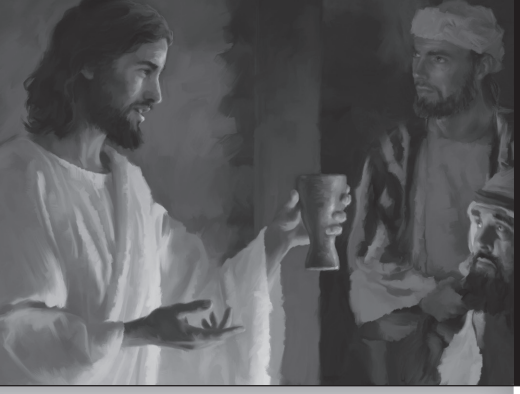


13

Friends Forever

Grace in Action
Prayer connects us with God and with one another.

POWER TEXT

"Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous" (1 Peter 3:8).

KEY REFERENCES

- John 17
- *The Desire of Ages*, chap. 73, pp. 662-680
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 9, pp. 70-72
- Student lesson on page 142 of this guide

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 2, The Trinity
- No. 14, Unity in the Body of Christ
- No. 11, Growing in Christ

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** that it is God's will that His people be united in love.
- **Feel** a desire to be unified in their love for God and for one another.
- **Respond** to God's love by loving and respecting others.



God's love for us shows us how to love one another.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Jesus prays for His disciples and all believers that they may be united as one in Him. Jesus recognizes the diversity among His disciples and appreciates their uniqueness. He prays that they will look to Him and find unity rather than looking to each other and being distracted by their diversity.

This is a lesson about grace in action.

Through prayer and our experience of God's love for us, we can learn to love other believers. Once we recognize the immensity of God's love for us we are inspired to extend His love to others. When we focus on Him we begin to understand the immense value that Jesus saw in each one of us when He sacrificed His life to save us. In this light we learn to value each human being as extremely precious in heaven's sight.

Teacher Enrichment

"John's Gospel reveals that the Godhead consists of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—a unity of three coeternal persons having a unique and mysterious relationship. . . . Sinners will never comprehend what Jesus' death meant to the Godhead. From eternity He had been with His Father and the Spirit. They had lived as coeternal, coexistent in utter self-giving and love for one another. To be together for so long bespeaks the perfect, absolute love that existed within the Godhead. 'God is love' (1 John 4:8) means that each so lived for the others that they experienced complete fulfillment and happiness. . . .

"The only true God is the God of the cross. Christ unveiled to the universe the Godhead's infinite love and saving power; He revealed a triune God who was willing to go through the agony of separation because of unconditional love for a rebel planet. From this cross God proclaims His loving invitation to us: Be reconciled, 'and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus' " (*Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, pp. 29-32).

How do I nurture my relationship with God? In what ways do I embrace the unity that God intends to maintain with me? How do my relationships with others reflect the harmony that should characterize our interactions with fellow believers?

Welcome

Welcome students at the door and direct them to their seats. Ask them how their week has been. Encourage learners to study their Sabbath School lesson regularly, and use several minutes to debrief students on the previous week's lesson.

Ask: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful? Which activity was the most fun?** Invite students to share their experiences and/or the handiworks they created for Sabbath School during the week. (The leader should be familiar with the previous lesson to be able to direct the discussion.) This is also a good time to have students recite the power text.

Have students begin the Readiness Activity of your choice.

Program notes

LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	Ongoing	Greet students at the door. Ask about their week.	
1 Readiness	10-15	*A. As One*	blindfolds (optional)
		B. Friend Qualities	white/chalkboard, markers/chalk, paper and pencils
* Prayer & Praise	15-20	See page 137. Prayer & Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, world map, pushpins, milk OR honey container
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story	paper and pencils
		Experiencing the Story	adult in costume to read OR recording of John 17
		Exploring the Bible	Bibles, art supplies
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*How Are We Doing?*	spool of thread for each group
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*Secret Unity Drops*	slips of paper with church members' names and addresses; paper and pencils
* Closing		A. Prayer and Closing Comments B. Reminder to Parents C. Coming Up Next Week	

1

READINESS ACTIVITIES

Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.

A

YOU NEED:
- ☐ blindfolds (optional)

As One

Have everyone stand in a group, close their eyes (wear blindfolds), and begin to move about slowly and carefully. Say: **When you come in contact with another person, you are to shake that person's hand and ask, "Christian?" When you are asked "Christian?" each of you (unless I told you that you are the Christian) needs to answer with the same question. Keep your eyes closed and find another person to ask. If you receive no answer, join hands with that person. The Christian will remain silent.**

When everybody is moving about, whisper to one of the students that he/she is the "Christian." That person may then open their eyes. When someone passes by the "Christian," shakes their hand, and asks the question "Christian?" the real "Christian" does not respond, but holds on to the questioner's hand. The questioner may now open their eyes, and together the two are the "Christian."

When someone comes in contact with either of the "Christians," shakes one of their free hands, and asks the question, that person also is not answered, but becomes part of the growing body of "Christians." Other seekers who shake hands with, and question either end of the growing "body of Christians," will open their eyes and stay joined to the growing group. ("Christians" should stay together.) Eventually everyone will be a part of the "Christian" group.

Debriefing

Ask: **How did it feel to be a "seeker"? How did it feel to be part of the group with open eyes? What happened as more and more people were joined together? How is this like or unlike our lives as Christians? Jesus prayed for the unity of believers that by His grace we would live, work, and worship together in unity, just as He and His Father do. Let's say together our power text, 1 Peter 3:8:**

"Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous" (1 Peter 3:8).

Let's repeat our power point:

God's love for us shows us how to love one another.

B

YOU NEED:
- ☐ white/chalkboard
- ☐ markers/chalk
- ☐ paper and pencils

Friend Qualities

Brainstorm with the students qualities of true friends. Write their answers on the board in a column titled "Qualities of a True Friend." Then brainstorm with them characteristics of unreliable friends. Create a second column on the board titled "Characteristics of Unreliable Friends" and list their answers. Ask: **Why is it important that we nurture positive friendships by always being true and reliable friends? How can our positive attitude and Christ-like love for our friends help them?** Have students form groups of three or four. Distribute to them paper and pencils. Have them create poems about friendship, using some of the words listed on the board that describe the qualities of true friends.

The students in each group may work collectively to create one group poem, by each contributing verses and ideas to the poem. For example, their poem could start with a verse like: "A true friend accepts you in spite of your faults." Ideally, share your own poem or read some poetry on the theme of friendship. If any of the students feels impressed to create their own poem about friendship, they should do so. Once the groups complete their poems, allow a few minutes for students to read these to the class.

Debriefing

Ask: **How does your poem help you think of the kind of friend you would like to be? How can you be the friend you described to someone you love or appreciate? Let's say together the power text, 1 Peter 3:8:**

"Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous" (1 Peter 3:8).

Let's repeat our power point:

God's love for us shows us how to love one another.

Accommodation for students with special needs:
Guide students with special needs to groups that offer them assistance in participation. Allow students who experience difficulty with writing and spelling to express answers verbally, while another group member records these in writing.

Prayer & Praise

Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). If they have given you permission, share one or two special items from students' Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"Our Prayer" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 137)
"Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 45)
"It's About Grace" (see music on p. 149 of this guide)

Mission

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map
- ☐ pushpins

Use *Adventist Mission for Youth and Adults* (go to www.juniorpowerpoints.org and click on MISSION) or another mission report available to you. For the mission story, have a map of the world where the students can identify the location of the mission story and compare it to where they are. You could use pushpins to mark where the mission story takes place.

Offering

YOU NEED:
- ☐ milk OR honey container

Say: **Giving our offerings to support missions around the world is one of the ways that we share God's love for us with others.**

Prayer

Form a prayer chain by asking the students each to pray for someone they know. Close with a prayer for the students' joys and sorrows, for the birthday and other special event celebrants, as well as for the visitors.

Notes

2

BIBLE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pencils

Introducing the Bible Story

Divide the group into random pairs. (You can do this by going around the group and numbering everyone, counting as high as half the total number of students, and then starting over from one again. There should then be two people with each number. Ask them to pair.)

Ask each pair to make a list of what they have in common and what is different. For example, they can be different because one is a boy and the other a girl. However, they have many distinctive human characteristics in common.

Some questions they may ask each other are: (1) What is your favorite activity? (2) What is your favorite piece of music? (3) Who is one of your heroes? (4) How many siblings do you have?

Debriefing

Ask: **How many similarities did you find? How many differences did you identify? Did anyone discover a similarity that surprised them? How would your differences help you work together as a team? How would they hinder your working together?**

Say: **Jesus understood the differences between the disciples. Today we are going to hear His final prayer for them.**

YOU NEED:
- ☐ adult in costume OR
- ☐ recording of John 17

Experiencing the Story

Arrange your room so that an adult, dressed in biblical clothes, is seen in an attitude of prayer with their back or side toward the students. If possible, dim the lights or have the person removed slightly from the students. Have that person read or recite John 17.

(Optional) Record a person with a clear, expressive voice reading John 17 and play the recording for the students. Create an atmosphere of reverence and prayer.

Debriefing

Ask: **How did this prayer from Jesus to His Father inform you of God's love for you?** (Encourage a variety of responses.) **What did you learn about what God wants for us, His believers on this earth?**

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ art supplies

Exploring the Bible

Divide students into four groups (or whatever number works best for your group). Provide art supplies for each group. Assign one of the following texts to each group: Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 10:17; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 4:13. Ask each group to create a representation of their text with the supplies you provide. (If possible, encourage three dimensional representations, not just drawings.) When groups have finished, have each group show their creation, read their text aloud, and then answer questions regarding their interpretations.

Debriefing

Ask: **What have you learned about unity in Christ?** (Encourage responses.) **How would you explain unity in Christ to someone else?** (Being willing to be open and honest with each other, talking about our differences, putting others before ourselves.) **Let's once again repeat our power text, 1 Peter 3:8:**

"Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous" (1 Peter 3:8).

Let's say our power point together:

God's love for us shows us how to love one another.

Accommodations for students with special needs: Encourage students who experience difficulty with this activity to work with a partner who could assist them. If needed provide these students with materials for alternative modes of artistic expression. The goal is to help them contribute in ways that they feel comfortable, accepted, and valued.

YOU NEED:
- ☐ spools of thread

How Are We Doing?

Divide into groups of four to six, each with an adult facilitator. Have students sit in a close circle with left elbows resting on their knees and left hands raised (all the raised arms should be only three or four inches (seven to 10 centimeters) from each other. The facilitator holds a spool of thread. As you (or the facilitator) read the following phrases or sentences, everyone in each group should agree or the group disagrees. If they agree, the facilitator takes one turn around their wrists with the thread. (The first pass should be secured with a knot.) If they do not all agree, their bond is not strengthened that time. Tell them to each be honest in their answers.

1. We believe Jesus died to save us.
2. We believe God loves us no matter what we do.
3. We believe Jesus is coming back to take us to heaven and offer us eternal life.
4. We believe no one of us is better than the other.
5. We believe Jesus would have died for any one of us, even if we had been the only sinners to accept that gift.
6. We believe that only through God's grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit can we obey Him.
7. We believe we should confess our faults one to the other and pray for one another.
8. We believe that we should put one another before ourselves.

Debriefing

Say: **Test the strength of your bond by putting a little pressure against the thread.** Ask: **Do you believe your group is unified in Christ?**

Say: **While you are still "united," I want to read two more verses to you.** Read 1 Corinthians 1:10 and Ephesians 4:3.

Ask: **What could divide you?** (Our understanding of our worth to God, our belief in Jesus' sacrifice, the Holy Spirit's work.) **What can unite you?** (The same things.) **What can unite you if you are divided on these issues?** (Studying the Bible and praying for the Holy Spirit to bring the unity Jesus promised.)

God's love for us shows us how to love one another.

4

SHARING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:

- ☐ slips of paper with church members' names and addresses
- ☐ paper and pencils (optional)

Secret Unity Drops

Ask students to share their experiences if they had the opportunity to pray for and with their friends. Ask: **Did anyone of you pray with a friend? Did you pray for the unity of your friendship?**

Prepare in advance small slips of paper, each with the name and address of one of the families in the church. Model to the students how you would offer encouragement to someone through a letter. Let the students take turns drawing a name. Each student will write a short prayer letter to the family members, including the commitment to support the family through prayer during the coming week or month. In their letters the students will share expressions of God's grace and love. Have the students close the letter with some expression of appreciation for what that family contributes to the church community.

Debriefing

Ask: **How well do you know the family for whom you will be praying? What specifically will you ask God to do for these people? How do you think the families will feel when they get your letter?**

Remember our power point:

God's love for us shows us how to love one another.

Accommodations for students with special needs:
Allow students with special needs who experience difficulty with writing to work with a partner who could assist them.

Closing

Prayer and closing comments:

Ask God for unity in your Sabbath School class. Pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to be manifest as the members of the church seek unity by nurturing a humble and loving spirit.

Reminder to parents:

Say: **Check out the student Bible study guide to find Parents' Pages for your use in family worship, or however you wish to use them to spiritually guide your children. You may listen to the podcast of the lesson online at www.juniorpowerpoints.org/podcast.php?channel=1.**

Coming up next week:

Say: **Jesus' friends fall asleep. We support our friends in their times of need.**

Notes

Student lesson

Friends Forever

When have you been part of a cheering crowd at a sporting event? How did it feel to be part of a group with the same goal—the winning of your favorite players? Jesus knew it was good to be part of a united team.

The Passover meal hadn't quite lived up to the disciples' expectations. They had been looking forward to the meal with a sense of anticipation. Something momentous was about to happen. There was a buzz in the air that started with Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Surely Jesus would tell them tonight about His plans to establish His kingdom.

The evening hadn't quite followed their plan. Jesus their Master had begun by washing their feet. The meal had been a quiet time with Jesus talking as though He was going to leave them, not overthrow the Romans. The disciples felt confused. They loved Jesus. Surely He must see that now was the time to act.

The disciples barely noticed Judas slipping out of the room. He often disappeared to help a needy person, or pay for something; there was nothing unusual about his going early. Only Jesus seemed to notice and looked sadly after him, as if He wished He could call Judas back. Jesus looked around at the other disciples. They were His closest friends. He knew them so well—their qualities and their weaknesses, what made them happy and sad. He knew their expectations and also the pain that was in store for them. If only He could help them to understand what was about to happen.

Jesus knew God as His Father and Friend. God was with Him all the time; they communed together and were one in purpose. Jesus knew that if His disciples could only understand this, they wouldn't feel so devastated when they would see Him being taken away from them to be crucified.

It was getting late and time for them to leave. Jesus would talk some more on their way to the garden. But before they left, Jesus wanted to pray to His Father, their Father as well, who loved them just as much as Jesus did. Lifting up His hands, Jesus began to pray.

"Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do."

"I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth."

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me."

"Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:1-4, 14-17, 20, 21, 24).

Jesus longed to help His disciples understand the bond of unity that existed between Him and the Father. Oh, how He longed to help them understand the events that would lead up to His crucifixion and death. Only if their faith rested entirely in God would they recognize that Jesus was the Son of God. Only then would they be able to stand in the hour of trial. Then they would comprehend that Jesus was sent from God to sacrifice His life to save us from sin and eternal death. Through this prayer Jesus entrusted His disciples to the Father's care. He interceded for them and for everyone who would believe in Him as our rightful high priest.

Sadly, the disciples did not understand at that time the meaning of Jesus' words. Their spiritual eyes were still dimmed by their own expectations. They failed to understand Jesus' mission. That night Judas betrayed Jesus. The disciples spent a weekend of lonely despair. But after Jesus' resurrection they would remember this prayer of Jesus. They would understand that truly the key to victory is found in communion with God. If we seek to become one with Jesus, He will enable us to reflect His love to the world around us. Remember, Jesus prayed that we would be one with God so that the world would believe that the Father had sent Jesus to save the world. Let's decide to have a living connection with God and pray that the world will come to know Jesus and the love of the Father through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

KEY REFERENCES

- John 17
- *The Desire of Ages*, chap. 73, pp. 662-680
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 9, pp. 70-72
- Our Beliefs, nos. 2, 14, 11

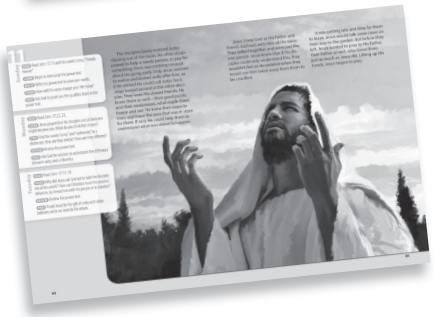
POWER TEXTS

"Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous" (1 Peter 3:8).

POWER POINT

God's love for us shows us how to love one another.







Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 102.

Sunday

READ Read John 17:11 and this week's story, "Friends Forever."

REVIEW Review the power text, 1 Peter 3:8.

WRITE Write the power text in your own words.

THINK How will this verse change your life today?

PRAY Ask God to grant you the qualities listed in the power text.

Monday

READ Read John 17:22, 23.

THINK Jesus prayed that His disciples and all believers might become one. What do you think that means?

FIND Find the words "unity" and "uniformity" in a dictionary. How are they similar? How are they different?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God for wisdom to understand the difference between unity and uniformity.

Tuesday

READ Read John 17:13–19.

THINK Why did Jesus ask God not to take the disciples out of this world? How can Christians have the greatest influence, by interaction with the people or in isolation?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank Jesus for the gift of unity with other believers while we wait for His return.

Wednesday

READ Read Matthew 6:9-13.

COMPARE Compare Jesus' last prayer in John 17 with His prayer known as the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13.

THINK For whom and for what are you praying?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Use as a model Jesus' prayer as you talk to God.

Thursday

READ Read Colossians 3:12–14.

DO Cut a six-inch (15-centimeter) piece of thread. Cut eight pieces of thread and bind them together. Break a single strand of six-inch thread and then break the second, thicker combined thread. Which was easier to break?

NOTICE When all believers or friends combine their strength in Christ, they have greater influence for good.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God for wisdom to promote unity.

Friday

READ Read John 17:1–5 with your family.

SHARE Share what you have learned about Jesus' prayer for unity.

ASK Ask each family member to share what unity in Jesus means to them.

REPEAT Say the power text by memory.

PRAY Praise God for the unity He has promised to believers. Ask Him to bring that unity into your family.