

Outline for Friendship

A Counselor Activity

Overall Purpose:

This activity encourages students to be somewhat analytical about the important topic of friendship, describing how friends are made and what qualities are needed to keep them.

Materials:

One copy of the experience sheet, *What I Want in a Friend* for each student; a large sheet of butcher paper; marking pens; masking tape

Directions:

Announce to the students that today you have come to get some information from them about friendships. To develop interest, ask a few questions, such as:

- How many of you have friends?
- How many of you have a best friend?
- How do you know that this person is your friend?
- How many of you have a friend now that you didn't have a year ago?
- How did you and your friend meet?
- What did you and your friend say or do that caused a friendship to start?

Focus the discussion on how friendships develop. Encourage the students to identify such activities as walking to school together, being on a team or in a club together, taking music, dance, or karate lessons together, etc., and on such behaviors as offering to help someone solve a tough math problem, complimenting a person's appearance, starting conversations with kids you don't know, saying "hi" and "how are you?", and congratulating others when they score a point, do well on a test, or win a prize. Jot ideas on the board and verbally summarize the main points students come up with. Distribute the student experience sheets and briefly review the directions. Give the students a few minutes to complete their sheets.

While the students are working, clear a space and lay the sheet of butcher paper on the floor. When the students have completed their

experience sheets, ask four volunteers to join you in front of the group. Have one volunteer lie down on the butcher paper while two volunteers hold the paper down at either end to keep it from moving or curling. Ask the fourth volunteer to draw around the one who is lying down, using the marking pen.

Ask the volunteers to tape the drawing to a wall, and say: *We have here the outline of a best friend.*

Then, in your own words, explain:

I'm going to go around the room and have each of you describe one quality from your experience sheet that you think a best friend should have. When it's your turn, try to name a quality that hasn't been mentioned yet. I'm going to make all of these qualities part of my "best friend" here on the wall.

As the students describe qualities, write or symbolize them inside the outline. For example, if a student says, *I want my best friend to be kind*, draw a heart shape in the chest area and write the word *kind* inside it.

When everyone has had an opportunity to contribute, ask the questions below to facilitate a summary discussion.

Discussion Questions:

1. If you wanted to make a new friend, which of these qualities would be most helpful?
2. What kinds of things can you do to show a friend that you are thoughtful?
3. What kinds of things can you do to show that you are loyal?
4. What can you do to prove that you are truthful?
5. How can you demonstrate that you are interested in another person?
6. What is one area in which you could improve, in order to be a better friend?

Variations:

Have the students take turns adding qualities to the “perfect friend” outline themselves. After each person has written or symbolized a quality, ask him or her to explain to the group why that quality is important.

With young children, skip the experience sheet and generate ideas directly from the group. Symbolize or write the qualities within the outline as simply and clearly as possible. Read each word back to the students and ask them to read it with you.

What I Want in a Friend

Student Experience Sheet

What qualities do you value in a friend? Read through the list and circle the 10 qualities that are most important to you. Then write them on the poster that the student is holding. Rank the qualities from most important on the first line to the least important on the last line.

I want my best friend to be:

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|---------------|
| ambitious | patient | strong |
| artistic | polite | talented |
| athletic | popular | thoughtful |
| beautiful | rich | truthful |
| brave | sensitive | understanding |
| considerate | serious | witty |
| clever | smart | |
| creative | | |
| dedicated | | |
| dependable | | |
| energetic | | |
| fair | | |
| gentle | | |
| generous | | |
| graceful | | |
| funny | | |
| fun to be with | | |
| handsome | | |
| happy | | |
| helpful | | |
| honest | | |
| humble | | |
| intelligent | | |
| kind | | |
| a good listener | | |
| loyal | | |
| neat | | |
| organized | | |

