

Listening Is Important

Quarter 3 • Lesson 11

Focus on Life Skills

1. *Connecting:* Play a game that shows the importance of listening well.
2. *Teaching:* Learn 5 ways to improve listening skills and hear some verses about listening to God (Proverbs 18:13; James 1:19; John 10:27).
3. *Responding:* Practice recognizing God's voice and decide to be better listeners this week.

SUPPLIES

- Bible
- Small sticks (1 for every 2 children)

Optional Supplies:

- Memory Verse poster
- Pencils
- Blindfold
- Paper
- Student Pages

Teacher Devotion

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.

James 1:19

Be quick to listen and slow to speak. It sounds so simple, yet it can be so hard. We like it when other people listen to our stories and care about our opinions. Whether you are outgoing or shy, it feels good to talk to someone who will listen. We all like to feel that we are known.

This week, make an effort to be the kind of person who listens well and makes others feel known. When you are a listener and show genuine care for another person, you show him Jesus. So listen well to the children in your class. As they feel known and valued, they will learn to trust God more and more.

Family Connection: Share with family members that this week, their children are learning about being good listeners. Ask the children to share with their families the 5 things they learn today about listening.

LESSON TIME

1. Connecting: Play a game that shows the importance of listening well.

Before class, find an outdoor location with dirt on the ground that you can use for the Connecting activity. Collect small sticks, you will need 1 for every 2 children.

As the children come to class today, gather them outside and place them in pairs. Each pair will sit back to back. Give 1 child in each pair a small stick. This person is the sender. The other person will be the receiver.

The sender will use the stick to draw a simple shape or object in the dirt in front of her. For example, she can draw a square, a heart, or a simple object such as the sun or a tree. The receiver cannot look at the drawing.

Then the sender will give the stick to the receiver. The sender will tell the receiver how to draw the same picture—but she cannot say what the shape is, she can only describe it. The receivers will listen carefully and draw what they hear. They cannot ask any questions while drawing.

Give the partners about 2 minutes to complete their drawings. When they are finished, let the partners compare their drawings. Have the children carefully look at each pair's drawings. They should not step on or ruin any of the drawings.

Optional Supplies:

Have the children do the same activity with paper and pencils instead of sticks and dirt. Pairs will sit back to back as the senders draw their simple shapes or objects on paper. Each sender will tell her receiver how to draw the same shape, and the receiver will listen carefully and follow her instructions on his own paper.

End of Option

- **Why do you think some children were able to draw the shapes correctly?**
- **Why do you think some children had trouble drawing the shapes?**
- **Was this activity easy or hard for you and your partner? Why?**

In order to draw the shapes correctly, the person sending the instructions had to communicate clear directions, and the person receiving the instructions had to listen carefully. Even with the best communication skills, messages can become confused. This is why some shapes do not look anything like they are supposed to! This game demonstrates that listening well is not always as easy as it sounds.

Today we will focus on improving our listening skills. We will learn that listening well is important in all our relationships, with people and with God.

2. Teaching: Learn 5 ways to improve listening skills and hear some verses about listening to God (Proverbs 18:13; James 1:19; John 10:27).

When a person really listens to you, he shows that he cares about you. A good listener will pay attention to you and show interest in what you say in the conversation.

The following 5 rules can help you become a better listener. To be a good listener you must:

- 1. Give your full attention to the person speaking.**
- 2. Ask questions about what the speaker is saying.**
- 3. Check that you understand what the person is talking about. This means if there is something the person says that you do not understand, ask for clarification. If you do not ask, you may misunderstand the whole conversation.**
- 4. Try to feel (empathize with) what the other person is feeling. If the person is sad, you do not want to sit there giggling at what she's telling you. If the person is happy, you want to show that you are happy for him too.**
- 5. Use clues from the person's body language to listen better.**

- **What are common ways people use their bodies to show they are happy or excited?**
- **What are common ways people use their bodies to show they are sad or upset?**

Children's answers will depend on the body language that is appropriate and typical in your community.

If you know what someone else is feeling, it helps you hear the whole message of what she is trying to say.

Repeat each rule slowly with the group. Ask volunteers to say what each rule means in their own words, or have the children share examples of what this rule might look like in action.

Have the children sit in pairs. You will give someone in each pair a situation to talk about. The other person will listen. When you call time, the listener will share what he heard. The person who was talking will correct any mistakes or add anything that was missed. Remind the children to give their full attention to the person who is speaking. They should try to understand what the speaker is feeling. They will then switch roles and the other person uses the second situation to talk while the partner listens and responds. Each part of this practice time will take 2 minutes.

Here are the situations you can use (unless you come up with your own that fit your situation better):

Speaker 1: Explain to your friend how to play a game. Explain the rules and the goals and everything else the other person would need to know to be a successful player. It does not matter if your partner already knows how to play the game. Explain it as if she had never heard of it before.

Speaker 2: Pretend you can meet anyone you want, and talk to that person about his life. Who would you meet, and what are some of the things you would like to talk to him about? How do you think the person might respond to you?

When you are finished, ask the whole group to respond to these questions:

- **Were you a better listener or a better talker? Why do you think that is?**

Let's learn a Bible verse about listening.

To answer before listening is foolish and shameful.

Proverbs 18:13, NIV

- How would you explain this verse to someone younger than you?

This verse tells us that it is important to listen before responding to someone. Raise your hand if you have ever begun to talk while someone else was still speaking. Look at all these hands! It is a very common thing to do. But the Bible says we are foolish if we do this!

Read James 1:19 from your Bible if possible. It is also printed here. Ask the children to listen closely. Then ask the partners to say the verse to each other several times. When 1 person is talking, her partner should be listening carefully.

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.

James 1:19

- Turn again to your partner and explain in your own words what this verse is about.

After the children have shared with their partners, call on 2–3 children to share their ideas with the class.

Teacher Tip: Helping children understand things takes time. Sometimes it can feel as though you talk and that they do not hear you at all. Keep showing that you care for them by being quick to listen and slow to speak.

As you review the listening skills, hold up 1 finger for each. It can help the children remember the tips!

Let's review our good listening skills. Good listeners ...

1. Give their full attention to the person speaking.
2. Ask questions about what the speaker is saying.
3. Check that they understand what the person is talking about.
4. Try to feel (empathize with) what the other person is feeling.
5. Use clues from people's body language to listen better to them.

Optional: If you are using the Student Pages, allow the children to do the quiz on their pages to quickly review the ways to be a good listener.

When we listen well to our friends, our friendships become stronger. When we listen well to our family members, it helps our relationships with them become stronger. The Bible also talks about the importance of listening to God. If we are Christians, Jesus even calls us His friends.

Think of someone you are close to, such as a family member, a teacher, or a friend.

- What would happen to your relationship if you never talked with and listened to this person?
- What would happen if you were always the one talking and never listened to this person?

Just like in our relationships with others we are close to, God wants us to talk to Him and listen for what He wants to tell us, particularly through His Word.

Teacher Tip: Some of the children in your class may not have accepted God's gift of salvation. If any children have questions, refer to the Salvation Path as you share the greatest news of all with them!

Optional, if you have time:

Choose 3 volunteers. Assign 1 to be the shepherd, 1 to be a stranger, and 1 to be a sheep. Explain that a sheep knows the voice of its shepherd. Put a blindfold on the sheep or ask him to close his eyes tightly. Ask the shepherd and the stranger to quietly move so they are standing 3–5 meters from the sheep. Make sure the area between the sheep and the other 2 volunteers is clear, with nothing to trip over. The shepherd and stranger should call the sheep's name. The sheep must try to listen carefully to the shepherd's voice and go to him.

End of Option

Listen to this Bible verse where Jesus says He is a shepherd and His followers are His sheep.

Read John 10:27.

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

John 10:27

- **Have you ever seen shepherds taking care of sheep (or another animal, such as goats)? Describe what you saw.**

The job of a shepherd is to take care of his sheep. The shepherd knows each of his sheep, and the sheep recognize the voice of the shepherd. When a shepherd is good at his job, his sheep trust him. They follow his voice. Jesus is our Good Shepherd. When we choose to follow Him, we are His sheep. In order to follow Him well, we must learn what His voice sounds like and follow it. The Bible is God's Word. It is His true story, and it shows us what God is like. When we learn what the Bible says, we learn what God's voice sounds like. Then when we face difficult situations in life, we can know what God thinks is best. We can recognize what He is saying to us because it is consistent with what the Bible says.

- **What are some ways you can listen to God's voice?**

Have 2–3 children share their ideas. Some ways they can listen to God's voice are by reading the Bible, by praying, and by listening to the wise words of others. God's voice is always consistent with the truths in the Bible.

3. Responding: Practice recognizing God's voice and decide to be a better listener this week.

Listening well is an important part of all healthy relationships. It is important in our relationships with other people. And for Christians, it is important in our relationship with God. Just like all the other things we have learned about communication, being a good listener is something we have to practice in order to learn to do well. Let's practice recognizing God's voice and listening well to it.

Designate 1 side of your space as "God's Voice" and the other side as "Not God's Voice." Remind the children that God's voice is always consistent with the truths in the Bible. That is why the Bible is called God's Word. Explain that you will read 6 statements. They should listen well and decide if the statement sounds like something Jesus, the Good Shepherd, says about them. If it does, they should go stand on

the "God's Voice" side. If it does not, they should go stand on the "Not God's Voice" side. (Remember, Jesus is God.) Reveal the answer for each statement after children have chosen sides.

God created you in His image. You are special to Him. (God's voice)

God created everything in the universe. Therefore, you are no more important than an animal or an insect. (Not God's voice)

God looks down on you from heaven and does not care about what happens in your life. He is too powerful and busy to care about one small child. (Not God's voice)

God knows exactly who you are and cares about everything that happens in your life. He invites you to bring your worries and burdens to Him because He cares for you. (God's voice)

God only loves you when you are good. (Not God's voice)

God always loves you no matter what you do! He loves you so much He sent His Son to die in your place so that you can be with Him forever. (God's voice)

Gather the children back together.

Good job listening well to recognize God's voice. A Christian's relationship with God becomes stronger when he listens well to God's voice. Now think of someone in your life who you would like to have a better relationship with. It might be a friend, a family member, or a teacher. Your relationship with this person will grow stronger as you learn to listen to him better.

Give your children a moment to think quietly, then read the Memory Verse. Show the poster if possible.

He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed.

Isaiah 50:4b

I will read the five important listening skills we learned. As I do, choose 1 of them to work on this week in your relationship with the person you are thinking of.

Again, the children can hold up a finger for each statement to help them remember these.

- 1. Give your full attention to the person speaking.**
- 2. Ask questions about what the speaker is saying.**
- 3. Check that you understand what the person is talking about.**
- 4. Try to feel (empathize with) what the other person is feeling.**
- 5. Use clues from her body language to listen better to her.**

Ask children to turn to someone near them and share who they want to listen better to and the skill they will work on this week. Close class by praying this blessing based on James 1:19 and John 10:27:

Blessing: May you be quick to listen and slow to speak. May you take the time to listen well to others. And may you learn to recognize and listen to the voice of God.

Lead the children in singing this quarter's song if possible.

"Waymaker" by Sinach: <https://youtu.be/DFGDU3XZmms>