

SEPTEMBER THEME

**LUNCHROOM**

**Make Space at the Table**

**BIBLE STORY**

**John 13:34; 1 Samuel 20 (18-19)**  
Holding Out for the Arrows | Love  
One Another

**BOTTOM LINE**

Friends love one another

**MEMORY VERSE**

"A friend loves at all times. They are  
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 makes someone a good friend? At this phase in their life, kids are starting to experience the ups and downs of friendship. That's why we start with a foundational question to help them wrestle with what God says about having strong friendships with others. If they can recognize the qualities God desires for friendship, they'll not only choose friends who exhibit those, but hopefully will put them into practice for themselves.

We start the month with something Jesus said in **John 13:34**, "*I give you a new command. Love one another. You must love one another, just as I have loved you*" (NIV). Along with that, we'll take a look at one of the most famous friendships in the entire Bible: David and Jonathan. These guys went through a lot together. From making a promise to help each other to escaping the dangers of Jonathan's own father, King Saul, they showed us exactly what it meant for friends to love each other.

**Bottom Line: Friends love one another.** Loving our friends often means putting aside what we want to give our friends what they need. We pray that kids will learn how they can show love to their friends in everyday situations at home and school.

**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. Ask God to prepare their hearts to dig deeper into what it means to be a better, more Christ-like friend. Pray that kids would walk away from today ready to love their friends in more tangible ways and that God would give them the courage to do it.

**•• 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 if they have ever given away anything they owned to a friend or to someone else.
- **[Make It Personal]** (Tell kids about something that you have given away to a friend. It could be something you bought as a gift, or it could be something you owned and

*really liked, but you gave to a friend to help them out.)*

## •• FOOD FIGHT

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

**What You Need:** Colored paper, tape

### **What You Do:**

- Tape a line down the center of your small group table to divide your area into two sides.
- Divide the group into two teams and assign each team to one side of the line.
- Explain that each team has to stay on its own side throughout the game.
- Crumple the paper into balls and place them along the line.
- Explain that you will have a “food fight” with the paper balls. The goal is to be the team with the least amount of paper on your side of the line at the end of each round.
- Let the kids imagine what kind of food each color is before you begin; the grosser the better!
- Let each team nominate a “cafeteria person” who will try to dive and block the other team’s throws, saving their own team members from getting hit with the food.
- Each round should last about 30-45 seconds; let the groups play as many rounds as you have time for.
- After each round, do a general estimate of which team has the least amount of paper on their side, and select a different kid to be the “cafeteria person.”

**What You Say:** “In this game, one person tried to save the rest of you from getting hit with food in the food fight. **[Transition]** In Sunday CM worship/WOW family worship, we are going to learn/we learned about someone who stepped out to do what he could to try to save someone else.”

*[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.

## •• NOT SO SECRET MESSAGE [Live for God | Application Activity]

*Made to Reflect | An activity that creates space for personal understanding and application*

**What You Need:** Bible, paper, pens

### **What You Do:**

- Read John 13:34 to the group.
- Remind your few that in our Bible story, Jonathan sent a message to David and showed love to David by helping him.
- Ask kids to choose a friend and write out a message promising to help that friend with something.
- They can choose any friend they want to help, and they can choose any task to help their friend with.
- Some suggestions: help with homework, help with chores, help by taking their lunch tray to the trash for them, help by giving them a gift, or help them specifically with something they’re going through or struggling with.

**What You Say:** “It’s great to have feelings of love for our friends, but acting on those feelings—especially helping a friend with something they need—brings us even closer as friends. Loving a friend means you DO something for that friend. **[Make It Personal]** *(Talk about a time you and a friend were brought closer together by one of you doing something for the other.)* **[Bottom Line]** Friends love one another, so make sure you do that thing you wrote down!”

●● **LOVE COMPETITION** [Talk about God | Bible Story Review | Application Activity]

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

**What You Need:** Tape, copy paper, notecards

**What You Do:**

- Divide the group into two teams and tape off an equal area (roughly 3x3) of the floor for each team.
- Give each team a stack of paper to use to cover the space you taped off for them.
- One team will get normal-sized sheets of paper and one will get notecards.
- Teams will race to use the papers to try to cover their space entirely in paper.
- The only rule is that only one person can be placing a sheet of paper down at one time. Teams must line up in front of their taped-off space and take turns placing the sheets of paper down.
- After a couple minutes, it should become obvious that the team with the smaller pieces of paper has no chance of winning.
- Stop the game and read John 13:34 to the group.
- Challenge the kids to figure out how to show love by making the race fair.
- Encourage them to make sure everyone’s ideas are heard and guide them to come up with a solution that equalizes the playing field.
- Below are a couple solutions, in case your group gets stuck:
  - Throw out the small paper and both teams play with the big paper *(or the opposite)*.
  - Every other person trades paper with a person on the other team so the paper sizes are evenly distributed.
- Once the solution has been enacted, play the game again *(the fair way)* and declare a winner.

**What You Say:** “When we see friends in an unfair situation, like we did in this game, we should see what we might be able to do to help. David was Jonathan’s friend and recognized that he was in an unfair situation. Jonathan could have held onto his power or wealth or even the throne. But instead, Jonathan gave all of those things up to help his friend David. Think about some things that you might give up in order to help your friends. Friends sacrifice for each other because **[Bottom Line]** friends love one another.”

●● **A FRIEND LOVES** [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:** Bible, the crumpled up paper from the “Food Fight” activity

**What You Do:**

- As a group, talk about different types of “troubles” our friends might experience. *(For example: When they are sick; then they are lonely; when they do poorly on a test or sports activity)*
- Next, try to come up with at least one way you could love your friends when they are experiencing each type of trouble you talked about earlier.
- Now, using the following guidelines, show your group how to look up Proverbs 17:17 in the bible.

**Finding verses with 2nd and 3rd graders:** Open the Bible to the front and find the table of contents. Show the kids what the page looks like. Then, lead them to find Proverbs in the list under “Old Testament.” When the kids find Proverbs, lead them to look at the page number beside the word. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find Proverbs. Help the kids find the page. When they find Proverbs, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find chapter 17. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find verse 17 in chapter 17.

- Read the verse aloud to your group. Then, break the verse into sections and have them repeat it after you. A friend loves (*A friend loves*) at all times. (*at all times.*) They are there to help (*They are there to help*) when trouble comes (*when trouble comes*). Repeat this until your whole group can say the verse from memory.

- Hold up one of the crumpled up paper balls

- Explain that they're going to toss the ball to each other, and every time they catch it, they should say a phrase from the memory verse that you just learned. (*First person to catch the ball says the first phrase, the second person says the second phrase, etc.*)

- When your group has mastered that activity, add an additional challenge by adding another ball. Now they will need to be paying close attention to the phrase that the person throwing the ball to them is saying, so they know what they need to say next. Other kids in the group will probably be saying another part of the verse at the same time!

**-- NOTES --**

**PRAY AND SEND** [Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

**Made to Reflect | An activity that creates space for personal understanding and application**

**What You Need:** The notes kids wrote in the "Not So Secret Message" activity (*if you didn't do that activity with your group, do it quickly now*)

**What You Do:**

- Gather kids together in a circle and ask them to each hold the message they wrote, promising to help a friend with something.

- When everyone seems ready, pray for the group and let the kids say their friends' names out loud all at once each time you pause. For example: "Lord, today we pray for (*pause*). Please be with (*pause*) today. Help (*pause*) with any problem that might come up and help us know how to best love our friends. Amen!"

**What You Say:** "A powerful way to show love to our friends is to regularly pray for them. Be sure to pray for your friends this week and ask God to give you a chance to help your friend in the way you wrote down. **[Bottom Line] Friends love one another.**"

As adults arrive to pick up, mention the friend that their child has chosen to pray for this week. Be sure to have kids share their promise to help a friend with their parents. Give each child a weekly GodTime card. Remind kids of today's **[Bottom Line] friends love one another** and encourage them finish the memory verse: "A friend loves \_\_\_\_\_ (*at all times.*)"