

MEET
THE
GROUP**THE POINT**

A friend chooses to love.

BIGGER PICTURE

Friends come in all shapes and personalities. Some are outgoing, while others are more reserved. Some are like us in almost every way, and others seem to be the exact opposite in almost every way. And yet, there are also some consistent points in friendships. This week, we will see how the book of Proverbs would answer the question, "What is a Friend?" We will see that a friend is significant because they have chosen you, and you have chosen them. A friend is with you in all times and seasons (Proverbs 17:17). A friend knows you and still chooses to stick close to you (Proverbs 18:24). A friend is willing to speak and receive hard truths. A friend doesn't say what someone wants to hear, but what someone needs to hear (Proverbs 26:6, 9). A friend is there for total acceptance, total forgiveness, and total honesty. A friend chooses to commit to you with vulnerability and accountability. Ultimately, a friend chooses to love.

Verses:

Proverbs 18:24; Proverbs 17:17; Proverbs 20:6; Proverbs 27:5-10; John 15:12-13.

LEADER WIN

Friendships for students can be all over the place. We live in a time where anything other than total acceptance is often considered hate. However, true friendship is a place where there is total acceptance, total forgiveness, and total honesty. It is a place where you are vulnerable and gives others permission to hold you accountable to God's best for you. A friend chooses to love, even when it is hard.

LEADER TIPS

Be prepared. Life gets crazy. Some weeks finding an extra 30 minutes can seem near impossible. However, preparation can be one of the most powerful things you do for your group. Take 30-60 minutes each week to prepare for your group. Take 10-20 minutes to read over the guide and the relevant passages. Take 10-20 minutes to pray for each member of your group by name. Take 10-20 minutes to send a reminder to your group about meeting or to follow up on a challenge you took together as a group.

Getting Started...

1. If you have anyone new: Have everyone introduce themselves by sharing their name, where they go to school, and one interesting fact about them.
2. Remind everyone the purpose of group time and the expectations you have for how it will run.
3. **Ask this question:** Do you have a nickname? What is it and why?

The Big Question: What is a Friend?

1. What are the key characteristics you look for in a friend?
2. Read Proverbs 18:24, 17:17, 20:6, 27:5-10, and 17. Assign different passages to different students and read through all passages before the discussion. What sticks out to you about this passage? Why?
3. How does Proverbs describe the difference between a friend and a brother? How does this impact your answer to the question, "What is a friend?"
4. Commenting on Proverbs 18:24 and 17:17, Ray Ortlund writes, "Total acceptance. Total forgiveness. A true friend knows who you really are and does not walk away." Have you experienced a friendship like this? If yes, how does that feel? If not, why does this type of friend sound appealing?
5. What are barriers to you being a friend who totally accepts and totally forgives others?
6. Read Proverbs 27:5-6, 17, and 24:26. Here we see that a true friend is also marked by blunt honesty.
 - Which of these characteristics (accepting, forgiving, or honesty) is most challenging for you to show to others?
 - Which is most challenging for you to receive?
 - How can you embody each of these as a friend?
7. Read John 15:12-13. How does Jesus embody the ultimate picture of a friend?

Next steps

1. Commit to taking one step to being the type of friend described in Proverbs. Is it accepting? Forgiving? Speaking or receiving hard truth?
2. Choose one of the verses from Proverbs to memorize together as a group.

