codes / Week 3

BEFORE GROUP

BOTTOM LINE

Your words matter.

SCRIPTURE

Proverbs 15:1 NIV

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To encourage students to see the impact of their words and to help them apply wisdom to the things they say going forward.

THINK ABOUT THIS

The goal this week is to help your middle schoolers develop some self-awareness around their words. The reality is, they rarely (if ever!) think before they speak. And in this phase, that's normal! Their brains are still developing, so the ability to pause and consider their words—to practice a little self control—isn't fully there

yet. They may realize their words matter when they see the impact of them on someone else, and they certainly know what it feels like to be on the receiving end of harsh words. However, we want them to take this a step further, and wisdom can help. Our hope is that they'll begin to consider the weight of their words before they experience the fallout of them. Whether they see the impact their words have on others or not, wisdom will help them consider it before they speak. Will they get this right away? No! And will they get it right all the time? Of course not! But perfection isn't the point. So, celebrate even the smallest steps you see your students taking to choose their words wisely as a means of encouraging them to keep going and growing in wisdom when it comes to their words.

This guide is a suggestion, not a formula. Adjust the questions and activities as needed, and don't feel like you need to do, or ask, everything you see here.

DURING GROUP

DO THIS (EXPERIENCE) 1

Fan out the provided scenario cards in your hands. Without seeing what they're selecting, have each of your students pick a card. One-at-a-time, ask each student to read the scenario aloud to the group, then have everyone brainstorm what could make the situation better. Give your students options for how they'd respond. They could talk about how pausing before responding, naming what's bothering them, not using harsh words, or using "I think" or "I feel" phrases could help in those situations.

DISCUSS THIS

1. What's the nicest thing someone has ever said to you?
2. Think about the last time you were hurt by somebody's words. Without using names, share how their words impacted you?
3. On a scale of 1-10, how much do you think our words matter?
4. What does it look like to be wise with our words?
5. This week, which one of these things do you want to focus on when it comes to the words you use:
 - a. Pausing before you respond?
 - b. Using "I think" or "I feel" to help you communicate in a calm, thoughtful way?
 - c. Naming what's bothering you?
 - d. Stopping the back and forth of harsh, hurtful words?

You got **grounded** for breaking something **on accident**.

Your step-parent gave you a **9pm curfew** when everyone else's is 10pm.

You hear someone **gossiping** about you behind your back.

Someone posted a **hurtful comment** on your latest TikTok.

Your coach **picks someone else** to start in the big game instead of you, and your team ends up **losing**.

Your partner for your group project **didn't do their part**, so now you have to do **all the work**.

Your best friend asked **your crush** to sit with them on the school bus.

Someone **cuts in front of you** in the cafeteria, and they got the last slice of pizza you were eyeing.

You asked your friend to hang out with you during the school field trip, but they **totally ignored you** instead.

Your parent **won't let you sleep over** at your friend's house this weekend because they want family time.

You get the **newest video game** for your birthday, but your grandma says she'll need to **return it** because it's not appropriate for you to play.

Your younger sister wants to **hang out in your room** all the time, and it's getting **annoying**.