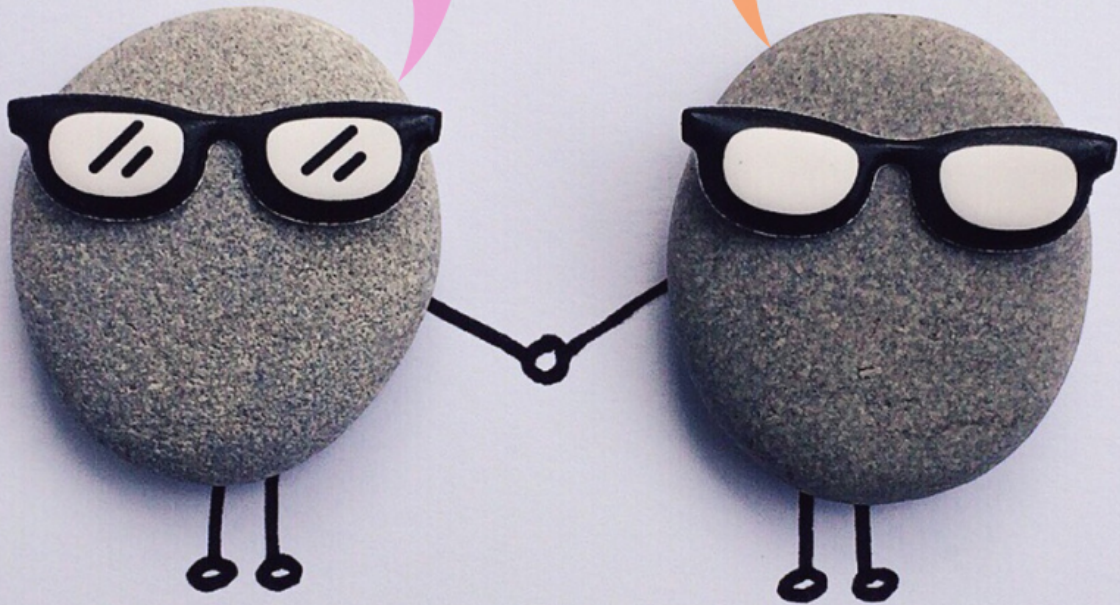


UR my friend.



U mine 2.



Friends with Everyone ...

Tween Small Group

Week 7: Find people. Grow friendships.

ACTIVITY: Friendship Prayer Bracelets

Supplies: Elastic, letter beads and plain/decorative beads (we added cross charms to ours.)

Activity: string beads together to make a bracelet, making sure each bracelet contains the first letter of every participants name.

We are making friendship bracelets today for a few reasons. First, because it's fun to identify with our friends by making matching bracelets! But the one you are making today is unique. Each part of it represents your connection to the friends you have made here, and the prayers we have promised to say for each other ...for our other friends outside of this group ...and the future friends we haven't even met yet. Each person has added a bead to your bracelet with their initial after it to help you remember them when you pray. When you look at your bracelet, be encouraged to know your friends are praying for you, too.

Shake hands ...it's important.

"You are my friends ..." John 15:14

Did you hear the girl in the video talking about fish-floppy hand-shakes? You may not shake hands much now, but you will in the future ...and how you shake hands says a lot about who you are. A firm handshake communicates our confidence to others. A firm grip on Jesus' hand visibly represents our faith in Him. Our faith says more about us than our hand-shake. When it comes to making friends, this is especially important. To be an authentic friend and have genuine friends, living out our faith says a lot about who we are. We want our friends to know us ...the real us ...all of us. Those are the friends God has placed in our paths ...right where we need them, or they need us.

Think about how you feel when someone tells you do or think about something you disagree with or don't understand. We resist, right? Others will resist listening to our story of faith if we aren't living it out in everyday life. It simply won't make sense to them. They won't understand. If we try to fake like we are OK with conversations and behavior we know goes against the faith we live by, others will be able to tell we are faking it to fit in.

It's hard being different. As Christians, we are set a part, and Jesus told us it will not always be easy. But He promised it would all be worth it. Trust Him. Stand firm in faith, and know God sees and hears you. He sees the hard days. He loves you so much.

Pray to be consistent with the way you follow Jesus and live your life every day ...before you even say anything ...others will notice the difference. It's important to be who you are, and not hide what you believe in order to make or keep friends. Remember who and Whose you are, and I promise you will make and keep wonderful

friends. Jesus calling us friends is a big deal. It means He chose to share everything He is and knows with us. He gave up His life for us. When we become friends with someone, we start to share more with them, and build our trust in each other. We can always trust Jesus to guide us and be with us. He sets a perfect example of friendship. Selflessness.

TRAIN YOUR BRAIN: "Consider the power of your presence in another person's life."

How do we get there?

"You are my friends, if you do what I command." John 15:14

When we read, listen, and obey God's Word, we are celebrating our friendship with Him! We are reflecting our appreciation for the way we trust Him to lead us and protect us, and we relax in knowing that He is always with us.

When we follow Jesus with all of our hearts, He will lead us to the friendships He has prepared for us. It's a mystery and an adventure to us, wondering who our friends will be now and in the future. But it's not to God. When we stay in touch with Him, we get to experience fully His plan for our lives.

How do we get there?

1. Pray.
2. Read the Bible.
3. Join a group just like this one! Good job! You are on your way!

Praying for our friends and learning what God has to say about friendship in the Bible is important. We are always learning and growing. It's important to find someone older to ask questions when we have them. Pastors, parents, and older siblings are great people to ask. We never stop learning new things in life, including God and His Word ...the Bible. There are younger kids looking up to you already! Make sure they know they can ask you questions, too. This is how we learn and grow together as God's people. Together!

TRAIN YOUR BRAIN: "Keep the conversation going."

Make is a verb.

"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." John 15:13

Jesus didn't just say He loved His friends, He showed them. He performed miracles to heal people and spoke words of love and life. Imagine getting advice from Jesus! We only know what is recorded in the Bible, but the apostle John said there was so much more he didn't write down! Jesus was a good friend to His friends, and He is a good friend to us. The life He lived on this earth teaches us it's important to serve and love each other. He died for us out of love for us. To protect us and to save us. We can certainly try to be good friends by caring for one another and going out of our way to make sure our friends are OK.

Making friends is a skill. It's something we learn to do and get better at as we grow. There will always be challenges in friendships, but the wonderful times are sure to outweigh them when we are seeking to apply the lessons we have learned here today.

Remember, YOU have been placed in someone else's life, too. When we make new friends, I believe God smiles. He brings us together knowing we need each other, and can make each other better. His plans for our lives are good. Friendship is a blessing that brings joy to our lives. Think of friends as a way He reaches down to hug us, help us, and make us laugh on this earth. Don't forget ...friendship won't just happen to us. We have to participate! Go out into the world each day knowing without a doubt that you are special ...you are loved ...and your place in this world is important. Smile! Have fun! Be joyful! When we love the people in our lives well, some amazing friendships are sure to bless us.

TRAIN YOUR BRAIN: "You are always forgiven, and never loved less."

Closing Activity:

Circle up and take turns praying for each other.