**Growing Friends**

**Carers asked to stay until after the Opening Prayer)**

Welcome back to Friends on Faith Adventures. We are looking forward to going on a journey and nobody knows where we will end up. All we know is we have got our crate filled with adventure and an open path ahead. So, hold on tight and enjoy the ride!!

Let’s hear about FOFA bear and FOFA cam’s adventures this week and how everyone got on with the Walking the Way challenge. (Encourage everyone, including parents and carers, to join in.)

**The Opening Prayer**

We are friends together *(shake hands with both palms facing towards body)*

On a faith adventure (*point to forehead with thumb. Hold other hand with palm facing up and bring the side of your first hand down so that it goes across the palm of the second hand just below the fingers)*

With the Bible as our mapbook *(draw cross with thumbnail on back of hand then put hands together and open like a book)*

And Jesus as our guide *(use index fingers to point into palm of each hand in turn).*

God, be with us in all that we do *(point up, then make index finger into a hook shape and move down as though pulling down towards you)*

And go with us wherever we go *(point outwards).*

Amen *(two thumbs up with hands apart, bring hands together)*

**Alternative Opening Prayer**

Lord help us to be:

**P**repared for adventure

**I**n all we do.

**L**oving and caring,

**O**pen to others

**T**ogether as one community

**S**haring the love of Jesus on our way.

Amen

**I have a friend who…...**

This is a story game. Ensure everyone is sat in a circle. The first person starts by saying: I have a friend who…………….and they finish the sentence with whatever they like, for instance……………….I have a friend who is very kind. The next person in the circle must say the first persons sentence and then add to it…………….I have a friend who is very kind………and likes elephants. The next person says what the first two said and then adds to it themselves. This continues until someone struggles to remember everything. Depending on how long the game takes, you could play some more rounds. TIP: It might be wise to prompt people with a word or similar to help them remember the order of sentences.

**Friends stick together**

* Something to use to tie two legs together
* Masking tape

This game is also known as the 3-legged race. Mark out a start and finish line. Sort everyone into pairs. Tie the ankles of each pair together then, with everyone starting together, the pairs should make their way towards the finishing line. The pairs will need to work together to be able to move smoothly. Have a practise run before starting properly. Explain that, just as the pairs have to stick together, so too do the two people in our story today.

**Today’s theme explores the precious gift of friendship given to us by God.**

**The Big Story: Ruth chs 1-4 – Good friends**

(You could all act out the story as you go if you wish – the bits in red indicate the actions the whole group could do)

READER 1: Hi, my name is Naomi, I want to tell you all about my friend Ruth.

READER 2: *(To the children)* Do you have a best friend? I wonder what they are like.

READER 1: To tell you about Ruth, I have to explain a bit about my life.

READER 2: I love hearing about people’s stories, do tell us.

READER 1: It’s rather a long story but I shall keep it short.

READER 2: Ok, we are sitting comfortably *(Sit comfortably)*

READER 1 I was married to a lovely man called Elimelech.

READER 2: Was married?

READER 1: Yes sadly Elimelech died, but I did still have my two wonderful sons Mahlon and Kilion and they had married two lovely ladies, Orpah and Ruth.

READER 2: Ah lovely, were you all happy? *(smile broadly)*

READER 1: We were, I missed Elimelech of course but I loved being around my sons…. Or rather, I did until they died too.

READER 2: Oh no…….how sad! What did you do? *(Sad face)*

READER 1: Well there was a famine in the land at that time………You’ve heard of a famine? It meant we didn’t have much food *(Rub tummy)* because everything we grew kept dying. It was a very hard time. We decided to set off for Bethlehem where we had heard there was food. *(Act out walking using fingers on palm of hand)*

READER 2: Did you all go together?

READER 1: Well that was the plan to begin with, but I told Ophra and Ruth to go back to their mothers. I said they should go back home to find a new husband.

READER 2: And did they? Go back to their mums? Get married again?

Reader 1: Well Ophra did, after some persuasion. But Ruth insisted she stay with me. She is so precious. She said to me ‘Don’t ask me to leave you! Don’t beg me not to follow you! Every place you go, I will go. Every place you live, I will live. Your people will be my people. Your God will be my God.’ (Children’s international Bible) Ruth was so good to me, she cared for me and was very kind.

READER 2: And you went home to Bethlehem? Were you welcomed there?

READER 1: Yes everyone was happy to see us and welcomed us in. *(hold out arms and say welcome)* We were very poor but Ruth was offered work gathering the crops that were being harvested *(Act out cutting down corn/ wheat).*  And to our surprise, it turned out to be the field that belonged to a relative of my late husband, Moab.

READER 2: That was fortunate.

READER 1: Moab came home and noticed Ruth working in the fields. He thought her to be very pretty and hardworking and wanted to know more about her.

READER 2: Did he speak to her?

READER 1: He did. He told her to follow his workers to whatever field they go to and to take a drink whenever she needed one. *(Imitate drinking from a cup)* He also told the men to leave her alone.

READER 2: That was nice of him, I think – but wasn’t Ruth allowed to get a drink whenever she wanted anyway? I have a water bottle with me all the time.

READER 1: Oh no, you must only get a drink when it is an official break and are told to otherwise you would get into trouble. Ruth thanked Moab and was really grateful, but asked why he was being so kind to her especially?

READER 2: Was it because he fancied her? *(Hand on heart)*

READER 1: [laughing] I think that was part of it but he had also seen what a good friend she had been to me and said that God would surely reward her for her loyalty and friendship.

READER 2: What happened next? Did they get married?

READER 1: Patience! Moab and Ruth did continue to get to know each other *(loop little fingers round each other)* and Moab continued to offer kindness to Ruth. I love Ruth very much and I loved her living with me but……………….

READER 2: You knew she needed to find a husband?

READER 1: Exactly and I realised that Moab would be really suitable and would look after us both. I hatched a plan, I told Ruth to dress nicely and wear perfume and go to see Moab.

READER 2: Oh did they kiss? *(blow kisses)*

READER 1: No they didn’t! What they did to was talk about whether they should marry for they had become very friendly. Moab was concerned though because he was much older than Ruth.

READER 2: Older? That’s ok though, my uncle is older than my auntie and they are very happy

READER 1: Eventually they did decide to marry *(wiggle wedding finger)*  and soon they had a baby, *(Act out rocking a baby)*, my grandson Obed. He is going to grow up to be a servant of God, I just know it. But for now he is helping to look after me. Ruth was such a good and loyal friend to me and, because of that, God rewarded her with a new husband and family. *(Shout hooray)*

READER 1: What an amazing friend Ruth was……..I wonder if you have a friend like Ruth?

**Creative Adventure**

**Friendship bands**

What you need:

* Threads of varying colours
* Sellotape
* Scissors
* Beads
* Ruler/ measure

Activity

Chose three different colour threads and cut them to about 25 cm in length. Leaving 5cm of long thread at the top, knot them together (younger children may need assistance with this) and then tape that end to a table. Thread a bead onto all three threads and then start to plait them – you can be really creative and thread a bead on one thread as you are plaiting them if you choose. Once the bracelet is long enough, fold the ends of the thread round to form a loop and tie a knot to secure. The long threads can be tied onto the loop to secure round a wrist.

Wondering questions to use during creative time:

I wonder what sort of friend you are?
I wonder what having a friend like God is like?
I wonder why God designed us to have friends?

**The Adventure Map**

Explain the Adventure Map and how a lot of the books were written hundreds and thousands of years before Jesus came to Earth. However, a lot of the stories in the Bible before the birth of Jesus, talk of his coming and set out how God wants us to live our lives.

Take the group to the Adventure Map that you have created on the wall. Get the group to find where on the Map today’s story came from. Choose one or some of the things created by the group to be photographed and attach this to the wall to create a visual reminder of where the story came from and your adventure together. The aim is that in a year you will have lots of reminders of the stories and where in the Bible they come from. Use a piece of string or ribbon to connect the photo of the craft work to the book of the Bible.

**Walking the Way**

**This is a time to invite the parents and carers back in to share what the children have been up to during the session. They will also be here to hear about the Walking the Way challenge and the tasks (should they choose to accept them) that the children (and parents) are about to undertake.**

For the Younger: FOFA the bear

This is FOFA. FOFA likes nothing more than to go on an adventure; FOFA is a little more adventurous than me. FOFA believes that faith is a journey and that’s why FOFA would love to take you on a journey with him and walk the way of God in our everyday lives. Each session FOFA would like to go home with one of you and add to FOFA’s scrapbook of things you do together. FOFA doesn’t mind if you draw a picture of what you have done, take a photograph or just write a story about it. FOFA also doesn’t mind if you just come and tell the rest of us what you got up to together. But because FOFA’s memory isn’t very good as FOFA’s brains are made of stuffing, it would be better to save the memories in the book if you can. At the end of our time together we can always remember the great adventures we have been on together with FOFA and hopefully you will walk a little closer with God.

For the Older: FOFA cam

This camera is your window on the world. You have one shot at this, so choose carefully. You will be given a very precious piece of equipment – a FOFA cam. You have one photo to take with the camera, that records one thing – a way you have met the challenge. If there are other people in the photo, please ask their permission first and explain this photo will be put on display here. Bring back the camera and your photo next time to share your moment - and remember you only have ONE shot at this!

Every time we will choose someone to take FOFA bear and someone to take FOFA cam to help them with the challenge – but we can all have a go at the challenge!

Our Walking the Way Challenge this time is: Choose someone to give your friendship bracelet to. Think carefully before passing it on and offer your friendship along with the bracelet.

**Adventurers Go!**

So today we have heard how Ruth offers her friendship to Naomi, she stays loyal and true. We hear how God rewards her for sharing this precious gift, friendship.

**Prayers (choose one/both)**

Prayer

Lord our friend, thank you for the precious gift of friendship.

Help us to be a good friend to others.

We hope others will be a good friend to us too.

Amen

**Active Prayer
Growing friendship**

What you need:

* Plant pots
* Seeds
* Sticky labels
* Pens
* soil

Fill the plant pot with soil, make a small hole in the centre and drop in the seed. Cover the hole with soil and sprinkle a little water on it. On the sticky label write ‘Grow with God’. Everyone can hold their pot while one person says:

Lord God our friend, help our friendship with you and those around us grow and blossom. Amen

**End Prayer Every Session: Altogether**

**We are Friends on Faith Adventures, travelling together with God.**

**Adventurers go! Amen**

**What you will need:**

* Something to use to tie two legs together
* Masking tape
* Threads of varying colours
* Sellotape
* Scissors
* Beads
* Ruler/ measure
* Plant pots
* Seeds
* Sticky labels
* Pens
* soil

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| **Location** | **Possible hazard** | **Action required** | **Action taken** | **Signature** |
| **During session** | Use of scissors during craft time, chance of cutting fingers | Supervise while using scissors, use appropriate aged scissors |  |  |
| **During session** | Risk of injury during 3-legged race  | Supervise game and remind everyone to be careful |  |  |