



Collective Worship Pack

Summer Term 2021



Amazing Friendship Collective Worship for the Summer Term

Introduction

This Collective Worship Pack aims to inspire, encourage and engage children in discovering how we can have an AMAZING FRIENDSHIP with one another and with God. By focusing on amazing stories of friendship from the Bible, we will consider how important friendship is during different times of our lives and how friendship has many benefits for our spiritual, mental and physical well-being.

As children return to school following the COVID-19 National lockdown, whatever time they are going through, whether it be sad, lonely, troubled, changing, difficult, up, down or moving on – we all need friends! Friendships are more important now than ever as we adapt and cope with change. Christians believe God created us to be his friends, and the Bible gives many practical ways in which we can learn to be good friends. Supporting one another, helping one another, encouraging one another, working together, having fun, loving one another, and respecting one another – even when our friends let us down or fall out with us!

Friendship is amazing!

Each worship this term will encourage children to ...

DISCOVER: God created us to be friends. What makes a good friend, and why it is important to have friends.

ENGAGE: with child friendly Bible stories, games and activities which help children understand key themes, values and qualities of friendship.

EXPLORE: the different thoughts and emotions they feel at different times and be given time to reflect on these.

BE INSPIRED: to have hope for the future and to help bring hope to others through good friendship.

God created us to be his friends. The Bible is full of FRIENDSHIP. Many people would say that after air to breathe, food to eat and water to drink, human connection or FRIENDSHIP is the next thing we need to survive/thrive. That's why, for so many of us Lockdown has been such a hard thing, and that's why we have chosen Amazing Friendship as our theme for this term.

Our first worship focuses on what makes a good friend and what are the most important qualities of a true friend. As we look at the story of Abraham, we see how at the beginning of Abraham's long and difficult journey, full of joys and disappointments, Abraham always knew that God was his friend no matter what happened. God helped Abraham with everything! Over the past year friendships may have changed, it's been hard not being able to see our friends, or play together. Perhaps some children are struggling with the fact that people who you thought were friends have not been very good friends during lockdown. As we start a new term it's



a good time to make a new start and consider our friends and any friendships that maybe needing a little help.

In the second worship we look at how good friends can achieve more working together and sharing their different skills, talents and personalities using the example of Moses and Aaron working together to do what God asked them to do.

The third worship helps us understand the importance of forgiveness and what to do when our friends let us down while the fourth worship in this pack encourages children to look out for their friends, to listen to them, and to be there for them when they need a friend even through troubled times.

Wise advice is offered during the fifth worship as friends often fall out. What should we do when there's a disagreement and we don't see eye to eye with one another? Find out as we look at the life of Paul and Barnabas.

Sometimes we need to help carry our friends at times when they are struggling and perhaps can't do things for themselves. The next worship in the pack helps children to consider what they can do to help support others, and we will hear some inspiring stories of children who have changed the lives of others through their acts of kindness and support.

This pack concludes with a transition assembly suitable for the end of the year as children prepare for 'moving on' during the summer holiday and coping with yet more change. Change is inevitable. Some people love change but for many change can be scary and makes us feel anxious. We may try to resist it, or try to stop it but we can't control everything in our lives. Perhaps the most important question is how do we respond to change and how does friendship help us work through times of change. As we look at the story of Ruth and Naomi we see how Ruth's faithful friendship to Naomi changed everything for them both. A happy ending to a sad story. Ruth was able to see past her own loss and show incredible kindness to Naomi. She was able to risk losing everything to be kind – and out of that kindness came a wonderful new beginning.

As each child worships with us through our series of Amazing Friendship, we pray that every child might know true friendship with God and those around them. No matter what they are going through we hope that they will be inspired to appreciate their friends and be encouraged to make their friendships stronger so that they know whatever they may face in the future they are not alone.

Multi-Media Worship Pack Resources

Each worship session in this pack is accompanied with a 'Thoughts on ...' PDF Resource sheet available on the resources section of our website: <https://spinnaker.org.uk>. It is free to use whenever and wherever appropriate in your school day. It can be used as a class assembly and includes activities to do, ideas to discuss and thoughts to reflect on.



‘Moving On’ – Year 6 transition workshop resources are available on our website:

Reflection and prayer

We have focused on reflections that can be used in most settings. There are a few prayers which should only be used with prior permission from the school and must be used sensitively. Remember that many children, even in a faith school are not Christian so you should always give children the option to listen to the prayer, rather than praying with you. Saying something along the following lines, gives children the opportunity to opt-in to the prayer. E.g. “I am going to talk to God by reading a prayer. If you would like to make this prayer your own, you can say, ‘Amen’ at the end.”

Contributors

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	Title	Story	Theme/Values/Keywords
1	Amazing Friendship	God & Abraham Genesis 12-21	An introduction to friendship. What makes a good friend and why is it important to have friends. Christians believe God created us to be his friends. Friendship is good for our well-being, physical, mental and spiritual health. Abraham trusted God. God helped Abraham to keep going with his adventure, journeying together through joys and disappointments. At the beginning of a new term this worship will encourage children to consider their friendships and encourage making a new start with any friendships that might need a little help. Friendship, New start, Hope, Trust, Forgiveness, Joy
2	Amazing Friendship – Makes a Good Team	Moses, Aaron & Miriam – A Great Team Exodus 3-4	Two heads are better than one! There are many famous friendships both in real life and fiction where working together has contributed to success and greater achievement than from working alone. In this worship we look at the teamwork of the brothers Moses and Aaron and their sister Miriam. Very different characters but by working together and combining their skills, talents and personalities they were able to help each other do what God asked them to do. We are all different and have different skills, talents and qualities to offer. This worship will encourage children to use and share what they have to help others and achieve more together. Talents, Skills, Teamwork, Partnership, Help, Support
3	Amazing Friendship – Makes Up & Moves On	Peter & Jesus Jesus forgives Peter John 21:1-19	Jesus forgave Peter and showed great love and compassion even when he let Jesus down by denying their friendship. What should we do when our best friends let us down? SUMO – Stop, Understand, Move on. Forgiveness, Compassion, Disappointment, Love
4	Amazing Friendship – Through Troubled Times	Jonathan & David 1 Samuel 18-20	What do you enjoy doing with your friends? How does it make you feel? Do you know your friends well enough to know when they need help? David and Jonathan had an amazing friendship. They made a promise to protect each other even in dangerous circumstances and separation. Through an act of true kindness Jonathan helped to save David's life. Jonathan & David cared for each other and choose to do the right thing even under pressure. This worship encourages children to look



			<p>out for their friends, to listen to them, and to be there for them when they they need a friend even through troubled times.</p> <p>Help, Protection, Kindness, Overcoming adversity Care, Comfort</p>
5	Amazing Friendship – Making & Keeping Friends	<p>Paul & Barnabas</p> <p>John 15:14 & Acts 9, 13-15</p>	<p>Making new friends and keeping friends is not always easy. It takes courage and trust. Who can we trust to be a good friend? What happens when friends fall out or disagree? As we focus on the story of Paul and Barnabas children will be inspired to take the risk of making new friends and be encouraged to choose to stay friends despite their differences – looking to the shared things they have in common to maintain healthy friendships.</p> <p>Courage, Risk, Kindness, Compassion, Change, Trust, Respect</p>
6	Amazing Friendship – Carrying One Another	<p>The Four Friends (Jesus heals a paralyzed man)</p> <p>Mark 2:1-12</p>	<p>Friends want the best for one another. In our bible story 4 friends wanted Jesus to help their friend. He was helpless to do anything for himself. They had to work together to carry their friend to Jesus, overcoming many obstacles on their way. With determination, hardwork and perseverance they did it and their friend's life was changed forever. Thorough a fun 'carrying challenge' and real-life examples of friends helping others, children will be inspired to consider how they can work together to make a difference to the lives of others.</p> <p>Hope, Help, Teamwork, Determination, Perseverance</p>
7	Amazing Friendship – Through Times of Change	<p>Naomi & Ruth</p> <p>Ruth 1-4</p>	<p>Change is inevitable. Some people love change but for many, change can be scary and makes us feel anxious. We may try to resist it, or try to stop it, but we can't control everything in our lives. Perhaps, what we should be asking is: how do we respond to change and how does friendship help us work through times of change? As we look at the story of Ruth and Naomi, we see how Ruth's faithful friendship to Naomi changed everything for them both. A happy ending to a sad story. Ruth was able to see past her own loss and show incredible kindness to Naomi. She was able to risk losing everything to be kind – and out of that kindness came a wonderful new beginning.</p> <p>Change, Kindness, Faithful, Sad, loss, Happy, Hope</p>



1. Amazing Friendship

Theme/Values/Keywords: An introduction to friendship. What makes a good friend and why is it important to have friends. Christians believe God created us to be his friends. Friendship is good for our well-being, physical, mental and spiritual health. Abraham trusted God. God helped Abraham to keep going with his adventure, journeying together through joys and disappointments. At the beginning of a new term this worship will encourage children to consider their friendships and encourage making a new start with any friendships that might need a little help.

Friendship, New start, Hope, Trust, Forgiveness, Joy

Bible reference: Genesis 12-21 God and Abraham

Key Stage Relevance: KS1 & 2

Resources: A4 printed word cards with qualities of a good friend (for the game).

Introduction: Many people would say that after air to breathe, food to eat and water to drink, human connection or FRIENDSHIP is the next thing we need to survive/thrive. That's why, for so many of us, Lock Down has been such a hard thing. And that's why we have chosen as our Assembly theme this term: AMAZING FRIENDSHIP.

The Bible is full of FRIENDSHIP. From almost the first page, when God says *"It's not good for people to be alone"* to the last page when everyone is invited to the biggest party ever held in all time. The Bible tells us that God made us for connection. Connection with Him and connection with one another - FRIENDSHIP. However, we're all different - Some people, even though they love their friends, get their energy from being quiet on their own. We sometimes call these people "Introverted", while others get their energy from being with others – maybe just one other or maybe even a group of friends. But whether we like it or not, all of us are here together. Sociologists (wow – that's a LONG word – it's what we call people who study human behaviour as their job) they tell us that even people who we call an "introvert" will have an influence on at least 10 000 people in their lifetime! But although we might know and influence thousands of people through our lifetimes – that's not the same as having friendships.

I wonder – what do you think of this:

"Many people will walk in and out of your life, but only true friends will leave footprints in your heart." – Eleanor Roosevelt (USA Politician and First Lady 1933-45)

Game/Activity: What do YOU think makes a good friend? Think about it now – inside your head, not out loud.

EITHER: Ask for pairs of 'friends' to come up to the front and tell everyone why they are such good friends. Have as many 'pairs' of friends that you have time for. This is rather a lovely exercise, as you can imagine. Listing someone's good qualities in front of the whole school! Probably better to just make it one sided for each pair so that more kids get a chance to stand up. Use their comments as a springboard to talk about the qualities that make a good friend.



OR: What you would say is the MOST important quality of a true friend? Don't say it out loud. Just think it in your head. Ask everyone to stand up and say that you are going to guess what they are thinking. If you say (or hold up a word printed on a card) the word they are thinking, they must sit down and NO CHEATING! – because you will find them out!!

- Go through the list allowing the children to sit down after each word/quality is mentioned.
- You should have a few children still standing. Ask as many as you have time for what they were thinking of... *Watch out though, you might need to field some "unusual" friendship qualities!*

Possible list of friendship qualities: Kindness, Faithfulness, Forgiveness, Listening, Easy to talk to, Fun to be with, Patience, Honesty, Loyalty, Generosity, LOVING!

Main Content: Today we are going to hear about a man called Abraham. He lived in what we now call the Middle East, about 4000 years ago. The Bible tells us that Abraham was God's Friend! Does that surprise you? It surprised me when I first heard about it. I mean, lots of people, when they think of God, they might think of someone that you go and see on a Sunday. Someone you might sing to, pray to, someone you worship, someone who you only talk to in a certain way. But a FRIEND? Surely, we've said already, that a friend is someone who you can "hang out" with, chat with, play with? A friend is someone who is always there for you, who you can tell your secrets, who loves spending time with YOU? And the Bible say YES – exactly – all those things are true – and GOD wants to be OUR FRIEND!

Bible Story: God and Abraham – Genesis 12-21

Abraham was a farmer. He was a good farmer. He was a rich farmer. He had lots of sheep, lots of camels and lots of servants. He also had a lovely home where he lived with his wife Sarah and their whole household. But Abraham also had something that was better than all of that – He had a VERY special friend. Who do you think was Abraham's very special friend? God was. The Bible tells us that Abraham was a FRIEND of God!

And one day, God spoke to Abraham: "Abraham, I want you to leave this place. I have a better place for you to live in. I am going to make you father of a great nation. I am going to make you a BLESSING to all people on the Earth", well – that was quite a speech! What would YOU have answered I wonder? What would I? I think I might have asked "Where?" or "How far is it?" or "Do I need to pack the...?" But Abraham didn't ask anything. He just did exactly what God has asked him to do. Why? Because God was his friend and he trusted him.

So, off Abraham went to the new land God had chosen for him. Its name was Canaan, and it was sometimes called "a land flowing with milk and honey", which I guess meant that there were lots of cows and goats and bees there! But I think it was also just a way of saying it was a beautiful place to live, with everything anyone might need. And Abraham liked it very much.



There was a problem though – I guess, a pretty serious problem. And next time Abraham and God had a chat, Abraham brought it up: “God, you said I am going to be father of a great nation? Well – I don’t know how to say this, but how can I father a nation when I don’t seem to be able to even father a family? And you know Sarah and I, well, we’re not spring chickens anymore. I mean, we are seriously OLD!

But God just said, “Abraham – do you trust me?”

Well – I guess that’s what we call a rhetorical question. A question to which we already know the answer – so we’re just trying to have an effect! God already knew the answer! Of course, Abraham trusted Him. He had left everything and travelled to the new land, hadn’t he? Just like God told him to. Because God was his friend. His very special friend. But now God was going to ask Abraham to trust him even more – and it wasn’t always going to be easy. He needed to help him a little.

So, God decided to take Abraham on a little walk. A night-time walk. “Look up at the sky Abraham,” he said, “What do you see?” Abraham looked up. (Have you ever looked up at the night sky when you are in the middle of the countryside? Did you notice how many more stars you can see when you are away from the towns and cities? Well – that’s what Abraham saw.) “I see stars, God – lots and lots of twinkling stars – millions of them”. “That’s right,” replied God, “Billions actually.” Which was perhaps a bit unfair because human beings weren’t going to discover how many stars there were for a few thousand years. “Way too many to count anyway.” said God – “So Abraham, I want you to imagine the nation I am going to make starting with your family – there’ll be too many to count”.

The next day, God took Abraham for another walk – a beach walk. “Here’s another way of looking at it Abraham – pick up a handful of sand and see if you can count how many grains there are.” Have you ever tried that? No? Well, let me tell you, in one handful of sand there are a VERY large number of grains. Way more than you or I can be bothered to count. Anyway – Abraham was getting the idea. And do you know what he did? He started laughing. He giggled, he chortled. He laughed his head off. “Me and Sarah have children? You are joking?” But God wasn’t joking. “This is my number 1 plan, Abraham. I’m going to do something wonderful for the whole world. Something that will mean every single person in the world can be my friend. And I’m going to do it through YOU and your family. So, wait to hear from me.”

And what do you think Abraham did? He believed God, of course. Why? Because God was his friend and he trusted him.

And it wasn’t long before God sent three messengers to visit.

“We’ll be coming back to see you and your baby son next year.” They said, as they were sitting chatting after the lovely meal Abraham and Sarah had made for them. Someone giggled. Someone chortled. Someone laughed her head off. It was Sarah this time, not Abraham. “Me? Have a baby?”

But the Messengers weren’t joking and when, about 9 months later, their son was born, there was laughter again. Abraham and Sarah and their whole household were laughing for joy. And that’s why they decided to name their son “Laughter”, which in Hebrew is the name ISAAC.



Pupil Response: That was just the beginning really – of Abraham's life journey with God. And what a journey it was. Full of joys and full of disappointments – like all life journeys are. But no matter what happened, Abraham always knew that God was his FRIEND and God would never leave him. And that helped him with...well everything!

In the past year, you might have found that your friendships have changed? It's been hard, hasn't it, not being able to see our friends? Not being able to play together? Not being able to go to school together?

Maybe, there are some of you struggling with the fact that people who you thought were your friends, have not been very good friends during Lock Down?

Everyone has been struggling with lots of different things and that puts pressure on our relationships. We can't all be friends like God is. We make mistakes, we say things we don't mean, we do things that are unkind. But with our true friends, we know we can always come back together. We can always say sorry, forgive each other, give our friends another chance.

Reflection: Let's do that now shall we? The beginning of a new term is a good time to make a new start.

Do you remember the WHITE assembly from last term? As long as we are able to ask for AND give forgiveness to our friends - we can make a new start – there can be new growth, new life (that would be the GREEN assembly!)

Give the children a chance to actually consider their friends and to think about any friendships that maybe need a little "helping".

I'm going to pray a prayer now asking God to help us with our friendships. Later today you may need to actually talk about it with your friends so that like Abraham you know you are never alone and have friends you can trust and rely on.

Prayer: Dear God, thank you that you created us to be your friends and that you know how important it is for us to have good friendships. We thank you for all the good times and fun we have with our friends and for times when our friends have helped and supported us. Please help us to have all the qualities of a good friend ... kindness, patience, forgiveness, trust etc (mention the word cards) and we ask that you might help us strengthen any of our friendships that may be struggling. Thank you that we can always have a friend in YOU! Amen.

Suggested Song: You've got a friend in Me. (Randy Newman)



2. Amazing Friendship: Makes a Good Team

Themes/Values/Keywords: Two heads are better than one! There are many famous friendships both in real life and fiction where working together has contributed to success and greater achievement than from working alone. In this worship we look at the teamwork of the brothers Moses and Aaron and their sister Miriam. Very different characters but by working together and combining their skills, talents and personalities they were able to help each other do what God asked them to do. We are all different and have different skills, talents and qualities to offer. This worship will encourage children to use and share what they have to help others and achieve more together. **Talents, Skills, Teamwork, Partnership, Help, Support**

Bible reference: Moses & Aaron – Exodus 3-4

Key Stage Relevance: KS1 & 2

Resources: Items to show that go in pairs, needle and thread, toothbrush and toothpaste, dustpan & brush, salt and pepper, pen & paper, bat & ball.

Introduction: Working with a partner can be more rewarding than working on your own. You can share ideas with each other and give and receive feedback, you can encourage your friend when they are feeling down, you may have skills your partner needs or your partner may have skills and abilities to share with you.

History is full of great partnerships; the Wright Brothers famously worked together to design and fly the first aeroplane. Wilbur Wright did not start off well, in 1886 an accident stopped him going to college and he became depressed but together with his brother Orville, through a shared interest in bicycles and helicopters, they carried out the first successful powered flight and went on to design an aircraft that would fly!

There have been many partnerships in the world of entertainment. Anthony McPartlin and Declan Donnelly are better known as, 'Ant and Dec.' They have worked together for more than 27 years presenting popular TV shows like Britain's Got Talent. They met at the age of 13 on a TV show called 'Byker Grove' in 1993, aged 18 they left the show but decided 'that if we stuck together, we could be stronger.' They stuck together and it has worked!!

Duos or partnerships are also popular in Fiction. Timon and Pumbaa, the meerkat and warthog in the Lion King, Sherlock Holmes the detective and Dr Watson, Bert and Ernie in Sesame Street.

Game/Activity: Can you guess the pairs, things that work together. Show the children some objects/pictures and get them to guess which go together. These are things that are always used together. Can you guess what is missing? Salt and pepper, knife and fork, needle and thread, toothpaste and toothbrush, pencil and paper, hammer and nails. Each item is vital to the other for it to work effectively!



Main Content: Our Bible story today is about a man who is thought of as one of THE greatest leaders ... ever. He lived about 3000 years ago. His story appears not just in the Bible but also the Koran and Torah. He is remembered as a great prophet, and a great leader. His name is Moses.

Moses wasn't just part of a pair of friends, he had a team!

Moses had a brother called Aaron and a sister called Miriam. And of the three, Moses was probably the most UNLIKELY to become a great leader of the Jewish people.

- He was youngest - the "baby" of the family.
- When Moses was a baby the Pharaoh had tried to have him killed, but his family had protected him, and Moses had actually grown up in the palace with the Pharaoh's daughter!
- He had a problem with his temper sometimes.
- He had been living in the desert for the last 20 years, hiding away and looking after sheep!

But the Bible tells us that God had amazing things in store for Moses.

You see, God could see his **potential**. God could see that with a good team of friends and God's supernatural power on his side he could become a great leader.

Bible Story: Moses, Aaron & Miriam, A Great Team (Exodus 3-4)

One day, Moses was looking after his sheep as usual in the desert, when he saw something strange – a bush that seemed to be on fire. How could that be? In the middle of nowhere?

So, Moses walked towards the bush – when he looked closely, he saw something even more strange - even though the bush was on fire – it didn't seem to be burning up.

And then, perhaps the strangest part of all – the bush spoke to him!

"Moses! Moses!" said the Bush – (well, actually, who do you think was speaking to him from the bush? You got it – God was speaking!

"I'm here Lord." said Moses.

"Don't come any closer," said God, "and take off your sandals because the place where you are standing is holy ground."

Moses, did what he was told, took off his shoes and came close to hear what God had to say.

"I have an important job for you Moses," God told him. God wanted Moses to go back into Egypt, visit the Pharaoh and demand, yes DEMAND(!) that he set the Jewish slaves free.

Moses was terrified and so he started to make excuses!

"I can't do that," he said, "I'm no good at speaking in public."

But God had already thought of that. "Your brother Aaron will go with you, he is very confident at speaking in public, he will help you."



Moses still wasn't sure.

"What if they don't believe that you have sent me!" he asked.

But God had already thought of that. "I will be with you and I have planned some amazing miracles for you to show the Pharaoh to prove that your message is from me."

Moses was still worried.

"If your plan works and we the Jewish slaves are set free, then what? I'm only used to looking after sheep, I can't look after all those people.

But God had already thought of that. "You won't be on your own, remember how your sister Miriam watched over you and protected you when you were a baby, she is kind and caring, she will help you to look after my people and lead them out of Egypt."

Moses had run out of excuses. God had already thought of everything. He's picked the perfect team of friends to work together. With Moses' experience of living in the palace and talking to God, Aaron's confidence as a speaker and Miriam's kind and caring heart everything went as God had planned.

Moses, Aaron and Miriam, went to Egypt and after a lot of persuasion, Pharaoh did the right thing. The Nation of Israel, the Jewish people were freed from slavery, they crossed the Red Sea into the Desert and eventually, after many very important lessons on the way, ended up at the Land God had promised to them.

Although it's Moses whose name so many people for so many centuries have heard of. Moses knew and God knew – that he could not have done any of it without his brother and sister, Aaron & Miriam who were at his side at every stage of the adventure.

Pupil Response: What a story, what a team!

Do you remember Moses' first reaction when God told him to go and talk to the Pharaoh?

(He said he can't do it. He gave excuses).

How was Moses supported by his brother and sister? (Aaron was a bold speaker, Miriam was kind-hearted and caring).

Moses, Aaron and Miriam were family, but they were also friends who made a good team. They each had different skills which enabled them to carry out the task God had given them. Without Aaron, Moses would have struggled to speak to Pharaoh and the people would not have left Egypt. Without Moses Aaron would have been without his leadership and wisdom. Without Miriam, Moses may never have been rescued from the River Nile as a baby or ended up living in the Pharaoh's palace.

It says in Exodus 33 v 11 of the Bible, "The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend." Moses and God were a great team too!



Reflection: Who do you work well with? When your teacher says, 'work with a partner, or in a group,' are you a good team? Do you listen to others? Do you offer your skills to help carry out a task? Are you happy to let your team use their skills to help you do something?

Who is the best listener and leader like Moses? Who is the most confident and best at speaking like Aaron? Who is the most kind and caring friend who looks out for others like Miriam?

We are all different and we all have different skills and abilities. You may not be a maths whizz or a spelling genius, but you may be able to draw or paint. You may be good at catching a ball or tying a knot. You may be kind and encouraging, helping you and your team to succeed. Amazing friendship is a team skill in itself!

Let's pause now for a moment to think about the skills, talents, abilities and qualities we can offer and share with others to help and achieve more together.

Prayer: Dear God, Thank you that you have given me friends and family to support me. Help me to be a good team player and a good friend. Help me to use my skills and abilities to help others because we can achieve more together. Amen.



3. Amazing Friendship: Makes Up and Moves On

Themes/Values/Keywords: Jesus forgave Peter and showed great love and compassion even when he let Jesus down by denying their friendship. What should we do when our best friends let us down? SUMO – Stop, Understand, Move on.
Forgiveness, Compassion, Disappointment, Love

Bible References: Jesus forgives Peter – John 21: 1-19

Key Stage Relevance: KS1 & 2

Resources: Truth/Lie Cards, A Vase/Mug/Jigsaw, Safety Goggles, Hammer, Clear Plastic Bag

Introduction: Isn't it good to have friends who we can have fun with, share stories with and who support and encourage us? What do we do when we have an argument with our friends or when a friend lets us down?
Can you think of a time when a friend let you down?
Perhaps they made new friends and couldn't spend as much time with you.
Perhaps they broke or damaged something you had lent them.
Perhaps they said something that hurt you.
How did it make you feel? Perhaps you thought your friendship had been broken a bit like this ...

Put on safety goggles and break a mug or vase inside a clear plastic bag using a hammer (or you could break up the pieces of a ready-made small jigsaw). Shattered into lots of pieces!

How would you feel if a friend of yours told you a lie or lied to somebody else about you? That's what happened in the story we're going to think of today. Let's play a game now to think about truth and lies together.

Game/Activity: Two truths and a lie game.

Play the two truths and a lie game where you share three pieces of information, two true one false. *(If doing this in school you could invite some teachers or older students to prepare some truth/lies to share/If filming we could invite some Spinnaker team to record their information and give time for guessing.*
Who is telling a lie?



Main Content: Our Bible story today is all about somebody who let their friend down. Not once, but three times. They lied and said they didn't even know their friend!

Bible Story: Jesus forgives Peter (John 21:1-19)

Peter and Jesus were good friends, Jesus had called Peter to follow him and for three years they had travelled together, eaten together and Peter had seen Jesus perform amazing miracles.

One evening Jesus was sharing a special meal with his closest friends.

"Somebody here tonight is going to betray me," Jesus told them.

"Not me!" Peter insisted, I would never do anything to let you down.

"Peter, before the cockerel crows, tomorrow morning, you will say three times that you don't even know me" Jesus said.

"I would never do that," Peter insisted.

That night Jesus was arrested and taken away by soldiers. Peter was very scared. He went to wait outside the courts where he could find out what was happening to Jesus.

"Hey, aren't you one of Jesus' followers?" somebody asked Peter.

"No, not me." Peter said, he knew that if he was recognised, he might be arrested too.

"I'm sure I've seen you with him." somebody else spoke up.

"No, I've never even met him." Peter lied again.

"I recognise you," a third person said, "you are one of his twelve disciples."

"NO!" Peter insisted, "I don't know Jesus."

Just then as the sun was rising a cockerel crowed, Peter realised that what Jesus had promised had come true.

"I am a terrible friend," Peter thought to himself, "I have let down Jesus when he needed me most."

Sometime later Jesus and Peter were sat together on a beach, so much had changed since they had last been together. Jesus had died on a cross and come back to life. Jesus knew that Peter still felt guilty for letting him down, he wanted to return their friendship to how it had been before?

"Do you love me?" Jesus asked Peter.

"Yes!" Peter said, "You know I do."

"I have a special job for you," Jesus told Peter, "will you look after my church, all the people who are going to be my followers?"

"I will," said Peter.

"You know what it feels like to make mistakes and be forgiven," Jesus reminded Peter, "help other people to know that I love them and want to be their friend even when they make mistakes."

"I can do that," said Peter.



Pupil Response: Do you think it was easy for Jesus to forgive Peter in the story and give him a second chance?

Jesus probably felt hurt and disappointed that Peter said to other people that he wasn't a friend of Jesus. Peter was disappointed in himself for being a bad friend to Jesus. When somebody hurts or upsets us sometimes it is good to try and think about how they feel. It can help us to be more forgiving and understanding.

Jesus and Peter didn't just make up, they moved on with a fresh start. That must have taken a lot of trust.

Reflection: Look at the bag of smashed pieces of mug/vase/jigsaw.

When a friendship is broken you may feel as though there is no way it can ever be put back together. The Japanese have created an art of repairing broken pottery by mending the breakages with Gold (show photo). It's called Kintsugi. The idea behind it is that it accepts the brokenness and imperfections and the gold (or the forgiveness/understanding shown in our story) can create an even stronger, more beautiful piece of art (friendship).

Next time we fall out with a friend, or we feel like we've broken a friendship. Let's see whether forgiveness, understanding and love can help rebuild our friendships even stronger.

Show another mug/vase or jigsaw in one whole piece!

Prayer: Dear God, Thank you for our friends, help us to be good friends to others this week. We know that sometimes our friends will upset us or let us down. Help us think about the feelings of others, to forgive and try to understand. Help us to find ways to make up and move on with our friendships. Amen.



4. Amazing Friendship: Through Troubled Times

Themes/Values/Keywords: What do you enjoy doing with your friends? How does it make you feel? Do you know your friends well enough to know when they need help? David and Jonathan had an amazing friendship. They made a promise to protect each other even in dangerous circumstances and separation. Through an act of true kindness Jonathan helped to save David's life. Jonathan & David cared for each other and choose to do the right thing even under pressure. This worship encourages children to look out for their friends, to listen to them, and to be there for them when they they need a friend even through troubled times. **Help, Protection, Kindness, Overcoming adversity, Care, Comfort**

Bible reference: Jonathan & David – 1 Samuel 18-20

Key Stage Relevance: KS1 & 2

Resources: Emotion Cards

Introduction: What do you do with your friends? (Ask for ideas) Chat with them, play football, netball, rugby, basketball, running games, skipping games, game with them, draw, write, colour, make things with them, sing, dance, joke, laugh with them? How do you feel when you're doing any of these? Probably happy, excited, energetic, maybe calm and relaxed, depending on what you're doing. How do your friends feel? Would you be able to tell? When you know someone really well, you can usually tell how they are feeling by how they are behaving, talking or moving. We can look out for clues as to how our friends are feeling, and then choose how to act in the best way for them.

Game/Activity: How good are you at recognising different emotions/feelings?

Either Guess the emotion from pictures of children's faces *OR* ask for volunteer(s) to move/walk/pose in a particular given emotion (have emotions written on cards – happy, excited, upset, confused, angry, lonely, worried, sad, bored, disappointed, cheerful, frustrated, annoyed, nervous, proud, silly, scared, overwhelmed) and others guess.

Main Content: Most of the time when we're with our friends, we feel happy. But what about when one of you feels sad, upset, anxious or worried, or is going through a difficult or troubled time? What do you do then? What do your friends do? There are many stories of friendship in the Bible but one of the most well-known friendships in the Old Testament is that of Jonathan and David, a friendship that lasted through troubled times.

Bible Story: Jonathan and David 1 Samuel 18-20

Jonathan and David were the very best of friends who cared deeply for each other. Jonathan was King Saul's son. David had been a shepherd boy but was now working for Jonathan's father as a musician and soldier. King Saul loved David very much and gave him a lot of attention. That might have made Jonathan, Saul's own son, really jealous but it didn't. Instead, they became close friends.



"Let's make a promise to be friends whatever may happen," Jonathan said to David. He gave David his robe, as well as some of his most precious belongings - his sword, bow and belt- as a sign that their friendship would last through good times and bad. That promise was soon to be put to the test. David was a better soldier and leader than Saul and people loved him, which made Saul very angry and jealous, so much so that he became obsessed with getting rid of David.

One day, Saul ordered Jonathan and all his servants to kill David. Jonathan was horrified. David was his best friend! Even though he was disobeying his father, Jonathan ran to warn David, "My father Saul is trying to kill you. Stay somewhere safe and hide. I'll talk to my father about you."

Jonathan bravely spoke to his father, praising David and persuading him to forget his threat. "David hasn't done anything wrong," he said. "In fact, he has really helped you as a soldier and you were happy with him. Why have you now threatened to kill him for no reason?" Saul listened to Jonathan and promised that he wouldn't do anything to harm David. David was able to stop hiding and go back to work for Saul, because Jonathan spoke up for him and protected him. It didn't last for long. Once again, Saul became extremely jealous of David and threatened him. David managed to escape and then went to find Jonathan to tell him.

Once again, Jonathan was prepared to protect his friend. David was very upset. Jonathan listened to him and tried to comfort him, telling him that his father wouldn't try to do anything to David without telling him first, and so he would be able to stop it. Jonathan promised to help David and said, "I'll do anything you want me to do." David knew that with Saul acting in this wild way, his friend could be in danger, but he was desperate. Together they agreed that while David hid again, Jonathan would find out if his father was planning to harm him, and if he was, Jonathan would warn David and help him to get away safely. Jonathan said to David, "If you have to go away, remember the promise we have made to each other to be friends, the Lord will make sure that we will keep it forever." David assured Jonathan that he would keep his promise and the two best friends hugged. They quietly sat together for a while, thinking about their friendship and what might happen now; before Jonathan returned to his father and David hid again.

The next day, Jonathan was eating dinner with Saul, when his father noticed David was missing and asked where he was. Jonathan answered, "David begged me to let him go to Bethlehem. That is why he has not come to the king's table." Then Saul became very angry with Jonathan. He said, "I know you are on the side of David! You bring shame on yourself. As long as David lives, you'll never be king or have a kingdom. Now send for David and bring him to me. He must die!" Bravely, Jonathan asked his father, "Why should David be killed? What wrong has he done?" At that, Saul flew into such a rage that he threw his spear at Jonathan. Jonathan realised that his father really wanted to kill David. Jonathan was very upset and angrily left the table.

The next morning Jonathan went to where David was hiding and told him what Saul had done and would do. The two friends knew they must go their separate ways and never see each other again. They hugged each other and cried together, but David cried the most. Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace. We have promised by the Lord that we will be friends. We said, 'The Lord will be a witness between you and me,



and between our descendants forever.'” Then with great sorrow, David left, and Jonathan went back to town.

Pupil Response: David went through some very troubling times but Jonathan was always there for him, even though at times, it put his own life in danger. Can you remember what did Jonathan do for David?

Jonathan and David cared for each other and looked after each other. We mostly hear about what Jonathan does for David, but we can imagine that David would do the same for Jonathan. When David is in hiding, Jonathan goes to see him because he is concerned about him. We find out that Jonathan listened to David and his worries but maybe Jonathan also comforted David by giving him a hug, or just sat quietly with him, letting him know he was there for him.

Jesus asked his friends to be with him when he was deeply upset. On the night of his arrest, he asked his three closest friends to come with him to a place called Gethsemane, to be with him while he prayed. He didn't want to talk, he just wanted them to be with him. He said, “Stay here and keep watch with me.” When Jesus died, Mary Magdalene and ‘the other Mary’ were together, they went together to his tomb, the day he died, and two days later. We can imagine that they would comfort each other and share their grief and sadness. They were there for each other.

Reflection: Have you been through a difficult, sad or worrying time? Maybe you feel that way now. Did a friend help you in that time? What did they do? Maybe they sat with you, listened to you, comforted you? How did that make you feel? Or maybe you've been there for a friend who was upset. What did you do? How can you show that you're there for your friends in troubled times? What would you like your friends to do for you if you are feeling upset? Who would you ask to be with you?

Christians believe that Jesus is with them, comforting them through troubled times as he understands and has been through troubled times himself.

Prayer: Dear God,

Thank you for our friends who are there in troubled times. Thank you for their comfort, their listening and their presence. Help us to be good friends in troubled times, to know what to do and when. Thank you that you are always there for us, ready to listen, understand and care. Amen



5. Amazing Friendship: Making and Keeping Friends

Themes/Values/Keywords: Making new friends and keeping friends is not always easy. It takes courage and trust. Who can we trust to be a good friend? What happens when friends fall out or disagree? As we focus on the story of Paul and Barnabas children will be inspired to take the risk of making new friends and be encouraged to choose to stay friends despite their differences – looking to the shared things they have in common to maintain healthy friendships. **Courage, Risk, Kindness, Compassion, Change, Respect, Trust.**

Bible reference: John 15:14, Acts 9, 13-15 Paul & Barnabas

Key Stage Relevance: KS1 & 2

Resources: A Duke's Hat for the game.

Introduction: Hello, in today's worship we continue our theme of Amazing Friendship. I wonder: when did you last make a new friend? You might think that it was pretty tricky during lockdown but actually I got to know my neighbours a lot better...

How about you?

Game/Activity: The Grand Old Duke of York

How many of you know the song 'The Grand Old Duke of York, he had ten thousand men, he marched them up to the top of the hill and he marched them down again. And when they were up, they were up, and when they were down, they were down' etc...

For our game today, I'm going to be the Grand Old Duke of York (put on a hat) and I need an army of children to follow all my commands. *(Invite a few children to stand in a line next to you while you give the commands).*

Give commands for the children to follow with the occasional silly or impossible commands to see whether the children will follow all the actions.

For example: stand to attention, salute, start marching, march up (arms up), march down (arms down), march forwards (move forwards in a line), march backwards (move backwards), march on the ceiling!! What's the matter? Why aren't you doing what I say? Ok then, march to the local shops to buy me some sweets!

Well, that old Duke seems like a very bossy friend. Actually, he wasn't really a friend but a commanding officer. His men were supposed to do what they were told, whatever they were told ... as part of their training. You do need to watch out with some friends, its ok not to agree with everything someone says you know! Yes, someone that you can trust shouldn't ask you to do anything wrong or hurtful.

Main Content: Jesus is both a friend and a commanding officer to his followers. He told his followers: "I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my father." (John 15:14) Christians believe that Jesus is someone that they can trust. I wonder if they always do what he says... and how they get along with each other.



Bible Story: Saul had had enough of Jesus' friends; they just kept popping up everywhere. He didn't agree with what they said, he hated what and how they worshiped, he believed that they were a very bad influence and was certain they were dangerous. The problem was that there seemed to be more and more of them. So, he was doing everything that he could to stop them from meeting up and inviting others to join them.

Before returning to heaven, Jesus had given his friends a job to do, a mission. He wanted them to tell everyone who would listen what they had seen and heard Jesus do. They believed that even though they could no longer see him, Jesus was still with them. When others joined their group, they would talk to Jesus in prayer and follow the things that he said. Even though they were very brave, Jesus' friends, or Christians as some called them, were afraid of Saul. Because of him, many of them had been put in prison.

One day something amazing happen. Jesus' friends began to hear stories about Saul. People were saying that he had changed. Apparently, he had seen Jesus and had become one of his friends too. He was traveling around telling everyone who would listen about how amazing Jesus is. Not many people believed him at first, it seemed rather suspicious. What if was just a trick so that he could get even more Christians in trouble.

Barnabas knew Jesus. He knew how he welcomed everyone who would come to him. So, he spent time with Saul. He believed Saul when he explained how Jesus had shown him that his ideas and behaviour towards the Christians were wrong. So, Barnabas chose to introduce Saul, or Paul as he now wanted to be called, to the rest of his friends. He vouched for him saying "if you trust me you can trust him, we all know how God likes to turn things around", and so Paul was welcomed into the group.

Paul and Barnabas became good friends. They travelled together, telling people all over the place about Jesus and encouraging the growing group of friends. They shared good times and bad times together, ups and downs. They didn't always agree about everything, but they did know that they both had one very good friend in common and that was enough for them to respect and care for each other.

Pupil Response: Wow! What a turn around. Imagine your worst enemy, the person you are most afraid of suddenly wanting to be friends. Would you trust them? Would you give them a chance?

Why was Barnabas willing to get to know Saul? Why did he take the risk and give him a chance? (because they had something in common - they were both followers of Jesus).

Paul and Barnabas didn't always agree about everything, they even fell out pretty badly once. But it didn't mean that Paul went back to chasing down all of Jesus' friends or that Barnabas decided never to trust someone again. It's ok to disagree with our friends. When we have been friend for a while, been through ups and downs, we know what to expect and can still choose to stay friends despite our differences.



Reflection: As we reflect on this story perhaps you might like to think about your friends.

Do you remember a new person joining your group of friends? Have you ever invited somebody you don't know to play with you? Have you ever been the new person?

I wonder whether you have ever stood on the outside of a circle of friends and wondered what they were talking about? Maybe you have felt left out, or suspicious about what they are saying.

Perhaps you are feeling inspired to get to know somebody new. It can take courage. You may need to make the first step. Making a new friend is always worth the risk of feeling a bit silly...

Think about any of your friends who you've fallen out with. Perhaps you've disagreed about something or you were upset by them being bossy and telling you what to do! Think about the things you have in common. Can you, like Paul & Barnabas choose to respect each other despite your differences and be united through the things you share?

Prayer: Dear God,

Thank you that you love to make new friends. Friendship is a good thing. Please help us to be good friends, to be brave, kind and trusting. To be open to making new friends wherever we go.

Amen.



6. Amazing Friendship: Carrying One Another

Themes/Values/Keywords: Friends want the best for one another. In our bible story 4 friends wanted Jesus to help their friend. He was helpless to do anything for himself. They had to work together to carry their friend to Jesus, overcoming many obstacles on their way. With determination, hard work and perseverance they did it and their friend's life was changed forever. Thorough a fun 'carrying challenge' and real-life examples of friends helping others, children will be inspired to consider how they can work together to make a difference to the lives of others. **Hope, Help, Teamwork, Determination, Perseverance**

Bible reference: Mark 2:1-12

Key Stage Relevance: KS1 & 2

Resources: 2 x tea towels, 2 x tennis ball (or similar) for the game/activity
4 narrow strips of A4 card held together with 3 split pins for the story

Introduction: As we continue our theme of worship on Amazing Friendship, today I wonder what you would say is the nicest or most memorable thing a **group** of your friends have ever done for you? Perhaps you were given a birthday surprise or treat? Maybe you were cheered on when taking part in a sports day to help you do well, or perhaps you've were sent a get-well card, if you were off school sick?

Why do you think your friends did this for you? *Because they like you. Perhaps they wanted to cheer you up? Maybe, it's because friends want the best for you?*

(Give a personal example to the children – my example would be for my birthday my group of running friends arranged a surprise day out for us all. I had no idea where they were taking me, but I ended up having one of the most memorable experiences of my life – Sailing around St Katherine's Dock in London in a Hot Tub Boat! We had so much fun together – show photo.)

During lockdown I heard some inspiring stories of children who all did amazing things to help support their friends who were going through difficult situations.

1. Daniel Hut, 8 years old from Tennessee, USA lost all his toys in a house fire. His classmates and teacher held a secret toy donation and surprised him with all his favourite toys – his reaction was priceless!
2. Becky Wass, from Cornwall encouraged her friends to design and send postcards to help cheer up self-isolated friends and neighbours in her community.
3. 10 boys from Hornchurch, Essex ran a 5k challenge to raise money to grant the wish of their friend (brave, 5 year old friend Jacob Tompkins) who is now hoping to go to Disneyland Paris following many years of hospital treatment.

What inspiring Children! It's amazing what can be achieved and what a difference we can make when we all work together for the good of others!

Game/Activity: Our game today is a team challenge. Two groups of four children each have to transport a tennis ball from one side of the room to the other on a tea towel. Each child holds one corner of the tea towel at face level. They are not allowed to use their other hand or touch the ball. When both teams have their tea towel in position, the worship leader places the ball in the centre of the tea towel. If they drop the ball they have to go back to the start. First team to finish wins!

Thank all the children for taking part.

Main Content: In our game each team had to work together to safely transport the ball to the finishing line. In our Bible story today, four friends wanted to get their friend to see Jesus. Let's find out how they got on.

Bible Story: The Four Friends (Jesus Heals a paralysed man) Mark 2: 1-12

As this story is told, every time there's a word in **BOLD** hold up the strips of card (held together with 3 split pins) to make the following shapes:

Mat

Walk

4 friends

Steps

Flat roofed house

Window (hold upright)

Hole (hold flat)

House with a pointed roof

Door (fold one strip back)



This story begins when Jesus returned to his hometown of Capernaum. Everyone had heard about it, and everyone wanted to see him and hear Jesus. That wasn't particularly good news for one man. He really wanted to see Jesus but couldn't because he couldn't **WALK**. He had to lay on his **MAT** bed all day long because his legs were just too wobbly. (Dangle/jiggle the walking legs).

Just then as he was feeling sad and helpless, he heard his friends coming **FOUR** of them. They were great mates these guys. They always seemed to know when he needed cheering up. But hey! What were they doing?

The **FOUR** friends lifted him up on his **MAT**, each one of them carrying a corner. They took him out of the **HOUSE**, carrying him down the road. In the distance they could see another **HOUSE**. As they got closer, they realised that there was no way they could take their friend inside. It was jam-packed! There were people everywhere, squeezing out of the **DOOR**, standing on the **STEPS** leading to the roof. (It was a **HOUSE** with a **FLAT ROOF**, not a **POINTED ROOF** like we have in this country.) "What's going on?" asked the man on the **MAT**.

"We're taking you to see Jesus", said his **FOUR** friends, "But..." "But what?" asked the man on the **MAT**. "Well, it seems like everyone else in town has had the same idea as us. There's no way we can get inside the **HOUSE** where Jesus is."

"Isn't there?" said one of the **FOUR** friends, carrying the **MAT** bed. "I think I know a way...come on!"

Without warning, The **FOUR** friends carried the man on the **MAT**, up the **STEPS** at the side of the **HOUSE** and onto the **FLAT ROOF**. Phew! That was hard work they thought, but having carried their friend so far, the **FOUR** friends were determined to get the man on the **MAT** to Jesus.

The man on the **MAT** then heard a scrabbling noise. "What are you doing?" he asked. His **FOUR** friends were making a **HOLE** in the roof of the **HOUSE** and before he knew it, they were gently lowering him down on his **MAT** through the **HOLE** until he was looking up into a kind, smiling face. It was Jesus! What was he saying? "Your sins are forgiven, my friend."

"Wow! Jesus has forgiven me." He thought. But wait ...Jesus was saying something else. "Get up, and walk". So, the man got up, picked up his **MAT** and did just that. He **WALKED** out of the **HOUSE** in full view of everyone. Everyone including his **FOUR** friends praised God in amazement at what they had seen.

Pupil Response: Wow! What a great bunch of friends the man on the **MAT** had.

Why do you think the 4 friends went to so much effort to help their friend? They wanted the best for him. Wanted to cheer him up. Wanted to help him do something for him that he couldn't do on his own.

What happened as a result of their help? The man was healed by Jesus. His life was changed for the better and he knew he had friends he could rely on.

Reflection: As we reflect on this story in the quietness perhaps you might like to think about your friends. I wonder whether you have noticed if any of your friends are



feeling helpless or are struggling to do things for themselves and need their friends to step in and support or carry them through difficult or challenging situations. Perhaps you are already feeling inspired with creative ways in which you could do something amazing to help a friend overcome any obstacles and help make a difference for the better.

Or perhaps you might be feeling like the man on the mat, needing the support of friends to help you get through? Christians believe that Jesus is our friend and in 1 Peter 5:7 it says, "Cast all your anxiety (or worries) on Jesus because he cares for you". He wants to carry our burdens because he cares for us. Our friends care for us and want the best for us too so why not also let them know how they can help you.

Prayer: Dear God,

Thank you for our friends who help carry us through difficult times. Inspire and help us to think of ways that we can work together to help others who need our support. Thank you that we can carry all our cares and worries to you and that you have the power to change lives. Amen.



7. Amazing Friendship: Tough Times of Change

Themes/Values/Keywords: Change is inevitable. Some people love change but for many, change can be scary and makes us feel anxious. We may try to resist it, or try to stop it, but we can't control everything in our lives. Perhaps, what we should be asking is: how do we respond to change and how does friendship help us work through times of change? As we look at the story of Ruth and Naomi, we see how Ruth's faithful friendship to Naomi changed everything for them both. A happy ending to a sad story. Ruth was able to see past her own loss and show incredible kindness to Naomi. She was able to risk losing everything to be kind – and out of that kindness came a wonderful new beginning. **Change, Kindness, Faithful, Sad, loss, Happy, Hope**

Bible reference: Naomi and Ruth (Ruth 1-4)

Key Stage Relevance: KS1 & 2

Resources: Paper & Pens or Board for the Game. Spot the difference pictures.

Introduction: I wonder – how good are you at CHANGE?

The psychologists (those are the people who study our minds and behaviour for their job) tell us that humans don't really like change much, on the whole. Apparently, when things change, it makes us feel as if we are not in control and that makes us feel afraid?

What do you think? Do you find change scary? Or do you rather like it?

Game/Activity: Choose the option that best suits your setting.

Either A: Invite some children to take part in a few change challenges and see how well they adapt.

- Ask children to stand on one leg for 20 seconds, then ask them to CHANGE and stand on their other leg for 20 seconds. Was that leg harder to balance on?
- Ask children to write their name on a board/piece of paper (large enough for people to see!), show their examples. Now ask them to do the same thing using their other hand! Not easy is it?! It probably takes a lot of practice to get used to doing that.

Ask the children how hard they found making the change. How did it make them feel? What might have helped them?

Or B: Ask the children to think about ... What is the biggest change that you have ever experienced in your life? Give the children a few minutes to share their change stories with the person sitting next to them. Say, "I will tell you when you can start. And when I do this (!) you need to stop talking and look back this way".

OR C: Spot the difference game – either show a picture on the big screen. Show the same picture with a few changes and see if children can spot what has changed.



Or have a pair of kids to the front. Everyone has a good look at them for a few minutes. Then they go out of the room for a brief moment and return with something changed. It has to be visible but needs to be subtle. Perhaps they might have a sock down slightly lower, or ask them to change their hairstyle, or swap jumpers! The other children have to guess what has changed.

Main Content: I guess pretty much EVERYONE has experienced more change than usual over the last 12 months? There are some changes that I'm guessing LOTS of you experienced during lock down? Like parents working from home? YOU working from home! Lots of walks?!

There might have been some exciting changes – you might have moved house, for example, or you might have a new brother or sister?

But there might have been some changes that made life a lot harder? Someone you know or someone you love might have got really ill or even died? Someone in your family might have lost their job? Someone you know might have become very, very sad?

In our Bible story today, we are going to hear about a young woman whose name was Ruth. She had gone through a terrible change – her husband had died even though she was still very young and they had not been married for long at all.

It would have been so easy for her, at such a hard time, to cling like mad to everything she knew really well – but instead, she lovingly gives up everything familiar to her and stays with her mother-in-law to support her.

Bible Story: Ruth & Naomi (Ruth 1-4)

Naomi was lonely. Naomi was sad. She lived in a place called Moab – but Moab was not her home country – and she missed her home – Bethlehem. You've no doubt heard of that town – the place in Israel where a very, very famous baby was born 2000 years ago? But our story today took place nearly 2000 years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

The name "Bethlehem" in Hebrew, means "House of Bread" – and Naomi had loved living there until, the town stopped living up to its name. There had been a terrible famine and Bethlehem became a place where there was no bread. None at all. And so, Naomi's husband had told her "We have to leave here. We have to take our two sons and find somewhere where we can survive through this famine." And that's how Naomi ended up in Moab, so far away from home.

They had survived the famine. Both their sons had grown up and married Moabite women. But then another tragedy had happened. Naomi's husband had died and very soon after that so had both her sons. It's difficult for most of us to imagine how sad Naomi must have been. She must have felt as if she were completely broken. She even asked people to stop calling her Naomi – because that name means "Pleasant," "Gentle," "Beautiful". "Don't call me that," she said. "You must call me "Mara."



Mara means “bitter”. Isn’t that so sad? We all know I guess, when you put something in your mouth, and you are expecting it to be a good taste, but it tastes bitter? What do we want to do? We want to spit it out, don’t we? We want to get rid of the bitterness. So did Naomi - She hated what had happened to her. And I don’t think we can blame her. But she had no way to get rid of the bitterness.

So now Naomi was a “widow” and so were both Orpah and Ruth, her daughters in law. Naomi decided that she would do what I’m pretty sure you or I would have done in her situation – she decided she would go “Home” to Bethlehem.

Both Orpah and Ruth said they’d come with her – that was kind of them. To offer to leave their own land, their own friends and customs and keep her company, even though they must have been so sad themselves.

But Naomi said to them “No – it’s better for you to stay here with your own people. You are both still young. You can marry again, maybe even have a family of your own. You don’t want to follow a sad old woman like me to a foreign place.”

So Orpah, hugged her mother-in-law and said goodbye. But Ruth hugged her mother-in-law and said, “I’m coming with you.” And even though Naomi argued with her and tried to stop her, she couldn’t. Ruth said “Wherever you go I will go. Wherever you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God will be my God. Where you die, I will die.”

Wow! I wonder – what was Ruth thinking? She was dealing with her own grief. Her husband had just died too. And yet, she seemed to be thinking only of Naomi.

Instead of being afraid of change – she welcomed it, she walked straight into it. “Embraced it”, is another way to put it - Even though, it was a sacrifice. And she must have been such a wonderful comfort to Naomi. She was her daughter in law, but, at that moment, she was also her **friend**. And the **best kind of friend**, don’t you think?

When the two women arrived in Bethlehem, Ruth went off straight away to try to get a job. It was difficult because she was from another country. Not everyone was kind to her. But one man was. His name was Boaz. He was a wealthy farmer. He owned many fields and employed many people. He was a kind man and when he saw Ruth arrive, he made sure that she had work and that she was treated with respect and that she was paid well for her work. So that evening, when she went home to Naomi, she had a wonderful bag full of grain to make into bread for them both – Bread in Bethlehem, the “House of Bread.”

Naomi wondered – could it be possible that there was hope for her future?

Day after day, Ruth went to Boaz’ fields. And night after night she came home with food for her and Naomi. They were able to start building a new life together.

Now, I wonder whether any of you can see where this story is going?

How many of you like a good romance? Well, if you don’t, I apologise, because this story is about to become a romantic one!



You see, what I didn't tell you about Boaz was that he was a single man – he had no wife. He had been impressed with Ruth right from the start because he had heard about her kindness to Naomi. But it didn't take him long to realise that she was a rather lovely young woman in all sorts of ways.

And Ruth? Guess what – she had also noticed Boaz...

Well – I won't bore you the whole story, because it's full of some of that slushy grown up stuff – But the important thing is, that after not very long, Boaz asked Ruth to marry him, and she said "Yes." Ruth and Boaz were married, and Naomi came to live with them, as was the custom in those days.

And not that long afterwards Ruth and Boaz had a baby boy. They called him Obed, which means "God's servant," And he was to be the grandfather of a King – the great King David. And when Naomi held her beautiful grandson in her arms, she knew that her bitterness was ending – a new life and a new hope had begun.

Pupil Response: So then - How does friendship work through times of change?

I think it's wonderful in this story – how Ruth's faithful friendship to Naomi changed everything for them both. What a happy ending to a sad story! Ruth didn't know how much happiness was in store for them both when she decided that she would go with her mother-in-law. But she went anyway.

We have talked about the fact that most of us don't get on very well with change. And sometimes, if we are a bit scared of change, we try to resist it. We try to stop it happening. But we can't control everything in our lives. Change will happen.

Perhaps, the more important question is how do we respond to change?

Naomi became so sad that she lost sight of everything except her sadness, and it made her full of bitterness. Ruth was able to see past her own loss and show incredible kindness to Naomi. She was able to risk losing everything to be kind – and out of that kindness came a wonderful new beginning.

Reflection: Let's now take some time to reflect on the changes we've been through and the changes we are yet to face. How important are/were your friends in helping you cope with the change? What is your attitude to change – do you resist it, or are you prepared to embrace it as Ruth did?

Those of you in year 6 will be experiencing lots of change as you prepare to go to another school. Having friends alongside you can give you support and encouragement to cope well with all the changes.

As we come to the end of our worship series on Amazing Friendship, I pray that you might know true friendship, with others and with God. No matter what you are going through I hope that you will be inspired to appreciate your friends and be encouraged to make your friendships stronger so that whatever you may face in the future you are not alone, because, we all need friends!