

KIDS *of*
INTEGRITY

Attentiveness



Are your kids already skilled at tuning you out? Try a few of these fun activities to help them learn to listen to you, and to God.

You'll create memorable lessons that help your children:

- be quick to follow verbal instructions
- comply with a request without arguing
- adopt a more teachable attitude
- show a greater desire to obey God's Word.

In addition, this lesson helps address problems with interrupting and stubbornness.

Lesson contents

Parents' prayer	2
Kids talk with God	3
Speak a blessing	4
Memory verses	4
Kick-off craft	5
Bible stories	5
Creative discipline	9
Hands-on options	10

Parents' prayer

Even as adults, we struggle with attentiveness. A pressing deadline, a demanding schedule or other anxieties can preoccupy our mind so that we miss what others are trying to communicate. As you prepare to guide your children through this lesson on attentiveness, don't let anything distract you from first drawing near to the One who hears every word you share with Him. Use this sample prayer, or build your own prayer using the verses from "Scripture-guided prayer for parents."

Sample prayer

Wonderful Counsellor, thank you for being a God of interactive communication. I am amazed that You, the Lord of the universe, communicate with me personally. Thank you for speaking to me and listening to me! The Bible tells the story of Your desire to commune intimately with mankind (Exodus 25:8, John 1:14, Revelation 21:3). What a privilege it is to know that You want to know us and be known by us. As the God of all wisdom, You promise to share Your wisdom generously (James 1:5). Please find me willing and worthy as Your student and Your friend (Psalm 25:12,14).

My desire is to be attentive to Your voice. I pray that You would show me any sin in my heart that is interfering with my communication with You (Psalm 66:18). Humbly I ask that You would forgive me for the times that I have been inattentive to Your leading in my life or slow to respond to Your gentle prompting. My desire is to have a heart that is sensitive to the guidance of Your Spirit of Truth (John 16:13). When You speak to me in the night or the day, through Your Word, through nature or through other avenues, may my ears be tuned to You so that I cannot miss Your voice.

Listening carefully to those around me is also so important. When my children come to me wide-eyed and excited, telling a story, help me to listen with genuine care and attention. When my spouse or another friend speaks, help me to listen with a focused mind. When others offer genuine advice or criticism, please help me to be open to accepting their input so that I may be wise in the end (Proverbs 19:20).

I bring _____ and _____ before You and I pray that You will build into them attentive and teachable spirits. Please give them ears that are ready to listen to You and to others and protect them from the temptation to ignore anything You bring to their attention. I ask that _____ and _____ will develop a deep respect for You. As they learn to revere You, I trust that You will grow in them spirits that are humble and contrite – that they will be ones whom You esteem (Isaiah 66:2).

I ask that early in life _____ and _____ will learn to practice effective listening skills. As they grow and mature, may they become children who are “quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry” (James 1:19). Listening is such a crucial aspect of learning and obedience. I pray that _____ and _____ will reach their full potential spiritually because they have learned to be attentive to Your voice. In school, sports, music or whatever avenues in which they pursue competence or excellence, I pray that they will be teachable and humble so that they make wise use of the talents You have given them.

Thank you for giving us directions for living life. Whether we turn to the right or to the left, give us ears to hear Your voice saying, “**This is the way; walk in it**” (Isaiah 30:21). For this is the desire of our family: to walk in Your ways so that we can influence the world for You. We pray together, “**Teach [us] to do Your will, for You are [our] God; may your good Spirit lead [us] on level ground**” (Psalm 143:10). Amen.

Scripture-guided prayer for parents

Read and pray through one or more of the selected Scriptures under each heading. Focus on listening to God and allowing His Spirit to direct you as you pray.

Character focus

Begin by letting God know how much you appreciate Him and desire to hear His voice.

Proverbs 2:1-9 | Isaiah 55:2-3 | Jeremiah 29:11-13 | Daniel 10:10-12 | John 10:25-27

Heart search

Acknowledge your inattentiveness to God and others. Psalm 66:16-20 | Proverbs 1:22-23 | Proverbs 12:15 | Isaiah 29:13-14,23-24 | Luke 6:46

Gratitude

Thank God for ways you have seen attentiveness exhibited in your family.

Family requests

Ask God to help you and your family to listen effectively to His voice and to others.

Deuteronomy 30:19-20 | Proverbs 19:20 | Proverbs 22:17-19 | Isaiah 48:17-18 | John 16:13-15

Kids talk with God

God is ready to help! These prayers will remind your children that God is pleased when they try to be more attentive and that He will help them develop this attribute. Alternatively, use the verses under “Scripture-guided prayer for children” as a basis for guiding your kids in prayer.

Sample prayers

Dear God, please help me to listen to Your voice when You speak to me. Amen.

Dear God, please help me to listen when my parents speak to me. Amen.

Dear God, listening is hard work. Please help me to do a good job. Amen.

Dear God, thank you that You are my shepherd. Please help me to be like a sheep who knows Your voice. Amen.

Dear God, please help me to be attentive like a _____ (select animal of your choice) when it is stalking prey. Remind me to be this focused when You, or my parents, teachers or friends, talk to me. Amen.

Dear God, please forgive me for not listening to _____ (name the person) as I should. Amen.

Dear God, I find it distracting and hard to listen when _____ (fill in the blank with an appropriate moment, e.g. “when I am playing with my toys and Mom asks me to do something”). Help me to be attentive even during difficult times. Amen.

Scripture-guided prayer for children

Read through one of the selected Scriptures under each heading and help your children pray based on the verse you read. Encourage them to listen to God and to allow His Spirit to guide them as they pray.

Character focus

Begin by letting God know how much you appreciate Him and desire to hear His voice.

1 Samuel 3:8-10 | Ecclesiastes 5:1-2 |
Jeremiah 29:11-13 | John 10:27

Heart search

Acknowledge your lack of attentiveness to God and others.

Proverbs 12:15 | Proverbs 18:13 | James 1:19

Gratitude

Thank God for ways you have been attentive.

Personal requests

Ask God to make you, your siblings and parents, attentive to Him and others.

Proverbs 3:5-6 | Proverbs 18:15 | Isaiah 48:17-18 |
John 14:26

Speak a blessing

When our children “slip up,” it’s usually all too obvious. But often the moments when they “did it right,” go unnoticed. Learn to watch for situations that demonstrate that your children are making progress in the area of attentiveness. Then, use the ideas listed here to encourage them.

- What a good listener you are, _____.
- What an attentive boy/girl you are, _____.
- Thank you for listening so carefully, _____.
- Thank you for being quick to listen, _____.
You were also slow to speak and slow to become angry. I am proud of you and so is God.
- I notice that when I talk to you, _____, that you look at me as you listen. Good job being an attentive listener.

Memory verses

Choose the Bible verse that will be most meaningful to your children and review it every day.

Isaiah 48:17-18 “This is what the Lord says – your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: ‘I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go. If only you had paid attention to My commands, your peace would have been like a river, your righteousness like the waves of the sea.’”

Proverbs 1:5-7 “. . . let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance – for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.”

Proverbs 3:5-6 “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.”

Proverbs 12:15 “The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice.”

Proverbs 15:32 “He who ignores discipline despises himself, but whoever heeds correction gains understanding.”

Proverbs 18:13 “He who answers before listening – that is his folly and his shame.”

Proverbs 19:20 “Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise.”

Proverbs 19:27 “Stop listening to instruction, my son, and you will stray from the words of knowledge.”

John 8:47 “He who belongs to God hears what God says . . .”

John 18:37 “[Jesus answered] ‘Everyone on the side of Truth listens to Me.’”

James 1:19 “My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.”

Kick-off craft

Have you ever watched a deer twitching its ears to catch every sound? Animals know the importance of staying alert. These fun hats will help kids remember to “tune in” to what matters, too.

You’re sure to have supplies for this project on hand already. All you need is some strong paper, scissors, colouring pencils and tape or a stapler.

Animal ear hats

Directions

- 1 Begin by measuring the circumference of each child’s head. Using thick paper, cut a strip 3-5 cm wide and tape or staple the ends of the paper strip together to make a band that fits snugly around each child’s head.
- 2 Have your children choose what kind of animal they would like to be, then help them cut out and colour appropriate ears. Fasten the ears to the headband with tape or staples.
- 3 Write the memory verse you have selected on the headbands.

When you want your children to listen to instructions, have them put on their “listening ears.” When a child listens effectively, add a star, a sticker or draw animal tracks around his/her headband to positively reinforce attentiveness. The goal is to completely encircle the headband with animal tracks or stickers.

Bible stories

The Bible has a lot to say about the importance of hearing and obeying God and others. Use the following Bible verses and questions to help your children understand how the truths in each reading apply to them.

If the Bible verses are too complex for your children, paraphrase them yourself or use the summary provided under “key concepts.”

Listening to parents and wise teachers

Read Proverbs 4:1,5-6,20-22.

Questions for discussion

1. If a baby were born deaf, do you think that he/she could learn to talk?
2. How can you learn about God?
3. Why should children listen to their parents?

Key concepts

Children can learn about God through listening to their parents. The Bible says that learning about God and His Word is as important as life and health. God’s Word also says that when children listen to their parents, they gain wisdom. This wisdom will protect you and help you stay out of trouble.

Mary and Martha learn from Jesus

Read Luke 10:38-41.

Questions for discussion

1. Who did Jesus say “chose what was best”?
2. What did Martha do wrong?
3. What things make us too busy to listen to Jesus?
4. Other than being too busy, what else can distract us from listening to God or others?

Key concepts

Mary sat at Jesus’ feet and listened to what He had to say. She valued His teaching and focused her attention on spiritual things – listening to what Jesus was saying. But her sister Martha was preoccupied with all the things she had to do – getting the meal

ready and the house clean. She asked Jesus to send Mary to help her. But Jesus said that listening to Him was more important than all the other things Martha wanted to get done. Just like Martha, we can become too busy with day-to-day activities to read our Bibles and listen to what God wants to teach us.

God gets mad!

Read Jeremiah 32:30-34 (verse 35 for older children only).

Questions for discussion

1. What did the Israelites do to make God mad?
2. What did they do instead of listening to or responding to God's discipline?
3. What makes your mom or dad angry with you?
4. What can you do to let your parents know that you want to obey them?

Key concepts

The people of Israel made God mad because they refused to listen to His advice or to change their ways when He disciplined them. They set up idols and worshipped them, even though God had commanded them not to. Just as it makes your parents angry if you turn your back to them – or cover your ears or ignore them when they are trying to talk to you – it makes God angry when we choose not to listen to His commands. God is pleased when His children listen and obey, and so are your parents.

Eager listeners

Read Mark 6:30-35 and Psalm 25:12-14.

Questions for discussion

1. How can you tell that the people were eager to listen to Jesus?
2. Why do you think that so many people were eager to listen to Jesus?
3. Do you think that Jesus still speaks to people? If so, how?
4. How can Jesus tell if you are an eager listener?

5. Who does God speak to? (See Psalm 25:12-14.)

Key concepts

The people were so eager to hear Jesus teach that they went to a very remote place to catch up with Him. The Bible says that they ran to where He was going to be. They left their toys and games and their work and food to go and hear Jesus talking.

God still speaks to people today. He speaks to people who “fear him.” To fear God means to treat Him with great honour and respect. We can show God that we honour and respect Him by putting away our toys, turning off the television and choosing to spend time talking with Him, listening to Him and reading our Bibles. God is pleased when we honour Him in this way.

Knowing the Shepherd – Jesus

Read John 10:22-30.

Prior to reading, talk with your kids about their pets, or about a friend or relative's dog, cat or horse. Remind them that animals know their owners because they are familiar with their owner's voice.

Questions for discussion

1. If Mom or Dad (or Grandma or Grandpa, or another special friend) came in the front door and said, “Hello!” before you could see who was there, would you know who it was?
2. Why do you know these people's voices?
3. How do animals know their owners?
4. How can we follow Jesus?

Key concepts

Because animals know the voice of their owners, they willingly follow them. When people asked Jesus how they could know for sure if He was really from God, He said, “My sheep know My voice and they follow Me.” God knows we are His followers if we listen to Him and if we follow His commands. Just as you know _____'s voice because you have heard it often, in order to become familiar with God's voice, we must spend time with Him.

The transfiguration

Read Mark 9:2-13, and James 1:5.

Questions for discussion

1. What did God tell the people to do?
2. How did Jesus teach His disciples?
3. How did they learn from Him?
4. What did they do when they didn't understand?
5. What should we do when we don't understand something?

Key concepts

One time, Jesus took a few of His disciples up to the top of a mountain. A cloud came down and surrounded them and God spoke to them from out of the cloud. He said, "This is My Son, whom I love. Listen to Him."

God still wants us to listen to Jesus. We can read the stories that Jesus told to His disciples and learn from them just as His disciples did. Sometimes His disciples did not understand what He was saying and they would have to ask Him what He meant. When we don't understand things we can ask God, because He promises to give us wisdom when we ask for it (James 1:5).

Samuel listens to God

Read 1 Samuel 3.

Questions for discussion

1. Did God speak out loud to Samuel?
2. Who did Samuel think it was?
3. When did God speak to Samuel?
4. When do you think God might speak to you?

Key concepts

There was once a priest named Eli. When Eli was old, a boy named Samuel came to live in the temple with him and be his helper. One night, after Eli and Samuel had gone to bed, Samuel thought he heard Eli calling his name. He ran to Eli, but Eli told Samuel

he had not called him. The same thing happened two more times, then Eli realized it was God who had called Samuel's name.

When Samuel understood that God was calling him, he told God he was listening. Then God gave Samuel an important message. When we are quiet and tell God that we are willing to listen, He will speak to us, too.

Closed ears and hard hearts

Read 2 Kings 21.

Questions for discussion

1. How do you feel when someone doesn't listen to you?
2. What did the people do to make God angry?
3. What did God say He would do as a result of the people not listening and obeying His commands?

Key concepts

God promised to care for the Israelites as long as they were careful to do everything He commanded them and to keep the whole law that He had given to Moses to give to them. One of these laws was, "You shall have no other gods before Me" (Deuteronomy 5:7).

When Manasseh was king of Israel, he led the people astray. He rebuilt altars to other gods that his father had previously destroyed. He even built altars to other gods right in God's temple. This made God angry. He was angry that the Israelites had not listened to Him and were not being careful to obey His commandments. He had no choice but to punish the Israelites for their sin (2 Kings 21:9). God said that He was going to send such disaster on them that "the ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle" (2 Kings 21:12).

Open ears and a soft heart

Read 2 Kings 22-23:25.

Questions for discussion

1. How old are you?

2. How old was Josiah when he became king of Israel?
3. Did he obey or disobey God?
4. What did Josiah do when he heard the “Book of the Law” (God’s directions) read aloud?
5. What did Josiah ask his helpers to do?
6. Why did God decide not to punish Israel during the time that Josiah was king?
7. What did Josiah do to lead the people in doing right?
8. What was special about Josiah?
9. What do you think God would say is special about you?
10. Do you think that God would say you have a soft heart?

Key concepts

Although Josiah was very young when he became king of Israel, he chose to obey God and His commands. He was eager to please God and was very sorry when he found out that Israel had not been obeying God’s commands. He served God with all his heart and soul and strength. He destroyed all of the places where the Israelites were worshipping idols and other gods. The Bible says that neither before nor after Josiah was there a king who so wholeheartedly followed God. Josiah had a soft heart and did his very best to honour God.

Closed ears and stubborn hearts

Read Isaiah 30:1-21.

Questions for discussion

1. What did the people do to make God angry?
2. What did God say He would do to the people who chose not listen and obey His commands?
3. Do your parents give you a warning before disciplining you?

4. Does God act in the same way?
5. If you are sorry, do your parents forgive you?
6. What did God say He was going to do and would do?

Key concepts

God was not pleased with the people of Israel because they were being stubborn and doing their own thing instead of looking to God for direction. They were rebellious, deceitful and unwilling to listen to the Lord’s instruction. God warned them that because of their behaviour He was going to allow their sin to “shatter” their lives. The amazing thing about God is that He never gives up on us – He wants to be gracious and to show compassion. When we turn from our sinful ways and repent of our sin, God promises to give us guidance, saying “**This is the way; walk in it**” (Isaiah 30:21).

Joseph and Mary listen to an angel

Read Matthew 2:13-23.

Questions for discussion

1. Why do you think parents instruct kids not to pet strange dogs?
2. What other kinds of advice do people give you to help protect you from harm?
3. What advice or warning did the angel give Mary and Joseph?
4. What would have happened to them if they had not listened to the angel of the Lord?
5. Have your parents given you advice that you would rather not obey?
6. What could happen to you if you did not follow their advice?

Key concepts

Parents give children advice in order to protect them from harm. For example, if you listen to your parents’ advice about not eating mushrooms in the forest, you can avoid getting sick or dying from one that may be poisonous. When Jesus was very young, an angel

came to Mary and Joseph and told them to leave Bethlehem and go to Egypt, or their son Jesus might be killed (Matthew 2:13). If they had not listened to the angel, they would have still been in Bethlehem when Herod sent soldiers to kill all the baby boys. Children can benefit from listening to the wise advice their parents give them, just as Mary and Joseph listened to the angel's directions. It's important to listen to God and to your parents.

Creative discipline

Have you stopped to think of all the ways improved attentiveness will help your children? They will enjoy more positive relationships with others – their teachers, their friends and other relatives. This, in turn, will build self-confidence and self-esteem.

As you use these ideas to tackle the unpleasant task of disciplining your children, keep the end results in mind. You are not just correcting your kids' behaviour; you are offering your children a happier future.

Biblical basis

Isaiah 66:2-4 “. . . This is the one I esteem: he who is contrite and humble in spirit, and trembles at My Word. . . . They have chosen their own ways, and their souls delight in their abominations; so I also will choose harsh treatment for them and will bring upon them what they dread. For when I called, no one answered, when I spoke, no one listened. They did evil in My sight and chose what displeases Me.”

Suggested disciplinary action

To help impress upon your child a sense of the importance of being attentive to God and to parents, do as Isaiah 66:4 suggests: “. . . choose harsh treatment for them and bring on them what they dread.” This is the way God gave the Israelites a wake-up call on the importance of listening. When you call and no one answers, or when you speak and no one listens, this is inattentiveness.

For each child, “harsh treatment” and “what they dread” will be very personal. Speaking firmly to one child may bring him/her to tears, whereas another child will need more severe intervention. One child may dread going to bed early, while a sibling

may dread missing dessert. Ask God what form of discipline will work most effectively with your child.

Second, you may wish to spend time with your child reading Scripture passages that focus on the awe of God and talk of the “fear of the Lord.” (Some additional passages you could use are Isaiah 45:5-12, Isaiah 46:9-10, Isaiah 40:21-26). The emphasis of your discussion should be that when we truly revere someone, we listen when they speak.

The key message to convey to your child is this: One of God's commands is for children to obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1). In order to obey we must first listen; inattentiveness precedes disobedience. Choosing not to listen to parental instructions is directly related to disobeying God's command that children are to obey their parents.

Affirmation

Affirm your child through assuring them that God is pleased when they are careful listeners. Assure your child that you believe that he/she is a child who wants to be, and can be, an attentive listener. Pray together, asking that God will help you both to grow in this area. Remind your child that as they learn to pay attention, they will become wise.

Proverbs 1:5-7 “Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance – for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.”

Proverbs 22:17-18 “Pay attention and listen to the sayings of the wise; apply your heart to what I teach, for it is pleasing when you keep them in your heart and have all of them ready on your lips.”

Isaiah 48:17-18 “This is what the Lord says – your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: ‘I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go. If only you had paid attention to My commands, your peace would have been like a river, your righteousness like the waves of the sea.’ ”

Hands-on options

Practicing listening skills can be loads of fun! Try some of these activities, then look for ways to adapt some of your family's favourite games to encourage your children to learn to listen closely.

Pass It On game

physical activity

To play the game Pass It On, stand or sit in a circle. One person begins the game by thinking of a short phrase, then whispering the phrase into the ear of the person standing or sitting beside him/her. That person then whispers it to the next person and so on. The last person says aloud what they heard whispered into their ear. Finally, the first person tells what he/she whispered in the first place.

Play for as long as you like. If you have a small group of only a few players, repeat the phrase around the circle several times before sharing it aloud.

For a more energetic game, have the players run a certain distance or complete a physical challenge before they whisper to the next person. This adds a memory component to the game as well.

Candid camera

any time

Do your children often defend their inattentiveness with the excuse, "But I didn't hear you"? This activity will help remind your children not to "tune you out."

Surreptitiously video each child while your spouse, friend or relative is making a request. Capture examples of each child ignoring the request. Try to capture occasions when your children were quick to hear and obey, too. (Alternatively, make an audio recording. Small hand-held tape recorders for grocery lists and other reminders are available for minimal cost.)

After recording, play the conversations back to your kids. Discuss what they did right, and how they can respond more promptly in the future.

Name that tune

drive time or any time

Have your children listen to music, then ask them to identify the song. Use a CD player, or play songs on a

musical instrument. If you are driving in the car, hum familiar songs or listen to a CD.

Fun with listening exercises

drama / role play

Introduce extra hilarity into your listening exercises by throwing some "curve balls" at your kids, rewarding them for following instructions. For example, you might say something like, "Place your ear on the table if you would like chocolate ice cream for dessert. Place your chin on the table if you would prefer vanilla ice cream."

Freeze-frame game

physical activity

To play this game, invite your children run and dance around until you call "Freeze-frame." They must immediately stop what they are doing, freeze in position and listen to you. Have some fun two-liner jokes ready to tell them each time they stop and listen. If you play this game often, your children will be prepared to stop what they are doing and listen whenever you call "Freeze frame!"

Animal Hide and Seek

physical activity

Have your children cover their eyes. Instruct them not to open their eyes until they hear you making an animal noise. Explain that you will make the animal noise very quietly at first. Hide somewhere and make your peep/squeak/whine/bark softly, gradually becoming louder. Reverse roles and play until everyone has had a turn to hide.

Your children may wish to wear the animal hats described in the **kick-off craft**.

Storytime listening exercise

drama / role play

During a family meal or while driving in the car, take turns telling a story. When the story is finished, have someone else summarize the story. Talk about how much we appreciate it when others listen to our stories.

When it is your turn to tell a story, you might choose to tell the following story to help your children understand the importance of listening. Follow up with the questions for discussion afterwards.

Once upon a time there was a little boy who did not like to listen to his mother or father. They had given him some wise advice. They told him that if he were to run onto the street he could be hit by a car and get hurt very badly. One day he was playing in front of his house and chased a ball (or butterfly) out onto the street. His mom called out, “Stop!” but the boy did not listen. Instead he ran right in front of a car. It could not stop and it ran right into him. He was hurt so badly that he almost died. If he had listened to his parents he would not have been hurt.

Questions for discussion

- How do we feel when others don’t listen?
- What things did you do to help you remember the story so that you could repeat it?
- What else can we do to become better listeners?

Treasure hunt

physical activity

Special clues leading to “noisy” appliances and other items in your home are the basis for this treasure hunt. Place the clues (provided below) and hide the “treasure” before beginning your hunt. The treasure can be anything you choose, but hide it with a Bible to illustrate that the treasure represents wisdom. Explain to your children that in order to find the treasure, they must listen to each clue carefully.

To begin, read the “fridge” clue aloud. When the hunters arrive at the fridge, they should find the “washing machine” clue hidden on the fridge and so on. The hunt should eventually end up at the final destination where the treasure is hidden. If you have younger children, you may choose to give them a hint by telling them that all the clues are hidden on things that make noise.

Use these clues, or make up your own:

- **Fridge:** “I might buzz, but I’m not a bee. I keep your food fresh and cool, you see.”
- **Washing machine:** “Swish, swirl, swish. I use water for cleaning clothes, not fish.”

- **Family pet:** “My friendly bark means, ‘Please take me to the park!’ ” or, “My friendly ‘Meow’ means ‘Please play with me now!’ ”
- **TV / VCR:** “People moving on my screen, talking, laughing – it’s a scene.”
- **Computer:** “Whirs and hums my sounds might be; I can say anything, just program me.”
- **Toilet:** “Swish and swirl, but there’s no rush – my water is new with every flush.”
- **Furnace:** “Sometimes I grumble and sometimes I moan, but really I’m happy heating your home.”
- **Dishwasher:** “I make splishes, splashes and some swishes. My job is washing dirty dishes.”
- **Stereo / CD player:** “Playing tunes is the name of my game, loud or soft and wild or tame.”

After your children have found the treasure, take time to review the concept that wisdom is the treasure God offers to all who will listen to Him.

Questions for discussion

- What were you searching for with such passion?
- What special treasure does the Bible talk about?
- Will you listen for advice and instruction from God as carefully as you listened to your treasure hunt clues?

Relevant Scripture

Proverbs 2:1-6 “My son, if you accept My words and store up My commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom and from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.”

Radio frequencies

drive time or any time

While listening to the radio, intentionally tune the radio poorly. Then use the following questions to initiate discussion.

Questions for discussion

- Is it enjoyable to watch or listen when things are not tuned correctly? Why not?
- When you are communicating with others, are they always tuned-in to your communication?
- Does this make communicating with them easy or difficult?
- Can you hear what one DJ is saying if you are tuned-in to another frequency?
- How can we tune-in to what God wants to tell us?
- How do we tune out the things that Satan wants us to believe?

To further develop this concept, ask your kids to list some things Satan would want them to believe and compare their answers with what God says instead (i.e. Satan says it is OK to lie if it is only a small lie. What does God say?) Close your time by praying and asking God to help you tune in to His voice.

Telephone fun

science with a twist

This activity helps illustrate the direct connection we have with God when we pray. The concept is based on Psalm 66:18-19.

You will need two clean, empty tin cans or paper cups, an awl or nail (to punch a hole in the tin can) and a 10- to 12-foot length of string. Kite string is ideal.

- 1** Be sure that the tin cans have no sharp edges. Punch a hole through the base of each tin can. The hole should be just large enough for the string to fit through.
- 2** Have your children help you thread one end of the string through the hole in one of the cans.

Tie some knots at the end of the string to keep it from being pulled back through the hole when the string is pulled tight.

- 3** Thread the other end of the string through the base of the second can and tie it off. Now your “telephone” is complete.
- 4** Have each child hold one can and instruct them to pull gently, making the string taut. Let them take turns talking into one can and listening with the other can. As one person speaks into one can, the sound vibrations travel through the string to the other can.
- 5** Point out that when one person speaks, the other person needs to be listening, or communication cannot take place. Explain that talking to God also works this way. He listens when we pray. When we talk with God, we also need to take time to be quiet to listen to what God wants to say to us. Communicating is all about taking turns speaking and listening.
- 6** Have your children try to use the tin can telephone while you are holding the string with your hand. This stops the vibrations from travelling through the string, preventing the children from hearing each other. Liken this to cherishing (or holding on to) sin in our hearts. Psalm 66:18 says that when we cherish sin in our hearts, God does not listen. God is always ready to listen when we want to confess our sins.
- 7** After you have had fun playing with the tin can telephone, decorate the exterior of the cans. Add phrases like, “God hears me when I pray,” and “I can hear God when He speaks to me.”
- 8** End your time by letting your children know that there is no need for string or a tin can telephone when they want to talk to God. They can talk to God anywhere, at any time.

Relevant Scripture

Psalm 66:18-19 “If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; but God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer.”

1 John 5:14 “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”

Animal ears sure can hear

getting into nature

Observe a cat or another animal stalking its prey. Point out its perked ears. Also notice the animal’s eyes: they will be very focused on the object it is stalking. Perked ears and focused eyes are signs of attentiveness. Explain that, just as the cat must be attentive to gain its dinner, we must be attentive in order to learn things.

Read Proverbs 2:1-6 and Ezekiel 40:4. Identify the senses that the Bible suggests we use to gain wisdom. Then ask the following questions.

Questions for discussion

- Would coyotes/cats/wolves (list a predator) find a meal if they did not use their eyes and their ears?
- What might you miss out on in life if you are not attentive?
- What animal would you like to pretend to be? (Later, when a child is not listening, call them by their animal name as well as their given name to gently remind them of their intention. You might, for example, say something like: “Mike coyote, are you paying attention with your eyes and your ears?”)

Relevant Scripture

Proverbs 2:1-6 “My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as silver and search for it as hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom and from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.”

Ezekiel 40:4 “The man said to me, ‘Son of man, look with your eyes and hear with your ears and pay attention to everything I am going to show you, for

that is why you have been brought here. Tell the house of Israel everything you see.’”

Eyes and ears in action

getting into nature

Another way to have your children hone their listening skills is to have them practice using their sense of hearing outdoors. If possible, find a location away from the urban buzz. Have your children close their eyes and listen. After listening for a minute, have them call out what they heard so that you can record it. Repeat this step two to four times, then have them open their eyes and see if they can find everything that they heard.

Recommended resources

For a list of children’s stories that reinforce the theme of this lesson, consult the home page for the **attentiveness** lesson at Kidsofintegrity.com.

Planning card for attentiveness

point form

God's way

I am demonstrating godly character when:

- I listen carefully to God
- I listen carefully and look at others when they speak
- I listen and follow instructions

My way

When I am tempted to:

- ignore God's instructions
- not give my full attention to others when they speak
- insist on doing things my own way

And God is pleased!

I know that I need to go to God for help.

This week, we will focus on learning about attentiveness by:

Date complete:

Daily reminders: PRAY! | Speak words of blessing and affirmation | Review memory verse

Memory verse:

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Planning card for attentiveness

calendar form

God's way

I am demonstrating godly character when:

- I listen carefully to God
- I listen carefully and look at others when they speak
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When I am tempted to:

- ignore God's instructions
- not give my full attention to others when they speak
- insist on doing things my own way

And God is pleased!

I know that I need to go to God for help.

This week, we will focus on learning about attentiveness by:

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Daily reminders: **PRAY!** | Speak words of blessing and affirmation | Review memory verse

Memory verse: