

ELEMENTARY HEALTHY FRIENDSHIPS



CONVERSATION GUIDE FOR SGLs

Every kid needs tribes over time to give them belonging. And your small group is a great place for that kind of connection to take place! As a small group leader, you're a significant member of a kid's tribe. So keep in mind your conversations about friendship matter. Your words could serve as the foundation of how a kid views and forms their own friendships.

Elementary schoolers are all about *fun*. And nothing is more fun than friends! At this age, friendships can change from week to week. Sometimes they change from day to day! But their importance isn't marginalized by their inconstant nature. Not getting invited to a sleepover or being the last kid picked for the kickball game can be heartbreaking to a kid. Even the seemingly small things, like not sitting by your favorite friend at lunch, can be a big deal to an elementary schooler.

And as the phases progress, so does your group's capacity to compel one another. To shape one another. To critically affect one another. So take care with how you approach the topic of friends—even during this early phase of elementary school. No fight is too silly or disappointment too small to unpack.

Here are a few ideas of what to say—and what to avoid saying—when leading discussions about healthy friendships with elementary schoolers:

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WHAT TO SAY:

- “What’s your favorite show, book, or movie about friends? How are they good friends to each other?”
- “Tell me about how you met your best friend. What kind of things do you enjoy doing together?”
- “Name three words that describe a good friend.”
- “Think about a time a friend has made you angry or sad. What happened?”
- “If you wanted to become a friend with someone new, what would you do?”
- “Have you ever felt like you needed to “tattle” on a friend?”
- “Have you ever wanted something a friend had? What happened?”
- “Friends forgive one another. What does it mean to forgive someone?”
- “If you saw your friend being mean or rude to someone, what would you do?”

WHAT **NOT** TO SAY:

- “Everyone should be your friend.”
- “You can only have one best friend.”
- “If you don’t have lots of friends, maybe you aren’t very nice.”
- “If someone hurts your feelings, you shouldn’t be their friend.”
- “Don’t be friends _____. They’re not a good with influence.”
- “_____ isn’t a good friend.”

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