



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

How to Friend / Week 1

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

SERIES BOTTOM LINE

The work is worth it.

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To encourage teenagers to think about what being a good friend to others looks like.

WEEK 1 BOTTOM LINE

Being a friend means serving your friends.

SCRIPTURE

- John 13:4-5 NLT
 - Luke 6:31 NLT
-

TEACHING SLIDES

All scripture, bottom lines, and teaching points that are bolded in this script are also provided as slides in your weekly "Teaching" folder.

OPTIONAL MEDIA

*OPTIONAL MEDIA for this week available for purchase through the XP3 HS Media Package:

- How to Friend Countdown (10 minutes)
 - Think About Your Friends Video Interactive
 - How to Friend Week 1 Teaching Video
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TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

- These days, we can Google “how to” do just about anything
- In fact, I Googled “how to” just to see what would autofill.
- One of the things it *doesn't* auto-fill in is “how to friend.”
- Friendships are good. But friendships can be difficult because friendships are always changing.
- I wish someone would've said, “This is how to friend.”

TENSION

- Anytime you mix two complex human beings in a close relationship, it isn't always easy to understand and maintain peace.
- Friendships take a lot of work.
- **Growing up, we weren't taught how to be friends.**
- With that being said, **our friendships are usually formed by default.**
- We don't put any more thought into it than that. And this is totally normal and natural, but it certainly doesn't mean that we'll have great friendships. Why? Because friendship is hard.
- When it comes to friendship . . .
 - **Things are always changing.**
 - **You're not always sure where you stand with friends.**
 - **Expectations aren't always met.**
- When it comes to friendship, we all tend to focus on what we're *not* getting from the people in our lives.
- Here's the good news: what we're talking about today—and in this series—has the potential to be a game-changer when it comes to the way we approach all aspects of friendship.

TRUTH

- As old as the Bible is, it still has something to say about our relationships with other people.
- The first four books of the New Testament are called the gospels. They are the accounts of Jesus' life when He lived among us. One of those gospels is the book of John.
- At one point, John writes about a very serious moment in Jesus' life. It took place right before Jesus would be arrested and sentenced to die on the cross.
- Considering what was ahead for Him, Jesus could have been looking around the table at His friends and thinking, *What are these guys going to do for me when all this happens? Are they going to prove they're my real friends?*
- **Instead of being reactive, Jesus was proactive with his friends.** Check it out:
 - *“So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him” (John 13:4-5 NLT).*
- Back then, this was a job typically done by a servant for a house guest.
- But Jesus was the master of flipping people's expectations.
- Jesus demonstrated to His disciples what true friendship looks like.
- **He took the first step.**
- He did it for them to model the kind of friend that He wanted them to be to other people.
- In fact, in a different gospel, written by Luke, who was a doctor, he records Jesus as saying something that's some pretty good advice when it comes to friendship:
 - *“Do to others as you would like them to do to you” (Luke 6:31 NLT).*
- **We need to treat our friends the way we wish they'd treat us.**
- But let's be honest, this is so difficult to do, right?
- Usually, we take the opposite approach. We react. We treat people the way they treat us. We respond to how they make us feel.
- But if we really think about it, we can agree that's not the way we want our friendships to work.
- Jesus could've made all of His friendships about Him. He was the ringleader. He had the highest status and position. He could've used His power to leverage the relationships for Himself. But instead, He served.

- Think of it this way . . .
 - **BEING A FRIEND MEANS SERVING YOUR FRIENDS.**
- We can follow Jesus' example in our friendships and serve others right now.

APPLICATION

- There are a million ways that you and I can serve our friends and put them first without waiting for them to do it. But for the sake of today, let's talk about three simple ideas:
 - **Think about your friends. [INTERACTIVE]: See the Communicator Guide for detailed instructions.**
 - **Listen to your friends.**
 - **Pray for your friends.**
- If you do these things, it doesn't mean everything is going to work out perfectly in your friendships all the time.
- But this will be so powerful for you moving forward!
- For the rest of your life, you're going to be in friendships and relationships. Learning how to serve, make the first move, and put others first will create an incredible foundation for you to be an incredible friend from now into the future.
- And at the end of the day, the only friend you can control is you.

LANDING

- **BEING A FRIEND MEANS SERVING YOUR FRIENDS.**
- Imagine if you become comfortable making the first move.
- Being this kind of friend will take work, but the work is worth it.



TEACHING SCRIPT

How to Friend / Week 1

PRELUDE SOCIAL WORSHIP STORY GROUPS HOME

WEEK 1 BOTTOM LINE

Being a friend means serving your friends.

INTRODUCTION

2 MINUTES

These days, we can Google “how to” do just about anything. In fact, I Googled “how to” just to see what would autofill. Here are some of the automatic responses:

- How to take a screenshot.
- How to delete an Instagram account.
- How to tie a tie.
- How to make French toast.
- How to play Wordle.

These are all great auto-fills, by the way. “How to screenshot” is probably for your mom or grandma. The delete Instagram is for someone going through a breakup. How to tie a tie? Good luck. Even if you watch a step-by-step YouTube video, it’s still not easy. French toast is delicious. And if you’ve never played it, Wordle is awesome!

One of the things it *doesn’t* auto-fill in is “how to friend.”

- How to be a good friend.
- How to make friends.
- How to keep friends.
- How to change friend groups.
- How to lose a friend.

Growing up, I would’ve loved for Google to help me with all of these things because friendships are awesome. Who wouldn’t want someone who just gets your sense of humor or shares your love for Taco Bell? Who wouldn’t want that friend who is there for you no matter what or who you can vent to about that one teacher without feeling judged? Friendships are good. But friendships can be difficult because friendships are always changing.

My friends in middle school were different from my friends in elementary school. In fact, I went to middle school in a town that was an hour away from my elementary school! In the first few years of high school, my friends were different from my friends in middle school. And my friends in the second half of high school were different from my friends in the first. There were so many different dynamics to so many different friendships. I even had seasons where I had zero friendships which weren’t always easy.

At the same time, friendships were *so important* to me. I cared about them a lot. If I had my choice as to who I'd spend time with, I would've chosen my friends every time.

Still, it was a whole world that was never explained to me. I wish someone would've said, "This is how to friend."

TENSION

2 MINUTES

Knowing how to friend is difficult. Anytime you mix two complex human beings in a close relationship, it isn't always easy to understand and maintain peace. Friendships take a lot of work. Plus, there are a few other things that make it tough. . .

Growing up, we weren't taught how to be friends. Our parents and teachers taught us to behave, be polite, be kind, say thank you, work hard, and mind our manners. They didn't explain to us what it meant to be a good friend. Maybe that's because adults struggle with it just as much as teenagers! We were taught to play basketball, spell, and do multiplication problems. We weren't taught how to navigate friendships.

With that being said, **our friendships are usually formed by default.** Like I already mentioned, our friendships just sort of "happen." If someone is in our class, on our team, or in our neighborhood—and we get along with them—we become friends. We don't put any more thought into it than that. And this is totally normal and natural, but it certainly doesn't mean that we'll have great friendships. Why? Because friendship is hard.

Think about it. When it comes to friendship . . .

- **Things are always changing.** You move to a new school, switch classes, or take up a new hobby, and the people in your life change. You're making new friends, which is cool, but it's tough to build and maintain close friendships with constant change.
- **You're not always sure where you stand with your friends.** Sometimes it seems like you're left out of text threads. Or you don't get a voice in making plans. Or nobody's inviting you to anything. If you were being honest, you're not even sure if you're actually "in" with your friends or not.
- **Expectations aren't always met.** Your friends don't do the things you want them to do; they don't connect with you enough during the week, hang out enough on the weekends, or remember the important details of your life. You feel like those are the kinds of things real friends do, but you don't have any friends around you who are doing them.

When it comes to friendship, we all tend to focus on what we're *not* getting from the people in our lives.

Here's the good news: What we're talking about today—and in this series—has the potential to be a game-changer when it comes to the way we approach all aspects of friendship.

TRUTH

5 MINUTES

As old as the Bible is, it still has something to say about our relationships with other people. The Bible is divided into two sections: The Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament was written before Jesus walked the Earth. The New Testament consists of the books that account for the time Jesus walked the Earth and beyond.

The first four books of the New Testament are called the gospels. They are the accounts of Jesus' life when He lived among us. One of those gospels is the book of John. It was written by the disciple John, who was a very close friend to Jesus, and who a lot of people think was just a teenager when he followed Jesus.

At one point, John writes about a very serious moment in Jesus' life. It took place right before Jesus would be arrested and sentenced to die on the cross. And while His disciples had no idea what was about to happen, Jesus knew what was approaching. With that in mind, Jesus gathered His friends together for one last meal.

Considering what was ahead for Him, Jesus could have been looking around the table at His friends and thinking, *What are these guys going to do for me when all this happens? Are they going to prove they're my real friends?*

But that's not what Jesus did. Instead of waiting to see how His friends would respond to Him, Jesus decided to take the first step. **Instead of being reactive, Jesus was proactive with his friends.** Check it out. . .

"So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him" (John 13:4-5 NLT).

This may seem totally random, but back in the day, people walked. A LOT! Sometimes they even walked on their bare feet. And there weren't sidewalks and paved roads. There was dust, sand, dirt, sweat, and who knows what else everywhere. Feet weren't clean. Not even a little bit.

Back then, washing someone's feet was a job typically done by a servant for a house guest. Or, someone in a lower position would wash the feet of someone in a higher position. In this situation, it would've made sense for the disciples to wash Jesus' feet.

But Jesus was the master of flipping people's expectations. He often did things that were counter-cultural or counterintuitive. And this was no different. Jesus demonstrated to His disciples what true friendship looks like. He took the first step. He didn't wait on someone else to do what he wanted them to do. He served them. He did it for them to model the kind of friend that He wanted them to be to other people.

In fact, in a different gospel, written by Luke, who was a doctor, he records Jesus as saying something that's some pretty good advice when it comes to friendship:

"Do to others as you would like them to do to you" (Luke 6:31 NLT).

In other words, Jesus is saying that when it comes to relationships, we need to be proactive. **We need to treat our friends the way we wish they'd treat us.**

But let's be honest, this is so difficult to do, right? Usually, we take the opposite approach. We react. We treat people the way they treat us. We respond to how they make us feel. If someone makes us feel angry because they aren't meeting our standard of friendship, we treat them with anger. If someone leaves us out of a group text, you better believe that we'll leave them out of our next group text.

But if we really think about it, we can agree that's not the way we want our friendships to work. We want our friends to value us, include us, notice us, and be kind to us. We want to feel important to our real friends. And we don't want them to pay us back evenly for every mistake that we make. We want them to be patient with us and show us grace and forgiveness.

Think about what Jesus said in today's terms:

- What if I message others as I would like to be messaged?
- What if I invite others as I would like to be invited?
- What if I talk to others as I would like to be talked to?

- What if I forgive others as I would like to be forgiven?
- What if I listen to others as I would like for them to listen to me?
- What if I post about others on social media as I'd like to be posted about?

Think about this. Jesus could've made all of His friendships about Him. He was the ringleader. He had the highest status and position. He could've used His power to leverage the relationships for Himself. But instead, He served. He put His friends first. He was humble, supportive, encouraging, and forgiving. And that's what we can do for our friends. Think of it this way . . .

BEING A FRIEND MEANS SERVING YOUR FRIENDS.

We want our friends to make the first move, treat us well, and put our needs first. But we can be the kind of friend we want to have without waiting on anyone else to make the first move. We can follow Jesus' example in our friendships and serve others right now.

APPLICATION

7 MINUTES

There are a million ways that you and I can serve our friends and put them first without waiting for them to do it. But for the sake of today, let's talk about three simple ideas:

1. **Think about your friends.** Don't just think about your needs and what they're doing—or not doing—for you. Think about their situation, their feelings, their worries, or insecurities. Try to be gracious and empathetic with them. They have moments of anxiety and fear just like you do. They get down just like you do. They have highs and lows, just like you do.



INTERACTIVE

OPTIONAL MEDIA available for purchase through the XP3HS Media Package:

[How to Friend – “Think About Your Friends Video Interactive”](#)

In fact, let's just practice this really quick. I'm going to put some stuff on the screen. This is an oh-so-simple exercise on thinking about your friends. All you have to do is fill in the blanks with a friend's name and something that's going on in their life. Don't answer out loud! If you can't think of friends or things that are going on with them, fill it in with people you know.

My friend _____ is involved in _____.

My friend _____ really likes _____.

My friend _____ is really good at _____.

I think _____ has been dealing with or struggling with _____.

2. **Listen to your friends.** Ask questions about things that are important to them. Try to actually listen to the answers! Try to keep up with important things that are happening in their lives. If you have a

terrible memory, maybe use the Notes app on your phone and write down important things—good or bad—that are happening in the lives of your friends. And then follow up with them. Take an interest in the things that interest them.

- 3. Pray for your friends.** If your friend is going through something difficult, pray for them. If things are falling apart in their family, pray for them. If they have important things coming up, pray for them. Even short, quick, simple prayers are a big deal. Then, tell them you are praying for them if you want.

If you do these things, it doesn't mean everything is going to work out perfectly in your friendships all the time. This won't magically fix your friendships. At the end of the day, a friendship is about two imperfect people existing in the same place. And any time imperfect people are around each other, stuff can go wrong.

But this will be so powerful for you moving forward! This is a great place to start when it comes to how to friend. For the rest of your life, you're going to be in friendships and relationships. Learning how to serve, make the first move, and put others first will create an incredible foundation for you to be an incredible friend from now into the future. And at the end of the day, the only friend you can control is you.

LANDING

1 MINUTE

Being a friend means serving your friends. It means taking the lead to look out for them and their interests, without waiting for someone to do something for you. Imagine if you become comfortable making the first move. Imagine if you started the group text instead of waiting for somebody else to start it. Imagine if you didn't retaliate, but instead, you forgave and showed grace. Imagine if you were the kind of friend you wanted to have.

Being this kind of friend will take work, but the work is worth it.

It all starts by you doing to others as you want them to do to you.



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS
