



HARMONY

TOGETHER IS BETTER



WEEK
ONE
SEPTEMBER 2023

LARGE GROUP
PRETEEN

TEACHING OUTLINE

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

It Takes Two Two People Are Better than One Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

WEEK 1

Key Question: **What makes someone a good friend?**

There's the old adage: if you want a good friend, you should be a good friend. As preteens are definitely more aware of friends and friend groups, it's important for them to explore how they can personally show friendship to others. We hope they become people who help point their friends to Jesus.

We kick off this series in **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12**, where Solomon wrote, "Two people are better than one. They can help each other in everything they do." Solomon went on to explain that—like a three-strand cord—we are stronger when we work together as friends. It's important that we have the right sort of people around us to build us up and help us make wise choices.

Bottom Line: **Choose your friends carefully.** God has designed relationships to help make life easier. As kids become more aware of how their friends influence them, it's important for them to know how to choose good friends. We pray that kids will find friends who encourage them and help them grow in their relationship with Jesus.

BASIC TRUTH

I need to make the wise choice.

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Choose your friends carefully.

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

What makes someone a good friend?

TEACHING GUIDE:

KEY SCRIPTURE: Ecclesiastes

This message should be 15- 18 min. More time for small group is key. Remember the lead small model.

"As we get ready to head to groups today, think about this question.

SLIDE: KEY QUESTION

"Think about this for a moment. When you look at these three signs, do these three signs define your friendships right now? In other words, do the people you surround yourself with most help you, stand with you, and trust God with you? Or think about it another way. Can these three ideas be said about you? Do you help your friends? Stand with them? Trust God with them?

"Our friendships have a HUGE influence on our lives. We can become more like our friends than we could ever imagine. So, it is important that, like this rope, we are binding ourselves to wise people. And that we are being wise people for others as well."

LANDING

COMMUNICATOR: "Today as you go to groups, think about this:

SLIDE: KEY QUESTION

"What makes someone a good friend? How have you seen this in your own life? Before you head out, let's pray and ask God to help us become this kind of friend to others and also thank God for His friendship to us! Let's pray!"

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

"A friend loves at all times.
They are there to help when trouble comes."
Proverbs 17:17, NIV



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PRELUDE

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25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

It Takes Two
Two People Are
Better than One
Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

What makes someone
a good friend?

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Choose your friends carefully.

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

**"A friend loves at all times.
They are there to help when trouble
comes."**
Proverbs 17:17, NIRV

MONTHLY VIRTUE

**Friendship—Using your
words and actions to show
others you care**

BASIC TRUTH

I need to make the wise choice.

LARGE GROUP

ENGAGE KIDS' HEARTS THROUGH A DYNAMIC AND INTERACTIVE BIBLE STORY, WORSHIP, AND PRAYER EXPERIENCE IN A LARGE GROUP SETTING.

AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS STUDENTS ENTER.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP

Host enters . . .

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): COUNTDOWN

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME

WELCOME

Host has lots of energy as he or she welcomes everyone to [Name of Environment]. Host is relatable and inviting. Host can talk about something that happened culturally throughout the week like a big sports game, movie opening, a viral video on YouTube, etc. Host tells them how excited he or she is that they're there and briefly runs through what they can expect. This is especially helpful for first-time guests to make them feel like they know what's happening.

OPENER

HOST: "Hey everyone! I am so pumped for another month here at [Name of Environment]. This month is all about making Harmony! How many musicians do we have in the room? Piano players? Trumpet players? How about a violin? Or maybe you just use your voice to sing? Awesome! Making music can be a lot of fun, but what can be even more fun . . . even more beautiful . . . is when you play music with others. One person takes the melody. Another person takes the harmony. And it turns out that the music is . . . Better Together.

"Now, how many of you are feeling a bit musical today? Awesome! Let's kick off the month with a musical game perfect for if you're an expert musician or can't sing a note. I call this 'What's That Song?'

SLIDE: "WHAT'S THAT SONG?"

Divide the group into Small Groups.

"First, let's make sure we're sitting with your Small Group. Perfect. Now, here's how 'What's that Song?' works. In just a moment, I'll give you a keyword. As a



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25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

small group, brainstorm several songs that contain that keyword IN the song. For example, if I say 'happy,' your group might come up with (*singing*) 'If you're happy and you know it clap your hands!' Get it? Great! We'll go around the room from group to group until a group can't come up with a song. If and when that happens, that group is out, and we'll move on to another keyword. Any questions? (*Take questions as needed.*) Great! OH - and make sure your group starts singing right when I get to your group. No delaying!

"Let's play!"

Words to use for different rounds:

Love / Heart / Together / Help / Friend / Hands

Start with easier words like "love" and move on to the more difficult words. The above words are related to the lessons, but you're welcome to choose your own words.

(After the game) "An incredible effort people! And guess what? Now we get to sing again! Let's stand together and worship our great God!"



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WORSHIP

Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.

WORSHIP LEADER: "Yeah! It's so good to be here with all my friends at [name of your environment]. I am pumped for this time to worship together. Jesus is our best Friend ever. Let's sing about that now. Here we go!"

AUDIO: "FRIEND LIKE YOU" / TRACK 5 FROM THIS LOVE

OPTIONAL VIDEO: "FRIEND LIKE YOU" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

"That's right! The way God loves us is so good. Before we continue in worship, let's watch this.

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): LIVE LOUD VIDEO FROM GET REEL

"We have a new song today. It's called 'Say It Again.' It's another song that will help us see what a good Friend Jesus is to us. When I think of how loving and kind Jesus is to me, it makes me want to love others with the same kind of love I've been given. Sing along when you catch on to this one!"

AUDIO: "SAY IT AGAIN" / TRACK 5 FROM MY LIFE FOR YOU

OPTIONAL VIDEO: "SAY IT AGAIN" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

"Nicely done! In 1 John 2:1-2, we read this: *'We have a friend who speaks to the Father for us. He is Jesus Christ, the Blameless One. He gave his life to pay for our sins. But he not only paid for our sins. He also paid for the sins of the whole world.'* (NirV) Wow. That's big stuff. 'We have a friend who speaks to the Father for us.' Think about how amazing it is that Jesus is that kind of Friend. Come on—let's sing and worship."

AUDIO: "YOU MAKE MY HEART SING" / TRACK 11 FROM EVERY BEAT

OPTIONAL VIDEO: "YOU MAKE MY HEART SING" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO



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25 MINUTES

COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Communicator enters as Worship Leaders exit.

INTRODUCTION

COMMUNICATOR: “Hey, everyone! This month is off to a great start! That was so fun hearing you all belt those songs out at the top of your lungs. So this whole month we are talking about friendship— using your words and actions to show others you care. Having good friends and being a good friend are some of the most important things in life. In fact, God made us for friendship! Just think about how there are all sorts of things in life that are just easier—and maybe more fun—with the help of a friend.

SLIDE: INTRO1 (TANDEM BIKE)

“Turn and tell the person next to you why this one is easier with the help of a friend.

“Or how about this one?”

SLIDE: INTRO2 (CANOE)

“You ever try to canoe by yourself? It IS possible but why is it easier with a friend?”

“What about this?”

SLIDE: INTRO3 (BIRTHDAY PARTY)

“Okay this one is a little tricky. What do you think this picture is communicating? What is more fun with a friend?”

“Yeah, who wants to have a birthday party alone?! Okay, how about this?”

SLIDE: INTRO4 (TENNIS)

“More fun with a friend? Absolutely. Okay I have one more for you . . .

SLIDE: INTRO5 (DOUBLE DUTCH)

“Okay, that one is kind of tricky because you can do a jump rope alone. But if you have the help of two friends, it can be so much more fun!”

TENSION

COMMUNICATOR: “Now, let’s think about something for a moment here. It’s hard to deny that life is better with other people in it. We have the examples in those photos, but I’m sure if we tried hard enough, we could come up with countless ways that our life is better because we have people we consider friends. But if that’s true, how come there are times when we think it’d be easier to be on our own without friends or classmates or teammates?”



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“People can let us down. Friends don’t pull their weight on a class project. Teammates don’t follow through on their promises. Sometimes we just don’t get along with people. Does this mean we should just give up? We might start to wonder why we should even try to make friends in the first place. Is it really that important to have friends?”

Those are important questions for us to consider. If you’ve been around here for a while, you might remember what we say about questions. Questions are worth asking because questions help us grow. When we have big questions, we need to look for big answers. And one of the first places we can look for answers is the Bible. In the Bible, we get to hear from all sorts of people who had personal experiences with God. And God inspired them to write them down so other people like us can learn from them and understand more about how God wants us to live. In fact, the writers of the Bible have A LOT to say about friendship. Let’s check one of those out today.”

TRUTH

COMMUNICATOR: “We’re in a book of the Bible that most of us don’t often spend a lot of time in. That book is from the Old Testament and is called Ecclesiastes. Can you say that? Ecclesiastes! That’s a big word, isn’t it? Now, do any of you remember a person from the Bible named Solomon?”

Allow for responses.

“Oh good. Yes, Solomon was a wise and powerful king of Israel. He didn’t always get it right, but he asked God for wisdom, and God gave it to him. Solomon went on to write many of the wise sayings in the book of Proverbs. Ecclesiastes is also full of questions and wisdom about life. The author of Ecclesiastes is known as ‘the teacher.’ We’re not totally sure who that was, but many people believe that Solomon wrote a lot of the book of Ecclesiastes near the end of his life after learning some hard lessons. Let’s check it out and see what he said about having friends.

Open the Bible to Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (NIRV) and read.

“Two people are better than one.

They can help each other in everything they do.

Suppose either of them falls down.

Then the one can help the other one up.

But suppose a person falls down and doesn’t have anyone to help them up.

Then feel sorry for that person!’

“The Teacher, maybe Solomon, is pretty straight forward, huh? He said that two people are better than one. What’s his reason for that?”

Allow for responses.

“That’s right, because they can help each other. Let’s make sure we remember that. *(Revealing first large sign)* ‘Friends help each other.’

Communicator clips first sign on the rope line.

“Let’s think about how that’s true. Here’s what I want you to do. Your Small Group Leader has some sticky notes. Brainstorm some ways that friends help each other. In Solomon’s example, one of the friends has fallen and the other



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person is helping them up. Maybe it is similar, but it doesn't have to be. When you've come up with an idea or two, write them on a sticky note and come stick it to the sign.

"Ready, go!

AUDIO: BACKGROUND MUSIC

After a short time, bring everyone back together and share some of the examples stuck to the first sign.

AUDIO: FADE OUT BACKGROUND MUSIC

"Sweet! Those were great ways that friends help each other. Now, let's continue with what The Teacher had to say about friendship in Ecclesiastes.

Open the Bible to Ecclesiastes 4:12a (NirV) and read.

*"One person could be overpowered.
But two people can stand up for themselves."*

"Ooooh, that's a good one! (Reveals second sign) 'Friends stand up for each other.'

"But how? What ways have you needed a friend to stand with you before? Let's do some brainstorming again. Gather with your small group, come up with some ideas of how friends stand up for each other, and write them down! Then come add your sticky notes to the sign. And go!

AUDIO: BACKGROUND MUSIC

After a short time, bring everyone back together and share some of the examples stuck to the second sign.

AUDIO: FADE OUT BACKGROUND MUSIC

"Awesome! Those are some really solid examples. Well done! Now let's see how Solomon landed these ideas.

Open the Bible to Ecclesiastes 4:12b (NirV) and read.

"And a rope made out of three cords isn't easily broken."

"Hmmm . . . that's . . . well, not so obvious. What is that all about? I mean, we have (going back over the signs) 'Friends help each other' and 'Friends stand up for each other,' but what is this thing about a rope made from three cords all about? Let's think about it together.

Communicator walks over to the rope line that is hanging up and holds the loose end.



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“What is it about a rope that makes it so strong?”

Allow for responses.

“Great thoughts! See, a rope is made up of different cords. Those cords are wound together to add strength. A one-cord rope . . . not so strong. A two-cord rope? Now we have some strength. That’s like you and your friend. You help each other. You stand with one another . . . like you just said. You strengthen each other. But did you notice what Solomon said in the verse? He didn’t say a ‘two-cord’ rope. What did he say?”

Allow for responses.

“Yep! Let’s check it out again!”

Open the Bible to Ecclesiastes 4:12b (NirV) and re-read.

“‘And a rope made out of three cords isn’t easily broken.’”

“THREE cords. You know, it is one thing for you and a friend to have a good relationship, but you know what makes that relationship even stronger?”

Communicator reveals third sign.

“When ‘Friends trust God together.’”

Communicator clips sign to rope line.

“One of the coolest things is when you and your friends follow God together! That relationship becomes so much stronger . . . like a rope with three cords. Let’s brainstorm together one last time about some ways that friends can trust God together. What does that look like? Then write them down like before and tie them on the line. And go!”

AUDIO: BACKGROUND MUSIC

After a short time, bring everyone back together and share some of the examples stuck to the third sign.

AUDIO: FADE OUT BACKGROUND MUSIC

APPLICATION

COMMUNICATOR: “You all came up with so many great ways that friends help each other, stand up for each other, and trust God together. There are certainly times in our lives when we might just be tempted to go at it alone, thinking that things would just be easier by ourselves. But the truth is that’s not how God made us. God made us for relationships! Because of Jesus, we can have a relationship with God that lasts forever. In fact, when Jesus was on earth, He showed us what being a great friend is all about. Some of you might even remember how Jesus picked out 12 men to be His disciples and closest companions. We can follow Jesus in how we choose to have good friends in our lives, too!”



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“Think about this for a moment. When you look at these three signs, do these three signs define your friendships right now? In other words, do the people you surround yourself with most help you, stand with you, and trust God with you? Or think about it another way. Can these three ideas be said about you? Do you help your friends? Stand with them? Trust God with them?”

“Our friendships have a HUGE influence on our lives. We can become more like our friends than we could ever imagine. So, it is important that, like this rope, we are binding ourselves to wise people. And that we are being wise people for others as well.”

LANDING

COMMUNICATOR: “Today as you go to groups, think about this:

SLIDE: KEY QUESTION

“**What makes someone a good friend?** How have you seen this in your own life? Before you head out, let’s pray and ask God to help us become this kind of friend to others and also thank God for His friendship to us! Let’s pray!”

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Communicator leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard. After prayer, Communicator dismisses kids to Small Group.

AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS THE KIDS EXIT.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP