
Session: Body of Words

Description

Years ago, when our kids were growing up, we used to travel to a place called Rancho Sordo Mudo (RSM) in Mexico. Many schools in Mexico don't offer any type of Special Education. RSM was a place where any deaf child could attend school (they board there), get an excellent education and learn both ASL and MSL. Many kids arrive there with no language other than pointing, but by the time they leave high school they are fluent and have learned a trade.

The first year we went, none of us were fluent in sign language and we were nervous about this. But the children welcomed us in by playing with us and it turned out that no words were necessary. All it took was a welcoming smile and a sense of fun. As we played with them, we began to pick up little bits of sign language and any walls we arrived with came down.

Good hospitality includes the ability to abandon preconceived ideas about people and simply engage with joy. Benedictine Monasteries exist today, and you can visit, or stay for a spiritual retreat. Even though children no longer live there, guests are welcomed with a sense of childlike joy. You will often see the monks whistling or singing while they work in the garden. They will smile and wave at guests as they arrive.

Their exuberance is offered to anyone entering their doors including the marginalized, poor or weak. Every traveler is considered a brother or sisters in Christ and are extended a gracious and respectful welcome. They believe that we are transformed by one another and thus are open to engaging new perspectives and ideas.

For me, this sense of wonder and openness aligns so well with the values of millennials and generation Z. These upcoming generations don't tend to create clear, delineated lines or boxes, defining terms like religion, church, spirituality or art, politics, culture. For them there is a sense of merging because they see the connections that previous generations may have missed. They are interested in God and Jesus, but more focused on relationship versus religiosity. They tend to think globally and holistically.¹ This bodes well for a sense of openness and learning as we reach out to others.

This week you are going to play! In order to practice the idea of hospitality through play, you are going to do an activity called Body of Words.

If you have family members with limited mobility, or those who might be extremely shy you can do this activity by using only your hands versus your whole body, or by using your hands to write on someone's back while they write on paper. If at all possible I encourage you, however, to let down your walls and go for it!

Practice

HOSPITALITY



Materials Needed

Body of Words Sample List, space to lay on the floor (you may need to move furniture), a timer.

Handouts

Sample Body of Words list

Body of words

Read aloud the quote or scripture

“Play gives children a chance to practice what they are learning.” *Mr. Rogers*

Questions for discussion (10 minutes)

1. Who is the most joyful person you know? How do you know they are joyful?
2. When was the last time you played? Describe the experience. Were you distracted or was it fun? What do you think stops you from playing more?
3. What do play and joy have to do with good hospitality? Do you think God likes it when we play? Does God have anything to do with joy? Do you think God laughs? Explain.
4. Do you think other people can feel it when you have walls up? What are some behaviors (in other people) that make you want to spend time with them? Explain. Who are your favorite people to spend time with? Explain why.

Rule of life activity

Body of words

1. In this activity, you are going to make words by only using your bodies.
2. As a reminder you can adapt accordingly based on your family's needs such as using your finger to write on someone's back or shaping your fingers (no talking and no using your finger to write the letters in the air) to spell your word.
3. Start by printing out one copy of the **Sample Body of Words List**.
4. This list is only a guide. I suggest that each person (or team) select their own word having something to do with hospitality or play.
5. Decide if you want to do this activity individually or in teams.
6. Choose a fair method to decide which family-member (or team) will go first and which order the rest of the family will go in.
7. Either individually, or as a team decide on your hospitality or play-related) word without letting the rest of family know what word you have chosen.
8. Set a timer for two minutes. (If you find this isn't long enough you can select a longer amount of time.)
9. Hit start on the timer, and without speaking - using only your bodies spell the word while the rest of the family guesses what

- your word is. If the family guesses your word within two minutes, you get one point. If the timer goes off and the word has not been guessed. It's the next person or team's turn.
10. Keep going until everyone has had a turn. Do as many rounds as you like. At the end, the person or team with the most points wins.

Examen

How did it go? Debrief highs and lows

1. Each person shares their favorite part of the conversation / activity and why.
 2. Each person shares their least favorite part and why.
 3. Did you do a Serving/Giving activity last week? How did it go?
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Serving /giving ideas for any time this week: Choose one or create your own. These can be done individually or as a group. You will be sharing your serving experience in the next session.

- Invite someone (or a group) over for a family game night.
- Gather any unused, or like-new games or toys you have in your home (or purchase one) and drop them off at a YWCA or women's shelter.
- Create joyful chalk messages or pictures on the sidewalks in your community.
- Coordinate a neighborhood BBQ or Ice Cream Social.
- Volunteer at a local retirement home to play board-games with seniors or host a seasonal craft activity there. Many residents love to have an Easter, Christmas or fall decoration to hang on their door.

ⁱ Anderson, Cameron J. *The Faithful Artist: a Vision for Evangelicalism and the Arts*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016, 228.