COMMUNICATION (LARGE GROUP)

Lesson 2: Effective Communication

Objective: Students will learn how to communicate effectively

GAME/ACTIVITY:

1) Place a long strip of masking/painters tape across the room. (You may need to do multiple strips if you have a large group. You could make the activity a competition and reward the first team to complete the task correctly.)

2) Explain that you will give some direction and they will need to order themselves shoulder to shoulder on the tape.

Ex: Order yourselves in age from least to greatest.

Each time that you give them a characteristic. Remove a communication method.

EX: Without speaking, order yourselves according to the number of siblings each person has.

3) Do this a number of times with differing characteristics. Be creative. Or just use the list below.

4) On the final attempt, tell them to line up without speaking, without using hands, with their eyes closed (blindfold them if they are cheaters at heart).

List-

- Age
- Height
- Hair length
- Shoe size
- Number of siblings
- Grade
- Birth month
- Hand size

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION:

Speaker: Everyone take a seat. Go ahead and share what you believe communication means with someone nearby.

Speaker: How did this activity challenge your ideas of the meaning of communication? Give me some examples. (Listen to some of the ideas given by students.) How do those people that may be blind or deaf overcome their disabilities? (Listen and allow students to share.)

Tonight, we are talking about communication and how to do it more effectively. With our activity, you probably noticed that I made it harder to communicate each time. What you should have also noticed is that eventually an idea came up to overcome the obstacle. People have a way of doing that. So the first time should have been really easy. You could see, hear, and listen. No obstacles. But what happened when I told you to line up without speaking? Many of you came up with the same language. You looked at each other in the eyes to make sure that the message sent was the message received. I noticed a lot of fingers and nodding and shaking of heads. So, is the voice absolutely necessary to communication? Well, based on what we just experienced, we would have to say no. Does it help and increase the speed and efficiency? Absolutely. But could you communicate without it? Yes, you could, and many deaf and hard of hearing people deal with it daily.

I hope you are starting to see the point I am making. We take our senses for granted. We take our ability to speak for granted. We don't hone it and use it effectively.

Many of our problems in life are because of poor communication skills. We make assumptions and jump to conclusions. We send mixed messages and then we get frustrated which leads to more confusion and misunderstanding, which leads to anger. Instead of using your mouth and eyes, you start communicating with your fists. How can we avoid this downward spiral? James 1: 19 in the Bible is a great help. It says this, *"My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry."* Let's unpack this.

The first part of the verse tells us to be quick to listen. Hmm, most of us are quick to what? Talk. Yell. Scream. Just the opposite of the verse. Why do we do that? Because you have to hear what I am saying. I have to change your mind. You need my help to fix the issue that you are confused about. You are wrong and let me show you how right I am. What does this lead to? We all know because all of us do this. We get frustrated, angry, and either start throwing some hands or just march away worse off then we first started.

Effective communication requires listening. Most of us assume we know what this is and worse, we assume we are good at it. Quick to listen is what it says, but we are slow. How do I know that you are listening to me right now? I see your eyes and you see mine. In this country, this communicates attention. *(Side note: If you work with immigrant students from South America, this may be taken as a sign of disrespect to authority figures. Make clear, we aren't encouraging disrespect to parents. Hear them out on this point. See if there is a way to show attention without showing disrespect.)* If I can't see your eyes, then where are they directed? At a cell phone screen? You are not listening and we are not communicating. Same goes if you are looking anywhere but at me.

Listening requires hearing. They are not the same thing. When I tell my son to clean his room or take out the trash while he is playing Smash Brothers on his Nintendo Switch, I should not be surprised when I return thirty minutes later to find his room a mess or the trash still in the same place it was. As a matter of fact, I would ask, "Were you listening?" To which he would answer, " Yeah, I heard you." Does this sound familiar? My son was not listening. He may have heard the sound of my voice but communication did not happen. How do I know? His room is still a mess. The trash was not taken out. Is this making sense?

Air pods in your ear.? Even if they are not on. You are not communicating effectively.

Ok, So effective communication requires open eyes, open ears, Here is something you can use to help ensure you are communicating effectively. I call it the drive-thru test.

Suppose that I get the munchies and I go to BK. I roll into the drive-thru and proceed to give my order over the microphone. I am not sure why in the 21st century we still struggle with this mode of communication. But, believe me, we do. I ask for a Whopper with Cheese, no pickles, and no onions. A large fry and a large Coke. My stomach is grumbling and my mouth is watering. I am ready for my burger. The clerk repeats my order in their metallic voice over the mic. "Whopper. No pickles, no onions, large fry and large Coke" I cry out, "Wait. No, That is not right." I said, "Whopper with **Cheese**, no pickles, and no onions. A large fry and a large Coke". What just happened? Because the clerk repeated the order, I could confirm whether or not I was heard correctly. In that moment, I was heard incorrectly. Because of the repeat of the order, I got what I wanted. Who wants a Whopper without cheese? Not me.

As I hope you are learning, communication is a 2 way street. I say something and the person I am speaking to repeats what was heard. As I listen, now I can ensure that the message sent was the message received. I believe this meets the standard set by the Word of God. What am I doing before speaking? Listening. What am I slow in doing? Speaking without thought or confirmation of what was said.

The last part of the verse is important. Slow to become angry. We can choose to control our anger. Sometimes, if you are like me, anger erupts like a volcano. You are left spent and confused; busy apologizing for things that you did not mean to say. If we are quick to listen, slow to speak, then by consequence we will be slow to become angry. Amazing how on point the Word of God can be right?!?

Imagine what your family life would be like if we prayed to God (another form of communication we will discuss later) and asked Him for the power and desire to be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry. I predict less fights, less hurt feelings, less black eyes in the world. If we use the drive thru test in our conversations and communications, we will be fulfilling the verse more frequently! That would truly be a miracle of God! I want you to practice this drive thru test on your own.

Partner up with someone. Make sure you are face to face. Put away any distractions; phones, air pods, Here is your topic that each of you will take turns answering. Share your favorite memory when you were younger. Remember, as one person speaks, the other will use the drive thru test to make sure they are tracking with the speaker. You do not have to stop them at every sentence. Let them tell their story and along the way, make sure you are getting it . Do the drive thru test. "I heard you say. . . . " After 5-7 minutes, you will switch.

Speaker: After 10-15 minutes, reread James 1:19 out loud. This is how to communicate effectively. Pray

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