



Date: _____

Series: Fitting In and Finding Friends
Fall Year 1, Lesson 19

Putting Down Put Downs

Take Home Point: *Build up others just as Jesus builds you up. *Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson.

Bible Event: Ephesians 4:29-32

Key Verse: Ephesians 4:29: "Don't say anything that would hurt another person. Instead, speak only what is good so that you can give help wherever it is needed."

We will help kids know:

- Words used as put-downs to others not only hurt them but are also a serious offense against God.
- There is great power in words for building up and encouraging others.
- God has not put us down. Rather, God builds us up by giving his Son Jesus.




We will help kids feel:

- Convicted about the hurt they might have caused others through their put-downs.
- Built-up and encouraged through hearing positive words spoken to them by God and others.

We will help kids do:

- Write encouraging words to build up others in their small group.
- Make a commitment to one another to use words to build up others in the group and to not use put-downs in their group and throughout the week.

THIS LESSON'S ROADMAP

DESTINATION	PAGE #	DISCOVERIES ON YOUR JOURNEY	SUPPLIES NEEDED
Small Group Warm-Up 	3-4	The group reviews the Covenant, and then examines the power of hurtful words.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> approximately ten rocks (from the size of marbles to small eggs) for each group 20 to 30 craft sticks for each group
Large Group 	4 7-8 8-11 11-13	Overview Mr(s). Thinkendo's Classroom: "Put Down the Put Downs" She tells her own brief story of encountering put-downs when she was a 5 th /6 th grader...or reads the story. Expert Panel Girls and boys respond to questions. Bible Teaching Mr(s). uses a clump of clay to teach Ephesians 4:29-32.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> stage set to look like a classroom (<i>see lesson 17</i>) unique clothes for an outlandish teacher look (<i>as in lesson 17</i>) sheet of paper or whiteboard to keep score index cards markers lump of clay the size of a baseball craft sticks
Small Group Application 	4-7	Small group will discuss how to love others and build them up. Kids build each other up by creating flags and a castle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> paper a flag for each child made from a paper triangle stapled to a straw pencils or pens sticks and stones from warm up cardboard base clay

Small Group Warm-Up: 15 minutes



Purpose: *Get pointed in the right direction! Build relationships and help guests feel at ease. Do the learning readiness activity that will point your group in the right direction for the lesson.*

As kids gather: *Listen to memory verses from last week and give coupons for memory verses, remembering to bring your Bible, and bringing a guest.*

Begin: *Review the group covenant signed by all. This can be as simple as reading it and reminding all that they have signed it. (See lesson 16.) Welcome new kids and invite them to sign the covenant.*

Supplies needed: approximately ten rocks (from the size of marbles to small eggs) and 20 to 30 craft sticks

Place the rocks and craft sticks in the center of the group.

You have heard the phrase, “Sticks and stones can break my bones but words will never hurt me.” Is that true? Do words ever hurt you?
Let kids respond.

I have put sticks and stones in the middle of our group for us to think about the words that can hurt even more than sticks and stones. These words are put-downs. Put-downs are things that someone says to another to their face or behind their back that can be cruel or hurtful.

Let’s think of examples of put-downs. Brainstorm an example of a put-down and then pick up a rock and tell the group your put-down. The rest of the group imagines what it would feel like if the put-down were said to them. I’ll begin. Let me give you my example. I remember one time someone called me a....

Share a personal example.

Pick up a rock, and then ask at least three students to share how they would feel if this were said to them. When they describe their feeling, have them pick up one of the sticks and break it in half. Lay the rock in the pile with the broken sticks. Then say:

When you hear the sound of the breaking stick, it is a reminder that words hurt and break us on the inside. Even though we can’t hear it, like a breaking stick, it hurts nonetheless.

Have a student share a put-down and pick up a rock. Then have three others share how that put-down would make them feel if said to them, as they pick up a stick and break it. As discussion moves around the group, encourage kids to include put-downs that are spoken behind someone’s back or put-downs that are written in notes.

Have them place their rock in the pile of broken sticks when their turn is over.

By the time you have finished discussing and are ready for large group, you should have a pile of rocks and broken sticks in the middle of your group. Wrap up the discussion with the following:

Wow! We can see from looking at all the broken sticks and rocks in the middle of the circle how put-downs can cause a lot of hurt feelings. I wonder what God has to say about put-downs. I wonder if God ever used put-downs himself, or if he would ever give us a put-down.

I wonder what kinds of words God would want us to use with others. Let's find out today as we explore how to **build up others just as Jesus builds you up.*

Large Group: 20-30 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids observe what the Bible says. Present the Bible Event in creative fashion. Help kids begin to interpret what it means.*

Overview

Mr(s). Thinkendo's Classroom: "Put Down the Put Downs"

She tells her own brief story of encountering put-downs when she was a 5th/6th grader...or reads the story.

Expert Panel

Girls and boys respond to questions.

Bible Teaching

Mr(s). uses a clump of clay to teach Ephesians 4:29-32.

Small Group Application: 20-25 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids map out the meaning of the Bible event in their lives. Use the questions to stimulate discussion, but don't feel tied to them. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. Include personal examples from your own faith journey. The example of Christ at work in your life will leave lasting impressions of how Christ can work in the children's lives.*

Use your Bibles! Children need to learn how to look up references and follow along when scripture is read aloud. Allow for quality time of prayer at the close of the lesson.

Observation Questions: What happened?

Along with Ephesians 4:29-32, have kids look up the following passages in their Bibles and discuss. (Do not feel like you have to read all the passages. These are some suggestions. Follow the Holy Spirit's leading.)

What does God say about words that tear down? (See especially Matthew 12:34-37 below. Our words and actions reveal what is in our hearts. Also, we will have to give an account for our careless words. Words are important to God. It is important here to emphasize that **every** sin is forgivable; even though this scripture says our words will declare us innocent or guilty, it also says God has already spoken the FINAL word on the subject of judgment – we are forgiven through Jesus' blood for **every** sin!)

What results when we tear others down? (We hurt others and ourselves. Our words bring us judgment. The judgment meant here is God's anger and disappointment not condemnation.)

Matthew 12:34-37: "Your mouth says what comes from inside you. Good people do the good things that are in them. But evil people do the evil things that are in them. I can guarantee that on judgment day people will have to give an account of every careless word they say. By your words you will be declared innocent or by your words you will be declared guilty."

James 4:11a: "Brothers and sisters, stop slandering each other. Those who slander and judge other believers slander and judge God's teachings."

1 Peter 2:1: "So get rid of every kind of evil, every kind of deception, hypocrisy, jealousy, and every kind of slander."

How does God say we should treat others? Is it an option? (No. God commands us to love each other.)

Option: Have kids look up the following scripture references. On newsprint, write words or phrases from the passages that show how we should talk to and about each other.

Say: **What words does God use in these passages to let us know how strongly he feels about how we talk to each other.** (command; must)

Hebrews 13:1: "Continue to love each other."

1 Peter 3:8: "Finally, everyone must live in harmony, be sympathetic, love each other, have compassion, and be humble."

John 15:12: "Love each other as I have loved you. This is what I'm commanding you to do."

John 13:34-35: "I'm giving you a new commandment: Love each other in the same way that I have loved you. Everyone will know that you are my disciples because of your love for each other."

1 John 4:7: *"Dear friends, we must love each other because love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born from God and knows God."*

1 Peter 1:22: *"Love each other with a warm love that comes from the heart. After all, you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth. As a result you have a sincere love for each other."*

Colossians 3:12, 14: *"As holy people whom God has chosen and loved, be sympathetic, kind, humble, gentle, and patient...Above all, be loving. This ties everything together perfectly."*

Interpretation Questions: What does this mean?

Why does God want us to love others and build them up? *(Because he first loved and forgave us through Jesus' death and resurrection. Our love is a reflection of his love. He wants others to come to him. Others will know we are Christians by our love. God wants his people to be strong in the Lord. Encouraging others helps them be strong.)*

Application Questions: What does this mean to me?

Application Activity:

Supplies needed: clay along with the rocks and broken craft sticks from warm-up and a flag per student

Give each kid a flag made from a triangular sheet of paper stapled to a straw. Have them write their name on one side.

Then have everyone pass his flag to the person on his right. Everyone should think of a word that builds up the person whose flag they are holding. This word should describe a positive characteristic about that person. Have kids write that word on the other side of the flag.

Then, pass the flags to the right once again. Now consider the new person whose flag you are holding. Write another positive word to encourage that person. Continue this until every member of the group has written a build-up word on his flag for every person in the group.

Using a square of poster board or cardboard as the base, use clay along with the rocks and broken crafts sticks from warm-up to make a castle from which these flags can fly. This castle is a picture of what the church does to build up one another in Christ.

Find some way to mark your castle with a cross, reminding everyone that it is through Christ and his forgiving power in our lives that we can build up others.

Our key verse from Ephesians 4:29 says, “Don’t say anything that would hurt another person. Instead, speak only what is good so that you can give help wherever it is needed.”

Today we learned that it is important to **build up others just as Jesus builds you up.*

Make a commitment to one another to use words to build up others in the group and to not use put-downs in the group and throughout the week.

Closing Prayer:

Thank God who builds us up and encourages us through his love. Pray to be like Jesus and to build others up instead of tearing them down. Pray that he would give the strength to keep the commitments made to not use put-downs this week.

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Large Group Presentation

“Put Down the Put Downs”

Introductory Story

The stage should be prepared in advance to look like a classroom (see Lesson 17). The large group presenter now becomes the teacher, Mr(s). Thinkendo. She/he does this by donning a few simple props such as wearing a frumpy, outdated dress, an outlandish tie or coat, a pocket protector, pens, and a coach’s whistle.

Mr(s). Thinkendo stands with an essay paper to read to the group. She can tell her own brief story of encountering put-downs when she was a 5th/6th grader or read the following story. The point of the story chosen should demonstrate how hurtful put-downs can be.

Fifth and sixth graders, today we are learning about put-downs and build-ups. Put-downs are words we say that put down other people. Build-ups are words we say that build up other people.

Though many put-downs are used in the 5th and 6th grades, you will probably discover that as you move to 7th grade and beyond, put-downs are even more widely used and can be more hurtful. For that matter, some adults may use put-downs not even realizing how hurtful or damaging they can be.

Consider how often we hear people on television putting down one another. But also consider this story written by someone remembering his 7th grade year.

When I was in 7th grade, everyone seemed to enjoy making fun of a particular girl. Her name was Mary Faye and people said she had “cooties.” I know this is a silly word that is not used today, but it wasn’t silly to Mary Faye when we were in 7th grade, nor to anyone else who at the time was accused of having “cooties.”

Mary Faye was a large girl. She was poor and she only wore one dress to school. She also had body odor. Maybe it was because of those things that the other kids decided to make fun of her.

I remember what happened one day in 7th grade homeroom. Mary Faye was sitting at her desk against the wall, trying to blend in and not be noticed. One of the popular boys walked by her desk and brushed up against her. He exclaimed, “Oh no! Mary Faye cooties!”

Then he tagged another boy in the next row. This boy then quickly tagged the girl in front of him saying, “Mary Faye cooties!”

It seemed to be a disease passed from student to student, as kids laughed and tagged another kid saying, “Mary Faye cooties!”

By now, it was to my side of the room and I was tagged. “Mary Faye cooties!” the kid behind me said as he tagged me.

What did I do? I passed the germ on to Steven in front of me. “Mary Faye cooties!” I said. When I touched Steven, he fell out of his desk pretending to choke and die. Everyone laughed—except one person, Mary Faye.

I looked at Mary Faye and tried to imagine what it would feel like if these words were used about me. What if the kids were making fun of me? What if they said I had cooties?

Maybe it was easier for me to participate in the game of putting down someone else. That way, I wouldn’t be the one experiencing the put-down. I don’t know if that’s the reason, but I do know this—I wish I could take those words back.

If I could go through those years again, I would make a promise to myself. I would promise to put down all put-downs. I would not use words that hurt others. Instead, I would look for words that build others up.

Expert Panel

Set up a panel that includes one boy and one girl. (If your group is exceptionally large, you might have two or three boys and two or three girls.) The job description for the girl (or the girls’ team) on the panel is to guess how the girls will respond to the question. The boy (or boys’ team) on the panel will guess how the boys will respond to the question. Have them first write down their answer on an index card before asking the audience.

Ms. Thinkendo introduces the panel.

Today, we will determine who are the clearest thinkers—the boys or the girls. Can the boys tell what each other are thinking? Can the girls tell what each other are thinking?

We're discussing the topic of put-downs, so let's figure out what you are thinking about put-downs. I will read a question and the panel members will put the letter of their response on a card, not letting anyone else see it. The boy panel will guess how other boys will answer the question; the girl panel will guess how other girls will answer the question.

I will keep score on the blackboard. Shall we begin?

Following is an example of how you would ask the questions.

Panel, your first question... "Where do put-downs more often occur?

- a. school**
- b. home**

To check if the panel answered correctly, ask the girls in the audience how many answered with letter (a)? How many answered (b)? Ask the girl panel to reveal its answer. Did the majority of the girls have the same answer as the panel? Do the same for the boy panel.

Further questions for the panel:

1. Who uses put-downs more?

- a. boys
- b. girls

2. Where do girls say put-downs more?

- a. behind people's backs
- b. to people's faces

3. Where do boys say put-downs more?

- a. behind people's backs
- b. to people's faces

4. What kind of put-down hurts more?

- a. a put-down said behind your back
- b. a put-down said to your face

5. Put-downs are used a lot on TV and they are often funny. When is a put-down okay?

- a. sometimes if it's not meant to hurt
- b. never because it might hurt

Optional: The following can be asked if there is time.

6. **What is worse for a boy?**
 - a. to be slugged in the arm
 - b. to be called a nerd in front of his friends
7. **What is worse for a girl?**
 - a. to overhear someone talking about her
 - b. to pass her a note that calls her names
8. **Who uses put-downs more?**
 - a. kids
 - b. adults
9. **Which is easier?**
 - a. to put someone down
 - b. to build someone up

Large Group Bible Teaching

You will need a clump of clay about the size of a baseball. Fashion a sculpture of lips and a mouth. You can even use the ends of craft sticks for teeth. Don't worry if your art does not closely resemble a mouth. Kids will get the idea and will appreciate your attempt. Have fun!

Show the clay mouth to the kids. Read Ephesians 4:29 (NIV). Say:

The Bible 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.”

Class, let's review what should not come out of our mouths. (Any unwholesome talk.) Right, anything that puts others down.

Remove the teeth from the clay mouth and roll the clay into a ball. Then smash the clay onto the table signifying put-downs. Refer to Ephesians 4:31 (GW).

“Get rid of your bitterness, hot tempers, anger, loud quarreling, cursing, and hatred.”

On the other hand, what should come out of our mouths? (Only what is helpful for building others up.)

While continuing with the following questions, roll the clump of clay between your hands to make a long clay snake.

What kind of example does Jesus give us? Did he ever use harsh words? Surprisingly enough, he does!

In Matthew 23, Jesus talks to the religious leaders who tried to look religious on the outside. On the inside, the leaders were far from God. Jesus called them hypocrites, blind guides. He even said they were like whitewashed tombs looking beautiful on the outside but full of death on the inside. He also called them snakes.

Hold up the clay snake.

Was Jesus using put-downs to hurt people? Let's take a vote.

Have kids stand up if they vote "yes" and then sit down. Have kids who vote "no" stand up and sit down. Have kids who don't know or are unsure if Jesus used put-downs to stand up and then sit down.

Here is the key to the answer. Was Jesus trying to help these people or hurt them? He was trying to help them. They were so blind in their sin that they needed a good shaking up. They needed truthful words. If Jesus just said nice things to them while they were doing something very wrong, he would not be helping them at all.

It even says in the Bible right next to our Bible verse for today, Ephesians 4:25 (NIV): *"Each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor."* In verse 29 (NIV) it says, *"but only (speak) what is helpful for building others up according to their needs."* The need that these leaders had was to get shaken up, not just put down.

Also Ephesians. 5:15 – Speaking the truth IN LOVE makes us grow together into Jesus, who is the head of the body. While Jesus' words were far from pleasant, he spoke them *in love* for the Pharisees, in hopes that they would change. Some did. Most didn't.

What should you do if you are ever put down? Here are two things that might help.

1) Remember what God says about you. He doesn't put you down. When you turn to him and trust Jesus as your Savior, God says to you, "You are my child whom I love. You are a prince or princess in my kingdom. Because of my forgiveness to you, you are a holy saint. You are my friend who will live with me forever."

Those are pretty powerful words that God speaks to you. Even though words others say might hurt us, it will always help us to remember the powerful words that God says to us.

2) God gives us another power to deal with words that people might say to us. In Luke 23:34 and following, we read how Jesus was on the cross. People stood by and made fun of him and mocked him. The soldiers and even the other prisoners put Jesus down. What

did Jesus do? He said, ***“Father, forgive them for they don’t know what they’re doing.”***

Because Jesus has first forgiven us, we have the power to say to others who put us down, ***“I forgive you, and I don’t have to try to get even.”***

That will make you so strong in your heart that the put-downs won’t hurt you as badly. Instead, you can even pray for those who put you down. That’s what it says to do in Ephesians 4:32 (NIV): ***“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”***

While you are talking, form the long clay snake into a smile. Say:

When God sees you respond to others in this way he looks down at you with a smile. Remember, you can **build others up just as Jesus builds you up.*

Close large group with prayer and dismiss kids to return to their small groups.