



## LOW-ENERGY GAME

### Friendship Fits

[10 min]

#### Supplies

- hula hoops (1 for every 5 kids)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

#### Try to Fit Everyone in a Hoop

**Say: Today we heard about one of Jesus' friends, Matthew. Matthew had a job that made others dislike him, but Jesus was a good friend to him. Jesus welcomed and included people who were unwelcome with others. Let's play a game where you'll work to include everyone.**

- Lay out the hula hoops or other circles you've created.
- Form teams that are slightly too large to fit inside the circles. The number of kids per team will vary.
- Challenge teams to include all their teammates in their circle—everyone has to be able to plant his or her feet inside the circle.
- Allow teams to struggle and strategize.
- The key to the game is that teams don't have to stand to plant their feet in the circles. If all the kids lie on their backs and put their feet in the circle, they should all be able to plant their feet. There will be more room without kids trying to cram their bodies into the circle.
- If you'd like, play upbeat music while kids play.

#### Talk About It

**Ask: • How did you figure out how to include everyone or get everyone inside the hoop?**

**Say: It isn't always easy to figure out how to be a friend to everyone or include everyone. Sometimes hurt feelings make it hard for us to want to include others, or maybe we just feel shy.**

**Ask: • What are some things that have made it hard for you to include others?** Share an example of your own, such as having different interests than others and not knowing how to find things in common.

**Say: It won't always be easy to include others, especially people who are different from us or people we've had trouble getting along with. Jesus is our friend, and he's a friend to the people it's hard for us to include. We can ask Jesus to help us see those people differently and be good friends to them, too.**



## TALK-ABOUT VIDEO Good Friends

[10 min]

### Supplies

- “Good Friends” teaching video

### 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.



## DEEPER BIBLE

### Does Jesus Understand What It's Like for Kids to Be Good Friends Today?

[15 min]

#### Supplies

- Bibles

#### Set It Up

Say: **We're learning that Jesus is our friend, so we're good friends to others. But does Jesus *really* understand what it's like for kids to be good friends today? After all, he was a 30-year-old man who lived a *long* time ago!**

Let's dig in to that.

#### Dig Deeper

Say: **Let's look more closely at how Jesus was a good friend to Matthew in our Bible passage. We'll look at this almost like we're detectives looking for clues. So think and listen as we read.**

Read Matthew 9:9.

Ask: • **Keeping in mind that no one liked tax collectors, what can you learn about friendship from Jesus in this verse?**

Say: **Jesus extended friendship to someone no one liked. That's hard to do! But we're good friends when we show friendship to people even if they're not popular. Let's see what else Jesus did. Ready, detectives?**

Listen closely.

Read Matthew 9:10.

Ask: • **What do you like to eat with your friends?**

Say: **Jesus spent time with Matthew and his friends. Being a good friend means spending quality time with our friends! And that's not all Jesus did.**

Read Matthew 9:11-13.

Say: **Jesus did a few awesome friend things in these verses.**

Ask: • **What do you notice about the kind of friend Jesus was?**

Say: **Jesus stood up for his friends when other people insulted them.**

Ask: • **Tell about a time something like that happened to you. Share your own example first.**

Say: **Jesus didn't leave his friends behind, either, even though it wasn't cool to be their friend. That can be hard to do!**

Ask: • **Tell about a time a friend ditched you because you "weren't cool." Share your own example first.**

Say: **It hurts when our friends ditch us! But Jesus shows us that good friends stick with their friends no matter what other people think.**

**Lastly, Jesus cared about helping his friends. Listen again to what he said.**

Read Matthew 9:12.

Say: **When Jesus said this, he was saying that people like Matthew knew they weren't perfect, and they knew they needed a friend like Jesus to help them and forgive them. The religious leaders thought they were perfect, so they didn't think they needed Jesus! Jesus is like the doctor who heals us from the punishment for sin. And *everyone* needs his help!**

Ask: • **What do your friends do that shows they care about helping you?**

Say: **Jesus is our friend, so we're good friends to others. Jesus showed us how to be good friends. We can be friends with people others don't like, spend time with our friends, stand up for them, stick with them,**

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**and help them. Let's use what we discovered from Jesus and see what that might look like in our friendships today.**

### **Role Play**

Have kids form five groups. Give each group one of the following scenarios and the principle to apply. In their groups, kids can come up with an idea to show that principle of friendship in the situation you provide.

- A new kid at school dresses funny and sits in the corner on the floor at lunch. No one wants to be his friend. (Principle: Extend friendship to people others don't like.)
- Your best friend really loves the movie *Frozen*, but you're sick of it. You'd rather watch a new movie. (Principle: Spend time with your friends.)
- You and your friend are sitting together at lunch when someone comes up and starts saying your friend is a crybaby and a loser. (Principle: Stand up for your friends when people insult them.)
- You have the chance to sit with the popular group...but only if you ditch your best friend. (Principle: Don't leave your friends behind even if it's not cool to be their friend.)
- Your friend forgot her lunch. (Principle: Care about helping your friends.)

Allow a few minutes for groups to prepare short skits, and then have them take turns acting out their presentations.

Say: **Thanks for sharing your ideas of how to be good friends! Here at church, we can be good friends. We can do all the things we've talked about for each other. Then we'll know how to do it at home and school, too!**

Pray: **Jesus, you're our friend. Help us be good friends to others, even when it's hard. Help us reflect your heart of friendship! In your name, amen.**



## LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

### Friendship Prayers

[5 min]

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#### Supplies

- paper
- pens

#### Write Prayers

- Distribute paper and pens.
- Have each child think of a good friend and write a prayer for that person.
- 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.

**ACTIVITY PAGES WITH A POINT  
BFFs**

[10 min]

**Supplies**

- “Jesus Calls Matthew to Be His Friend” Activity Page (1 per reader)
- pencils
- crayons

**Older Kids: Do an Activity Page**

Say: **Jesus is our friend.** And he can show us how to be good friends with others! Let’s practice being good friends by working together on this crossword puzzle. And if some of the words are too hard to spell or you feel stuck, remember that *I’m* a friend who can help, too!

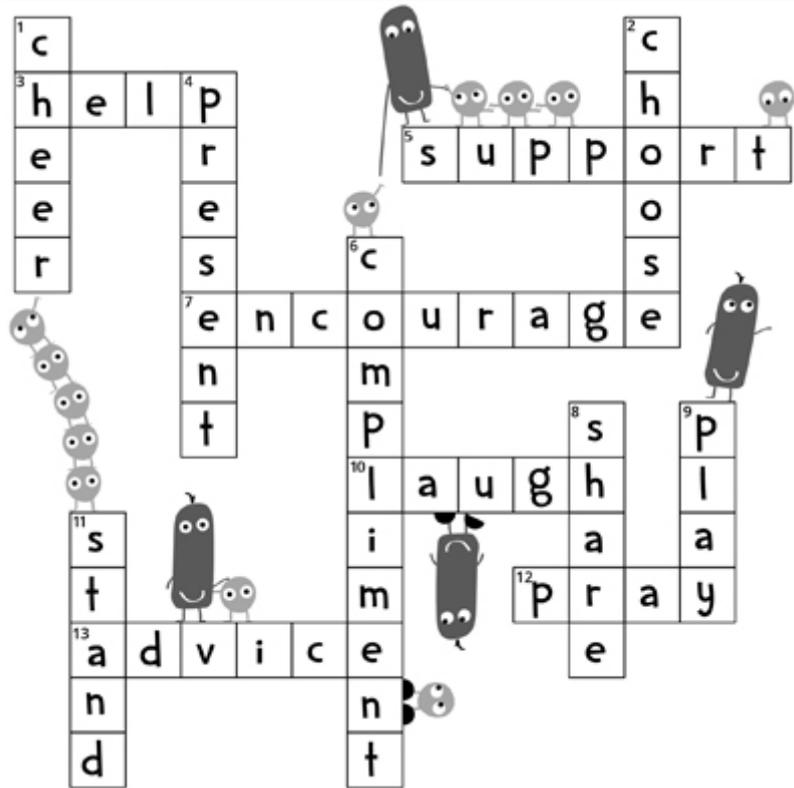
Distribute the activity pages and pencils. Kids will work in pairs to solve clues about friendship and put them in the crossword puzzle.

Ask: • **How did you show good friendship as you worked with your partner?**

• **Look at all the words in your puzzle. Which one is something a friend of yours needs?**

Say: **Jesus is our friend.** He welcomed Matthew, spent time with him, and stood up for him when others were mean to him. We can be good friends like Jesus when we support, help, and encourage our friends.

ANSWER KEY:



**Younger Kids: Color a Coloring Page**

Distribute the coloring pages and crayons. Say: **Even though a lot of people thought Matthew was a bad guy, Jesus was nice to him. Jesus is our friend! Let's color Jesus with his friend Matthew.**

Allow time for kids to color.