

The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of purple line art. It features stylized flowers with multiple petals, some with centers, and various leaf shapes. These are connected by thin, winding vine-like lines. Interspersed throughout the pattern are small, solid purple circles of varying sizes, some arranged in short horizontal or vertical lines, and others scattered individually.

for  
**GIRLS**  
*Only!*  
DEVOTIONS



**CAROLYN LARSEN**

illustrated by  
**LEAH SUTHERLAND**



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For Cori and Mallory . . . my girls. You continue to teach  
me so much about living and loving.



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# Sticks and Stones

*The tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches. But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire.*

JAMES 3:5

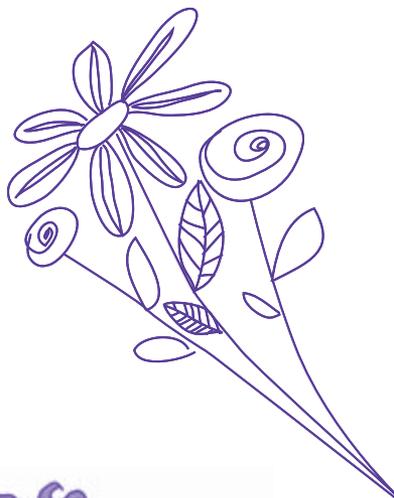


WHEN KARA CLOSED her eyes, she imagined flaming arrows flying through the air right at her. If she let herself think about the things Audrey and her friends had said, she could feel the arrows pierce right through her skin. “What’s wrong with your hair? Did you just roll out of bed or something?” “Where do you get your clothes? The secondhand reject shop?” They even said Kara was dumb because when Mrs. Taylor asked her to read out loud, she stumbled over some of the words. Kara *could* read—in fact, she could probably read better than anyone else in the class. But Audrey made her so nervous that she couldn’t get the words out.

For some reason, when Kara came to class midway through the year, Audrey decided she didn’t like her. Kara was so shocked by Audrey’s mean comments that tears rolled down her face before she could stop them. That was all Audrey needed to keep up the abuse. When she found out she could get away with bullying Kara, she did so every chance she got.

Some people only feel good about themselves when they are cutting others down. Maybe they don’t know how much their words hurt other people. Maybe they even think they are being funny. It’s no fun to be on the receiving end of sarcastic comments. The negative things settle into your heart and make it difficult to feel good about yourself.

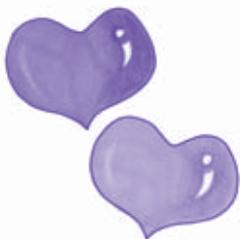
Most people don't realize how much their words affect others. But God knows that the things we say have the power to help or hurt people. We are encouraged in the Bible to speak kindly to each other. We are told to be careful how we speak to each other—to guard our tongues. Jesus taught that we should show love to others. A big part of showing love means being careful about what we say and thinking about how our words will make the other person feel.



# CHECKUP TIME

**On a scale of 1 to 5, how thoughtful are you in how you speak to others?**

- 1 = never**
- 2 = not very often**
- 3 = sometimes**
- 4 = most of the time**
- 5 = always**



I think about how my words will make others feel—before I say them.

**1 2 3 4 5**

I try to say things in a kind way, even when it's a difficult thing to talk about.

**1 2 3 4 5**

I make an effort to show God's love to others in all I do and say.

**1 2 3 4 5**

I ask God to help me always speak in love.

**1 2 3 4 5**

I try to be kind to everyone, not just my friends.

**1 2 3 4 5**

## KEY



**MOSTLY 1s** Uh-oh, you'd better stop and think about how you feel when someone speaks unkindly to you.

**MOSTLY 2s** You've taken some baby steps toward kindness. Keep moving in the right direction.

**MOSTLY 3s** Average is the best we can say. Not bad, but could be better.

**MOSTLY 4s** You're showing some Christlike attitudes and actions. Great job.

**MOSTLY 5s** Excellent! You share God's love by how you speak to and treat others.

## THINGS TO DO

- ❑ Think of someone your group of friends has treated badly in the past. Talk with your friends about one genuinely nice thing you can do for that person.
- ❑ List some good qualities of a person you're tempted to speak unkindly to.
- ❑ Say at least one kind thing every day . . . to a different person each day.
- ❑ Memorize a Bible verse about speaking kindly, such as Psalm 39:1 or Colossians 3:17. Post it on your mirror or in your locker, and say it to yourself several times a day.



## THINGS TO REMEMBER

Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.

**HEBREWS 10:24**

If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. **MATTHEW 5:47**

I will watch what I do and not sin in what I say.

**PSALM 39:1**

The lips of the godly speak helpful words, but the mouth of the wicked speaks perverse words.

**PROVERBS 10:32**

Whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father. **COLOSSIANS 3:17**

*If someone were to pay you ten cents for every kind word you ever spoke and collect five cents for every unkind word, would you be rich or poor?*

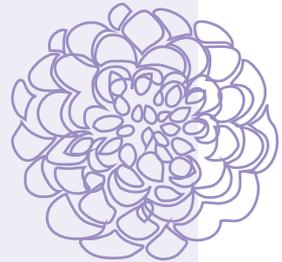
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*As perfume to the flower, so is kindness to speech.*

KATHERINE FRANCKE

*No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.*

AESOP



# Family Night

*May the Lord make  
your love for one  
another and for  
all people grow  
and overflow.*

1 THESSALONIANS 3:12



HALEY WOULD DENY it if any of her friends asked, but seriously, she thought Friday night was the best night of the week! She looked forward to it—not just because the weekend meant no school. She loved Friday night because it was family night. Phone calls went to voice mail, the computer was turned off, no friends came over, and everyone stayed home.

Family night was just for the family. They had pizza or hot dogs for dinner. Then they played games or watched a movie together. It was always something different. But the truth was, it didn't really matter what they did. The best part was just that they were all together: Mom, Dad, Haley, her sister, and her brother. No matter how the night began, they usually ended up laughing really hard. Dad talked in his silly cartoon voice, and sometimes Mom laughed so hard she cried. It was actually pretty fun.

Did you know that families were God's idea? He knew that it would be good for you to have a family to love you and support you—no matter what! Some families are made up of a mom and a dad and their children. Some families are just one parent and the kids, or a parent and a step-parent and the kids. Some families are related genetically, and some are connected by adoption. Some families even include grandmas and grandpas or aunts and uncles and cousins.

Sometimes you may get frustrated with the

rules at your house or with the chores you have to do. Or maybe you have a little brother who is a total pain or an older sister who is sometimes bossy. But the bottom line is that God gave you your family—whatever your family is like—to love and encourage you through good times and bad . . . and so you can do the same for each of them!



# CHECKUP TIME

**On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you appreciate your family?**

- 1 = never**
- 2 = not very often**
- 3 = sometimes**
- 4 = most of the time**
- 5 = always**



I treat my brothers and sisters with respect and love.

**1 2 3 4 5**

I obey the rules that have been set up at my house and do my chores without complaining.

**1 2 3 4 5**

I speak respectfully to my parents and grandparents.

**1 2 3 4 5**

I encourage my family members when they try new things.

**1 2 3 4 5**

I pray for my family each day.

**1 2 3 4 5**

## KEY



**MOSTLY 1s** Whoa, you'd better read this devotion again and think seriously about how much your family means to you.

**MOSTLY 2s** At least you know you *have* a family, but you've got some work to do.

**MOSTLY 3s** Just average. You can do better.

**MOSTLY 4s** Not bad. You appreciate being a part of a family.

**MOSTLY 5s** Excellent! You love and respect your family. Keep it up!

## THINGS TO DO

- ❑ Do one chore this week without being asked, to show your parents how much you appreciate them.
- ❑ Suggest a family night for your family and plan out the first one.
- ❑ Think of two nice things to say about each person in your family—then say them!
- ❑ Thank God for your family and all they do for you.



## THINGS TO REMEMBER

God himself has taught you to love one another. **1 THESSALONIANS 4:9**

My child, listen when your father corrects you. Don't neglect your mother's instruction. **PROVERBS 1:8**

A wise child accepts a parent's discipline; a mocker refuses to listen to correction. **PROVERBS 13:1**

Honor your father and mother, as the LORD your God commanded you. **DEUTERONOMY 5:16**

Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. **EPHESIANS 6:1**

*Look for the good, not the evil, in the conduct of members of the family.*  
JEWISH PROVERB

*You don't choose your family. They are God's gift to you, as you are to them.*  
DESMOND TUTU

*A brother is a friend provided by nature.*  
LEGOUVE PERE

