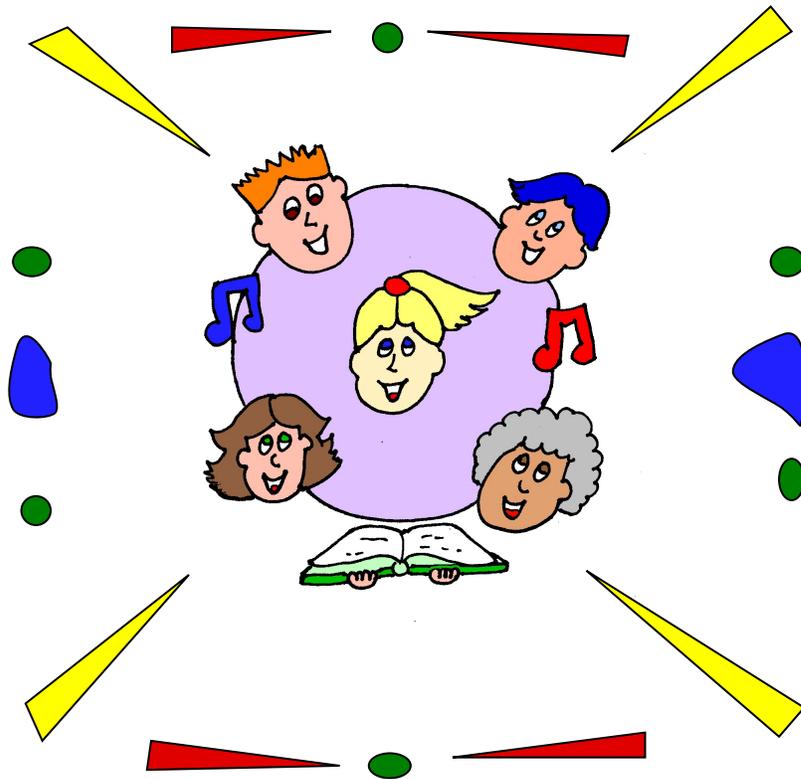


Friends in Christ



A "Friends in Christ" atmosphere saturates this VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL! It is uniquely designed to touch the hearts and lives of generations with the kindness and caring and strength of Christ. With so much violence and so many lonely people in the world today, Christ is our perfect example of strong gentleness, and He is also our Best Friend. This VBS reunites generations with Christ whose deep love strengthens them to love and care for each other just as He loves and cares for all people. The days of those who attend will be filled with lively songs, stories, puppets, fun activities and crafts for every age. Everyone will find something uplifting and extremely valuable to help them in their faith and lives, and learn how to pass it on as they seek to be friends in Christ who become thoroughly equipped by Him to change the world through His kindness and caring.

The following pages offer the flavor of this VBS
through excerpts from Day One

OPENING VBS LEADER'S GUIDE

DAY ONE: Welcome and Opening Devotions

AS FAMILY GROUPS GATHER: Pass out Song Books that contain Songs and Litany for Day One

Day One Theme: First Friends

Open with VBS Theme Song: "True Friends In Christ Forever" vs. 1

Printed in Song Book

Sung to Tune of : "The Church's One Foundation" TLH # 473 *Tune: Public Domain*

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(Instruct participants to hold their song book in one hand and clap their hand on their knee with their other hand. You only have one verse to sing so concentrate on getting the clapping down to a good one-two beat and learning just one verse.)

1. True friends in Christ forever, Please help us all to be.
Kind, caring and forgiving, So all the world will see.
How much we love our Savior, And love each other, too.
So they will see our Jesus, In all we say and do.

Repeat verse until everyone is clapping together in a solid one-two beat.

Welcome and Introduction by Leader ... WITH GREAT ENTHUSIASM!

- Show genuine excitement for this VBS program and for each participant present. Elaborate on all of the things you like and are excited about ... the songs, crafts and especially the Bible Stories and Puppet Plays.
- Share how much you want to be a friend in Christ to everyone present and also that so many people are so lonely and need friends, which makes this VBS so helpful and needed in our lives today.
- Invite everyone to begin a fantastic week by listening carefully to the first Bible Story.

BIBLE STORY: "Adam and Eve - First Friends"

You Will Need: A Story Teller, to reproduce one copy of the Bible Story for the Story Teller and Teachers, and to reproduce the Four Signs for this story found at the end of this Opening Guide.

- First, hold up signs one by one and ask participant's to read them in unison just for practice. Explain that when these signs are held up during the story, everyone should read them in unison. **For Preschoolers:** Ask those who cannot read to listen for and repeat the words that are read to keep them constantly listening to the story and involved in telling the story.
- Next, have the Story Teller read the story and hold up or have a helper hold up the signs at the correct time in the story. If you have a helper holding up the signs, you may need one more copy of the Bible Story for the helper.
- The story will tell itself and keep everyone listening and looking for signs to read. Move immediately from Bible Story to Puppet Play.

DAY ONE: Bible Story: "Adam and Eve - First Friends"

Props: Reproduce the four Signs found at the end of this lesson:

Sign One: "Everything looks so good"

Sign Two: "I am very, very sad."

Sign Three: God made Woman

Sign Four: That was good. That was very, very good.

Story Teller: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. In fact God created everything, the plants and trees, the animals, and when God was done He looked around and said: HOLD UP SIGN ONE. Then, God created Adam. Adam was the first man to walk around one earth. Adam lived in the Garden of Eden. It was a beautiful, perfect Garden. One day when Adam was walking around in the beautiful perfect Garden of Eden he said, HOLD UP SIGN TWO. You see, Adam was in the beautiful perfect Garden of Eden with all the animals, but he didn't have one single person who was human, like him. So, Adam felt very much alone. It seems Adam needed a friend. So: HOLD US SIGN THREE. Adam called the woman God gave him, Eve. Eve was Adams first friend on earth. HOLD UP SIGN FOUR. That was a wonderful story. PUPPET COMES ON THE SCENE.

PUPPET PLAY: "I Have Friends!"

You Will Need:

- A Narrator, a Puppeteer, and , of course, a Puppet (doll, stuffed animal, etc. will work). Use the same generic puppet named Jamie each day.
- A Puppet Theater can be made with a large Appliance Box or use a table on it's side to hide the puppeteer. A lectern may work in church.
- Use a microphone for the Puppeteer and Narrator for better hearing and learning
- To reproduce two copies of the play found at the end of this Opening Guide, one for the Narrator and one for the Puppeteer.

OPENING: Puppet comes on the scene as Bible Story is being completed.

Narrator: *Approaches puppet, curious.*

Puppet: *(Looks and acts sad)* "I'm sad. I'm very, very sad."

Narrator: "I can see you are sad, but, who are you?"

Puppet: "My name is Jamie.

Narrator: "Well hello, Jamie."

Puppet: "Hello, I wish I could be happy, but the truth is I'm sad. I'm very, very sad."

Narrator: "I'm sorry you are sad.

Puppet: "Well, thank you. I'm glad you feel sorry for me. But, don't you want to help me?"

Narrator: "Of course I do. What can I do?"

Puppet: "You can be my friend."

Narrator: "I'd like to be your friend."

Puppet: *(surprised)* "You would?"

Narrator: "Yes, I would."

Puppet: *(delighted)* "No ones ever wanted to be my friend. You are my first friend ever!"

Narrator: "Why, this is absolutely amazing. You need a friend and all the people here have come to make friends and be friends in Christ. Why don't you stay and be our friend?"

Puppet: "Could I really stay?"

Narrator: "Sure you can. I'll put you right here where you can join in on everything."

(Place the puppet in a prominent place.)

Puppet: "I have friends! I don't have to be sad anymore!"

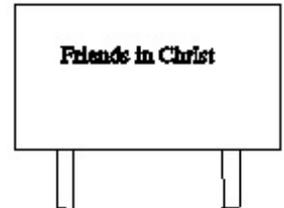
(Even move puppet with you during the day.)

Day One Board Activity: "Friends In Christ"

You Will Need: To reproduce and cut apart one copy of the letters for "Friends In Christ" found at the end of this Opening Guide, as well as a large sheet of newsprint and tape.

PART ONE:

- Choose a number of volunteers to tape the letters of: "Friends In Christ" onto the Board. Hand volunteers letters for the word Friends first and everyone to help make the letters form a word. Do the same with "in" and then finally with "Christ."
- Explain that during our first Family Group Time we will be drawing pictures of ourselves that we will be placing a few of our pictures each day on this board. By the end of VBS, we will all be together on the board as friends in Christ!



PART TWO: Put up a large sheet of newsprint .

- Each day talk about what kind and caring things we each can be doing today at VBS for our friends in Christ and when we get home.
- Write down or ask for volunteers to write down suggestions on the newsprint to keep them involved and the suggestions before everyone's eyes. **For Preschoolers:** Even have those who cannot read, listen and repeat the suggestions to hold their attention..
- Conclude by reminding teachers and helpers to continually ask how we can all be friends in Christ, and use teachable moments when participants may not be loving and caring to help them turn to Jesus (even sit down and pray at the time) for help and guidance to be loving, understanding, and forgiving friends.

Read Bible Verse for Day One : Psalm 68:6a

"God settles the solitary (alone) in a home (family);..."

- Print All Five Bible Verses for this VBS on one large piece of Poster Board and hang up for all to see. You may print one verse each day, or print verses on separate poster board pieces and tape together or tape them onto a larger Poster Board each day.
- To begin, read this verse from the Bible to help everyone know it is God's Word.
- Then, as time allows, ask one or more volunteers to read this verse from the poster board or even from the Bible if you desire.
- Finally, invite the whole large group to repeat this verse together, *louder and louder each time!* This technique holds attention, adds enthusiasm, and teaches by repetition.
- **ASK: Why do you think God places the lonely into families?** If no one else does, share that God created us for each other, to live in families and be friends. We "need" each other. So, God places us in families, all kinds of families like our own families, and especially His Church family, and during VBS we are all becoming a family of friends in Christ!

DAY ONE LITANY: "Jesus in My Friend" Printed in Song Book

Practice the refrain with actions a few times before you begin to help participants become familiar with the words and actions. Read or even ask volunteers to read the leader parts of this Litany. **For Preschoolers:** Help those who cannot read to read leader parts by reading them a few words at a time so they can repeat them after you to keep them involved.

Leader: Some days I feel so alone

REFRAIN: I am not alone (*clap*)
Jesus is with me (*clap*)
Jesus is my Friend, my greatest Friend! (*clap, clap*)

Leader: I will call to the Lord. **REFRAIN**

Leader: When I feel alone. **REFRAIN**

Leader: When I need a friend. **REFRAIN**

Leader: When I need Jesus. **REFRAIN**

OFFERING: Take time to briefly explain mission project and thank participants for their support. Remind them supporting missions is show love and care for others.

Object Lesson: Leader may present Object Lessons or Teachers and Helpers may take turns presenting one Object Lesson each day during VBS.

YOU WILL NEED: A large rope to pretend to use for the game: "Tug of War."

- Lay a large rope down. Do it carefully, as if you are doing something very important and precise. Your actions have no real meaning except to begin to make participants curious about what you are doing.
- Pick up one end of the rope, pull it and fall backwards with the rope following you. Pretend to be confused, but then enlightened with a better idea.
- Replace the rope and straighten it carefully once again. But this time, go to the other end of the rope and pull and fall backwards.
- Turn to participants and ask how many of them know how to play, "Tug of War"? Explain that you are trying to play, "Tug of War" with the rope, but it's just not working. Ask if anyone knows what you need to play, "Tug of War"?
- The answer, of course, is more people, or at least one more person to tug at the other end. Talk about how there are some things in this life we just can't do alone like play games, pick up large heavy objects, etc. We need a friend.
- Conclude with how thankful we can be that God gives us friends and how great it is to be here at VBS where we can all make so many friends.

Close with Day One Theme Song: "Jesus is My Friend, Indeed"

Sung to Tune of: "This Little Gospel Light of Mine" *Public Domain* Printed in Song Book
Text: Used by permission, Family Crossfires Ministries, Inc. © 2003

1. Jesus is my Friend, indeed, I want to jump for joy! (*jump*)
He gives me the friends I need, I want to jump for joy! (*jump*)
He loves you and He love me, I want to jump for joy!
Jump for Joy! (*jump*) Jump for Joy!(*jump*) Jump for Joy! (*jump*)

2. Jesus is my Friend, indeed, I want to SHOUT for joy! *(repeat 3 times)*
(say the word "SHOUT" as loud as you can) Shout for joy! (repeat 3 times)
3. Jesus is my Friend, indeed, I want to praise Him high! *(repeat 3 tiimes)*
(reach as high as you can) Praise Him high (repeat 3 times)
4. Jesus is my Friend, indeed, I want to bow so low. *(repeat 3 times)*
(get down as low as you can) Bow so low (repeat 3 times)
5. Jesus is my Friend, indeed, I want to jump for joy! *(repeat 3 times)*
(jump) Jump for joy (repeat 3 times)

Closing Prayer: *Explain that at the close of this prayer you will say: "All friends in Christ say," and at that time everyone should repeat the Amen three times, each time getting louder. NOTE: use this phrase at the end of other prayers and songs during this VBS to teach and add excitement.*

Dear Father in heaven. Thank You for making us "Friends in Christ" through faith in Your Son. Strengthen us during VBS to kind, caring, understanding and forgiving friends through Christ. Forgive us when we fail to be friends to people we come in contact with when we leave VBS. Bring us back each day renewed, forgiven, and strengthened to be not just good friends but friends in and through Christ.

All friends in Christ say: AMEN! *Repeat the Amen three times, louder and louder!*

Announcements for the Day

Remind Teachers to Collect Song Books

Release for Tent Time: Remind participants to listen carefully so they will know where to go and what to do during VBS today.

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Bible Story: "Adam and Eve - First Friends"

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. In fact God created everything, the plants and trees, the animals, and when God was done He looked around and said: HOLD UP SIGN ONE. Then, God created Adam. Adam was the first man to walk around one earth. Adam lived in the Garden of Eden. It was a beautiful, perfect Garden. One day when Adam was walking around in the beautiful perfect Garden of Eden he said, HOLD UP SIGN TWO. You see, Adam was in the beautiful perfect Garden of Eden with all the animals, but he didn't have one single person who was human, like him. So, Adam felt very much alone. It seems Adam needed a friend. So: HOLD US SIGN THREE. Adam called the woman God gave him, Eve. Eve was Adams first friend on earth. HOLD UP SIGN FOUR. That was a wonderful story. PUPPET COMES ON THE SCENE.

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Sign One:

"Everything looks so good"

Sign Two:

"I am very, very sad."

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Sign Three:

God made Woman

Sign Four:

That was good.

That was very, very good.

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DAY ONE: Puppet Play: Reproduce two copies of the play, one for the Narrator and one for the Puppeteer.

"MY FIRST FRIENDS EVER!"

OPENING: Puppet comes on the scene as Bible Story is being completed.

Narrator: *Approaches puppet, curious.*

Puppet: *(looks and acts sad)* "I'm sad. I'm very, very sad."

Narrator: "I can see you are sad, but, who are you?"

Puppet: "My name is Jamie."

Narrator: "Well hello, Jamie."

Puppet: "Hello, I wish I could be happy, but the truth is I'm sad. I'm very, very sad."

Narrator: "I'm sorry you are sad."

Puppet: "Well, thank you. I'm glad you feel sorry for me. But, don't you want to help me?"

Narrator: "Of course I do. What can I do?"

Puppet: "You can be my friend."

Narrator: "I'd like to be your friend."

Puppet: *(surprised)* "You would?"

Narrator: "Yes, I would."

Puppet: *(delighted)* "No ones ever wanted to be my friend. You are my first friend ever!"

Narrator: "Why, this is absolutely amazing. You need a friend and all the people here to make friends and be friends in Christ. Why don't you stay and be our friend?"

have come

Puppet: "Could I really stay?"

Narrator: "Sure you can. I'll put you right here where you can join in on everything."

(Place the puppet in a prominent place.)

Puppet: "I have friends! I don't have to be sad anymore!"

(Even move puppet with you during the day.)

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DAY ONE LESSON PLAN

First Friends

OPENING

INTRODUCTIONS! Go around your family group and have each member share their name and their favorite color. Basically this is a get to know each other time, but it will also prepare participants for the Board Activity when they will be asked to share something about themselves.

LESSON REVIEW AND APPLICATION

1. Why do you think people need friends so much? *God created people to enjoy, love and need each other.*
2. What can happen when people don't have friends? *They can get lonely, depressed, even ill, etc.*
3. Why do you think it is important for people who are married to be friends? *It makes it easier to get along and stay married.*
4. Why do you think it is important for family members to all be friends? *To have peace and to feel loved.*
5. Why do you think is important for Christians to be friends? *To be of one mind so they don't fight and turn others away from God and His love.*
6. What bad things can happen when people aren't friends or friendly to each other? *Hurt feelings, pain, anger, etc. which can lead to many terrible problems.*
7. Who do you think has the power and enough love to make us friends even with our enemies? *Christ. We can't be the kind of friends we need to be without Him.*
8. What kind of time do you think we are going to have as a family group if we become good Christian friends? *A great time!*
9. What kind of life do you think you will have if you learn to be good Christian friends? *A good life. As we learn to be friends in Christ, we will be blessed by God and become a blessing to all the people around us.*

LESSON CRAFT: You Will Need: Paper and markers.

DRAW PICTURES! Have paper and markers ready for family members to draw a picture of themselves. Be sure participants print their name on their picture. It needs to be ready for Day Two Opening Devotions Board Activity.

LESSON ACTIVITY: You Will Need: Paper and pencils.

Hand out paper for participants to play "tic tac toe." Emphasize that they cannot play alone. They will have to find a partner. If you have an uneven number teachers will have to play. Review some things that are hard to do alone like play games, pick up large heavy objects, etc. We need a friend. Share that God makes us all friends through Christ. We become friends in Christ, and we also become members of God's family.

Close with Memory Time: Psalm 68:6a "God settles the solitary (alone) in a home (family);..."

Ask everyone to stand.

For each line: Demonstrate the action and read one line at a time so participants can repeat each line after you and do the action for that line.

God settles the solitary in a home (*point thumbs up*).

We're not alone! We have a home! (*Hold hands with people near you*)

Oh, how happy we can be (*dance in place*)

When God sets us in a family! (*point thumbs up*).

Keep these words and actions in mind for your Closing Program.

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