

COUNSELOR'S COMMENTARY

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouth, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. Eph.4:29

This is a verse I think about when I consider the area of respect and/or the lack of respect many of us and the children have for one another. Many times each day I have students approach me with comments such as 'so and so said this to me and I don't know what to do about it'. Also, when just cruising the hallways I will have to stop (especially at the water fountains) and encourage the students to use appropriate comments with each other. Then I wonder, are we getting so accustomed to hearing inappropriate comments and language that it just doesn't even phase us? If so, the children we are raising for His service are following our example.

Respecting one another by using our tongues wisely is an area that must be taught, but even more so it is something that must be modeled at home as well as at school. The following is a list of ideas that might be helpful in accomplishing this biblical concept.

All ideas have been adapted from PRIM (Pre Referral Intervention Manual) and experience.

1. Teach appropriate ways to communicate displeasure, anger, ect.
2. Model communicating in an appropriate manner in all environments.
3. Require the children to identify alternative appropriate behaviors following an instance of derogatory comments or inappropriate gestures.
4. Reduce the emphasis on competition (a stimuli which contributes to derogatory comments). Emphasize individual success with the abilities God has granted, instead of winning.
5. Interact frequently with children to monitor language usage especially when they are with their friends.
6. Provide children with a predetermined signal when they begin to use inappropriate language.
7. With the children critique conversations or t.v. shows for insults and put downs. Make them aware of where they may hear it and what to do about it (e.g. leave the scene, turn the station).

In a society where insults and put downs are the norm, we must always set our sights on the Bible. Our children need to know that the desire to laugh and seek humor should not be at the expense of others. God's commandments take precedent over human desires.