

# Speaking in Public

Quarter 7 | Lesson 12 | Life Skills

1. **Connecting:** Do an activity to introduce each other.
2. **Teaching:** Learn about public-speaking skills (Colossians 4:6; Proverbs 16:23; Matthew 19:23–26).
3. **Responding:** Practice speaking skills with short speeches.

## SUPPLIES

- Bible

*Optional Supplies:*

- Pencils
- Memory Verse Poster
- Student Pages

## Teacher Devotion

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*May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.*

Psalm 19:14

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Speaking in front of others allows us to share our thoughts and ideas and influence others. Often when we are speaking in public, instead of thinking of our audience, we become very self-conscious and think things such as “What do they think of me?” and “Am I speaking well?” We forget that we reflect the One who created us—and that He listens to every word. Instead of worrying about how our words reflect on us, we should think about how our words reflect the Lord.

Think about how you use the opportunities God has given you to speak and influence an audience. Are you using that influence to bring others closer to God? Are you honouring Him in your communication? Next time you speak to a group, let your words reflect your heavenly Father, and ask Him to make your words pleasing in His sight. Only when our words are God-honouring and God-centred will they have the power to communicate in powerful and transformational ways.

## Lesson Time

### 1. Connecting: Do an activity to introduce each other.

Greet your students warmly as they arrive. Ask them about their favourite speakers. When you are ready to begin class, ask the following question.

- **What speakers do you enjoy listening to? Why?**

Allow 4–5 students to share their thoughts.

**I enjoy listening to all of you! No one has a story that is exactly like your story. Who you are and what you think and feel are important.**

**Often the people we enjoy listening to are good at public speaking. They are interesting and connect with the audience. They communicate their ideas clearly and truthfully.**

**An important part of public speaking is doing an introduction. This may seem very basic, but a good introduction honours the person being introduced and the group itself by letting them know why this person is worth listening to.**

Have the teens find partners. Each student will introduce himself to his partner by stating his name and 2 other details about himself. Then the other partner will state his name and share his 2 details. If some of the students know each other well, encourage them to share 2 details about themselves that may not be commonly known. The pair will link arms when they are finished. When all pairs have linked arms, announce that each pair will now find another pair of students and take turns introducing their partners and sharing the 2 details about them. After those 2 pairs have introduced themselves, they can find other pairs to meet up with. The goal is to meet as many people as possible and pay attention to what they say.

After 3 minutes, have the class sit down. Point to different students to see who can remember the most details about each person he met. The winning person is whoever can remember the most details about the people he or she met.

**Public speaking is a useful and important skill to learn.**

- **What are some occasions when you might need to speak publicly in our community?**

If the students do not mention these ideas, you can suggest addressing a group of community or church leaders, teaching others a skill you have, participating in or leading a Bible group or Sunday school class, or sharing a story with a group.

**The skills you learn today will help to prepare you to speak in front of groups. Public speaking prepares you to be a leader. Even if speaking in front of others is difficult for you or makes you nervous, you can benefit from learning to do it well. Job interviews, teaching Sunday school classes, and many other life situations require strong public-speaking skills. Public speaking also gives you the opportunity to express who you are, share things that are important to you and others, and make connections with your listeners. And, the more you practice, the easier public speaking will become.**

## **2. Teaching: Learn about public-speaking skills (Colossians 4:6; Proverbs 16:23; Matthew 19:23–26).**

Have a student read Colossians 4:6 aloud from the Bible. If that is not possible, the verse is printed here for you.

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*Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.*

Colossians 4:6

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- **How would you say this verse in your own words?**

- **How can a person have “gracious” speech?**

Allow students to answer, and then share the following if they do not mention it: Speaking what is true can help others. It is also gentle and thoughtful.

**When we speak well, our words can be helpful and caring to those who listen. Here is something else the Bible teaches us about our words.**

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*The hearts of the wise make their mouths prudent,  
and their lips promote instruction.*

Proverbs 16:23

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**When we are wise with our words, our speech can be instructive, helpful, and pleasant to hear. That means the listeners want to hear what we say and to understand what we are expressing.**

- **Why is it important to speak in a way that others will want to hear?**

Allow students to answer.

**When our speech is instructive, we can help others to learn or we can lead them to think in new ways, even about something familiar. Jesus was a gifted public speaker. We can learn some valuable public-speaking skills from Jesus’ example.**

**Listen to this message Jesus gave to His disciples. As we read the verses, think about what made Jesus’ message clear and interesting for His audience.**

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*Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly I tell you,  
it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven.  
Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle  
than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”  
When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished  
and asked, “Who then can be saved?”  
Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible,  
but with God all things are possible.”*

Matthew 19:23–26

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- **What made this engaging for Jesus’ listeners?**

Students might suggest things like the topic itself, the word picture of a camel going through a needle, or the statement that He made about how hard it is for a rich person to get into heaven.

**Jesus used dramatic language and examples that others could understand. He was truthful, and He cared deeply about what He was speaking about.**

- **How can you tell that the audience was interested in what He was saying?**

The verses say that the disciples asked questions and had an emotional response—they were greatly astonished.

One of the most important public-speaking skills is to speak about things you care deeply about. Jesus did that as He shared the message of God's love and forgiveness with the world. This message was so important to Jesus that He gave His life to allow us to benefit from that forgiveness.

**Teacher Tip:** If any students express interest or have questions about Jesus' gift of salvation and forgiveness, meet with them after class and share the information from the Salvation Path at the front of this guide.

It may be helpful to read the verses again after you read the questions in this section so the students can discover the answers.

**When you do public speaking, it is helpful to talk about things you care about. You will have more experiences to share if you talk about subjects you are familiar with. Also, it is much easier to keep your audience listening with interest when you are excited about what you are saying.**

**When you speak to others, it is important that what you say is sincere and truthful. When you speak honestly, it gives you credibility as a speaker. This means that people believe what you say and want to listen to your thoughts and opinions.**

Here are some other things we can learn about speaking in public from Jesus:

Jesus shared stories in the form of parables when He spoke. Stories are a helpful and memorable way to share information with others.

Jesus was aware of His audience. He was a good listener, and He often asked questions. He understood what people wanted and needed to hear, and He answered their questions. He also had different ways of speaking to crowds and to His close friends. He understood the value of His words and expressed Himself carefully.

Jesus often sat or stood close to the people He shared with, and sometimes He even touched them. Because of this, people were excited to hear His message.

**Teacher Tip:** For students who come from broken homes, poverty, or other difficult circumstances, learning to speak well can be a tool that can help build their confidence and open doors of opportunity in the future.

Here are a few more tips to help you with public speaking.

- Know your audience. Ask questions and listen to the answers.
- Use good body language. It is important to use appropriate hand gestures and have a welcoming facial expression so people feel interested. Move around to keep the audience watching.
- Have the audience participate in some way. For example, you could ask them to do hand motions, raise their hands, or stand up if they agree or disagree with what you are saying.
- Use realistic images to engage your audience emotionally. If you can get an emotional response from your audience, you have made a good connection.
- Prepare well so you truly know your topic. Research the topic or ask questions of people who know it well.
- Pray before you speak. Ask God to bless and use your words and help you to focus on what is important. Prayer often helps to calm your thoughts.
- Start with something interesting. Get your audience's attention with a fact or statement that interests them or is startling, such as the image Jesus used about the camel and the needle.
- Speak loudly, slowly, and clearly. If people cannot hear you, they will lose interest quickly. If

you tend to rush because you are excited or nervous, try talking slower than usual. This will help you to speak at an understandable pace.

- **Show your personality!** Your speech should not sound like someone else talking. Your audience wants to know you, so show them who you are. Whether you are speaking naturally or acting, your speech should reflect who you are in the way that best fits the situation.

### 3. Responding: Practice speaking skills with short speeches.

Perhaps Jesus' most powerful public-speaking skill was that He spoke on His Father's behalf. He did not seek glory or honour for Himself. Instead, He pointed the way to the knowledge of God's love and forgiveness.

When we speak only to bring recognition to ourselves, our words are meaningless and unimportant. When our purpose is to help or inspire others or our community, our words can have great impact. When we use our words to share God's truth and love and bring honour to Him, our words have the power to change people's lives. Listen to this verse about using words God would approve of.

If you are using the Memory Verse Poster, show it to the students.

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*May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.*  
Psalm 19:14

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- **Why do you think your words are more powerful when you do not use them to point only to yourself?**

Allow 2–3 students to share their thoughts.

**Now we will practice what we have learned! We will not make formal speeches, but each of you will have a turn to say 3–5 sentences. You can choose a topic that interests you and that you think may interest your audience.**

- **What skills have we learned that you should remember when you are speaking?**

If they do mention these, remind the students of these tips: Know your audience. Ask questions and listen to the answers. Use good body language. Have the audience participate in some way. Use realistic images to try to engage your audience emotionally. Prepare well. Pray before you speak. Start with something interesting. Speak loudly, slowly, and clearly. Show your personality.

Begin by doing the activity yourself. Use as many of the skills the students learned as possible. Allow each student to share 3–5 sentences. If your class is large or if you do not feel you have enough time to allow all the students to share, divide the class into 2–3 groups. Clap after each student speaks. Afterward, smile and encourage the teens in their skills.

**Teacher Tip:** If the students have trouble thinking of topics, suggest some ideas from your community or things to help them to get to know each other, such as sports, family members, or skills and talents the students have.

*Optional:* If you are using Student Pages, have the teens write their speeches on the pages. Encourage the teens to express their personalities as they read them aloud to the class.

Close class with this blessing based on Psalm 19:14.

**Blessing:** May your words and the way you speak be engaging and bring knowledge and transformation to others. May your words and thoughts honour God.

**Family Connection:** Encourage the students to ask a family member, "What helps you to have confidence when speaking to others?" The teens can then share the skills they learned and that God is always with them to help.

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

"What a Beautiful Name" by Hillsong Worship: <https://youtu.be/r5L6QIAH3L4>