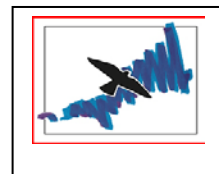


THEME: What would you do?
for your friends?

CHRISTIAN VALUE:
Friendship

Friendship is an undisputed value in our society, with children often spending more time with their friends than with family. It is a key concept in the Christian framework, with Jesus being criticised for being ‘the friend of sinners’ and eating with those whom society rejected. Sharing a meal with someone is an explicit sign of friendship.



Luke 5:17-26 ¹⁷ One day while Jesus was teaching, some Pharisees and teachers of religious law were sitting nearby. (It seemed that these men showed up from every village in all Galilee and Judea, as well as from Jerusalem.) And the Lord’s healing power was strongly with Jesus. ¹⁸ Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a sleeping mat. They tried to take him inside to Jesus, ¹⁹ but they couldn’t reach him because of the crowd. So they went up to the roof and took off some tiles. Then they lowered the sick man on his mat down into the crowd, right in front of Jesus. ²⁰ Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the man, “Young man, your sins are forgiven.” ²¹ But the Pharisees and teachers of religious law said to themselves, “Who does he think he is? That’s blasphemy! Only God can forgive sins!” ²² Jesus knew what they were thinking, so he asked them, “Why do you question this in your hearts? ²³ Is it easier to say ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or ‘Stand up and walk’? ²⁴ So I will prove to you that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins.” Then Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said, “Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!” ²⁵ And immediately, as everyone watched, the man jumped up, picked up his mat, and went home praising God. ²⁶ Everyone was gripped with great wonder and awe, and they praised God, exclaiming, “We have seen amazing things today!”


INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME:

This powerful story tells of a group of dedicated and loyal friends who faith in Jesus that they go to extraordinary lengths to seek Jesus out, in order for him to heal their paralysed friend. Jesus is teaching in a house where the crowds are so great that the friends can’t get close to him. The door is blocked by people but the loyal friends are not deterred. They climb onto the flat roof of the house and break a hole through! Whilst this may initially seem to be an act of vandalism the roof could easily be repaired! They lower their friend, who was laying on a sleeping mat, through the hole and at Jesus’ feet below. In front of the Jewish leaders and teachers Jesus heals the man by telling him that his sins are forgiven – this would have been blasphemy! Only God could forgive sins! Jesus then told the man to stand up and walk so everyone could see that he had been sent by God.

GATHERING / WELCOME (This can be said or signed)

Leader: Jesus, the Light of the World, is here!
Response: Lord Jesus, shine upon us.

WORSHIP SONGS - Suggested songs: A new commandment; Father we love You; Rise and shine; Love will never come to an end. (No Pianist for Assembly? No Problem 1)

Way in 1 - Lean on me!	Idea 1 - INTRODUCING THE BIBLE STORY
<p>What makes a good friend? Ask the children to describe a perfect friend. Use the accompanying slides to help. How many of us have friends this good?</p> <p>Create an obstacle course using PE benches and mats. Ask for pairs of friends to come and assist. Blind fold one of the friends and ask them to trust the other to lead them through the obstacle course. What did it feel like putting your trust in your friend? Were you worried or nervous? Everyday people put their trust in their friends and even people they don’t know. They trust others to care for them and guide them and look after them. Imagine what the world would be like without friends like this.</p> 	<p>Ask the children to close their eyes and imagine that they are unable to walk or do anything for themselves. Imagine that you are paralyzed – unable to move. Our story from the Bible this week tells the story of a man who was unable to walk and his amazing friends who brought him to Jesus. Can you think of some of your amazing friends? Shake hands with an amazing friend!</p> <p>Tell a story: Jesus was in house teaching and many, many people wanted to listen to him. The house was crowded and people were queuing outside to see him and listen to him. Amongst the crowd were a group of men who had a friend who was paralysed and they were carrying him on a sleeping mat (a bit like a stretcher). They wanted Jesus to heal him and make him walk again – they trusted Jesus and had faith in him. When they arrived at the house they couldn’t get near Jesus because of the crowds. The crowds were jostling and pushing and, try as the might, they could not get through. One of the friends then noticed the steps onto the roof of the house. Houses in Jesus’ time had flat roofs so when the weather was hot they could sleep under the stars. They friends carried the man onto the roof where they started to break through the tiles. Inside the house, way below, people were being covered in dust and debris but still the friend continued until they had made a hole big enough to lower the man through. Everyone below must have been very angry except Jesus who smiled. He knew just how much the man’s friends loved him and how much it would mean to them if he</p>



could walk again.

In the house, listening to Jesus, were the religious leaders who were always trying to trick Jesus and catch him out. Jesus wanted them to see who he was and believe in him but they just wouldn't. To try and help them see, and because Jesus felt compassion for the man and his friends, in front of all those people Jesus performed a miracle. He healed the man and told him to take up his bed and walk! Most people were so excited when they saw this miracle but the religious leaders were angry and hated Jesus all the more!

REFLECTION – Imagine how the friends must have felt when they saw their friend walk again. Have you ever been so happy that you want to run around and shout for joy like footballers who score a goal? Imagine how the man must have felt being able to get off his bed and walk for the first time.....to run and jump and hop and skip. Is that what you think he might have done?

RESPONSE – When Jesus performed miracles he did so for special reasons and at special times. There were lots of people that Jesus healed and some that he did not. That must be hard. Jesus asks us all to show and share his love with everyone we meet. To be good friends to everyone – can we do that?

PRAYER – Loving Jesus, You told us to love our neighbours as ourselves; to be friends to others but especially to care for the sick, the poor, the weak and the vulnerable. Sometimes that is hard. Help us learn to be like you and to share your love. AMEN

Way in 2 – in safe hands.

You will need a number of props to help:

A tennis ball, a larger soft ball, a yo-yo.

Ask for a volunteer to support you as a partner.

Start off by placing one of the balls on a table in front of the children and asking them what they could do with the ball? They could throw it, kick it, head it; roll it.

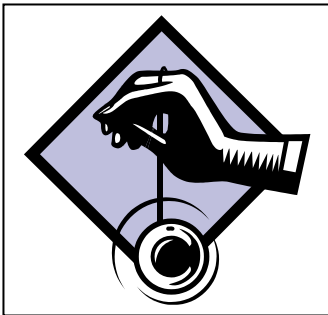
Which if those are the safest and which demonstrates most control? (You are aiming for the children to see that when the ball is held safely in the hands it is secure.) Even footballers miss-kick but it is the safe hands of the goal keeper that really count!

Does the size of the ball make it easier or harder to catch and keep safe?

Using the yo-yo ask if there is an expert amongst you. (or prime a child to come and demonstrate their skills.)

Demonstrate how the yo-yo works but emphasise that every time a trick is completed it returns safely to the palm of the hand.

Jesus is a safe pair of hands that are always there for us – he holds us gently in his hands. When we slip he will catch us and bring us back to him just like the yo-yo.



Idea 2 - INTRODUCING THE BIBLE STORY TO THE CHILDREN.....

Throughout the New Testament there are lots of stories about the wonderful miracles Jesus performed. We can read about miracles like when he made blind people see, he healed people with a terrible disease called leprosy, he even brought two people back from the dead! But there is one story where a paralysed man was healed and able to walk again. His friends bought him to Jesus – to be close to him! They lowered him through the roof of a house! The friends knew that he would be in safe hands being near and with Jesus.

REFLECTION – Ask the children to think of people who they feel safe with; their parents, their teachers; members of their family. Feeling safe is really important and knowing how to stay safe is important. How do you stay safe? How do you know what it feels like to be safe?

RESPONSE – Ask the children to look at their hands closely and imagine just how important our hands are to us.

PRAYER- Create a finger prayer by holding each finger as you pray for something or someone.

Starting with the thumb –

- let us pray for our families and all they do for us and with us
- let us pray for our friends and how they support us and care for us
- let us pray for our school and all who help us to learn
- let us pray for children around the world who are scared and in unsafe, dangerous places
- let us pray for ourselves and help us to understand that, with Jesus, we are in safe hands.

AMEN