



## 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.

- Explore the concept of "fishing for people."
- Discuss what friends to follow.
- Focus on why we follow Jesus.

## SUPPLIES

scissors

paper clips

pencils

CEB kids' Bible or CEB Bible storybook

TV and DVD player or streaming device

sticky notes

crayons

string

dowel rod

magnet

wading pool or bucket

bandanna

paper

## SESSION OUTLINE

### COME TOGETHER

Prepare to Learn

Faith Focus—Jesus Is Our Friend

Colorful Fish (Craft)

### FUN WITH FAITH

Fishing for Friends (Game)

You're Invited (Craft/Outreach)

### FAITH CONNECTIONS

Read the Story

Big Faith Video

Faith Response

### 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:** Jesus made friends when he started his ministry. We call those friends the disciples. Today we will hear about the day Jesus first met some of his friends.

## Faith Focus—Jesus Is Our Friend

**Supplies:** All-Ages Class Pack

**Prepare Ahead:** Display the Unit 1 Faith Focus Poster (Class Pack—pp. 2 & 23).

- Show children the Faith Focus Poster.

**SAY:** Our faith focus for today is "Jesus is our friend."

**ASK:** Spending time with friends is fun. What personality and character traits do you hope for in a good friend?

- Give children time and space to share their ideas.

## Colorful Fish

**Supplies:** Activity Sheets, scissors, paper clips, pencils

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

- Give each child an activity sheet.

**SAY:** When Jesus first met his new friends, they were fishing. We are going to use our fish friends for a game later.

**ASK:** What kinds of things do your friends like to do?

- Invite the children to cut out the fish, name each fish, and write each fish's name on its back. Then slide a paper clip into each fish's mouth. Save the fish for later.

# FAITH CONNECTIONS

## Read the Story

**Supplies:** *CEB kids' Bible or 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 a CEB kids' Bible or your favorite CEB Bible storybook.

**ASK:** What would you do if someone told you to follow them?

## 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.
- Give children time to respond to the questions on the screen. Discuss the questions as partner pairs, as small groups, or all together.

**ASK:** What was your favorite part of the video?

## Faith Response

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

**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 is a faithful friend. Jesus helps us when we need it and Jesus cares for us.

**ASK:** How can you invite new people to be your friends?

**SAY:** Jesus met his new friends and invited them to come on an adventure with him. He knew that these friends would be part of an important group. These friends would follow him from city to city and witness his miracles and teachings. Jesus invites us to follow him by being part of the church and caring about everyone around us.

- Lay the Faith Response Poster on the floor or a table and invite the children to gather around it.
- Give each child a sticky note and crayons.

**ASK:** What do you see on our poster?

- Invite each child to write one way she or he will invite someone new to be a friend.
- Have the children put the sticky notes on the poster.

## FUN WITH FAITH

### Fishing for Friends

**Supplies:** string, dowel rod, magnet, paper-clipped fish from “Colorful Fish,” wading pool or bucket, bandanna

**Prepare Ahead:** Tie a string around the end of a dowel rod. Tie a magnet to the other end of the string.

**SAY:** Jesus and his friends were very close. Today, we are going to fish using our friends’ help. Sometimes Jesus’ friends were very helpful. Let’s see what happens when we help each other fish blindfolded.

- Place the fish the children made earlier in a wading pool or bucket (without any water).
- Have the children line up on one side of the pool or bucket.
- Tie a bandanna around the first child’s eyes. Have the rest of the group help the child fish by giving him or her directions about where to put the fishing pole.
- Pause the game and ask the fisher if he or she is confused or clear about what to do. Ask the group how they might improve the fisher’s “invitations” to help find the fish. Continue fishing with these suggestions in mind.
- Once the child catches a fish, have the child read off the name of the fish written on its back. Whoever named that fish gets to go next. Continue with the game until everyone has had a try.

**ASK:** How did it feel to have your friends help you? How did it feel when you found a fish? What was most helpful?

## You're Invited

*Supplies: pencils, crayons*

*Prepare Ahead: Make copies of the reproducible "You're Invited" (Leader Guide—p. 16).*

- Give each child a copy of "You're Invited."

**SAY:** One way to be a friend is to invite new people to come with you to places you love. We are each going to create our own invitation to church for a friend.

- Have the children follow the directions for the "You're Invited" reproducible.

## 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) and the Unit 1 Faith Focus Poster (Class Pack—pp. 2 & 23) if you haven't already. Photocopy the Unit 1 Family Faith Letter (Leader Guide—pp. 91–92) for each child.*

- Show children the Faith Focus Poster.


**SAY:** Jesus is our friend. Jesus invites us to be his friends. Being a friend to Jesus means we commit to loving people and being a good friend to others.

- Have the children gather in a circle.
- One at a time, invite each child to share one way she or he can be a good friend this week.

**PRAY:** Thank you, God, for good friends. Help us to be good friends and show love to everyone. Amen.

- Send the Family Faith Letter home with each child.
- Send home any activities or items made during today's session.

Fill out the card below to invite a friend to church.



Where?

When?

What do we do at church?

My favorite part of church is when we...

