



Unit 1: BFFs

Faith Focus: Jesus is our friend.

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

SESSION 2

GROW IN FAITH

Friends Include—Mark 2:13-17

In this week's lesson we hear the story of Levi. Levi was a tax collector. When Jesus saw Levi, he issued the invitation "Follow me." With these words, Jesus extended an invitation to someone most people didn't even like. But the story of Jesus calling Levi is good news for us! Jesus' invite action is given to everyone. Not just to those who are perfect and righteous but to imperfect, ordinary, and even disliked people. Jesus calls all people to follow.

Levi must have known his life would change drastically if he accepted Jesus' invitation to follow. The passage does not mention any hesitation on Levi's part. When Jesus called, Levi followed. Jesus calls all, and it seems even a tax collector wanted to be included in that kind of work. And the work of inclusion is work for us all.

- Utilize collaborative activities.
- Discuss feelings of exclusion.
- Reflect on inclusive communities and practices.

SUPPLIES

pencils

scissors

glue sticks

CEB kids' Bible or CEB Bible
storybook

TV and DVD player or
streaming device

sticky notes

crayons

SESSION OUTLINE

COME TOGETHER

Prepare to Learn

Faith Focus—Jesus Is Our Friend

Inclusion Chain (Craft)

FAITH CONNECTIONS

Read the Story

Big Faith Video

Faith Response

FUN WITH FAITH

Silly Walks (Movement)

Finding Friends (Maze)

Slow-Motion Blob Tag (Game)

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 coin sticker on the Session 2 space.

SAY: Sometimes, it can be hard to be friends with a person. People can be mean or unkind. Jesus met someone who did not have very many friends. Jesus did something surprising when he met this person. Let's find out more.

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: Have you ever felt like you did not have many friends? How did that feel?

- Give children time and space to share their ideas.

Inclusion Chain

Supplies: Activity Sheets, pencils, scissors, glue sticks

Prepare Ahead: Tear out "Inclusion Chain" (Session 2 Activity Sheet) for each child.

SAY: All of us can feel left out from time to time. It is wonderful when we find places and people that make us feel included and special.

ASK: Where do you feel included, special, or safe?

- Give each child an activity sheet.
- Have each child write one of his or her ideas on each strip, cut out the strips, and make a chain out of the strips.

FAITH CONNECTIONS

Read the Story

Supplies: *CEB kids' Bible or CEB Bible storybook*

- Invite the children to join you in a circle.
- Read Levi the tax collector's story (Mark 2:13–17) from a CEB kids' Bible or your favorite CEB Bible storybook.

ASK: How do you think Levi felt when Jesus invited him to be a follower?

Big Faith Video

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

- Watch the Session 2 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 wants to include all people, no matter who they are, as friends.

ASK: How could you be a friend in a surprising way?

SAY: Jesus made sure that all people could learn about God's love. Jesus includes all of 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 feels loved by a friend.
- Allow all children to put their sticky notes on the poster.

FUN WITH FAITH

Silly Walks

SAY: Jesus wants us to follow him. Jesus includes us so that we can spend time with him. We are going to play a silly game to make sure everyone feels included.

- Have the children stand up and form a circle.
- Choose one child to be the leader and stand in the center of the circle.
- Have the leader do a silly walk and have the other children follow. Let the children continue walking until the leader invites someone new to lead a silly walk.
- Have the new leader and the old leader swap places, with the old leader rejoining the circle. Have the new leader lead a new silly walk. Continue adding leaders until everyone takes a turn doing everyone else's silly walk.

ASK: How does it feel to watch your friends join you in a silly walk? How does it feel that everyone contributed to our silly walks?

Finding Friends

Supplies: pencils

Prepare Ahead: Make copies of the reproducible "Finding Friends" (Leader Guide—p. 22).

- Give each child a copy of "Finding Friends."

SAY: Let's find Jesus' friends by solving the maze on this page.

- Have the children follow the instructions on the "Finding Friends" reproducible.

Slow-Motion Blob Tag

SAY: Making friends is not always easy. When we include others in our play, we learn to make lots of friends.

- Choose one child to be the tagger.
- Have the children move in slow motion to play blob tag. When a child is tagged, he or she becomes part of the blob and must hold hands with the person who tagged him or her.
- Continue until the whole group is part of the blob.

SHARE YOUR FAITH

Big Faith Idea—Faith in Jesus

Supplies: All-Ages Class Pack, paper chains from “Inclusion Chain”

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) as needed.

- Show children the Big Faith Idea Poster.

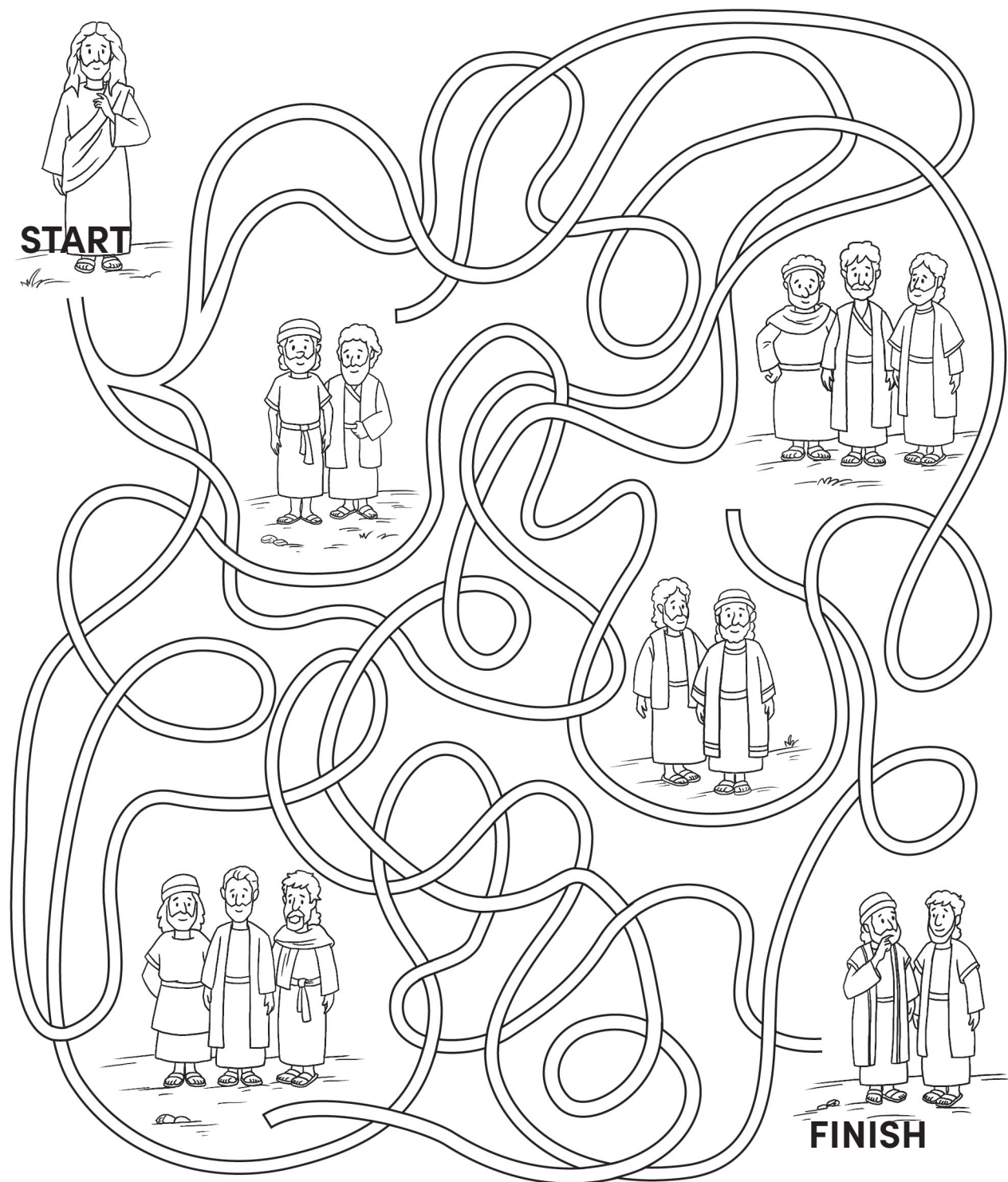
SAY: Jesus is a good friend. He invites each of us to be a friend. Nothing that we do can keep us from God’s love. Jesus wants to be our friend no matter what. Look at the chains you made at the beginning of class. Take home your chains and remember to help others feel included in each of the places you wrote down.

- Have the children gather in a circle.
- One at a time, invite each child to share one word to describe how he or she feels about being Jesus’ friend.

PRAY: Thank you for loving us, Lord. Thank you for giving us places where we feel loved. Help us to make people feel invited and loved. Amen.

- Send the Family Faith Letter home with each child who hasn’t received it yet.
- Send home any activities or items made during today’s session.

Jesus is on his way to find twelve friends. Complete the maze to show how he does it.



Art: Carolyn Williams/Gwen Walters Artists' Representative

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