



Deep Friendship

Goal: To name ways we can be loyal in friendships.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In 1 Samuel 18–20

Sometimes friendships point us to deep grace that accepts us as we are, even when we feel undeserving of such a blessing. We respond in deep gratitude since we have been given a great gift.

The friendship of David and King Saul's son, Jonathan, was a meaningful expression of caring friendship. Through all the difficulties David encountered in his relationship with Saul, Jonathan remained constant and loyal to David, even when David was an outlaw and hunted by Saul.

When their friendship was established, we read that "Jonathan thought as much of David as he did of himself" (18:1) and "Jonathan liked David so much that they promised to always be loyal friends" (18:3). Jonathan warned David when Saul sought to kill him because Saul feared David was trying to take over Saul's throne (19:1–3). Jonathan interceded with Saul and brought David and Saul together (19:4–8). But further attempts at reconciliation failed. When Saul threw a sword at Jonathan, he knew his father still wanted to kill David (20:33). Jonathan warned David and they parted, weeping (20:41). This was a friendship that remained loyal and faithful throughout many troubles.

This deep friendship was a sign of God's grace for which Jonathan and David were grateful.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

The story of David's friendship with Jonathan is a good follow-up to last week's story about an adversarial relationship with Goliath. As they hear the story of David and Jonathan, they can listen for the kinds of things they did that made this a good friendship. Children can be invited to talk with people during the week about friends they have and bring back stories to share. This could provide a nice connection with the story for next week about Abigail who acted like a friend to David.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

As you tell the story of David's friendship with Jonathan, be aware of the children in your group. As you invite them to tell stories about their friends, be sensitive to the quieter more introverted children, making sure there is space for all to share. Some children may not have as many friends as others. Remind them it's not about competition. Jonathan stayed friends with David through some very difficult situations with Saul. This story invites children to consider whom they know who might need them to be a friend. It's also good to help them remember to look around people at church and invite them to be friends with an older adult or someone with special needs.

*Dear God, help me to know that you are my friend.
Help me to be a good friend too. Amen.*

Supplies

- basic supplies (see p. vii)
- audio recordings (see p. vii)
- symbol rocks from previous sessions
- river rock with two stick figures drawn on
- multicultural crayons

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) 7, 22, 28, 33, 36–39

Music & Melodies (MM) 2017–2018

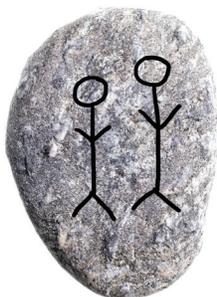
Responding

Offering

- copies of **Grace Notes (GN) 1**, 2" wide clear plastic packing tape

Bonus Activity

- copies of **GN 2**



Rock 3

GATHERING IN GOD'S GRACE

Post the visual schedule shown in **SCM 36–37** to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM 38–39** for the key to icons (for example, **LG T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

“Offering God’s Grace” requires more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing

LG A B M MS

Greet the children by name and with the words, “The grace of Christ be with you.” Prompt the children to respond with the same words.

Invite children to help prepare the worship space. Offer a candle, a Bible, the river rocks from the previous two sessions, and a river rock with two stick figures drawn on (see sidebar illustration). Also include **SCM 22** (photo of friends).

Bookmark 1 Samuel 18 and place the Bible on the table.

Ask some children to help prepare today’s Responding in Gratitude activities and suggest that one or two prepare to lead today’s singing.

Cut off a long piece of mural paper. The length depends on the number of children and the amount of space on a wall. Attach the paper to a wall and write “Our Wall of Friendship” across the top. Invite the children to draw a picture of themselves on the “wall of friendship.”

Include multicultural crayons, available in many craft and discount stores. These crayons offer a wider range of colors that more closely resemble the variation and shades of various skin tones than traditional crayons do.

Comment that today’s Bible story is about two very best friends.

Singing

Gather the group together in the worship space. Play “For the Beauty of the Earth”—**MM 2; SCM 28**—and sing along.

Praying

Turn on the candle. Invite children to close their eyes and breathe deeply. Encourage them to imagine God as their friend, who loves them deeply.

Offer this prayer:

Dear God,
Thank you for the grace of your son Jesus who calls us friend.
Show us how to be faithful friends to others.
Amen.



Preparing to Hear the Story

C L

Call attention to **SCM 22**. Work as a group to make up a story of friendship about the two boys pictured. Sit in a circle and start the story with a few sentences about these two friends, then ask the person to your left to add to the story until you say “pass”; the person to their left will add a sentence and so on around the circle. Upon completion, ask follow-up questions about the story they created.

Recall together what you have learned about David over the last two weeks. Use the river rocks from the worship table to help. Hold up today’s rock with the two stick figures and offer that today’s symbol is two friends.



Hearing the Story

C L

Have a child open the Bible to 1 Samuel 18 and place the open Bible on the worship table. Comment that this story stretches over several chapters.

Read **SCM 7** or ask a volunteer to read. Use your voice, expressions, tone of voice, and feelings to make the story most engaging.

Conclude the reading, saying, “Word of wisdom, word of grace,” and prompt the children to say, “Thanks be to God.”

Reflecting on God’s Grace

C L

Just as you told a friendship story during “Preparing to Hear the Story,” retell the Bible story in the same way. You may begin with a sentence to get children started, and then ask the child to your right to add what they remember. Each time you say, “pass;” continue around the circle allowing children to fill in details of the story they just heard.

Praise them for working together to retell the story of David and his friend, Jonathan.

Wonder together:

- ▼ I wonder, “Why did Jonathan keep his promise of friendship to David even though his father, King Saul, was against it?”
- ▼ I wonder, “Was Jonathan ever afraid to stand up to his father?”
- ▼ I wonder, “What kinds of things did David and Jonathan talk about?”
- ▼ I wonder, “What is most important about having a friend; about being a friend?”

Singing

Give God an offering of music. Play and sing together “God Loves You, and God Loves Me”—**MM 27; SCM 33**. Turn off the candle.



If children are uncomfortable with direct touch, allow each child to hold one end of a scarf or ribbon.

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and for the time available.

Celebrating God's Grace



Play a game. One volunteer is King Saul another is David. King Saul stands opposite the first person in a single-file line of Jonathans.

The players in the line of Jonathans place their hands on the hips of the person in front of them. David stands on the other side of the line of Jonathans.

The object of the game is for King Saul to capture (*touch*) David. The Jonathans try to move the line constantly to keep David away from King Saul. The game shows how Jonathan protects his friend, David, by putting himself between David and his father.

Let the children take turns being King Saul and David.

Praying God's Grace

Ask:

- Have you ever been worried about a friend?
- How can we faithfully help friends when we are worried about them?

Write "Thanks," "Please," and "Awesome" on newsprint. Comment that one way of being a faithful friend is to pray for our friends. And one way of offering a faithful prayer could be to offer "Thanks" for a friend, to ask God to "Please" be with them or help them in a certain way, and to ask God to help you be an "Awesome" friend, too.

Provide 3 craft sticks and a marker for each child. Have them write one of the words on each of the sticks.

Lead your group by asking them to hold each stick and in turn, "Thanks" for a friend, "Please" help this friend, and help me be an "Awesome" friend.

Encourage children to commit to praying this "Thanks, Please, Awesome!" prayer each day this week.



Offering God's Grace

In today's story, the arrows that Jonathan shot were a sign of his friendship to David. Wonder together:

- I wonder, "What are some of the happiest times you have shared with friends?"
- I wonder, "What is important about having friends?"
- I wonder, "Why would it be important to God for us to have friends?"

Invite the children to think of a friend and make a friendship bracelet to share with them. Distribute copies of **GN 1**, markers, and scissors. Invite the children to write or draw a message to their friend on one of the arrows.

When they have finished, give them 2 strips of the packing tape that are long enough to cover the arrow (about 10.5"). Have the children carefully place the tape over the design on the front and the back of the paper, then cut the arrow out. Show them how to fold the arrow with end points together so they can cut the dotted line. It is important to not cut past the end of the line, so you may need to help younger children.

To wear the bracelet, bring the arrow point around to the tail end and push the point up through the slit, gently working it through until it catches. If time allows, use the other arrows for other friends.

Bonus Activity



David and Jonathan worked out a secret code that Jonathan could use to warn David. Hand out Bibles and invite a volunteer to read more about it in 1 Samuel 20:19-22 and 35-42. Have you ever worked out a secret code?

Invite children to decode the message in the "Codes of Friendship" activity on **GN 2**. Ask children to write or draw messages of greeting or caring to others in your group on the blank space of **GN 2**. Share the messages when all have completed the activity.

Answer: Run away, my friend, for Saul is after you.



Ages 5-7

Deep Friendship

October 15, 2017



LOVING AND SERVING GOD

LG

Invite the children to gather and lead them in cleaning up the worship space.

Ask them to consider who they know who might need a faithful friend. Imagine ways they can each be a faithful friend this week.

Pray this echo prayer together, prompting children and giving them the chance to speak aloud during the prayer:

Ask parents and caregivers for their e-mail addresses so you can send the Grace Sightings link, or invite them to visit gracesightings.org.

God we are grateful for faithful friends.

Thank you for those who have been a faithful friend to me. . .

(invite children to speak those names)

God help me to be a faithful friend to. . .

(invite children to speak those names)

Thank you for the grace of friendships. Amen.

Send the children with the following: Go in peace to be a good friend to others.

