



SEPTEMBER THEME

**LUNCHROOM**  
Make Space at the Table

**BIBLE STORY**

Romans 15:7; Acts 9:26-28  
(Acts 9:1-25, 26:12-18)

Take on Thee | Accept One Another

**BOTTOM LINE**

Friends accept one another

**MEMORY VERSE**

“A friend loves at all times. He is there to help when trouble comes.”

Proverbs 17:17, NIV

**LIFE APP**

**Friendship** | Using your words and actions to show others you care

**BASIC TRUTH**

I should treat others the way I want to be treated, and with God’s help... I can!

**FOR LEADERS ONLY**

**GOD VIEW:** the connection between **FRIENDSHIP** and God’s character, as shown through God’s big story.

**This WEEK: Key Question**—What does it mean to accept a friend? Even kids will tell you that some people are easier to get along with than others. But just because we get along with some people better than others, doesn’t mean we ignore them or treat them poorly. We’ll help kids figure out how they can be friendly and accept others in a way that honors God.

In **Romans 15:7**, Paul writes, “Christ has accepted you. So accept one another in order to bring praise to God” (NirV). We see this played out perfectly through Paul and Barnabas. Paul had a terrible reputation, one that was well deserved. But after his encounter with Jesus, Paul changed. Barnabas believed that about Paul, accepted him, and stood up for him as he introduced Paul to the rest of the apostles.

**Bottom Line: Friends accept one another.** We pray that kids start to realize that regardless of how people dress, what they own, or are able to do, we are called to accept them and show them how much God loves them with our friendship.

**SOCIAL: PROVIDING TIME FOR FUN INTERACTION**

Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Get ready to experience today’s story.

Before kids arrive, **PRAY** for each regular attendee by name. Pray for those who might visit your group for the first time. Pray especially for the kids who have a hard time accepting those who are different from them or those they don’t have chemistry with. Pray that they would understand that God wants us to accept all people, no matter who they are. Ask God to give kids the wisdom to be accepting of everyone and also discerning of whom they choose to befriend.

**•• EARLY ARRIVER IDEA**

**Made to Connect** | An activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

**What You Need:** No supplies needed

**What You Do:**

- Ask kids about the phrase “never judge a book by its cover.” Ask if anyone knows what that phrase means.
- Then talk with kids about times when you misjudged someone. Maybe you thought they would like classical music, but they like grunge rock; or maybe you thought they would like Hawaiian pizza, but they only like veggies on their pizza.



- Ask if kids have ever experienced that with someone they had just met.

## •• WHY DO YOU LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR?

*Made to Move | An activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body*

**What You Need:** No supplies needed

### **What You Do:**

- Ask one group member to stand, Move his chair (*and any extras*) away from the table.
- The person standing points at two people sitting beside each other and asks one person, “Why do you love your neighbor?”
- The person being asked has to say something that the two of them have in common. For example: “I love my neighbor because, just like me, he’s wearing jeans.”
- What kids decide to say can be anything, but the phrase needs to be consistent. “I love my neighbor because, like me, \_\_\_\_\_.”  
—Some more examples include: she has long hair, he has two eyes, he is wearing sandals, she is wearing a dress, etc.
- Then anyone in the circle not wearing jeans (*or having the characteristic mentioned*) has to get up and change seats.
- While this is happening, the standing person tries to sit down in an empty seat.
- The new person caught without a seat will choose a new pair of people for the next round.

**What You Say:** “It’s pretty common to like people who are similar to us in some way, but there’s a very important thing that makes all of us alike and means that we should show love to everyone even if they seem different. **[Transition] In Sunday CM worship/WOW family worship we’ll learn about/we learned about someone who had a hard time being accepted by the early church members.**”

*[Sunday Leaders: Lead your group to the Family Room for Children’s Ministry worship. Wednesday Leaders: Continue with the study.]*

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## GROUPS: CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

## •• 3 TEAMS, 1 GOAL [Talk about God | Bible Story Review | Application Activity]

*Made to Play | An activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group*

**What You Need:** Masking tape, a ball-pit ball

### **What You Do:**

- Using the tape, set up a “goal” on one side of your small group space.
- On the other side of your small group area, make a starting line.
- Then divide the group into three teams: Team Barnabas, Team Paul, and Team Ananias.  
—Team Paul can kick the ball toward or into the goal but can only take three steps at a time.  
—Team Ananias can kick the ball toward or into the goal, but they have to remain in place in a line along the center of the game area.  
—Team Barnabas can only kick the ball to pass it to another player (*they can’t kick the ball into the goal*), but they can take unlimited steps.  
—Instruct kids that no one is allowed to run during the game.
- Position Team Ananias around the center of the game area, and line Teams Paul and Barnabas up at the starting line.



- Give the ball to a Team Barnabas player to start the game.
- All the teams will work together to get the ball into the goal, while following the rules for their specific teams.

**What You Say:** “In this game, we needed everyone to work together in order to achieve our goals! Because Jesus accepted Saul, Barnabas accepted Saul, too, even when his other friends rejected Saul. It takes more than just being a nice person to be accepting of everyone, especially when it comes to someone who hasn’t been nice in the past or someone you don’t really get along with. To do that, we need rely on the love of Jesus to help us. When we remember how Jesus has accepted us, the Holy Spirit can help us to be willing to reach out and accept those who are different from us. The love of Jesus can help us to look deeper than differences and accept others based on the fact that Jesus has accepted us and Jesus wants to accept them. So remember this: **[Bottom Line] Friends accept one another.**”

•• **I WOULD ACCEPT YOU IF...** [Live for God | Application Activity]

*Made to Imagine | An activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play and reenactment*

**What You Need:** Copy paper; marker

**What You Do:**

- Start off by asking kids to help you make a list of good qualities a friend could have and some not-so-good qualities.
- If they seem stuck, here are some examples of both types of qualities:
  - Good: generous, willing to share, honest, kind, fun
  - Not-so-good: selfish, dishonest, controlling, bossy, mean
- Then play a game similar to “Honey, If You Love Me You’ll Smile.”
  - Get kids into a circle and choose one volunteer to go first.
  - That volunteer has three chances to get one of his peers to smile.
  - He must say to his friend, “I would accept you if \_\_\_\_\_,” and then fill in the blank with one of the qualities (*good or bad*) from the list you just made. (*The point is that you’ll end up mixing good qualities with bad qualities, to help kids understand they should accept a friend no matter what.*)
  - To get a friend to smile, kids can make crazy faces, talk in weird voices, fill in the blank with random hilarious things (*such as, “I would accept you if you squawk like a chicken”*), etc.
  - Whenever a kid gets his peer to crack a smile, that kid is the next person up to try to get a friend to smile.
  - If the volunteer fails to get a friend to smile after three tries, pick a new volunteer.
  - If your group seems to be having a hard time loosening up and making their friends smile, try to get them started by doing a few of your own!

**What You Say:** “That was kind of a silly way to talk about accepting others, but it gets the point across. That’s how we should accept others: no matter what they’ve done, who they are, or if they [*insert a funny quality or something funny that happened during the game*]. Jesus accepts us and offers to free us from our not-so-good qualities. Because of that, we can do the same for our friends. **[Make It Personal] (Tell about a person you accepted, who then changed because of the love of Jesus.) [Bottom Line] Friends accept one another.**”

•• **A VERSE TO TAKE WITH YOU** [Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

*Made to Play | An activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group*

**What You Need:** No supplies needed

**What You Do:**

- Divide your group into three smaller groups and instruct them to move around to make a left side, middle, and right side.
- Share today’s verse, Romans 15:7, NIV: “Christ has accepted you. So accept one another in order to bring praise to God.”

