

# JOURNEY IN... YEAR THREE

# COMMUNITY STORY

## This lesson's Big Ideas:

One of our Unitarian Universalist principles encourages us to think of spiritual friendship as "acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth"

Being a friend is a religious act; it is living out our love. To have a friend and be a friend takes time, patience and effort. Strong friendships are based on commitment, respect, listening, trust and celebration of differences.

There are many examples of rich spiritual friendships to inspire and guide us in choosing and keeping friends. These stories teach us that we can and should be friends with people who are different from us.

## Lesson Materials

- Children's Literature about friendship: see list in lesson
- Copies of acrostic poem worksheets
- Markers

## TEACHER REFLECTION AND PREPARATION

🕒 Ahead of time

"And a youth said, Speak to us of Friendship.

And he answered, saying:

Your friend is your needs answered.

He is your field which you sow with love and reap with thanksgiving.

And he is your board and your fireside.

For you come to him with your hunger, and you seek him for peace.

When your friend speaks his mind you fear not the "nay" in your own mind, nor do you withhold the "ay".

And when he is silent your heart ceases not to listen to his heart;

For without words, in friendship, all thoughts, all desires, all expectations are born and shared, with joy that is unclaimed.

When you part from your friend, you grieve not;

For that which you love most in him may be clearer in his absence, as the mountain to the climber is clearer from the plain.

And let there be no purpose in friendship save the deepening of the spirit.

For love that seeks aught but the disclosure of its own mystery is not love but a net cast forth: and only the unprofitable is caught.

And let your best be for your friend.

If he must know the ebb of your tide, let him know the flood also.

For what is your friend that you should seek him with hours to kill?

Seek him always with hours to live.

For it is his to fill your need, but not your emptiness.

And in the sweetness of friendship let there be laughter, and sharing of pleasures.

For in the dew of little things the heart finds its morning and is refreshed."

-from *The Prophet*, by Khalil Gibran

- In preparation, for this lesson, take some time to reflect on the gifts that friendship has brought into your life. What have your friendships asked of you? What qualities do you seek out in other people? What does spiritual companionship look like, in your experience?

**TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LESSON**

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**YOUR FIELD EXPERIENCES: FEEDBACK AND NOTES**

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**GATHERING AND FOCUSING**

🕒 5-8 minutes

Let's see if you can guess the book I'm thinking of if I name some of the friends in the story:

- Harry, Ron and Hermione (Harry Potter)
- Wilbur and Charlotte (Charlotte's Web)
- Jess Aarons and Leslie Burke (Bridge to Terabithia)
- Lucy and Mr. Tumnus (Chronicles of Narnia)

How are these friends different from each other? How can you tell that they are good friends? Would you like to have these characters as real friends?

**PRIMARY ACTIVITY ONE  
STORIES OF FRIENDSHIP**

🕒 45 minutes

We'll be reading some stories from a selection of books and tales about friendship. Let's vote for three titles that we'd like to read. (Share the selection of stories available and take a vote).

For older groups

- o Damon and Pythias (*From Long Ago and Many Lands*)
- o The Two Friends (*From Long Ago and Many Lands*)
- o Ruth and Naomi (*The Book of Virtues*)
- o The Selfish Giant (*The Book of Virtues*)

For younger groups

- o Why Frog and Snake Never Play Together (*The Book of Virtues*)
- o Elijah's Angel
- o Mrs. Katz and Tush
- o The Giving Tree
- o The Rainbow Fish
- o Margaret and Margarita
- o Little Blue and Little Yellow
- o Harry and Willy and Carrothead
- o Danitra Brown, Class Clown
- o Julio's Magic
- o Koko's Kitten

Read the stories with the class, following each with ample time for discussion.

**TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LESSON**

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**Wondering Together**

- I wonder which character in the book you'd like to have as a friend?
- I wonder how you would be a good friend to that character?
- I wonder what the best part of this friendship might be?
- I wonder if you saw any of these qualities in this friendship:
  - respect?
  - caring?
  - honesty?
  - listening?
  - commitment?
  - celebrating differences?
- I wonder what \_\_\_\_\_'s life would have been like without this friendship?
- I wonder if you find it easy to choose and keep friends? I wonder what might be hard about finding and keeping friends?

**PRIMARY ACTIVITY TWO  
FRIENDSHIP ACROSTIC POEM**

⌚ Remaining time in session

Has anyone ever written an acrostic poem before? What are they like? If I show you our poem writing sheet, can you guess how we might write a poem on it?

Acrostic poems describe their subject using the letters of the title as the starting letter of each line.

Thinking about what we've learned from today's stories, let's write our own acrostic poems. (Use the "FRIENDS" starter for younger children and the "FRIENDSHIP" starter for older children.)

Take a moment to share the poems with the whole group.

**CLOSING AND LEAVE-TAKING**

⌚ 2 minutes

Gather in a circle, take each other's hands and speak these words:

*May we be blessed with good friends*

*May we be good friends ourselves*

*May our friendships help us to grow and change*

*May we be grateful for the blessing of friendship.*

Invite the children to speak the names of good friends out loud before or after this blessing.

**A POEM BY** \_\_\_\_\_

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**A POEM BY** \_\_\_\_\_

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