



Kids meet Buddy every day in the skits at opening and closing.

Resources for kids

How to use Elementary Friends Bible Packs



Trek Guides, one for each day.

Kids have everything they need to tell their family and friends about Jesus when they take these guides home.

Visualizes the Bible story action.

Jesus called Matthew
Matthew 9:9-13

No friend zone
In Bible times, people would not be friends with sinners, outsiders, or outcasts, including:
 • tax collectors, such as Matthew
 • people who were blind
 • people with other illnesses
 • people who could not work and begged for money
 • people from other countries, such as the Romans and Samaritans
 • sinners
 Jesus reached out to outcasts and made them His friends. Although Matthew was a sinner, Jesus reached out to him. Jesus accepted Matthew as His friend. Jesus said "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners" (Matthew 9:12-13).

Did you know?
 • The Roman Empire was a powerful force that conquered many lands, including Jesus' country of Israel.
 • Matthew collected tax money for the Romans. Tax collectors were thought of as being more than they should be by charging more than they should have. They became very unpopular. People considered them dishonest traitors because they cooperated with the Romans and became rich by taking from their own people. People, especially Pharisees, considered them dirty because they were friends with the Romans, who were very dedicated religious men. They proudly kept money from those who did not. They thought and looked down on those who did not. They thought their actions earned God's love, forgiveness, and acceptance. They often disagreed with Jesus and got angry when He called them to turn away from their sins. They didn't think they needed a Savior.

Friend zone
Friends enjoy doing lots of activities together—talking, playing, going places, sleeping over at each other's houses. You probably have eaten meals with your friends many times. Bible people enjoyed activities with their friends too, especially meals. In fact, when friends ate together, they only included Bible people who accepted Jesus. That's why the Pharisees were upset when Jesus ate with Matthew, other tax collectors, and sinners. Did this mean Jesus called them His friends? What do you think?

Friends do enrichment activities if they finish tasks early or have to wait for something.

Forest friends help kids remember the Main Ideas each day.

Raccoons reach out with their hands to do tasks or get food. Jesus reached out to Matthew and asked Matthew to follow Him & be His friend. **JESUS: OUR FRIEND REACHES OUT** to make us His friends too. Rays means "friend."

good FRIEND CHALLENGE
Ask Jesus to help you make a new friend this week.

friend? FRIEND
 • What did you learn about Jesus, our friend, in the Bible story?
 • What can you tell your friends about Jesus? friend reaches out?
 • How can you show them that Jesus, our friend, reaches out?

Who is your friend?
Think about a good friend.
 • Tell about something your friend likes.
 • Name something you and your friend both like.
 • Name something you like, but your friend does not.
 Friends often have many things in common, but having friends who are different can be great too.
 Jesus came to earth, but we do, even though our lives are different from His. He reached out to make us His friends.

Jesus' friends
Jesus chose 12 disciples to help with His work, including Matthew. He also called Peter, Andrew, John, and his brother James, Philip, Nathaniel, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddeus, Simon, and Judas Iscariot. These friends learned from Jesus, traveled with Him, and shared His miracles, teachings, death, and resurrection. Jesus gave His life on the cross to forgive sin and give eternal life to His friends. This includes the 12 and everyone who believes in Jesus on God and loves what He has done and will do to save Him. Jesus promised to be with His friends always. After Jesus went back to heaven, the 12 were out to teach about Jesus. Jesus wants you to be His friend too! Jesus will always be with you. He wants you to know about Him, to tell Him, and to see His work in your life. He wants you to tell about Him to your friends, and to show His mercy to others. Will you be Jesus' friend?

Bible Memory Verse
Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. 1 Timothy 1:15

Friends learn Bible memory verses at Buddy's Bible Challenge.



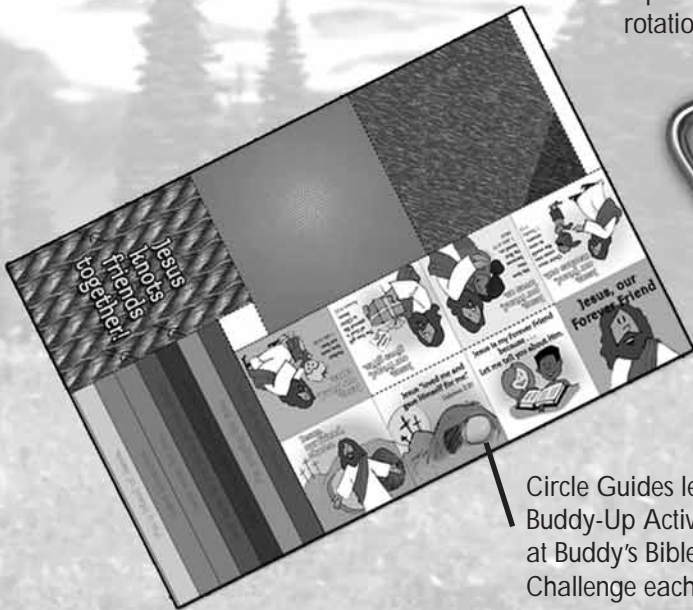
Friends discuss *Real-Life Stories* at Backpack Snacks.



Kids read the Bible story Scripture at Trailhead Opening, before rotation sites.



Kids review the Bible memory verse at Friendship Summit Closing. What a great way to reinforce God's Word!



Circle Guides lead Buddy-Up Activities at Buddy's Bible Challenge each day.

Give different colors of Friendship Bandanas to each Friendship Circle or Rotation Group.



Kids love collecting *Friendship Flips* at Friendship Summit Closing. Each features the Bible memory verse, Main Idea & forest friend of the day.

