**Topic: Friendship**

**Bible Passage: Proverbs 17:17 & John 15: 13-15**

**Activity: Find a Friend**

You’ll need a large open space for this activity. Have the group spread out randomly in the space. Instruct them to mix and mingle as the music plays. When the music stops, call out a number (2, 3, 4, or 5) and have students link arms to form a group of “friends” of the called number. For example, if you call out 3 then students must link arms to form groups of 3. As the game progresses, students will be left out and unable to link with a group. If a student does not link with a group, they are eliminated and must sit out. Play until you are down to just a few students—preferably 3 students and then call out the number “2” and watch to see who is eliminated. This will setup the discussion after the game.

**After the activity, ask the following questions:**

* How many of you were eliminated from the game because you couldn’t find someone else to link up with?
* How did it feel when you weren’t allowed to link with a group?
* As the groups got smaller, did you worry that your “friends” would abandon you?
* (To the last player eliminated) How did it feel to be in the final three and then the other two players left you out?

This game was a fun, silly way to form some “friendships”, but the truth is that we sometimes don’t put much more thought into what it means to be a true friend. Too often we form friendships based on superficial things like appearance or popularity, and then we wonder where our friends run off to when things get tough. The fact was that they weren’t really true friends in the first place. So what does it mean to be a “true friend”?

Proverbs 17:17 says, “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity” and Ecclesiastes 10:9-10 says, “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!”

True friendship is marked by a willingness to put the other person before yourself. A lot of friendships are based on what the other person can do for me, but according to Scripture true friendship means that we share troubles and adversity with one another. It is all about sacrifice.

A great example of this type of relationship is found in the Old Testament. David and Jonathan had an amazing friendship. David defeated Goliath and continued to gain popularity among the nation. This outraged the king, Saul, who just happened to be Jonathan’s father. Saul became so outraged with David that on more than one occasion he tried to take David’s life! Just as many times as Saul tried to kill David, Jonathan would warn his friend and offer him protection.

Read 1 Samuel 20:1-17

David and Jonathan continuously made sacrifices to benefit the other. After Jonathan’s death, David continued to show love towards Jonathan by taking care of his son as if he were his own child. This was definitely true friendship.

And of course there is the ultimate example of true friendship found in the New Testament. Jesus Christ displays it through his sacrifice for us.

John 15:13-15 says:

“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”

This verse sums up the greatest example of true friendship. It’s all about sacrifice, and there is no greater sacrifice than Jesus Christ. He has shown us this example of true friendship so that we can form this type of relationship with others.

**Break into small groups and answer the discussion questions:**

* How would you Define friendship.
* Use the concordance of your Bible to look up Scriptures on friendship (loyalty, kindness, brother). What do these Scriptures have in common?
* Which of your friendships would you say are “true friend” type of relationships (sacrificial, unconditional, etc.)? What makes these relationships different from others—how they started, what you’ve been through, common interests?
* What would need to change about your other relationships to make them fit the “true friend” definition?
* As a Believer, how does it feel to be called a “friend of God”?
* How does being a “friend of God” change our attitudes, actions, and words?
* What is one thing that you can do this week to serve a friend instead of waiting to be served?