



Helping Kids Build Friendships God's Way

When Friends Shape Who We Become

Raising Christ-Centered Kids | Faith | Friendship

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“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.” (Proverbs 17:17, *ESV*)

Key Takeaway

Real friends love like Jesus.

The Biblical Meaning of Friendship

The Bible shows us that friendship is one of God's greatest gifts. True friends help us grow in faith (Proverbs 27:17), lift us up when life is hard (Ecclesiastes 4:9–10), and walk beside us with loyalty and love.

One of the clearest examples of friendship in the Bible is the bond between David and Jonathan. After David defeated the giant Goliath, King Saul became jealous and angry. But Jonathan, Saul's son, saw David's courage and faith in God. Even though his father didn't like David, Jonathan chose to be David's loyal friend. Their story shows that love and loyalty matter more than popularity or position.

Jesus raised the meaning of friendship even higher when He said, “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13, *ESV*) His words show us that true friendship is not selfish. It means caring more about others than ourselves.

In Christ, friendship becomes something holy. It's not just about spending time together. It's about helping each other become more like Jesus. When our hearts are filled with His love, we can offer the same kind of loyal, forgiving, and grace-filled friendship that He offers us.

Understanding Friendship: Why the Right Friends Matter

Friendship means more than just getting along—it's a heart connection built on trust, kindness, and honesty. Friends laugh together, help each other, and stay close through both ups and downs.

Most friendships begin in small ways: a shared laugh, a kind word, or a simple act of helping. Over time, trust grows, kindness deepens, and love strengthens. When God's love fills our



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hearts, we begin to love others as He loves us. That's when friendship becomes something special—a reflection of Jesus' love.

Real friends celebrate your wins, comfort you in hard times, and remind you of what's right. Those kinds of friendships are rare treasures worth protecting. Friendship also takes time and care to grow. Kids sometimes face rejection, cliques, or unkindness. But with your guidance, they can learn to shape their friendships after Jesus' example and build bonds that last.

Practical Steps: Building Friendships God's Way

1. **Comfort your child.** When friendships hurt, remind your child that God's love can heal a hurting heart. Talk about how Jesus was betrayed too, yet He forgave and continued to love.
2. **Encourage kindness.** When peers leave children out, point them to Jesus, who welcomed everyone, even those others ignored. Help them think of one way to reach out to someone who feels alone.
3. **Teach forgiveness.** When conflicts arise, share how real friends say, "I'm sorry," and try again. Explain that staying loyal, like Jonathan did, shows love that lasts.
4. **Celebrate friendship.** When friendships grow stronger, encourage your child to write a note, share a snack, or pray for their friend as simple ways to show love and gratitude.
5. **Build faith first.** Remind your child that their most important friendship is Jesus. He is the Friend who listens, loves, and never leaves us. Spending time with Him helps them be a better friend to others.

Scripture for Parents and Kids

- "Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another." (Proverbs 27:17, *ESV*)
- "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you." (John 15:13–14, *ESV*)

Encouragement for Parents

Friendship will shape who your child becomes. The friends they choose—and the kind of friend they become—can either strengthen or weaken their walk with Christ. Take heart: you have the privilege of guiding them toward life-giving, Christ-centered friendships.

Your child is learning about friendship by watching you. When they see you being loyal, forgiving, and kind, they're seeing what God's love looks like in action. Even when friendships get messy or disappoint, you can point them back to Jesus—the faithful Friend who never changes.

Every time you share a story, listen with empathy, or pray for their relationships, you plant seeds that will one day grow into lasting, godly friendships. You don't need to have all the answers. You just need to walk with them, model love, and let God do the growing.

CTMP Corner: Kingdom Kids in Action

- **Connect** – Share stories of loyal, Christ-centered friendship.
- **Teach** – Show that friendship means love, forgiveness, and following Jesus.
- **Model** – Demonstrate how you encourage, protect, and bring out the best in friends.
- **Pray** – Ask God to guide and grow friendships in Christ's love.