

Unexpected friends



Purpose

For students to accept the possibility that friends may be found in unexpected places.

Students will achieve this purpose by:

- Expressing the qualities they desire in a friend
- Thinking about how sometimes unlikely people can make great friends for us
- Examining accounts of unlikely friendships in the Bible.

Preparation

- Prayerfully read and reflect on 1 Samuel 17: 12-15; 18-20, Matthew 4: 18-22 and John 15: 15b.
 - David was the youngest son of a family that wasn't considered to be very important and Jonathan was the son of King Saul. David was anointed by Samuel and told that he was to be the next king. Jonathan was next in line for the throne; their friendship was an unlikely one.
- Make copies of worksheets as required.
 - BLM 1 *David and Jonathan BFFs [Best Friends Forever]* (paraphrase of Samuel passages)
- Decide how you will present the Bible passage from Matthew: by using a class set of Bibles or another means.
 - Collect a class set of Bibles if required.
 - Bookmark the passage if you will ask a student volunteer to read to the class.
- View clip and decide whether to make use of it or not:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GC2IAwJBo4> (Marc and Ashton)
- Carefully read through all of the instructions for 'air tennis', the Orientation activity.
- Decide whether you will do the 'Article of two friends: David and Jonathan' mini-book. This task will require a little time each week to write something either directly about David and Jonathan's friendship or something we can learn about their friendship.
 - If you decide to do this activity you will need to source coloured card for the cover and plain white paper for the inside. The book could be A5 or A6.
 - Decide whether you will pre-make all of the books or if they will be compiled and constructed at the end.
- Decide which value you will focus on and how you will incorporate it into the session.
- Familiarise yourself with the Student Journal to aid your ability to explain any of the activities; complete your copy of the Student Journal.
- Check to see if there are any additional resources in the online Toolbox for this session.

Module 1 Everyday Relationships

Main Point

It is important to treat everyone in a friendly manner; friendship can be found in unexpected places.

Key Verse

'If you fall, your friend can help you up. But if you fall without having a friend nearby, you are really in trouble.'

Ecclesiastes 4: 10 (CEV)

Values

- Diversity
- Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion
- Friendliness

Orientation

- Greet the students and if this is the first session for the year, introduce yourself.
- Say that you would like to start the session with a game called 'air tennis'.
 - Have the students move into position and explain how the game works.
 - The students will need to make a large circle or rectangle around the room; they will need to have some space to move without there being any risk of them hitting any fellow students or furniture.
 - One student will start by 'serving' the 'ball' to another student (the more authentic the better). Recommend to the students that they make eye contact with the person they will 'hit' the 'ball' to.
 - The invisible ball will bounce once between each hit so the next student has a couple of seconds to get ready to 'hit' the 'ball' on to another student.
 - Each time a student hits the ball they will need to give an answer to the question that you have asked. Each student is only allowed to respond to a question once, so the 'ball' needs to be 'hit' to different people.
 - You will ask the question at the start of each 'game' and call 'serve', and then the starting student will serve the ball while giving their response. When you want 'play' to stop so you can change the question, call 'reset'. When you want to end the game and for the students to return to their seats, call 'game, set, match'.
 - Use any of the following questions for the game:
 - 🕒 What do you look for in a friend?
 - 🕒 What is one good friendship quality in a person that you are hitting the ball to possess?
 - 🕒 What is one good friendship quality that you have?
 - 🕒 What is one of your 'how-to-be-a-good-friend' tips?
 - 🕒 What is a fun thing to do with friends?
 - As the students respond write down any positive friendship qualities that are expressed (this list will be useful in future lessons so ensure that you retain a copy).
 - Before you start the game properly, give the students a quick go at 'hitting' the 'ball' to one another. If making eye contact isn't working sufficiently then you will need to incorporate calling out the name of the recipient somehow. Either you could call out the name of the next recipient or the student can call out a name before they give their answer to the question.
 - Get started and have fun!

Exploration of the Issue

- Tell the students that today's focus will be on unexpected friendships. Suggest that sometimes even when we know the kinds of things we are looking for in a friend we may discount some people too quickly thinking that they are too unlikely to be a potential friend. However, if we behave like this all the time then we may be missing out on some truly wonderful friendships.
- To illustrate the idea and get them thinking show or explain, based on the clip below, the story of two friends.
 - Show clip https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GCxiA_uJBo4 (friendship of Marc and Ashton)
 - 🕒 Why might Marc and Ashton be described as 'unexpected friends'? (*they only met because of the race that they were paired for; there was no expectation that they would ever meet or race again, they were different ages, at different schools, had different lifestyles and Marc had never before met anyone with autism so he wasn't at all familiar with how it can impact communication and friendships*)
 - 🕒 What can we learn from their friendship? (*we don't need to be exactly the same as our friends, people can surprise you*)
- Everyone has something to offer
 - Ask the students to open their Student Journal to page 2 and to think about their great qualities that they bring to a friendship.
 - Encourage the students to reflect honestly and kindly about themselves and their qualities. It's not being proud or arrogant to know yourself and recognise your strengths.
- Being wise with friendships discussion
 - 🕒 We have been talking about being open to new friendships, and it's definitely important, but are there some people who might not be the best choice for you? (*Yes, probably*)
 - 🕒 When would it **not** be a good idea to give someone a chance at being your friend? (*if they make you feel unsafe, if they are trying to pressure, persuade or manipulate you into being their friend*)
 - 🕒 Do we need to be friends with everyone? (*No we don't, no – but that doesn't make them our enemies, we should still be friendly to them*)
 - 🕒 How should we treat everyone? (*In a kind, friendly, respectful way, we should be loving and caring of everyone*)
- The Bible encourages people to treat everyone the same way we would like to be treated.

Bible Connections

- Mention to the students that there is a great example of an unexpected friendship in the Bible; it can be found in the Old Testament.
 - Hand out copies of BLM 1 *David and Jonathan BFFs*.
 - Read through the description of David and Jonathan's friendship. Ensure the students know what all of the words mean, give them the opportunity to clarify any they are unsure of (in particular: prophet – a messenger from God and valiant – brave and courageous).
 - Discuss the question on the sheet and then give the students at least five minutes to write their short story or draw their cartoon.
- Say to the students that another great example of unexpected friendships is in the New Testament. Jesus called His disciples to come and follow Him, to learn from Him and to be His friends.
 - Ask for a volunteer to read from Matthew 4: 18-22. If there is a class set of Bibles hand them out and have the whole class look up the passage together, if not, provide the volunteer with a bookmarked Big Rescue Bible.
 - 🕒 What was unusual about what happened? (*Jesus chose His friends without knowing them, they followed immediately*)
 - 🕒 What could we learn about Jesus from what happened? (*Highlights that Jesus was different, He was welcoming of everyone, the disciples must have known that there was something different about Jesus or they would not have followed Him without question*)
- Mini-Book – A tale of two friends: David and Jonathan
 - Explain to the students that over the next five weeks or so they will be making a mini-book about the friendship of David and Jonathan, adding a new page each week. They can either write about the events that happened in the friendship or write about things that people can learn from their friendship focusing on the theme of the day.
 - Hand out either pre-made mini-books or coloured card and a piece of white paper.
 - Please note: If the books are going to be compiled and constructed later explain to the students how the book will work regarding the layout of the pages, whether they will need to leave a margin for the book to be stapled, whether the paper be folded in half or not, etc.
 - Let the students know that they can add to their cover each week also so their priority should be writing the new page each week. They can illustrate the pages if they like also.

- Suggest to the students that for today's page they could give some background for David and Jonathan and talk about the unexpected nature of their friendship.
- Give the students several minutes to work on their mini-book then ask them to write their name in pencil and hand them in to you.

Student Reflection

- Allow some time for the students to share the short stories or comic strips they created on the BLM. This can be either as a whole class or sharing with a partner.
- Once again ask the students to open their Student Journal. This time they will need to write down their plan for being more open to unexpected friends as they reflect on the session.
- Conclude the session with a prayer:

Dear God, Thank you that we are all different with different interests and backgrounds. Please help us be open to making new and unexpected friends. Amen.

Checking for understanding 1: What I know then and now

Ask the students at the beginning of a new module what they know about the theme (as well as about the biblical character or characters if a character is followed and developed during the module). They can record what they know on their own, on a plain piece of paper.

At the end of the module, ask the students to go back to this piece of paper, and using a different colour, add what they now know about the theme and characters. The items added in the second colour are an indication of the learning that has taken place.

This could also be completed as a mindmap with the theme in the centre. Again what has been learned would be added to the map in a second colour.

EVERYDAY relationships

Session 1

Name _____

David and Jonathan BFFs

based on 1 Samuel 18-20

David was a shepherd and the youngest of eight sons born to a man called Jesse. In those days the youngest son wasn't thought to be very important and so no one really expected much of David. However a prophet called Samuel had told David that God had chosen him to be the next King.

Jonathan was the oldest son of King Saul; he had already established himself as a valiant soldier by the time he and David met and was next in line to be King.

Jonathan and David didn't let their backgrounds or what might happen in the future get in the way of their friendship. Soon after they met one another they became best friends. Jonathan thought of David as his equal in everything and he solemnly promised always to be a loyal friend. David highly valued his friendship with Jonathan and promised that he would always be kind to Jonathan and his descendants.

Why was the friendship between David and Jonathan unexpected?

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Write a short story or draw a comic strip about David and Jonathan meeting and becoming friends

