

# What Makes a Good Friend?

## SMALL GROUP LESSON



### Lesson Objective:

*Being a good friend means being honest, trustworthy and loyal.*

### Set Up Info:

#### **Supplies Needed:**

1. Computer or internet connection to watch the YouTube video
2. Copies of the Student Response sheet (printed below)
3. Bibles so you can look up the Scripture story (or copy the one below)
4. A passion to see students transformed in their friendships!

#### **Instructive prep:**

Lots of times kids are struggling to develop good friends, and many of them just have no idea (or good models) of what makes a good friend. It's even harder for military kids who move in and out of each other's lives so much, and the tendency is to write friends off or settle for less than good friendships.

This session is designed to look at some internally-driven characteristics of any person that would set them up as a potential "good friend." In the Harry Potter series, Neville is as awkward and out of place as they come, YET he proves to be one of the best friends in the entire story, not because of his external looks or skills but because of his internal qualities of loyalty and faithfulness. The Scripture story of David during his period of flight also describes him as a truthful and loyal friend to Achish.

Our suggestion is that you lead your students toward understanding that God's view of a good friend is someone who is ***honest, trustworthy and***

**loyal.** So, there is a dual need to get kids to grasp that they should be developing these qualities in themselves as well as looking for these characteristics in others with whom they choose as friends.

The progression of these studies is four-fold: *learn, feel, do and what next*. The aim is for students to learn something new, connect at an emotional level to some degree, and participate in doing something during the study (like the ranking the friendship qualities below). Finally, the *what next* focuses on a change in attitude and/or behavior, which you will find in the challenge of the Life Application section. Remember, the movement is toward spiritual and emotional transformation in kids' lives, so the application section based on God's truth is really the crux of the time together! Have fun and lead well.

#### INTRO:

*In some ways, being at a boarding school has relational challenges like living on a military installation. Yes, they're different challenges, but the need for friends is just as real. Let's take a look at this summary from Harry Potter.*

#### INTRO STORY:

*Harry Potter's Neville Longbottom*

Neville Longbottom, a Hogwarts classmate of Harry Potter, is from a family of wizards and witches. When he was very young, both of his parents were killed in the struggle against Lord Voldemort, in much the same way that Harry's own parents died. In fact a prophecy was given that most assumed applied to Harry Potter but could in fact apply to Neville since the description aligns with both of their stories.

The two boys form a friendship in their dormitory and classes. While Harry does well in most classes, Neville is disorganized, clumsy, and forgetful. He makes mistakes over and over and yet continues on, studying harder, asking for help from Harry or Hermione, and even from the beginning his actions reveal him to be someone to be admired.

Over time Neville really begins to grow and develop in his wizardly skills. He begins working closely with Harry when Dumbledore's Army is assembled. It is a student club of sorts that was organized by Harry and his friends to help prepare one another for what they see to be an inevitable confrontation with Lord Voldemort or

those loyal to him known as the Death Eaters. Their fears are correct and when the literal battle is upon them, Neville is right there on the front lines. He proves himself crucial to their cause in his fearless leadership of the students against the Death Eaters. He sees a fellow student die and still he keeps fighting. Neville decapitates the evil snake Nagini, he and Ron destroy a werewolf, Fenrir Greyback, and at the end of the final battle when they are victorious, Neville is still standing beside Harry, never wavering in his loyalty or love of his friend.

Watch this video montage: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bS4RT04ZxeY>

Intro Questions:

1. If you could be one of the characters in Harry Potter, who would you be and why?
2. What kind of friend would you say that Neville is to Harry and the others?

**PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS:**

1. What characteristics of a *good friend* do you see in Neville?
2. Which of these characteristics do you possess? Which would you like to have?
3. Would you want to be friends with Neville? Why or why not?
4. Rank these eight things in the order of their importance when it comes to friendship (1 is most important, 8 is least important)
  - a. Nice Appearance
  - b. Loyal
  - c. Kind
  - d. Trustworthy
  - e. Good Personality
  - f. Available
  - g. Fun-loving
  - h. Honest
5. Write your own questions: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## CENTRAL BIBLE PASSAGE

### 1 Samuel 27:1-6, 12—28:2; 29:1-11

#### *David among the Philistines*

<sup>1</sup>David said to himself, “One of these days Saul will kill me. The best thing for me to do is to escape to Philistia. Then Saul will give up looking for me in Israel, and I will be safe.” <sup>2</sup>So David and his six hundred men went over at once to Achish son of Maoch, king of Gath. <sup>3</sup>David and his men settled there in Gath with their families. David had his two wives with him, Ahinoam from Jezreel, and Abigail, Nabal's widow, from Carmel. <sup>4</sup>When Saul heard that David had fled to Gath, he gave up trying to find him.

<sup>5</sup>David said to Achish, “If you are my friend, let me have a small town to live in. There is no need, sir, for me to live with you in the capital city.” <sup>6</sup>So Achish gave him the town of Ziklag, and for this reason Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah ever since.

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<sup>12</sup>But Achish **trusted** David and said to himself, “He is hated so much by his own people the Israelites that he will have to serve me all his life.”

<sup>1</sup>Some time later the Philistines gathered their troops to fight Israel, and Achish said to David, “Of course you understand that you and your men are to fight on my side.” <sup>2</sup>“Of course,” David answered. “I am your servant, and you will see for yourself what I can do.” Achish said, “Good! I will make you my permanent bodyguard.”

#### *David Is Rejected by the Philistines*

<sup>1</sup>The Philistines brought all their troops together at Aphek, while the Israelites camped at the spring in Jezreel Valley. <sup>2</sup>The five Philistine kings marched out with their units of a hundred and of a thousand men; David and his men marched in the rear with King Achish. <sup>3</sup>The Philistine commanders saw them and asked, “What are these Hebrews doing here?” Achish answered, “This is David, an official of King Saul of Israel. He has been with me for quite some time now. He has done nothing I can find fault with since the day he came over to me.” <sup>4</sup>But the Philistine commanders were angry with Achish and said to him, “Send that fellow back to the town you gave him. Don't let him go into battle with us; he might turn against us during the fighting. What better way is there for him to win back his master's favor than by the death of our men? <sup>5</sup>After all, this is David, the one about whom the women sang, as they danced, “Saul has killed thousands, but David has killed tens of thousands.” ”

<sup>6</sup>Achish called David and said to him, “I swear by the living God of Israel that you have been **loyal** to me; and I would be pleased to have you go with me and fight in this battle. I have not found any fault in you from the day you came over to me. But the other kings don't approve of you. <sup>7</sup>So go back home in peace, and don't do anything that would displease them. ” <sup>8</sup>David answered, “What have I done wrong, sir? If, as you say, you haven't found any fault in me since the day I started serving you, why shouldn't I go with you, my master and king, and fight your enemies?” <sup>9</sup>“I agree,” Achish replied. “I consider you as **loyal** as an angel of God. But the other kings have said that you can't go with us into battle. <sup>10</sup>So then, David, tomorrow morning all of you who left Saul and came over to me will have to get up early and leave as soon as it's light. ” <sup>11</sup>So David and his men started out early the following morning to go back to Philistia, and the Philistines went on to Jezreel.

**Comment:** Being *trustworthy* seems to be crucial to being a good friend in God's eyes. Along with trustworthy is the concept of being *loyal*. Add to these two characteristics what Proverbs says, “An *honest* answer is a sign of true *friendship*” (**Proverbs 24:26**), and you have a very informative picture of what the Bible says makes a good friend – ***honesty, loyalty and trustworthiness!***

### LIFE APPLICATION:

1. Of the three biblical characteristics of a good friend (*honesty, loyalty and trustworthiness*), *what would you identify as your strongest and weakest in being a friend? If you wanted to create change in your ability to be a good friend, what would you work on?*
2. Rate your top 2 or 3 friends in these three characteristics using a one to ten scale (1 being best). Now determine whether they are truly a good friend or not according to scriptural descriptions. If they are, then thank them for their character qualities. If not, then consider challenging them in those areas or consider if there is a true value of their friendship.
3. Write your own challenge: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT RESPONSES:

1. Rank these eight things in the order of their importance when it comes to friendship (1 is most important, 8 is least important)

- Nice Appearance
- Loyal
- Kind
- Trustworthy
- Good Personality
- Available
- Fun-loving
- Honest

2. HONESTY, LOYALTY, and TRUSTWORTHINESS

Strongest = \_\_\_\_\_

Weakest = \_\_\_\_\_

What I would work on = \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. RATE YOUR TOP 2 OR 3 FRIENDS

	Honest	Loyal	Trustworthy
Friend: _____	_____	_____	_____
Friend: _____	_____	_____	_____
Friend: _____	_____	_____	_____