



Add Friend



Goal:

**To have good
friends, be one!**

**Scripture Verse:
Matthew 16: 13-23**

Choose Your Opening

Option 1: Wearing It

(For this activity, use a permanent marker to write "Real Friends Always..." on a large, white T-shirt. You'll also need several other permanent markers)

As you begin, give each child a permanent marker, and have them take turns writing their completions for the sentence by writing on the T-shirt. Make sure everyone adds at least one sentence completion. Duplicates are OK.

Have a male volunteer put on the T-shirt, and have kids sit in a circle around the T-shirt wearer. Ask another volunteer to read aloud the sentence completions.

Then Ask:

- *Which sentence completions describe the most important qualities of a real friend?
- *How easy is it to find friends who have these qualities?
- *What qualities do you wish you'd see more of in the friends you have?

Say: Real friendship isn't easy. It takes commitment, honesty, and love. Lots of people are looking for real friends. Today we'll discover how to be a real friend.

Option 2: Grab a Group of Friends

As you begin, explain that the kids will play a simple game to start the lesson. When you call out a number, kids must quickly huddle together in a group consisting of that number of friends. For example, if you yell "three", kids should group together in threes. Kids who don't get in a group fast enough are out for that round. Play a few rounds of the game, randomly yelling numbers from two to five.

Discuss the following questions:

- *What was it like to huddle together with friends in this activity?
- *How did it feel when you got into a group? When you didn't get into a group?
- *How is this like or unlike the way you feel when you're trying to make friends with people in real life?

Say: This game is a lot like real life—friends, often come and go, and sometimes it's not easy to make friends. But it's possible to build lasting relationships. Today we will explore how.

THE BIBLE EXPERIENCE

Friendship Can Sting

(For this activity, you'll need a chenille wire for each child and a Bible)

Begin by **asking**: What kind of friend do you think Jesus is?

Have kids call out their answers. Then explain that you'll be looking at a story about Jesus and Peter, one of Jesus' closest friends.

Give each child a chenille wire. Say: As I read aloud Matthew 16:13-20, listen for ways Jesus showed real friendship to Peter. When you hear something that shows how Jesus lived out real friendship, form your chenille wire into a shape that represents that idea. For example, if you think Jesus affirmed Peter, you could shape your chenille wire into a heart.

Read the passage a second time while kids look for good examples of Jesus' true friendship. Here are some ideas: Jesus affirmed Peter, Jesus showed confidence in Peter, Jesus showed that He trusted Peter, and Jesus shared His own ministry with Peter.

Have kids explain their chenille-wire shapes to everyone. Then read Matthew 16:21-23 twice while kids shape their chenille wires into representations of Jesus' true friendship as recorded in this passage. Here are some ideas: Jesus shared personal concerns with Peter, and Jesus wouldn't let His friends come between Him and God.

Now have the kids trade chenille-wire shapes and attempt to explain the shapes to everyone else. After a few volunteers have explained the shapes they're holding, have the original owners explain what the shapes symbolize. **Ask**:

- *What was it like to explain someone else's chenille-wire shape?
- *How is that like the way you felt when looking for examples of friendship in the second passage?
- *How easy was it to find examples of friendship in this passage?
- *What surprises you most about Jesus' actions in this passage?

Say: Being a real friend means speaking the truth—even when it hurts. To be forever friends, we need to be willing to speak the truth in love and to be honest with one another. And we need to be willing to listen to the truth spoken by our friends.



Still Shots

(For this activity, have your phone/camera up and ready, poster board, and a marker)

Have kids call out the ways Jesus showed friendship to Peter as you list them on the poster board. Then have kids identify the four or five most important qualities of a true friend, and circle them.

Assign one of the circled friendship qualities to each child. Ask each child to imagine what a photograph would look like that could show how people express friendship using that assigned quality.

Then have kids pose for their pictures while you take them. Show the pics and compare to the poster board list as a visual reminder.

Choose Your Closing

Option 1: Flex Your Friendship

(For this activity, you'll need index cards and pencils)

Give each child an index card and a pencil. Have them write the name of a friend across the top of their cards. Encourage kids to choose someone who means a lot to them and who they hope will be a forever friend.

Now have them list three ways they could build their friendships with the people listed at the top of their cards. Encourage kids to list ideas based on what they've learned about Jesus' friendship style.

Close by having kids pray silently that God would help them be real friends to the people on their cards and to all of their friends.

Option 2: Hold Onto That Friend

If possible, form a circle and have everyone stand close together facing the inside of the circle.

Have each person reach his or her right hand into the center of the circle and grab someone else's right hand. Then have each person reach his or her left hand into the circle and grab a different person's left hand.

Say: Friendship is something worth holding onto. It's not always easy to build lasting friendships, but it's worth the effort.

Have kids attempt to untangle themselves to form a larger circle without letting go of their two friends' hands. Then have volunteers close in prayer, thanking God for the gift of friendship.