

A Powerful Prayer to Help Your Child Learn That Words Can Hurt—and Heal

“Sticks and stones may break your bones, but words will never hurt you.”

I don't think there was ever a saying that's more untrue. Words do matter, and words can inflict some of the most intense, long-lasting damage we'll ever see. And the hurt caused by words can seldom be smoothed over and healed quickly. This type of injury usually has a long recovery time.

As a parent, some of my greatest challenges were how to help my sons process unkind and even vicious verbal attacks. Sometimes the speaker intended to lash out and cause as much hurt as possible. In other instances, the words were spoken in haste or without thought. It didn't always matter which situation I faced, the devastating effects of hurtful words left wounds that took a lot to heal.

I've tried to instill wisdom into my kids regarding words. I want them to understand that the labels and accusations from others don't define who they are. And on the flip side of the coin, I've tried to help them see that the words they use to other people carry weight and can sometimes matter deeply to that person.

Here's one of the prayers I've used when I encounter this situation.

Dear Lord,

You are the Creator of life. You spoke the world into existence through Your words. Help me know as I try to impart to my child the wisdom of words. There are two sides to

words—the speaking and the hearing.

Help me teach my child to measure his words. Let him take the lessons he's learned receiving harsh words to temper his own. Give him a heart to encourage others. Grow his ability to be kind until that is one of the adjectives others use to describe him.

On the other hand, keep him from defining himself through the hurtful words of others. Don't let him allow their labels—spoken with malice or in haste—become the adjectives he uses to describe himself.

Most of all, lead my child to Your words. Let him breathe them in and accept them as the truth by which he measures every aspect of his life. Remind him that You find him valuable and that Your love for him knows no bounds. Amen. {eo}

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