

# Friends

## John 15.9-17 Easter 6

Jesus encourages the disciples to keep his commandments and, above all, to love one another as he loved them. He says that those who do this are his friends and he emphasises that this is his choice rather than theirs.

*This week we explore what Jesus means by friendship.*

### Prepare your young people's session

Read Bible notes on [WEB](#).

What does Jesus mean by love? It is often seen as an emotional response that cannot therefore be commanded.

Friendship and love are sensitive subjects. Begin with a sense of where the young people are and move gently, emphasising the importance of the quality of friendships and recognising the different means of befriending that we may experience. Young people may have fixed ideas about how both love and friendship work. Try and explore some of this openly and honestly with them and how Jesus' 'definition' fits into this.

**Christian Aid Week 9-15 May, Ascension Day 13 May**, see [WEB](#) for resources.

Find more ideas opposite. Go to [www.rootsontheweb.com](http://www.rootsontheweb.com) for links, templates, images, tracks.

### Make friendship bracelets 10 mins EA

Demonstrate friendship by giving to a friend

**You will need:** instruction video (on [WEB](#)); embroidery thread in three colours, safety pins, cushion, scissors.

- Watch the video for instructions on how to knot the bracelets.
- Play the track 'Faithful', Brooke Fraser on *Albertine* as you make the bracelets.
- Ask the young people to take six threads in three different colours and begin by making a loop in their threads, then join the loop to a cushion with a safety pin and spread six threads out in the colour sequence they would like their stripes.
- Help them to begin the knotting pattern, using the video. Encourage them to repeat with all the threads until their bracelet is the required length.
- Tie both ends with a knot and knot the bracelet together, trimming the ends to the desired length.

### WWW prayers 10 mins WESA

Bring friends to God in prayer

**You will need:** a large sheet of paper and three different coloured marker pens.

- Ask the group for names of people they would like to pray for (*who*). Write the names on the paper using one pen.
- Ask *why* you should pray for them and write this in a different colour.
- Ask *what* you should pray for them and write this in the third colour.

[WEB](#) Check-in: Connecting faith with everyday, real-life issues.

## GATHER

### My week 5 mins WE

**You will need:** pens and A4 paper.

• Play the track 'Friend of God', Israel & New Breed on *Live from Another Level*.

- Ask each young person to divide their paper into four sections.
- In the top left they can write 'highlight'; in the top right 'low point'; in the bottom left 'hope'; in the bottom right 'sadness'.
- Invite the group to write something in each section from the past week, then ask if there is anything anybody wants to share. Discuss together that friendship is about sharing one another's highs and lows.

### First impressions [WEB](#)

You could also use the image and following questions to help introduce the theme.



- Who shares in your daily highs and lows?
- In what ways do you consider yourself a friend of Jesus?
- How do earthly friendships differ from a friendship with Jesus?

## SHARE THE WORD

RCL Easter 6 Year B: Acts 10.44-48; Psalm 98; 1 John 5.1-6; **John 15.9-17**

### Read and compare 5 mins WE

- Read the passage in the NRSV or another version and ask for any preliminary thoughts. Then read *The Message* version (see [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com)). Ask: What differences are there? Which version would you prefer to explore and why?
- In small groups look at whichever version of the passage is preferred and discuss the following questions. How do you think it felt for the disciples to be called friends by Jesus? What sort of friend was Jesus? What sort of friend is Jesus?

## EXPLORE AND RESPOND

### Friendship word game 5 mins W

Explore descriptions of friendship

**You will need:** pens and paper.

- Challenge the group in pairs or solo to see how many words they can make from the letters of the word 'friendship'.
- As an extra challenge, see if any words can be found that describe friendship, particularly the type of friendship Jesus offers, e.g. die – Jesus would die for his friends; fish – Jesus was friends with fishermen.

## GO WITH GOD

Consider together what you have explored, what that means for each of you and how it might influence your daily lives.

- Invite the group to make simple acrostics out of the word 'Friend' to describe what friendship means to them. Each line should include a letter from the word 'friend' but it does not necessarily have to be the initial letter.
- Compare acrostics and ask whether anyone sees friendship in a different light after exploring the Bible passage.

### Go with God 24/7

Think about what you enjoy doing with your friends. Try to spend time with Jesus this week in a similar way. **E**

As you finish, give out the **ROOTS at home** resource [WEB](#) to encourage faith at home.