



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

How to Friend / Week 2

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

SERIES BOTTOM LINE

The work is worth it.

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help teenagers recognize the value of choosing their closest friends wisely.

WEEK 2 BOTTOM LINE

The friends you choose impact the future you will have.

SCRIPTURE

- Proverbs 12:26 NIV
-

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)
 - Bull's-eye Video Interactive
 - How to Friend Week 2 Teaching Video
-

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

- *Tell a personal story.*
- **The people you hang around can have a big impact on your life.**

TENSION

- Think about this. What's the last bad decision you made? Or maybe I'll ask it this way—when's the last time you made a decision that got you in trouble?
- Whatever it was, you thought, *How could this happen to me?*
- But here's the deal: **The common denominator in all of those choices was you!**
- **We aren't just innocent bystanders. We are participants.**
- But what's also true is that many of those decisions weren't made by ourselves. A lot of times, the reason we did what we did is because there were other influences involved.
- In other words, friends have a direct impact on us.
- Ultimately, **your friends will have a big influence on your quality of life now and where your life ends up later.**
- When it comes to most of our major decisions, we put a lot of thought into them.
- But when it comes to who we allow into our inner circle, we don't always think much about it.
- Instead of being proactive, we tend to be reactive.
- Here's the bad news: friends can pull us down. Here's the good news: they can also pull us up.
- **Friends are a big deal.**
- So, let's talk about how to be a friend, and how to maintain the right type of friendships that are better for you in the long run.

TRUTH

- There's a book in the Old Testament of the Bible called Proverbs that speaks to the importance of deciding which friends you'll let influence your decisions.
- A guy named Solomon is credited for writing most of it, and he was the king of Israel during a really prosperous time. Not only that, next to Jesus, he was considered the wisest person who ever lived.
- Here's what he said...
 - *"The righteous choose their friends carefully, but the way of the wicked leads them astray" (Proverbs 12:26 NIV).*
- Let's define the word "righteous." It simply means **people who do the right thing.**
- It's about being a good decision-maker, a wise decision maker.
- If we want to be "right decision-makers" who do what's best for our future, Solomon says we need to choose our friends *carefully*.
- "Right decision-makers" pay attention to who their friends are because they know that they need friends who are just as invested in their future as they are.
- Ask yourself, "Are they leading me to a future that I'm proud of? Or to a future I don't want any part of?"
- I understand that in high school you can't always choose the kind of people who are around you.
- You may even say that you don't even have any friends.
- And while that may be true right now, and it may be awful right now, it won't always be this way. And the decisions you make right now when it comes to friends can save you from a lot of potential pain in the future.
- So, when you're making decisions about who your friends will be, it's important to be intentional.
- And that's why Solomon told us to choose them carefully in the verse we looked at.
- Solomon ends the verse by saying this...
 - *"...But the way of the wicked leads them astray" (Proverbs 12:26b NIV).*
- This is basically just people who are the opposite of "right decision makers." When we hear the word wicked we may all think of different things, but what Solomon meant was "someone who's done something wrong."
- **They think about themselves, and they think about right now. They don't have your future or your best interest in mind.**

- When Solomon says that it “leads them astray,” he’s basically referring to trouble.
- That’s why you may have a friend who’s a good person and a ton of fun to be around, but you find yourself getting in trouble when you’re with them.
- This is why I don’t think we should ask the question, “Is this friend good or bad?” Instead, I think we should ask, “Is this friend a good influence on my life right now?”
- If the answer is no, it doesn’t mean it’ll be like that forever—there is hope for everyone to get on the right track.
- **[INTERACTIVE]: See the Communicator Guide for detailed instructions.**
- **[BOTTOM LINE]: THE FRIENDS YOU CHOOSE IMPACT THE FUTURE YOU WILL HAVE.**
- The truth is the same for all of us: **if we want great friendships—either today or one day in the future—then we need to be friends with people who care about our future and influence us in a positive way.**
- **Great friendships start with great people.**
- While you’re waiting, it’s a great time for you to learn how to become a great friend.
- As you focus on your character, you’ll grow into a person who will be a great influence on the people in your inner circle.

APPLICATION

- A few things I’d love for you to do in light of what we just talked about...
 - **Pray for great friends.**
 - **Ask yourself important questions about your friends.**
- Depending on how you answer those questions, there may be friends you need to take a couple of steps back from. If you are feeling this, we’re going to talk about how to do this next time.
- But whatever it is, *you* need to be the one who decides what happens next. Don’t be passive—be intentional.

LANDING

- **THE FRIENDS YOU CHOOSE IMPACT THE FUTURE YOU WILL HAVE.**
- I believe that God wants us to have life-giving, “sharpening” friendships, friendships where we can see God at work in the relationship.
- Invite God into your journey of building great friendships, and ask God to help you be a great friend to others.
- These kinds of friendships take work, but believe me, the work is worth it.



TEACHING SCRIPT

How to Friend / Week 2

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

WEEK 2 BOTTOM LINE

The friends you choose impact the future you will have.

INTRODUCTION

2 MINUTES

When I was in 8th grade, I got into serious trouble.

Let me explain . . .

I had an awesome group of friends that I loved hanging out with. We had so much fun together. But for some reason, we got into the habit of daring each other to do mischievous things. What started as harmless pranks turned into us daring each other to steal ice cream from the cafeteria. And this eventually led to us doing more destructive and illegal things.

One particular Saturday night, it was my turn to be dared. My buddies challenged me to break into a car and steal something. Since I couldn't turn down a good dare, I pulled on car doors until I found one that was unlocked. Then chaos broke out. I was busted by the guy whose car I broke into. Needless to say, he wasn't happy about a 12-year-old rummaging through his stuff. My friends ran away and left me there alone. A few minutes later, the cops showed up.

In the end, my friends got into a little bit of trouble. But I got into *a lot*.

Now don't get me wrong, I take responsibility for what I did. It was ME who made the bad choice. I was the only person who did what I did. But I never would've been in a random parking lot on a Saturday night if it weren't for my friends. And I CERTAINLY wouldn't have broken into a vehicle if they hadn't dared me.

I was arrested, suspended from the basketball team, and for a while, I was the source of school gossip. And in the midst of it all, I learned a valuable lesson:

The people you hang around can have a big impact on your life.

TENSION

3 MINUTES

Think about this. What's the last bad decision you made? Or maybe I'll ask it this way—when's the last time you made a decision that got you in trouble? I'm not asking you to raise your hand or share out loud, but just think about it. Maybe you knew it was wrong while you did it. Maybe you didn't. The point is, you . . .

- Got caught.
- Got in trouble.
- Got lectured.
- Got kicked off the team.
- Got exposed.
- Got punished.
- Got embarrassed.
- Got detention.

Whatever it was, you thought, *How could this happen to me?* But here's the deal: The common denominator in all of those choices was you! The reality is, most of the bad choices we make and the negative consequences that we experience don't just happen to us—we happen to them! **We aren't just innocent bystanders. We are participants.**

But what's also true is that many of those decisions weren't made by ourselves. A lot of times, the reason we did what we did is because there were other influences involved. There were people we cared about who were included. And whether the idea itself was innocent, malicious, playful, or ignorant, the people around us played a role.

The truth is, there have been moments when we've lied, tried something, gossiped about someone, acted nice to someone, acted mean to someone, pretended to like something, pretended to hate something, did something good, did something bad, and we wouldn't have done it . . . if it hadn't been for the people who were next to us.

In other words, friends have a direct impact on us. Not just in the little things of life, but in some really big areas, too. And not just right now—they also have an impact on our future. Ultimately, **your friends will have a big influence on your quality of life now and where your life ends up later.** And the closer the friend, the more influence they have.

We've all heard stories of people, who at a young age, seemed to be heading in a positive direction in life. Then something happened and things began to go downhill. What's interesting is that these stories tend to always go the same way. The person began to surround themselves with people who pulled them in the wrong direction. We know these stories about other people and we also know this same thing can happen to any of us.

Here's what's interesting. When it comes to most of our major decisions, we put a lot of thought into them. We think about what classes to take, whether or not we want to go to college, where we may want to live, and who we like or want to date. We think about it, pray about it, and maybe even ask for advice about it. But when it comes to who we allow into our inner circle, we don't always think much about it. Instead of being proactive, we tend to be reactive.

Here's the bad news: friends can pull us down. Here's the good news: they can also pull us up. Some of you have become better students, better athletes, and better people because of your friends. They've encouraged you to try things you wouldn't normally do, and those things have helped you improve as a person.

Friends are a big deal. No doubt about it. So, let's talk about how to be a friend, and how to maintain the right type of friendships that are better for you in the long run.

TRUTH

6 MINUTES

There's a book in the Old Testament of the Bible called Proverbs that speaks to the importance of deciding which friends you'll let influence your decisions. This book has some of the best advice you'll ever hear on just about any topic.

A guy named Solomon is credited for writing most of it, and he was the king of Israel during a really prosperous time. Not only that, next to Jesus, he was considered the wisest person who ever lived. Which means we may have something to learn from him and his advice when it comes to friends.

Here's what he said:

"The righteous choose their friends carefully, but the way of the wicked leads them astray" (Proverbs 12:26 NIV).

Let's define the word "righteous." It simply means **people who do the right thing**. It's about being a good decision-maker, a wise decision-maker. It's about people who make choices that take their future and the best interest of others into account. If we want to be "right decision-makers" who do what's best for our future, Solomon says we need to choose our friends *carefully*.

"Right decision-makers" pay attention to who their friends are because they know that they need friends who are just as invested in their future as they are. They need friends who will help them stay on the right course.

This doesn't mean that if you have a friend who doesn't always make the best decisions, you should dropkick them out of your life. I'm just saying that you should take a look at the people who you are closest to and who you spend the most time with. Ask yourself, "Are they leading me to a future that I'm proud of? Or to a future I don't want any part of?"

I understand that in high school you can't always choose the kind of people who are around you. You can't control who has the same work schedule, lunch period or sports interests as you.

Or you may be thinking, "I'm not on a team. The people I work with and in my lunch period don't even acknowledge that I'm alive." You may even say that you don't even have any friends. I'm sorry. Trust me, I've been there! There's nothing easy about that. And while that may be true right now, and it may be awful right now, it won't always be this way. And the decisions you make right now when it comes to friends can save you from a lot of potential pain in the future.

That's because, like I said earlier, friends are a big deal. So, when you're making decisions about who your friends will be, it's important to be intentional. And that's why Solomon told us to choose them carefully in the verse we looked at.

Solomon ends the verse by saying this:

". . . But the way of the wicked leads them astray" (Proverbs 12:26b NIV).

This is basically just people who are the opposite of "right decision-makers." When we hear the word wicked we may all think of different things, but what Solomon meant was "someone who's done something wrong." They don't think about how their decisions will impact their future or the people around them. **They think about themselves, and they think about right now. They don't have your future or your best interest in mind.**

When Solomon says that it "leads them astray," he's basically referring to trouble. That's why you may have a friend who's a good person and a ton of fun to be around, but you find yourself getting in trouble when you're with them. Your ability to make good decisions with them goes down. Or maybe you haven't

gotten busted yet, but if you were caught doing some of the things you did together, it would be trouble! This is why I don't think we should ask the question, "Is this friend good or bad?" Instead, I think we should ask, "Is this friend a good influence on my life right now?" If the answer is no, it doesn't mean it'll be like that forever—there is hope for everyone to get on the right track. And it doesn't mean you'll never interact with them. It just means that you change the amount of influence you give them in your life.

Here's another way to think about this . . .



OPTIONAL MEDIA available for purchase through the XP3HS Media Package:

How to Friend – “Bull’s-eye Video Interactive”

Get a magnetic dart board of Amazon (https://www.amazon.com/Magnetic-Roll-up-Double-Outdoor-Teenage/dp/B09CKKPY6F/ref=sr_1_6?crid=2T5BPO7NEVOY0&keywords=cheap+dart+board&qid=1644173562&refinements=p_36%3A-1000&rnid=386589011&srefix=cheap+dart+boa%2Caps%2C381&sr=8-6). Or, just draw a dartboard target on a poster board.

Imagine that this dartboard represents your friendships. The closer to the bull's-eye, the closer to you as a friend. So, this inner circle represents the people who have the most influence in your life.

As you build your closest friendships moving forward, look for people who influence you in a positive and healthy way. Put those people closest to the bull's-eye. If someone doesn't influence you in a positive way, you can still see them, talk to them, care about them, and pray for them. But you want the best influences to be closest to the bull's-eye.

Jesus had the same kind of pattern with His own friendships. When you read the New Testament, you see that He had levels of influence among His friends and followers. He had huge crowds that followed Him. He had 12 disciples that He spent a lot of time with. And He had three disciples He was closest to—they were His bull's-eye.

Think about it this way . . .

THE FRIENDS YOU CHOOSE IMPACT THE FUTURE YOU WILL HAVE.

Now again, some of you may be thinking, “I don't even have someone to put on the dartboard right now!” I get it, and like I said, I've been there. The truth is, friendships will come and go throughout the course of your life. Things will change, and there will be seasons of unknown. But one day, you will have friends. Things won't always look the way they do now. The truth is the same for all of us: **If we want great friendships—either today or one day in the future—then we need to be friends with people who care about our future and influence us in a positive way.**

Great friendships start with great people.

While you're waiting, it's a great time for you to learn how to become a great friend. As you focus on your character, you'll grow into a person who will be a great influence on the people in your inner circle.

APPLICATION

7 MINUTES

A few things I'd love for you to do in light of what we just talked about:

1. **Pray for great friends.** In another verse from Proverbs, Solomon says this:

“As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17 NIV).

This just means the right kind of friends make us better, sharpen us. But the right kind of friend doesn't mean a friend who is exactly like us. In fact, it's good to be friends with people who think differently and look differently than you. People who see the world differently from us, who have a different experience in the world, have something to teach us. What matters most isn't that you share everything in common. What matters is that you share the right things in common.

2. **Ask yourself important questions about your friends.** In fact, you can ask these questions about yourself while you're at it! The reason we do this is so that we can become more intentional about who we let influence us. Ask questions like...

- Can you count on them to be “right decision-makers”?
- Do they make not just right but the *wise* decision?
- Are they always caught up in drama?
- Do they seem to constantly be living in the fall-out of bad decisions?
- Do they have your best interests in mind?
- Do they treat other people well?

Depending on how you answer those questions, there may be friends you need to take a couple of steps back from. If you are feeling this, we're going to talk about how to do this next time. There may even be friends you need to take a couple of steps *towards*. But whatever it is, *you* need to be the one who decides what happens next. Don't be passive—be intentional.

LANDING

1 MINUTE

The friends you choose impact the future you will have. I believe that God wants us to have life-giving, “sharpening” friendships, friendships where we can see God at work in the relationship. Invite God into your journey of building great friendships, and ask God to help you be a great friend to others. Being and having a good friend is good for you right now and in the future. Just remember that this doesn't happen overnight. These kinds of friendships take work, but believe me, the work is worth it.



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS
