upper elementary

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Lesson 5 / October 4, 2026

God's Best for Our Friends

By RLD Editorial Team

for use as STEP 1

Lesson 5
Focus:
Friends want God's best for each other.

Lesson 5
Bible Basis:
1 Samuel 20

Lesson 5
Memory Verse:
For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.
—Ephesians 2:10

Students will discuss qualities they look for in a friend and what it looks like to want God's best for others.

Materials:
- Internet access

Artificial Intelligence, or AI, has made great strides in recent years. Many of you have probably used AI, such as Google Gemini, which curates search results, or OpenAI's ChatGPT, which allows users to enter prompts or questions into a chat and receive answers or written content in return. These are just some forms of AI! In fact, there are conversations that can happen entirely between two forms of AI. Let's watch as two AI robots have a chat.

Play the following video for your students [0:41]:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oN3Y_iKmgZA
Ameca and Azi having a chat

It's interesting to think of two forms of AI, such as Ameca and Azi in our video, as being friends and having conversations, but digital "friendships" can't go beyond a surface level. People can have digital friendships, too—friends who they may know through texting or social media but with whom they don't have a real-life relationship. While it can be fun to connect with people digitally, it's important to find and cultivate close, real-life friendships with people who will be there for us and walk with us through life.

➢ **What qualities do you look for in a close friend?** (Answers might include: kind; funny; loyal; trustworthy, etc. Be prepared to share what qualities you find valuable in a friend.)

➢ **How are you a good friend to others?** (Answers may include: I always keep our secrets; I stick up for my friends if someone is bullying them; I help them with their chores so we can hang out faster, etc.)

We should always want the best for our friends, even if it means we have to give something up for them.

➢ **Have you ever experienced a situation where you gave something up for a friend, even if it was something you wanted for yourself?** (Answers might include: I played my best friend in soccer and his team beat ours, but I still was happy for him and congratulated him after the game; my best friend and I were up for the same part in our school play, she got the part instead of me and I helped her learn her lines, etc.)

Having our friends beat us for a position, part, or grade in class can be hard to swallow. We want the best for our friends, but when that means we may have to take second place, it can be harder to accept.

Today, we're going to see God's example of what true friendship looks like. Two men, the best of friends, and one even willing to give up his place as king for the other. How did he handle the loss? Let's read on and see what wanting God's best for our friends really looks like.

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

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Materials:
- Index cards or pieces of paper (1 for each student)
- Pens/pencils

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

Today we saw a godly example of what true friendship is intended to look like. David and Jonathan were the best of friends. They loved one another, looked out for one another, and were willing to help each other no matter the cost. Friends want God's best for each other. David and Jonathan gave us a clear picture of what that looks like.

Think about your best friend. How do you treat them? Do you want God's best for them? Do you look out for them? Help them no matter the cost? Jonathan wanted God's best for David. He chose to follow God's will instead of his own for David's life even if it meant personal loss.

Ask the following questions.

➢ **What are ways we can show our friends we want God's best for them?** (Answers may include: Share with them about Jesus, help them study for a test, etc.)

➢ **What are some ways we might not be treating our friends as if we want the best for them?** (Answers will vary, but might include: always wanting our own way, gossiping about them, not helping them when we could, not standing up for them, etc.)

Once students have discussed ways to show their friends they're loved, distribute supplies (or invite students to have them ready at home). Preteens should think about actionable ways they plan to show their friends they care about them and want God's best for them. Have them write things they plan to do for their friends. Students can share their ideas when they're finished if time allows.

God has given us the gift of friendship! We are blessed to have our friends. Let's make sure we show them how happy we are to have them in our lives. We should try to model the picture God has given us of what true friendship looks like by putting our friend's needs

and wants before our own. Put your ideas in your school notebook, or some other place that is accessible. As you complete a friendship goal, put an X over that idea to mark its completion. Show your friends you care. Shower them with God's love!

Pray to close.

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