

# 'Friendship With Jesus'



This material is suitable for ages 8+.

### Aim:

To use the friendship of David and Jonathan to illustrate what a difference it makes to know Jesus (Friend of Sinners).

### Bible focus:

1 Samuel 18 - 20; 2 Samuel 1:9; 2 Samuel 9

### Background:

The friendship between David and Jonathan is one of the greatest friendships there has ever been. David himself looked back on his friendship with Jonathan as one of the best things in his life (see 2 Samuel 1:26).

Their friendship had an unlikely beginning. Jonathan was the son of King Saul while David was a mere shepherd boy who had a quick rise to royal favour because he killed Goliath. However once that friendship was made, nothing was able to shake it, even though David was eventually to rob Jonathan of the throne, a fact of which Jonathan was not unaware (see 1 Samuel 20:31). The instant friendship between Jonathan and David proved to be loyal and lasting enough to withstand even the hatred and betrayal of King Saul.

After Jonathan's death in battle David searched for, and then cared for, Mephibosheth, Jonathan's crippled son. This was an unusual action at a time when the family of a displaced monarch was either killed or forced into slavery. But David treated Mephibosheth as a son saying, 'I will be kind to you for the sake of

your father Jonathan' (see 2 Samuel 9:6-8, 11-13).

The friendship between David and Jonathan is used here to help the children understand how we can become friends with Jesus and then continue to develop that friendship throughout our life.

## Introduction:

### Make an Acrostic (Option 1)

Ask the children for words to describe our friends using the letters of the alphabet. (e.g. **A**lways there, **B**est friends, **C**aring, etc.) Alternatively use the letters of 'friends' for a shorter version.

e.g. **F**unny  
**R**eliable  
**I**nseparable  
**E**xciting  
**N**ever lets me down  
**D**ependable  
**S**pecial

OR

### Who is your Friend? (Option 2)

Ask:

- ◆ Do you have a best friend?
- ◆ Why are you friends?
- ◆ What is a real friend like?

Some suggestions – someone who really likes you/ someone who will help you, and not leave you when you are in trouble/someone who likes to give you things/ someone who 'sticks up' for you when other criticise.

In 1 Samuel we learn about one of the greatest and best-known friendships of all time – that of David and Jonathan.

## Bible time:

There are three things about the friendship between David and Jonathan which will help us to understand how we can be friends with Jesus.

(There are seven Bible verses used in this Bible time. If you have time, have a child/ren ready to read out these verses as they come up in the story or have them marked in your Bible ready to read.)



**David and Jonathan's friendship was very personal.** David had just killed Goliath and was speaking to King Saul. Jonathan the king's son and heir developed a great love for the young shepherd, David. Soon their friendship was so close that they were prepared to make a vow of friendship. Read 1 Samuel 18:3. 'Jonathan swore eternal friendship with David because of his deep affection for him.' (GNB).

**David and Jonathan's friendship was costly.** King Saul pointed out to Jonathan that his friendship with David would cost him his throne. Read 1 Samuel 20:30 - 31.

But such was Jonathan's friendship for David that he accepted this, knowing it to be the Lord's will. Read 1 Samuel 20:13-14. This must have been a great sacrifice for Jonathan, yet he was prepared to protect David and even help him gain the throne.

Jonathan was prepared to put his life at risk for David. Jonathan loved David more than himself and therefore he was prepared to say and do things that placed himself in great danger. (1 Samuel 20:24 - 33).

**The friendship between David and Jonathan was lasting.** David and Jonathan had a close bond. Jonathan died in battle and David was deeply grieved. Read 2 Samuel 1:26. Once Jonathan was dead, David might well have feared that his descendants would claim the throne but he stood by his promise to Jonathan by bringing Mephibosheth (Jonathan's crippled son) to his palace and to his favour (2 Samuel 9).

## Friendship with Jesus

From the friendship between David and Jonathan we can learn something about the friendship Jesus wants to have with us.

Jesus is willing to enter into a very **personal** friendship with individual people. His friendship is so strong and so personal it's as though we are the only people in the world needing to be saved. He knows our individual names and counts the hairs on our head. Read Matthew 10:31.

Our friendship with Jesus was **costly** to him. He was willing to leave the courts of Heaven, and be considered a nobody, in order to make us children of God. Read Hebrews 12:2. There is no one else in the world who would do such a thing for us.

Our friendship with Jesus is **lasting**. The Bible tells us that when we become friends with Jesus He never leaves us. Nothing can break that friendship. Read Romans 8:38 - 39. When we belong to Jesus, He walks with us, He guides us and He promises to never leave me.

Every friendship must go two ways. We hear a lot about Jesus' love for us, but do we know what it is to love Him?



## Response:

Refer back to suggestions of what a real friend is like from the beginning, relating this to Jesus. Talk about when we are friends with Jesus we should try to talk to Him everyday just like our school friends (praying), we should try to live the way he wants us to (reading the Bible) and to show people by the way we live that we are his friends. I'm going to pray now and if you would like to ask Jesus to be your friend then pray with me silently.

(Allow time for the children to pray with you by pausing during the prayer.)

## Prayer:

Thank you Jesus for our friends. Please help me to be a good friend, even when it is not easy (pause). Thank you that we can be friends with you. We want to be your friend (pause). We are sorry if we have done wrong and upset you (pause). We are glad that you will love us, and ask that you will forgive us (pause). Please help me to be your friend and stay loyal to you (pause). Amen.

Hand out the response cards (photocopy the attached template for each child) and ask the children who prayed with you to fill it in appropriately. As they complete this activity take time to note those children who have made first time decisions.

Ensure you follow up any children who indicate they said this prayer with you for the first time. For this age group Scripture Union produces Bible reading notes called 'Hot Shots' (8 - 9 years) and 'Snapshots' (9 - 10 years) which are helpful in encouraging children to read their Bible's regularly. Linking them in to other sections in the corps which they may not already be attending e.g. Sunday School, Kids Club or Junior Soldiers, will also help with their ongoing spiritual development.





Today I asked Jesus  
to help me live the  
right way:

- for the first time
- again

I will use *God's Word* to help me  
live the way Jesus wants me to.



Today I asked Jesus  
to help me live the  
right way:

- for the first time
- again

I will use *God's Word* to help me  
live the way Jesus wants me to.



Today I asked Jesus  
to help me live the  
right way:

- for the first time
- again

I will use *God's Word* to help me  
live the way Jesus wants me to.



Today I asked Jesus  
to help me live the  
right way:

- for the first time
- again

I will use *God's Word* to help me  
live the way Jesus wants me to.