

SABBATH SCHOOL

Preteen Sabbath Instruction Program — Teacher's Outline

Level 3 • Unit 2 • Week 1

GOD IS OUR FRIEND

OBJECTIVE:

To show the friendship qualities of God and to help the students understand how to develop a relationship with God as they would with a friend.

ATTENTION GETTER:

Say: Let's turn in our Bibles to Exodus 33 and read the first part of verse 11. (Ask one of the students to read the first sentence of the verse.) This says that the Lord spoke to Moses as a man speaks to a friend. Think about the friends you have here at Church and at school.

Ask: What makes someone your friend? (Let students respond. Example: you spend a lot of time with them; you talk to them a lot; you can talk with them anytime about anything; you may know what they like or need; you help each other; you share with them.)

Say: Did you know that you can have another best friend in God, if you get to know Him well?

BIBLE LESSON:

Say: In the 33rd chapter of Exodus, God showed Himself as a friend to Moses. God knew Moses as His friend because Moses spent a lot of time talking to God. Verse 7 tells us, "Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp...and called it the tabernacle of meeting." Moses spent a lot of time here to learn from God how to lead the children of Israel. Because he felt close to God, Moses one day made a special request of Him. You can do that with a friend, can't you?

Say: Moses had a desire to see the merciful God that had created all things and was guiding them to the Promised Land. Because of His radiant glory, though, no one can look upon God's face and live. As humans, the brilliance would be too much for us. Only after Christ's return when we are changed to spirit beings will we be able to "...see Him as He is." We are told this in 1 John 3:2.

But as a friend, God agreed to show Moses as much of Himself as He was able. While standing on a rock, God put Moses in the cleft (or cave) of the rock and covered Moses with His hand as He passed by. Then God took away His hand and Moses was able to see God's back.

Ask: We haven't seen God as Moses did. How do you think God shows himself to us today? (Let students respond. Examples: through the Bible; answered prayer; Sabbath school lessons; sermons in church services.)

Say: Jesus, the Son of God, set the example of being a friend. As a friend, He cared about people and healed them, provided wine for a wedding party, spent lots of time teaching His disciples and often took time to have a meal with people. Even after His resurrection Jesus spent some time with His disciples.

Once, as a friend, He prepared breakfast for some of them. We can read about this in John 21:1-14 in the New Testament. Seven of the disciples had been out fishing all night, but hadn't caught anything.

Do: Everyone stand up and we'll pretend we're fishing. Cast your net into the water on the left side of our pretend boat. We'll let it drag on the bottom for a few seconds. (Pause.) Now pull up your nets. We haven't caught anything yet. Look, there's a man standing on the shore. He's telling us to fish from the right side. Throw your nets over the right side.

Say: Jesus was standing on the shore that morning and He told them where to cast their nets. He said they would catch fish on the right side of the boat. When they did what He said, the net was so full of fish they could not even pull it up out of the water.

Do: We can feel our nets full of fish now. Hang on to them tightly while we take the boat to shore.

Say: They brought the boat to shore, dragging the net, but the net didn't break though it had 153 large fish in it. Jesus already had a fire of coals burning and cooked the fish for their breakfast. He then spent time with them instructing His friends about teaching God's way to others. (Have students sit down.)

Another place in God's word where we can read how God is our friend is in the book of Psalms. Many of the Psalms were written by a young man named David. David loved God and His laws and in the Psalms he talked about his relationship with his friend, God. Let's read some of the ways that God was David's friend. In Psalm 8:6-8 we read how God has put mankind in charge of the earth and all that He created. (Teacher can read the verses.) David wrote this Psalm wondering why God even cares about mankind when we are so small compared to all that He has made. But David learned that as a friend, God respects us enough to have us take care of what is His. Let's do our part to take care of God's creation.

Ask: What are some things you do to help take care of what God has given us? (Let students respond. Examples: put out bird seed for the birds, throw trash in containers; don't waste water, etc.)

Say: In Psalm 9:3-4 David tells us “When my enemies turn back, they shall fall and perish at Your presence. For You have maintained my right and my cause; You sat on the throne judging in righteousness.” Again, as a friend to David, God helped him to win the victory over his enemies. In David’s time, ancient Israel fought many wars with the nations that were around it. God stuck up for His friend David. Verse 10 tells us we can trust God as a friend and He will always be there for us. (Teacher read.)

Psalm 23 is another place we can see what kind of friend God is. David wrote this Psalm about a good shepherd who takes perfect care of his sheep. God is our good shepherd and we are His sheep. David’s poem shows how God takes care of all our needs. A shepherd is nice to his sheep as a friend would be nice. David describes a shepherd providing green grass and good water for his sheep, just as God makes sure we have the things we learn in church and Sabbath school. (Read verse 3.) Another job of the shepherd is to protect his sheep. A friend would do all he could to protect you from danger too, wouldn’t he? Verse 4 says: (Read.) David’s friend, God, protected him as He does us today. We don’t have to be afraid of evil, we just have to ask God to help us stay away from it. David talks about the rod and the staff of the shepherd. A shepherd’s rod is like a club that he uses to protect his sheep. It is a hard heavy stick with a thick knob on one end. The shepherd is very skilled in using this rod to drive away wild animals, or throwing it at something like a snake to kill it. He is ready at any moment.

Ask: What do you think God’s “rod” might be? What does He give us to keep us from being hurt by doing wrong things? (Let students respond. Answer: The Bible.)

Say: It is the powerful weapon of His own Word—the Bible. All through the Scriptures God promises us protection and gives us rules and laws to follow to help us make right decisions. In Matthew 4, we can read of Jesus’ own example of using the Scriptures as a weapon against Satan. When Satan was trying to get Jesus to do the wrong thing, Jesus always answered Satan by quoting the Bible and telling him what was the right thing to do. Jesus won the battle over Satan. You can too if you remember the things from the Bible.

Something else a shepherd always has with him is a staff. A shepherd’s staff is a long, slender stick with a crook on the end. He uses it to help handle his flock. He can use it to draw any one of his sheep near to him, or reach out gently with it to touch and guide them. If a sheep is in danger, his staff can also be used to reach out and pull the sheep back to safety.

Ask: Do you have any ideas what God’s staff might be? What does God give us to guide us and help us make the right choices? (Let students respond. Answer: His Holy Spirit.)

Say: God gave His Spirit to David, Abraham, Noah, Moses and others of the Old Testament, and poured it out on the Church on the Day of Pentecost. God’s Holy Spirit is with you now to lead you to do what is right and to help you understand God’s way of life. Later, that Spirit can be in your mind when you are older and make the choice to always obey God and live by His laws.

Ask: Can anyone share with the class an example of when God protected you, someone in your family or a friend? (Let students respond, then the teacher might tell an example from his/her own life.)

Say: In the last two verses of Psalm 23 David talks again about the shepherd providing a feast of good food for his flock, even when there may be danger all around. The shepherd sees his flock as a very special group. God sets us apart as special too, by anointing us with his Holy Spirit. David talks about God's goodness and mercy being with him all the days of his life, and that he will be with the good Shepherd forever in His Kingdom. (Read verses 5 and 6.)

In another Psalm, Psalm 33, David tells how his friend God is always there to help him and protect him. In verse 20 he says, "Our soul waits for the LORD; He is our help and our shield." In verse 22, he tells us that we should return that friendship by asking God for His mercy and forgiveness when we do wrong and put all our hope in Him. Our hope is to be in His family when His Son, Jesus Christ, returns and sets up His Kingdom on the earth. God wants all His friends to be in His family.

So you see, through these examples, we have learned that just as a friend is very involved with you, God wants to be involved in every part of your life. As you get to know more about God through reading the Bible, talking to Him in prayer and learning about His way in Sabbath school and church services, He will truly become your BEST FRIEND!

LESSON APPLICATION:

Before class: Write the following words on index cards: FUN, RESPECTFUL, INTERESTING, EXAMPLE, NICE, DEDICATED. Place the cards in a small paper bag.

Have students take turns drawing a word card out of the bag. Ask them to hold up the card so the rest of the class can see it. Discuss each word and how it shows that God is our friend.

When all the words have been discussed, instruct the class to write the first letter of each word on the back of each card and together unscramble them to make an important word (FRIEND).

Discussion:

FUN - God has given us His Feast days where we have fun traveling, eating out, doing special things, etc.; we have fun at picnics, potlucks, ball games, Sabbath school.

RESPECTFUL - Just as we respect God, He respects us too. He respects us enough to put us in charge of the earth and all that He created. Let's be sure we respect and take care of His creation.

INTERESTING - God has given us the Bible as an instruction book and it is full of many interesting stories. Some are adventures, like the story of Jonah and the big fish. Some are mysteries, like the parables that Jesus told. Songs and poetry are found in the book of Psalms, and stories of the future are written in Revelation.

EXAMPLE - The friends we spend time with should set a right example. We can learn in Sabbath school about the right examples Jesus set for us when He helped those who were sick or hungry. He kept the Holy Days and the Sabbath. He even gave up His own life to pay the penalty for our sins.

NICE - If you are going to be a friend, you have to be nice, don't you? And you want your friends to be nice to you. God shows He is nice by forgiving us when we do wrong, healing us when we are sick, making sure we have food to eat and by giving us the Holy Days so we can know His plan of salvation.

DEDICATED - Friends are dedicated or loyal to one another. God says He wants all of His friends, everyone who has ever lived, to be a part of His family and He is dedicated to each one of us to help us learn how.

Music:

Sing to the tune of "Three Blind Mice."

God is our friend. God is our friend.
We are His friends too. We are His friends too.
We care for each other in all that we do.
To set the example for others too.
Teaching His way, as He gave it to you.
'Cause God is our friend. God is our friend.

MEMORY VERSE:

Proverbs 18:24 "A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." God is this kind of friend.

family activity

THE POINT:

God possesses the qualities of friendship and we are learning to develop a relationship with God to make Him our "Best Friend."

In Exodus 33 God revealed Himself to Moses as a friend, and in John 21 we read about how Jesus, as a friend, prepared breakfast for some of His disciples. We also looked at how God was a friend to David by discussing some of the Psalms.

Using the letters in the word "friend," we talked about God being Fun, Respectful, Interesting, setting the right Example, being Nice, and being Dedicated.

FAMILY TOGETHER TIME:

Have your child write out the word "FRIEND" on a piece of paper and see how many of the friendly traits of God they can remember. Ask them how each of these shows that God is our friend.

- Invite some friends over for a Sabbath brunch or supper and let your child help with the planning.
- Help your child make a prayer list of people or things they can talk to their "Best Friend," God, about. Add or delete from it as needed.
- Encourage your child to make a card for someone who is sick or someone who just needs cheering up by a friend.

MEMORY VERSE:

Proverbs 18:24 "A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." God is this kind of friend.