

Alley SG-September 23 & 24, 2017

Bible Story: We'll Be There for You (Encourage One Another) • 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Job 2:11-13 (Supporting: Job 1-2)

Bottom Line: Friends encourage one another

Memory Verse: "A friend loves at all times. They are there to help when trouble comes." Proverbs 17:17, NIV

1. Just For Fun

- **Ask:** Would you rather have an itch in the middle of your back all the time or an eyelash in your eye all the time?
- **Another Option:** How could you be a friend to someone who doesn't speak the same language as you?
- **Let** students discuss the answer to the question.
- **Encourage** them to ask each other why they chose the answers they did.

2. Take a Snapshot

- **Announce** that you're hosting a "Worst Day Ever" contest.
- **Explain** that you want each student to brainstorm a "worst day," but the worst day must be from their own experience or that of a close friend/family member (not a stranger or from a book/news/TV/movie).
- **Give** them a minute to think and let them brainstorm with a friend if they like.
- **Encourage** them to get in groups of four people and take turns sharing their "worst days ever."
- **After** everyone shares (within the smaller groups), ask the groups to vote on which person in their group had the worst day.
- **Then** have all these "winners" share one more time to the whole group.
***Pro Tip:** If you have someone who is shy or new, give that kid the opportunity to share, but don't force him/her. If possible, enlist someone from that kid's group to share the story for him!*
- As a whole group, let students **vote** on how bad they think these days are with a double thumbs down (the worst), one thumb down (pretty bad), both thumbs sideways (not too bad really), or both thumbs up (pretty good day actually).
- **Count** the number of total "thumbs downs" each story gets and declare a winner.

Wrap & Say: "Those are some really awful days! Having a bad day is pretty unavoidable—it will happen to all of us at some point. When people show up to offer their support and show they really care, that can give us a real boost. If we want others to do this for us, shouldn't we look for chances to do that for others?"

3. Discussion Questions

- When and where are the easiest places to be a good friend this week? What does it look and sound like to be a good friend?
- What are the hardest places and times to be a good friend?
- What gets in the way of being the kind of friend you want to be?
- Do you have a friend who's really good at showing up and just being there for you? What do they do and say? What can you learn from that?
- What does it look like to just "be present" for a friend? Have you ever been that friend who shows up and doesn't "do" much but is being a good friend just by being present?
- Does anyone feel like it can be awkward to do that? How can we work to push through that awkwardness?

4. Verses to Take with You

What You Need: Blank paper, pencils

- **Share** this verse with your group. Romans 12:10, *Love one another deeply. Honor others more than yourselves. (NIV)*
- **Challenge** students to think of all the ways they can encourage their friends—to love others deeply and honor them more than themselves.
- **Ask** them to create a scrabble-like crossword or acrostic using the word or letters found in "encourage" and adding examples of how to do this.

Pro Tip: *If they seem confused, start a crossword puzzle with "Encourage" as your first word, adding other words that are connected by letters and the topic. An acrostic is when you write the word Encourage going down the page and come up with words that start with each letter, and then you write those going across. You are just trying to get them thinking of all the different ways they can encourage others. You can make it more competitive by giving points for each word or using certain letters like when you play scrabble.*

5. EXTRA TIME ACTIVITY: God Time Take Home Sheets

Hand out the "God Time" Take Home Sheets to each student, and allow them to work on them until pick up.

NOTE: Remind the students that if they bring back their completed God Time Sheets the following week, they will receive \$5 in Alley Cash.