

# Friendship Starters

**WANT TO MAKE** a new friend, but don't know where to begin? Here are several ideas for getting started:

- **Be friendly.** Say hello. Smile. Show interest in what this person is doing. Basically, treat him or her as you'd like to be treated.

- **Remember names.** When you initially meet someone, make the effort to remember her name and use it occasionally in the conversation. If she doesn't have to repeat her name, she'll know you were listening closely.

- **Listen.** Make eye contact when someone is talking to you. Ask questions and wait patiently for a response.

- **Pay attention to the little things.** When listening, keep in mind key things this person tells you about himself. When your paths cross again, you can refer back to that earlier conversation. In doing so, the person will realize that not only were you listening, but you cared enough to remember what he said.

- **Take the time.** Avoid asking questions that you don't have the time or willingness to hear the answers to. Don't rush the conversation, either. People may get the wrong impression if you're in a hurry and seem abrupt.

- **Stick to the facts.** To feel like "one of the gang," it's tempting to stretch the truth a bit: to say we like a rock band we've never heard of, to say we're NBA material. But don't do it. In the long run, such talk undermines your credibility and destroys trust.

- **Say a good word.** People like to be (*sincerely*) complimented. Make the effort to find something good to say about your new friend—and say it.

- **Keep confidences.** As a friendship develops, it may be tempting to tell others something your new friend said in secret. *That's gossip.* Don't do it.

- **Remember special times.** Send a card on his birthday, give her a note of congratulations when she acs a tough test, show up at your new friend's soccer

game. Special events and days mean a lot to a friend—and your interest shows just how much you care.

- **Laugh.** A good sense of humor goes a long way in building a solid friendship.

- **Respect a person's space.** Everybody needs a little time for themselves or for other friends. If you're always waiting at her locker, or always shoving your way behind him in the lunch line, you'll quickly wear out your welcome.

- **Open up slowly.** Initially, stick with talking about everyday stuff (the weather, homework, the putty your lunchroom calls mashed potatoes). Those deeper conversations will come naturally as a closer friendship develops.

- **Be yourself.** People like to get to know you—not somebody you pretend to be. So be yourself.

- **Don't get discouraged.** Sometimes friendships click; other times they don't. If someone doesn't respond to your gestures of friendship, don't take it personally. Move on. There are a lot of other people out there who are looking for your friendship.