

A Faithful Friend

By RLD Editorial Team

for use as
STEP 1

**Lesson 4****Focus:**

Make God your best friend.

Lesson 4**Bible Basis:**

Ps. 34:17-18;
55:16-17; Matt.
6:6-8; Phil. 4:6-7;
1 Thess. 5:17

Lesson 4**Memory Verse:**

Come near to God and he will come near to you. —James 4:8a

Students will explore how they have maintained friendships as they consider making God their best friend.

Materials:

- Internet access

Once your students have arrived, invite them to participate in a discussion.

- **Think of your best friends. Did you click right away or become friends over time?** (Accept all reasonable answers.)
- **What makes your best friend your best friend? What bonds you together?** (Accept all reasonable answers. For some it may be shared interests or experiences; for others it may be qualities such as trustworthiness, kindness, loyalty, or humor; for others it may simply be that they've been friends forever.)

Whether you've known your good friends for a long time or you've formed those friendships more recently, the act of connecting with friends is actually good for our brains and helps them develop. Let's check out a video that explains some of the neuroscience of friendships.

Play the following video for your students [4:22; start at 1:07; stop at 4:04]:
How friendship affects your brain - Shannon Odell
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YmVpwXH4jhA>

The more time we spend with our friends, the better we know them—and the more we become like them. It's so cool that God designed our brains this way!

- **Other than spending time together, what are some ways to maintain healthy friendships?** (Accept all reasonable answers.)

Maintaining our friendships in healthy ways helps us to become closer to our friends. These kinds of good, lasting friendships are a gift from God. But God can also be your friend. Even though we can't see Him, God is with us all the time, and we can draw close to Him as a friend through quality time and conversation—just as we can with our other friends.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

middle school



Lesson 4 / June 23, 2024

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Materials:

- Whiteboard and marker (or screenshared document)
- Index cards (1 per student)
- Pens/pencils (1 per student)

If your class is meeting online, invite students to bring supplies with them to class.

A 2018 study said it takes:

- **50 hours for an acquaintance to become a casual friend**
- **90 hours for a casual friend to become a friend**
- **200 hours for a friend to become a best friend**

➤ **When it comes to your relationship with God, would you consider yourself acquaintances, casual friends, friends, or best friends? Why?** (Accept all reasonable answers, ensuring there's no right or wrong answer. Some students may feel very close to God because of an active prayer life or involvement with Christian ministries; others may feel that church is something they attend without feeling a connection with God.)

➤ **How would growing in your relationship with God be similar or different to growing in your relationship with friends?** (Accept all reasonable answers. The physical difference in relating to God vs. people may seem challenging to students. But, as mentioned earlier, time and conversation would be two similar elements. What that time and conversation consists of might look different... or maybe not so much.)

Encourage students to set a goal of a number of hours they'd like to spend growing in their friendship with God this year. Lead a discussion that helps them consider how they will count the hours (Worship? Sunday school? Prayer? Bible or devotional reading? What else might count, such as star gazing or nature walks with Him?) Remind them that it isn't just time that makes a friendship, but the conversation too. Lead the discussion to help students consider how they will speak to God and how they will listen. What will they speak about and what will they listen for? You may want to jot down ideas on a whiteboard (or screenshared document) so students can jot down their own plan before leaving.

Distribute supplies (or invite students to have them ready at home). Invite students to write down their personal goal and plan on an index card. Challenge them to grow their friendship with God this week and making note of what that was like—when they felt a connection, when they didn't, what they might have heard God say to them, etc. Ask them to come prepared to share about their experience next week.

Close in prayer.

Friendship Study Source: <https://news.ku.edu/2018/03/06/study-reveals-number-hours-it-takes-to-make-a-friend#:~:text=In%20a%20new%20report%20published,and%20more%20than%20200%20hours>

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