

Abide in Love

Grades
1-2

FRIENDSHIP • EASTER 6 • YEAR B

JOHN 15:9-17



6

What is happening in this story?

John's version of the greatest commandment goes beyond Matthew and Mark in expounding on what it means to love God and others as God loves us. Jesus simplifies and intensifies the law: all of God's laws are meant to be motivated by love, not by a sense of obligation. Jesus shows this love on the cross. His use of friendship is also important. In the ancient world, friendship was taken seriously. Putting another's needs equal to one's own implies Jesus is looking for companions in his mission, not servants.

Why does this story matter for kids?

This text makes a high demand on friendship, telling us the greatest thing to do is to lay down our lives for our friends! As kids learn to make and maintain friendships, they can see how this boils down to everyday life. A friendship shouldn't be based solely on what we get out of it. Instead, being a good friend means showing concern for other people and taking their feelings into account every day. We can "lay down our lives for our friends" by simply caring about them every day.

What is the lectionary connection?

During the Easter season, the readings interpret the message of the Resurrection and what it means for us. This message of love and the idea of a "new model" of faith (i.e., the friendship of God) help us to understand the message of Easter for today. Easter is a time in which we learn about developing a relationship with a resurrected Christ.

AGE LEVEL TIP

Some of the things kids learn in Sunday school have nothing to do with the leaflets or planned activities. Aim to create a classroom atmosphere that is friendly, positive, and encouraging. Kids may not recall every lesson they were taught, but they will remember how they felt about the class.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Scissors
- Clear tape
- Markers

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Cord or yarn (green)
- Beads
- Bath towel
- Newspaper (1 sheet for every 3 kids)
- Hole punches (single)

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Set out cord or yarn, beads, and scissors. Tie one end of the cord to create a knot. Invite kids to string beads to create friendship bracelets. Kids exchange bracelets to signify friendship. **What are some other ways to show friendship?**

Invite kids to gather near the Wall Chart.

Point out today's date, season (Easter), color (yellow), and icon (butterfly). **During the season of Easter, we remember how Jesus died to forgive our sins and then came back to life! No one forced Jesus to do this. Why did Jesus die for us?** Allow kids to respond. **Jesus died for us because he loves us and is our friend. Let's show Jesus we love him and that he is our friend too.** Cut a piece of cord or yarn. Invite each kid to place a bead on the lanyard. Tape it to the wedge. **Jesus is our forever friend!**

Leader calls, **"Jesus is the vine!"** and forms a vine with his or her body. Kids respond, **"We are the branches!"** and form branches with their bodies. Everyone says, **"Love each other!"**

Pass out leaflets and markers.

The Bible often talks about vines, branches, and fruit. **What kinds of fruit grow on vines?** (Melons, grapes, blackberries, kiwi, etc.) **Use this grapevine to figure out what Jesus said to his disciples.** Instruct kids to write the letters found inside the darker grapes in the ovals to complete the sentence. Read it together. **How do you think the disciples felt when Jesus called them "friends"?** Collect their leaflets until Respond.

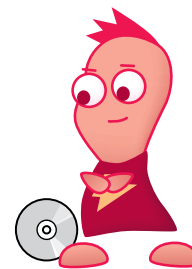
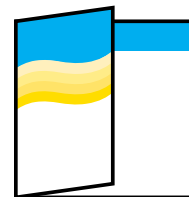
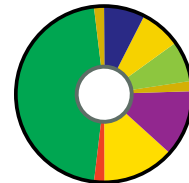
Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

Clara is noticing something a little different about Otto today. Let's see what's going on.

View Episode 12, "Jesus, Inc.," on the Whirl Year B Spring PreK–Grade 2 DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- **What was Otto doing with a toothbrush?**
- **Why was Otto working so hard?**
- **What is the difference between a boss and a friend?**
- **Can Otto still do nice things with Jesus as his friend? What would be different?**
- **How can you show others that Jesus is your friend?**



Pass out Whirl Story Bibles to kids.

Let's find our story today! Help kids find "Jesus the Vine" on page 386. Start by pointing out the graphic that shows the butterfly in the yellow circle for the Easter season. Before you read, invite kids to look for Jesus talking to the disciples, grapes growing on a vine, and the disciples showing love to others.



Read the story and Ada and Otto's questions and comments on each page.

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- What did Jesus want the disciples to understand?
- Why do you think Jesus talked about vines, branches, and fruit?
- What commandment did Jesus give the disciples?
- How do you think the disciples showed God's love to others?
- How does Jesus feel about you? How do you know?

Play together!

Play "Cross the River." Gather all of the kids on one side of the room. Identify a place across the room as "the other side of the river." Place a bath towel in the middle of the river like an island. **Your job is to work together to get everyone across the river without touching the water. You must cross as a group.** Hand kids the newspaper to use like stepping stones or rafts. When the game is over, ask: **Did everyone work as friends, or was one person the boss? How did it work best? When did you enjoy the game the most?**

BIBLE BIT

- The disciples would have been quite familiar with growing lots of good fruit.
- Grapes were so plentiful, they were often dried and eaten as raisins! See 2 Samuel 16:1.

WATCH IT AGAIN

- **What was Otto trying to accomplish by mailing himself in a box? How do people really serve overseas?** This would be a great time to highlight church-sponsored missionaries.

OUR CHURCH

- Invite a church volunteer coordinator to talk to the class about the many types of volunteer opportunities there are in your church. **How can people show Jesus' love to others?**

RESPOND 10

Pass out leaflets, hole punches, scissors, cord or yarn, and markers.

Unfold and tear off leaflet square.

- 1. What do you see in this picture? What's missing?** Invite kids to punch holes around the perimeter of the leaflet on the red dots.
- 2.** Have kids cut and thread lengths of cord or yarn through the holes around the leaflet to look like a vine.
- 3. If Jesus is this vine, then who are the branches?** Invite kids to write their own name in the blank leaf.
- 4. Why did Jesus tell the disciples to grow fruit?** Discuss the kinds of fruit growing from the disciples' branch.
- 5.** Have kids look at the fruit from Otto's branch. **Is this the fruit Jesus was talking about? Why or why not?**
- 6. What are some ways you could show God's love to others?** (Letting someone else go first, sharing supplies, complimenting someone, helping clean up, etc.) Have kids write or draw some ways they can show love to others in the blank spaces.

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

Finish this sentence from our puzzle. **Jesus said, "You are my (friends)." Otto learned that as Jesus' friends, we can work together with Jesus. Jesus told his disciples to "Love each other like I love you" and to grow fruit. What kind of fruit did you draw on your leaflet?** Allow kids to respond.

Pass out leaflet panels, markers, and scissors.

Jesus wants each of us to pass his love to others. Invite kids to draw themselves onto the blank shape in the middle, and then draw a friend in the blank shape on the right. Fold accordion style along the lines and cut the panel to make a paper chain. Unfold. Attach chains together and hang in the classroom or church hallway. **We can all stay connected to Jesus!**

Send kids out.

Kids call, **"Jesus is the vine!"** and form vines with their bodies. Leader responds, **"We are the branches!"** and forms branches with his or her body. Everyone says, **"love each other!"**

Pray together: **Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus to be my friend. Help me to love others the way Jesus loves me! Amen.**

Thank kids for growing good fruit. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.