

Big Idea: Our words make a difference.

Primary Scripture: 1 Samuel 16:16-18

Supporting Scripture: James 3:9; Ephesians 4:29

CAPTURE (Why should students pay attention to and care about your message?)

- Words can shape our lives and change history.
- An example of this is Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's "I Have a Dream" speech.
 - 16 minutes that painted a vision of hope and equality.
 - It inspired people across the United States to march, protest, and demand change.
- Words can change things on a big scale and in smaller, personal ways.
 - Compliments can lift moods.
 - Encouragement can help someone take a step.
 - Kind words can make someone feel noticed.
- Today's Bible story is about how one person's simple words set off a chain reaction that changed history.
- They were just talking about someone they noticed – a young shepherd named David.
- Our own words might be more powerful than we realize.

SCRIPTURE (What does God's Word say?)

- The setting is in the Old Testament book of Samuel where Saul (different Saul from last week) is having a leadership crisis.
- King Saul's leadership is falling apart.
- His mental health is deteriorating due to disobedience and rebellion.
- His servants offer a solution which is to find a good musician to play some soothing music.

¹⁶ Let us find a good musician to play the harp whenever the tormenting spirit troubles you. He will play soothing music, and you will soon be well again. ¹⁷ "All right," Saul said. "Find me someone who plays well and bring him here." (1 Samuel 16:16-17 – NLT)

- Even 3000 years ago, they understood music helps mental health.
- Saul demands they find someone who plays well.
- One servant speaks up and suggests someone.

¹⁸ One of the servants said to Saul, “One of Jesse’s sons from Bethlehem is a talented harp player. Not only that—he is a brave warrior, a man of war, and has good judgment. He is also a fine-looking young man, and the Lord is with him.” (1 Samuel 16:18 – NLT)

- That someone is David, who is probably 13-15 years old.
- David is described as...
 - Talented musician.
 - Brave.
 - Good judgment.
 - Good-looking.
 - Connected to God.
- Even though David was a young shepherd, his reputation stood out.
- This unnamed servant’s words start the series of events leading to David becoming king.
- What’s fascinating is the servant who spoke up remains anonymous.
- This could have been any one of us.
- One conversation, one moment, one comment, can change everything.

INSIGHTS (What might this Scripture mean?)

1. Small actions can have a big impact.

- The servant’s words seemed small but had a huge ripple effect.
- Have you ever had a quick compliment or text totally change your day?
- That’s what happened with David.
- One small action was a huge turning point.
- Like throwing a pebble in a pond, the ripples went far.
- Encouragement, kindness, standing up for someone – these things matter.
- The servant didn’t need a title or platform, just the willingness to speak up.

2. Our words matter.

- Words stick with us, for better or worse.
- The servant's words highlighted David's strengths, not his weaknesses.
- Words have power to.
 - Build up or tear down.
 - Open doors or shut them.
- We carry that power every time we speak.

3. Encouragement can open doors.

- The servant's words literally opened the doors for David.
- Encouragement doesn't just make someone feel good, it can help someone step into opportunities they didn't believe they were capable of.
- Sometimes we think "What difference can my words make?"
- Your encouragement could be the key that unlocks someone's next opportunity.
- If the servant stayed quiet, David's story might have been very different.

ACTION (How could we live this out?)

1. Replace negative talk with encouragement.

- Be honest – were your words today mostly positive or mostly negative?
- James 3:9.

⁹ Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. (James 3:9 – NLT)

- This week, whenever you catch yourself going negative, replace it with encouragement.
 - Instead of "They're so annoying," try saying something like, "They really care about what they believe."
 - Instead of "They're not good enough," try saying something like, "They're working hard to improve."

- Instead of joining in when others are gossiping about another person, try sharing something positive about that person.
- Encouragement stands out and can be contagious.

2. Use your words wisely.

- What impact could it make if you pause and think before you speak?
- Ephesians 4:29.

Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them. (Ephesians 4:29 – NLT)

- Using words wisely isn't just about avoiding bad language. It's about purposefully choosing words that build others up.
- This week, challenge yourself to:
 - Think before you speak.
 - Be specific with your compliments.
 - Focus on character over appearance.
 - Point out the good you see in others.

3. Start with one person.

- Pick one person this week who needs encouragement.
- It could be...
 - A struggling friend.
 - A sibling you've been clashing with.
 - Anyone who could use a positive word.
- Don't wait to send a text or speak a word of encouragement.
- Your words might be exactly what they need.
- You never know what doors your words might open.