



ORANGE GROUP ADDITIONAL IDEAS

ICE BREAKERS

Orange Group Leader: Please read the following suggested ice breaking activities for your first meeting. Choose the icebreaker that you believe will work best for your group.

Nonverbal Introductions

Have each person (children & adults) state his/her name. Then, similar to a game of charades, have everyone (even the children) take a turn to introduce him/her self by pantomiming something about themselves, without talking. Work as one big group so everyone is trying to guess what the pantomime clue means. (i.e. someone likes to run, play baseball, sews, likes to read, etc.)

Balloon Bounce

How many times in a row can you bounce a balloon off your head? Stand kids in a circle and have one child go at a time OR have all the children take turns bouncing the balloon without letting it touch the ground. Have each child keep his/her own score. Whoever wins gets to take home as many balloons as his/her parents will allow.

MAIN IDEAS FOR THE NIGHT

God hates it when we complain because it means that we are only thinking about ourselves instead of all that we have to be thankful for. Complaining drains energy and life away from our families, community group, classrooms, workplaces, and church.

KEY VERSE:

Do everything without complaining and arguing, so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people.
Philippians 2:14-15 (NLT)

ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT THE MAIN IDEAS:

GIVE AND TAKE WORDS (You will need at least one balloon for this activity.)

Invite the group to talk about specific, recurring words, actions, or experiences at home that add energy/joy to the family. (Ex. When a child is asked to pick up her toys and she immediately responds with “Yes Mommy!” and obeys.) Invite others to add examples of their own.

NOTE: As examples are given, add air to the balloon and show that it’s getting larger!

Next, give specific examples of words, actions, or experiences that sap energy/joy from the family. (Ex. When a child complains about having to clean up, or do homework, or brush teeth, etc.) Again, invite examples from the group.

NOTE: As these negative examples are given, deflate the balloon by pinching and stretching it’s nozzle wide, allowing the escaping air to make a shrieking sound. Tell everyone that that is what whining and complaining sounds like to everyone else and to God!

Pray together as a group that God will help us this week to not be complainers, but instead to do and say things that add joy and energy to our families and to others.



BE A LIGHT (You will need a flashlight for this activity)

As a parent I have heard my share of complaints. Why do kids want to argue when they are in the back seat of a car? How many of you have argued with a sibling during a family trip? It happens a lot, doesn't it? I have to confess, as a fellow human being, I have gotten in many arguments over the years and I have done my share of complaining. However, now that I know how God feels about them I try very hard to do it less. Does that mean that I roll over and let people walk all over me? No, but you can stand up for yourself without being ugly about it. And sometimes you just have to learn not to complain.

Let's read Philippians 2:14-15 together. (Read the verse with the kids.)

This is really an amazing couple of verses. **See how the bible mentions shining like the stars in the sky? I've got a flashlight right here and I want to demonstrate to you what I think these verses mean.** (*Turn on the flashlight and ask a helper to dim the lights.*)

Look at that. Let's pretend that this dark room is the whole world. It's a dark place and people have to walk around in the dark all the time. You know why it is so dark? Because everyone argues and grumbles and complains all the time. Except for a few people. They are the children of God. (*Walk around the room shining your flashlight.*) Wherever they go, people can see. It's good to have a child of God near you except when they begin to argue too.

(*Flick the light off and on.*) Looks like Christians are arguing! Oh no! You know what that means? (*Turn the light off for a few seconds then turn it back on.*) Thank goodness! They must have made up. (*Ask the helper to turn the lights on.*)

Okay everyone, this is your challenge: Don't argue and complain. When you do you make the world a dark place. Keep the light shining, y'all!

BE THANKFUL & GIVE GOD A CHANCE

Who has ever complained about anything? What kinds of things do you complain about? (food, chores, etc.) Why is complaining a sin (something that displeases God)?

God rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. God planned to bring his people through the wilderness into a land that was very rich with food and provisions. But they angered God by complaining. Even though they had seen God part the Red Sea miraculously and destroy Egypt's army, they quickly forgot God's victories that often came just in time.

Because of their complaining and disbelief, the Red Sea generation wandered in the desert for 40 years until they all died. They missed out on the wonderful things God had in store for them. The notable exceptions were Joshua and Caleb who brought back a positive report of the land God had promised.

Complaining about your circumstances is a sin because you're so focused on yourself instead of realizing all the good that God has already done. **God takes complaining very seriously because our complaining words show that we have unthankful hearts.** Besides that, when you complain (like the Israelites did) you don't give God a chance to do what He has planned to do.

Let's memorize this truth: "*Do everything without complaining and arguing*" (Philippians 2:14).

Ask this question: This week, will you give God an opportunity to work on your behalf by trusting him, or miss out on his very best by complaining?



Orange Group Leader: *The following idea will take longer to develop but is an excellent way to capture the main ideas regarding complaining. You will need to do a little bit of craftwork ahead of time, but the results can be fantastic. You will also need some sweet and sour candies that are safe for everyone to use.*

THANKFUL HEARTS & MOUTHS

Today, we are going to talk about complaining and what God thinks about complaining. I know how easy it is to complain because I do it too; but we are going to learn today what complaining shows to others about us and how we can keep from complaining.

Our main verse today is a command from God in Philippians 2:14:

"Do everything without complaining and arguing..."

God tells us that we are to do everything without complaining or arguing.

We see many examples in the Bible of people who complained and how God was upset with them for their complaining, but the stories that I think of most of the time when I think about complaining are the stories of the Israelites.

In Exodus 14-17, we see several of these examples of the complaining Israelites. God had just rescued the Israelites from Pharaoh, and they had crossed the Red Sea on dry ground. They sang songs and praised God for His miraculous works, but they quickly forgot God's goodness when hard times hit. They soon ran out of their food and instead of praying to God, the One who delivered them out of the hand of Pharaoh, they complained.

Listen to Exodus 16:2-3:

In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. 3 The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death."

God did miracles several times when they complained: He gave them water at least three times, He gave them manna every morning, He made sure their clothes never wore out, yet they still complained. But because of this complaining, God told Moses He was going to kill them all and start over, but Moses begged God to spare their lives and God spared them. **God takes complaining very seriously.**

Do you know what our complaining words show? Our complaining words show that we have unthankful hearts. Luke 6:45 says:

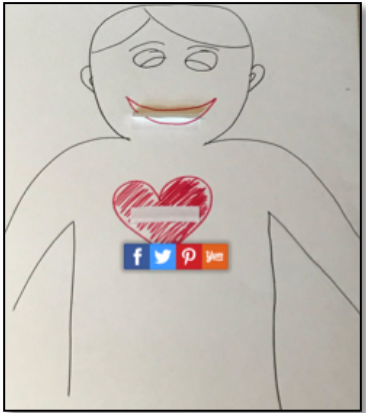
A good man says good things. These come from the good that is stored up in his heart. An evil man says evil things. These come from the evil that is stored up in his heart. A person's mouth says everything that is in their heart.

Many times, you may have heard other people say something mean, and then they say, "I didn't mean it." or "I was just joking." No! This cannot be true! Our speech shows what is in our heart. So if we are complaining all the time, then we have unthankful hearts, or bitter and sour hearts.

When we have a thankful, tender, and obedient heart, then we will speak the way God wants us to speak. The verse in Luke says that we will speak out what is good. When we have a good heart, we will have sweet words; but when we have unthankful and evil hearts, we will bring forth evil – or bitter or sour words.



(Here is when you do the object lesson. Draw a “person on a piece of poster board. Make only the heart and mouth red, as you want them to remember that our speech comes from our heart. Make a slit in the mouth and 2 parallel slits in the heart about 1” apart. Through the slits pull a long piece of paper taped together with 13 comments written on it.)



SAY: Here you see my little person. What are the only two things on my person that are red?

Yes, the heart and the mouth. We are going to see if this person has a good heart or a bad heart by what comes out of his mouth. If it is sweet words, then he has a good heart. If it is bitter or complaining words, then he has a bad heart. Who would like to be first?

(Invite the children to come up and pull the piece of paper out of the mouth until the next line, and read the sentence. If it was a sweet, kind sentence, then give them some Skittles. If it was a mean, complaining sentence, give them a Warheads Extreme Sour piece of candy.) Below are the sentences you can include on the paper:

1. Why do I always have to do the dishes? I hate doing the dishes! (Complaining/bad heart; Warheads)
2. Sure, I'll do the dishes! (sweet spirit/heart; Skittles)
3. I hate sitting next to him! He's so annoying! (Complaining, unkind heart; Warheads)
4. I'm so bored! There's nothing fun to do! (Complaining, unthankful heart; Warheads)
5. You can sit here even though it's a better seat. I'll go sit next to the new girl. (Kind heart; Skittles)
6. I'll stop watching TV to go help my mom with dinner. (Helpful, sweet heart; Skittles)
7. Even though we lost the game, I'm thankful I could play and that I did my best with a good attitude. (Thankful heart, Skittles)
8. It's his fault that I got in trouble because he talked to me first. It's not fair! (Complaining heart; Warheads)
9. I don't like my teacher. She's always getting me in trouble and is so mean! (Complaining heart; Warheads)
10. Church is so boring. I have to sit with a bunch of babies! (Complaining heart; Warheads)
11. Singing songs to the old people at the nursing home is not my favorite thing to do, but I'm glad we can bring some joy to the older people's lives. (Admitting that you don't love something is okay as long as you don't complain and have a bad attitude; Skittles.)
12. I feel so sick! Now I can't go to the party! Why am I always the one who gets sick? It's no fair! (Complaining heart; Warheads)
13. I am so sad that I am sick and have to miss the party. I'm going to pray for my friend to have a good party and thank God that I am normally healthy. (Sweet, thankful heart even though he is sad; Skittles)



ASK: How do we have a good, not complaining, heart?

We need to focus our hearts on God's goodness and on being thankful. When bad things happen, see what we can find that is good instead of complaining about the bad.



Our complaining words show we are selfish.

The Israelites complained about how *they* didn't have food or *they* didn't have water. Usually when we complain, we say words like "I" or "me" a lot. We are focused on ourselves. When you are tempted to complain about how bad you have it, see if you can help someone else or be a blessing to someone else.

Philippians 2:4 tells us: "*None of you should look out just for your own good. Each of you should also look out for the good of others.*"

How do we not have a selfish heart? Focus on others.

Our words and lives are either a good or a bad testimony to those who hear us and watch us. Would your friends or grandparents or family members want to be Christians if the Christians they know are always complaining and being grouchy? Philippians 2:14-15 says:

Do everything without complaining and arguing, so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people.

We should shine as lights to the unsaved around us.

So what should we do when we are tempted to complain?

Focus on letting your light shine on others when you are tempted to complain!

The next time any of us is tempted to complain – and we all will be tempted to complain – remember to instead find something to thank God for, see how you can be a blessing to someone else (or don't focus on yourself and your bad situation), and remember that others are watching and we want to glorify God with our words and our actions.