



WEEK 1 LEADER PREP

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 and John 15:12-19 in preparation for today's lesson. Ecclesiastes is considered "wisdom literature" – it contains general expressions of truth, but the book isn't to be read as a list of "guarantees." The John 15 passage is a part of the "farewell discourse," a long section of teaching (John 14-17) after the Last Supper and before Jesus was arrested.

Students live in the murky waters of adolescent friendships. Each student approaches these relationships in unique ways, but all students are affected by the ups and downs of their friendships. Jesus' words in John 15 highlight how friendships can be a powerful expression of love.

WEEK 1 OVERVIEW

THE MAIN POINT

**If your goal is to be loved
by the world, you have to
become like the world.
If your goal is to love the world,
you have to become like Jesus.**

THE BIBLE

**Ecclesiastes 4:9-12
John 15:12-13
2 Corinthians 5:20**

DISCUSSION GUIDE

This guide is a suggestion. Adjust the questions and activities as needed to fit your group. Don't feel like you need to do, or ask, everything you see here. Let the students and the Holy Spirit guide the conversation, too.

GET THEM TALKING

- Who are your favorite BFFs from your childhood cartoons? (Ex: Phineas and Ferb, Scoobie-Doo and Shaggy, etc.)
- Earlier we made a list of the qualities of a good friend. What are your top 3 qualities – the things you think you must have for a friendship to really work?

TOPIC QUESTIONS

- If we asked Jesus' disciples to describe the kind of friend Jesus was, what would they say? (Bonus if you refer to specific Bible stories.)

READ Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 and answer the following questions:

- What do we gain by HAVING good friends?
- What do we gain by BEING a good friend?
- What do we GIVE to others by being a good friend?

READ John 15:12-13 and answer the following questions:

- How can being a good friend help you grow in your relationship with Jesus?
- How can growing in your relationship with Jesus help you become a better friend?
- How can being a good friend help your friends begin their own relationship with Jesus?

NEXT STEPS

One of the best ways to make a message like this personal is:

1. Respond to Jesus' love for you by saying "yes" to him.
 - Tell about when you said your personal "yes" to Jesus. If you haven't yet, would you want to do so tonight?
2. Allow God's truth to define who you are, where you belong, and what your purpose is.
3. Be a great friend by deciding to live a life that points your friends to Jesus.

If your goal is to be loved by the world, you have to become like the world. If your goal is to love the world, you have to become like Jesus.

PRAYER GUIDE

We'll close our time tonight by praying for our friends. Someone open in prayer, then leave a time of silence for each person to share the initials of one or more students they are praying would begin a relationship with Jesus. Someone close the prayer by asking God to show how each of you can help your friends say "yes" to Jesus.