

© 12: Choosing Friends

Family Night
TOOL CHEST

Exploring how to choose friends who will help us grow in faith

Scripture

- 1 Samuel 16:7
- Galatians 2:6
- Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW		
Activity	Summary	Pre-Session Prep
Activity 1: Who Is My Friend?	Learn that it's what's on the "inside" that counts when choosing friends.	You'll need 4 cans of pop (2 diet, 2 regular), 1 large tub to put these in (a five-gallon bucket will do), duct tape, water, and a Bible.
Activity 2: Support System	Stack pennies on a piece of cardboard and learn the value of a supportive friend.	You'll need strips of cardboard cut out from a cereal box, books, 50 pennies, and a Bible.

Main Points:

- God looks at the heart.
- A good friend encourages us to do what Jesus would do.

LIFE SLOGAN: "God never lied; what's important is inside."

"Choosing Friends" - Taken From - Simple Science Family Nights Tool Chest
www.HeritageBuilders.com

Make it your own

In the space provided below, outline the flow and add any additional ideas to guide you through the process of conducting this family night.

Prayer & Praise Items

In the space provided below, list any items you wish to pray about or give praise for during this family night session.

Journal

In the space provided below, capture a record of any fun or meaningful things which happened during this family night session.

Session Tip

We intentionally have provided more material than we would expect to be used in a single "Family Night" session. You know your family's unique interests and life circumstances best, so feel free to adapt this lesson to meet your family members' needs. Remember, short and simple is better than long and comprehensive.



WARM-UP

Open with Prayer: Begin by having a family member pray, asking God to help everyone in the family understand more about Him through this time. After prayer, review your last lesson by asking these questions:

- What did we learn about in our last lesson?
- What was the Life Slogan?
- Have your actions changed because of what we learned?
If so, how? Encourage family members to give specific examples of how they've applied learning from the past week.

Share: Today we're going to learn about how to choose friends and how good friends can support us.

ACTIVITY 1: Who Is My Friend?

Point: God looks at the heart.



Supplies: You'll need 4 cans of pop (2 diet, 2 regular), 1 large tub to put these in (a five-gallon bucket will do), duct tape, water, and a Bible.

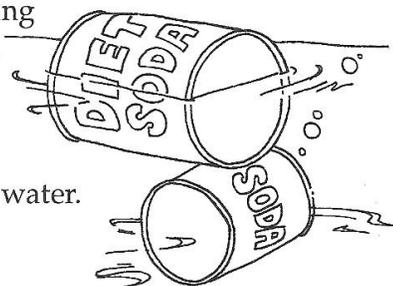
Activity: Prepare for this activity by taking the soft drink cans and wrapping them with duct tape so you can't see what kind of soft drinks they are.

Have children examine the soft drinks. Then fill the tub or bucket with water.

Ask: What do you think will happen when I place the cans in the water?

(They will sink; they will float.)

Put the cans in the water and watch as some float (the diet sodas) and some sink (the regular sodas).





Consider these questions:

- **How are the soft drinks like our friends?** (They look the same on the outside, but they're different on the inside; some people seem nice, but aren't.)

Age Adjustments

OLDER CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS have likely developed strong friendships by the time they've entered middle school. In an effort to feel wanted and liked, they may have chosen friends whose "insides" aren't what you'd prefer. Talk with older children and teenagers about their friends. Ask them to consider why they're friends and how they can boldly live out their faith among those friends. Use this activity as a discussion-starter on the importance of surrounding yourself with people who will help you grow spiritually—and the value of having non-Christian friends who can discover Christ through your witness and lifestyle.

- **What do you think makes some of the cans float?** (More bubbles; more air in the can.) NOTE: The scientific reason is that the artificial sweetener used in the diet soda is lighter in weight than the sugar used in the regular soda.
- **What do you think makes some people good friends and others not-so-good friends?** (What they believe; how they act; what they think is important.)



Remove the duct tape and look at the soft drinks together. Then read aloud 1 Samuel 16:7 and Galatians 2:6.



Ask:

- **What does this passage tell us about people?** (It's what's on the inside that counts; our hearts are important to God.)
- **How can we make sure we "float" with God's love?** (Read the Bible; trust Jesus; go to church; pray.)

Open and enjoy the soft drinks together and **share: God tells us in the Bible that what's on the inside is what's most important to Him. When we look for friends, we need to look beyond their clothes and appearance to see what's inside.**

Ask family members to share ways they can discover what's inside someone. Then pray, asking God to help them make good choices when making friends.

ACTIVITY 2: Support System

Point: A good friend encourages us to do what Jesus would do.



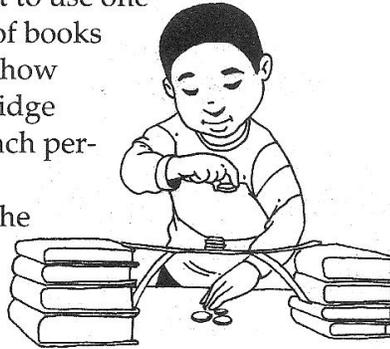
Supplies: You'll need strips of cardboard cut out from a cereal box, books, 50 pennies, and a Bible.



Activity: Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12. Cut 2" wide strips out of a cereal box, the height of the box. Place two stacks of books

(about five inches high) on a table about seven inches apart and set a bunch of pennies next to the books. Send family members out of the room and have them return to attempt this activity one at a time.

Have every family member attempt to use one strip of cardboard and the two stacks of books to make a bridge. Then have them see how many pennies they can stack on the bridge before it falls. Repeat this activity so each person has a chance to stack the pennies. Keep track to see who is able to stack the most pennies.



After everyone has attempted this activity, gather together and show family members how easy it is to balance more pennies on the bridge. Take the second strip of cardboard and secure it as illustrated below (placing the edges of the cardboard at the bottom of the stacks of books, arching it upward until it touches the top piece of cardboard). Then have family members stack as many pennies as they can on the newly supported bridge.

? Ask:

- **What made this bridge sturdier than the others?**
(The support of the other cardboard.)
- **How is this bridge like someone who has good, godly friends?** (They can support someone; good friends make you stronger.)

Share: By encouraging us to do what Jesus would do, standing by us, and helping us to seek God’s will, good friends can support us and make us stronger.

Have family members share ways friends can be a positive influence (such as encouraging us to obey parents, doing things to show love to others, using positive words) and a negative influence (such as gossiping, hurting others, encouraging disobedience). Then show family members how bad friends can “let us down” by turning the support cardboard over into a “U” shape—the pennies will fall once again as the support is no longer there.

Close this activity by thanking God for giving us friends and asking Him for the wisdom to choose friends who will be supportive and positive influences.



WRAP-UP

Gather everyone in a circle and have family members take turns answering this question: **What’s one thing you’ve learned about God today?**

Next, tell kids you’ve got a new “Life Slogan” you’d like to share with them.

Life Slogan: Today’s Life Slogan is this: “God never lied; what’s important is inside.” Have family members repeat the slogan two or three times to help them learn it. Then encourage them to practice saying it during the week so they can talk about it at your next family night session.



Close in Prayer: Allow time for each family member to share prayer concerns and answers to prayer. Then close your time together with prayer for each concern. Thank God for listening to and caring about us.

Remember to record your prayer requests so you can refer to them in the future as you see God answering them.