

SOCIAL: Providing Time for Fun Interaction (15 minutes)

Today's Bible Story: Friend Like Me (Elijah and Elisha) • *1 Kings 19:14-21; 2 Kings 2:1-15*

Today's Bottom Line: Friends encourage one another.

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 should treat others the way I want to be treated.

Before kids arrive, take a few moments to pray for them. Thank God for the friends in your life who encourage you and point you toward God. Ask God to guide you as you help teach your few what it looks like to be an encouraging friend. Pray that kids would see and feel the need to be an encouraging friend and that they can identify which friends THEY can count on to encourage them through good times and bad.

1. Early Arriver

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

What You Need: Die, Play-Doh®, paper, pencils

What You Do:

- As a group, make a list of words that the kids can easily draw, sculpt, or act out (i.e., car, baby, tree, plane, cup, etc.).
- Divide the group into two teams and give each team some Play-Doh, paper, and pencils.
- Without letting the rest of their team overhear, assign the first player from each team the same word from the list.
- Those first kids each take a turn rolling the die.
- Each number on the die is assigned an action:
 - #1 or #2 = Charades (silently act out)
 - #3 or #4 = Pictionary® (draw a picture)
 - #5 or #6 = Sculptionary® (sculpt the object)
- The players will then go back to their team and act, draw, or sculpt the word, depending on what number they rolled.
- The first team to guess the word scores a point.
- Continue playing as long as time and interest allow.

2. Opening Activity

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

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Select one kid as the “finder” and have them step out of the Small Group area or out of the room, if possible.
- Lead the group to pick an object (i.e., a book on a shelf) in the environment for the finder to find.
- Ask the finder to come back and walk around the environment in search of the object.
- Tell the group they cannot say anything, but they can give hints by using applause to lead the finder in the right direction.
- If the finder is far away from the object, the group should clap slowly and softly.
- When the finder gets closer and closer, the group should applaud faster and louder until the finder picks the correct object.
- Assign a new finder with each new round.

What You Say:

“Great job using your imaginations and encouraging the ‘finders’ to locate the objects. **[Transition]**
Let’s find out how two friends used their imaginations to encourage each other, also.”

PLAY BIBLE STORY VIDEO

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

1. Let’s Work Together!

[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: “Question List,” “Answer Cards” and “Answer Key” Activity Pages

What You Do:

- Divide the group into two teams.
- Give each team roughly half of the “Answer Cards” and ask them to spread them out so the entire team can see them. *Note: One team will have eight cards and the other nine.*
- Tell the group that you will ask a question (from the list) and then set a timer for 20 seconds.
- Before the timer goes off, the team must work together to see if one of their “Answer Cards” is a match to the question.
- If they think they have a match, the team collectively gives a “thumbs up.”
- If they don’t think they have a match, the team collectively gives a “thumbs down.”
- After the teams vote, verify the answer via the “Answer Key.”
- Assign points to both teams if they answered correctly with their thumbs.

What You Say:

"I love how God heard Elijah's cry for a friend and answered it! God knew that Elisha and Elijah would be perfect friends to each other. As the years went by, their friendship and love for each other grew. Elisha refused to leave Elijah multiple times! That's what friends do. They refuse to leave you when you're sad, confused, or hurting. Instead they stay by you and encourage you with their words and actions.

"Sometimes you'll know what to do or say to encourage your friends, and sometimes you'll wonder how you can help. It's always a good idea to pray and ask God to give you ideas on how you can encourage your friends. You can trust that God will understand our friends' needs better than we do. The important thing to remember is that we should always do our best to treat others the way we want to be treated. **[Make It Personal] (Tell about a time when someone encouraged you when you needed it the most.)**

"What are some kind things you can say or do when your friends need your support? (*I can spend time with them; I can give them a card; I can give them a hug; I can listen*) Those are wonderful ideas. You guys are incredible friends! So remember, **[Bottom Line] friends encourage one another.**"

2. Courage to Encourage*[Live for God | Application Activity]**

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

What You Need: "I Will" Activity Page, pens

What You Do:

- Give an "I Will" Activity Page to each kid.
- Read each of the four statements to the group.
- Encourage the kids to silently reflect on the best way they could encourage their friend in each of the situations and write their answers down in the space provided.
- When everyone is done, lead the group in a discussion using their answers.

What You Say:

"Wow! What unique answers! God has designed each of you to be unique. This means that you are a unique friend to your friends. It's important to slow down and pay attention to how your friends feel. It might take courage to encourage your friends when they are feeling shy, lonely, frustrated, or hurting, especially when it might embarrass you when you help. But good **[Bottom Line] friends encourage one another**, even if it means going against the flow and ignoring what you or others want to do.

"For some of you, there might be times when you feel like you have no friends. You might feel left out and shy. That's a hard place to be. What are some things you can do to feel included and encouraged? (*Look for someone else who is sitting by themselves; be a good friend to those who look like they are hurting*) We need to always practice encouragement because there is never a time when someone doesn't need at least a little of it."

3. Cornhole Toss

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Explore: an activity that extends learning through hands-on experimentation and discovery

What You Need: “Memory Verse” cards (Activity Page), containers/cornhole boards, beanbags

What You Do:

- Set the two containers/boards 15-20 feet apart.
- Place a set of memory verse cards (facedown) next to each container.
- Form two teams and ask each team to line up a good distance from each container.
- Tell the group that each team will take turns throwing the beanbags, alternating with their opponent.
- If the beanbag lands in the container successfully, the kid who threw it will pick up one card and place it face up on the floor.
- The kid will then go to the end of the line and while doing so, receive high-five encouragement from each team member.
- If the beanbag misses the hole, the kid will go to the end of the line without retrieving a card, but still receiving high-five encouragement from each team member.
- The first team to successfully collect all of the verse cards and put them in order wins.
- End by asking the winning team to cheer on the other team as they continue playing the game until they finish their verse.

What You Say:

“Great job encouraging your teammates with high-fives, especially when they missed the container! Your encouragement made them feel like they were part of the team. When we encourage our friends, we give them energy to face challenges. Our verse tells us that **[Bottom Line] friends encourage one another**, and are there when hard times come. Good friends always practice encouraging friends.”

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: “I Will” Activity Page from “Courage to Encourage” Activity

What You Do:

- Make sure kids have their “I Will” pages.
- Encourage the kids to read what they wrote and silently ask God to help them identify and encourage friends who might be shy, lonely, frustrated, or hurt.
- Close with group prayer.

What You Say:

“Dear God, open our hearts and eyes so we can see and encourage our friends who might feel shy, lonely, frustrated, or hurt. Help us to encourage one another at all times even if it means taking a break from what we really want to do. Give us opportunities and the courage this week to do the things we said we will do when our friends are down. Amen.”