



TODAY'S TOPIC:

You are welcome to use this lesson to inspire spiritual conversation in your family or youth classroom. It is written for elementary age but could be adjusted as needed.

**THINKING JOB:** Ask a “thinking job question” to get everyone thinking about something pertinent to the lesson. This could be asked moments or hours before your conversation.

***How do you feel when someone smiles at you?***

**Lesson**

Materials	Things to Prepare	Today's Goal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pencils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write names on pencils if needed.</li> </ul>	Know the power of a smile.

**SMILES** – Ask kids to smile. Are there different kinds of smiles? Practice big smiles, small smiles, half smiles, open mouth smiles, closed mouth smiles, toothy smiles.

**ASK –**

- What are some things that make you smile?
- Can you choose whether or not to smile?
- Have you ever heard that it is harder (takes more muscles) to frown than to smile? Do you think that's true? (There's a lot of debate online but it is true!) Have everyone make a “UUU” (like in “huh” sound, which mimics the muscles of frowning. Now have everyone practice an “EEE” (as in “bee”) sound which mimics the muscles of smiling.
- Is smiling something we learn to do or something we automatically do (like blinking)? We don't know. Lots of debate about this. It is proven that when you smile, it actually reduces blood flow to your brain, making it cooler, which makes you happier. (Older kids: this fits with common expressions like “makes my blood boil” and “hot under the collar” when you're angry, and “chill out” to calm down.
- What are some reasons to smile?
- ✓ Act of smiling actually makes you feel better, even if you had to make yourself do it.

- ✓ When you smile, people smile back which makes you and them feel good. (Sometimes you can't help but smile back, we are biologically inclined to mimic a smile.)
- ✓ People treat you differently when you smile (usually better!)
- ✓ Feelings from smiling last a long time – longer than the smile.
- ✓ It's healthy – smiling relaxes the body, lowers your heart rate, lowers your blood pressure, reduces pain.

**ACTIVITY** - Have everyone put their pencil between their teeth like the bit for a horse (see picture). Have kids hold the stick in their mouths for 30-60 seconds if possible. Play a happy song for the 30-60 seconds. WHY? Holding a stick in your mouth forces it into a smile and even though it's forced, it makes you feel good. Plus it's funny, which makes you feel good. All the sticks/pencils were brand new and wiped off. Please put used pencils/sticks in the marked bag.



**AFFIRMATION** – I share my smile. repeat 4X

Note: Printable affirmations and coloring sheets for this lesson are available at <https://www.milehichurch.org/youth-family/> .