

Victory Sports Outreach  
~Soccer Season ~  
Weekly Devotions Overview

2007

Victory Sports Outreach

~Fall Season~

Weekly Devotions Guide



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**Overall Theme: Friendship / Jesus is the best friend of all**

**Overall Theme Verse: John 15:15, “I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you *friends*, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”**

Kids respond so well to concrete stories that they can relate to, so we have put together a fictional story called *Friends for Life* written in weekly chunks (chapters) to be an opener for that week’s devotional time.

The story is about a family that moves and the main character is a typical elementary school boy named Jared who is a little overdramatic at times, but learns some big lessons about friendship and grows deeper in his walk with the most important friend of all- Jesus.

Laying truth to the weekly theme is a verse and a related Bible story or truth that parallels the lessons Jared is learning each week. There are also questions throughout the devotional to involve the kids in the discussion. Feel free to elaborate and/or speak from whatever is on your heart.

We hope you will enjoy the devotions as much as the kids. Here are the weekly topics:

- 1- Jesus is our best friend
- 2- Friends accept each other
- 3- Friends encourage each other

- 4- Friends pray w/each other
- 5- Friends support each other
- 6- Friends forgive each other
- 7- Being a friend to others
- 8- Summary/ The ultimate act of friendship- Jesus' death for us

## Week #1~ JESUS IS OUR BEST FRIEND

**Joshua 1:9- “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”**

### *Friends for Life: Chapter 1*

School was almost out for the summer and Jared Barnes was very excited! He had worked hard for Mrs. Tate this year and even learned all of his math facts! On Monday evening, he was daydreaming about what he was going to be doing this summer: swimming at the neighbor's pool, going to the park, and practicing his soccer skills with the new ball he had just gotten for his birthday, when all of a sudden...

*Knock, knock, knock.* The sound startled him. He looked up to see his mom poking her head into his room.

“Jared,” his mom said quietly, “I need you to come to the living room for a family meeting.” She slowly turned and went downstairs.

Jared thought to himself, “Family meeting? We've never had one of those before. It must be something terrible, something..., something *awful*. Wait, what if my sister needs to have a *brain transplant*? What if *I* have to *be the donor*???”

Jared followed his mom into the living room where his older sister Sarah and his dad were already waiting. He sat down on the couch.

“OK guys,” his dad began, “Your mom and I have something to tell you. My company is opening a new sales office back east and since I knew the area, they asked me to head up the new staff. That means we'll be moving once school is out.”

“Do I get to shop for a comforter for my new room?” asked Sarah.

“We'll see,” said Mom.

“What?! Is that all you can think about?” Jared exclaimed, “I have to leave my friends and my school and the park and *everything*!”

This is crummy! This is worse than your brain transplant!”

“What? Whose brain transplant?” asked Sarah.

“Jared, you’ll make new friends once we’re there and you can keep in touch with the old ones too. Remember, Jesus is your best friend and He’s with you wherever you go.” answered Dad.

Jared stomped back up to his room to think. He couldn’t believe it. He didn’t have any choice. They were leaving and that was that. What was he going to do?

Find out what happens next week as Jared and his family move far away!



Follow-Up Questions~

1. Who enjoys having friends?
2. Have you ever had to move or go to a new school where you didn’t know anyone?
3. How did that make you feel?
4. What are some characteristics of a good friend?

We all want to have friends. Life seems much better when you do things with your friends (maybe give the name of your best childhood friend or a time when you had to move). Even if we have to move away or go places where we have no friends with us, the Bible reminds us that Jesus is always with us and wants to be your very best friend.

Bible Truth~

In the book of Joshua in the Bible we find Joshua having to lead God’s people across the Jordan River and into the promised land after Moses had died. He was very afraid of moving to another place also. There were a lot of people to take care of, but God reminded Joshua that He would be with him wherever he went.

Joshua ultimately was able to lead about a million people across the river and into their promised land, and conquer the city of Jericho (so they would have a city to live in) by just walking around it and

then using trumpets and shouts. Joshua trusted God as his friend and guide and amazing things happened!

There isn’t any place we can go that God will not be able to find us. Psalm 139:7-9 states, “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Where can I flee from Your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, You are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there Your hand will guide me, Your right hand will hold me fast.”

What if we hide in our closet~ Can Jesus find us there?

What about under our bed?

At a friend’s house?

On our summer vacation?

What if we’re not in church on Sunday? Can Jesus still find us?

That’s right!

Jesus is that someone that is **always with us**,  
that’s always **faithful**,  
that’s **perfect, holy, and just**,  
that has our **best interest** at heart,  
that **loves us** more than we can ever know, and  
that can always **be found**.

Jesus is the perfect friend! Let Jesus be your best friend today. He’s just waiting for you to ask!

Pray to close the session.

Overall Theme Verse: John 15:15, “I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you *friends*, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”

**Romans 15:7, “Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring glory to God.”**

*Friends for Life: Chapter 2*

Jared said a tearful farewell to his closest friends and got into the car and shut the door. They were moving- no doubt about it and it was happening today. Butterflies rumbled in his stomach. He tried not to let his sister see him cry a little bit on the long trip as they followed the moving van.

The next day, they arrived at their new house.

“It *seems* OK,” Jared said out loud to no one in particular.

They all got out of the car and stretched. After a short break, they began to unload their things out of the moving van. Jared didn’t realize how much stuff he had until he had to help move a dozen or so boxes up to his new room.

“Another one?” Jared grumbled.

“Yep. Just be thankful you have things to put in your new room. Toys, books, games. Jared, some kids don’t have nearly as much as you do. Besides, a little work won’t hurt you. It’ll all be over before you know it.” Mom always seemed to have the right answers.

A little while later, Jared was sitting on his front steps having a cold glass of ice water. He was looking down the street at all the other houses and wondered who lived in them. Were they nice people? Were they young or old like Ms. Jones back home? Did they have kids? Did they have pets?

Just then, a boy about his age came up into the yard and stood in front of him. He was tall and had dark brown hair and skin.

“Did you just move in?” asked the young boy.

“Yeah, we just got here today.” said Jared.

“Where’d ya’ come from?” the boy wanted to know.

“Springfield.” replied Jared.

“Don’t they grow corn out there? How long did it take you to

get here? Do you have any brothers or sisters? How come you got red hair and so many freckles?”

Jared smiled at him and answered with a funny face, “I have one sister, but she didn’t want the red hair or the freckles, so I got a double dose.”

Both boys started laughing. In fact, Jared laughed so hard that he had water come out his nose!

After he coughed and snorted the water out, Jared asked the boy what his name was.

“Franklin Oliver Grant. But everyone calls me Frank. I live three doors down. What’s your name?”

“Jared Timothy Barnes. But everyone calls me Jared. Did you know that your initials spell *F-O-G*?”

“Wow- I never noticed that. Could come in handy someday though... Hey, do you play soccer? The community league is starting next month.” Frank asked.

“I sure do! Wanna practice? I think I saw my soccer ball here somewhere.” Jared replied.

That day, Jared and Frank became fast friends even though they were very different. Jared began to think that moving may not have been such a bad thing after all.

Find out what happens next week as soccer season begins!



Follow-Up Questions:

1. How were Jared and Frank different? How were they similar?
2. What are some things that make us look different?
3. Are all your friends just like you in how they look and act?

Bible Truth~

The Bible also speaks of a very special friendship (in 1 Samuel 20) between David and Jonathan. David was just a shepherd boy, but Jonathan was a prince. David was a very good musician and was often invited to play music on his harp for Jonathan’s father, the king, when he couldn’t get to sleep. That’s how David and Jonathan

met.

David and Jonathan became fast friends, but the king became jealous of David's talent and tried to kill him. Jonathan was such a good friend that he found out his father's intentions and warned David to get away. David had to leave quickly. Their farewell was very sad.

Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the Lord, saying, 'The Lord is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever.'" Then David left, and Jonathan went back to the town. (1 Samuel 20:42)

And later when David was king, he did remember Jonathan's descendants and treated them well. He did not forget his promise.

David and Jonathan were very different, but still were very good friends because God was at the center of their friendship.

Each of us is unique and valuable to God. But sometimes we think we are better than someone else or we don't speak to or play with someone because of the way they look or dress. God says we should not look down on each other.

Accepting each other doesn't mean that everyone's opinions or actions are right. It means realizing everyone has faults and God can help anyone overcome them. "But thanks be to God. He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 15:57) Amen? It also means treating others the way you want to be treated. Remember the golden rule?

Sometimes we compare ourselves to each other. But God says we should compare ourselves to Him. That way, we are able to see how much we need Him. We need His salvation, His strength, His guidance, His presence, etc.

God's acceptance of us is not based on our own merit, but on His perfect love. In John 15:16, we read, "You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, to go and bear fruit- fruit that will last."

God loves you and that's the best kind of friend to have!

Pray to close the session.

Overall Theme Verse: John 15:15, "I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you *friends*, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you."

**1 Thessalonians 5:11, “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”**

*Friends for Life: Chapter 3*

Jared and Frank were excited to be playing on the same team! The Eagles- what a great team name! Coach Mason was really nice and the other kids on the team seemed friendly as well as talented. The season was going along great until game three. Jared set up to shoot the first goal of the game when all of a sudden his ankle buckled under him. Down he went- onto the ground. Hard. Writhing in pain, he held his ankle.

The ref blew his whistle and Coach Mason rushed out onto the field. Both teams crowded around him as Jared’s parents fought to push through.

“Jared, can you move it?” asked the Coach

“No! I think it’s broken! I don’t think I’ll ever be able to walk again! Aaaah!”

“Somebody get him some ice,” said Coach Mason.

Ice was brought and wrapped around Jared’s ankle. His dad picked him up and carried him to the car. His mom and sister followed.

Later at the emergency room, the on-duty doctor pushed back the curtain, still holding the X-rays.

“Nothing broken. Looks like just a bad sprain, Jared. You’ll have to stay off of it for a few weeks.”

“Oh, no! I’ll never be able to play soccer again! Oh, why did this have to happen?! What am I going to do?” Jared complained.

On the way home, Jared’s dad reminded him, “Jared, didn’t Jesus help you find friends since we moved? Frank is your new best friend. And didn’t Jesus help us find this new soccer league? Don’t you think Jesus can heal your ankle? The doctor only said it would take a few weeks. I think Jesus would want you to be encouraged by His power and strength to get you through this. What d’ya say?”

“I guess so. I’m just so disappointed that I can’t play. You

know how much I love soccer, Dad.” Jared replied.

“I know, but Jesus wants you to love Him more. And besides, you can still go and cheer on your teammates for the rest of the games. I’d bet they’d like that. You may even be able to play the last one if all goes well.”

As they were rounding the corner to their street, they saw half a dozen cars parked outside their house. Turning into their driveway, Jared noticed Coach Mason’s car and those of many of his other teammates.

As Jared’s dad helped him out of the back seat, Coach Mason approached and said, “Jared, we didn’t want you to think we had forgotten about you, so after the game we decided to come and check on you.”

His other teammates got out of their cars and brought over homemade cards for him. “We had to do something while we were waiting,” said Franklin with a big grin. Jared didn’t know what to say at all the cards given to him. He was a bit overwhelmed. He just took them in his hands, smiled, and fought back a tear.

Find out next week how Jared decides to react to his circumstances!



Follow Up Questions:

1. Jared got discouraged because he got hurt and was going to have to miss the next few games. What kinds of things make you discouraged or disappointed? (Not doing well at something, not getting to do something, seeing what other people have that you don’t, etc.)
2. What did Jared’s teammates do to encourage him?
3. What could Jared do to encourage his teammates while his ankle was healing?
4. What are some things we can do to encourage each other on and off the field?

Bible Truth~

Today’s verse is 1 Thessalonians 5:11, “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”

Without Jesus, our own way of thinking is faulty and sinful. Left to ourselves, we are negative and selfish. We need Jesus' way of thinking to help us see the bright side of things.

We can encourage each other to keep trying (especially at soccer)! Don't give up. Practice, practice, practice. When we encourage each other to try hard, we stay more motivated and perform better. Don't you like to have people cheer for you on the sidelines during the games? It makes you want to do your best and try harder.

It's the same with our faith. When someone encourages you to keep learning more and more about Jesus because of the difference He can make in your life, it makes us want to find out more about Jesus. That's especially true if you really see how Jesus helps people in their own lives.

Did you know that Jesus encourages us every day? He does that through the words in His very special book to us- the Bible. In it are hundreds of verses that show how much Jesus wants to encourage us.

Some of the most encouraging verses in the Bible are God's promises to us. Here are just a few of them:

★(God is all powerful) Jeremiah 32:27- "I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?"

★(God will provide for our needs) Philippians 4:19- "And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."

★(God loves us more than we can imagine) John 3:16- "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

★(We can do whatever God tells us to do) Philippians 4:13- "I can do everything through him who gives me strength."

★(God is good) Psalm 136:1- give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever.

★(He gives us strength) Isaiah 40:28- "He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak."

We can use these verses to encourage each other to have a better attitude. Let's face it, some days are harder than others. Sometimes we come to practice and we've had a really bad day. Maybe you did poorly on a test or couldn't find your homework, or had a fight with your sister. When we get here to practice, we should treat each other well enough that we can put away the bad things that have happened during the day and focus on our soccer skills and learning more about the way Jesus wants us to live.

We need to build each other up so we can work together as a team. A team that fights and tears each other down usually doesn't perform that well. Let's try to encourage each other to do our best!

Pray to close the session.

Overall Theme Verse: John 15:15, "I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you *friends*, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you."

## Week #4- FRIENDS PRAY FOR EACH OTHER

**James 5:16- “The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”**

### *Friends for Life- Chapter 4*

Jared took his cards in one hand and hobbled on his crutches into the house. He thought about what his dad had said on the way home and how his team had responded to his accident. He decided that the right way to respond was to go to the rest of the games and cheer everyone else on.

He went over to the desk and pulled out some large yellow pieces of construction paper and big magic markers. On it, he began to draw posters for the next game. On one he wrote, “Go Eagles!” On another, he drew an eagle and wrote, “Fly high!”

As he was drawing, he remembered a verse somewhere in the Bible about eagles. He called to his mom and asked where it was found. She said it was Isaiah 40:31 and she quoted it to him, “But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”

As he heard the verse, he stopped and thought, *I need hope and the team needs strength. I need to pray for that right now.* He bowed his head right there and prayed silently,

*Dear God, I need Your hope to get me through this time. Please heal my ankle so I can maybe play in the last game. Lord, let the team be able to run and not grow weary. Keep them strong and safe as they practice. Thank you for sending Frank to be my friend. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

He felt better after that. Every day that week, his ankle seemed to improve, but he still tried to stay off of it as much as possible. Frank came over every afternoon to see how he was doing. Sometimes they just sat on Jared’s front porch and sometimes they sat on the giant swing in the side yard.

On Wednesday, as they were swinging, Frank said, “Me and my family have been praying for you every night. The night you got

hurt, we were reading Isaiah 40:31 in our family devotion time and we prayed that you would be able to run without growing weary really soon and that you’d regain your strength. Does your ankle feel any better today?”

Jared couldn’t believe what he was hearing. Had his mother told Frank’s family to read that verse that very night? No, he hadn’t remembered her calling them. Wow! It must have been the Holy Spirit prompting both friends to pray the same thing for each other!

“It’s incredible!” Jared said with emotion.

“Your ankle is incredible?” Frank asked, a bit confused.

“No- I have been praying that very same verse for you and the team- that you’d stay strong and not grow weary for the rest of the games too!” Jared said, still a little stunned.

“No way! Wow! That is so cool. Jesus helped us to pray the same thing for each other. I can’t wait to see how we both make out as our prayers are answered!” Frank said with anticipation.

Both friends smiled and talked the rest of the afternoon away. What a joy it is to be able to pray with and for your friends!

Stay tuned next week to find out how the team does!



Follow Up Questions~

1. What did Jared’s teammates do for him when he hurt his ankle?
2. What was Jared planning to do to encourage his teammates?
3. Do we have things that we can pray for each other too?

That’s just what we are going to do today!

Bible Truth~

Praying for each other is one of the most important things we can do for each other. This is true especially if there isn’t anything we can do to help. Jesus is not only our friend, He is able to work out our situations for our good and His glory.

Jesus is our ultimate example and He prayed for His disciples



(friends) in the Garden of Gethsemane just before He died for our sins. This is found in John chapter 17.

He prayed that they would be kept safe, get along with each other, and stay strong in their faith. Those are the same things we can pray for each other about. We can pray for our safety, strength, health, other physical and emotional needs, and of course, for salvation.

Today we are going to do things a little different. We are going to take some time to pray for each other.

Take prayer requests and pray for each other.

Time will vary as requests are varied. It may be short or long, but try to pray for each request. You may be surprised at the requests you receive.

Overall Theme Verse: John 15:15, "I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you *friends*, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you."

Week #5- FRIENDS SUPPORT EACH OTHER

**Proverbs 18:24- "A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother."**

*Friends for Life- Chapter 5*

On Saturday, Jared met his team members on the soccer field. He brought his posters and his loudest voice to cheer them on. He even dressed in his team uniform for an extra effect. He drew the line, however, at borrowing his sister's pom poms.

At the sound of the whistle, both teams were off, running their course down the field, trying to stop the other and take control of the ball. Jared held up his posters and yelled, "Go, Frank! Pass it to Bobby! Shoot! Score! Yes! Good job guys!"

By the end of the half, the Eagles were leading by one point. Jared was sitting by the water cooler and had cups filled and ready for everyone. As soon as the team caught their breath, they discussed their strategy for the next half.

"Whoever can get the ball, try to pass it to one of the forwards. Frank and Bobby, when you have the opportunity, try to score." Coach Mason said.

As the whistle blew again, the team headed back out onto the field. Things were going along great. Katie got possession of the ball. She passed it to Bobby. Bobby passed it to Frank. Frank was taking the ball closer to the goal. Goal!

Not only were the other team's players a challenge, the team members on the sidelines began to make rude comments about Jared and his posters during the game.

"Is your team so lame that you need a cheerleader?" one boy called out.

"Where are your *pom poms*?" said another.

"Look, their cheerleader is hurt." a girl offered.

At first, Jared's teammates just ignored the rude comments, but soon they were really annoyed.

"At least we have *team spirit*!" Frank fired back.

"Our team means *everyone*, even those with injuries!" said

Katie.

“Being a team means winning together and losing together.”

Jared said.

“Hey, let’s practice good sportsmanship, now, guys. If you can’t say something positive, don’t say anything at all.” the referee said.

The rest of the game was played with intensity as the Eagles were able to pull out a win in the last quarter. The Eagles were “flying high” at this win because they not only overcame an opposing soccer team, but they rose above the bad attitudes. They stood up for sportsmanship and the proper way to act.

Coach Mason got the team together, “Come on, guys, let’s have a team huddle. Let’s talk about what just happened. The other team just showed you what *not* to do during a game. They showed poor sportsmanship, but you all stood up for your team and Jared who is injured. It’s true- we win together and we lose together. Teams that treat others badly just end up making themselves look bad. Let’s go get some homemade lemonade.”

Find out what happens next week when friends don’t treat each other right!

★★★

#### Follow Up Questions

1. How did the opposing team act during the game?
2. What did the Eagles do to stick up for Jared?
3. Have you ever had someone stick up for you? Or have you ever stuck up for someone else?
4. How did you feel? How did that make you feel?

#### Bible Truth~

In the Bible, Job had a lot of troubles. He lost his children, his animals, and most of his servants. He kept his faith in God though. He knew that he had an advocate that would be there for him. He knew that Jesus was his friend and was on his side even before He came to live on the earth.

In Job 16:19, we read, “Even now my witness is in heaven; my advocate is on high. My intercessor is my friend as my eyes pour out tears to God; on behalf of a man he pleads with God as a man pleads for his friend.”

Job had some friends that didn’t give him good advice. They thought Job had brought on God’s punishment because of some sin. Even Job’s own wife told him to curse God and die. But in fact, God was allowing Job to be tested to refine his faith. It’s a good thing Job didn’t listen to them.

We can choose good friends or poor ones. Good friends support us and tell us the truth. We must be aware that friends who help cover up our wrongs are really not friends at all. Supporting our friends does not include covering up wrong behavior but encouraging right behavior.

(Note: Never hold a secret from an adult about someone doing wrong things even if they threaten not to be your friend anymore. If they are doing something illegal/immoral, they need to be stopped for their own good.)

We also always have a friend in Jesus- He is the ultimate friend who will always do what’s best for us.

Jesus sticks up for us too! He is our *advocate*. The word *advocate* means defender, or in a legal sense, pleading the case of another.

Jesus placed Himself between us and God the Father so we could have salvation. God the Father is so holy, he cannot have any sin around Him. But Jesus took the penalty for our sin when He died for us on the cross. He made it possible for us to have salvation if we choose to believe that Jesus is the only way to heaven.

With Jesus sticking up for us, we can get through any situation. We can’t get through very much by ourselves, but Jesus wants to be our best friend and help us not only go to heaven someday, but be

conquerors while we are still here on earth! We can have victory today and tomorrow through Jesus- 1 Cor. 15:57- “But thanks be to God. He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Amen!

Let’s try to support each other just as Christ is there for us!

Pray to close the session.

Overall Theme Verse: John 15:15, “I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you *friends*, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”

## Week #6- FRIENDS FORGIVE EACH OTHER

**Colossians 3:13- “Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”**

### *Friends for Life- Chapter 6*

The day finally came for Jared to get rid of his crutches and try to walk on his foot again. The soccer season had one more game to go and Jared wanted to play. Frank came over for the occasion. They all went out to the back yard. Jared laid down his crutches and tried to take a step. It didn’t seem to hurt. So he took another one, and then another one. Soon he was walking all around the back yard.

Frank and Jared decided to practice a little so they would be ready for the last game on Saturday. The skills came back to Jared in no time. In fact, he thought he might be playing a bit better since he had time to rest and just watch over the past few weeks.

Saturday couldn’t come fast enough for Jared. The morning of the game, he put on his uniform, tied up his cleats and ate breakfast in a flash.

“We’re gonna win today. I just know it! I can feel it!” Jared said as he raced out the door to the car.

“Just remember, it’s only a game, Jared. You just started playing again. You’ll have to take it easy. The team already has a winning record. It really doesn’t matter if you win today.” Mom gently reminded him.

Practically before the car stopped, Jared was out the door and onto the field. Within minutes his teammates arrived and were all talking to him. Coach Mason walked over and asked, “Jared, are you up to playing forward today?”

“Am I up to it? You bet! I’m so ready I feel like I could take ‘em on all by myself.” Jared responded.

“Whoa there now. This is a team sport, remember? I’ll put you in but you’ll have to work with your teammates, OK?” said Coach Mason.

“Sure thing, Coach.” said Jared.

Time seemed to stand still for Jared, but finally the game started and he was on his way down the field. After a few minutes, he had the ball. He was looking at the goal. A few of his teammates had a better shot, but he was so excited that he took the shot himself. And missed.

During the first half, Jared tried several more times to shoot by himself and missed each time. At half-time Coach Mason took him out and put in someone else.

*Why did he do that?* Jared thought to himself. *He knows how much I wanted to play. He'll put me back in for sure since I missed half the season.*

But the coach didn't put him back in and the team didn't win the game. When the game was over, he asked Coach Mason why he got taken out.

"Because you were trying to play all by yourself. Others had better shots and you didn't pass. You know, you really owe the team an apology." The coach said.

Jared hadn't thought about that. He had just been so excited to play that he hadn't given anyone else a chance with the ball. The coach was right, so he walked up to the team and apologized.

"I'm sorry, guys. I cost us the game. I should've let someone else have a shot at the goal. I was so excited about playing, I forgot that you guys were playing too. Will you forgive me?"

Even Frank was upset, but he responded, "I forgive you. There's always next year, and we still won more games than we lost. But even if we had lost every game, we still had a lot of fun, didn't we?"

"We forgive you too," said the rest of the team.

"OK, let's get some cake since it's the end of the season," said Coach Mason.

The team walked over to the sidelines where a great big cake with an eagle on it stood waiting to be eaten.

Find out next week what Jared does with all the things he has learned about friendship!

★★★

## Follow Up Questions

1. What did Jared do to make the team lose the game?
2. What did Jared ask the team after the game?
3. Did the team forgive him?
4. Have you ever had to ask for forgiveness? Or has someone ever asked you for forgiveness?
5. Is it hard to forgive others?

## Bible Truth~

Jesus wants us to forgive each other. Forgiveness doesn't mean that we say that what the person did to us was right. It means giving up our right to get back at them.

"Forgiveness is surrendering my right to hurt you for hurting me."  
- quote from Archibald Hart from James Dobson's *Love Must Be Tough* book.

We can leave that up to Jesus because He knows everything and He will grant justice where it is needed.

Our verse for today is Colossians 3:13- "Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

Jesus has forgiven our sins when he died for us on the cross. He is our example on how we are to treat each other. When we don't forgive, we are in fact, sinning because Jesus has given us this command.

When we don't forgive, we end up hurting ourselves because we are living in anger. It gets into every area of our lives. The right thing to do is to give up our anger and hurt and get on with things that are more important.

(Maybe give an example in your own life, or someone you know, or ask for a volunteer to give an example of how unforgiveness affected his or her life and how forgiveness made them feel new and alive

again).

Here is a poem if you don't have any other illustrations:  
(The original poem uses the word *leaf* instead of *page*. I changed it for the little ones to understand better)

### **Beginning Anew**

He came to my desk with quivering lip;

The lesson was done...

“Have you a new page for me, dear Teacher?

I have spoiled this one!”

I took his page, all soiled and blotted,

And gave him a new one, all unspotted;

Then into his tired heart I smiled;

“Do better now, my child!”

I went to the throne with trembling heart;

The day was done.

“Have you a new day for me, dear Master?

I have spoiled this one!”

He took my day, all soiled and blotted,

And gave me a new one, all unspotted;

Then into my tired heart He smiled:

“Do better now, my child!”

-By Kathleen Wheeler, quoted in John R. Rice's *Poems That Preach*.

Pray to close the session asking forgiveness for the times we have failed Jesus.

Overall Theme Verse: John 15:15, “I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you *friends*, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”

## Week #7- BEING A FRIEND TO OTHERS

**Matthew 7:12, “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.”**

### *Friends for Life- Chapter 7*

Soccer season was now over and school was starting next week. Jared was a little nervous, but that was only because he didn't know the school building very well. He had gotten to know Frank and the other kids on his team. Most would be going to the same school.

These last few days were full of swimming, hanging out at the park, and playing Frank's new video game. Funny. That's just what he was doing last summer at his old house. He had to admit- God had been pretty good to him despite his ankle injury. He had new friends, a new room, and a new life. Life was good.

Two days before school started, Frank and Jared were at the pool when they saw a big moving truck rumble down the street. Frank jumped out of the pool and grabbed his towel. Jared followed.

They ran down the street and stopped at Jared's house to watch. A few minutes later, a minivan pulled up in the driveway four doors down the street. Frank and Jared held their breath as they waited to see what kind of new neighbors they would have.

Yes! The side door opened and a boy about their age got out and stretched.

“Are you thinking what I'm thinking?” Jared raised an eyebrow to his friend.

“Yep, let's go introduce ourselves. We could always use another friend. I wonder if he plays soccer....” Frank mused.

The two boys raced off toward the new neighbors house. They had learned many lessons on being a good friend and couldn't wait to meet someone new and share their friendship

Next week we'll learn about Jesus' ultimate show of friendship!

★★★

## Follow Up Questions

1. How did Jared and Frank treat the new boy in the neighborhood?
2. Have you ever gone out of your way to be a friend to someone?
3. Has someone ever gone out of their way to be a friend to you?

## Bible Truth~

Our verse today is the Golden Rule. It is Matthew 7:12. "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you."

In the Bible, Jesus told many parables. A parable is a story with a moral or lesson at the end.

Have you ever heard the parable of the Good Samaritan? A man was going from Jerusalem down to Jericho when a band of robbers attacked him and left him almost dead on the side of the road. Several men came walking along that way. First, a priest, then a Levite, but both walked past without helping the man.

Then a Samaritan came by. Samaritans were hated by the Jews, but still he stopped and helped the injured man.

The hurt man needed a friend that day and the Samaritan was there when he needed him.

How can we be a friend to someone who needs one today? Do you know of anyone who needs a friend? Could you be that friend?

Overall Theme Verse: John 15:15, "I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you *friends*, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you."

## Week #8- THE ULTIMATE SHOW OF FRIENDSHIP

### Season Summary:

During our fictional story we learned a lot about friendship. Our season's verse is:

**John 15:15, "I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you *friends*, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you."**

### **We learned that Jesus is our best friend. (Week 1)**

(Jared has to move away)

Joshua 1:9- "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

### **We also learned that friends accept each other. (Week 2)**

(Jared meets Frank)

Romans 15:7, "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring glory to God."

### **Friends encourage each other. (Week 3)**

(Jared is encouraged by his teammates as he sprains his ankle)

1 Thessalonians 5:11, "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."

### **Friends pray for each other. (Week 4)**

(Jared and Frank pray the same verse for each other)

James 5:16- "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective."

### **Friends stick up for each other. (Week 5)**

(Jared sticks up for Frank when he is tripped during a game)

### **Friends forgive each other. (Week 6)**

(The team forgives Jared for not passing during a game)

**Friends are willing to be a friend to others. (Week 7)**

(Jared and Frank choose to be a friend to a new boy in the neighborhood just before school starts)



Bible Truth~

This week we learn that Jesus, our best friend paid the ultimate show of friendship.

**John 15:13- “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”**

Many of us would not lay our lives down for our friends. Our parents might do that for us, but Jesus has already given the ultimate sacrifice- His own life in order that we might gain salvation and go on to live with Him in heaven when we die.

No one knows the day or the hour that they will leave this world, but Jesus, being our best friend, wanted to have a relationship with us so badly that He came to earth, lived a sinless life, gave us the Bible that tells us how to live righteously, and then died for us. **It’s all because of the amazing LOVE that He has for us!**

That’s what the colored soccer ball is all about. That’s what we’ve been hearing about at the games each week. The only thing that truly matters in life is what we do with the fact that Jesus died for our sin on the cross. But that’s not all! He rose again because death could not hold him down! He is more powerful than death!

When we believe that there is no way we can get to heaven on our own (we can’t be good enough), and we accept what He did on the cross for us as our way of salvation, we become Jesus’ friend.

If you have not done that and would like to, pray this simple prayer in your heart. (Have everyone bow their heads)

*Jesus, I admit that I cannot get to heaven on my own because I have sinned. But right now, I believe that You died for my sin so I could*

*live with You in heaven when I die. I ask You to come into my heart and make me clean. Help me to live the way You want me to. I want to get to know You as my best friend. In Your name I pray, Amen.*

If you have prayed that in your heart right now, please see me or one of the other coaches before you leave today.

Overall Theme Verse: John 15:15, “I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you *friends*, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”