

LIFE IN AN ANXIOUS WORLD

SMALL GROUP | FAITH IN AN ANXIOUS WORLD

LEADER REFLECTION

This week, we're focusing on relationships—how they impact us and how we can be a good friend to others.

For students, friendships can be full of joy and stress. One day they feel close to someone, and the next day they feel left out. It's a big deal to them, and God cares about it too.

In our stories this week, Jesus shows us that we're never alone. He reminds us that we are loved and invited into connection with Him and with others. We'll explore how our relationships can be safe places to be known, accepted, and loved.

BIG IDEA

We were made for connection. God created us to be in relationship—with Him and with each other.

When our friendships feel shaky, Jesus reminds us that we are never alone.

LEADER TIP

As a leader, model how to talk about friendship honestly.

Share a story about a time you felt left out, or how you learned to be a better friend. This builds trust.

SUPPLIES

- Bibles or printed Scripture
- Piece of blank paper per student
- Bean bag, soft ball
- Hand-out page x1 per student



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FRIENDSHIP TOSS

1. Have everyone stand in a circle.
2. Toss the ball to someone and say their name plus a question: "Taylor, what's your favorite snack?"
3. They answer, then toss to someone new with a new question.
4. Continue until everyone has had a turn.

Goal: Build connection and comfort before diving into deeper conversation.

BIBLE STORY

MARK 2:1-12 — JESUS HEALS THE PARALYZED MAN

Tell the story or read it from the Bible.

Say: In this story, a man couldn't walk—but his friends cared deeply about him. They carried him to Jesus, even digging through a roof just to help him. That's what real friendship looks like.

Ask:

- What did the man's friends do to help him?
- Why do you think they worked so hard to get him to Jesus?
- How do you think Jesus felt about their friendship?

Say: God wants us to have people in our lives who help carry us when life feels heavy—and He wants us to be that kind of friend to others too.

DISCUSSION

- Who are some people who make you feel safe?
- What's one way you can be a helper-friend this week?
- What do you think Jesus wants you to know about friendships?



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LARGE GROUP

REFLECTION ACTIVITY: FRIENDSHIP MAP

Hand each student a blank piece of paper. Have them draw a stick-figure version of themselves in the middle.

Say: Around yourself, draw or write the names of people you're close to—friends, family, neighbors, teachers. This is your friendship circle.

Ask:

- Who helps you when you're having a hard day?
- Is there someone you'd like to get to know better?
- Is there someone you might need to forgive?

Let students color or decorate their map if time allows.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some ways a good friend can help when you're feeling anxious or unsure?
2. Have you ever felt left out or alone? What helped you feel connected again?
3. What are some signs that a friend might be feeling anxious or overwhelmed?
4. What does it look like to be a calm, steady friend when someone else is feeling anxious?
5. What's one small thing a friend has done that made a hard moment easier for you?
6. How does it change things to remember that Jesus is with you, even when friends aren't nearby?

DAILY REPLAY: PRAYER PRACTICE

Use from Week 1, review briefly. Let students guide each other if they remember it.

1. Be still — Take deep breaths. Invite God in.
2. Say thank you — Name something good from today.
3. Notice — When did you feel lonely or left out?
4. Forgive — Ask God to help with hurt feelings.
5. Ask — Invite God to help with tomorrow.



JUNIOR COMPANY

TAKE HOME

"Carry each other's burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ." —Galatians 6:2

DAILY REPLAY: PRAYER PRACTICE



Prayer Practice Try the Daily Replay each night before bed:

- Breathe and be still
- Say thank you
- Notice a hard moment
- Forgive and be forgiven
- Ask for help tomorrow

CHALLENGE OF THE WEEK

Pick one person in your friendship circle. Do something kind for them this week:

- Write them a note
- Help them with something
- Invite them to join you in something fun

GROW YOUR CIRCLE

Think about someone you know and trust—like a parent, grandparent, older sibling, or another grown-up who takes good care of people and stays calm when things feel hard.

This week, try to spend a little extra time with them or ask them a question about how they handle tough moments or make good choices.

Listening to people who care about us can help us learn and feel supported too.

Ask that trusted adult this week: "Can I tell you about how I feel about friendships? Sometimes they're awesome, but sometimes they're hard. Can we talk about it together?"

Write down who you met with and what they shared that helped you:

I met with:

On this day:

At this place:

Helpful things they said:

