

## Teachers Dig In

### Dig In to the Bible

- Read: Matthew 9:9-13
- In This Passage: Jesus sees a tax collector named Matthew and calls him to be a disciple. When the religious leaders see Jesus eating with Matthew and his friends, they don't approve. They think tax collectors are scum. But Jesus is our friend, and he was a good friend to Matthew.
- Bible Point: Jesus is our friend...
- Application: ...so we're good friends to others.
- Summary Verse: "A friend is always loyal, and a brother is born to help in time of need" (Proverbs 17:17).

### Dig Deeper

- You'll Be Teaching: *Jesus is our friend*. Friendships among kids can be fickle. Help kids see that Jesus was a good friend even when it wasn't good for his reputation. Jesus befriended the unpopular guy! Help kids realize that Jesus wants to be their friend, too.
- Think About: Who in your life has been a friend like Jesus?

### Dig In to Prayer

- Pray that kids would feel accepted in their friendship with Jesus and extend his friendship to others.

### Quick Tip

- Use this lesson as a chance to evaluate friendships among your kids. Be sensitive to those who may be new or who may not have many friends at church. If you have several "loners" in your group, pair them together and encourage them to use this lesson as an opportunity to forge new friendships.

## This Lesson at a Glance



### OPENING

Kids share about a topic related to the lesson.

#### Supplies

- Bible



### CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

Kids experience being an outcast, cut out paper people, and connect friends.

#### Supplies

- Bible
- paper
- scissors
- transparent tape
- pencils
- markers
- masking tape
- whiteboard or poster board



### LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Kids pray for friends.

#### Supplies

- paper
- pens



### OBJECT LESSON

Kids pick up chenille wires with magnets.

#### Supplies

- chenille wires (at least 1 per child)
- magnetic wands (1 for every 5 kids)

#### Easy Prep

- Form a chenille wire into 2 stick people by cutting the wire in half. Then cut each half into 1 large and 2 smaller pieces. Create a loop at the end of a larger piece to make a head, and then twist 2 smaller pieces around the wire to make arms and legs. Make at least 2 stick people per child.



### HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Kids move balloons using fans.

#### Supplies

- balloons (2 or 3 per child)
- paper plates (1 per child)
- painter's tape
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

#### Easy Prep

- Inflate the balloons.
- At one end of the room, tape a rectangle on the floor large enough for all the balloons to fit inside, and place the balloons in the rectangle.
- At the other end of the room, tape another rectangle of roughly the same size as the first.



### LOW-ENERGY GAME

**Kids play a version of bowling.**

### Supplies

- plastic beverage bottles or pool noodles cut to 6-inch lengths (6 for every 6 kids)
- rubber playground balls (1 for every 6 kids)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

### Easy Prep

- For each team of 6 kids, set up 6 bottles or pool noodle pieces in a bowling pin formation.
- Place a rubber ball about 5 feet away from each set of “bowling pins.”



### CRAFT

**Kids make heart-shaped friendship baskets.**

### Supplies

- paper plates (2 per child)
- child-safe scissors
- stapler (1 for every 5-6 kids)
- markers
- paper
- pens

### Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.



### TALK-ABOUT VIDEO

**Kids watch a video and discuss the Bible Point.**

### Supplies

- “Good Friends” teaching video (watch or download [here](#))

*\*Marked supplies can be reused from Core Bible Discovery*

Let's keep kids safe! You can help by using supplies as instructed for only ages 3+, purchasing child-safe items, and being aware of allergy concerns.



### Supplies

- Bible

### Welcome

- Thank kids for coming.
- Just for fun, have kids shake hands with four friends using the *back* of their hands.
- Make announcements.
- Introduce new kids.
- Celebrate birthdays by having kids sing the words “happy birthday” like opera singers.
- Collect the offering.

### Introduce the Lesson

Say: **Today we’ll find out that Jesus is our friend, and we can be good friends to others, too. We’ll hear how Jesus made a new friend named Matthew and spent time with Matthew at his house. Let’s start by talking about our friends.**

### Share

- Share about *your* best friend and what you like to do together.
- In small groups, have kids share about *their* best friends and what they like to do together.
- After small groups have discussed, have a few kids share with the whole group what they talked about in their small groups.

### Summarize

Open a Bible, and say: **It sounds like you have some pretty good friends! Did you know that Jesus is our friend? He’s the best at being a friend, and he even shows us how to be great friends to others!**

Pray, thanking God for your friend, Jesus.



## Supplies

- Bible
- paper
- scissors
- transparent tape
- pencils
- markers
- masking tape
- whiteboard or poster board

## Experience Being an Outcast

Say: **Today we're learning that Jesus is our friend, so we're good friends to others. In our Bible story, the person Jesus befriended was an outcast. That means he didn't fit in and had a hard time making friends. Let's see how it feels to be an outcast.**

For every eight kids, have one volunteer to be the first Outcast. The other seven kids in each group will stand in a tight, shoulder-to-shoulder circle, facing in. The Outcast will try to get into the circle, while everyone else will stand their ground and try to keep the circle tight enough to not let the Outcast in.

Switch roles so everyone can experience being the Outcast.

Ask: • **Say one word that describes what it was like to be the Outcast.**

• **Some of you were left out because it was part of the game. All of you—what are some reasons you've been left out in real life?**

Say: **Sometimes people are outcasts because of how they look, how they dress, or how they act. In our Bible story, a man named Matthew was an outcast because of his job. Matthew was a tax collector, and people in Bible times knew that tax collectors took *extra* money—more than the government needed—to keep for themselves. They stole people's money!**

Ask: • **Would you want to be friends with someone like that? Why or why not?**

Say: **Usually it's the people who leave someone out who are acting mean. But in Matthew's case, he was kind of the bully. He took people's money! Even so, Jesus invited him to be his friend. Let's see what happened!**

## Explore the Story

Read Matthew 9:9. Explain that a *disciple* is a follower or friend.

Ask: • **Tell about a time you made a new friend.** Share your own story first.

• **What are some things you like to do with your friends?**

Say: **It's fun to hang out with friends. Matthew and Jesus thought so, too! Listen to this.**

Read Matthew 9:10.

Say: **Jesus is our friend, and he was a good friend to Matthew. He even made friends with Matthew's other friends. The Bible calls them "disreputable sinners." That means they probably did things that people didn't like. Let's see what they might've been like.**

Ask: • **What are some examples of *sins*—wrong things people do**

Distribute paper, scissors, and pencils. Have kids each cut out the shape of a person and write or draw on it some of the examples of sins they think Matthew's friends might have done. They can also write or draw one of their own sins on the person. Then hang all the paper people on the wall, making sure they're not touching.

Have kids look at the collection of paper people on the wall. Say: **This reminds me a bit of the group of people Jesus ate with. They weren't perfect...far from it. They had a lot of flaws. On the *opposite* side, we find the Pharisees. These religious leaders thought they were perfect. They liked to judge people like Matthew and his friends...and they didn't like Jesus. Here's what they said.**

Read Matthew 9:11.

Say: **Wow! Those are some harsh words about Jesus' new friends!**

Ask: • **If someone said bad things about your friends like that, what would you say?**

Say: **Let's see how Jesus responded.**

Read Matthew 9:12-13.

Say: **Jesus is our friend. We can see what kind of friend he is by looking at his friendship with Matthew! Jesus hung out with Matthew even though he wasn't popular. He defended Matthew when other people called him "scum." Jesus is a good friend!**

### **Connect Friends of Jesus**

Set out markers to share. Have kids remove their paper people from the wall.

Say: **On your paper person, write "Friend of Jesus" in big letters. You can write it over your words from before.** Write this phrase on a board so kids can copy it, and have adult and teen helpers look for any kids who need extra help with writing.

Say: **Jesus is our friend, even when other people don't want to be our friend. No matter what else people say about us, no matter if we mess up, we can be friends with Jesus!**

**And since Jesus shows us what good friends do, he can help us be good friends to others. He can help us make friends with his other friends!**

Give each child a piece of masking tape, and have kids write on the tape something a good friend does. If kids need help, offer these examples: Good friends sit with someone who's left out, good friends defend each other, good friends can be themselves around each other, good friends spend time together, good friends support each other.

Then have kids make a chain of all the paper people by taping the arms together with their masking tape. As each child adds tape, he or she can read what it says.

Say: **Jesus is our friend, so we're good friends to others. You've shared some great ideas of how to be the kind of friend to others that Jesus is to you! When we see everyone as someone who could be a friend of our friend Jesus, we'll want to show each person the kind of friendship Jesus offers.**



### **Supplies**

- paper
- pens

### **Write Prayers**

- Distribute paper and pens.
- Have each child think of a good friend and write a brief prayer for that person. Have adult or teen helpers write for kids who aren't able to write themselves.
- Have kids take turns reading their prayers aloud.
- Kids can take their prayers home and continue to add to them or repeat the prayers throughout the week.

### **Wrap Up**

Pray: **Jesus, you're such a good friend. Help us be good friends to others. And please bless our friends! In your name, amen.**

Thank kids for coming, and encourage them to come back next week.



## OBJECT LESSON

### Pick Me Up

[10 min]

### Supplies

- chenille wires (at least 1 per child)
- magnetic wands (1 for every 5 kids)

### Easy Prep

- Form a chenille wire into 2 stick people by cutting the wire in half. Then cut each half into 1 large and 2 smaller pieces. Create a loop at the end of a larger piece to make a head, and then twist 2 smaller pieces around the wire to make arms and legs. Make at least 2 stick people per child.

### Tip

- Magnets can be harmful if swallowed. Ensure that children don't put the magnets in their mouths.

### Pass Wand and Pick Up People

Have kids sit in small groups. Say: **In our Bible story, Jesus invited Matthew to be his friend. Jesus said, "Follow me." And that's what Matthew did! Matthew even invited some of his friends over to meet Jesus, too!** Hold up a stick person. **Let's see how many of these little people will follow a magnet.**

- In their small groups, have kids spread out the stick people (at least two per child) in the middle of each circle.
- Kids will take turns holding a magnetic wand over a stick person to pick it up.
- They'll then pass the wand to a neighbor to pick up another "friend."
- They'll continue passing the wand around the circle until each child has picked up a friend. At the end, they'll count to see how many stick people are drawn to the magnet.
- Challenge groups to do it several times, seeing if their group can get the most stick people on the magnet. They can also race to see how fast groups can pick up the stick-people friends.

### Talk About It

Say: **The little people in our circle couldn't help but stick to the magnet. They followed it the whole way around the circle! More and more friends wanted to follow the magnet. In our Bible story, Matthew followed Jesus. Matthew was a good friend because he helped other people meet Jesus, too!**

Ask: • **Why do you think people "stuck" to Jesus like they did?**

- **What attracts you to being friends with Jesus?**
- **How can you remember those things to welcome more friends into your life?**

Say: **Jesus is our friend. We're good friends when we tell other people about Jesus so they can be friends with him, too!**



### Supplies

- balloons (2 or 3 per child)
- paper plates (1 per child)
- painter's tape
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

### Easy Prep

- Inflate the balloons.
- At one end of the room, tape a rectangle on the floor large enough for all the balloons to fit inside, and place the balloons in the rectangle.
- At the other end of the room, tape another rectangle of roughly the same size as the first.

### Tips

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today's lesson during the game. You can find the downloadable album [here](#).
- To avoid choking hazards, be sure to pick up pieces of any broken balloons promptly.

### Fan Plates to Move Balloons

**Say: Today we read about Jesus' friend Matthew and how Jesus was a good friend to him. Jesus spent time with Matthew and his friends at Matthew's house. Let's play a game where we'll pretend to move Matthew and all his friends to his house for dinner!**

- Give each child a paper plate, and have kids gather at one side of the rectangle with the balloons in it.
- To move the balloons (Matthew and his friends) to Matthew's house (the empty rectangle), kids will fan the paper plates at the balloons. They can't use hands or feet to move the balloons; they can only fan the plates. They also can't let the plates make contact with the balloons—they must use the wind from their "fans" to move the balloons the whole way.
- The goal is to get all the balloons inside the second rectangle as quickly as possible.
- If you'd like, play upbeat music while kids play as many rounds as time allows.

### Talk About It

**Say: It was so fun keeping all the balloons together! It's great to laugh and play and be with good friends. One of my favorite things to do with friends is** (share an example of your favorite thing to do with friends).

**Ask: • What's something you love to do so much with your friends that you never want to stop doing it?**

**Say: It was important to Jesus to spend time with his friends, the way he spent time with Matthew. Jesus is our friend, too, and he loves to spend time with us! We can invite him to be with us anytime!**



## LOW-ENERGY GAME

[10 min]

### Buddy Bumpers

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#### Supplies

- plastic beverage bottles or pool noodles cut to 6-inch lengths (6 for every 6 kids)
- rubber playground balls (1 for every 6 kids)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

#### Easy Prep

- For each team of 6 kids, set up 6 bottles or pool noodle pieces in a bowling pin formation.
- Place a rubber ball about 5 feet away from each set of “bowling pins.”

#### Tips

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today’s lesson during the game. You can find the downloadable album [here](#).
- This game requires at least 3 kids.

#### Help Friends in a Fun Bowling Game

Say: **Today we heard about one of Jesus’ friends, Matthew. Jesus was a really good friend to Matthew and showed us how we can be good friends, too. Let’s play a game where you’ll all get to be good, helpful friends!**

- Form teams of six. (If you have fewer than six kids, form only one team.)
- Give each team a ball and show teams their bowling pins.
- Each team member will roll the ball once to try to hit the pins and knock them down, resetting any pins between tries.
- Then everyone will try again, but this time team members will stand along the path to the bowling pins to act as helpful bumpers to guide the ball to the pins.
- Encourage team members to cheer each other on as they act as bumpers.
- If you’d like, play upbeat music while kids play.

#### Talk About It

Ask: • **Why was it better to have your friends’ help when you bowled?**

Say: **You were good friends to each other in the game. You helped each other and cheered for your friends. There are lots of ways we can be good friends.**

Tell about something *you’ve* done in the past week to be a good friend, such as buying coffee for a friend or co-worker.

Ask: • **What’s something *you’ve* done to be a good friend?**

Say: **It’s great to have friends, and Jesus is our friend, too. When we treat our friends the way Jesus treats his friends, we’ll be good friends to others!**



## Supplies

- paper plates (2 per child)
- child-safe scissors
- stapler (1 for every 5-6 kids)
- markers
- paper
- pens

## Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.



## Make Friendship Baskets

Show kids the sample craft you made. Give each child two paper plates, and set out the remaining supplies to share. Have adult and teen helpers lead kids through these directions.

- Fold each of the two plates in half.
- Join the plates together at one end, with one plate overlapping the other and the folds facing outward. Angle the other ends outward, creating a V shape, as shown in the photo.
- Staple the two overlapped points together to hold them in place.
- Cut the top points to round them off and create a heart shape. Staple together the overlapped curved edges on each side of the heart basket.
- Use markers to decorate the basket.

## Add a Note or a Picture

- Write a funny note or draw a fun picture to your best friend, and put it in the basket.
- When you get home, you can also add small gifts such as candy, erasers, or toy cars.
- Then give the basket to your friend!

## Talk About It

Ask: • **Tell about the friend you're going to give your basket to.**

• **What have you done to show friendship to that person?**

Say: **Jesus is our friend, so we're good friends to others. When you give that basket to your friend with a fun note and gift, you'll show good friendship! When you're a good friend, you reflect Jesus' heart of friendship.**

Have kids take their baskets home and give them to their friends as a demonstration of good friendship. Friends can even pass the baskets back and forth to exchange notes and gifts.



## Supplies

- “Good Friends” teaching video (watch or download [here](#))

## Tip

- Don't have internet in your classroom? That's okay! You can download the videos before class using the “download” button at the link provided, or just purchase this quarter's DVD [here](#).

## Discuss and Watch “Good Friends”

**Say: In our Bible story, we saw what a good friend Jesus was to Matthew and his friends. But how can we be that kind of friend? Let's see how some girls today showed good friendship.**

Watch “Good Friends.”

Ask: • **Tell about a time you had a friend pull away from you.** Share your own story first.

- **How can you be a good friend when someone is going through a hard time?**

**Say: In our video, Avery was going through a hard time because her parents got divorced. She needed good friends, but it was hard for her to reach out for friendship. When we see people who are going through a hard time, we can reach out, too! We can ask Jesus to help us know what to do or say. Jesus is our friend, so we're good friends to others.**