I AM WORTHY Facilitator's Guide

Middle School

#5 | I Am Worthy to Speak and Be Heard

Lesson Overview

This lesson (35–45 minutes) helps students understand that they are worthy to speak and be heard, whether they are naturally talkative or quiet. Students will learn that their words matter and can wound or strengthen others, and that they are responsible for choosing how they use their voice. They will also explore practical ways to speak with truth and responsibility while recognizing that other people's voices matter too.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Understand that they are worthy to speak and be heard.
- Recognize that their words matter and can affect other people.
- Understand that they can choose to use their voice with truth and responsibility.

Supplies Needed

- Tube of toothpaste
- Paper plate or tray
- Paper or cardstock megaphone templates
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- Optional decorative stickers
- Tape or stapler
- Scissors, if templates are not pre-cut
- Journals
- Pencils
- Blank paper or cardstock
- One printed Find Your Message Prompt Sheet per table (see final sheet)
- Markers or colored pencils

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Introduction: Would You Rather? (4–5 minutes)

Lead Teacher

Say: “Let’s start with a few Would You Rather questions. There are no right or wrong answers. Just pick the one you’d rather do.”

- “Would you rather be the person telling the jokes OR the person who laughs so hard everyone else starts laughing?”
- “Would you rather be amazing at telling stories OR amazing at drawing them?”
- “Would you rather know the answer to every question in class OR always have the most interesting question to ask?”
- “Would you rather meet someone new and start the conversation OR have them come talk to you first?”
- “Would you rather share your best idea with the whole room OR tell it to one person you really trust?”

Say:

“Did you notice? We didn’t all choose the same answers.”

“Some of us love to talk. Some of us are quieter. Some of us may talk a lot with people we know and hardly at all in a bigger group.”

“And that is okay.”

“You do not have to become quieter if you love to talk, and you do not have to become louder if you are naturally quiet.”

“No matter which kind of person you are, your voice matters.”

“You are worthy to speak and be heard.”

Teaching Truth #1: You Are Worthy to Speak and Be Heard (4–5 minutes)

Lead Teacher

Say:

“Being naturally quiet is perfectly okay. But sometimes people stay quiet for a different reason.”

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"Maybe the mean voice starts telling us, 'What I have to say isn't important,' or, 'Nobody really cares what I think.'"

"That is the mean voice trying to convince you that your voice does not matter."

"Sometimes intimidation fear can do the same thing. Maybe you have something to say, but you start worrying that you will sound silly, get the answer wrong, or that other people will not want to listen."

"Sometimes those feelings can also come from experiences we have had."

"Maybe you tried to speak up because you needed help or comfort, but it felt like no one really listened."

"Maybe you tried to join a conversation and someone ignored you or said something rude."

"Experiences like that can make us start thinking, 'Maybe my words don't matter.' And sometimes even, 'Maybe I don't matter.'"

"But that is not true."

"Someone else not listening well does not decide the value of your voice."

- "You are worthy to ask a question."
- "You are worthy to share an idea."
- "You are worthy to say what you need."
- "You are worthy to ask for help."
- "And you are worthy to speak and be heard."

Ask: "What are some things the mean voice or intimidation fear might tell someone that could keep them from speaking up?"

Allow a few responses.

Say: "When that happens, we can recognize that voice for what it is and remind ourselves of the truth: **My voice matters. I am worthy to speak and be heard.**"

Students repeat: "I am worthy to speak and be heard."

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Teaching Truth #2: Words Matter (5–6 minutes)

Lead Teacher

Say:

> “I want to show you something about words.”

Squeeze some toothpaste onto the plate.

> “That came out pretty easily.”

Invite one student to try to put the toothpaste back into the tube, or briefly try it yourself.

> “Not so easy to put back, is it?”
>
> “Words can be like that. Sometimes we say something quickly because we are angry, embarrassed, joking around, or just not thinking. But once the words are out, we cannot always take them back.”
>
> “Our words matter. They can wound people or strengthen them.”

What Did You Notice?

Lead Teacher

Ask:

> “Why can words be hard to take back once we have said them?”
>
> “What could help you pause before saying something you might regret?”

Allow a few responses.

Say:

> “We are not going to get every word right all the time. If we hurt someone with our words, we can take responsibility, apologize, and ask for forgiveness.”
>
> “And saying, ‘I was just kidding,’ does not automatically make hurtful words okay.”
>
> “You alone get to choose your words. You can use them to wound people or strengthen people.”

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Talk It Out (2–3 minutes)

Table Leaders

Ask: “Why do we need to take responsibility for the words we use in texts, group chats, comments, posts, and social media, even when we cannot see the other person’s reaction?”

Small Group Activity: Find Your Message (7–10 minutes)

Lead Teacher

Give each student a blank sheet of paper or piece of cardstock. Place one Find Your Message Prompt Sheet at each table (see final page). Provide markers or colored pencils.

Say:

> “Imagine 10,000 people were listening to you.”
>
> “What is one thing you would want them to hear from you?”
>
> “You are not writing a speech. You are looking for one message that matters to you.”
>
> “Use the prompt sheet at your table if you need help getting started.”

Instructions

1. **Choose one idea.**
   Use one of the prompts at your table or come up with your own.

2. **Turn it into one short message.**
   Keep it to one sentence or a few words.

3. **Create your message.**
   Use words, colors, drawings, symbols, or creative lettering to make it your own.

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Table Leaders

Help students choose a prompt if they are having trouble getting started. Remind them that they only need one idea and one short message.

Allow students time to create. Sharing is optional.

Teaching Truth #3: Make Room for Other Voices (2–3 minutes)

Lead Teacher

Say:

> “Being worthy to speak and be heard does not mean we have to be the one talking all the time.”
>
> “Part of using our voice well is knowing when to speak and when to give someone else room to speak too.”
>
> “That means resisting the urge to interrupt or talk over someone. It also means giving other people a chance to share their ideas.”
>
> “Our voice matters, but so do other people’s voices.”

Ask: “What is one way you can make room for someone else’s voice?”

Allow a few responses.

Say: “In our next lesson, we’re going to talk more about what it means to be a caring, attentive listener.”

Journal Reflection (3–5 minutes)

Lead Teacher

Say: “Take a few quiet minutes to think about what you learned today.”

Journal Prompt:

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When is it hardest for you to speak up, and what could help you use your voice in those moments?

Closing Affirmation (1–2 minutes)

Lead Teacher

Say:

> “Today we learned that your voice matters, your words matter, and other people’s voices matter too.”
>
> “You get to choose how you use your voice.”
>
> “Let’s say today’s affirmation together.”

Students repeat: “I am worthy to speak and be heard.”

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FIND YOUR MESSAGE

If 10,000 people were listening, what is one thing you would want them to hear from you?

Use one of these ideas to help you get started:

- Something I care about...
- Something I wish people understood...
- Something I want to encourage people to do...

You do not have to use one of these prompts. They are only here to help you find a message that matters to you.

One idea. One message. Make it yours.