

## Friendship

[Previous](#) | [Next](#)  
&nbsp;



Aim: to define what it means to be a good friend and to help young people appreciate the costs and benefits of friendship.

### Intro - find someone who...

Divide an A4 sheet into 15 squares - five rows of three columns. Write an attribute in each square:

one third of which are things they were born with - has curly hair; has blue eyes etc

one third are skills they have learned: can play piano; can create a web page etc

one third are experiences they have had or would like to have: has been to America; would like to do a bungee jump etc

Make a copy for everyone in the group and supply pens.

Individuals have to find someone who fits each category and get them to sign their name in that square. If your group has less than 15 people, then allow each person to sign two or three spaces as necessary. The winner is the first person with a signature in each square.

Discuss the game - did you find out anything about people in the group that you didn't already know? Who would you have gone to first if the category were 'is a good friend'? Why?

Explain that the attributes fall into three categories - things you're born with, skills you learn and experiences you have had. Which category does 'being a good friend' fall into - something you're born with, a skill you can learn, or an experience you have? Most people would say that it's a bit of all three, but there are definitely skills that you can learn that will help you be a better friend.

### Discussion

Ask everyone to answer the question 'who has been a good friend to you and why?' in turn. Note down the reasons people give on a flip chart and build up a definition of friendship. This may be quite a rosy picture of a friend - should we

expect someone to always be this fantastic? What should our attitude be when friendships go up and down? What skills do we need to learn to become more like this definition of friendship?

### **How friendly are we?**

This is a method of measuring how friendly the group feel they are. Write the following statements on pieces of A3 paper and stick them round the room:

welcoming new people;

supporting people who are having a hard time;

including lots of different types of people;

having a laugh together;

a place where people can be real and honest.

Add other measures of friendship that you feel are appropriate.

Give everyone a pen, and ask them to go round the room giving the group marks out of ten in each category from their experience. To allow people to do this anonymously, give everyone the same colour pen. Then add up the marks - you could work out a percentage for each category so that you can compare them. Discuss the results. Is this a fair reflection of your group? Where are you doing well? How could you do better in the categories that got a lower mark? Even if your marks are high overall, did any category get a very low mark from some individuals? What does this tell you? Try to end with some constructive action points and take note of where you might need to do some more work with the group.

### **Bible Study - Jesus and friendship**

Jesus invested a lot of time in relationships with people. Hand out the following bible passages. Ask people to look them up and answer these questions: How many people count as Jesus' friends in this passage? What does the story tell you about how close Jesus was to them?

Luke 10, 1, 17; Luke 8:1-3 (Jesus sends out the 72 and is supported by women who travel with him. He had a wide circle of friends that he taught and shared his life with.)

Luke 6:12-16; Luke 9:1-6 (Jesus chooses 12 disciples to invest more time in - these are closer friends that he trusts and takes risks with.)

Matt 26:36-38; Matt 17:1-3 (Jesus has three closer friends - Peter, James and John - that he takes on special missions.)

John 13:21-25; John 21:20-24 (John is Jesus closest friend out of the disciples.)

Jesus is known for being welcoming to all people, and yet he had some friends who were closer than others. Encourage the group to emulate Jesus - to have a wide group of friends that include lots of different types of people; to have a smaller circle of friends that you trust and spend more time with; to have one or two friends that know everything about you. Get them to think about which of their friends fall into each of these categories. Where do they need to invest more time or energy into their friendships?

## **Pros and cons of friendship**

On a flip chart or OHP draw a horizontal line. Write a big plus sign above it and a minus sign below it. Ask the group to think of the benefits of friendship - what does friendship give you? Write these above the line. Then ask them to think of the costs of friendship - what or when does friendship take from you? Write these below the line. What is it like to be in a friendship that only has the plusses? What is it like to be in a friendship that only has the minuses? Has anyone found that a friendship has got deeper through going through a difficult time, by experiencing some of the minuses? In reality there are costs to friendship as well as benefits. We can't just take from our friends, we need to give to them as well, but often helping a friend through a crisis, or sorting out an argument can lead to a much deeper friendship than just having a laugh together, even though it can be painful. Point out that some friendships may go through a long time of needing a lot of input from you; such as if someone's parents are splitting up and they need a lot of support. How can you make sure you don't burn out and get resentful because you may not be getting much back from the friendship? Is there ever a time when a friendship/relationship can be harmful to you? Should you ever give up on a friendship? When? How do you decide that a friendship has reached that point? You will want to encourage people to be faithful to their friends, and to be there for them when they need help, but they also need to know that in a very few cases, 'friendships' can be abusive and it may be better to have time out from them.

## **Friendship advice**

This is a method of group problem solving. You can either ask group members to write anonymous 'agony aunt' letters on the theme of friendship, or you can make up some letters about issues that you know are pertinent to your group. Asking the group to write their own letters is appropriate for a more mature group that you know will respect one another. Writing scenarios for the group may work better for a younger group, or where you feel specific issues need to be addressed. The letters could be about restoring a friendship that has gone wrong, or how to make friends if you feel you haven't got any, or any of the issues that arose out of the group audit above.

Put the letters in a bowl in the centre and produce a hat. Explain that group members are going to take it in turn to give advice to the people who have written the letters. Read out one of the letters and ask if anyone has some advice to give. They should wear the hat while they give their opinion. If anyone else has something to add, they should put their hand up and take their turn wearing the hat. Feel free to add your advice too, as long as you are wearing the hat too. Encourage lots of people to take part, and to realise that they have skills and experiences that are worth sharing.

End with a time of prayer for the group. You could ask them to reflect quietly on one or two friendships that they have realised they need to invest in as a result of today. Pray for friendships to be strengthened, both within the group and outside it.

***Jenny Baker is a writer and a Consultant Editor for Youthwork International***

## **Prayer**

- [In step with the Spirit](#)
- [A vision for friendship](#)
- [The heart of leadership](#)
- [Influencers](#)
- [Pushing the Senses](#)
- [The 10 Commandments](#)
- [Safe-Sex promotion by Ringtone](#)
- [Helping them to decide](#)
- [Set up for success?](#)
- [Keeping the Flame Alive](#)
- [Disney star promises abstinence until marriage](#)
- [Following Jesus](#)
- [Under construction](#)
- [Relationships](#)
- [Blessed are the meek](#)
- [Money, money, money](#)
- [Responding to violence](#)
- [Rest in the City](#)
- [Understanding Grace](#)
- [Singing Ourselves Nowhere](#)
- [Quiet Times](#)
- [Healing](#)
- [Coffee House ministry a success](#)
- [It's good to talk...](#)
- [Married to the job?](#)
- ["Young people to promote unity", says Taize](#)
- [How have we made this boring?](#)
- [Es ist gut zu reden](#)
- [Mentoring](#)
- [Bread of Life](#)
- [The Second Coming](#)
- [Ø\\$Ù,,Ø£Ø-ØªÙ•Ø\\$Ø, Ø"Ø\\$Ù,,Ø´Ø¹Ù,,Ø© Ù...ØªÙ,Ø`Ø©](#)
- [Meet the parents](#)

&nbsp; [Previous](#) | [Next](#)

&nbsp;[Back to top](#)