



FRIENDSHIP

What's Best for You

July 22, 2023

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

Proverbs 18:24 (NIV) • “One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”

Proverbs 22:24, 25 (NIV) • “Do not make friends with a hot-tempered person, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn their ways and get yourself ensnared.”

James 4:4 (NLT) • “Don’t you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God.”

James 2:23 (NIV) • “And the scripture was fulfilled that says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,’ and he was called God’s friend.”

John 15:13 (NIV) • “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

1 Peter 4:8 (NKJV) • “And above all things have fervent love for one another, for ‘love will cover a multitude of sins.’ ”

Matthew 18:15 (NKJV) • “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you

have gained your brother.”

Proverbs 14:20 (NIV) • “The poor are shunned even by their neighbors, but the rich have many friends.”

Proverbs 19:6 (NKJV) • “Many entreat the favor of the nobility, and every man is a friend to one who gives gifts.”

B. WHAT’S TO BE SAID ABOUT “FRIENDSHIP”

Jesus showed us how much He values friendship. While Jesus was on earth, He had friends, close friends, and very close friends. Jesus shows, by His example, that we shouldn’t limit ourselves to only popular or powerful people. We also learn from Jesus that even when friends let us down, that doesn’t mean we have to end the relationship.

Friendship comes in many shapes and sizes. Sometimes it is very easy to make a new friend. Other times we have to work to get to know someone and become their friend. But friendships can be lost if we aren’t careful. Mistakes and misunderstandings can lead to the end of the desire to spend time together. Jesus has given us a plan for solving our problems with others. He wants us to continue to enjoy our time with our friends. Friendship is so important that Jesus also wants to be included as our friend. He is looking forward to our desire to be friends with Him. Jesus longs for us to delight in spending time with Him.

In a world of battling kingdoms, the motto

Divide and Conquer describes a strategy Satan uses to separate Christ’s citizens from the source of their power. Satan works to find ways of drawing us away from our relationship with Jesus and toward friendships that will distance us from our Creator.

C. WHERE WE’RE GOING WITH “FRIENDSHIP”

As a result of this lesson we would like the students to be able to:

1. Identify the characteristics of friendship.
2. Recognize the characteristics of a Christian friend.
3. Desire to be a Christian friend.
4. Understand the steps for dealing with conflict.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity A) photocopies of complete student list; paper, pens or pencils; clipboards or hard surface for writing.

Connecting • Bibles, student lessons, paper, pens or pencils.

Applying • White/chalkboard, markers/chalk.

2 BRIDGING

A. THE WEEK IN REVIEW

Allow 10 minutes at the beginning of class for students to:

1. Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.
2. Engage in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief highlighted this week.
3. Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults at www.realtimfaith.net)
- >> Service projects reports

3 BEGINNING

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word.

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • Students should recognize that everyone has at least one good quality. Students need a list of all classmates’ names. They need something to write with and on. Students shouldn’t be able to see what others are writing. Allow a few minutes for them to think and write.

Get set • Say: Today we’re going to write something positive about each Sabbath School member’s character. This is not about their hair, clothes, or possessions. (Examples: James—honest; Sarah—always cheerful; etc.)

Go • Make sure the instructions are understood. Check that everyone writes something kind. Collect all the lists without the students seeing what others have written. (During the week, write all the kind words about James on one page, Sarah on another, and so on. Next week give everyone their list.)

Debriefing • Ask: How was this an easy assignment? How was it difficult? Why? If you had had more time to think about the good in others, would it have been easier? Challenge the students to find something good

about everyone they are around this week.

B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • The purpose is to help students think about how they react to situations. You may wish to do only one scenario about an area with which your students struggle, or attempt all of them (or make up your own). Prepare these slips of paper with the opening lines of each scenario you choose.

Get set • Get two volunteers (don't force anyone). Give the participants their opening lines. Students are then to continue the scenario with their own words.

Scenario 1: Two girls:

1: "You know, that new girl thinks she's better than the rest of us."

2: "That's her problem, I sure don't see why she's so great."

1: "Maybe we should give her a mirror."

2: "The first thing she needs to do is see a . . ."

Scenario 2: Two boys or two girls

1: "How did you do on your science test?"

2: "Bad. I don't know why; I really studied."

1: "I did too. I spent at least an hour on it."

2: "I think it was a stupid test. The book doesn't explain things clearly, and the teacher doesn't know . . ."

Scenario 3: Two boys

1: "You're so ugly, even the dog won't look at you."

2: "You're so stupid, the doctor took a brain scan and it came back blank."

1: "You're . . ."

Debriefing • Ask: In Scenario 1, what is the problem? (gossiping) Will this conversation help or hurt? Why? What should a citizen of God's kingdom do in this kind of situation? In Scenario 2, what is the problem? (blaming)

Is this conversation helping or hurting? What should the students do now? before the next test? In Scenario 3, what is the problem? (put-downs) Why do people put others down? What is gained by this kind of talk? What should we do when someone says, "We're just joking around"? Do words hurt? Explain your answer.

C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

In your own words, tell the following story:

In 1936 the Olympic Games were held in Berlin, Germany. Unknown to the rest of the world, Germany's leader, Adolf Hitler, was preparing to invade the other countries in Europe.

Hitler's Nazis believed that the German athletes would win the Olympic Games. The Nazis wanted to prove they were right.

Jesse Owens, the son of a Black American sharecropper, was spectacular at the long jump. He held the world record of 26 feet and 8¼ inches.

As Jesse approached the long jump practice pit, he began to worry. The tall German long jumper, Luz Long, was landing with jumps in the 26-foot range.

To Jesse's surprise, the Nazis' "model of perfection" came over and introduced himself. Luz remarked that Jesse could make this jump "with your eyes closed." Needing only 23½ feet to qualify, Luz suggested that Jesse start his jump early, increasing the chance of a safe landing. Luz's suggestion worked.

Jesse won the gold medal and set an Olympic record. The first person to congratulate him was Luz, right in front of Hitler.

That was the last time the two ever saw each other. A few years later Luz was killed in World War II.

Jesse Owens wrote of that brief friendship, "You could melt down all the medals and cups I have, and they wouldn't be a plating [covering] on the 24-carat friendship I felt for Luz Long."

—Adapted from David Wallechinsky in *The Complete Book of the Olympics*.

Debriefing • Ask: What would you have said if you were Luz? if you were Jesse? Based on the story, what can be said about friendship? What does it take to make a new friend? Why are some friendships formed quickly? (Images of Long and Owens can be found on the internet.)

4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

Ask: When we have a disagreement, what are some ways we choose to solve the problem?

Say: There are usually a couple of ways we respond: one is to run away from a conflict; the other is to fight back. Let's look at what the Bible says about fighting. (Hand out the student lessons. Review the texts in Wednesday's activity as well as those in the beginning of the teacher's lesson.)

What do the following texts tell us about friendship? (From the teacher's section: Proverbs 22:24, 25; Sunday's reading in the student's lesson: Proverbs 17:14; see also Proverbs 19:11.)

Ask: What are some ways a person might run away, besides getting on their feet and heading in a different direction? (Stop listening or look away.)

Say: One form of running away is to deny you have anything to do with the problem. Some people will deny there even is a problem. Another way is to blame someone else.

Ask: We understand about fighting with fists, but are there other ways of fighting?

Say: One way to fight is with words. Sometimes people use a put-down to fight. Other times people choose to talk behind

another person's back. This is called gossiping. Most of us probably don't think of put-downs or gossiping as fighting.

What does the following text tell us about how we should talk? Have someone read Ephesians 4:29 from the Bible or student lesson.

Ask: So what does the Bible tell us to do instead of fight or run away? Let's look at the following texts: Proverbs 19:11; 1 Peter 4:8; Colossians 3:13.

Ask: What does the Bible say? (Sometimes we need to overlook problems or wrongs that have been done to us.) **What should we do if we can't overlook the problem?**

Have someone find and read Matthew 18:15.

Ask: What does the Bible tell us? (We need to go and talk to the person.) Have someone find and read Galatians 6:1-5 and Matthew 5:23, 24.

Ask: When does talking about your disagreement work? (When both parties agree to try to resolve their differences.) **Is talking to someone about a problem easy? Why doesn't everyone solve their problems this way?** (They don't really want to solve the problem; they're afraid of the other person; they don't trust the other person.) **In some cases even talking won't work, so what should we do then?**

Have someone find and read Matthew 18:16.

Ask: What should we do? (Take someone who is trustworthy with you and talk to the person, trying to resolve your disagreement.)

Ask: Does this sound like good advice? **Whom might you ask to go with you?** (a trusted friend, parent, teacher, other adult) **Why do you think Jesus wants us to try to work things out?** (He created us with a desire to love others.) **What happens if talking it out doesn't work?** (The friendship may be at an end; the other person may need some time to change their mind; remember to keep the situation in your prayers and continue to do what Jesus would do.)

Additional texts on the topic of friendship that you might like to use in this discussion are

found in The Source section of this teacher's guide (Proverbs 18:24, James 4:4, James 2:23, John 15:1, Proverbs 14:20, and Proverbs 19:6).

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath's section of the lesson.

Follow up by discussing the following questions. **Ask: What solution did King Saul choose to solve his "David" problem? (fight) What solution did Jonathan choose? (Jonathan went to David and talked to him, wanting to protect David from the king.) While we don't face life-and-death decisions every day, we do face decisions that will lead to life or death eternally. These are the decisions that determine our character. We can choose what we will do or say. The Bible provides the best guide for what choices we should make.**

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Pose the following scenario:

While your class is taking a test, you glance up and spot your best friend looking at something on the bottom of their shoe. After studying the shoe for a few seconds, they put their foot down and return to the test. You don't think any more about it until you're at gym class and you see that the bottom of the shoe has words written on it, words that match with the test answers.

Ask: What do you do? If you ignore the problem, what are you really doing about the situation? (running away, denying there is a problem) What happens if you decide to talk to your friend about what you suspect? (Your friend may deny they did anything. After all, by now the evidence has worn away. You may lose that person's friendship.) Why should you choose to talk to the person, instead of ignoring their supposed cheating? (Because you care about the person, and you want to know why they felt the need to cheat. You might offer to help them prepare honestly for future tests.)

Can you trust the friendship of a person who is dishonest about school? Why or why not?

Pose the following scenario:

The boys in the class are having a put-down fight. They keep saying mean things to each other. When the teacher says something about stopping, the boys respond, "We're just joking; it doesn't matter; no one believes it."

Ask: What would you say to the boys' response? (Words do hurt.) Let's take a look at Ephesians 4:25, 26, 29, 31, 32. How does this scripture apply to put-downs? (Speak the truth about others; don't be angry or bitter; stay away from using corrupt and evil words; use only good words; be tenderhearted and forgiving.)

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

On a white/chalkboard, create three columns. Use the headings fight, flight, and solve. Remind students there are times when fighting or fleeing is good thinking. The class will work on creating lists in these three areas.

Say: What are some real-life problems that teens might choose to fight by using put-downs or gossiping? What are some times we try to avoid our problems by running away, denying there is a problem, or blaming someone or something besides ourselves? When might we try to resolve a problem by ignoring it, talking about it with the person involved, or getting someone else to help us solve the problem? Work together to create three lists. Include typical, real-life responses, not just ones that would be ideal.

Have different volunteers write on the board or chart, or dictate the list to one of the leaders as you discuss with the students.

Debriefing • Ask: In the future, do you think you will be able to consider your response first, before you react? Why might this be a

difficult thing to do? (Old habits of response are hard to give up; our brains are used to the old ways.)

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. What can we do to help change a habit that leads to a given response? (Pray daily that the Lord will remind us that we want to respond differently and help us remember, especially when we need to make a choice.)
2. What method will citizens of God's kingdom choose to use the most? (Resolving by overlooking the problem, if possible, talking it out, or getting someone to help.)
3. When might the fight-or-flight options be the best choice? (life-threatening situations)
4. How realistic is it to you that words (gossip, put-downs) really hurt others and are a type of "fight" response?
5. What can you say to someone who is using put-downs or gossip?
6. What have you learned about blaming or denying?

6 CLOSING

SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

Friendships are what God has put in place to help us stand strong and true to Him. As citizens of the kingdom of heaven, we need to find friends who share our desire to be on God's winning side.

Even good friendships can encounter difficulties. We have a choice of how to respond when conflicts arise. We can choose to run away, but will this save the friendship? We can fight, but the damage that is done may wreck the bond we shared. Or we can make the hard choice of working out our disagreements. We can choose to ignore the problem or discuss it until we find a solution. We may need to arrange for someone to help us resolve our differences. God has a plan for the problems we face each day. His way leads us to peace and joy.



STUDENT LESSON

FRIENDSHIP

What's Best for You

July 22, 2023

Sabbath FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do” (Colossians 3:12, 13, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 14, Unity in the Body of Christ:** “We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 27, 28

WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU

The two young men facing each other stood tall and strong. Though only an arm's length away, it felt as if a huge canyon separated them. The years they had spent together had bound their friendship so that they were closer than most brothers. The futures they each longed for now appeared to be impossible. What had gone wrong?

Jon had been born into privilege. The first-born of the first CEO of a growing empire. Everyone believed this adored son was being

groomed to replace his father one day. The young man appeared to be living up to everyone's expectations of him.

During Jon's childhood the family had practically adopted a boy about Jon's age. Dave had been born the youngest son in a large family of boys. His parents had given Dave many hard and unglamorous chores so that he had learned to be a dependable worker. One such chore required Dave to go to where the CEO was working on a most difficult problem. Many employees had tried to solve it, but Dave, in his youthful innocence, surprised everyone. At first, employees had laughed at Dave's suggestion, but when the young man solved the problem, the future looked brighter for all of them.

The CEO was thrilled and at that time insisted that Dave join the family. Over the years Jon and Dave became inseparable. Then, the father began to hear rumors that the employees might prefer to have Dave as the next CEO. Jon's father became furious; that position was to be held by his beloved son. The CEO began to show Dave that he was no longer welcome.

Jon had heard all the talk about Dave becoming the next leader. Jon loved Dave and believed the adopted brother might be a better leader. Jon really just wanted the best for everyone.

One day Jon realized just how worried and angry his father had become. Jon listened, and learned that his father was thinking of having Dave killed. The CEO warned his son to say nothing about this to Dave and instead find a way to get Dave to walk into a trap.

Because Jon loved Dave, he ignored his

father's request and warned his friend of the danger that waited. This warning gave Dave a chance to escape before Jon's father could find him.

Jonathan's actions kept his father, King Saul, from killing David, the anointed, future king of Israel.

Sunday RESPONDING

- » Read Proverbs 17:14 (NIV).
- » Jennifer was ready for a change. Since kindergarten Cheryl had been her best friend. But now they were going into the eighth grade. While they were still great friends, Jennifer realized their interests were changing. After school Jennifer liked to play sports. Cheryl preferred to go home, practice her music, and read. Jennifer felt it was time to have a different lockermate at school. Would it be better to continue sharing a locker, since that is really not a big deal? If you were Cheryl, how would you feel if Jennifer told you she wanted a change? What other conflicts might good friends have as they get older?

Monday BIBLE ANSWERS ON UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

- » Psalm 133:1; Ephesians 4:3-6; John 17:20-23.
- » God wants us to be in harmony with each other after the example of the unity that exists between God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit—the three members of the Godhead.
- » What does it take for you to be in harmony (agreement, union) with someone that is disagreeing with you?

- » Fill in the missing words. The verse is from the New King James Version.

"Therefore, as the _____ of God, _____ and _____, put on _____, _____, _____, _____; _____ with one another, and _____ one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must _____. But above all these things put on _____, which is the bond of perfection. And let the _____ of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be _____" (Colossians 3:12-15).

Tuesday REFLECTING

- » Read Matthew 18:15-17 (NKJV).
- » The animal kingdom has two responses to a problem—flight or fight. As humans we are part of that kingdom. When it comes to fleeing a problem, we're looking for a way to escape. We can run away from it. We can deny there is a problem, or we may choose to blame others for what is bothering us.
- » There are times we choose to fight instead of flee. This could be the physical kind of fight, with fists flying. But with many, fighting takes the form of using put-downs on other people. Another nonphysical way of fighting is to gossip about the person, hitting them with words.
- » But there is a third response that comes from being connected to our heavenly source of power. God says we'll be happiest if we face our problems and try to work them out. And sometimes it's best just to overlook a problem. Is everything worth fighting about?
- » However, some things can't be overlooked; we have to solve them. The first step is to talk to the person you are having trouble

with and try to work it out between the two of you. Other times we may need to get someone else to help us work out the differences and solve a problem.

- » Jesus places a great value on friends. He had several close friends while He was on earth. Jesus also says He wants us to be friends with Him.

Wednesday BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Look up each text and fill in the blanks. If a version of the Bible is used that you don't have at home, you can go to www.biblegateway.com. You will find many versions of the Bible on that site.

"Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should _____ that person gently. But _____ yourselves, or you also may be tempted. _____ each other's burdens, and in this way you will _____ the law of Christ. If anyone thinks they are _____ when they are not, they deceive themselves. Each one should _____ their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, _____ themselves to someone else, for each one should _____ their own load" (Galatians 6:1-5, NIV).

"_____ with one another and, if anyone has a _____ against another, _____ each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must _____" (Colossians 3:13, NRSV).

"What this adds up to, then, is this: _____ more _____, _____ more _____. _____ your neighbor _____. In Christ's body we're all connected to each other, after all. When you lie to others, you end up lying to yourself. Go ahead and be angry. You do well to be angry—but _____ your _____ as _____ for _____. And

_____ the Devil that _____ of _____ in your _____. Did you use to make ends meet by stealing? Well, no more! _____ an _____ so that you can _____ others who can't work. _____ the way you talk. Let nothing _____ or _____ of your _____. Say only what helps, each word a gift. Don't _____ God. Don't _____ his heart. His Holy Spirit, _____ and _____ in you, is the most intimate part of your _____, making you fit for himself. Don't take such a gift for granted. Make a clean _____ with all _____, _____, _____. Be _____ with one another, _____. _____ one another as _____ and _____ as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:25-32, *The Message*).

"A _____ is _____ - _____, but a _____ person _____ when _____" (Proverbs 12:16, NLT).

"Behold, how _____ and how _____ it is for brethren to _____ together in _____!" (Psalm 133:1, NKJV).

Thursday CONNECTING

- » Read Proverbs 18:24 (NKJV).
- » Friendships come in a great variety. Some friendships you were born into, such as your relationships with brothers, sisters, and cousins. There are friendships that come from years of shared experiences. These friends may have shared swimming lessons, bike rides, class assignments, or childhood worries. Other friendships come from shared interests: you enjoy the same sports, play in the band together, or read similar books.
- » This world is full of potential friends. Sometimes new friends begin to look more attractive than old ones. Some people even

begin to feel they've outgrown their family. So how do you choose a new friend? Now is the time to consider what kind of friends we should have.

- » We have been born into God's family. He's been there while we're growing up, and seen all the bad in us, and yet wants to be with us. God has chosen us to be part of His circle of friends. As citizens of the kingdom, we should daily consider how we can help others be included in this circle of love.

Friday **APPLYING**

- » Read Matthew 5:23, 24 (NIV).
- » Think of the last time you had a disagreement with someone and it ended badly. Did you try to solve your problem by fighting? Did you use put-downs, gossiping, or actual hitting? Did you try to escape by denying

there was a problem, or blaming someone else, or running away?

- » Now think of a time a disagreement ended in renewed friendship. Did you work it out by overlooking the problem? By talking about the problem together until you were able to solve it? Or did you get someone else to help you?
- » Which work-it-out strategies might have solved the problem you were just thinking about?
- » What do you plan to do when future friendships are threatened by disagreements?
- » Keep a record this week about problems you have each day. Make a note about how you solved them. Think about what works the best and why.

My Solution Journal

Sabbath _____

Sunday _____

Monday _____

Tuesday _____

Wednesday _____

Thursday _____

Friday _____

