



Unit 1: BFFs

Faith Focus: Jesus is our friend.

Friends love all the time. (Proverbs 17:17)

SESSION 1

GROW IN FAITH

Friends Invite—Matthew 4:18-22

In today's Bible story, Jesus greets two sets of brothers who are fishing. He calls out, "Come, follow me." The brothers drop everything and follow. Jesus does not give a lengthy explanation about why. He simply says he will show them how to "fish for people." The brothers trust Jesus and immediately go with him. Jesus' call to action prepares his future disciples for his mission to bring all people into God's kingdom.

We know that later these brothers and others will become friends and followers of Jesus. To be a friend means we trust, listen, and sometimes even explore new things together. We are all called to "fish for people." This means we can look for friends everywhere we go, because each of us is called to be a part of God's kingdom.

- Engage in pretend play with fish and nets.
- Talk about the importance of friends.
- Practice following good leaders.

SUPPLIES

crayons

scissors

envelopes (optional)

CEB Bible storybook

TV and DVD player or
streaming device

sticky notes

different kinds of netting

white paper

sponges

tempera paint

paper plates

plastic tub or bowl

water

plastic tablecloth or
newspapers

smocks

plastic cups

kite string

nail

SESSION OUTLINE

COME TOGETHER

Prepare to Learn

Faith Focus—Jesus Is Our Friend

Fish Friends (Matching)

FAITH CONNECTIONS

Read the Story

Big Faith Video

Faith Response

FUN WITH FAITH

Fishnet Art (Art)

Fish Stamps (Art)

Three-Way Telephone
(Communication/Science)

SHARE YOUR FAITH

Big Faith Idea—Faith in Jesus

COME TOGETHER

Prepare to Learn

Supplies: All-Ages Class Pack, Activity Sheets, Activity Stickers

Prepare Ahead: Set up your area with the supplies and activity pages needed for today's session. Display the Unit 1 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 10 & 15), Unit 1 Faith Focus Poster (Class Pack—pp. 2 & 23), and Unit 1 Faith Response Poster (Class Pack—pp. 11 & 14) to use later in the session.

- As children arrive, invite them to join you in a circle.
- Give each child a copy of the "Spring Sticker Page" (Activity Sheets—p. 29) and their own set of Activity Stickers. Have children place the fish sticker on the Session 1 space.

SAY: This month we will learn about how Jesus treated all people as friends. And Jesus can be our friend, too!

ASK: What is a friend? Who is a friend to you?

Faith Focus—Jesus Is Our Friend

Supplies: All-Ages Class Pack, crayons

Prepare Ahead: Display the Unit 1 Faith Focus Poster (Class Pack—pp. 2 & 23). Photocopy "Fishing with Friends" (Leader Guide—p. 16) for each child.

- Give each child a copy of the "Fishing with Friends" page.

SAY: Today we will learn how Jesus invited people to be his friends. The people he invited to follow him and help with his ministry were called disciples.

ASK: What does it mean to invite someone to do something? How do you invite people? What do you invite people to do?

- Give children time to fill out the page.

Fish Friends

Supplies: Activity Sheets, scissors, envelopes (optional)

Prepare Ahead: Tear out "Fish Friends" (Session 1 Activity Sheet) for each child.

- Help the children cut apart the fish cards on the activity sheet.

SAY: In our Bible story today, Jesus meets two brothers who are fishing. The three of them become friends and they serve people together.

ASK: How do you know if someone will be your friend?

- Have the children get into groups of three and play with their matching cards.

FAITH CONNECTIONS

Read the Story

Supplies: CEB Bible storybook

- Invite the children to join you in a circle.
- Read the story of Jesus calling the disciples (Matthew 4:18–22) from your favorite CEB Bible storybook.

ASK: How do you think the brothers felt when Jesus talked to them? How did they decide to follow Jesus? How do you think Jesus felt having people join him in his ministry?

Big Faith Video

Supplies: Big Faith DVD, TV, DVD player or streaming device

- Watch the Session 1 video on the Big Faith DVD or via your Amplify Media subscription.
- Share the questions on the screen with the children. You may also choose to add your own questions. Give children time to share their responses and ideas.

ASK: What was your favorite part of the video?

Faith Response

Supplies: All-Ages Class Pack, crayons, sticky notes

Prepare Ahead: Display the Unit 1 Faith Response Poster (Class Pack—pp. 11 & 14) and Unit 1 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 10 & 15) if you haven't already.

- Invite children to wonder about the images on the posters.
- Encourage children to say the Bible verse with you: "Friends love all the time" (Proverbs 17:17).

SAY: Jesus invites all people to follow him. No matter who we are or where we are, we can follow Jesus. When we decide to be friends with Jesus, we are saying "yes" to following his example of sharing the good news about God's love with the world.

ASK: How did Jesus share the good news about God's love in our Bible story today? Who do you know who shares the good news?

- Lay the Faith Response Poster on the floor or a table and invite the children to gather around it.

ASK: How does it feel to know Jesus wants to be your friend?

- As the children share aloud, give each child a sticky note. Invite the children to write or draw how they feel on the sticky notes and add them to the poster.

FUN WITH FAITH

Fishnet Art

Supplies: different kinds of netting (net bag from grocery store, fishing net, stockings that are cut up, hair net, and so forth), scissors, crayons with paper peeled off, white paper

Prepare Ahead: Cut the netting apart so multiple children can use different kinds of netting.

ASK: Have you ever been fishing? Did you or anyone with you catch a fish? How did they catch the fish?

SAY: When Jesus met the brothers in our Bible story, they were fishing. Fishing was their job, and so they used huge nets to try to catch as many fish as possible.

- Give each child a plain piece of paper. Have them choose some pieces of net and crayons.
- Demonstrate how to create a rubbing of a net by putting the netting under the paper and going over it with the long side of a crayon. Then encourage children to experiment with different kinds of netting.

Fish Stamps

Supplies: sponges, scissors, paper, tempera paint, plates for paint, plastic tub or bowl of water, plastic tablecloth or newspaper, smocks

Prepare Ahead: Cut sponges into fish shapes, enough for each child to have one. Prepare a workspace by placing a plastic tablecloth or newspaper over a table. Put each color of paint on a different plate in the center of your workspace.

SAY: Jesus invited the brothers to follow him. They put down their fishing nets and became friends with Jesus.

- Give each child a sheet of paper and a fish sponge.
- Have children dip the fish sponges in paint and make prints on the paper.
- Set papers aside to dry.

Three-Way Telephone

Supplies: plastic cups, kite string, scissors, nail

Prepare Ahead: Use a nail to poke a hole in the bottom of each cup. Depending on the capabilities of the children in your group, you may wish to assemble the cup telephones before the children arrive.

ASK: Has someone ever called you? How did they call you? (cell phone, landline telephone, megaphone, their voice)

SAY: When God asks people to do something, we might say God “called” that person. This happened in our story today, when Jesus called the fishermen brothers to follow him.

- Divide children into groups of three. Have them sit in a triangle. Give each child a piece of string and a cup. Show the children how to put the string through the hole in the cup. Tie a knot in the string so it stays in the cup.
- Have each child take the string and tie it through the hole in the cup of the person next to them. Once all children do this, there will be a triangle of cups, each with two strings attached.
- Show the children how to talk into cup one at a time. The other children will listen through their cups.

SHARE YOUR FAITH

Big Faith Idea—Faith in Jesus

Supplies: All-Ages Class Pack

Prepare Ahead: Display the Spring Big Faith Idea Poster (Class Pack—pp. 4 & 21). Photocopy the Unit 1 Family Faith Letter (Leader Guide—pp. 91–92) for each child.

- Show children the Big Faith Idea Poster.

SAY: Today we heard how Jesus invited people to follow him. We can follow his example by inviting people to be our friends and inviting them to learn about God.

- Have the children turn to someone near them and say, “Jesus loves you!”
- Invite the children to pray with you.

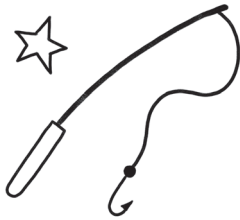
PRAY: God, we thank you for sending Jesus to us to be our friend. Help us follow Jesus’ example every day. Show us who we can invite to be our friends and how we can share your love with the world. Amen.

- Send a Family Faith Letter and activity home with each child. Also send home any activities or items made during today’s session.

REPRODUCIBLE SESSION 1

Fishing with Friends

Fill out this card to invite a friend to do one or more activities together!



To: _____

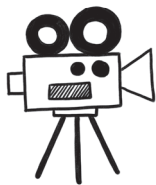
From: _____



I'm glad you are my friend! Would you like to ...



- ☐ play on the playground
- ☐ go to church
- ☐ share a snack
- ☐ play a board game
- ☐ bake cookies
- ☐ watch a movie
- ☐ play dress-up
- ☐ go to a museum
- ☐ write a story
- ☐ take a class
- ☐ join a sports team together
- ☐ other: _____



Friends are special, and I am glad we can share
these fun activities!

