

Introduction *Friendship Builders*

The goal of *Friendship Builders* is just that—to build and strengthen friendships centered around Jesus, our Lord. The activities and games reinforce or reflect Christian living, teamwork, and community building.

Each week, one recreation activity and one option is suggested. Let your kids participate in one or both, depending on your situation. Minimal materials are required, but enthusiasm is a necessity! As your kids play the games, both their understanding of the Bible story and their social skills will be developed. Participating in the team activities will strengthen their sense of membership in the family of Christ. “If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

Edited by Kathryn Krieger

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1

Friendship Builders

God Creates a Paradise (Genesis 2)

Point to Remember

Although sin destroyed perfection in God's world, He continues to love all people; sending Jesus to be our Savior proves the extent of His great love.

Pass It On

Materials Two basketball goals, basketball

Procedure Divide the class into two equal teams of 5–7 students each. Assign each team a goal. Begin with a jump ball to determine which team will have first possession of the basketball.

This game is played like regular basketball with several exceptions. No dribbling is allowed in this game. The ball is moved up and down the court by passing only. Before any shot is attempted, the ball must be passed to every person on the team. Every time the ball is passed, the passing player must say to the receiving player, "(Name of student), JLY!" (Jesus loves you.) When everyone on the team has had a chance to receive the ball, a shot can be taken. If the shot is made, the team receives 2 points and the ball is automatically given to the other team. If the shot is missed, the team with first possession (if they rebound the missed shot) must pass the ball to every player once again while saying "JLY" before another shot can be attempted.

The team without the ball can steal a pass in midair anytime. If the opposing team gets the ball, they, too, must pass it to every player with the message "JLY" before a shot can be attempted. Play continues as long as time allows.

R & R (Rest and Reflect) Ask, **Is it usually this easy to tell others about Jesus? Would anyone like to tell about an experience they've had sharing the Good News about Jesus? (Leave time for discussion.) Even though it's sometimes hard to spread the news about Jesus' love for us, it is an important job, and He has promised to help us do it!**

Paradise Partners Pantomime

Materials None

Procedure Divide the group into pairs. Give each pair 5 minutes to think of an activity that cannot be done or is extremely difficult to do without a partner (for example, carry a long pole, talk on the telephone, play catch, participate in a 3-legged race, play a piano duet, play tug-of-war).

When each pair has thought of an activity, seat the group in a circle. Invite a pair to the center of the circle to pantomime their activity while the rest of the group tries to guess what it is. The first pair to correctly guess performs the next pantomime.

R & R (Rest and Reflect) Say, **We just finished talking about some things that are hard to do by ourselves. Now think back to the Bible story. Why did God make Eve? (To be a partner for Adam.) Why do you think God didn't want Adam to be alone? What might Adam have needed help with?** There will be various answers to these questions. Lead children to verbalize how God made other people so that we have companionship and can share His love with each other.

2

Friendship Builders

Babel

(Genesis 11:1-9)

Point to Remember

Although barriers exist between people as a result of human sin, God continues to love all people.

Babbling Tunes

Materials 3" × 5" index cards, bowl

Procedure Before class, print the titles of familiar children's tunes on 3" × 5" index cards, one title per card, each title printed on two cards. (For example, two separate cards would each have the title "Mary Had a Little Lamb." Two other cards would each have the title "Row, Row, Row Your Boat.") Write enough song titles so that you have one title for every two students. Shuffle the cards and place them in a bowl.

Invite each student to draw one card from the bowl. When you say, "Go," each student is to begin humming the tune named on his or her card. While humming, each person is to walk through the classroom in an attempt to find the other person in the room who is humming the same tune. When a match is made, that pair should stop humming their tune. Play continues until everyone has found a match.

R & R (Rest and Reflect) Ask, **Have you ever heard an orchestra warm up? How does it sound?** (It just sounds like noise because everyone is playing at the same time.) **Even though it sounds like noise to us, to the players it makes sense. They know what to listen for. When God talks to us, we have to know what to listen for, too. What are ways that God talks to us?** (God speaks to us through His Word, the Bible.) **The Bible says in Deuteronomy, "Love the LORD your God, listen to His voice, and hold fast to Him. For the LORD is your life."**

Babel Ball

Materials Large set of wooden building blocks; small, underinflated playground ball

Procedure Gather in a large playing area. Divide the group into two teams. Give one team the set of building blocks. Instruct this team to build as high a tower as they can in the center of the playing area. The tower should be strong enough to avoid toppling. When this team has finished, have them stand around the tower in a circle facing outward. Students should stand at least an arm's length apart, at least 3 feet away from the tower.

Have the other team form a circle around the team guarding the tower. This circle should be at least 10 feet away from the first team's circle. Students in this second circle should also stand an arm's length apart. Give a student in the outer circle the ball.

Students in the outer circle are to take turns rolling the ball through the guarding circle of students in an attempt to knock down the block tower. Students in the inner guarding circle can use only their feet to stop the ball from hitting the tower. Neither group can leave their circle during the game.

Limit the students in the outer circle to 10 rolls. If the tower is knocked down within the 10 rolls, the outer circle students build and guard a new tower, with the original inner circle students now becoming the outer circle. If the original tower is still standing after 10 rolls, switch circles and let the new inner circle now guard the tower.

R & R (Rest and Reflect) Discuss with children how they guarded the tower. In much the same way, we ask God to guard our spiritual life from attacks. People, movies, TV, books—many things in the world may work against us when we follow Jesus. But God can protect us.

3

Friendship Builders

Isaac

(Genesis 21-24)

Point to Remember

God will always provide for His people. He gives us our family and friends and Jesus, who lived and died and rose again for us.

Find the Ram

Materials Extra large playing area with plenty of places to hide, stopwatch or watch with a second hand

Procedure Select one student from the group to be the “ram.” While others turn away and close their eyes, the ram has 2 minutes to find a hiding place. When the 2 minutes are up, the other students set out in search of the ram. When someone finds the ram, instead of calling out to the others, he or she hides with the ram. The search continues until everyone is hiding with the ram or 5 minutes have passed. The first person to find the ram becomes the new ram in the next round.

R & R (Rest and Reflect) Ask, **What part did a ram play in the Bible story of Isaac?** (Abraham found the ram in the bushes and sacrificed it instead of Isaac.) **How is the sacrifice of a ram like God’s sacrifice of Jesus for us?** (Jesus took our place on the cross; like Isaac was Abraham and Sarah’s first and only son, so Jesus was God’s first and only son.)

Train of Blessings

Materials None

Procedure Gather in a large, open area. Assign each student one different letter of the alphabet, starting with the letter A. Give each student 30 seconds to think of something or someone God provides us for our good that begins with the letter he or she was assigned. When each student has something in mind, have the group scatter throughout the playing area.

Then call, “Who has the letter A?” The person who has the letter A runs over to you and names a blessing God gives that starts with A. Now call, “Who has the letter B?” When that person raises his hand, the letter A person runs over to him. The letter A person names the A blessing. The letter B person names the B blessing. Then the letter B person stands behind the letter A person to form a train.

Now call, “Who has the letter C?” This person raises his hand and the AB train runs over to him. Each names their blessing in alphabetical order and the letter C person joins the train. Play continues until everyone is a part of the train. Then, as a train, run around the playing area chanting all the blessings on the train in alphabetical order.

R & R (Rest and Reflect) Say, **You really came up with a lot of blessings, didn’t you? What was God’s most important blessing to you?** (Jesus.)