



Invitation to Friendship

4th grade is the peek year for relationships. Many 4th graders are beginning to express interest in the opposite sex. Your child is beginning to listen to their peers. Many children this age develop an intimate relationship with a best friend. We can be wise in helping our children choose their friends well since friends are the biggest influence in the life of a child after parents.

Kickstarter 1: Loyalty in Friendship

The story of David and Jonathan is the “go to” story in the Bible for friendship. David and Jonathan were extremely close. Read about their special friendship in **1 Samuel 18:1-4**.

David finished talking with Saul. After that, Jonathan and David became close friends. Jonathan loved David just as he loved himself.

From that time on, Saul kept David with him. He didn't let him return to his father's home.

Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him just as he loved himself. Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David. He also gave him his military clothes. He even gave him his sword, his bow and his belt.

What does Jonathan give David to signify he cares for him? Why do you think Jonathan chose these items to give to David?

These items were things very close to Jonathan. Jonathan was a prince, so he was giving David a prince's robe. Jonathan was also a soldier, so to give up his sword, bow and belt meant he was giving things he valued away.

Ask your child who she/he considers to be a close friend. What is something special that your child owns that he/she would be willing to give away to a friend in a gesture similar to Jonathan's, as a way to say thank you for being my friend. Help your child name the person, the item, and the time for them to give this item away.

Kickstarter 2: Respect in Friendship

Have your child fill out the “I want a friend who...” sheet. Girls use the girl outline, boys use the boy outline. Have him/her read the characteristics they list. Read **Matthew 7:1-2**

In everything, do to others what you would want them to do to you. This is what is written in the Law and in the Prophets.

Take a serious look back at the list of characteristics your child wrote, and one by one, ask your child if he/



she exhibits these characteristics as a friend. We say we want our friends to be a certain way, but are we being that for them? If there are a couple ways that your child knows he/she could be a better friend, pray with them that God would help them develop those traits.

your child is brave enough, have them go for it. It's not often that we take the time to tell people why they are special to us. This could be a significant start of transparency and honesty in your child's life.

Kickstarter 3-Encouragement in Friendship

1 Thessalonians 5:11 tells us:

So cheer each other up with the hope you have. Build each other up. In fact, that's what you are doing.

As a friend, we should be building up others or encouraging them. This is a good time to help your child think through his/her friends. Is there someone in his/her life who isn't encouraging. If so, take this opportunity to help them see that a good friend is one who encourages and builds up.

Encouraging words build people up and make them strong. Think of a brick wall. Each brick stacked with another and another will eventually create a strong wall. Ask your child to think of a close friend and write his/her name or draw a picture of him/her on top of the bricks. Have them write encouraging words about their friend in each of the bricks. What makes him/her special? What does your child appreciate about that friend? Etc. For some kids it may be super awkward to give this to their friend. However, if