

Abide in Love

Grades
3-4

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?

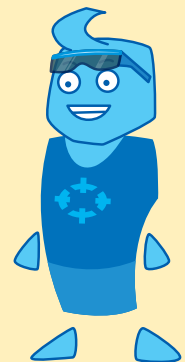
This text makes a high demand on friendship, telling us the greatest thing to do is to lay down our lives for our friends! As kids learn to make and maintain friendships, they can see how this boils down to everyday life. A friendship shouldn't be based solely on what we get out of it. Instead, being 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

Kids know what it means to be a friend and have friends, but friendship is a term often thrown around without knowing what *true* or *great* friendship is. Help kids consider more deeply what a real friend is and is not.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Permanent marker
- Markers
- Scissors
- Construction paper
- Glue sticks

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Craft sticks
- Gold stars
- Bowl of water
- Soft modeling clay
- Blocks

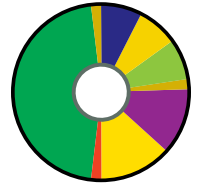
WHIRL SUPPLIES • WHIRL NRSV BIBLES • DVD • WALL CHART • LEAFLETS

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Use a permanent marker to write one word (*what, when, who, how, and why*) on each of five craft sticks and “Summer Plans” on the opposite side of all sticks. Give a stick to the first five kids. Ask them to walk around sharing summer plans and trading sticks.

Invite kids to look at the Wall Chart.

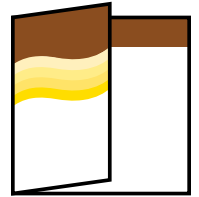
Point out today’s date, church season, color, and icon. **It’s still the season of Easter!** Invite kids to stick six gold stars on the chart in a circle formation. **On the sixth Sunday in Easter, we continue to remember how Jesus died and was raised. Today, we can remember it six times. God must really want to be our friend!** Invite a volunteer to write “friend” in the middle of the circle of stars.



Gather around the bowl of water. Stir it with a craft stick. **When life spins around, a true friend is there.**

Pass out leaflets and modeling clay.

Roll a piece of modeling clay and turn it into a heart. Place it in the center of the child. We’ll talk about abiding again today. When something lives with you, it stays with you. It abides in you. It is with you all the time. God loves each of you. To show that love, God gave us Jesus, who laid down his life for you. God



wants to abide in you from the day of your birth. God holds you in God’s hands. Set modeling clay aside for later use.

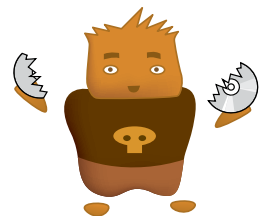
Gather kids around the screen where you’ll watch the video.

How do you choose your friends? What qualities does a good friend have? How do you act when you’re with them?

View Episode 12, “Trend or Friend,” on the Whirl Year B Spring Grades 3–6 DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- I wonder why Burt was hanging out with Eagle Eye.
- Why does Eagle Eye want Burt to be something he’s not?
- How does Burt try to become Leo’s true friend again?
- What did Burt sacrifice (give up) to be Leo’s true friend?
- When were you not a very good friend, but then thought about what you could have done differently?



Pass out Whirl NRSV Bibles and help kids find John 15:9-17.

Do the Easter 6 Preview Activity together on page 1262 and compare responses.

Read John 15:9-17 in this creative way together: **Every time you hear the word *love*, take turns adding a block to a tower of “friendship love.” Let’s see how high we can build it.** Take turns reading. After each verse, invite the reader to place a block on the tower. Need a higher tower or more turns? Read it again so everyone has a turn.



Ask these questions after you read the story:

- Tell me again what *abide* means.
- How did Jesus say we can abide in his love?
- What did Jesus mean that our joy might be *complete*?
- Jesus is the best friend we could ever have. Why? What did he do for us?
- Jesus told his disciples that he chose them. Name ways we can be kind to people we choose as our friends.

BIBLE BIT

In today’s reading, the fruit refers to the outward signs of an inward faith. Our connection to God is shown through our actions.

WATCH IT AGAIN

Have kids raise their hand whenever Eagle Eye *isn’t* being a true friend or Burt *is* being a true friend. Stop the video and ask them to explain why.

OUR CHURCH

A command usually implies a sense of *duty*. But Jesus’ commands are about *love*. What does your church command?

RESPOND 10

Open leaflets and pass out markers.

Tear off leaflet square.

1. We see God's love for us in Jesus. Jesus told the disciples that great love is shown when someone sacrifices for a friend. How did Jesus sacrifice for his friends and for you?
2. Invite the kids to create groups of two or three.
3. Friends are important. Talk with your group to come to an agreement of what a true friend *is*, *does*, *says*, and *is not*. Write your agreed-upon answer in each space in the square.
4. Pick up the clay hearts you made earlier. Jesus' love was so great that he died on the cross so we might live. Transform the clay heart into a cross.
5. Place your cross in the center of the square. Jesus *is* a great friend.
6. We can be true friends to others when we look to God's friendship with us. Name some ways we can share God's friendship with our friends.

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

We talked about *true* friendship today. How is our friendship with God different than our everyday friendships? We can be true friends to others, even when it's hard. How is being a true friend different than just being nice to someone? Take time to hear kids' responses.

Return to the leaflet panels and pass out scissors, markers, construction paper, and glue sticks.

When we love our friends, we bear the fruit of love. Cut fruit shapes out of paper and write ways you show love to friends. Glue the fruit to God's vine.

Send kids out.

Gather around the bowl of water. Stir it with a craft stick. **When life spins around, a true friend is there.**

Pray together: **Jesus, thank you for sacrificing your life for us. Give us the strength to love each other, even when it's difficult. Amen.**

Thank kids for working so hard on learning how to be a true friend. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.