

The Write Stuff

Bible Story: The Write Stuff (Paul writes to Rome) • *Romans 14:13; 15:7 (Supporting: Acts 9)*

Bottom Line: Friends accept one another.

Memory Verse: “A friend loves at all times. He is there to help when trouble comes.” *Proverbs 17:17, NIV*

Life App: Friendship—spending time with someone you trust and enjoy.

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

Early Arriver Activity (8:45 or 10:30)

What You Need: an offering container

What You Do:

Collect kids’ offerings. Ask kids if they have ever received a letter or postcard or card in the mail. Who sent it? What did it say? How did they feel when it came? Have they ever written a letter to someone instead of just an email? Have they ever sent a postcard while they were on vacation? Have they sent cards to people for something special?

Plug In (9:00 or 10:45)

We’re All Different

What You Need: no supplies needed

What You Do:

Have kids sit in a circle. Go around the circle, with each kid answering the question: How are you different from me? The first kid in the circle will ask the kid to his right: “How are you different from me?” And will get a short answer such as, “I have brown hair” or “I am taller.” Keep going until every kid has answered. Encourage kids to answer quickly and make sure their responses aren’t hurtful. If time allows, play the game again, going around the circle the other way.

What You Say:

“God made all of us different from one another. Some of us are boys and some of us are girls, some of us are taller or shorter, some of us have dark hair or light hair. Even identical twins aren’t exactly the same; they have different personalities, likes, dislikes, and fingerprints. Wouldn’t it be boring if everyone were exactly the same?”

[Transition] Now, let’s head to Large Group and find out about some men who were very different from each other at first but later became friends.” Lead your group to the Large Group area.

Prayer Time

After large group, gather children in their small groups. Lead them in prayer focusing on “The Bottom Line.”

Catch On #1

In It Together (application activity / great for boys) *This is a whole group activity. Pair up with one other Small Group.*

What You Need: 2 XXL T-shirts, 8-10 ping pong balls, 2 buckets

What You Do:

Divide kids into two teams, and within each team have kids pair up with same-gender partners. Kids will run a relay race with partners, wearing only one shirt. Give each pair a Ping-Pong ball, and instruct kids to run down to the other end of the room, holding the ball together. Pairs place the Ping-Pong ball in the bucket together and then go back to line. Have some kids go twice if there are unequal numbers.

What You Say:

“God made each of us different for a reason—so we could help each other. We might not be good at a certain thing, but we might have a friend who is good at that thing and can help us. Or we might not know how to do something that someone else does know how to do. If we work together and accept one another and the level of skills or abilities we each have, we will be able to do more things than we’d be able to do alone. **[Personalize]** (Tell kids about a time when you worked with someone and got something done faster or better than you would have alone.) **[Apply]** This week, when you can’t do something, ask a friend to help you. **Stick together.** Doing this will help you grow like Jesus did. Don’t worry about what your friend might think if you ask him or her for help, because **[Impress]** friends accept one another.”

Catch On #2

Here's What Happened (*application activity / review the Bible story*)

What You Need: "Here's What Happened" postcards (Activity Pages), pens, markers (*optional*)

What You Do:

Have kids write a postcard to a friend in another class or someone who isn't at church today and tell that person their version of the Bible story. Encourage kids to include all the parts of Saul's conversion and his friendship with Ananias. You may want to write the names *Saul*, *Paul*, *Judas*, and *Ananias* where kids can see them for spelling. Have kids draw their favorite part of the story on the front of their postcard with a caption.

What You Say:

"Paul was writing a letter to his friends in Corinth and it ended up becoming one of the books of the Bible called Romans. In Paul's letter, he was trying to encourage his friends there to come together and live in peace even though they were all very different. It's important for us to read this letter so we see that those same lessons about coming together and accepting each other apply today. **[Apply] When you hear others making fun of someone because they are different, you should tell them to stop and try to help them find ways to accept that person or at least to be respectful. [Impress] Friends accept one another.**"

Catch On #3

What's That Verse? (*memory verse activity*)

What You Need: extra Bibles, large sheet of paper, markers, sticky notes

What You Do:

Before the activity begins, write the Bible verse on the board or on a large sheet of paper (be sure to space the words out enough and write them small enough that each word fits under a sticky note or two). Then cover up each word with a sticky note.

With the kids, look up the Bible verse and say it together.

Finding verses with 2nd and 3rd graders: Guide kids to open their Bibles to the front and find the table of contents. Hold up a Bible opened to the table of contents to show the kids what the page looks like. When the kids find the table of contents, lead them to find Proverbs in the list under "Old Testament." When the kids find Proverbs, lead them to look at the page number beside the word. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find Proverbs. Help the kids find the page. When they find Proverbs, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find chapter 17. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find verse 17 in chapter 17.

Then have kids close their Bibles and raise their hands trying to remember all the words of the verse one at a time. If kids get stuck, give hints such as words it rhymes with, sounds like, etc. When they guess a word on the board, peel off the sticky note to reveal it. Keep going until the whole verse has been uncovered and say it together.

What You Say:

"Friends love each other no matter what. They are there for each other. So, if you see a friend who is in trouble, go and help him. Or, if you know someone who is having a hard day, try to do something for her that might make her day a little easier. **[Apply] Show your friends you love them and that you will be there for them when trouble comes. [Impress] Friends accept one another.**"

The Write Brother

Bible Story: The Write Brother (Paul writes to Thessalonica) • 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Bottom Line: Friends encourage one another.

Memory Verse: “A friend loves at all times. He is there to help when trouble comes.” (Proverbs 17:17, NIV)

Life App: Friendship—spending time with someone you trust and enjoy.

Basic Truth: I should treat others the way I want to be treated.

Early Arriver Activity (8:45 or 10:30)

What You Need: an offering container

What You Say:

Ask kids what it means to encourage someone. How do they feel when someone encourages them? What kinds of things do they do to encourage other people? Have they ever been to a sporting event or concert where people were cheering? How do they think it made the people on the field or on the stage feel to hear all that clapping? Who are their biggest fans (at home, school, church, soccer, etc.)?

Plug In (9:00 or 10:45)

Bag It

What You Need: brown paper lunch sacks, scissors

What You Do:

Have kids stand in a circle and put an open brown paper sack in front of each kid. Instruct them to put their hands behind their back, stand on one foot, and lean down to pick up the bag with their mouth. Every person gets three tries and if they can't pick up the bag, they sit down and encourage others who are still playing. After everyone has done this, cut an inch off the top of each bag and do it again. Keep cutting off the top of the bags until no one can pick it up anymore.

What You Say:

“I heard some really encouraging words out there! Thanks for showing our group that we really care about each other and want to encourage one another to do well. **[Transition]** Today in Large Group we are going to hear about some friends who encouraged another friend in doing God's work so they didn't quit or give up.” Lead your group to the Large Group area.

Prayer Time

After large group, gather children in their small groups. Lead them in prayer focusing on “The Bottom Line.”

Catch On #1

Encouraging Words (application activity / review the Bible story)

What You Need: paper, pencils

What You Do:

Ask the kids what verse we heard about today. (“So cheer each other up with the hope you have. Build each other up. In fact, that's what you are doing.” 1 Thessalonians 5:11, NIV) Paul wrote these words to the Thessalonians in a letter. Paul's friends also encouraged him along the way, as he spread the word about Jesus. Can they remember some of Paul's friends that we talked about today? (Silas, Barnabas, Priscilla and Aquila) There are clues below if they forgot any of them. Ask kids what are some of the ways Paul's friends encouraged him?

#1: This guy traveled with Paul on some of his journeys, telling people about Jesus. One time he was arrested along with Paul and thrown in prison ... then, in the middle of the night when they were praying and singing to God, and there was a HUGE earthquake, the prison doors flew open, and their chains came loose. Who was that friend? (Answer: Silas—Acts 16)

#2: This guy also traveled with Paul, telling people about Jesus. The Bible says he sold a field and brought the money for the apostles to use. His name was Joseph, but the apostles called him something else—a name that meant “son of encouragement.” (Answer: Barnabas—Acts 4:36)

#3: These two were actually a guy and a girl—a married couple. They were tentmakers, like Paul. They went on journeys with him and told people about Jesus, and they even hosted a church in their house. Their names even kind of rhyme at the end. (Answer: Priscilla and Aquila—Acts 18)

Instruct kids to write their names at the top of their paper and draw a small picture of themselves. Do one for yourself, too! Explain that everyone will pass their picture to the right, and that person will write something encouraging about the person whose paper they have. We can encourage each other today like Paul and his friends did. **[Personalize] (Make sure you're also doing the activity, so your kids can encourage you and you can encourage them!)**

What You Say:

"Paul had a lot of friends encouraging him along the way. There is no doubt this helped him in his journey because he knew he had people loving and supporting him, even when things were getting hard. **[Impress] Friends encourage one another. [Apply] We need to encourage our friends so they will know we are with them even when they are going through a hard time.** Doing this will help us know how to live and we will grow like Jesus did. We all like having people encourage us, and **[Recycle] we should treat others the way we want to be treated."**

Catch On #2

On Target (application activity / great for boys)

What You Need: masking tape OR a large piece of paper with markers, beanbags

What You Do:

Make three concentric squares on the floor with masking tape or draw them on a large piece of paper. Have kids take turns tossing a beanbag to try to get it in the squares. The middle square is worth three points, the next square out is worth two, and the biggest outer square is worth one point. Instruct kids to encourage one another as they take turns. Kids get a bonus point if they use their beanbag to move someone else's into a higher point area. Each kid gets three turns and the one with the most points at the end of three turns earns the right to go first for the next game.

What You Say:

"Sometimes it can be hard to encourage our friends, especially when we are competing against them. **[Apply] But be sure to encourage each other all the time, even when you would rather win for yourself. [Impress] Friends encourage one another.** You guys did a great job of encouraging one another during that game."
[Personalize] (Tell kids about a time you felt encouraged by something someone did or said.)

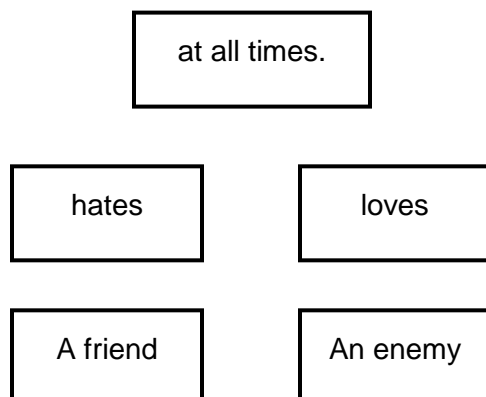
Catch On #3

Stepping Stones (memory verse activity)

What You Need: prepared "Stepping Stones" (Activity Pages), masking tape

What You Do:

Either pre-cut out all stones or get the kids to help you. Use masking tape to tape the words down in order as if it were a hopscotch path. Each pair of stones (stones that were originally on the same page) should be taped in order. Make sure the correct words in each pair are not all on the same side of the path. For example, the first sentence will look like this on the path:



Then instruct kids to travel down the path while only stepping on the stones with the correct words on them. Then do it again and instruct them to move faster. You could also have them move down the path in different ways, like hopping on one foot, taking two-footed jumps, or tiptoeing.

What You Say:

“It’s easy to love and encourage our friends when we are having fun together and when everything is going well. It can be harder, though, to be there for our friends when things aren’t going so well. Sometimes we might feel like we don’t know what to say or we don’t know what to do. But this verse tells us that a friend loves at all times.

[Apply] So this week, reach out and encourage your friends no matter what, because [Impress] friends encourage one another.”

Give each child a GodTime card. Pass out Parent CUE cards as adults arrive for pick-up.

You Got Served

Bible Story: You Got Served (Paul teaches us to serve) • *Galatians 5:13b* (Supporting: *Romans 12:16*)

Bottom Line: Friends serve one another.

Memory Verse: “A friend loves at all times. He is there to help when trouble comes.” (*Proverbs 17:17, NIV*)

Life App: Friendship—spending time with someone you trust and enjoy.

Basic Truth: I should treat others the way I want to be treated.

Early Arriver Activity (8:45 or 10:30)

What You Need: an offering container

What You Do:

Ask kids about a time kids have served someone or they’ve seen someone being served. Ask questions such as: Have you ever been to a restaurant where someone served you? Where are some other places where you see people serving other people? What do you think motivates people to serve other than money? How does it feel when someone serves you? Collect offering.

Plug In (9:00 or 10:45)

Serving Head to Toe

What You Need: large piece of paper, markers

What You Do:

Choose a kid to lie down on the paper. Have the other kids trace his or her outline with the markers. Then have kids brainstorm ways to use various parts of the body to serve others and write those ideas on that part of the body. For instance, hands could be used for typing an encouraging email, arms could be used for helping carry something, legs could be used for delivering something, etc.

What You Say:

“Those are some great ideas for ways to help other people. **[Transition]** Now, let’s head to Large Group and hear about why it’s important to do things for other people.” Lead your group to the Large Group area.

Prayer Time

After large group, gather children in their small groups. Lead them in prayer focusing on “The Bottom Line.”

Catch On #1

Pencil It In (application activity / review the Bible story)

What You Need: “Pencil It In” (Activity Page), pens, sticky notes

What You Do:

Have kids make the Activity Page into a kind of calendar by filling in the dates for the rest of the month (April 21-30). Then give each kid 10 sticky notes and instruct them to think of 10 ways they can serve those around them. They should put each sticky note in a block and use it as a reminder to serve in that way on that day. Remind them to use the ideas they came up with in Plug In. Alternatively, you could do this activity as a group and pass out the sticky notes at the end of the activity so each kid takes home just one or two ideas.

What You Say:

“Serving can seem like a big thing that is too hard to do on your own. But even small acts can really bring joy to another person or at least make them smile. Whenever we show someone that we care about them by serving them in whatever way we can, we are doing what Paul asked us to in his letter to the Galatians. **[Apply]** Let’s try to serve someone every single day for the rest of the month, no matter how small our act of service may seem. Doing this will help us know how to live and we will grow like Jesus did. **[Personalize]** (Tell kids about a time someone did something for you that made you feel loved or appreciated.) We all like having people help us, and **[Impress]** friends serve one another.”

Catch On #2

Pasta Words (*application activity / great for boys*)

What You Need: Elmer's glue, paper, construction paper, glitter

What You Do:

Have kids spell the word "SERVE" on their paper with the glue. Then sprinkle glitter on top and let dry. If time and materials allow, have them also spell out their name and add it to their paper.

What You Say:

"It can be easy to forget to serve or to avoid serving because it's easier to do what we want to do. But in his letter, Paul instructs us to serve others. He means all the time, not just when we feel like it. **[Apply] Let these signs be a reminder to serve those around you this week.** Let's remember that **[Impress] friends serve one another.**"

Catch On #3

Picture This (*memory verse activity*)

What You Need: "Picture This" (Activity Page), Bibles, markers

What You Do:

Look up the memory verse and read it together as a group. Then hand out the Activity Pages and markers. Instruct kids to fill in the blanks not with the correct words, but with pictures that show those words.

What You Say:

"This verse is telling us to love our friends. What's one way we can love them? Yes! By serving them! **[Apply] Show your friends you care about them by helping them or by serving them in ways that brighten their day. [Impress] Friends serve one another.**"

Happy Together

Bible Story: Happy Together (friends worship) • *Hebrews 10:25; Colossians 3:16*

Bottom Line: Friends worship with one another.

Memory Verse: “A friend loves at all times. He is there to help when trouble comes.” (*Proverbs 17:17, NIV*)

Life App: Friendship—spending time with someone you trust and enjoy.

Basic Truth: I need to make the wise choice.

Early Arriver Activity (8:45 or 10:30)

What You Need: an offering container

What You Do:

Ask kids what they think of when they hear the word *worship*. What are some ways we can worship the Lord? What are some things our church does? Why did you come to church today instead of staying home?

Plug In (9:00 or 10:45)

Wiggle Your Hips This is a whole group activity. Please combine with one other Small Group.

What You Need: tissue boxes, 10-20 ping-pong balls, duct tape or masking tape, CD and player OR MP3 player, timer

What You Do:

Put 5-10 ping-pong balls in each tissue box. Divide the group into two teams (boys vs girls if possible). Pick one kid from each team and tape the tissue boxes to their hips by putting duct tape or masking tape all the way around their waist over their clothes. Then play the music for one minute. Have the kids shake their tissue box as hard as possible just by wiggling their hips and trying to get the ping-pong balls to come out. Then allow another boy and girl to play for one minute. The team with the most balls out of the box at the end of two minutes wins. Be sure to encourage kids to cheer, give each other tips, and participate by counting out loud as the ping-pong balls fall out.

What You Say:

“That was some awesome fun! It almost looked like dancing. Dancing is one way we can worship the Lord.

[Transition] Let’s go to Large Group to hear about why worshipping together is important.”

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

Prayer Time

After large group, gather children in their small groups. Lead them in prayer focusing on “The Bottom Line.”

Catch On #1

My Church (application activity / review the Bible story)

What You Need: white boards, markers

What You Do:

Have kids work together in groups of two to three and come up with what church would be like if they were in charge. Have them put all their ideas on the white boards, using words and pictures. As they work, remind them of some different things we do in church: studying the Bible, praying, and praising God together. What other things can they think of that you do at church? After a few minutes of planning, have kids stand up and share their ideas with the rest of the group. Ask them lots of “why” and “what else”-type questions to keep them going.

What You Say:

“Churches can be very different from one another—some are big, some are small; some are in cities, some are out away from all the people; some meet in buildings that have been churches for hundreds of years and some meet in people’s homes or even schools and movie theaters—but as long as people are meeting together to worship and learn more about the Lord, that’s church! It’s important to know that it’s not where you meet or what kind of snacks you have that make a church special, it’s the people who are there and their desire to learn about God that makes the church great. **[Apply]** Tell someone this week what it is that you already love about this church. **[Personalize]** (Tell kids about the church you went to when you were younger and how it was

*similar to or different from your current church. Also, tell kids what you love about your church right now.) It's important to be here because **[Impress]** friends worship with one another."*

Catch On #2

Make a Joyful Noise (application activity / great for boys)

What You Need: various music-making supplies

What You Do:

Give kids 10 minutes to each build an instrument using the supplies and anything else they find in the room (with your permission). They can work with a partner if they choose. Then give them two minutes to play their instruments as loud as possible. Let them go back and try to use the materials to make their instruments even louder. Then give them another two minutes to play them and make as loud a ruckus as possible. If time allows, sing a song they all know well while playing the instruments.

What You Say:

"We can worship in many different ways, but one of the ways we worship is through music. The Bible tells us that our music is a sweet sound to the Lord's ear no matter if it's loud or quiet or somewhere in between. **[Apply]** So, even if you think you don't have a very good singing voice or you think you aren't very good at playing your instrument, God thinks you sound great! It's your heart or your attitude that He pays attention to the most. Worship God as you go to school and walk around your house this week. Let's remember that **[Impress]** friends worship with one another."

Catch On #3

Memory Toss (memory verse activity) this is a whole group activity. Boys vs. Girls!

What You Need: paper plates or plastic rings, scissors, water bottles

What You Do:

Cut the centers out of the paper plates so that only a ring is left. Divide the group in half and have kids get in a line. Set up the water bottles about five feet in front of each line. (You may want to mark the bottles with "Team 1" and "Team 2" so there is no confusion, or use different bottles.) Give the first kid in each line a ring. Review the verse as a group. Then ask the first kid in each line, individually, to say the verse. If they say the verse correctly, they can take a turn throwing the ring toward the water bottle to try to get a "ringer." If they don't say the verse correctly, they don't take a throw. After each turn, kids go to the back of the line and the game repeats with the next kid in line taking a turn throwing the ring after he says the verse correctly. The first team to get all five rings on their water bottle wins. You could do a speed round by having each kid say the verse again except inserting his/her name into the verse so it reads: "[My name] loves at all times. I am there to help when trouble comes."

What You Say:

"This verse tells us that a friend loves at all times and is there to help when trouble comes. Well, we can't love our friends if we never see them, and we can't help when trouble comes if we don't know when they are in trouble. That's why **[Apply]** it's important for us to worship together as a church because then we see each other and hear what's going on so we can pray, serve, love, and help one another. This verse also shows us how important it is for us to be honest with one another because our friends can't be there to help when trouble comes if we don't let them know when we have trouble in our lives. **[Impress]** Friends worship with one another."