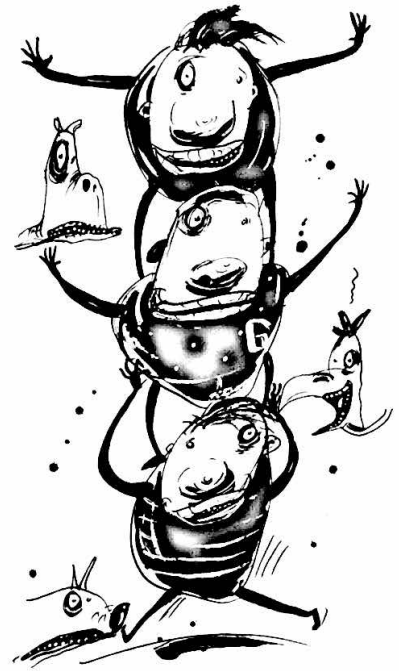


I AIN'T GOT NOBODY



1. Who is one of your closest friends? List **three reasons** why this person is a good friend.
2. You've been given the chance to order the perfect best friend from e-friends.com! You can choose from the individual specifications below, so that your new friend arrives in ideal form—plus free shipping and handling! As a first-time buyer, you've been given a \$25 credit, but each spec will cost you so spend it wisely!

Each costs \$6:

- Money
- Popularity
- Intelligence
- Godliness
- Compassion

Each costs \$5:

- Good looks
- Good conversationalist
- Outgoing personality
- Sense of humor
- High moral standards

Each costs \$4:

- A cool car
- The right clothes
- Lots of free time
- Loyalty
- Dependability

Each costs \$3:

- Common interests
- Honesty
- Good listener
- Generosity

Each costs \$2:

- Nice house
- Sex appeal
- Nice parents
- Same age as you

Each costs \$1:

- Athletic ability
- Lives close to your house
- No other friends
- Very talented

3. What do you think—**Y** (yes) or **N** (no)?

- I choose the right kind of friends.
- I don't like the friends I have now.
- I think a best friend should be a Christian.
- I'm influenced by friends in negative ways more than I influence them in positive ways.
- I get along very well with my friends.
- I have a hard time making friends.
- I think my friends talk about me behind my back.
- I wish I had a best friend.
- I have friends my parents don't approve of.
- I would like to find some new friends.

4. Flip to **Colossians 3:12-14**. What are some characteristics of friendship found in these verses?

THIS WEEK

Friendships are the heart and soul of the teenage years. There's hardly anything as important to high school kids than having friends. Everyone wants to be accepted, fit in, and have fun with friends. There's no doubt that your kids will want to talk about friends—how to get them, how to keep them, how to get rid of them, and how to be one. This TalkSheet will help your group discuss friendship from a Christian perspective.

OPEN

If your group is large enough, play the famous friends game. Give everyone a slip of paper with one half of a well-known duo written on it. Among celebrity couples and other well-known duos, some examples include the President and First Lady, Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck, Kermit the Frog and Miss Piggy, and so on. They have to find their partners without saying anything or showing anyone their slips of paper. They'll have to act out their characters in order to find their match.

Or you can play that same game, but with pictures from magazines, newspapers or the Internet. Paste the picture on a piece of paper, then cut the picture in half, so that each kid gets one half of the picture. They must find the person who has the other half of their picture without talking.

Another good intro is to make a long list of qualities in a good friend on the whiteboard, which can include such things as having a lot of money, popularity, intelligence, strong Christianity, kindness, considerate, good looks, sense of humor, same age, has no other friends, lives nearby, good personality, and so forth. Then tell the kids they can choose five qualities for a friend of their own. (Or any number you decide.) Which would be the most important to them? Have a few kids share their choices.

THE DISCUSSION, BY NUMBERS

1. Have the kids talk about their friends and why they are good friends. If they don't want to talk about specific people, have them tell what qualities close friends have.
2. Ask several kids to describe the friend they bought for \$25. Concentrate the discussion on which qualities are truly important in a friendship.
3. Discuss these items one by one but don't force anyone to share answers. You may want to focus on friendships that don't meet parental approval. Ask the group why this happens and what they think can be done to remedy such situations. What did they learned from the statements?

4. In this passage, there are eight characteristics of friendship—compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiving, and loving. Emphasize how important it is to think of as qualities that will make them a good friend to others.

THE CLOSE

Read Proverbs 18:24—“A good friend shows himself friendly.” In other words, if they want to have good friends, then they need to be a good friend. What does it take to be a good friend? Friendships, like all relationships are two sided—they need mutual respect, consideration, and effort.

Point out that the Bible is filled with stories of friendship—in fact, Jesus himself had many good friends, a close group of men and women with whom he spent a lot of time. He was the perfect example of true friendship—loving, patient, giving. He showed all of us how to relate to others in positive ways.

Jesus also wants to be our friend—he sticks with us through it all. If we have Christ as our friend, we'll be part of a family—a circle of Christian friends. That's what the church (and this youth group) is all about! Close with a prayer, asking God to bless the friendships of your group members.

MORE

- Friendships take work! They need to be nurtured in order to grow. Challenge your kids to nurture their friendships this week. Have them send each of their close friends a postcard or e-mail telling them how much their friendship means to them. Have them go out of their way to encourage their friends and then thank God for the friends he's given them.
- What do your kids need to work on to be better friends to others? Challenge them throughout the week to think of three things that they'd like to work on in their friendships. Do they need more patience? More kindness? Use 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 to guide them. What would your kids like to change about themselves? Have them write these three things down; then list one thing under each that they can do to improve this. For example, if one wanted to be more patient, he or she could write something like, “not grumble when my friend doesn't call me back right away.”
- Have the group take a look at the biblical friendships of David and Jonathan (1 Samuel 18 and 19) and Jesus and Lazarus (John 11). What made these friendships good? What qualities of friendship were shown?