

THERE FOR YOU [friendship—Proverbs 17, 18, 27]

THIS WEEK

Friendships are the heart and soul of the teenager years. As friendships become more and more important, your high schoolers are learning what creates and sustains valuable and lasting friendships. They'll learn what kind of friendships to cultivate as well as what kind of friendships and friends to avoid—and what kind of friend they need to become. This TalkSheet will help the students to discover that friends can be one of the greatest gifts that God gives them.

OPENER

Your kids have most likely learned about friendship through television shows and movies. You may want to start off by showing a few clips of a TV show or movie that portrays a friendship. Chose a variety of examples, including same sex friendships, group friendships, and mixed gender friendships. Ask your kids to observe the friendship shown. In the opinion of your kids, how healthy are the friendships portrayed? Why or why not? Was there a disagreement or conflict—and if so, was it valid? How did the two (or more) people relate to each other? How did same-sex friendships differ from girl-guy friendships? Talk about the perception of friendship from these examples and how realistically your kids think these situations were handled.

THE DISCUSSION, BY NUMBERS

1. Talk about the process of making and keeping friends. Discuss what might cause friendships to dissolve and what can make friendships last a long time. Why do people shift and change friendships? Is this a good thing or a bad thing? When do friendships change the most in a person's life? Why or why not?
2. Discuss the qualities of a real friend. Which qualities are the most desirable to have and why? What makes a friend a true friend? Do any of your kids have friends that have these qualities?
3. Have a few willing students share their answers (a friend loves at all times, loyalty is important, you can trust a real friend, you don't run out on your friends, and so on). Talk about the ideas the Bible contributes to the area of friendship. Discuss why a friend telling you bad news is better than flattery from an enemy, and why friends are important to have for advice and help.
4. Discuss myths and fallacies about friendship. Some of your kids may have both Christian and non-Christian friends. Talk about the pros and cons of having friends like them. How does this

affect them at school or at church? You may want to talk about their opportunity and responsibility to share Christ with their unsaved friends.

5. Ask your group to share what they would say about a friend as a tribute in an article. What would they say and why? How does this compare with what they'd want said about them? What's hard about doing this activity? Why or why not? How often do your kids let their friends know that they value and appreciate them?

THE CLOSE

Friendships take work, patience, and wisdom if they are going to last. Point out to your kids that everyone is different. Some people are better at making friends than others and some people will have more friends than others. Some people are happy with a few close friends while others like to have lots of friends.

You may want to talk about some of the famous friendships in the Bible like David and Jonathan, Jesus and his disciples, and Paul and Timothy. How are these examples of godly friendships? What characteristics of friendships were shown? How did these friends help each other and support each other?

MORE

- You may want to talk more about friendship in the media—on TV, in movies, song lyrics, magazines, and so on. How do these portray friendship as opposed to what this proverb talks about? You may want to bring in (or have your kids bring in) articles, song lyrics, or clips of a TV show or movie. Talk about society's views of friendship versus God's views of friendship. How do these compare? What is the value of friendship, based on these sources?
- Challenge each of your kids to encourage a friendship or two this week—to send a friend an e-mail or note, hang out with them, or something else. Maybe brainstorm some ways that your kids can work on their friendships. Then have them pay attention to how the friendship changed or grew from these efforts. Was it easy to work on the friendship? Why or why not? How did the other friend react?