



EASTER – MARCH 2024 – PRESCHOOL

Bible Story: *Easter | Matthew 26:26-28:10*

Key Question: *Who wants to be your friend forever?*

Bottom Line: *Jesus wants to be my friend forever.*

Memory Verse: *“I have called you friends.”– John 15:15 NIV*

Basic Truth: *Jesus wants to be my friend forever.*

Series Overview: Waiting to be picked by a team in grade school is agonizing. If you’re some of the last people chosen by a team, it means while everyone else is cheering, “Go team!” you’re probably thinking something like, “They don’t want me, and I don’t want to be here.” The truth is, we don’t all have the skills to hit home runs or run really fast. And that’s okay. What’s not okay is being unwanted. Thankfully, for all of us, Jesus wants everyone on His team! Jesus wants everyone everywhere to follow Him and be His friend forever. No matter what we can or can’t do, what we have done, what we look like, or where we live, Jesus is alive and He wants to be our friend...forever! And that kind of Good News makes us all want to say, “GO TEAM!”

9:00 - 9:15 | 11:00 – 11:15 | EARLY ARRIVERS ACTIVITY

Opening Small Group Activity

Play: an activity that encourages preschoolers to follow guidelines while having fun + learning new concepts

What You Need: “Emotion Sort” Activity Page; scissors; tape; cups; pom-poms (red/blue/green/brown)

What You Do:

- *BEFORE THE ACTIVITY*
 - Gather children around your circle
 - Set each cup in the midst of your small group space
 - Spread out small pom-poms around the cups
- *DURING THE ACTIVITY*
 - Encourage children to sort the pom-poms into the cups by matching the colors
 - Talk about the different emotions
 - Have each child share how they are currently feeling
- *AFTER THE ACTIVITY*
 - Introduce today’s Bible story

What You Say:

- *BEFORE THE ACTIVITY*
 - “Friends, gather around the SG space! I have a fun activity for us. Come and see these different cups I have.”
- *DURING THE ACTIVITY*
 - “Let’s look at the cups together. Look at the green face. What kind of face is that? (*Pause.*) Yes, it’s a happy face. What about the brown face? (*Pause.*) Yes, that’s a sad face. The red face is a frustrated face. We feel frustrated when things aren’t going how we thought they would. Who knows what the blue face is? (*Pause.*) Yes, that’s an afraid face. Raise your hand if you’ve ever felt like one of these faces.

(Pause.) Me too! Let's sort these pom-poms into the cups. We'll put all the green pom-poms in the happy face cup. Who is feeling happy right now? *(Pause.)* What made you feel happy? *(Pause.)* All the brown pom-poms go in the sad face cup. Is anyone feeling sad right now? *(Pause.)* Oh, what made you feel sad? *(Pause.)* Is anyone feeling frustrated? *(Pause.)* You can tell us about it while we put the red pom-poms in the frustrated face cup. Finally, is anyone feeling afraid? *(Pause.)* Tell us about it. Let's put the blue pom-poms in the afraid face cup."

- *AFTER THE ACTIVITY*
 - "You did a great job of sorting all the pom-poms into the feelings cups. Can everyone point to the sad face cup? *(Pause.)* Can you make a sad face like that one? Great job. Can everyone point to the happy face cup? *(Pause.)* Can you make a happy face like that one? Great job. We're going to hear a story today about some people who were very sad and then became very happy! I can't wait to hear what happens."
- *TRANSITION*
 - Move to Worship and Story by making different emotion faces

9:15 - 9:45 | 11:15 – 11:45 – LARGE GROUP

Story Focus: Jesus is alive! Jesus dies, is put in a tomb, and comes back just like He said He would, so we could be His friend forever. Yes, Jesus is alive and Jesus wants to be my friend forever. And Jesus wants to be your friend forever...every child's friend forever...every-person-in-the-world's friend forever!

9:45 – 10:05 | 11:45 – 12:05 – SMALL GROUP

I Have Called You Friends

[Hear From God | Memory Verse Review]

Move: an activity that allows preschoolers to review the Bible story, bottom line or memory verse by creating a craft to take home

What You Need: N/A

What You Do:

- *BEFORE THE ACTIVITY*
 - Gather the children in your small group area
 - Say the Memory Verse and do the motions together
- *DURING THE ACTIVITY*
 - Lead children to sing the memory verse to the tune of “Farmer in the Dell”
 - Repeat as desired
- *AFTER THE ACTIVITY*
 - Review the Bottom Line: **Jesus wants to be my friend forever**

What You Say:

- *BEFORE THE ACTIVITY*
 - “Friends, come gather with me! Let’s say our Memory Verse as we do the motions. ‘I (*point up*) have called you (*two fingers on top of two fingers*) friends,’ (*hook index fingers twice*) John 15:15. (*Open hands like a book.*) Great job!”
- *DURING THE ACTIVITY*
 - “Let’s sing the verse together. Listen as I sing it one time, then join me in singing:
 - I have called you friends,
I have called you friends,
Jesus wants to be my friend,

Jesus calls me friend.

“Okay friends, let’s sing together.” (*Repeat several times.*)

- *AFTER THE ACTIVITY*
 - “Great job, friends! Jesus calls us friends. Isn’t that amazing? Jesus is the best friend ever. Tell me: **Who wants to be your friend forever? Jesus wants to be my friend forever!**”

I Spy Jesus!

[Live for God | Application Activity]

Think: an advanced activity specifically designed for older preschoolers

What You Need: “I Spy Jesus!” Activity Page; cardstock; washable markers

What You Do:

- *BEFORE THE ACTIVITY*
 - Give each child a “I Spy Jesus” activity page
- *DURING THE ACTIVITY*
 - Encourage the children to search their pages to find Jesus hidden in the picture
 - Encourage children to circle Jesus when they find him
- *AFTER THE ACTIVITY*
 - Review the Bible story

What You Say:

- *BEFORE THE ACTIVITY*
 - “Friends, let’s sit down in our circle!
- *DURING THE ACTIVITY*
 - “There are lots and lots of things on your paper! But somewhere, hidden among all these pictures, is a picture of Jesus! Can you find Jesus? When you find Jesus, circle Him with the marker. (*Pause.*) Hooray! You found Jesus in the picture! Way to go, friends!”
- *AFTER THE ACTIVITY*

- “When Jesus’ friends went to the tomb, the stone had been rolled away and Jesus wasn’t there. Jesus came back, just like He said He would! Jesus is alive. He came to be our friend forever. **Who wants to be your friend forever? Jesus wants to be my friend forever!**”

Journal + Prayer

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding + application

What You Need: “Memory Verse Card” Activity Page; Bible; journal

What You Do:

- *BEFORE THE ACTIVITY*
 - Place “Memory Verse Card” in Bible at John 15:15
 - Keep this card in your Bible all month long
- *DURING THE ACTIVITY*
 - Sit down and gather the children around you.
 - Review the Memory Verse and motions, then encourage the children to help you make a list in the journal of people we can tell the good news that Jesus is alive and He wants to be their friend forever
- *AFTER THE ACTIVITY*
 - Pray with the children using the list you made in the journal

What You Say:

- *BEFORE THE ACTIVITY*
 - “Now let’s do one more activity!”
- *DURING THE ACTIVITY*
 - *(Open the Bible and lay it in front of the children.) “In our Bible Story today, something very sad happened and then something very happy happened. What sad thing happened? (Pause.) You’re right. Jesus died. And what happy thing happened? (Pause.) Yes! Jesus came back, just like He said He would! Jesus is alive, and He wants to be our friend forever! Who wants to be your friend forever? Jesus wants to be my friend forever! Jesus wants to call [child’s name] His friend and [child’s name] His friend and (continue with each child’s name)! And the Bible verse that*

we have learned will help us remember that Jesus wants to call us His friend. In this verse, Jesus says: ‘I (point up) have called you (two fingers on top of two fingers) friends,’ (hook index fingers twice) John 15:15. (Open hands like a book.) Let’s stand up and say Jesus’ words together! Just say what I say and do what I do. ‘I (point up) have called you (two fingers on top of two fingers) friends,’ (hook index fingers twice) John 15:15. (Open hands like a book.) I think you’re ready to try and say it by yourself. Let’s sit down and take turns doing that. I have my stickers ready! (Give each child the opportunity to try and say the Bible verse.) Everyone, clap for [child’s name]! Here is your sticker! (Say this with each child as they try to say the Bible verse.) I am very proud of you for trying to say that Bible verse! When I count to three, I want everyone to stand up and show me your sticker/handstamp. One, two, three! (Pause to look.) Yay!’” (Clap.) Now let’s sit back down so we can write in our prayer journal and talk to God. (Open journal.) Today, we’re going to make a list of people we can tell the good news that Jesus is alive AND He wants to be their friend forever! So when I say your name, tell me the name of one person you can tell the good news to, and I will write it in our journal. (Remember to print as you write in the journal, so the children can recognize their names and the letters.)

- **AFTER THE ACTIVITY**

- *(Hold up the journal.) “Look at all these people! Let’s use our list when we pray. Would anyone like to pray before I pray? (Give each child who wants to pray the opportunity to do so.) Dear God, we want everyone to hear the good news that Jesus is alive and He wants to be their friend forever. Please help [child’s name] tell (person they listed) and [child’s name] tell (person they listed) and . . . (continue with each child and the person they listed). Thank You for giving us Jesus. We love You, God. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”*