

Kindergarten—Unit 11

Jesus Is a Friend to You and Me

Jesus is our friend and wants us to be his friends, too. Through stories of friendship and discussion of what it means to be a friend, children explore how Jesus befriends each one of us. Bible stories and picture books in this unit present the themes of loving, needing, helping and forgiving friends, and following Jesus' model.

LESSONS

1. We Love Friends
2. We Help Friends
3. We Forgive Friends
4. We Need Friends

Unit 11: Jesus Is a Friend to You and Me

Unit Information

SUMMARY

Jesus loves us all. Through discussion of what it means to be a friend, children will explore many facets of friendship. As they learn about what it means to be a loving friend, they will discover the importance of honesty, communication, and forgiveness.

KEY BIBLE TEXTS

- John 15:9-17
- Mark 2:1-5
- Matthew 5:21-26
- Mark 11:25
- Luke 11:4
- 2 Corinthians 2:7
- Colossians 3:13
- Matthew 18:21-35
- Luke 5:17-26
- John 11:1-44
- Acts 15:6-21

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

We Love Friends

In John 15:9-17, Jesus talked to his disciples about his relationship with them. When we look closely at this passage, we can identify some attributes of friendship. Friends know things about each other. Jesus said, “Everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you” (John 15:15b). Friends show love, even to the point of laying down their lives for one another (John 15:13). Being someone’s friend is a result of personal choice.

When we think of Jesus’ friendships, we think of the disciples, but Jesus was close to other people too. The story of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus shows us this. Even though Lazarus’ resurrection appears to be a vehicle for God’s glory, Jesus obviously feels compassion for the sadness of his friends.

Jesus chose people from all walks of society to be his friends. He included outcasts (*lepers*) as well as persons of good standing such as Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. Age, race, gender, socioeconomic status, or physical ability were not important criteria in Jesus’ choice of friends.

We Help Friends

In Mark 2:1-5, we read the story of a paralyzed man whose friends came up with an ingenious solution to gain him access to Jesus. They lowered him through the roof of the house in which Jesus was teaching. Although the paralytic’s friends had to carry him through large crowds to Jesus, they did not give up. They were determined to help their friend until he was healed.

It is important to understand that roofs in Jesus' day were quite different from those of our homes. People often slept on their roofs. The roof of this house would have been fairly accessible. The paralytic's friends would not have done much damage in lowering the man through the roof.

This story shows friendship on two levels. First, the four friends went to some trouble to care for their friend. It would have been easier for them to go to Jesus by themselves or tell the paralyzed man that it just wasn't possible to take him to Jesus. Second, Jesus befriended the paralyzed man. When he saw the man come through the roof, he appeared glad to see him. He said, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Instead of being irritated at the interruption these men had caused, Jesus showed love and caring. Jesus acted as a friend to the men.

We Forgive Friends

Jesus addressed our need for reconciliation. We need to be reconciled with those we have hurt. We also need to make things right with those who have hurt us. Reconciliation with other people is closely tied to our relationship with God. "If you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins" (Mark 11:25). We are encouraged to go to great lengths to bring about reconciliation (2 Corinthians 2:7). In love, God has forgiven us. By the strength of Christ's love, we are to forgive others.

Forgiveness keeps relationships right. We are all imperfect people. Because we are imperfect, we are bound to hurt others and be hurt by others. When that happens, the need for forgiveness is present. We need to ask for forgiveness as well as strive to forgive. Jesus' instructions to Peter on the need for forgiving a friend were to forgive "not seven times, but seven times seventy" (Matthew 18:22).

We Need Friends

Needing friends and helping friends are closely related. Many things are accomplished because people work together. The beginnings of Christianity relied on many to spread the good news. Paul and Barnabas worked together to tell the news of Jesus to the Mediterranean region. They also worked with others to spread Christianity and to counsel existing believers.

In the story the children will hear, Paul and Barnabas are sent together, clearly going to work as a team. Their ministry was safer, clearer, and more consistent when they could protect each other and share ideas. Paul and Barnabas did not always agree (Acts 15:36-41), as is typical of friends. But their goals were the same, to get the good news of Jesus to the people of the first century.

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- Jesus is our friend and wants us to be his friends, too.
- We can show God's love to all people.
- Sometimes people hurt us. We can show God's love by showing forgiveness when we have been hurt.
- Sometimes we hurt others. We can show God's love by saying we are sorry and asking for forgiveness.
- By forgiving, we help the other person, and we help ourselves.
- God forgives us when we ask.

WORSHIP / BIBLE MEMORY

1. Colossians 3:13 is the main memory verse for the unit. You may wish to have children learn verses 12-14, or just one or two of the verses. Colossians 3:12 lists the qualities of a good friend. Verse 13 goes on to recognize the struggles that come with friendship. Verse 14 sums up the job of a friend, to have love, which “binds them all together in perfect harmony.”

To learn Colossians 3:12, pin the words COMPASSION, KINDNESS, HUMILITY, GENTLENESS, and PATIENCE to five different T-shirts. Explain what each word means and how it describes a good friend. As you recite the words of verse 12 together, put the shirts on one by one, one on top of the other. If the children are not readers, they may be able to use the first letter of the word as a clue to the quality it names.

When learning 3:13, have the children shake hands as they “forgive whatever grievances you may have” and kneel as if in prayer with the words, “as the Lord forgave you.”

To learn 3:14, put on the shirts from verse 12 again. Then add a shirt labeled LOVE as you recite “Over all these virtues put on love.” Have the shirts available in the classroom for the children to work on the verses by themselves.

2. Sing page 51 from *Jubilee Songbook*, “I Need a Friend,” as your theme song for this unit. Its themes of needing a friend, loving friends, and thinking about friends echo those of this unit. Other songs from *Jubilee Songbook*:

- Love One Another, page 50
- Be Kind to One Another, page 52
- Song of Forgiveness, page 55
- Jesus Is My Shepherd Friend, page 21

You may also want to use the song, “Ha La La La,” sometimes called “Jesus Is a Friend” by David Graham.

3. Pair the children each day with a different prayer partner. Ask them to hold hands and say a prayer, thanking God for this friend and asking God to be with that person. If they are uncomfortable doing this, give them the words to say, having them repeat the prayer after you.

Pray aloud for your class, asking for love, kindness, forgiveness, and a spirit of cooperation. If there are specific issues in your class, such as tattling or exclusion, pray for help with those. As the children hear your words, they will sense God’s interest and care that they grow into caring, loving friends.

ASSESSING TEACHING / LEARNING

Specific activities throughout this unit lend themselves to observing students’ grasp of the concepts. You have probably been assessing their abilities to sustain friendship throughout the year. Ask yourself if any classroom issues have improved in any way as a result of an individual’s learning. Do the children view Jesus as their friend?

MEMORY PASSAGES

This unit offers the following main memory verse for students to memorize: Colossians 3:13. Optional verses include Colossians 3:12-14 and Proverbs 17:17a. You will find these verses in large format on pages 303-305, to copy as take-home sheets for students.



Bear with each other
and forgive whatever
grievances you may have
against one another. Forgive
as the Lord forgave you.

Colossians 3:13



Therefore, as God's chosen people,
holy and dearly loved,
clothe yourselves with compassion,
kindness, humility, gentleness and
patience. Bear with each other
and forgive whatever grievances
you may have against one another.
Forgive as the Lord forgave you.
And over all these virtues put on
love, which binds them all
together in perfect unity.

Colossians 3:12-14



A friend loves
at all times.

Proverbs 17:17a

Jesus Is a Friend to You and Me

LESSON 1: WE LOVE FRIENDS

Objective

Children will hear that Jesus loves us as friends and that we should show love to our friends.

Key Concepts

- Jesus invites us to be his friends.
- Friends love and care for each other.
- Jesus wants us to show love to our friends.

Text: John 11:1-44

Estimated Lesson Time: 30-40 minutes

Materials

- *Jubilee Songbook*
- Bible story props: story cloth, story figures, box or bowl large enough to hide a story figure, strip of white cloth
- Paper, markers/crayons
- Book about friendship (*see lesson step 5 for suggestions*)
- For Extend the Lesson, option one: ball that is easy to roll and catch

Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the Bible story with story figures and props.
- If you wish, copy sheets of paper for friendship book with the preprinted words, “We love friends.” (*See lesson step 4.*)

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

1. Worship and Bible memory. See Unit Information, page 302.

2. Showing love. Ask, “How do you know when people love you?” Children may respond with ideas such as, “They spend time with us,” “They are nice to us,” and “They give us good things.” Then ask, “How do you show your parents that you love them? Your grandma and grandpa? Your friends?” Tell children that today they will hear a story about Jesus and some friends that he loved. “Let’s find out how Jesus showed love to his friends.”

LESSON STEPS

1. Tell the story of Jesus and Lazarus. You will need a story cloth and figures for Jesus, Mary, Martha, Lazarus, and Jesus’ disciples. Put Lazarus under a small overturned box or bowl, representing a tomb. Wrap the figure in a strip of white cloth.

(Begin with Jesus near disciples.) The disciples were Jesus’ friends, but Jesus had other friends too. Some of those friends were two sisters named Mary and Martha and their brother Lazarus. Jesus loved these friends and went to visit them often. *(Have Jesus “visit” with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, then move him back to disciples.)*

One day, Jesus got a message that Lazarus was sick (*lay Lazarus down*). Jesus loved his friend Lazarus, but he didn't go to his house right away. He stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Jesus did this because he knew he could help Lazarus, even if he died! Finally, Jesus told his disciples, "We're going to Judea again."

"But Jesus," his disciples said, "there are people who want to hurt you there."

Jesus replied, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going to wake him up." Jesus meant that Lazarus had died, and he was going to raise him from the dead.

Jesus and his disciples traveled to the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus in Bethany. (*Move Jesus and disciples to Mary and Martha, with tomb nearby.*) When he got there, Jesus saw many people comforting Mary and Martha, because Lazarus had died. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. You could have helped him."

Jesus said, "Your brother will live again."

"I know he will rise again in the resurrection," said Martha.

"Martha," said Jesus. "We all go to live with God when we die. But that's not what I meant. Show me where you buried Lazarus."

Mary and Martha took Jesus to the tomb where Lazarus' body was laid. (*Move Jesus, Mary, and Martha to tomb.*) Mary was crying and crying. This made Jesus very sad. He wanted to help his friend.

"Take the big stone away from the tomb," Jesus said.

"But my brother has been dead for four days," said Martha. "His body will smell."

Jesus said, "If you believe, you will see the glory of God."

So they took the stone away from the tomb. Jesus prayed. He wanted the people watching to know that his power came from God. Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" And Lazarus did come out. (*Take Lazarus out from under bowl or box.*) His hands and feet still had the cloth on them that they buried him in.

Jesus said, "Take off the cloth and let him go." (*Take cloth off Lazarus.*)

Jesus' friend was alive again! Imagine the joy that Mary and Martha felt when Lazarus walked out of the grave. They needed their friend Jesus, and he showed them he loved them when they were very sad.

2. Wonder about the story, using the following statements:

- I wonder how Jesus knew he could raise Lazarus from the dead.
- I wonder what the people thought when they saw Lazarus walk out of the tomb.
- I wonder what Lazarus, Mary, Martha, and Jesus said to each other.
- I wonder how I could show love to a friend.

Pray, "Dear God, we want to show love to our friends, like Jesus did. Amen."

3. Talk about friends. Talk with the children about the model of friendship found in this story. Jesus was an important person, but he had friends like Lazarus, Mary, and Martha that he loved very much. He came to their house to visit often, and probably told them his cares and worries. Life would be lonely without friends. Sing the songs, "I Need a Friend" (p. 52 in *Jubilee Songbook*) and "Jesus Loves Me."

4. Work on friendship book. In each of the four lessons of this unit, children will make a page for a book about friends. For the first page, give each child a piece of paper and writing/drawing utensils. At the bottom of the paper (*turned horizontally*) have them write or copy from the board the words “We love friends.” (*If you prefer, you can copy pages with the words preprinted.*) Make sure the words are spaced so children can read it later. When they have written the words, ask them to illustrate the story they just heard. Write the words Jesus, Lazarus, Mary, and Martha on the board, in case children want to label their characters. Make sure each child’s picture is identified on the back. Store the pages in a safe place until all four pages are complete.

5. Read a story. Close the lesson with a book about friends, such as *My Best Friend* by Pat Hutchins (Puffin Books, 2000) or *The House on East 88th Street* by Bernard Waber (Houghton Mifflin/Walter Lorraine Books, 1975).

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30-40 minutes.)

- **Play “Are you my friend?”** Have children sit on the floor in a circle. Begin by rolling a ball to a student, asking, “(Name of student), are you my friend?” The child answers, “Yes, I’m your friend.” That child then rolls the ball to someone else and asks the same question as the ball is rolling, so the child has a chance to get ready. Again, the child answers, “Yes, I’m your friend.” No one may receive the ball more than once, so help the children remember who has had a turn and who hasn’t. Emphasize that you are all friends.
- **Review the earlier story** about Jesus and his disciples found in the unit “Jesus Grew to Be a Man of God” (Unit 8, Lesson 3). See if the children can remember the song that names Jesus’ friends. Sing it together and talk about the close friendships Jesus must have had with these 12 people.

Jesus Is a Friend to You and Me

LESSON 2: WE HELP FRIENDS

Objective

Children will recognize that sometimes we need help from our friends. Jesus is our friend and helps us.

Key Concepts

- We can help our friends.
- Our friends can help us.
- Jesus is our friend and helps us, too.

Text: Luke 5:17-26

Estimated Lesson Time: 30-40 minutes

Materials

- *Jubilee Songbook*
- Props for introduction, such as jump rope or large box
- Paper, markers/crayons for friendship book
- Book about friends helping friends (*see suggestions in lesson step 6*)
- For Extend the Lesson, option one: large cardboard box, ropes, dolls
- For Extend the Lesson, option three: blanket

Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the Bible story from pages 309-310.
- If you wish, copy sheets of paper for friendship book with the preprinted words, “We help friends.” (*See lesson step 4.*)
- If using Extend the Lesson, option two, make plans to visit a retirement center.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

1. Worship and Bible memory. See Unit Information, page 302.

2. Help from a friend. Ask one child to do a task that requires two people, such as twirling a long jump rope, carrying a large box, or playing “I Spy.” Let the child try for a minute or two to do the task alone. Then ask if it would be easier to do the task with help from a friend. Let the child ask someone to help complete the task. Ask, “Was it easier to do when you had help from a friend? Today we will hear a story about some friends who helped their friend in a BIG way.”

LESSON STEPS

1. Tell the story of Jesus healing the lame man. Explain to the children that today’s story will be a little different. They will hear the words exactly as they are written in the Bible, then they will do some imagining about the story.

Begin by reading the text, Luke 5:17-26, aloud. Lower the lights in the classroom. Have students sit apart from one another and quiet themselves to get ready to use their imaginations. Invite them to close their eyes, then read the following story:

Imagine yourself in a small house, in a crowded room. Jesus is standing in the middle of the room. Do you see him there? What does he look like? You keep getting bumped and pushed, because people are shoving and pushing, trying to get closer to Jesus. Look around at the crowd. See that sick person over there? She is trying to get to Jesus so he can heal her. That man is listening carefully to what Jesus is teaching.

Look at Jesus in the center of all these people, quiet, peaceful. His disciples stand in a circle around him, protecting him as much as they can from the push of the crowd.

Now you hear a new sound. It is a scraping, tearing noise. You see Jesus continuing to teach. Look up, with the rest of the crowd, and see the sky showing through a hole in the roof. See, right above Jesus' head, a strange thing being lowered through the roof. It is a bed, with ropes at each end. You can see the hands of four men lowering the bed. It wobbles and bobs jerkily toward the floor. You recognize the man on the bed. He is a crippled man whose face is pinched with pain and suffering. You look at Jesus carefully. What will he do? The bed lands on the floor with a thud, right in front of Jesus. The crowd moves to make room.

Now you see Jesus smiling at the man. You hear his voice say, "Son, your sins are forgiven." You are amazed. How can a person forgive sins? Look at the group of Pharisees over there. They are frowning at each other. One of them says to the other, "Who does he think he is, God? Only God can forgive sins!"

Jesus seems to be looking right at you. He says, "Is it easier to tell the man that his sins are forgiven or tell him to rise up from his bed and walk?" You feel that Jesus has seen into your heart and that your sins are forgiven, too. Then Jesus tells the man to get up and walk!

The crippled man moves. He bends his stiff legs. He tests the new strength in his body. Now you see him rising, standing. He rolls up the bed and lifts it to his shoulder.

From the roof comes a great cheer from his friends. The surprised crowd makes way for him, and he walks straight and strong out into the street to join his happy friends.

You leave the house, following the healed man and his friends. The people you just left in the room with Jesus are amazed. Continue walking until the house and people are far behind you. When you feel ready, open your eyes.

2. Wonder about the story, using the following statements:

- I wonder what Jesus taught about on that day.
- I wonder why the Pharisees hated Jesus so much.
- I wonder how it felt to walk after lying in bed for so long.

Pray, "God, we want to be good friends like the people in the story. We want to help our friends, too. Amen."

3. Role play situations where someone helps a friend. Invite one child to be the victim, and invite ideas of ways to help your friend. What would Jesus do if he saw this friend in need?

(Name of child) just fell down on the playground. His knee is bleeding and he is sitting on the ground crying very hard. What would you do to help? *(Have child actually fall down and pretend to be hurt and crying.)*

(Name of child) just found out that her mom has to go to the hospital for an operation. She is scared that her mom might not get better. What would you do to help? *(Have child make a sad face.)*

(Name of child) is sitting at his desk. The teacher just told him to write the letters of the alphabet many times because he doesn't know them. He is sad because he doesn't know how to do it. What would you do to help? *(Have child sit with empty paper and pencil in front of him.)*

(Name of child) just spilled the big box of markers all over the floor. What would you do to help? *(Have child spill box of markers onto floor.)*

4. Work on friendship book begun in the previous session. For the second page, give each child a piece of paper and writing/drawing utensils. At the bottom of the paper *(turn paper horizontally)* have children write or copy from the board the words "We help friends." *(If you prefer, you can copy pages with the words preprinted.)* Make sure the words are spaced so children can read them later. When they have written the words, ask them to illustrate the story they just heard. Label the papers on the back with children's names and store them in a safe place until all four pages are complete.

5. Jesus is our friend. Discuss how Jesus helped people in the Bible, but he can help us today too. Jesus is our friend when we feel sad or scared or happy. We can tell Jesus how we feel in a prayer. Jesus cares about what we do and how we feel. Sing page 51 in *Jubilee Songbook*, "I Need a Friend."

6. Read a story. Close the lesson with a book about friends helping friends, such as: *Now One Foot, Now the Other* by Tomie dePaola (Putnam Juvenile, 2005) or *Cook-a-Doodle-Do!* by Janet Stevens and Susan Stevens Crummel (Voyager, 2005).

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30-40 minutes.)

- **Make a flat-roofed house** out of a cardboard box, cut a hole in the top, and let children re-enact the Bible story using a board, ropes, and dolls.
- **Visit a retirement center** where residents may feel like the paralytic man, wanting to walk. Before your trip, discuss how the children can bring cheer to the residents, even though they can't make them walk as Jesus could.
- **How does it feel?** Make a stretcher or pallet by folding a blanket on the floor. Invite one of the lighter students in your class to lie on the blanket and pretend to be paralyzed. Ask the child to describe his/her feelings. How do you feel when you hear others running and playing? What would you do first if you could walk? How do you spend your time? You heard about someone who could heal you. How do you feel now?

Jesus Is a Friend to You and Me

LESSON 3: WE FORGIVE FRIENDS

Objective

Children will understand that Jesus wants us to forgive others, just as he forgives us.

Key Concepts

- Forgiveness keeps relationships friendly.
- Sometimes I need to forgive.
- Sometimes I need to ask forgiveness.

Text: Matthew 18:21-35

Estimated Lesson Time: 30-40 minutes

Materials

- *Jubilee Songbook*
- 490 small items (*children will count them—you don't need to*) such as beans or buttons, paper cups
- Paper, markers/crayons for friendship book
- *The Quarreling Book* by Charlotte Zolotow (Harper Collins Children's Books, 1982)
- Candle and holder for each character in book, matches
- For Extend the Lesson, option two: *Sometimes I Get Mad: Psalm 73 for Children* by Elspeth Campbell Murphy (Chariot Family Publications, 1981)

Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the Bible story.
- If you wish, copy sheets of paper for friendship book with the preprinted words, "We forgive friends." (*See lesson step 4.*)

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

1. Worship and Bible memory. See Unit Information, page 302.

2. Seventy times seven. To illustrate how much is seventy times seven, divide the class into seven groups. Using beans, buttons, or pennies, have each group count seventy items by putting ten in each of seven paper cups. When each group has seven groups of ten, count the total number of items (490) by tens, keeping track of the hundreds with objects or fingers. Say, "Wow, that is a lot of things! In the story you will hear today, Jesus tells us to do something this many (*point to objects*) times! Let's see what it is."

LESSON STEPS

1. Tell the story of Peter learning about forgiveness. When Peter speaks or thinks, take on his role, with expressions and intonations.

Peter was one of Jesus' disciples. He liked to get things done, and checked off his list. *Finished.* Peter's heart was kind, but he didn't have lots of patience to do the same thing over and over again.

Peter knew Jesus would want him to forgive his brother, but how often? Surely seven times would be plenty. Then Peter could check that person off his list. No more forgiveness!

One day Peter asked Jesus, “How many times do I have to forgive my brother? Is seven times enough?”

“Oh, Peter,” Jesus answered. “Seven times is not enough. You should be happy to forgive at least seventy times seven.”

Peter groaned. *I can't do it*, he thought. *Doesn't Jesus understand? I haven't done anything wrong! My brother has! Why do I have to keep forgiving him for the same mistake—over and over and over again?* “Seventy times seven?” he said. “I can't do it!”

“You're right. You can't,” Jesus replied. “Not while you're being selfish. Not when you think you're better than your brother.”

“What do you mean?” asked Peter.

“Let me tell you a story,” Jesus said.

This is the story Jesus told:

“A king loaned a man three million dollars, but for some reason, the man could not pay it back. The master said gruffly, ‘I am going to sell you and your wife and children and everything you have to repay what you owe me!’

“The man begged and pleaded on his knees, ‘Please, sir. Please be patient! I promise to pay it back. Please, *please* give me more time!’

“The master knew the man might never be able to repay all that money. He felt sorry for him. ‘Look,’ he answered. ‘I'll cancel your debt. Let's forget all about it.’ ”

“Oh,” interrupted Peter. “That was really kind of him!” Then he wondered to himself, *Is that what Jesus means about forgiving?*

Jesus went on with the story.

“As the man whose debt was forgiven was going home, he met one of his workers, who owed him a few dollars. He grabbed the worker by the neck and almost choked him.

“ ‘Look, mister,’ he said. ‘Pay what you owe me! NOW!’

“ ‘Please, *please* be patient with me,’ the worker pleaded. ‘I promise to pay you back!’ the worker pleaded. But the man showed no mercy and sent him to jail.”

Peter thought about what the story was telling him. *The man who had been forgiven so much should surely be able to forgive so little. He didn't understand about forgiveness*, thought Peter.

Then Jesus told the rest of the story.

“When the king heard about what had happened, he was furious. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said. ‘I canceled your three-million-dollar debt and you don't care enough to forget about a couple dollars! Go to jail and stay there, until you can pay me everything you owe!’ ”

The story was done. Peter stood there thinking about what he had heard.

Jesus looked at him and said, “Peter, forgive your brother from your heart. That's what the story is telling you. That's what matters to me.”

2. Wonder about the story, using the following statements:

- I wonder what Peter's brother did that made Peter so angry.
- I wonder if I can forgive my friends when they do something wrong.
- I wonder if Peter was able to forgive his brother after he heard Jesus' story.

Pray, “God, help me to remember to forgive my friends. Amen.”

3. Forgiveness litany. Note with the children that Jesus told Peter he needed to be patient and forgive his brother seventy times seven times, 490 times. Remind them about the counting exercise they did. That's a lot of times! Explain that what

Jesus meant was that we need to forgive all the time, even when we are very angry. (*Jesus' use of the number seventy times seven represents an infinite amount of times we need to be ready to forgive.*) God forgives us lots of times, and we need to forgive others. Have the children repeat the words "Help me forgive" after every statement in the following litany. You read the dark print.

When my sister breaks my toy.

Help me forgive.

When my friend plays with someone else and ignores me.

Help me forgive.

When my neighbor calls me a bad name.

Help me forgive.

When my friend grabs all the good candy.

Help me forgive.

When my brother won't let me play.

Help me forgive.

Seventy times seven.

Help me forgive.

God, sometimes it's hard not to be angry. People do mean things to us. They forget things. They make us feel bad. Help us to remember that you forgive us for many, many things. Help us to forgive others.

4. Work on friendship book. For the third page, give each child a piece of paper and markers or crayons. At the bottom of the paper (*turn paper horizontally*) have them write or copy from the words "We forgive friends." (*If you prefer, you can copy pages with the words preprinted.*) Make sure the words are spaced so children can read it later. When they have written the words, ask them to illustrate the story they just heard. Label pictures with children's names and store them in a safe place until all four pages are complete.

5. Read a story. Close the lesson with the song, "I Need a Friend" (p. 52 in *Jubilee Songbook*) and *The Quarreling Book*. On a table in front of the class, arrange a candle in a holder for each character in the book. Without explaining, light all the candles. As you read the story, blow out one candle each time a character does something unfriendly or mean (*a candle snuffer is quite dramatic*). As the story progresses and the characters do something kind, relight the candles. When you finish reading the story, invite students to reflect for a few minutes. Encourage them to look at the candles and think about why you blew them out and relit them.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(*These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30-40 minutes.*)

- **Talk about times** students have been forgiven or have needed to forgive. Discuss how forgiveness renews friendships and anger breaks them apart.
- **Read *Sometimes I Get Mad: Psalm 73 for Children*** by Elspeth Campbell Murphy.
- **Forgiveness stories.** Tell a story of someone who could not forgive and the pain that anger caused. Then tell a story of great forgiveness (*a family forgiving a theft, etc.*) that brought healing to a terrible situation. If you have a victim/offender reconciliation program in your community invite a representative to talk about how they foster forgiveness.

Jesus Is a Friend to You and Me

LESSON 4: WE NEED FRIENDS

Objective

Children will understand that sometimes we need friends to do jobs that we can't do alone.

Key Concepts

- Paul needed his friend Barnabas to help tell others about Jesus.
- We need our friends to help us do jobs we can't do alone.

Text: Acts 15:6-21

Estimated Lesson Time: 30-40 minutes

Materials

- *Jubilee Songbook*
- Large sheet of paper, markers
- Story cloth, story figures
- Blanket or parachute, balls or balloons
- Paper, crayons/markers, stapler for friendship books
- Book about friends (*see suggestions in lesson step 5*)
- For Extend the Lesson, option one: map of Paul and Barnabas' journeys
- For Extend the Lesson, option three: large sheets of paper, paints

Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the Bible story with props.
- If you wish, copy sheets of paper for friendship book with the preprinted words, "We need friends." (*See lesson step 4.*)
- If using Extend the Lesson, option two, invite an athlete to visit the class.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

1. Worship and Bible memory. See Unit Information, page 302.

2. Make a list together on a large sheet of paper, naming why we need friends. Children may include reasons such as "to play with," "to help us when we are hurt," "to tell secrets," "to laugh and tell jokes," "to help us do the right thing." Explain that today they will hear a story about two friends who worked together to tell about Jesus. They needed each other.

LESSON STEPS

1. Tell the story of Paul and Barnabas. You will need a story cloth and story figures for Paul, Barnabas, members of the Jerusalem conference, and people in surrounding cities. Put a large group of figures in one spot to represent Jerusalem. Place two or three smaller groups of people to represent other cities a short distance from Jerusalem.

Jesus had died and gone to heaven to live. The disciples were left here on earth. They told others what Jesus had taught them. There were other people too, who had never met Jesus but believed in his teachings and wanted to tell

others about him. One of those people was a man named Paul. (*Touch Paul figure.*) Paul used to hate Christians, but now he believed in Jesus' teachings. He worked hard to spread the good news about Jesus. There was another man who preached the good news of Jesus. His name was Barnabas. (*Touch Barnabas figure.*) Paul and Barnabas were friends.

Paul and Barnabas' church sent them to a meeting in the big city of Jerusalem. They would work together to teach the leaders of the church. Paul and Barnabas packed up their bags and began their journey. (*Move Paul and Barnabas toward large group of people on way to "Jerusalem."*) They were friends, so they liked to talk as they traveled. Maybe they planned what they were going to say to the church in Jerusalem.

When Paul and Barnabas arrived in Jerusalem, the church, the apostles, and the elders welcomed them. (*Move Paul and Barnabas to "Jerusalem."*) They probably gave Paul and Barnabas a place to stay and some food to eat after their long journey. Paul and Barnabas told the group all that God had done with them. At the meeting, the leaders of the church talked together and made some good decisions together.

The gathering of people in Jerusalem sent Paul and Barnabas and two other men, Judas and Silas, to towns called Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. (*Move Paul, Barnabas and two other story figures away from crowd to smaller groups of figures.*) They gathered the congregations together and delivered a letter from Jerusalem. When the churches read the letter, they rejoiced at the good words. Judas and Silas were sent off in peace by the church. (*Judas and Silas leave.*) But Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch, teaching and preaching about Jesus.

2. Wonder about the story, using the following statements:

- I wonder if Paul and Barnabas could have done such a good job helping the church in Jerusalem if they hadn't been friends and worked together.
- I wonder what Paul and Barnabas talked about as they traveled together.
- I wonder what my friends and I can do if we work together.

Pray, "God, thank you for friends. Help us to work together like Paul and Barnabas did. Amen."

3. Cooperative activities. Go outside or to a large area indoors to do one of the following activities. Before you begin, talk about how one person could not do the job alone. We need each other, just as Paul and Barnabas needed each other to do the job of telling the good news of Jesus:

- With children around the perimeter, use a parachute or large blanket to bounce several balls on the surface to make "popcorn."
- Try to keep balloons (*as many as you think your class can handle*) from touching the ground, by hitting them into the air.
- Make a train with the whole class by holding on to the person in front of you. Move together, making train noises. See how fast your train can travel.

OR, if you prefer a calmer classroom activity:

- Invite children to count something in the room, such as your book collection.
- Make a paper chain together, with each student making links to contribute.

4. Work on friendship book. For the fourth and final page, give each child a piece of paper and markers or crayons. At the bottom of the paper (*turn paper horizontally*), have them write or copy the words “We need friends.” (*If you prefer, you can copy pages with the words preprinted.*) Make sure the words are spaced so children can read them later. When they have written the words, ask them to illustrate the story of Paul and Barnabas preaching together. Make sure pictures are labeled with children’s names. Then instruct children to each make a cover page with the word “Friends” on it. (*This is a word that your children can learn to spell.*) Staple the pages from all four lessons together. See if the children can retell the stories they illustrated. Refresh their memories if they cannot.

5. Read a story. Close the lesson and the unit with a final book about friends such as: *Yo! Yes?* by Chris Raschka (Scholastic, 2007)—making new friends; or *Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel* by Virginia Lee Burton (Houghton Mifflin, 1939)—faithfulness to friends.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30-40 minutes.)

- **Look at a map** of Paul and Barnabas’ journeys (*from a study Bible or the Internet*). Talk about the perils of traveling in the first century (*exhaustion, robbery, shipwreck, etc.*).
- **Invite an athlete** from a team familiar to the children to tell how he/she needs to work with friends, teammates, to win a game.
- **Paint a friend.** Provide large pieces of paper and paint for the children to paint a picture of a good friend. Display the paintings in “Our Friendship Gallery.”