

'My Friend Jesus'



This material is suitable for ages 8+.

Aim:

To help the children realise they have to know Jesus as their friend first so they can share this great news with others.

Bible focus:

Acts 10:1 - 8, 38 - 42, 44 - 45.

You will need:

Colouring pencils/textas, one sheet of A4 paper for each child, divided into three equal sections.

Background:

Ask the children to draw a picture or write the answer to each of the following questions (one answer goes on each section on their paper):

- ◆ What does Jesus look like to you?
- ◆ Where does Jesus live?
- ◆ What would you tell your friends about Jesus?

(Allow some time for the children to share their pictures with the group. If your group is large, you may have them form groups or pairs to share their answers.)

Now ask the children to tell you how they found out about Jesus. What did that person say about Him? Why did you believe that person/people?

Most people are friends with Jesus today because someone has told them about Him, what Jesus did for us and how much He loves us. They have introduced people to Jesus. But they could only do that because they knew Jesus first. It's very hard to talk about someone if you don't know them. We're going to hear a story

about Peter, a man who knew Jesus really well and was able to help someone else to become a friend of Jesus.

Bible time:

Read Acts 10: 1 - 8. Cornelius was a Gentile who was visited by an angel. A Gentile was someone who wasn't from the Jewish nation and before Jesus came, most Jews believed they were the only ones who could know God and be His friend. Cornelius knew a bit about God and so he could know more God sent an angel to Cornelius. The angel told Cornelius to find Peter, who could tell him some more about God.

Now Peter was obedient to what God told him. Peter and his friends went to Cornelius' house and there Peter helped Cornelius to know that what he had been told was true. This is what Peter said. Read verses 38 - 42.

So Peter told Cornelius and his friends and family about God and about God's Son Jesus. Peter helped Cornelius to know more about God and introduced Cornelius to Jesus. And then something amazing happened. Read verses 44 - 45.

Peter knew Jesus. He was His friend and because He knew Jesus really well, He listened when God told Him to go and speak to Cornelius about His Son. And when He spoke to Cornelius, the Holy Spirit came and changed his life and the lives of those who were with Him. They became best friends with Jesus because Peter, who knew Jesus well, came and spoke to Him.

Response time:

We too need to tell our friends about Jesus. But to do that we need to know Jesus as our friend first. We need to get to know Him and listen to Him so that when we have the chance, we too can tell people about Jesus.

It's not hard to become a friend of Jesus. God has made it very easy for us. All we have to do is believe that Jesus died to take away our sins, say sorry for the things we've done wrong and ask Jesus to be our friend and help us to live our life His way.

If you want to get to know Jesus and start a friendship with Him, you can do that right now. We are going to pray together and if you would like to pray along with me you can do that. I will pause during the prayer to allow you the chance to pray it quietly yourself. When we have finished, it would be really great if you could come and tell me or one of the leaders that you prayed this prayer with me. We would like to know so that we can pray for you in a special way this week or if you have any more questions or things you don't understand about Jesus, we'd like to be able to help you find the answers.



Prayer:

Dear Jesus I believe that you died for my sins (pause). I would like to be your friend (pause). I'm sorry for the wrong things I've done (pause) and for the times when I have not lived the way you would like me to (pause). Please forgive me and help me to live your way (pause). Amen.

Follow up:

Encourage the children that if they have further questions they would like to ask, to come and speak to you or one of the other leaders about this. Also encourage any children who have prayed this prayer for the first time to come and tell you so you can pray for them this week and help them to keep on trusting Jesus.

It will be helpful to have copies of Starting Out: how to be a follower of Jesus for 8 - 11's to help you follow up the children. Part 2 of the Starting Out booklet introduces children to the Bible and helps them understand what it's like to live as friends of Jesus. Some age-appropriate Bible Reading notes may also be an appropriate method of following up the children who made decisions. These resources are available from your local Scripture Union Resources For Ministry bookshop. Make time to go through the Bible Reading notes to ensure the children have a good understanding of how to use these notes.

A further counselling resource that may be helpful if a child has more questions is Team Talk, again produced by Scripture Union. It is available through their Resources For Ministry department ph. 02 4337 0200 www.scriptureunion.org.au/resources_ministry.htm or Koorong Books www.koorong.com.au. This resource includes pages for children who are recommitting their lives or for children who have asked questions about a particular issue. E.g. Why did dad leave home?

Linking children in to other sections in the corps e.g. Sunday School, SAGALA, Kids Club or Junior Soldiers will also help with their ongoing spiritual development.

If children who are already Junior Soldiers make a decision, inform the Junior Soldier Sergeant so he/she can follow up that child.

