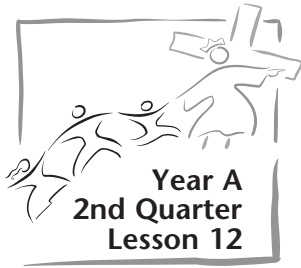


LESSON



Special Friends

COMMUNITY

I show love to my family and friends.

References

John 3:1–21; 7:45–53; 19:38–42; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 167–177.

Memory Verse

“A friend loves at all times” (Proverbs 17:17, NIV).

Objectives

The children will:

Know that Nicodemus was Jesus’ loyal friend.

Feel a desire to be Jesus’ friend.

Respond by telling others about Jesus’ love.

The Message



Friends always care for each other.

Getting Ready to Teach

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Nicodemus visits Jesus because he wants to know more about Him and why He is doing the things He does. Jesus answers Nicodemus’s questions and shows him that God loves him. Nicodemus wants to think about all he has heard, so he goes home and continues to study. Later he becomes one of Jesus’ loyal friends and tells others about His love.

This is a lesson about community.

When Nicodemus became one of Jesus’ friends, he told others that Jesus loves them. Jesus’ friends tell others about Him so they can join the family of God.

Teacher Enrichment

“The lessons that had fallen from the Savior’s lips had greatly impressed

TWELVE

Program Outline			
LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	A. <i>Sharing With Friends</i> B. <i>Helping a Friend</i> C. <i>Treasure Hunt</i>	puzzles, books, Bible games none paper, feathers, or leaves
* Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	See page 126. *Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.	offering device with pictures of families and friends
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story	long scarves
		Bible Study	Bible
		Memory Verse	Bible
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	A. <i>Jesus Is My Friend</i> B. <i>Be a Friend</i>	crayons or colored pencils, picture of Jesus to color (see p. 143) none
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Heart-to-Heart</i>	copies of heart drawing (see p. 141), scissors, crayons or pencils, stickers (Jesus or nature scenes)

him, and he desired to learn more of these wonderful truths" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 167).

"For a time Nicodemus did not publicly acknowledge Christ, but he watched His life, and pondered His teachings. In the Sanhedrin council he repeatedly thwarted the schemes of the priests to destroy Him.

...
"After the Lord's ascension, when the disciples were scattered by persecution,

Nicodemus came boldly to the front. He employed his wealth in sustaining the infant church. . . . In the time of peril he who had been so cautious and questioning was firm as a rock, encouraging the faith of the disciples, and furnishing means to carry forward the work of the gospel" (*ibid.*, pp. 176, 177).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 1.

Teaching the Lesson

Welcome

Welcome children at the door. Ask them how their week has been—what they’re pleased/troubled about. Ask them about their sharing project from last week’s lesson.



Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- simple jigsaw puzzles
- books
- Bible games

A. Sharing With Friends

Tell the children you will give them a puzzle, a game, or a book to read if they can find a friend to do it with them. After they find a friend, let them choose something to do for a few minutes.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **How did you feel while playing with a friend? Was it fun? It’s nice to do things with our friends. It’s nice to do things for our friends too. I’m thinking of someone who was such a good friend. He did many nice things for his special friend. And that reminds me of our message for today:**



Friends always care for each other.

Say that with me.

B. Helping a Friend

Have the children sit in a circle on the floor. Ask them to stand up without using their hands. Next, have them sit down with a partner. They may use their hands only to help each other. Try it two or three times until they can do it.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **What did you find easier, getting up by yourself or getting up when your friend helped you? How did you feel when it was hard to get up? How did it feel when someone came to help you? Isn’t it nice to have friends? Friends help each other. And that’s what today’s message is about.**



Friends always care for each other.

Say that with me.

C. Treasure Hunt

In advance, hide feathers or leaves in the room.

Ask the children to find a friend to play with (or if their number is uneven, have them form groups of three). Give each pair or group a sheet of paper and ask them to find the feathers or leaves you have hidden. Instruct them to put their found treasure on the sheet of paper. Each child holds one side of the paper as the children bring it back to you.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **What do you like about playing with a friend? Do you think it was easy to find the feathers (leaves)? Why?** (Because there were two or three of us looking for them.) **Was it easy to walk with the feather on the paper? Why? Did it help to do it with a friend? It's nice to do things with friends. Friends help each other; friends have good times together. I like having friends. And it's nice to have friends who help us. Those are real friends. Today we're going to talk about some special friends. And that reminds me of our message for today:**



Friends always care for each other.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- sheets of paper
- feathers or dry tree leaves (something that "flies" easily)

2

Bible Lesson

Experiencing the Story

You Need:

- long scarves (fabric scarves, or you can make them with a rectangular piece of crepe paper)

Say: **I'm going to give each one of you a scarf. I want you to listen to the story and watch and do everything I do with my scarf. Can you do that?** Have adult helpers assist the children as needed.

Read or tell the story.

Nicodemus was an important man and a leader of the Jews. Many people listened to the things he said. *[Place the scarf near your ear as if listening. Children do the same.]* Nicodemus was wise. He had been reading his Bible scrolls for a long time. *[Roll the scarf to make a scroll.]* Can you make a scroll like the one I just made? Just roll the scarf from both ends. At the time Nicodemus lived, scrolls were the books they had, and the Bible was in a scroll. They opened it *[show how]* like this and read.

Nicodemus had read in his Bible scroll that it was time for the Savior, the Messiah, to come. He had heard a lot about Jesus, and he was wondering if Jesus was the Messiah. Nicodemus wanted to have a little talk with Jesus. But he had a problem. He was an important man. *[Make a knot with your scarf and put it on your head to look like a turban.]* He didn't want his friends to know that he wanted to see Jesus. So he thought and he thought. *[Put your hand on your face as if thinking.]* Finally! He had it! He was going to find out where Jesus was staying. Then he could go see Him late at night when everything was dark *[put your scarf over your eyes]*, when nobody could see him.

And that's what he did. One night he walked quietly through town. *[Move*

your feet quietly as if walking; have the children do it too.] He looked this way and that way. *[Look around to one side, then the other.]* He looked down and hid his head between his shoulders *[do it]*; perhaps he put something on his head so nobody could recognize him. *[Put the scarf over your head.]*

Quickly he found the place where Jesus was staying. Jesus was in the garden. He was happy to see Nicodemus. *[Wave your scarf or form a big smile with it.]* Nicodemus and Jesus talked and talked. *[Move one end of the scarf, then the other end, to make one and the other speak, facing each other.]* Jesus told Nicodemus that God loved him, that God loves everybody.

Nicodemus wanted to think more about all the things Jesus told him. So he went home, hiding from everybody along the way. *[Hide behind your scarf.]*

Nicodemus kept reading his Bible scrolls. He went often to listen to Jesus. After some time he decided he wanted to be Jesus' friend. That made him so happy! *[Wave with your scarf.]*

One day some important people wanted to hurt Jesus. They didn't like Him. But Nicodemus liked Him. He had been Jesus' secret friend for some time. *[Put the scarf over your head.]* He didn't want these people to hurt Jesus. So he stood up and defended Jesus. *[Put the scarf around your neck.]* The other people didn't like it, but they liked Nicodemus, so they didn't hurt Jesus.

Later on Nicodemus stood up for his friend Jesus again. But this time the important people with whom Nicodemus worked knew he was Jesus' friend. They had an important meeting and someone said, "Don't invite Nicodemus to this meeting; he is

Jesus' friend." *[Shake your scarf.]*

When Jesus went to heaven, Nicodemus was still Jesus' friend. He loved Jesus so much that he wanted everyone to know about Him! People who love Jesus care about one another. Can you say that with me? *[Repeat.]*

[Help the children link their scarves by tying them together. Or have them overlap their scarves so they hold the end of their own scarf and the end of their neighbor's scarf. Make a big circle with all the scarves tied together.] Good friends care about one another. They work together. They share, as we all are sharing scarves now. They are good friends, just as Nicodemus was Jesus' friend.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **What do you like to do with your friends? What do you like to do for your friends? What did Nicodemus do for Jesus? How do you feel when your friends are nice to you? How do you feel when you do something nice for your friends? People who love Jesus care about one another.** Repeat with children. **They are good friends, friends who love at all times.**



Friends always care for each other.

Say that with me.

Bible Study

Open your Bible to John 3. Point to verses 1-21 and say: **This is where today's story is found in God's Word, the Bible.** Point to each word as you read aloud verses 1 and 2.

You Need:
 Bible

Debriefing

Say: **And this is what Jesus told Nicodemus that night.** Point to verse 16 and read it aloud. Say: **Jesus loves us so much. He wants to be our special friend. Raise your hand if you want Jesus to be your special friend.**

Memory Verse

Turn in your Bible to Proverbs 17:17. Point to the text and say: **This is where today's memory verse is found in God's Word, the Bible.** Point to each word as you read the text aloud.

You Need:
 Bible

Use the following motions to teach the verse. Repeat until children know the verse well.

"A friend

Hold hands with a friend.



loves

Cross arms over chest.



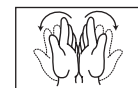
at all times."

Spread arms wide.



Proverbs 17:17

Put palms together; then open.



PRAYER AND PRAISE



Fellowship

Welcome all of the children, particularly visitors; celebrate birthdays and make announcements. Review last week's memory verse.

Suggested Songs

"Something Nice" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 261)

"Let Us Do Good" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 263)

"Helping Song" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 288)

"Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 202)

"Jesus Loves Me" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 102)

Mission

Use a story from *Children's Mission*.

Offering

Continue to use the offering device for this month. Say: **When we love Jesus and care about each other, we want to help the people we care about. One way of caring and helping is with our offerings, so other people can get to know Jesus. We can show others we love them when we bring our offerings to Sabbath School.**

Prayer

Kneel or sit in a circle. Hold hands. Have the children pray, "Thank You, Jesus, for (child's name to their right)." After saying this, they squeeze their neighbor's hand, and that child prays. Continue around the circle until all have prayed.

* Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.

3

Applying the Lesson

A. Jesus Is My Friend

You Need:

- crayons or colored pencils
- picture of Jesus to color (see p. 143)

Distribute materials and have the children color the picture (see page 143) while singing "Jesus Loves Me" together. Talk about ways Jesus shows His love for us and why we want Him to be our friend. Encourage the children to take their picture home and put it where they will see it every day.

what ways does He show that He cares for us? Friends care about each other, don't they? How can we show that we care about our friend Jesus? Yes, one way is to tell others about Him. Another is to do what He asks us to do. Jesus cares about us and we care about Him. Let's remember . . .



Friends always care for each other.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **How do we know that Jesus loves us? In**

Say that with me.

B. Be a Friend

Read the following scenarios to the children, allowing time after each to ask:

How can you be a friend to that person?

1. Sammy just moved to a new street. He doesn't know anyone yet. (Smile; say hello; ask him to play.)
2. John's dad lost his job so he can't buy Christmas toys for John. (Share a toy; buy him a new toy, etc.)
3. Crystal is new at Sabbath School. She looks shy and scared. (Sit next to her; talk to her; invite her to do the activities.)
4. Sarah has only one arm. Someone is making fun of her. (Tell that person to stop; comfort Sarah; ask Sarah to play with you.)
5. Mark asks you why you go to

Sabbath School. (Tell him about Jesus and why you love Him; invite Mark to Sabbath School.)

Debriefing

Allow response times as you ask: **Is it easy or hard to be a friend? Why?** (Friends care about each other.) **Who is your best friend? I hope it is Jesus. Jesus cares about us, and we care about Him. How can you show that you care about our friend Jesus? Remember our message:**



Friends always care for each other.

4

Sharing the Lesson**Heart-to-Heart**

In advance, copy the two heart designs from page 141 onto light-colored construction paper, one for each child.

Distribute supplies. Have the children cut out the hearts and trace over the words, then fold the hearts and add a sticker to the cover.

Say: **This is something you can share with a friend today. Think of someone, a friend of yours, with whom you want to share Jesus' love today.**

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **You**

have made a nice heart-to-heart booklet to share with someone today. Who it will be? A family member? A neighborhood friend?

How do you think that person will feel? Do you want to share Jesus' love with others? Friends share good things with each other. Remember:



Friends always care for each other.

Say that with me.

You Need:

(for each child)

- copies of heart drawing (see p. 141)
- scissors
- crayons or pencils
- stickers (Jesus or nature scenes)

Closing

Close with prayer. After prayer, repeat the memory verse and hug each other.

STUDENT LESSON

Special Friends

References

John 3:1–21;
7:45–53; 19:38–
42; *The Desire
of Ages*, pp. 167–
177

Memory Verse

“A friend loves at
all times” (Prov-
erbs 17:17, NIV).

The Message

Friends always
care for each
other.

Do you have a special friend? What do you do with your special friend? Did you know Jesus had special friends too?

Nicodemus opened the door just a tiny little bit. The night was dark. There wasn't anybody on the street. He closed the door gently and walked to the city gate.

While he walked he thought about the new teacher. He had listened to Him teach. Nicodemus had studied his Bible scrolls, and he was sure this new teacher was someone sent by God. Nicodemus thought this new teacher was the promised Savior, the Messiah they had been waiting for, but he wanted to be sure.

Nicodemus had important friends. And this teacher was not popular. Nicodemus' friends didn't like the new teacher. So Nicodemus had decided, “I'm going to see Him at night!” And that's what he did. He walked in the darkness to see Jesus. “I know that You are a teacher from God,” Nicodemus said to Jesus. “No one could do miracles like You do unless He came from God.”

Jesus spoke kindly to Nicodemus.

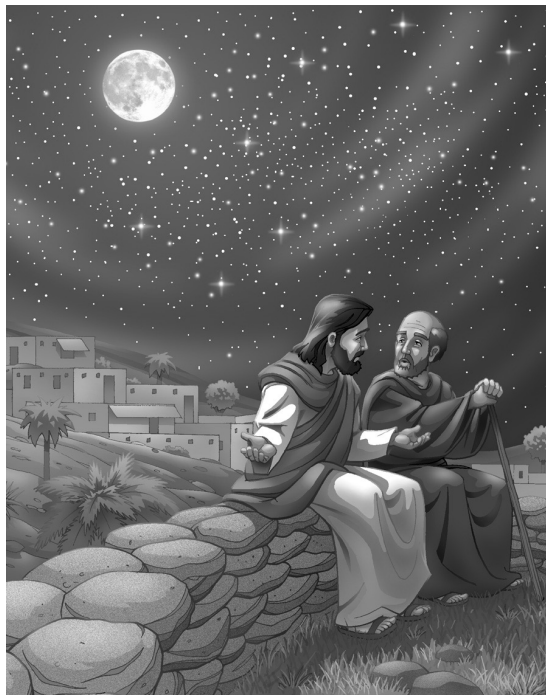
“God loves everybody,” He told Nicodemus. “God loves people so much that He has sent someone very special, His own Son, to help people on this earth.”

Now Nicodemus was sure Jesus was very special. As he thought and thought and read his Bible scrolls, he was convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, the Savior God had promised to send.

However, Nicodemus had a problem. His friends didn't like Jesus. They didn't want Jesus to teach and heal people, so they tried to stop Him.

When Jesus died, Nicodemus was there to help. He didn't care if other people saw him. Nicodemus had been a secret friend, but now everybody could see he was Jesus' friend.

Nicodemus was rich. He spent his money helping other people know about Jesus. He wanted others to be Jesus' special friends too. Would you like to be Jesus' friend today, as Nicodemus was? Would you like to tell your friends about Jesus?



Do and Say

Sabbath

Read the lesson story and use the following to review the memory verse this week.

"A friend loves at all times."	Hold hands together.
Proverbs 17:17	Cross arms over chest.
	Spread arms wide.
	Put palms together; then open.

Discuss with your child, the way that Jesus shows His love for us and the ways we show our love for Him.

Sunday

Help your child take the heart-to-heart card made in Sabbath School (or make a card that says "Jesus loves you") to a friend. Encourage your child to tell his or her friend what the card says.

Sing a song about Jesus' love; then thank Him for His love for your friend.

Monday

Help your child make a heart shape for each family member. Encourage him or her to say "Jesus loves you" while distributing them. Ask each one to tell how they know Jesus loves them. Sing "Into My Heart" before prayer.

Tuesday

Read John 3:1, 2 together. Let your child carefully hold the Bible as you point to the

verses. Ask: When did Nicodemus visit Jesus? How did he know that Jesus was sent by God? (He knew of Jesus' miracles.) Talk about the way Jesus cares for your family every day.

Take your child outside to look at the night sky and talk about how Jesus cares for us at night.

Sing a song of thanks to Jesus before prayer.

Wednesday

Play hide-and-seek. Pretend to be Nicodemus looking for Jesus. When you find Him, share a loving hug.

Let your child ask your family to tell about a special friend. Thank Jesus for friends.

Thursday

Use dried beans or other small objects to help your child name and count friends. Name each one in a special thank-You-for-friends prayer.

Friday

Act out the story for family worship. Let your child be Nicodemus. Talk about how Nicodemus was Jesus' loyal friend and how your family can be Jesus' friends too.

