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Peer Pressure

Main idea

Jesus can help us to do what we should.

Questions answered

by this program

- What do I do when my friends are mean to me?
- How can I stand up to others?
- When should I do what others want me to?
- When should I not do what others want me to?

Bible Base

Romans 12:2; Proverbs 16:28; 17:9-17; 18:24; 22:24; 24:1

For the leader

Friendship can be negative as well as positive. Children need to learn how to handle these negative pressures and deal with them in positive ways.

Present Jesus to the children as someone who knows what it is like to be under pressure. He cares about them and will be with them as they go through difficult times in their friendships.

Jesus stood up to bullies (Luke 19:28-48; Mark 7:1-23). He cared about those who were being pushed around by others (John 4:1-42). He knows what it is to be let down by friends (Matt 26:14-16).

Open the pack

TASTE TEST

Why? To illustrate how easy it is to have our opinions changed by others.

Needed: *Small paper cups, two jugs marked Brand A and Brand B containing identical drink,*

Give everyone a taste from each jug and invite them to say which of two brands of drink they like best.

Beforehand, secretly ask a few influential people to deliberately choose brand A and subtly try to persuade the others to do the same one. Chances are the others will yield to this 'peer pressure' and choose Brand A.

Reveal that both drinks were the same and let people comment on the role of others in their choice.

Congratulate those who stuck to their own convictions.

FOLLOW THE LEADER

Why? To introduce the theme of doing what others do.

Appoint a leader and play 'Follow the Leader' moving around the room if possible or doing simple actions for the group to follow if in a confined space.

Dig in

WHAT DO YOU DO?

Why? To think about how our friends sometimes influence us to do things we don't want to do.

Needed: *A copy of Appendix 13 cut into 6 'Situation cards'.*

Ask volunteers to choose a card describing one of the situations, read it aloud and pose the question 'What would you do?'

If you have extra time, groups of children could make up skits to act out the situations and a solution.

Pose the question:
Is it easier to say or do the right thing here than in real life? Why?

THE BIBLE ON FRIENDS

Needed: *Bibles*

Look up each reference with the children then discuss the question.

- What makes good friends? *(Proverbs 18:24)*
- What helps to keep friends together? *(Proverbs 17:9-17; 27:10)*
- What breaks up friendships? *(Proverbs 16:28)*
- What kinds of friends should be avoided? *(Proverbs 22:24; 24:1)*

Chew on it

DOING THE RIGHT THING

Why? To give children a strategy for working out what they should do and for doing it.

Needed: *'ASK' chart Appendix 14*

Pose the question:
What can you say if someone asks you to do something you know is wrong?

List some useful responses like:

- 'I'm worried that you're doing something which is not good for you and I don't want to be part of it.'
- 'Let's do (something positive) instead.'
- 'I don't want to get into that sort of thing so I'm going.'
- 'I want to be your friend but I don't want to be involved in the wrong things you are doing. Call me when you decide not to do them.'

Display the ASK chart and discuss the three steps for saying no.

Pose the questions:
When is it good to do what other people want you to do?
When is it not good to do what other people want you to do?

(Refer back to the 'ASK' questions.)

Close the pack

Comment: It's often hard to go against what everyone else is doing, but sometimes we need to. We need Jesus' help to do the right thing and say no when others want us to do something wrong.

Jesus knows what it is like to be let down by friends and to be pressured (See *For the leader*).

Pray for the children and for yourself that you will all have the strength to stand up to negative influences and help your friends to do the right thing.

Situation cards

1

Someone tells you they know something nasty about a friend of yours.

What do you do?

2

A friend tells you that you look awful in some new clothes you've just bought.

What do you do?

3

A friend tells you that another friend has been saying nasty things about you.

What do you do?

4

Some friends want you to help them graffiti the fences in the street next to yours.

What do you do?

5

A friend wants you to tell his parents he was at your house after school, even though he wasn't.

What do you do?

6

A friend tells you that they stole some chocolate bars from the local shop?

What do you do?

Ask questions of the other person and yourself

- Is it wrong?
- Will I be upset or hurt?
- Will I be sorry afterwards?
- Will it disappoint my family?

Say 'NO' if the answer to any of these questions is 'yes'

Know positive options

- Suggest something else
- If the person doesn't accept, leave.

Ask questions of the other person and yourself

- Is it wrong?
- Will I be upset or hurt?
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Say 'NO' if the answer to any of these questions is 'yes'

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