



Faith Adventures for Children Together



*Committed to URC Children Together:
enabling everyone to grow more like Jesus
together in the home, church and beyond.*

For guidance on the purpose of the resource and how to use it as a launch pad for your engagement with children and families, please use this link:

<https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FACT-how-to-sheet.pdf>

Proverbs 16:28, 17:9, 18:24

Theme: Hints and tips from God for healthy friendships

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Introduction: What would be helpful to know in my planning?

Proverbs

The book of Proverbs is a series of short and pithy words of wisdom which can help us to look at life through God's eyes. These few lines from Proverbs are just a few verses which give advice about what makes a good friend. They are advice about some of the things which can strengthen a friendship and some of the things which undermine it. God created us to be in a relationship with God and with one another and wants us to be wise in how we treat one another.

As this is the last session in this section on friendship, it is a good time to look back over the friendship wall you have been creating (if you were able) and look at what particularly stands out for you. Could these verses be added to your wall?

It's important to be mindful in this session of discussing clear boundaries, so that we are able to give others a second chance whilst ensuring we do not get taken advantage of.



Together

How do I help my group to come together and get started with the theme?

Gathering prayer

Jesus, our friend

(use alternate index fingers to point and tap the middle of opposite palms)

Be with us today

(two hands, palms up in front of you, move up and down twice)

As we share together,

(two hands, palms up in front of you, move one forward and one back and alternate twice)

Pray together,

(hands together, palm against palm, as though praying)

Play together,

(hands to each side, palms up, make two small circles outwards)

And get to know you better,

(point up with one hand)

As children together in your family

(one hand out, palm down in front of you, move it sideways and up in three 'steps' as though to indicate children of three different heights)

AMEN

(Two thumbs up, and bring fists slowly together to meet in front of you)

OR

Thank you, God, for bringing us together today.

Help us to grow closer to you in all we do.

Help us to speak and to listen, to learn and to grow together,

Adventuring together with you wherever we may go.

Amen

In-person game

Use a ball of string or wool to throw from person to person, the first person keeping hold of the end of the string and subsequent people holding on to a piece of it. At the end of the game everyone should be linked with the string/wool.

When the ball of string/wool is thrown to someone, that person is to shout out a characteristic that person holds that makes them a good/ godly friend to others. It could be anything from their smile to being helpful to giving them a lift to the group. At the end, look around and point out all the characteristics that have been highlighted amongst those playing. A person can get chosen more than once but do ensure everyone does get chosen at least once.



Online game

Perfect Match

Perfect for online but can also be done in a circle face to face.

Every child is given a piece of paper, and they are asked to write down the three most important things about being a friend/friendship. Next, choose one child (or a leader can play) and ask them to shout out their number one top answer. Any child who has that same answer as one of their three, holds their sheet up and waves and shouts. The aim to get as many matches as you can with your friends. It also opens out conversations about what we rate highly in friendships.

Experience

For this story we recommend using the Easy to read version

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs+16%3A28%2C+17%3A9%2C+18%3A24+&version=ERV>

Where can I find the story online?

Under fives: Action for children clips children talking about how to be a good friend

<https://youtu.be/ReMq3KX8F94?si=FAwCmuylokJ8XuGC>

Over fives: What is the book of Proverbs for Kids

<https://youtu.be/cs69466qVHs?si=GFd7r7oQEUxsv0cO>

Songs to support the story

Under fives: My best friend by Hillsong kids <https://youtu.be/7JFjruVrrag?si=iDWying7rlszazuy>

Five to elevens: You've got a friend in me from Toy Story Karaoke version by Music Star

Kids https://youtu.be/EYb2QfjKe_4?si=VxoeoyYj4bUa_yVu The words can be changed to sing 'Jesus is a friend in me'

Explore

Ideas and activities to explore this week's Bible passage together

Sometimes it is easier to think about who we aren't and who we don't want to be rather than what kind of friend we are, like in the song 'Not evil'.



<https://youtu.be/ainPfa-AEPY?si=v-Wx2GwdQ4rVlqiR>

Use the ideas you've collected on your Friendship Wall over the past month, to think about negatives and positives. What advice would you give to someone who wants to be a good friend? What do good friends not do?

If your group like writing and rhyming, they could try creating an extra stanza for this week's new poem.....

**A new poem to share****Not one of *those* friends!**

You won't find me laughing,
At those pictures online.
Of the time you got stuck,
On the local Zip line.

And

You won't see me waiting,
Each lunchtime to 'share'.
Whilst I take your favourites
And leave only my pear.

And

You won't catch me moaning,
Every time you're not there.
About your breath, your clothes,
Your singing and your hair.

And

You won't hear me spreading,
False rumours or weird lies.
That you have a pet slug,
And like stealing school ties.

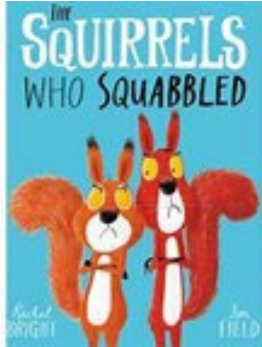
So

You won't ever wonder,
Or think kindness depends.
On my mood – or the weather,
I'm not one of *those* friends!



Modern parables

Jesus used stories to help people understand the things of God, even though they weren't necessarily overtly Christian stories. Lots of children's books can be used in a similar way as a conversation starter on the week's theme. Examples are shared here but you may think of others too.



'The squirrels who squabbled' by Rachel Bright and read by story time Hullabaloo

<https://youtu.be/UMxIHkOc7s?si=IEazkWbqCAsa9uk5>

Talking together: How might we talk about the story together?

- Looking at our friendship wall, what have we learnt? Is there anything we should take down?
- What is the difference between a good friend and a godly friend? When does a friend become a doormat?

Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- I wonder what sort of friend you are? Are you able to forgive a friend for things they have done to upset you?
- I wonder how you choose your friends? What makes a good friend?

What's in the box (for under fives)

Use the special box or bag and sing "What's in the box/bag? What's in the box/bag? Let's see, let's see, what's in the box/bag" (to the tune of The Farmer's in the Dell). You could tap the top of the box twice after the word 'box'. Pull out the things one by one and then let the children play with them, talking about the theme or the story in simple terms.

This week's box could include:

- Building blocks, Lego bricks (talk about how we connect with people as friends)
- A pair of magnets (repelling and attracting each other, talk about what a good friend is)
- A children's bible (talk about where these verses come from and that they give us wise words about friends)
- Two toys (play with the figures and talk about what makes a good friend, e.g. sharing, listening, being kind, playing together nicely)
- Pictures of all the children in the group or of a group of friends, maybe of friends doing thing together
- A set of play people to act out the story or random shapes/bits you can move around to make pictures from the story as you tell it (e.g. stones, felt, twigs etc)



Express

Praying together: how can you involve the children actively in prayer?

Fizzy Forgiveness

The verses from Proverbs give us help like an instruction book of what a God filled friendship is like. Being friends is not always easy but one important thing is that we are able to say sorry and to forgive one another as it teaches us in the Lord's prayer *'forgive us as we forgive one another'*. It is good to talk to God about the things we have done or said that we want to say sorry for and to also ask God to help us forgive others.



You will need:

- Jug of water
- Effervescent tablets (eg vitamins) broken in half or quarters

Encourage everyone to think of someone they need to forgive or something they want to say sorry for. Talk about how when we are hurt and angry, it can hurt us too. But we can ask God to help us to let go of these feelings and to forgive others. Put the tablet in the water and ask God to help. As the bubbles start to come off the tablets, imagine giving the hurt feelings to God.

The water might have changed colour. Talk about it is not as if the thing that hurt you had never happened, but it has been changed by God.

Dear God

Forgive us when we get angry, or storm off, or sulk,
when we think we are right and others are wrong,
when it's easier to get cross
than to admit we were wrong or say sorry.

Forgiving God,
you forgive us.
Help us to forgive others.
Help us to forgive ourselves.
Amen. (Adapted from Roots)

Spoken prayer

Dear God,
Thank you for giving us friends
And for showing us what a good friend is like.
Help us to be the best friend we can be.
Amen



Responding together

Here are some suggested crafts and activities, and there is a colouring sheet at the end of this resource. You could also use small play toys and/or have a basket of resources available so children can choose their own way to respond. <https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FACT-how-to-sheet.pdf>

With an online group, plan whether to deliver any resources in advance or how you will encourage them to use what they've got to hand in their response.

However you do it, it is good for the adults to engage in the response too, and all chat together.

Making a friendship book

You will need:

Sheets of paper or a big sheet of paper

Ribbon

Coloured pens

Pictures of friends

Print off the verses from Proverbs

Other decorative things – stickers, etc



What you do:

If you are making a book, fold the paper and join the sheets together using a ribbon.

Talk about what you are going to add into your book and then encourage the children to make their own guidebook of friendship by drawing, stick in the verses, adding pictures, writing words about what makes a godly friend.

Alternatively, they could make a poster, which shows what a godly friend at the group they are in looks like.

Friendship

Talk to the children about the friendship wall, and how we make friends and get along with others depends on how we treat them and speak to them. Do these experiments to explore this further.

What you need:

Two bowls of cool water (clear bowls, if possible, glass or plastic)

Ground black pepper

White granulated sugar

A bar of soap (any kind)

What you do:

Discuss the sort of behaviours which make a good friend and what spoils a friendship.

Fill the two bowls with cool water and liberally sprinkle the pepper on top of both.

Explain that the pepper represents their friends, classmates, and brothers and sisters.

Take the first bowl of pepper-coated water and explain that you will show what happens when we say hurtful things or be unkind to others.

Show the children the bar of soap. Ask them what they think might happen when the soap is dipped into the first bowl, then dip the bar of soap into the pepper-coated water. The pepper will move away from the soap, just as with hurtful words and actions, we push people away.



Take the second bowl of pepper-coated water and explain that you will show what happens when we are kind and thoughtful.

Ask the children what they think will happen when some sugar is put in the water.

Get a volunteer to pour a teaspoon of sugar into the centre of the bowl and then watch as the pepper from the top is drawn down to the sugar at the bottom. (The more sugar you put in the water; the more pepper will be drawn to it.) Talk about how others are drawn to people who use kind words and actions and that God calls us to be good and godly friends to others.

Everyday with Jesus – Walking the Way

What could we do this week to carry on what we've learned? Maybe members of the group could come up with a suggestion. If not, get them to choose from these two challenges:

- Try extra hard this week to be a good friend to those around you and see whether it makes a difference.
 - Draw a portrait of yourself and your friends. Each evening before bed, or each morning when you wake, pray for God's blessing on your friends and your friendship.
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We hope you enjoyed exploring **Friendship** with us.

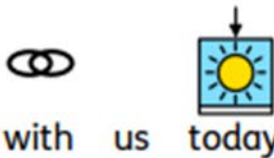
Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing lorrainewebb@urc.org.uk

Why not have a look at next month's resources on **Advent**.

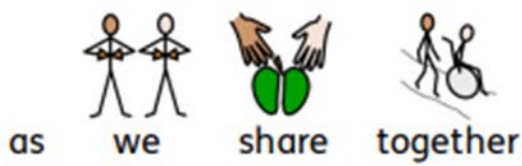




Jesus our friend,



be with us today



as we share together



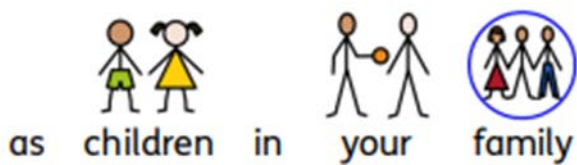
pray together



play together



and get to know you better



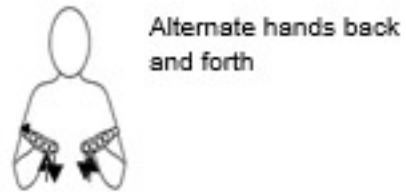
as children in your family



Amen



Right middle finger touches centre of other palm, repeat with left hand



Alternate hands back and forth



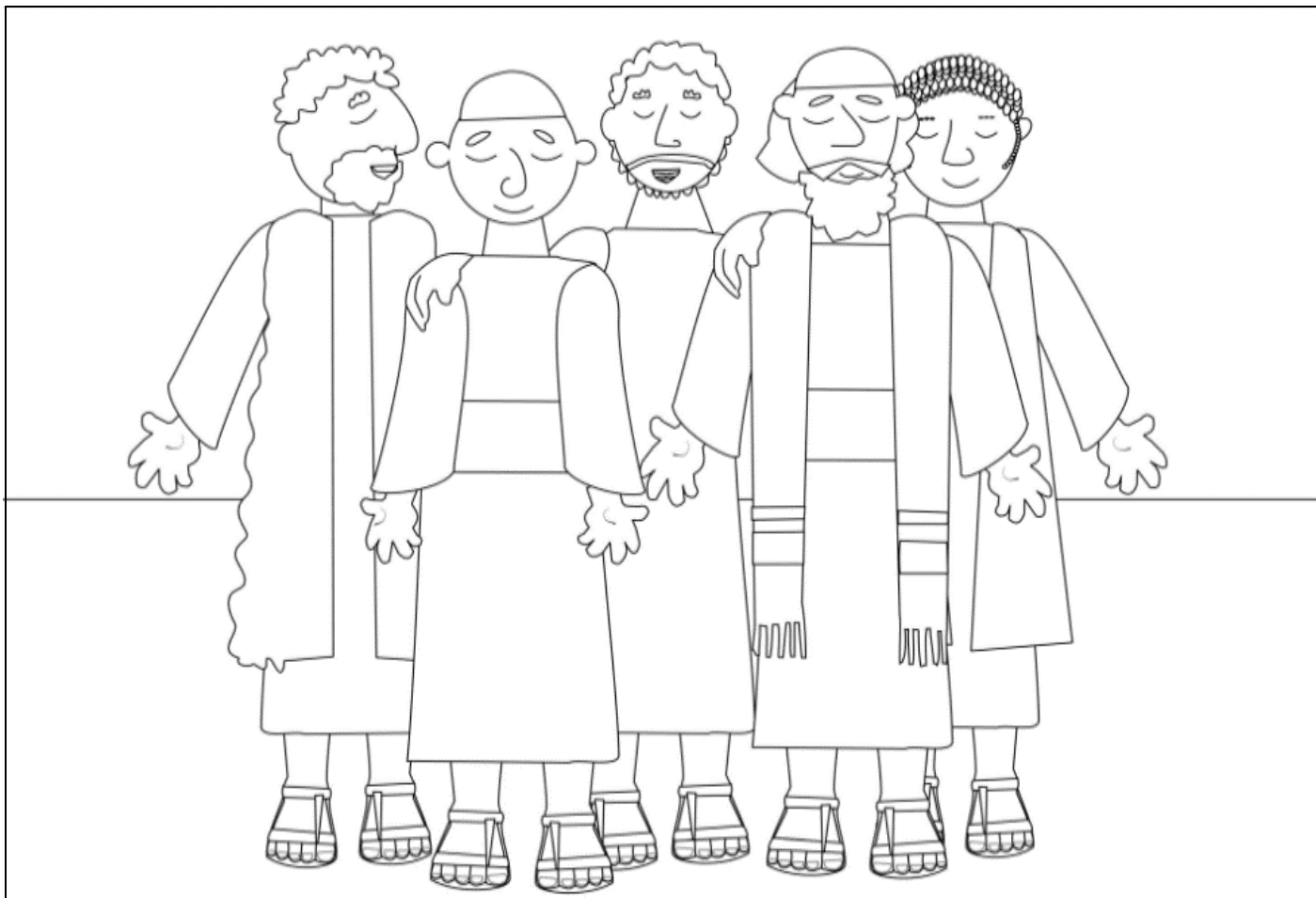


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