

Session Topic: Social Skills / Interactions – Friendships, Peer/Peer (Friends Are Nice to Be Around)

Developmental Level: Elementary School

Purpose: To introduce the idea of friendship as an active, dynamic process of give-and-take; to help children recognize how important their friendships are and how they contribute to these relationships.

Materials Needed: Brown paper bags (better if small grocery bags, but you can use lunch bags), An assortment of magazines with pictures (preferably with many pictures of children), Drawing paper, Crayons, colored pencils, and/or markers, Glue sticks, Safety scissors, (Optional) Additional art supplies: colorful stickers, glitter, bits of ribbon, sequins, etc., (Optional) Home Handout "25 Qualities of a Good Friend" from A Leader's Guide to We Can Get Along by Lauren Payne, M.S.W., and Claudia Rohling, M.S.W., p. 46, (Optional) Book – We Can Get Along by Lauren Murphy Payne, M.S.W.; illustrations by Claudia Rohling, M.S.W.

Description of Session: Read all or part of book, We Can Get Along (optional). Introduce this session by asking each child one or more of these questions:

- "Who are your friends?" Encourage them to name at least two friends.
- "Why are these people your friends?" (Guide them to give at least two reasons.)
- "What things do you like to do together?"
- "How do you know they are your friends?"
- "What makes someone a good friend?"

You might want to suggest some of the items from the "25 Qualities of a Good Friend" handout. Give each child a paper bag. Explain that the children will use it to make a "Friendship Bag". Have them write their names on their bags. Have them cut pictures from magazines that represent their friendships or remind them of their friends. When the children have found and cut out the pictures they want to use, have them glue their pictures to the outside of their bags.

Shift the children's focus by asking:

- "Why are these people friends with you?"
- "What do you do to be a friend?"
- "What makes you a good friend?"

Refer again to the "25 Qualities of a Good Friend" handout. Ask the children if they have these qualities. Now, ask the children to draw a picture that shows them being a good friend. Encourage them to think about this before they start drawing. When they are finished drawing, have them put their pictures inside the bags.

Invite the children to bring their bags and sit in a circle. Give each child the opportunity to tell about his or her friendships, followed by asking discussion questions 1-3 listed below. Next, have each child open the bag and share the pictures of himself or herself. Ask discussion questions 4-6 below.

End the activity by saying something like, "It seems as if we all have good friends, and we are good friends. Every friendship is a work of art, just like the 'Friendship Bag' you made today."

Discussion Questions:

1. Why did you choose those particular pictures to glue on the outside of your bag?
2. What is happening in each picture?
3. What do you think these pictures say about your friendships? (For example, we like to laugh; we like to play sports; we like to go shopping.)
4. How do the pictures inside your bag show you being a good friend?
5. What do you like most about these pictures?
6. What qualities of being a good friend do you want to show?

Reference: A Leader's Guide to We Can Get Along by Lauren Payne, M.S.W., and Claudia Rohling, M.S.W., p. 44-46