



## THEME: **New Friends**

### ABOUT THIS CLASS:

The theme for this Frolic Faith Class is **New Friends**. You will read the Frolic picture book titled *Hal and the New Kid*.

## Prep Time

### Friendship in the Bible

The Bible describes friendships as a life-giving source of strength and community. It also advises us to consider carefully whom we choose to be our friends. King David is helped by his friend Jonathan. Ruth and Naomi are family, but share a deep, respectful friendship. Jesus is friends with all of his disciples, and Peter is described as a close friend. After the death and resurrection of Jesus, the gospel message is spread through friendships like the one between Paul and Barnabas. The Bible also teaches us values that help us make and keep friends. Being honest, caring, forgiving, and patient are all keys to building Christian friendships.

### A Parent's View of the Theme

No matter who is in your social circle before you have children, the reality is that parenting takes a toll on your ability to develop and maintain adult friendships. Many parents find they are too tired to interact with others. Some find it difficult to fit in time with friends around a young child's erratic and demanding schedule. As Christians, we know that we are called to share one another's joys and burdens. Friendships can be a critical part of surviving the first few years of parenting. Time together with other parents, whether on playdates or in parent-only settings, is healthy for both adults and children.

### A Child's View of the Theme

From the time we are born, we are created to be social. Newborns can recognize human voices and sounds in their native language(s). They show a strong preference for looking at human faces. Young babies will grow to follow a trusted adult's eye gaze and imitate the adults around them. Studies show that children who are raised in secure, loving environments grow up to have better emotional control, stronger communication skills, and more helpful, empathetic behavior toward others. These skills all contribute to children being better able to make friends. Learning the social skills we need to navigate future friendships is a long process that begins early in life, starting with what we experience in our own families.



### Bible Verse

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

—John 15:12



### Today's Ritual

Show families how to start a friendship circle. Begin by turning to and greeting the person next to you. **"Good morning, friend. My name is \_\_\_\_\_."** Invite adults and children alike to repeat this ritual all the way around the circle until the greeting returns to you. (To save time, start this greeting on both sides of you, so it so the greetings meet halfway around.) Remind everyone that friendly faces, eye contact, and sharing your name are part of making new friends.



# Gather Time

## If families arrive early:

Encourage parents and children to meet each other. You can also have music playing in the background and a center available for families to explore together before the class begins. Select the center that best fits your space and available materials.

**OR**

## If you open the door at the start time:

Have families sign in, choose an instrument from the basket, and sit in a circle.

### Welcome

Gather together in a circle. **Welcome, families! Today we are going to talk about the theme of friendship and how we make new friends.** Lead families in singing a welcoming song, tracks 1-3 on the Frolic Faith Music CD, while children play their instruments. Then teach the ritual from page 1.

### Share

Encourage families to share with the group, as they are comfortable. **What has been going on in your families that you are excited about? What has been a challenge? Verbal children can respond to these questions. What is something that made you happy today? What made you feel sad?** Model this sharing of highs/lows for families by beginning this conversation. Jot notes in the space to the right so you remember what to include in later prayers.

### Prayer

**Dear God,**  
**Thank you for this time to come together and learn more about you. Thank you for the joys we have experienced.**  
 Name the highs shared by the group. **We pray especially for the things that are causing struggles.** Name the lows.  
**Please bless this time we have together with love and laughter.**  
**Amen.**



### Get Ready

- Print the Welcome sign and post it at the entrance.
- Place the sign-in sheet and nametags near the door.
- Place the basket of instruments on the floor.



### Prayer Notes

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## Story Time



Hold up the story basket that contains a copy of *Hal and the New Kid* for every family. Place it in the middle of the circle. Lead the story basket rhyme below.

### Group Storytelling

Let's hear a story about some of our Frolic animal friends.

It is called *Hal and the New Kid*. Read the story aloud in a lively manner, holding up the book so that everyone can see the pictures. Families can follow along in their books as you read.

Ask these questions and encourage toddlers to respond.

- Who is Hal's favorite friend?
- What are some things that Hal and Ava like to do together? Invite children to find the pictures of them stacking rocks and picking grapes.
- How does Hal feel when Ava starts playing with her new friend, Jo?
- What does Ava say to Hal to help him feel better?
- After Hal prays to God for help, what does he do with Jo and Ava?
- What are some things you like to do with your friends?

Find the page with Hal's prayer and say it together.



### Sing Together

Sing this song, track 24 on the Frolic Faith Music CD, to invite families to get a book from the story basket.

**Time for a story.  
Come get a book.  
Open the pages.  
Let's take a look.**

If you want to sing another song, sing "Who Is My Friend?" track 7 on the Frolic Faith Music CD.



### About This Book

*Hal and the New Kid* explores friendship—how we make new friends and watch our friends make new friends. Hal's prayer models asking for help when meeting new friends.

### One-on-One Storytelling

**Now it's time for you to read the story together.** Give time for caregivers to read the book to their children. Notice how Hal responds to Ava and Jo playing together.

### Making Faith Connections

#### Hand in Hand

Fold construction paper in half. Place the child's hand flat on the paper so their index finger and thumb touch the fold's edge. Trace their hand and cut it out. (Don't cut the fold between finger and thumb!) Open the hand to show two hands with a heart in the middle. Write "We love our friends" on the hands. Then name your friends, writing their names on the heart. Post at home to remember all your friends.

#### Scripture in Action

Teach this Bible verse using signs and actions.

**This is my commandment** (*Point to others around you like a teacher or parent would when giving a direction.*)

**That you love one another as I have loved you.** (*Hug the person next to you, then make the ASL sign for Jesus by touching each hand's third finger to the opposite palm.*)

#### Joyful Noise

Give each child an instrument and invite them to play along while you say today's Bible verse rhythmically or sing a song from the Frolic Faith Music CD.



### Caregiver Conversation

Once they read the story together, ask parents the questions below or lead one or more of the Making Faith Connections activities.

**Who was your close friend when you were little?**

**When you were younger, were you someone who had a few close friends or lots of casual friends in many different aspects of your life?**

**Since becoming a parent, what are some ways you've continued to nurture your own friendships?**



### Transition to Play Time

Choose an instrument such as a tambourine or chime and play it to get the children's attention. You can also say or sing the song at right.



### Sing Together

Sing this song, track 25 on the Frolic Faith Music CD, to transition to Play Time.

**Time to explore!**  
**Time to play!**  
**Find a center**  
**About God today.**

## Play Time

Time to play! Choose the centers that best fit your space and materials. Make photocopies of the center descriptions on pages 8–15, fold them in half, and post them near the materials for parents to reference. Caregivers and children can explore the centers at their own pace. Caregivers may also use this time to connect with each other while their children play and discover.

### 1 **Let's Color Together**

This center supports **coloring skills**. *For toddlers.*

Supplies: New Friends Coloring Page on page 16, crayons, and blank paper

Make copies of the Coloring Page and place on a low table with crayons and blank paper.

### 2 **Let's Read Together**

This center supports **early literacy**. *For infants and toddlers.*

Supplies: Frolic books, other board and picture books, letter blocks, and cushions or pillows

Create a cozy reading nook with pillows or cushions. Display the Frolic picture and board books and other books. Place letter blocks nearby. Point out that *F* is for *friend*.

### 3 **Friendly Faces**

This center supports **emotional expression**. *For infants and toddlers.*

Supplies: Child-safe mirrors

Lay child-safe mirrors out on a table with a sign that says, "Show me your friendly face."

### 4 **Look Around Me**

This center supports **visual searching** and **language development**. *For infants.*

Supplies: Clean baby blankets and list of colorful things around the room that a baby can see, such as a toy, the overhead light, or a big tree outside the window

Label this center as one specifically for infants. Make a sign to instruct families to lay their baby on the blanket and then look at the things on the list provided.

# Play Time

continued

## 5 Pizza Place

This center supports **social development**. *For toddlers.*

Supplies: Pieces of felt or paper cut into pizza shapes (triangles for the slice, red circles for pepperoni, yellow rectangles for cheese, etc.)

Place the pizza ingredients on a low table.

## 6 Puppets

This center supports **emotional development** and **hand-eye coordination**. *For toddlers.*

Supplies: Soft puppets and a basket

Place puppets in a basket.

## 7 Friendship Band

This center supports **early musical awareness** and **social development**. *For infants and toddlers.*

Supplies: Musical instruments, shakers, and other child-friendly percussion instruments

Place instruments in a space where children can play together in a band.

## 8 Friendship Books

This center supports **fine motor skills** and **early literacy awareness**. *For toddlers.*

Supplies: Pieces of paper stapled together to make a book, photos of children in the Frolic Faith Classes, picture of Jesus from the Frolic First Bible on page 17, crayons, and glue sticks

On the front cover of each booklet, write "My Friendship Book." For this activity, print photos of the children (and families, if desired) who attend Frolic Faith Classes, or arrange to have a photo printer and camera during the class so you can take and print photos.



# Send Time

Prior to the end of Play Time, give the children a 2-minute notice that it is almost time to stop playing. At the end of 2 minutes, play the same instrument that you played at the beginning of Play Time to get the attention of families.

## Summing It Up

Thank you for reading and playing with us today! It was so much fun to think about all the friends in our lives. We got to remember that friends are a special gift from God and that Jesus will always be our friend. What will *you* remember about today? Invite any children and caregivers to respond.

## Closing Ritual

Invite caregivers to engage with their children in the ritual from page 1. Families can bless each other by hugging or by making the sign of the cross on their child's forehead while saying, "Jesus loves you, and so do I." Then lead the group in a closing song, such as "God Is So Good," track 13 on the Frolic Faith Music CD.

## Prayer

Lead families in this simple prayer. Add other prayer topics that arose during your time together.

**Dear God,**

**Thank you for this time together. Thank you for being our friend and for sending us other friends to love and care for. Help us to nurture our friendships, and to continue to grow the skills that will make us good Christian friends to others.**

**Amen.**



## Sing Together

Sing this song, track 26 on the Frolic Faith Music CD, to call everyone back to the circle.

**Play time is over  
For you and me.  
Come back to the  
circle—  
One two three!**



## Prayer Notes

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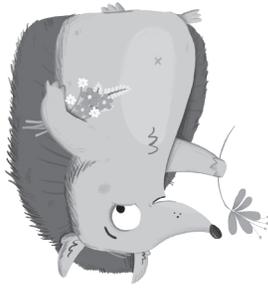
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Make copies of the Coloring Page and place on a low table with crayons and blank paper.

### For Leaders

New Friends Coloring Page on page 16, crayons, and blank paper

### Supplies

This center supports coloring skills. For toddlers.

# Let's Color Together

THEME: **New Friends**

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THEME: **New Friends**

# Let's Color Together

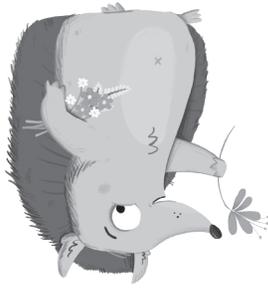
## Caregivers, while you do this . . .

Encourage your child to color the images from the book. Delight in their colorful creations!

## Your child is learning this!

- When I color, I develop my fine motor skills.
- Using crayons helps me learn the names of colors.
- **When I color pictures from this story, I remember that God gave me the gift of new friends.**





Create a cozy reading nook with pillows or cushions. Display the Frolic picture and board books and other books. Place letter blocks nearby. Point out that *F* is for *friend*.

### For Leaders

Frolic books, other board and picture books, letter blocks, and cushions or pillows

### Supplies

This center supports **early literacy**. For infants and toddlers.

# Let's Read Together

THEME: **New Friends**



THEME: **New Friends**

# Let's Read Together

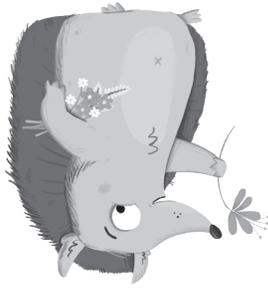
## Caregivers, while you do this . . .

Enjoy reading together. Point out letters on the blocks. Spell your names and other words together.

## Your child is learning this!

- When I hear you read, I learn about letters, sounds, and words.
- When I handle books, I learn about books and print.
- When I see letters that I can manipulate, I am learning about letter sounds and words.
- **When I see and hear stories about friendship, I learn that God is with me when I am making new friends and when I am with familiar friends.**





me your friendly face." Lay child-safe mirrors out on a table with a sign that says, "Show

### For Leaders

Child-safe mirrors

### Supplies

This center supports emotional expression. For infants and toddlers.

## Friendly Faces

THEME: **New Friends**



THEME: **New Friends**

## Friendly Faces

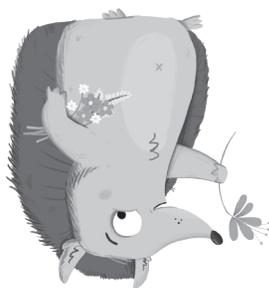
### Caregivers, while you do this . . .

Talk to your children about what being a good friend looks like. Practice with the mirrors to show each other your friendly face, your "I want to help you" face, and your "I'm glad to see you" face.

### Your child is learning this!

- When I look at our faces in a mirror, I am learning about my emotions and my non-verbal body language.
- When I learn how to interact with others in a friendly way, I am learning about how to share God's love with other people.





Label this center as one specifically for infants. Make a sign to instruct families to lay their baby on the blanket and then look at the things on the list provided.

### For Leaders

Clean baby blankets and list of colorful things around the room that a baby can see, such as a toy, the overhead light, or a big tree outside the window

### Supplies

This center supports visual searching and language development. *For infants.*

## Look Around Me

THEME: **New Friends**

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THEME: **New Friends**

## Look Around Me

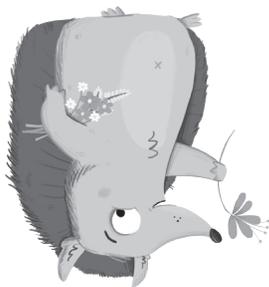
### Caregivers, while you do this . . .

Look at the things around the room and talk to your child about what you see. Watch to see if your baby will follow your gaze. Talk to your baby about how God has made these things and blessed us with these gifts.

### Your child is learning this!

- When we look at things together, I learn to develop joint attention.
- When we pay attention to the same things and you talk about them, I learn about new things.
- When you name the things in my environment as created by God, I learn that God's world is all around me.





Place the pizza ingredients on a low table.

### For Leaders

Pieces of felt or paper cut into pizza shapes (triangles for the slice, red circles for pepperoni, yellow rectangles for cheese, etc.)

### Supplies

This center supports **social development**. For toddlers.

## Pizza Place

THEME: **New Friends**



THEME: **New Friends**

## Pizza Place

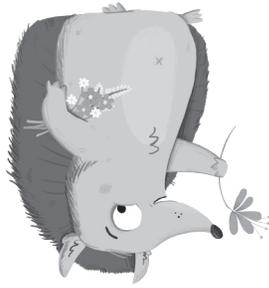
### Caregivers, while you do this . . .

Invite your child to put together a piece of pizza with the ingredients they want. Model the skill of asking them for their preferences by saying, "Would you like \_\_\_\_\_ on your pizza?" Then have them ask you or another friend. When you have completed the pizza, say a prayer together before you "eat" together.

### Your child is learning this!

- When we ask about pizza toppings, I learn how to take turns.
- When we pretend to make pizza together, I am learning how to share.
- **When friends come together to share a meal, praying before we eat is a way to share our faith.**





Place puppets in a basket.

**For Leaders**

Soft puppets and a basket

**Supplies**

This center supports emotional development and hand-eye coordination. For toddlers.

## Puppets

**New Friends** THEME:

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THEME: **New Friends**

## Puppets

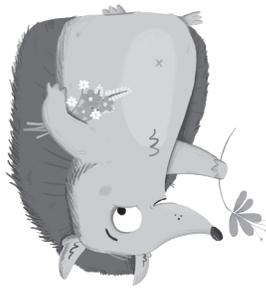
### Caregivers, while you do this . . .

Have you and your child each take a puppet. Use them to role-play how the puppets might be feeling and how we can name and deal with those feelings. For example: "This puppet is feeling sad. What can your puppet do to help her feel better?" or "Sophia the puppet is feeling frustrated. How can she calm down?"

### Your child is learning this!

- When I role-play with puppets about my emotions, I learn ways to name and manage my emotions.
- Puppets help me develop hand-eye coordination.
- **When I hear story characters pray to God about their emotions, I learn that I can pray to God about my feelings.**





Place instruments in a space where children can play together in a band.

### For Leaders

Musical instruments, shakers, and other child-friendly percussion instruments

### Supplies

toddlers.

This center supports early musical awareness and social development. For infants and

## Friendship Band

THEME: **New Friends**



THEME: **New Friends**

## Friendship Band

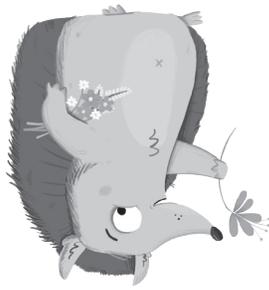
### Caregivers, while you do this . . .

Have your child play with the instruments and encourage them to have other children play alongside them in a "friendship band."

### Your child is learning this!

- When I play an instrument, I am developing motor skills.
- Playing in a "band" together encourages me to feel and express rhythm and movement and is a great way for me to learn that I can play with other people.
- **When I sing songs of faith, I learn that I can have fun when praising God.**





On the front cover of each booklet, write "My Friendship Book."

### For Leaders

Pieces of paper stapled together to make a book, picture of Jesus from the Frolic First Bible on page 17, crayons, and glue sticks  
For this activity, print photos of the children (and families, if desired) who attend Frolic Faith Classes, or arrange to have a photo printer and camera during the class so you can take and print photos.

### Supplies

This center supports fine motor skills and early literacy awareness. For toddlers.

## Friendship Books

THEME: **New Friends**

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THEME: **New Friends**

## Friendship Books

### Caregivers, while you do this . . .

Make a book filled with pictures of your child's friends. Glue pictures of children from Frolic Faith Classes onto the book pages. Label each with the child's name. On the last page, glue the picture of Jesus. Remind your child that Jesus is always their friend.

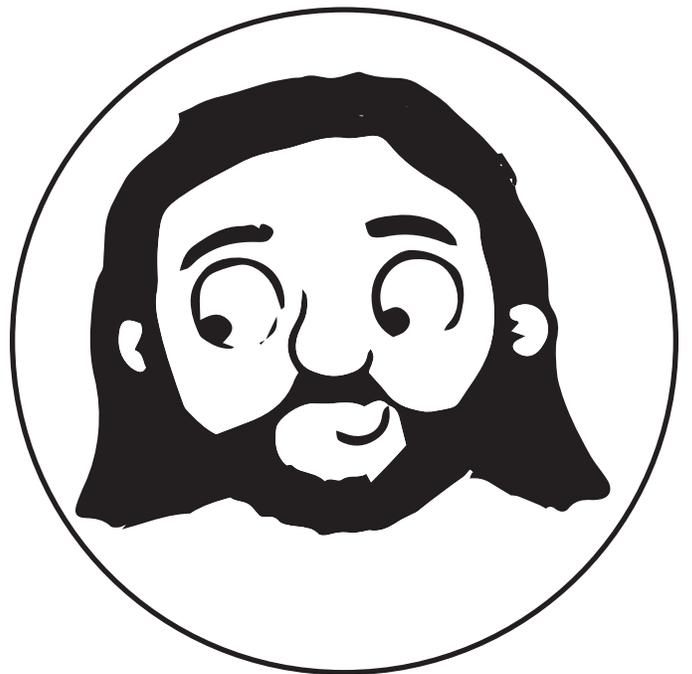
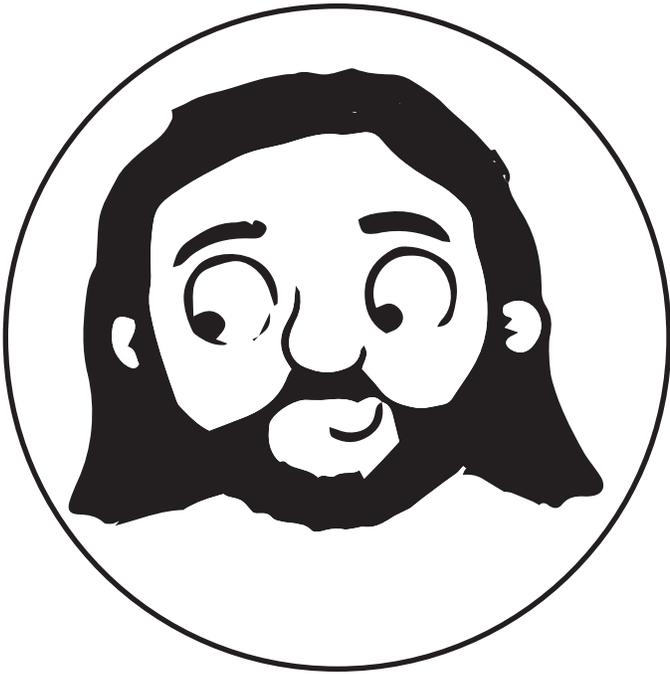
### Your child is learning this!

- When I make my own book, I develop early literacy skills.
- Drawing and gluing build my fine motor skills.
- **When I see the picture of Jesus along with pictures of other friends, I learn that Jesus is my friend.**
- **Stories about friends help me learn that all of my friends are a gift from God.**



Dear God,  
Meeting someone new isn't easy. Please help me make new  
friends so we can all have fun and be happy together.  
Amen.







THEME: **New Friends**  
**Parent-Only Class**

Use this content if you can schedule time for a parents-only session while children are cared for in another location.

### **Icebreaker Introduction**

Welcome everyone to this time together. Invite them to share their names and the names and ages of their children. To get the conversation started, ask some questions about today's theme, New Friends.

**Take a moment to think of and name your childhood friends. What is a favorite memory you have?** Ask participants to share.

**When was the last time you got together with friends for fun? What did you do together?** Encourage people to share so that they can hear both stories of success and stories of being too busy or too tired.

### **Friendship Activity**

Hand out paper and a pen to each participant. Ask the following questions, and ask them to write down their answers based on this 1-to-4 scale. **1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Strongly Agree**

**Answer these questions by ranking yourself on a scale from 1 to 4.**

- 1. I have at least one close friend who's not my spouse who I can talk to about anything.**
- 2. I believe spending time with friends is important.**
- 3. When I spend time with friends, I feel more balanced in my life.**
- 4. Since becoming a parent, I interact with friends as often as I did before parenthood.**

- 5. My friends understand the demands of parenting a young child.**
- 6. My friends can be flexible when we're planning time together.**
- 7. My friendships are a gift from God.**
- 8. I feel comfortable sharing my joys and my burdens with my friends.**

Invite parents to add up their numbers and consider the total. Assure them this is not a test with a pass or fail score. Higher totals indicate a more active and supportive network of friendships. Lower totals indicate that maintaining friendships during this season of life has been more difficult. Ask them to reflect on their scores with these questions.

**What were your thoughts/feelings as you considered these statements?**

**Did anything surprise you?**

**What motivates you when you consider these statements?**

**What gives you hope when you consider these statements?**

**Making new friendships and maintaining existing ones during this time of life can be a real challenge. This is where the gift of playdates can offer some relief. At these early ages, babies often just nap and toddlers play independently rather than interacting very much with each other. But parents can find time to support each other and to connect. These Frolic Faith Classes are like one big playdate!**



THEME: **New Friends  
Parent-Only Class**  
continued

### Reading the Bible

Ask a participant to read John 15:12-13. Then ask them some questions about the reading.

- **What are some ways that God has loved you? How can you show that type of love to your friends?** Encourage participants to think of deep and abiding ways God has loved them. God has been patient, forgiving, constant, protective, sustaining, etc. Then consider ways they can offer those qualities to others.
- **Jesus calls his disciples "friends." Do you have an image of God as a friend? Why or why not?** Some people may have a more authoritarian image of God. Allow people to share their image of God, and encourage them to explore the idea of God as friend if they have not already done so.
- **Besides physically dying, how can you lay down your life for a friend?** In our busy lives, any sacrifice of time and the gift of intentional listening can be a way of setting aside our life's distractions in order to focus on a friend.

- **Can you think of some sacrifices you make for your friends that are not healthy?** Allow participants to name the truth that some friendships are not healthy and can be harmful.

### Wrapping It Up

Thank caregivers for their participation. Affirm the friendships that are forming among those attending Frolic Faith Classes. Close with a brief prayer, including any additional prayer concerns that arose during your time together.

**Dear God,  
Thank you for our time together. Help us develop and strengthen friendships that mean so much to us during this journey of parenthood.  
Amen.**

### At-Home Ideas

- Include your child's friends and friends of the family in prayers of thanksgiving, so children learn that friends are a gift from God. Make a list of friends to pray for, and hang it next to your bed for bedtime prayers, or keep pictures of friends on the fridge to pray for at mealtime prayers.
- Look ahead to the next month and schedule some time to spend with friends. If possible, pull out your calendar or phone to schedule that time right now!



THEME: **New Friends**  
**Parent-Only Class**  
continued

If appropriate, share this basic information about friendship in the first three years of life, and invite parents to share where they think their child is on this spectrum.

- Infants and toddlers are not interested in making friends—or developmentally ready to do so—in the way they will just a few years later, when they enter preschool and the elementary years. But the foundations for friendship skills are being established early in life. Human beings are created to be social.
- Newborns recognize human voices and show a strong preference for human faces. During the first year of life, children are learning about themselves and their surroundings. Everything is new, and they are happy to interact with others for short periods of time.
- From twelve to twenty-four months of age, toddlers have a growing awareness of another person as someone who is separate from themselves—but toddlers do not yet have the skills for successfully interacting with that other person in a way that is not egocentric.
- From twenty-four to thirty-six months of age, early social skills begin to emerge in children, who may express their strong sense of *mine*.
- Studies show that children who are raised in secure, loving environments grow up to have better emotional control, better communication skills, and skills for helping others. These skills all contribute to children who are better able to make friends. Learning the social skills we need to navigate future friendships is a long process, beginning early in life, starting with what we experience in our own homes.