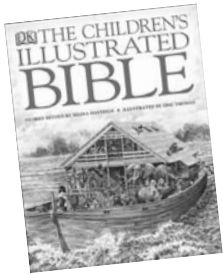


Ordinary Time, Proper 19



The Children's Illustrated Bible

The tongue is a small thing, but what enormous damage it can do. It's like a tiny spark that can set a great forest on fire. The tongue is like a flame on fire. It can cause damage that can ruin your whole life.

—James 3:5–6 adapted

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.
—Psalm 19:14 adapted

I.A.L.A.C. Signs

James warns the early Christians that their words can do as much damage as a forest fire. (Read James 3:5–6)

Have kids draw a quick picture of themselves on paper and add the letters “I.A.L.A.C.” on it—“I Am Lovable and Capable.” Tape the pictures to their backs with duct or fabric tape. Explain that everyone is created lovable and capable by God—full of hope, promise, and able to do whatever they set their minds to. And everyone wears an invisible I.A.L.A.C. sign. (It’s on your back today!) But sometimes things happen or people say things that make us feel unlovable and incapable. A teacher might say, “Your pencil isn’t sharpened. Why aren’t you better prepared?” (Tear off a small piece of someone’s I.A.L.A.C. picture.) Or your best friend might say, “I don’t want to play with you today.” (Tear off another small piece.)

Kids may play a game, without getting too carried away, of some of the unlovable and incapable things people say to us. Each time, tear a small piece off a person’s picture. Be careful not to tear too much or give messages that are too hurtful.

Gather kids in a circle. Have them take their signs off and look at them. Discuss: How did it feel to have these bad things said to you? What condition is your I.A.L.A.C. sign in? What is the most hurtful thing someone has ever said to you? What is the most hurtful thing you’ve ever said to someone else? What would put the pieces of your sign back together? (Follow this activity with the Blessing Giving Game below to affirm kids!)

Blessing Giving Game

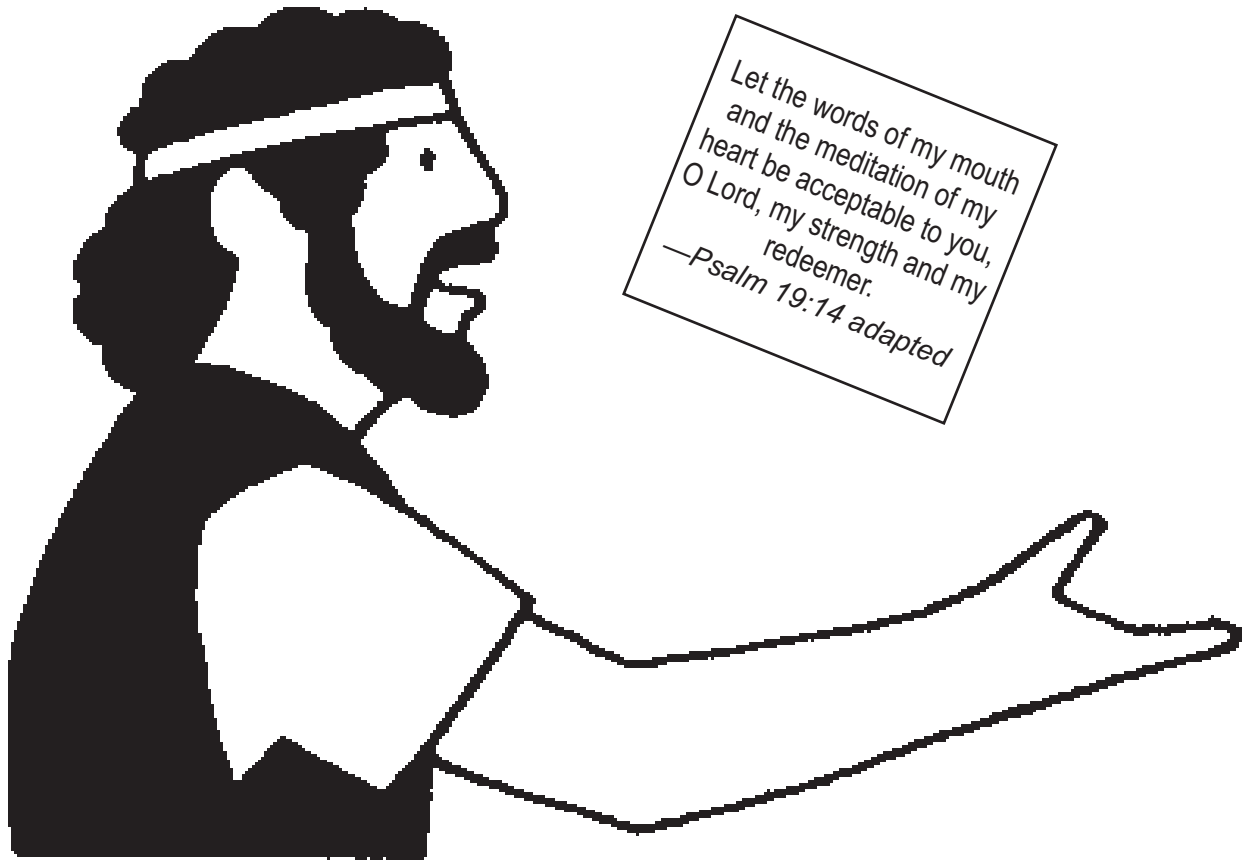
Children can give words of blessing to one another. Discuss thank-you cards, hugs, times when you’ve told others you love them.

An evangelist’s blessing is a prayer of blessing for someone. Often it is recorded so the person may read the blessing again and again for words of encouragement.

Have kids think of great messages of love from God while a scribe writes them on a chalkboard. Play the Blessing Giving Game so kids can give these blessings to one another. Form two lines and give these instructions to play the game.

1. Line 1, take 1 step forward.
2. Line 2, take 2 steps back.
3. Share a blessing with your partner (kids may initiate their own kind words or use the words of one of the blessings written on the chalkboard or poster board).
4. Line 1, hop back once.
5. Share a blessing with you partner.
6. Line 2, take 2 giant steps forward.
7. Share a blessing with your partner.

Keep playing until everyone has shared a blessing with several other kids. Afterward discuss: How did it feel to “speak only in blessings”? How did it feel to receive blessings? Give kids index cards and have them copy a blessing from the chalkboard, encouraging them to read these daily and to share them with others in the worship service, congregation, with their families, and in their school and neighborhoods.



Let the words of my mouth
and the meditation of my
heart be acceptable to you,
O Lord, my strength and my
redeemer.
—Psalm 19:14 adapted

Unscramble words from the scripture.

1. SRWOD

2. ITAONEMDTI

3. ERHTA

4. ECACPBELTA

5. GERNTSHT

6. EMEREDRE
