

YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND

by Margaret Tyree

PURPOSE

To help youth identify basic characteristics of a friend, to decide the kind of friends they are, to categorize friendships, and to examine scriptures that refer to Christlike qualities that youth can model in their relationships.

PREPARATION

Gather a record player, newsprint, paper, pencils, felt-tip markers or crayons, tape, a hat and Bibles.

Prepare copies of the Friendship Survey in the "Meat" of the Meeting.

Select several Christian songs or other recordings that pertain to friendship such as "You've Got a Friend" by Carole King.

Gather pictures of people doing activities together as friends such as biking, eating or chatting. Place the pictures about the meeting room.

Arrange the chairs in a circle and place a Bible, songbook, pencil, paper and marker on each one. Put the hat in the middle of the circle for the opening game.

OPENING

Sing a familiar Christian song that pertains to friendship. Then play Secret Friends.¹

Begin this game by explaining Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 3:12, "... abound in love to one another."

Tell the youth this is a too often forgotten Christian concept.

Read aloud and discuss Matthew 22:39; John 13:35; 15:12; and 1 Thessalonians 3:12 to explore the vital role of loving one another as a part of Christian growth.

Have the youth write their names on slips of paper and put them into the hat. Each member then draws a name from the hat.

Tell the youth that during the upcoming week they are to:

- Write to the person whose name you drew. Tell them their traits you admire and why they would make a good friend. Include in this letter your favorite scripture verse or one that has been helpful.

- Pray daily for the person whose name you drew.

Next, divide into small groups. Distribute the markers and newsprint to each group and tell the youth to write traits of a friend. Encourage them to draw pictures to aid in their descriptions. If they have trouble thinking of several traits, call attention to the friendship pictures that are about the room. As they are making their lists, play the recording that addresses friendship.

Tape each group's newsprint list to the wall.

THE "MEAT" OF THE MEETING

Discuss the characteristics that

were most often listed. Are all the traits desirable? Can any of the traits be undesirable? Do good friends have to possess all these traits? Do you possess these traits?

To further explore these characteristics, distribute the Friendship Survey and have the youth answer the questions.²

Friendship Survey

1. How many friends do you have?
2. Do you have friends of both sexes?
3. Do you have friends who are five years younger than you are?
4. Do you have friends who are five years older than you are?
5. What's the craziest thing you've done with friends?
6. Who would consider you a friend?
7. What qualities do you have that make you a friend to others? List three.
8. What qualities does your best friend have?
9. Are your parents your friends? Why or why not?
10. Do you have any really close friends?
11. Do you have more or fewer friends than you had a year ago?
12. Are you a good friend? Explain.

Assign each small group one of these scriptures: Proverbs 17:17; 18:24; Galatians 6:1-10; Ephesians 4:31-32; Colossians 3:12-15. Discuss the ways these scriptures relate to friendship.

Re-form one large group and

share the small group insights.

Ask if these characteristics are realistic to today's world.

Read and discuss John 15:13. What does it mean to lay down your life for a friend? Ask the youth to name people who were legendary friends, such as Anne Sullivan and Helen Keller. (Friends who gave their lives to each other in a special way.)

RESPONSE (OR CLOSING)

Draw a line down the center of a large piece of newsprint. Ask the youth to name characteristics of Christ and list these in one column. Then ask specific examples the youth can employ in their daily relationships and list these traits on the right side.

Ask the youth to name the best characteristic a friend can have. Discuss the answers.

Sing a few songs that deal with the subject of friendship such as "Pass It On" or "They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love."

Remind the youth of the names they drew earlier. Encourage them to be Christlike and to think of other things they can do for their friends.

Form a circle and ask the youth to put their arms around one another for a time of prayer and thankfulness for friendship.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Bible commentaries, read scriptures on friendship and friends.

The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Abingdon, 201 8th Ave. S., Nashville, TN 37202.

¹Thom Schultz, ed., **More Try This One**, (Loveland, Colo.: Group Books, 1980), pp. 58-59.

²Dr. Arlo Reichter, et al., **The Group Retreat Book** (Loveland, Colo.: Group Books, 1983), p. 155.