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Friends (1) What Makes

Main idea

The Bible gives us clues about how to be a good friend.

Questions answered

by this program

- How can I find a good friend?
- How do I know if someone will be a good friend?
- Does the Bible talk about friends?

Bible Base

1 Corinthians 13: 4-8

For the leader

The greatest love a person can have for his friends is to give his life for them (John 15:13). Jesus gave his life for us even though we were his enemies (Romans 5:10)

While very few young people will be required to give up their life for their friendships they will be called on to make hard choices at times. Jesus faced many of the difficulties young people face today and models the loving response in many situations. He was let down by his friends Judas, Peter and the others (Matt 26:14-16, 31-35, 46-56; Mark 14: 69-75) yet showed love to them and forgiveness.

Jesus understands young people today in their struggle in friendships and you can help them to see that the Bible has things to say about this area of their lives.

It's suggested that you take two sessions on this topic. It may be helpful to look at Session 24 as well as you plan this one.

Open the pack

FRIENDSHIP MAPS

Why? To help children think about their friends.

Needed: *Paper and felt pens*

FRIENDS

Give children paper and pens and ask them to draw a large stick figure in the centre of the page leaving room for smaller figures around the outside. Label the figure 'Me'

Ask them to think of their friendships and family relationships and draw their closest friends near 'Me', then those who are not so close further away. They could label the figures with initials.

FRIENDS

Invite them to draw a picture of themselves and their friends as above, not worrying about placement of friends in relation to themselves.

Be sensitive to children who seem to have no friends. They may like to include pets or toys in their maps.

Dig in

WHAT MAKES A GOOD FRIEND?

Why? To explore what the Bible says about real friendship.

Needed: *Bibles, somewhere to list findings*

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 and ask the group to give you words from these verses which describe good qualities for a friend. List the words on sheets of paper or a board.

a Good One?

Chew on it

THIS IS WHAT IT'S LIKE

Why? To apply the Bible teaching

Form groups of 2 –4. Let each group choose a word or phrase from the list without telling other groups and make up a skit to illustrate it. (Depending on the abilities of the group you may have to give them suggestions.) Let the groups present their skits for the others to guess the word or phrase.

MEMORY VERSES

Why? To remember specifics of being a good friend.

Needed: *Memory verse cards below.*

Give 14 children a memory verse card (or if you have fewer children, let them arrange the cards in order on the floor). Using a Bible let the children arrange themselves in the order the words appear in 1 Corinthians 13: 4-8. (You will need to help younger ones.)

Start by everyone saying together: 'Love is …' followed by people say their word or phrase, in order.

Have several turns getting faster each time.

Close the pack

Pose the question:
How could you be a better friend this week?

If you used the memory verse cards the children could use them to pray for specific help to show those qualities to others.

kind | patient | never jealous | never boastful

never rude | isn't selfish | isn't quick tempered

doesn't keep a record of wrongs that others do

loyal | hopeful | always supportive

trusting | never proud

rejoices in the truth but not in evil

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Friends (2) Being a

Main idea

Jesus can help us to be a good friend.

Questions answered

by this program

- How can I be a better friend?
- What stops people being friendly?
- How should we treat those who are not our friends?

Bible Base

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

For the leader

This session builds on the previous one and gives your group the chance to revisit the qualities of true friendship.

Some children struggle with friendships. Make sure the emphasis is on '*Being* a friend' rather than '*Having* friends'. Because children live very much in the present they sometimes change best friends frequently. Encourage them to be the best friend they can to everyone, even when others are not always friendly towards them.

When he was on earth, Jesus befriended people who were left out and shunned by others. He invites us all to be his friends, but particularly those who may have been let down by earthly friendships.

. . . . . .

Open the pack

FRIENDS CHART

Why? To tap into children's experience of changing friends.

Needed: *Materials for chart*

Draw up a chart on a large sheet of paper, board or on OHP.

Friend	Not Friend

Suggest words and phrases for each column to describe someone who is a friend and someone who is not a friend. Be prepared for swear words and decide in advance how you are going to cope with this.

Discuss these questions:
How could a 'Not friend' become a 'friend'?
How could a 'friend' become a 'Not friend'?
Why do we need friends?

'HI FRIEND!'

Play bright music while everyone walks around giving high 5's. When the music stops each person must tell the last person they 'high5ed'something good about being a friend.

Good One

Dig in

WHAT MAKES A GOOD FRIEND?

Why? To recall 1 Corinthians 13: 4-8

Needed: *Memory verse cards from last session.*

Pose the question:
What makes a good friend?

Refer to last session and 1 Corinthians 13: 4-8. If you didn't use the memory verse activity, now might be a good time to do it. If the group enjoyed it last week, why not have fun with it again?

Talk about the word 'love' and how we use it to mean different things. Explain this word 'agape' which the Bible uses to mean 'love' in this passage is not a feeling but a choice. We can choose how we act and what sort of a friend we will be, even to people who are not friendly towards us.

Chew on it

ACROSTIC POEM

Why? To think about some of the qualities of friendship.

Needed: *Paper and pencils*

Encourage the children to work in small groups to make an acrostic based on the word 'FRIEND' for example

Find a good friend who
Respects your opinions
Interested in what is happening to you
Encourages you
Nearly always helps you out
Doesn't say bad things about you

ADVERTISING POSTER

Why? To think about some of the qualities of friendship they can offer others.

Needed: *Sheets of paper and felt pens*

Make a poster advertising yourself as a good friend. List qualities you are offering others. You might encourage them to add a note on it saying that they mightn't be all those things at present but they're trying.

Close the pack

Jesus gave us a good guide for how to treat our friends – in fact everyone.

Ask children to find Matthew 7:12 in their Bibles.

Pose the question:
How do you like your friends to treat you?

Accept answers from the group such as 'kindly', 'including me' 'not being mean'.

Pray or ask a volunteer to pray that God will help you all be a good friend to others.