

Date Used: \_\_\_\_\_

Group: \_\_\_\_\_

## **"!#\*X/#" AND OTHER WORDS**

### **Topic: Profanity**

#### **Purpose of this Session:**

Profanity and taking the Lord's name in vain have become common on the elementary school playground. Children have had good teachers—today's adults. In past generations, adults used bad language, but they protected kids from it. Today this is no longer true. Kids need an opportunity to talk with adults about the use of profanity and how it can adversely affect them.

#### **To Introduce the Topic:**

Ask the group members to list a number of movies (either presently showing in theaters or available for home rental) popular with their age group. Write these down on newsprint or on a chalkboard for everyone to see. Then ask the group to identify those movies that contain swear words. Circle these as group members identify them. Point out how many of today's popular movies contain swear words. Affirm and support those group members who have not seen many of the movies that contain profanity. You do not want to support these movies; rather, you want to point out that these movies are adversely affecting your group members. Do not talk about these negative effects at this time. Use the session closure time to call attention to the detrimental effects of today's popular movies. Tell the group you will be talking about profanity. Pass out the TalkSheets and ask the kids to fill them out as honestly as they can.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** Be careful if you choose to use profanity during the discussion. It can be appropriate to use examples of profanity but not to shock kids. When profanity is used as an example, it can demonstrate that you know the words. This takes the fun and mystery out of the words. You do not have to use the words as examples, but avoid the mistake of elevating the words to the totally forbidden. When talking about the profane, we can avoid the words to such a degree that it becomes enticing and exciting to use profanity.

**SPECIAL, SPECIAL NOTE:** Many kids have parents who curse and misuse God's name on a regular basis. This can be confusing to children when you talk about the negative effects of profanity. Mention to the group that some parents do curse, but this does not make it appropriate for kids to curse. Some parents smoke, but this does not make it right or healthy for kids to do so.

#### **The Discussion:**

**Item #1:** Poll the group to see the extent that profanity is used by kids. Ask the kids, "When you hear profanity, what do you usually think?" Ask kids if they would misuse God's name or use profanity if God were around. Point out that God is with us. We tend to forget where God is.

**Item #2:** Have the group decide the three most popular reasons kids use bad words. Some additional reasons might be to get more friends, to be a part of the group, to show off, to be like their parents, or because they are mad.

**Item #3:** If most of the group members feel that kids should be allowed to watch movies that contain profanity (and many will), you will need to support those kids who feel that they should not be allowed. Take time to discuss the swearing in movies. Pay special attention to the statement, "A kid \_\_\_ be allowed to use swear words around other kids." Often young people believe bad language is appropriate as long as it is not used around adults.

**Item #4:** Brainstorm with the group all of the possible responses, from ignoring the profanity to asking that person not to use bad language. You may want to role-play responses with the kids.

**Item #5:** Explain that the first number represents the Old or New Testament (1 = Old Testament; 2 = New Testament), the second number represents the book of the Old or New Testament, the third number locates the chapter, and the fourth number indicates the verse. The three verses in order are Proverbs 15:28; Ephesians 5:4; and Philipians 4:8. Ask for volunteers to read each of these verses. Discuss how each relates to the use of bad language. Also look at the third commandment (Exodus 20:7) to discuss misusing God's name.

#### **To Close the Session:**

Make a list with the kids of the adverse effects of profanity. The following is a sample of some negative effects:

1. We become so comfortable with profanity that it becomes a part of us.
2. Profanity puts others down.
3. Using profanity is an inappropriate way to deal with anger. We need to learn more constructive ways to deal with anger.
4. Profanity hurts people.
5. The misuse of God's name hurts our relationship with God.
6. Cursing demonstrates how immature we are.