

## **Murder (in thought and words) (Matthew 5:21-26)**

*Checklist:* - pencil and paper for person for “Murder in Thought and Words”

### **1. Murderer’s Sentence:**

*Have youth get into groups of 3-5. Tell them to come up with what type of punishment a person should get if they murder someone. Then have a rep. from each group share what they came up with to the whole class. Then...*

*Ask:* Why is murder such a big deal?

### **2. Murder in the Heart:**

*Read Matthew 5:21-22 (while youth follow along in Bibles).*

*Explain:*

- “Anger” seems to mean “malice that is nursed inwardly”<sup>1</sup>
- Jesus seems to be saying that whoever has hateful, held-onto anger or insults someone is like a murderer.
- I John 3:15a also says “Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer” (NIV).

### **3. Murder in Thought and Words:**

*Give each youth a piece of paper and pencil. Have them think of a time when something someone said hurt them deeply and write it down. (Let them know they’re not going to share it with the class.) Then...*

*Ask:* Why is hateful anger and insulting people like murder?

*Explain:*

- Words are powerful! Just like physical assault can hurt or kill our bodies, words can hurt and “kill” our hearts. They can hurt big time!
- So, here’s what we should do if we’ve hurt someone...

### **4. Reconciling:**

*Read Matthew 5:23-26 (while youth follow along)*

*Ask:* What do these verses tell us to do?

*Explain:*

- Seems God makes a big deal of making things right with others (vv 23-26).
- If you’ve hurt someone with your words, you should ask their forgiveness.
- And if you’ve hurt someone, you should ask for God’s forgiveness.
- And if someone has hurt you, you should forgive them, just like God’s forgiven you (if you are a Christian)!

### **5. We should love people and build them up!**

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<sup>1</sup> Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary: New Testament Volume 1* (Victor, 2001), 23.

- Instead of having hateful anger toward people, we should love them.
  - Jesus said we should even love our enemies and do good to them!
  - We can hate sin and disagree with people. But we should always love people, do our best be at peace with them, and even do good to them.
- Instead of tearing people down with our words, we should build them up.
  - Just like words are powerful to hurt people, they can be powerful to build them up too.
  - Don't flatter! But do honestly, lovingly encourage other people!

*Ask:* Can you think of any examples where words have helped build you or someone you know up?

## ***6. Application:***

*On the same paper they used earlier, have kids write down the name of one or two people that they need to ask forgiveness from because of what they said to them. Encourage them to do that!!*

## ***7. Closing Prayer***

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