

Salted Speech

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*Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt.
Colossians 4:6*

1. When I open my mouth, what comes out?
How do my words sound?
Will the words you hear in your ear
Make you smile or frown?

Refrain

I need to . . .
*Put a little salt on it.
Shake a little salt on it.
Sprinkle some salt on it.
Make it taste so good.

'Cause when I . . .
Put a little salt on it.
Shake a little salt on it.
Sprinkle some salt
My speech will sound just like it should. [*2nd time to bridge*]

2. In the book of Colossians, Paul gives a caution:
Season your speech with salt.
Words are seasoned for a good reason:
To bless and to exalt. [*to refrain*]

Bridge

My words can speak kindness,
Gentle as a dove.
My words can bring peace and joy
When I season them with love.

[shout: *Colossians 4:6* says . . . to refrain -- *Put a little salt on it]

Salted Speech

Teaching Resources

Background

Over the years, when I have been working with groups of children in Christian settings, I have used this verse from Paul's letter to the Colossians to encourage the kids to speak to each other and adults with greater kindness and sensitivity:

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

Colossians 4:6

The verse comes at the end of a set of basic guidelines that Paul lays out for the people of Colossians so that they can be as effective as possible in building relationships among themselves as well as new potential believers.

Once I've spent some time teaching kids what the verse means – in the same way that salting food makes it taste better, salting our speech makes our words sound better to others – I remind the kids from time to time to use “salted speech,” or I may ask, “now was that an example of salted speech?” I might overhear some “un-salted” speech and ask, “how might you say that differently if you put some salt on it?” In other words, the verse provides me with a simple phrase (salted speech) that I can use to get kids to evaluate and improve their own speech habits.

Instead of reprimanding children for inappropriate speech or simply correcting them by telling them what they should have said, the “salted speech” reminders provide a verbal scaffold upon which children can begin to think for themselves about how their words might sound to others and how they might make their words more “tasty” to the ears of others.

A couple years ago, I was out on a trout stream in Northern Pennsylvania fly fishing and I started to think about the idea of “salted speech,” wondering if anyone had ever written a children's song about it. Then I started wondering if I might be able to create a song about salted speech. The next thing I knew, while standing knee deep in a cold trout stream, the words and melody to “Salted Speech” started to form in my head. After fishing that morning, I rushed back to the cabin, wrote down the words I had so far in my head, and the song, “Salted Speech,” was born! I don't remember if I caught any fish that morning, but I caught a song instead!

Preparing Activities

1. Ask children what all the following foods have in common that make them taste so good: potato chips, pretzels, popcorn, corn on the cob, peanuts, French fries. What would these foods taste like without salt? Just as salting food makes it taste better, “salting” our words make them sound better. Relate to Colossians 4:6.

2. Pass around some unsalted pretzels for a snack, but don't say anything about the pretzels being unsalted. Talk about how the pretzels taste (pretty bland!). Then pass around salted pretzels. How much better do they taste? Why? Relate to Colossians 4:6.

Extending Activities

So what, exactly, does “salted speech” sound like? Children may not necessarily know “salted” words and phrases to use – especially if they come from home environments where they hear a steady diet of “unsalted” speech. As for all skills we want children to acquire, we need to model salted speech for them and provide opportunities to practice. Here are some examples of unsalted speech that could be used. For each example, ask what makes it unsalted? How could each be changed to make it salted? Children could be paired or placed in groups to work together.

- a. I'm never playing this game with you again! You always cheat!

Salted example: I like playing this game, but it isn't fun unless we both play by the rules. Could we both try hard to to that?

- b. I can't find my lunch money. I know you stole it!

Salted example: I can't find my lunch money. Is there any chance you might have picked it up by mistake? Could you help me look for it?

- c. Mom, this meat loaf is terrible! It's so bad the dog won't even eat it!
 d. I got all A's and B's on my last report card, but you got all C's and D's. I guess we know who is smarter!
 e. We lost that basketball game because you missed the last shot. It's all your fault.
 f. We always play dodgeball or kickball. We never do anything I want to do.
 g. I don't want to be on your team. You always mess up and make us lose.
 h. I heard you playing the piano. You really aren't vey good at it.
 i. That's the ugliest sweater I've ever seen. Why do you wear it all the time?
 j. It's your fault our class had to stay in for recess again. You're always getting all of us in trouble.
 k. Your clothes are always dirty and torn. I'm sure glad I don't have to look like you.
 l. I said I wanted the red ball first. You can't have it.

Related Scripture

- **Galatians 5:22 – 23.** Salted speech is clearly related to the fruits of the spirit, as described in Galatians 5:22 - 23. We can use the fruits of the spirit to help us evaluate the

“saltiness” of our speech. Do our words show . . . Love? Joy? Peace? Patience? Kindness? Goodness? Faithfulness? Gentleness? Self-control?

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