

SOCIAL: Providing Time for Fun Interaction (15 minutes)

Today's Bible Story: Better Together (Two people are better than one) • *Ecclesiastes 4:9-12*

Today's Bottom Line: Choose your friends carefully.

Monthly Memory Verse: *A friend loves at all times. They are there to help when trouble comes.*
Proverbs 17:17 (NirV)

Monthly Life App: Friendship—Using your words and actions to show others you care

Basic Truth: I need to make the wise choice.

Before kids arrive, take a few moments to pray for them. Ask God to guide you as you plant the seeds that will set a foundation for your kids' relationships and friendships in the future. Pray that your few would have the wisdom, even at their young age, to evaluate their friendships through the lens of what God wants for their relationships. Pray for the kids who might feel like they don't have many friends or simply feel a bit lonely. Ask God to help those kids identify friends they do have or kids they could develop a friendship with.

1. Early Arriver

Made to Connect: an activity that invites kids to share and collaborate with others while growing their understanding

What You Need: "Getting to Know You" Activity Page and music

What You Do:

- Give each kid a question card.
- Instruct the kids to dance or move in a funny way around the room as the music plays.
- Challenge them to come up with the most creative moves they can think of!
- When the music stops, encourage kids to partner up, read their questions, and answer each other.
- For the next round, have the group switch question cards before the music plays again.
- Kids must find a new partner and ask/answer new questions when the music stops.
- Play as many rounds as you can.

2. Opening Activity

Made to Create: an activity that explores ideas through the process of drawing, building, designing, and problem-solving

What You Need: “Block Party!” Activity Page, string, stapler or hole punch, pencils, markers, extra decorating supplies (*optional*)

What You Do:

- Give each kid one “Block Party!” pennant.
- If you have more than eleven kids, hand out extra exclamation mark pennants.
- In the space below the letters, invite the kids to draw or write what they like about their friends or what they like to do with their friends.
- Give them time to color and decorate their pennant.
- As they finish, ask kids to take turns sharing about their pennant.
- As they do, fold the top of the pennant over a long piece of string and staple it in place to create a “Block Party!” banner; or punch holes in the corners and string the pennants together.

NOTE: If possible, display the banner in your environment as part of this month’s theme décor.

What You Say:

“I love block parties! It’s a time to hang out and do fun things with friends. It’s also a place to meet new friends! I loved discovering what you like about your friends. **[Transition] Let’s hear what the Bible has to say about friendships.**”

GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (25 minutes)

1. Better Than One

[Talk about God] Bible Story Review]

Made to Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and/or working as a group

What You Need: Balloons

What You Do:

- Divide the group into two teams.
- Give each team three balloons.
- For round one of the game:
 - One teammate from each team will try to keep all three balloons in the air while the rest of the teammates cheer.
 - The kids can use any part of their bodies to keep the balloons in the air, but the balloons cannot rest on their bodies or be held for any length of time.
 - The game ends when a balloon touches the floor.
 - Continue playing until everyone has had a chance to try.
- For round two:

- Using the same guidelines, the entire team will work together to keep three balloons in the air.
- The team that can keep all three balloons floating in the air for the longest time wins.
- At the end of round two, ask the kids to share their thoughts about which round was easier to play.

What You Say:

"It was much easier to keep three balloons in the air as a team than by yourself, wasn't it? Today's verses are about how two people working together are stronger than just one person by themselves. Friends can help you and also make things way more fun! That's what friends do. They support each other, and they help each other. What else do good friends do? (*Allow time for a few responses.*) That's one of the reasons why God wants you to **[Bottom Line] choose your friends carefully**. He created us to have relationships with others. Finding friends is super important. But it's even more important to find friends who want the best for you and will help you trust God. And it's important to BE a friend who helps others trust God."

*2. Friendship Skills

[Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Imagine: an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates concrete application through role-play and reenactment

What You Need: "Good Friends" Activity page, green and red markers or crayons

What You Do:

- Pass out the "Good Friends" page.
- Encourage the kids to color "what good friends do" in green and "what bad friends do" in red.
- As they work, engage them in conversation about being a good friend. Ask:
 - How do you know when someone's a good friend?
 - How do you know you're BEING a good friend?
 - Who's the greatest friend ever? (*Jesus*)

What You Say:

"Who can tell me what it means to influence someone? (*To affect or change their behavior or how they think*) Did you know that you are influenced by others whether you know it or not? Some people can influence you to do good things, while some can influence you to do bad things. That's why it's important to **[Bottom Line] choose your friends carefully**. If someone is always unfriendly and hurting you or not being nice, you might need to protect yourself and kindly walk away and not talk to them. If you struggle to know what the correct thing is to do, talk to a trusted adult to help you deal with the situation. **[Make It Personal] (Share an age-appropriate story about a time when you had trouble choosing your friends carefully. How did you know a friend wasn't good for you? How did it make you feel?)** One way you can have good friends is by BEING a good friend."

3. Bop It

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Move: an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body

What You Need: Bibles, chairs or cardstock placeholders taped to the floor

What You Do:

- Help kids look up Proverbs 17:17 using the tips below.

Finding verses with 2nd and 3rd graders: Guide them to open their Bibles to the front and find the table of contents. (*Hold up a Bible opened to the table of contents to show the kids what the page looks like.*) When the kids find the table of contents, lead them to find Proverbs in the list under Old Testament. When the kids find Proverbs, lead them to look at the page number beside the word. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find Proverbs. Help the kids find the page. When they find Proverbs, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find chapter 17. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find verse 17 in chapter 17.

- Say the verse together several times until the kids can say it without much hesitation.
- Then, ask the kids to sit in a circle using the chairs or pieces of cardstock.
- Assign each kid one to three words from the memory verse.
- Tell kids that you're going to walk around the circle and (gently) "Bop" them on the head to cue them to say their assigned word(s).
- Once you have gotten through the entire verse, ask everyone to move one seat to the left.
- For the next round, kids say the word(s) that the person previously sitting in that spot was assigned. *NOTE: The easiest/smoothest thing to do is to have the group collectively remember which "seat" the first word is assigned to.*
- Once the group becomes fluent with the verse, increase the pace of how often you change seats/words.

What You Say:

"Our memory verse tells us that our actions and words are a huge deal in friendships. True friends learn to love each other through good times as well as rough times. They don't run away when things become difficult. Instead, they stick with you when you need them the most. That's why it's important to **[Bottom Line] choose your friends carefully**. One way to do this is by finding friends who love and trust God. When you do, both of you can rely on each other AND ask God for help when problems come your way."

4. Pray and Dismiss

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

Made to Reflect: An activity that creates space for personal processing and application

What You Need: “Good Friends” Activity Page from “Friendship Skills” Activity

What You Do:

- Make sure kids have their “Good Friends” page.
- Encourage the kids to silently ask God to show them how they can be a better friend to someone by making sure they practice at least one of the green friendship skills this week.
- Close with group prayer.

What You Say:

“Dear God, thank You for showing us the importance of godly and healthy friendships. Help us be a good friend to those You have put in our lives by *(name a few good friendship skills from the activity page)*. Please help us when we are tempted to not be a good friend by *((name a couple of bad friendship skills from the activity page))*. Help us to rely on and trust You in our friendships because that is the only way you can **[Bottom Line] choose your friends carefully, amen.**”

GETTING READY

Here's everything you need to know to get ready for this week.

SOCIAL: Providing time for fun interaction (15 Minutes)

Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Get ready to experience today's story.

(Choose one or both of these activities.)

1. Early Arriver

Made to Connect: an activity that invites kids to share and collaborate with others while growing their understanding

- An offering container
- Print and cut out the "Getting To Know You" Activity Page; one set for each group
- Music (try Orange Kids Music on Spotify® or Apple Music®)

2. Opening Activity

Made to Create: an activity that explores ideas through the process of drawing, building, designing, and problem-solving

- Print and cut out the "Block Party!" Activity Page; one pennant for each kid
- Print extra exclamation point pennants if you have more than 11 kids
- Sturdy string long enough to hold all of the pennants
- Stapler or hole punch
- Pencils
- Markers
- *(Optional)* Decorating supplies such as stickers, stamps, or glitter if you're brave enough!

GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (25 minutes)

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

(Choose as many of these activities as you like.)

** If you don't have time to do all these activities, be sure to do activity #2.*

1. Better Than One

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and/or working as a group

- Six inflated balloons in two different colors; three balloons in each color

***2. Friendship Skills**

Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Imagine: an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates concrete application through role-play and reenactment

- Print the "Good Friend" Activity Page; one for each kid
- Red markers or crayons; one for each kid
- Green markers or crayons; one for each kid
- Pencils; one for each kid

3. Bop It!

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Move: an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body

- Bibles
- Chairs or cardstock taped to floor as placeholders

4. Pray and Dismiss

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

Made to Reflect: An activity that creates space for personal processing and application

- Completed “Good Friends” Activity Pages from “Friendship Skills” Activity

HOME: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience

- Print on cardstock or email this week’s GodTime devotionals and Parent Cue cards.
- Tell parents about our additional family resources: **Studio252.tv** and the **Parent Cue app**.