

FRIENDED

JOHN 15:15

LARGE GROUP RESOURCE BOOK



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

HI FRIEND!

There's something immensely personal and special about hearing the name "Friend," isn't there? Our friends cheer us on, prop us up, and encourage us when we are feeling down.

But that's not everyone's story.

Our girls live in a culture that is unprecedented in both its digital connection and its social isolation. Researchers name the growing problem "The Loneliness Epidemic." Sadly, this is a reality for many girls today. We see it in their desperate search to find a place to belong and be loved, whether it's at school, on the sports field, or through their innumerable Snapchat streaks.

Until we know that the God who created us and designed us to live within community is our closest Friend, we will always feel lonely, isolated, and in need of something or someone. Our deepest need is for Him to be our Savior, Lord, and Friend!

That was Abraham's story. *Abraham believed God . . . and he was called God's friend* (James 2:23). And in Christ, that is our story, too! Jesus said, *"I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you"* (John 15:15).

Can you imagine if every girl you mentored said her closest Friend was Jesus? Rather than looking to her screens or trying to fit in with the popular girls, what if she looked to Him for love, acceptance, and her true worth and identity?

Can you imagine if a girl's real FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) was not from missing a party, but from missing an opportunity to be with her Friend and Lord Jesus in prayer, Bible study, and spending time with His people? Wow! That's my prayer for you, me, and our girls!

Friend, you don't have to imagine. You get to be part of helping your girls discover that their greatest Friend is God, and from that friendship, they will become "One Another" friends. Friends who love one another, serve one another, pray for one another, accept one another, and are kind to one another . . . always.

As you create a culture within your club where every girl knows she is loved and belongs, I'll be praying and cheering you on. If there is any way I can serve you, please reach out. That's what I'm here for!

Serving Him Together,



Cindy Bultema
GEMS Executive Director

MEET THE *FRIENDED* CURRICULUM TEAM

CINDY BULTEMA is the Executive Director of GEMS Girls' Clubs. Prior to GEMS, Cindy served as the Children's Pastor at a West Michigan megachurch, a children's curriculum writer for Zondervan, an international women's speaker, and the author of the Bible studies *Red Hot Faith* and *Live Full Walk Free: Set Apart in a Sin-Soaked World*.

Cindy lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan, with her husband and their four children. When she's not running a full household, you can find Cindy meeting a friend for coffee, walking her dogs, or attending one of her kids' sporting events.

LENAE BULTHUIS is the Curriculum and Content Director for GEMS Girls' Clubs, where she has served since 2003. She was eight years old when she stepped into club for the first time. Today, she counts it grace to write curriculum and train leaders within a ministry that has radically changed her life.

Lenae lives with her husband, Mike, on a Minnesota grain and livestock farm. She enjoys reading, watching grand littles, and early-morning runs on gravel roads.

SERENA ELLENS is the Managing Editor and Content Manager for GEMS Girls' Clubs. Serena graduated from Anderson University with an English and Writing degree with a focus in Young Adult Literature. She loves spending time with girls and learning about their interests. Serena was a GEM and is amazed that God brought her to serve at the ministry that blessed her as a girl.

Serena lives in her hometown of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and is having the best time exploring this growing and developing city. She also loves to travel and can't wait for her next adventure.

KAMARAH BAYARD is a Content Writer for GEMS Girls' Clubs. Kamarah has had a passion for writing and storytelling since she was small, as well as a love for education and, of course, girls! Her passion for education took her overseas to South Korea, where she taught English to children as a private tutor and co-coordinated her church's Sunday children's program.

Kamarah lives in her hometown of Grand Rapids, Michigan and enjoys watching science shows, cooking, and sipping a hot cup of tea while listening to music.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	1
MEET THE <i>FRIENDED</i> CURRICULUM TEAM.....	2
WHY <i>FRIENDED</i> ?	4
HOW <i>FRIENDED</i> WORKS	5
HOW TO USE <i>FRIENDED</i> : 3 OPTIONS.....	6
WHAT YOU NEED.....	7
LEADER GUIDE.....	9
<i>FRIENDED</i> CLUB GUIDE	11
THE JOY OF SHARING JESUS.....	12
THE <i>FRIENDED</i> “ONE ANOTHERS”	14
A-TO-Z WHO GOD IS LIST.....	15

LESSONS

LESSON ONE: WHAT IS <i>FRIENDED</i> ?	17
LESSON TWO: JESUS IS SAVIOR AND FRIEND	30
LESSON THREE: THE GREATEST FRIENDSHIP	39
LESSON FOUR: LOVE ONE ANOTHER.....	48
LESSON FIVE: SERVE ONE ANOTHER	56
LESSON SIX: PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER	64
LESSON SEVEN: ACCEPT ONE ANOTHER	72
LESSON EIGHT: BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER.....	80

FRIENDED PROJECTS

SISTERHOOD FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION: <i>FRIENDED</i> PROJECT 1.....	90
SPRINKLING LOVE TO FRIENDS AROUND THE WORLD: <i>FRIENDED</i> PROJECT 2	93
GEMS KINDNESS CAMPAIGN: <i>FRIENDED</i> PROJECT 3	96
SERVING JESUS TOGETHER: <i>FRIENDED</i> PROJECT 4	99

FUN NIGHTS

GEMS & GENTS NIGHT: FUN NIGHT 1	104
GEMS & GALS NIGHT: FUN NIGHT 2.....	107
CHRISTMAS PARTY: FUN NIGHT 3.....	110
THE SKIT—A SKIT ON FRIENDSHIP FOR FRIENDS: FUN NIGHT 4	113

BADGES AT CLUB

KNOWING GOD: BADGES AT CLUB 1.....	120
UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WORD: BADGES AT CLUB 2	122
CARING FOR GOD'S WORLD AND HIS PEOPLE: BADGES AT CLUB 3.....	124
EXPLORING AND USING GOD'S GIFTS AND TALENTS: BADGES AT CLUB 4	126

INDEX

INDEX OF LARGE GROUP ICEBREAKERS.....	129
INDEX OF CRAFTS.....	129
SAMPLE CLUB REGISTRATION FORM.....	130
BEFORE YOU GO.....	131

WHY FRIENDED?

Loneliness has been named an epidemic. It's impacting our health *and* our girls. And it's bigger than friendships of yesteryear, when the problem was limited to a girl feeling like a third wheel on the playground at noon.

The playground has expanded to screens, and the timeframe to all hours of a girl's anxious days and sleepless nights as the wheels in her mind spin and ask—*who am I? Does anyone see me? Where do I belong?*

Mean girls can torment, best friends can change with the seasons, and even the most trusted friends can suddenly unfriend you with a snap of their fingers or a tap on their screens. It's exhausting trying to earn a spot at the popular table—or wondering if there is a seat at *any* table to belong and be loved.

But everything changes when girls understand that God, who is holy, a King, and Lord over all, would invite them into a forever and intimate relationship with Himself. God is their King *and* Friend all because of His Son, Jesus! In Jesus, we are friended. He calls us friends!

I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.
John 15:15

When girls understand that they are friended by God Almighty, it impacts everything. Anxiety lifts. Loneliness dissipates. The pressure's off to fit in, measure up, or seek approval. Because no matter how a girl feels or what her peers say or do, the capital 'T' Truth is that our great God initiates the relationship and calls her friend!

Once her greatest relationship is being friended by our Sovereign God, all her relationships find their right place and proper motivation. From the fullness of His selfless, perfect love, girls discover what it means to be “One Another” friends who love one another, serve one another, pray for one another, accept one another, and are kind to one another.

Watch the ReFresh Message “Why Friended?” at gemsfresh.org for more inspiration.

HOW *FRIENDED* WORKS

The *Friended* study will help girls understand who God is, what it means that He is King *and* Friend, and how to grow in their relationship with Him through prayer, worship, Bible study, spending time with others, and being the kinds of friends who demonstrate faith in God as they obey His “One Another” commands.

When girls understand they are friended by God, it will change the way they friend one another.

- ◆ **KNOW.** The *Friended* study material will teach girls who God is and what He says about being “One Another” friends by looking to His Word.
- ◆ **GROW.** Girls will experience what true friendship looks like as they grow in their relationship with God, their leaders, and one another.
- ◆ **GO.** Girls will live what they’ve learned by showing the world that loving God and loving people are the greatest things we can do.

The *Friended* Starter Kit curriculum contains enough material for 16 weeks of club gatherings, including eight Bible Teachings, four *Friended* Projects, and four Fun Nights. Use the material weekly, every other week, or in whatever fashion best fits your schedule. From the fullness of a forever relationship with God, all of your girls’ relationships will be impacted. Girls will become “One Another” friends who . . .

- ◆ Love one another—John 13:34
- ◆ Serve one another—Galatians 5:13
- ◆ Pray for one another—James 5:16
- ◆ Accept one another—Romans 15:7
- ◆ Are kind to one another—Ephesians 4:32

. . . and more!

Through worship, Large Group Bible teachings, Small Group application, memorizing God’s Word and His attributes, prayer, crafts, service projects, and fun friendship-building activities and events, girls will grow in their relationships with God and one another.

In understanding they are friended by God, loneliness dissipates, isolation is eradicated, and the world is changed—one friendship at a time.

HOW TO USE *FRIENDED*: 3 OPTIONS

GEMS Girls' Clubs come in all shapes and sizes—from big clubs to small clubs, from city clubs to rural clubs. There is no one-size-fits-all! However, the one consistent thing among all GEMS Clubs is they use GEMS curriculum. Based on how frequently your club meets, you'll want to select one of the options below for using the *Friended* resources. Once you've selected the option that best fits your club, set your schedule for the year and begin praying, planning, and preparing.

..... **OPTION 1:**

***FRIENDED* ALONE**

Works great for clubs that meet twice a month or for a shortened season.

BI-MONTHLY: One *Friended* Lesson and One *Friended* Project or Fun Night

SHORTENED SEASON: October–November or January–February

Use *Friended* as a stand-alone resource for up to 16 weeks—eight Bible Teachings, four *Friended* Projects, and four Fun Nights. Everything you need for a full club gathering is included!

..... **OPTION 2:**

***FRIENDED* + BADGES**

Works great for clubs that meet two to four times a month.

BI-MONTHLY: One *Friended* Lesson and One Badge

WEEKLY: One *Friended* Lesson, Two Badges, One *Friended* Project or Fun Night

Use the 16 weeks of *Friended* (eight *Friended* Lessons, four *Friended* Projects, and four Fun Nights) with GEMS Girls' Clubs badges. See four Badges at Club opening devotionals within *Friended*, and go to www.gemsgc.org for more information on our wide variety of girl-friendly badges.

..... **OPTION 3:**

***FRIENDED* + BADGES + OTHER GEMS SUPPLEMENTAL CURRICULUM**

Works great for clubs that meet weekly.

WEEKLY: One *Friended* Lesson, One GEMS supplemental curriculum, One Badge, and One *Friended* Project or Fun Night

Use the 16 weeks of *Friended* (eight *Friended* Lessons, four *Friended* Projects, and four Fun Nights) with other GEMS curriculum and badges (four Badges at Club opening devotionals within *Friended*). GEMS offers a variety of supplemental curriculum options. See www.gemsgc.org for more information.

WHAT YOU NEED

The *Friended* study provides all the necessary components to help your girls understand what it means to be a friend of God and how to be a friend to others.

LARGE GROUP RESOURCE BOOK—There are eight lessons with an overview, Large Group arrival activities (called Icebreakers), scripted lesson openers and Bible teachings, craft activities, and meaningful dismissals. Additionally, there are four *Friended* Projects with corresponding devotionals and service project ideas, four Fun Nights with corresponding devotionals and event ideas, and more.

SMALL GROUP LEADER'S GUIDE—There are eight Small Group welcomes, memory verse games, *GEMS Journals* leader's helps, prayer prompts, and craft instructions for three program levels: Grades 1–3, Grades 4–6, and Grades 7–8.

GEMS JOURNALS—There are eight take-home sheets for girls with lesson review, Bible study, and real-life application for three program levels: Grades 1–3, Grades 4–6, and Grades 7–8.

GEMS "ONE ANOTHER" DINER MENUS—These "menus" highlight the "One Anothers" that are used throughout the *Friended* study. The menus are included in the *Friended* Starter Kit or are available for purchase from gemsgc.org/store.

FRIENDED CRAFT GUIDE—There are eight crafts, supply lists, instructions, and Craft & Chat Questions that correspond to the eight *Friended* lessons. Put this guide in the hands of all your craft leaders! **NOTE:** These are the same crafts that are included in this *Large Group Resource Book*.

FRIENDED THEME SONG—"I Am a Friend of God" by Israel Houghton (performed by Colleen and Grace), as well as creative movement video downloads.

"REAL TALK" VIDEOS—An intro video to meet the GEMS *Friended* Teaching Team and eight "Real Talk" videos provide fun and inspiring challenges to close each lesson, helping your girls live out what they learned in club. A link to each lesson's video is included in the corresponding *GEMS Journals*, and all videos are available in the *Friended* Online Resources.

FRIENDED ONLINE RESOURCES

If you purchased a *Friended* Starter Kit, you received access to a digital library that contains items such as printables, videos, and presentation slides. If you did not purchase a *Friended* Starter Kit, these digital resources are available for purchase at gemsgc.org/store or by calling (616) 241-5616, ext. 3032.

OPTIONAL RESOURCES

You may purchase these additional resources from gemsgc.org/store or by calling (616) 241-5616, ext. 3032.

GEMS GOSPEL TREASURE BOX—Use to share the Gospel message with your GEMS girls! See “The Joy of Sharing Jesus: Leading a Child to Christ” on page 12 for more information.

A-TO-Z WHO GOD IS BOOKMARK—This beautiful bookmark contains A-to-Z Truths and corresponding Scripture verses to help girls discover more about who God is. There are 10 bookmarks included in the *Friended Starter Kit*, and they are also available for purchase from gemsgc.org/store.

GEMS TEA TOWEL—This durable tea towel provides a beautiful visual of what it looks like to be a “One Another” friend who serves. It is available for purchase from gemsgc.org/store.

MICAH 6:8 POSTER—This poster displays the GEMS Girls’ Clubs Aim, which is Micah 6:8. Girls and leaders recite this aim each time they meet at club!

You may also want to incorporate badges from the *Discovery Place Badge Book*. See How to Use *Friended Options* 2 and 3 on page 6.

AND MORE! Find more resources at gemsgc.org/store.

NOTE: All *Friended* materials are protected under copyright. Photocopying is not allowed with the exception of the printables in the *Friended Online Resources*.

SAMPLE
DO NOT REPRODUCE

LEADER GUIDE



The *Friended* study is designed to lessen your planning and prep time so leaders have more time to pray and focus on building relationships with their girls. It contains everything needed to guide your girls in their friendships and teach them about what it means to be a friend of God and a friend to one another. Here is the structure of what is included in each lesson.

LESSON OVERVIEW

PURPOSE—Each lesson has a short statement with the primary focus of the lesson. This is your main aim and prayer!

BIBLE VERSE—This is the Bible verse that will be studied throughout the lesson. Additional Scripture passages and Bible teachings are woven into each lesson.

MEMORY VERSE—This is the verse that will be memorized by the girls and leaders.

PREPARATION

At the beginning of each lesson is a chart that lists the materials you need to prepare for each club meeting. Advance preparation includes praying for your girls, gathering needed supplies, and, if necessary, printing materials from the *Friended* Online Resources.

LESSON ELEMENTS

The lessons are broken into four elements to make it easy for you to lead your girls. While some clubs have the luxury of two-hour meetings, this study is structured for a 1½-hour club meeting.

ARRIVAL—GIRLS MATTER. Arrival is the time frame between when girls arrive until club officially starts. When girls open the club doors, the first people they should meet are their leaders. The whole team is waiting for them, welcoming them, and letting them know they matter!

During Arrival, warmly welcome girls by name. As you distribute name tags, look each girl in the eye and say, “_____ [girl’s name], this is a place for you to belong and be loved.” Then direct girls into the Large Group space to play the Arrival activity.

LARGE GROUP—GOD’S WORD MATTERS. Large Group is the 20-to 30-minute time frame when you gather all girls and leaders into one space. Begin with a warm welcome and prayer. Recite the GEMS Girls’ Clubs Aim. Then worship together—sing praise to God!

After worship, you’ll open God’s Word. You’ll teach girls that this is God’s Word of Truth. It tells them who God is and what it means to be His friend. It shows them what it looks like to be a “One Another” friend. These “One Another” friends love one another, serve one another, pray for one another, accept one another, and are kind to one another.

SMALL GROUP—RELATIONSHIPS MATTER. Small Group is a 60-minute time frame when six to eight girls meet with their Small Group leader. GEMS is a relationship-building ministry, and it’s within Small Groups that relationships are built and lives are transformed.

During the first 30 minutes of Small Group, you'll use your *GEMS Journals* to help girls apply God's Truth to their lives. This time includes the application of God's Word, prayer, and memorizing Scripture—including the *Friended* “One Anothers” (see page 14). Extra-Bonus Challenge is to memorize the A-to-Z Who God Is List attributes and verses (see pages 15–16). During the last 30 minutes of Small Group, grow relationships with hands-on activities. This is the time to craft, participate in service projects, or earn badges.

DISMISSAL—LEAVING LOVED MATTERS. Dismissal is the last 5–10 minutes of club. Gather all girls into the Large Group space to reiterate the focus of the club meeting and pray. Send the girls home with high fives, hugs, and words of encouragement.

Gather all girls and leaders into the Large Group space. Speak a sentence or two that summarizes the focus of the night. Show a “Real Talk” video from the *Friended* Online Resources. Then speak life-giving words. Remind them of the foundational Truth that God invites them to be His friends. Even when they feel left out, lonely, or invisible, God sees them and will always love them no matter what. And when they leave club, may they remember those last words.

GEMS JOURNALS

Each lesson includes a full-color, four-page *GEMS Journal* for girls in Grades 1–3, Grades 4–6, and Grades 7–8 to take home. The *GEMS Journals* are designed to be a beautiful, tangible reminder of Truth. Girls engage with the lesson they learned in Large Group, continue to study God's Word in Small Group, and bring the message home to share with their grown-ups.

LEADERS NEEDED

In addition to the Club Coordinator, you will need one leader for each Small Group of six to eight girls. The leader should stay with her Small Group throughout the year. You may also choose to have additional helpers for sound and video, worship, snacks, and crafts.

SPACE NEEDED

You will need one space to host the Large Group activities for each lesson and separate spaces for Small Group activities and crafts.

DÉCOR (OPTIONAL)

LARGE GROUP SPACE. Decorate with anything that will make your space feel like a fun diner! Think retro—vinyl records, a tall table or booth, jukebox, mismatched coffee mugs, malt or tall glasses with straws, soda signs, checkered flooring, tablecloths, glass bottles of Coke®, diner baskets, popcorn buckets with stripes, condiment bottles, a gumball machine, and more. **OPTIONAL:** Play jazzy, retro music without lyrics (maybe coming from a jukebox or record player!).

SMALL GROUP SPACE. Create a Small Group space where fun is served and friendship is on the menu as girls discover what it means to connect with God and one another. Use colorful tablecloths or anything checkered or retro to cover your table.

CENTERPIECE OPTIONS:

- ◆ Records with the “One Anothers” written on them, or with a soda bottle and flowers in the middle
- ◆ Soda straw dispensers with pencils, paper straws, or candy
- ◆ Typical diner table supplies like napkin dispensers, condiment bottles, and sugar and cream bowls, but decorated to fit the GEMS theme
- ◆ Milkshake-themed centerpieces with glasses full of flowers, candy, or other treats, and a straw, plus maybe some cotton-ball whipped cream to top it off
- ◆ GEMS “One Another” Diner Menus—included in the *Friended* Starter Kit or available for purchase at gemsgc.org/store

If possible, keep décor up all season! For more fun decorating ideas, visit gemsgc.org to find the GEMS *Friended* Pinterest board.

FRIENDED CLUB GUIDE

ARRIVAL

Icebreaker Activity

LARGE GROUP

Praise & Worship

Lesson Opener

Bible Teaching

Closing Prayer

SMALL GROUP

GEMS Journals

Craft or Badge Work

DISMISSAL

Return to Large Group

“Real Talk” video

Closing Prayer

Watch the ReFresh Message “How *Friended* Works” at gemsrefresh.org for more details about each part of your club meeting.

GEMS ReFresh

Equip • Encourage • Engage

THE JOY OF SHARING JESUS: LEADING A CHILD TO CHRIST

At GEMS, we are on a mission to help bring girls into a living, dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ. It's the heart of our name and the GEMS acronym—Girls Everywhere Meeting the Savior. GEMS is committed to speaking the life-changing Truth that girls are loved and known by God, and they matter to Him and to us.

Think about this generation of girls. Think about the girls in your sphere of influence.

GIRLS HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT GOD. Who is God? Do I have to be good for God to love me? Does He love me when I'm bad? Can He be King *and* Friend, Lord of all *and* the One who knows my name?

GIRLS HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THEMSELVES. Who am I, anyway? Why am I here? Do I matter? Am I worth it?

Friend, you know the Truth! You know the good news that girls' questioning hearts need to hear. His name is Jesus! His love is unending and unstoppable. In Jesus is life, forgiveness, meaning, and our true identity.

JESUS MADE OUR MISSION CLEAR. *Go and make disciples* (Matthew 28:19). You get to tell this generation of girls about Jesus and His love. You get to help them discover who Jesus is, all He says about them, and that He is inviting them into a relationship with Himself. It's why you're holding this resource!

THE TIME IS NOW. Girls must know they have a friend in God. A survey by the International Bible Society reported that 83 percent of Americans make their commitment to follow Jesus between the ages of four and fourteen.¹

And George Barna reports, "What you believe by your thirteenth birthday is generally what you die believing."²

As you experience the joy of sharing Jesus, remember that you don't go alone. You're part of a growing sisterhood who is on a mission to bring girls to Jesus. And *above* all else, God is our Guide who calls and equips us to lead girls to Christ!

SHARING THE GOSPEL REMINDERS

- ◆ Sharing Jesus is not a one-time conversation. Every time you meet, share more about who He is and all that He says about them.
- ◆ Sharing Jesus is more often caught than taught! Girls are observing your life and relationship with Jesus.
- ◆ Sharing Jesus happens best as we listen to the Holy Spirit and to the child. What do they need to hear about Jesus first?
 - The unfriended need to hear that God is a Friend who chooses them.
 - The lonely need to hear that God is near. He is with them!
 - The sad need to hear that God is their Comforter.
 - The anxious need to hear that God cares about them and is bigger than their fears.
 - The self-conscious need to hear that God accepts them just as they are.
- ◆ Sharing Jesus requires heart prep. Always be prepared to share your faith story within the context of His big story. And pray that He would prepare the hearts of the girls to receive His good news!

¹ home.snu.edu/~hculbert/ages.htm

² www.barna.com

RESOURCES

GEMS has a number of resources to help you share the Gospel with the child/children in your care.

THE GOSPEL LESSON. Lesson 2 of this *Friended* study, “Jesus Is Savior and Friend” (page 30), guides leaders as they share the Gospel message. Leaders teach John 3:16 using the visuals found within the GEMS Gospel Treasure Box.

Gospel Message Series. Watch the three-part *Gospel Message Series* videos at gemsgc.org/gospel for specific training and equipping for sharing the life-changing Good News of Jesus.

GEMS GOSPEL TREASURE BOX. This box is a beautiful, tangible resource that aids leaders in walking girls through the Gospel message. It can be used in Large Group, Small Group, or one-on-one settings throughout the season. To order, go to gemsgc.org/store or call the GEMS Global Office at (616) 241-5616, ext. 3032.

SAMPLE
DO NOT REPRODUCE

THE *FRIENDED*

“ONE ANOTHERS”

THEME VERSE: *I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you (John 15:15).*

In *Friended*, GEMS will learn what it means to be a friend of God and how to be a friend to others. When God is their Lord and closest Friend, it impacts all of their relationships. They become “One Another” friends! Challenge

girls to memorize John 15:15 and these “One Others.” For extra heart-strengthening, encourage girls to memorize some or all of the corresponding Bible verses.

GOD’S WORD SAYS FRIENDS OUGHT TO . . .

1. **LOVE ONE ANOTHER.** *A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another (John 13:34).*
2. **SERVE ONE ANOTHER.** *Serve one another humbly in love (Galatians 5:13).*
3. **PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER.** *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other (James 5:16).*
4. **ACCEPT ONE ANOTHER.** *Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God (Romans 15:7).*
5. **BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER.** *Be kind and compassionate to one another (Ephesians 4:32).*

A-TO-Z WHO GOD IS LIST

During *Friended*, GEMS will learn that they can know God more by spending time with Him in prayer and in His Word. This A-to-Z Who God Is List, with supporting Scripture verses, is a tool to get girls started. As they move from getting to know *about* God to getting to *know* God, they will experience and enjoy His friendship.

Not in a “buddy” or “bestie” kind of way. He is the Sovereign God who knows us intimately. The One who hung the stars in their place knows us inside and out! When we think about His greatness, majesty, and power, it’s even more amazing that He would call us *friends*. Because of all the friendships in the world, there is no greater or truer Friend than God!

GOD’S WORD SAYS GOD IS . . .

AWESOME. *For the Lord Most High is awesome, the great King over all the earth (Psalm 47:2).*

BEAUTIFUL. *Gaze on the beauty of the Lord (Psalm 27:4).*

CARING. *Cast all your anxiety on him because cares for you (1 Peter 5:7).*

DEPENDABLE. *God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill? (Numbers 23:19)*

EVER-PRESENT. *God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble (Psalm 46:1).*

FAITHFUL. *He is faithful in all he does (Psalm 33:4).*

GOOD. *The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made (Psalm 145:9).*

HOLY. *And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory” (Isaiah 6:3).*

I AM. *God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you’” (Exodus 3:14).*

JUST. *For I, the Lord, love justice; I hate robbery and wrongdoing (Isaiah 61:8).*

KIND. *The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: “I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness” (Jeremiah 31:3).*

LOVING. *In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed (Exodus 15:13).*

MIGHTY. *Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit (Psalm 147:5).*

NEAR. *Yet you are near, Lord, and all your commands are true (Psalm 119:151).*

OUR ONLY GOD. *To the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen (Jude 25).*

PATIENT. *The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).*

QUICK TO FORGIVE. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).*

RIGHTEOUS. *There is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me (Isaiah 45:21).*

STRONG. *Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle (Psalm 24:8).*

TRUSTWORTHY. *The Lord is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does (Psalm 145:13).*

UNCHANGING. *I the Lord do not change (Malachi 3:6).*

VICTORIOUS. *With God we will gain the victory, and he will trample down our enemies (Psalm 60:12).*

WISE. *Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! (Romans 11:33)*

EXCELLENT. *O Lord, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth (Psalm 8:1 NKJV).*

YEARNING FOR US. *Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me (Revelation 3:20 NRSV).*

ZEALOUS. *Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: . . . I will be zealous for my holy name (Ezekiel 39:25).*

NOTE: All rights reserved. Do not photocopy. An A-to-Z Who God Is List printable is available on the *Friended* Online Resources. An A-to-Z Who God Is poster and bookmarks are available at gemsgc.org/store.

SAMPLE
DO NOT REPRODUCE

LESSON 1

DATE OF LESSON _____

WHAT IS *FRIENDED*?

PURPOSE: Introduce GEMS girls and their grown-ups to this season's study: *Friended*. *He calls us friends!*

BIBLE VERSE: *Abraham believed God . . . and he was called God's friend* (James 2:23).

MEMORY VERSE: *I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you* (John 15:15).

ARRIVAL

- ☐ Name tags—download from the *Friended* Online Resources
- ☐ Icebreaker: Friendship Web. Supplies: A ball of yarn or string
- ☐ **OPTIONAL:** Create a Photo Bulletin Board. Supplies: A rope and means to take pictures
 1. Have a taut rope that girls can stand behind and hold for individual pictures.
 2. When taking each photo, the rope should go across the photo so it looks like it's being held on either side of the girl.
 3. When photos are displayed, place them next to each other so the rope ties them together. They are all friends of God and of one another!

LARGE GROUP

FOR GIRLS:

- ☐ Select worship songs, including the *Friended* theme song “I Am a Friend of God” and provide the means to play them. Suggested songs and lyrics can be found at <http://bit.ly/FriendedSongs>
- ☐ Micah 6:8 Presentation Slide—download from the *Friended* Online Resources or display using the Micah 6:8 Poster available at gemsgc.org/store
- ☐ John 15:15 Presentation Slide—download from the *Friended* Online Resources
- ☐ Bible
- ☐ A-to-Z Who God Is Bookmarks—10 are included in the *Friended* Starter Kit, and more are available for purchase from gemsgc.org/store

FOR GEMS GROWN-UPS: (Choose a time at the beginning or end of club to meet with the GEMS Grown-Ups)

- ☐ A club schedule
- ☐ Club registration form—download from the *Friended* Online Resources
- ☐ GEMS Grown-Ups Letter—download from the *Friended* Online Resources
- ☐ Use the “Connect with GEMS Grown-Ups” text within this lesson to guide your meeting
- ☐ **OPTIONAL:** Show ReFresh Message titled “*Friended* for GEMS Grown-Ups”—see gemsrefresh.org

SMALL GROUP

- ☐ Lesson One *GEMS Journals*—*GEMS Journals* are available for three program levels: Grades 1–3, Grades 4–6, and Grades 7–8
- ☐ A *Small Group Leader's Guide* for each leader—Leader's guides are available for three program levels: Grades 1–3, Grades 4–6, and Grades 7–8
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Pencils or pens

DEAR GEMS, Should all of my girls have Bibles? And what if they don't know how to navigate books, chapters, and verses?

DEAR GEMS LEADER, We encourage you to make a club commitment that every girl will have a Bible to call her own. Spend time at club walking through the table of contents, books, chapters, and verses so girls can read the Bible on their own. When girls are dismissed from Large Group to Small Group, they will be given an A-to-Z Who God Is Bookmark and encouraged to look up the verses to get to know God more. Remind them that the more they are in God's Word, the more they will get to know Him!

DISMISSAL

- ☐ Videos: "Meet the Real Talk Team" and Lesson One "Real Talk" and the means to play them—download from the *Friended* Online Resources.
- ☐ **OPTIONAL:** Give your girls a GEMS Club Invite to help them invite their friends to your next club meeting—download from the *Friended* Online Resources

CRAFT SUPPLIES

- Pocket Rock
- ☐ Paint in various colors
 - ☐ Paintbrushes (one per girl)
 - ☐ Small rocks or pebbles (one per girl—about pocket-sized)
 - ☐ A-to-Z Who God Is List—download from *Friended* Online Resources or use the A-to-Z Who God Is Bookmarks they will receive in Large Group



ARRIVAL

[Time: When girls arrive until club begins]

Introduce yourself to the girls at the door.

Welcome each girl by name! As you distribute name tags, look each girl in the eye and **SAY** “_____ [girl’s name], this is a place for you to belong and be loved.”

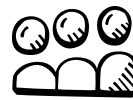
Until club starts, direct girls into the Large Group space to play the Icebreaker: Friendship Web. As you play Friendship Web, let the girls know this season’s theme is *Friended*. We’re going to connect as friends with God and one another!

FRIENDSHIP WEB

SUPPLIES: A ball of yarn or string

1. Gather girls into a circle.
2. Toss the ball of yarn to a girl, have her say her name and a fun fact about herself, and then encourage her to toss the ball of yarn to another girl while holding on to some of the yarn herself.
3. Try to have girls pass the string across the circle as much as possible to make a web. Make sure all girls have participated before the yarn returns to any girl who has already shared her fun fact.
4. Add girls to the circle as they arrive.

(When it’s time for club to begin, start Large Group.)



LARGE GROUP

WELCOME & PRAYER

[Time: 2 minutes]

SAY Welcome to _____ [name of your club] GEMS Girls’ Club! **PRAY** [Have everyone stand for an opening prayer.]

GEMS GIRLS’ CLUBS AIM

SAY One of the ways we’ll begin each club gathering is by reciting our GEMS Girls’ Clubs Aim, which is Micah 6:8. It’s something that GEMS girls and leaders across Canada, the United States, and the world do each time they meet at club!

MICAH 6:8 PRESENTATION SLIDE: Download from the *Friended* Online Resources or display using the Micah 6:8 Poster available at gemsgc.org/store.

ASK _____ [name of your club] GEMS and GEMS leaders, what does the Lord require of us?

(Leaders and girls respond): To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God Micah 6:8.

GEMS GIRLS’ CLUBS AIM HISTORY:

In 1972, GEMS Girls’ Clubs adopted Micah 6:8 as the organization’s theme verse and aim. Girls and leaders across the globe recite this aim in unison at the start of each club gathering to remind ourselves of the type of women and girls God desires us to be.

PRAISE & WORSHIP

[Time: You decide!]

About 4 minutes per song]



SAY Girls, the God of the universe who made you, knows you, and loves you invites us to be His friends. During Praise & Worship, we sing our thanks and praise to Him. Sing with all your heart!

SING one or more songs as a whole group.

SAY Please repeat after me: “God invites us to be His friends.” (*Girls repeat.*)

Think about that. God who is Perfect and the King of the universe, and who *gives everyone life and breath and everything else* (Acts 17:25), invites us to be His friends. Not in a “buddy” or “bestie” kind of way. He is the God who made the world and everything in it and knows you by name. The One who hung the stars in place knows you inside and out! When we think about His greatness, majesty, and power, it’s even more amazing that He would call us friends. But unlike our earthly friends, who may change their minds about us with a snap of their fingers or tap of their screens, God will never change His mind about wanting you to receive His love and be His friend. Let’s think about friendship together.

NOTE: Any supplies or people needed for the Lesson Opener or Bible Teaching are found under the Large Group list at the beginning of the lesson.

LESSON OPENER: FAMOUS FRIEND

[Time: 5 minutes]

SAY This year at GEMS, we’re talking about friendship. We all want good friends, don’t we? I know I do. Together we’ll focus on our friendship with God and with one another.

But what does it mean to be a friend? I’ll share a few things about friendship. Give a thumbs up if you agree or a thumbs down if you don’t. Are you ready?

ASK To be a friend you have to look the same. Thumbs up or thumbs down? (*Girls respond.*)

SAY Thumbs down. Friends come in all ages, sizes, and skin, hair, and eye colors. That’s part of what makes friendships interesting and fun!

ASK To be a friend, you need to go to the same school. Thumbs up or thumbs down? (*Girls respond.*)

SAY Thumbs down. Friends come from everywhere, including different schools, teams, and communities!

ASK To be a friend you have to agree on everything. Thumbs up or thumbs down? (*Girls respond.*)

SAY Thumbs down. Like fingerprints and snowflakes, no two friends are exactly the same, which means friends won’t always agree!

ASK The last question: to be a friend you need to love one another. Thumbs up or thumbs down? (*Girls respond.*)

SAY Thumbs up. Friends love one another. What matters most in friendship is not how we look, where we go to school, or if we always agree. What makes people friends is love!

SAY Think beyond the friends in this room and the ones you know by name. If you could make a new friend with anyone in the world, who would you choose? Who is a famous person or someone you really look up to or admire? Maybe it’s a YouTuber, athlete, or musician. Maybe it’s a world-changer on a mission to provide clean water to every person across the globe. Do you have someone in mind?

ASK Does anyone want to share who they would pick for their famous friend? (*Listen.*)

SAY Now I’d like everyone to close your eyes and imagine you’re sitting at home and you hear a knock on the door (*knock on a door or table*). You open the door, and can hardly believe your eyes: standing in front of you is the famous person you want for a friend!

Let’s just say this person is a girl or woman. She knows your name and all the things you love to do and what matters to you. She wonders if you could hang out today and she wants to do whatever you want to do!

Though your famous friend knows what you would want to do, the other girls in this group might not be so sure. We need to get to know one another better. Let's do so with a Would You Rather? game. To respond, you'll either raise your hands high or cross your arms. Are you ready?

ASK Would you rather eat candy and cookies or chips and crackers? Raise your hands high if you'd rather eat candy and cookies and cross your arms if you'd rather chips and crackers. *(Girls respond.)*

ASK Would you rather have 100 OK friends or three best friends? Raise your hands high if you'd rather have 100 OK friends and cross your arms if you'd rather have three best friends. *(Girls respond.)*

ASK Think about your famous friend who just showed up at your door. Would you rather put off spending time with her until next year or spend time with her today? Raise your hands high if you'd rather put off spending time with her until next year and cross your arms if you'd rather spend time with her today. *(Girls respond.)*

ASK How would you feel if the famous friend you're thinking about actually became your real friend—not just for a day, but for life? *(Listen.)*

SAY It would be amazing, right?

[Use the example of some of the famous people the girls mentioned. Example: It's one thing if _____ (name of girl) tells people, did you know that _____ (famous person) is MY friend? It would be even more amazing if _____ (famous person) told everyone, did you know that _____ (name of girl) is MY friend?]

Girls, our pretending gives us a tiny glimpse of a true story that is in the Bible, which is God's Word of Truth. It's a story about a man named Abram who experienced the greatest friendship possible. It's a friendship that you can have, too, because of God's Son, Jesus! Lean in and listen closely.

BIBLE TEACHING: ABRAHAM

[Time: 6 minutes]



SAY In Genesis, the first book in the Bible, we read about a man named Abram. Abram was an ordinary man, and on a very ordinary day, God showed up and gave him this command. *(Read from your Bible.)* Genesis 12:1 says, *The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you."*

This was before phones and technology could keep Abram connected to old friends. If Abram chose to obey God, it would mean leaving everything and everyone.

ASK What would you have done if you were Abram? *(Girls respond.)*

SAY Abram chose to go! He took his wife, Sarai, and his nephew, Lot, and walked away from everything to step into a new life and a new friendship that changed everything.

Later, Abram's name changed to Abraham. And God honored Abraham for following His call. *(Read from your Bible.)* James 2:23 says Abraham *was called God's friend.*

Wow! Abraham was called God's friend. Can you imagine being called "friend" by the God of the universe? We can't compare God to a famous person or to anyone at all! He made the world and everything in it.

ASK So how do you think Abraham felt when God said, "Abraham is my friend"? *(Listen.)*

SAY Here's more amazing news. You can be God's friend, too! God also wants a relationship with you!

Maybe you're thinking, "But isn't God holy and perfect, a King, and Lord over all?" Yes, He is! It's true! The good news is that God isn't our King or our Friend. He's both! He's King and Friend all because of His Son, Jesus!

Jesus makes having a relationship with God possible! King Jesus makes a way for us to be friends with God today and one day in Heaven. We'll be talking about this all GEMS season!

But maybe you wonder why God would want to be your friend. Maybe you think "Why me? I have nothing to offer." Or you might wonder if He feels sorry for you or if He's forced to be your friend because He's God.

Or maybe others have said you're too much, not enough, or you don't belong here. If you've ever been bullied or been a bully, if you've ever been lied to or left out, why would God want *you* to be His friend?

In a word? It's love. It's God's selfless, inviting love. No matter who you are or the number of friends you may or may not have, God loves you! And unlike people, He'll never unfriend you if you mess up, and He'll never get too busy for you. You are the one He loves. The God who hangs the stars in place and knows the number of hairs on our head invites us to be His Friend.

But being God's friend is no ordinary friendship. He is perfect, powerful, and mighty. There is no Friend like God!

Our closest friends will disappoint us. It's impossible for anyone except God to perfectly love us, be with us all the time, rescue us, or always understand us. There is no Friend like God!

Please say, "There is no Friend like God!" (*Girls repeat.*)

SAY When Abraham first met God, God knew everything about Abraham, but Abraham didn't know much about God. This changed when Abraham spent time with God as good friends do. They talked about everything. The more Abraham got to know God, the more he loved and trusted Him. When Abraham left everything, God became his everything! He was called God's friend!

Our GEMS theme this year is *Friended. He calls us friends!*

God invites us to be His friend through His Son, Jesus. (*Read from your Bible and use the John 15:15 Presentation Slide to display the verse.*) Please repeat our theme verse, John 15:15, after me. This is what God's Son, Jesus, says to us!

THEME VERSE: *I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you* (John 15:15). (*Girls repeat.*)

SAY Being God's friend changed Abraham's life. You know what? Being God's friend changed my life, too.

If you want to be God's friend, but you're not sure what that means or who Jesus is, let's talk. After I pray, please stay and meet with *me [or say the name of another leader] or talk to your Small Group leader. We want to connect one-on-one with you.

If you already have a relationship with God, but you want God to be your greatest Friend, here's what you can do. First, spend more time with Him! Pray to God. Like Abraham, you can talk to God about anything!

Second, get to know God more! Reading God's Word is the best place to begin. And as you leave, we will gift you *bookmarks to help you know Him more. Look up the verses about God, write them in a journal, and if you have questions about God, write those down too so you can ask me or one of your leaders! As you spend time with God, praying and getting to know Him more, He may become your greatest Friend. Because of all the friendships in the world, there is no Friend like God!

God sees you, He is for you, and He loves you—no matter what! He invites you into a forever friendship with Himself.

*Distribute A-to-Z Who God Is Bookmarks as girls dismiss to Small Groups.

DIGGING DEEPER

If thinking of God as a Friend is new to you or your girls, reflect on these Digging Deeper Q&As.

Q: Can we be a friend of God?

A: God created us for a relationship with Himself. It's a friendship that is only possible through His Son, Jesus. We enter into this relationship by trusting Jesus as our Savior, humbly submitting to Him as our Lord, and enjoying Him as King and Friend today on earth and one day when we live together in Heaven.

Through Jesus, we are no longer called servants, but friends (John 15:15). Jesus made the way and shows us the way to be friends. *Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends* (John 15:13). The cross proves His friendship with us, and our obedience demonstrates our friendship with Him. *You are my friends if you do what I command* (John 15:14). What a friend we have in Jesus!



Q: In James 2:23, what does “it was credited to him as righteousness” mean?

A: “Credited to him as righteousness” doesn't mean Abraham earned his righteousness. We cannot earn our righteousness or salvation. It is a gift from God made possible through His Son, Jesus! Instead, in simplest terms, we learn that Abraham believed in God and in His Word. Abraham's trust in God and obedience to Him demonstrated that his friendship with God was real. His faith and actions worked together, and he was called God's friend!



Q: Where can we learn more about God's friendship with Abraham?

A: Abraham's journey is a beautiful picture of someone being friended by God. God calls Abraham His friend in James 2:23, 2 Chronicles 20:7, and Isaiah 41:8. In the book of Genesis, we see Abraham's relationship with God grow as he followed God's call to leave his country (Genesis 12:1-3) and was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac (Genesis 22:1-19). Abraham's friendship with God was evident in his worship and prayer life when he built altars to the Lord (Genesis 12:7, 8; 13:4, 18), asked honest and respectful questions (Genesis 17:15-22), and talked responsively to God (Genesis 18:29-32). Abraham's reverent fear of God models for us that God is not an ordinary Friend. Abraham testified that He is the *Lord, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth* (Genesis 14:22). Abraham's friendship with God displayed confidence in who God is and all He promised as he walked by faith (Hebrews 11:1, 8-12).

WRAP-UP & PRAYER

[Time: 1 minute]



SAY Girls, if you want to learn more about God inviting you to be His friend through His Son, Jesus, let's talk. Or maybe you want to talk about your friendships with others. If so, after I pray, please stay and meet with *me [or say the name of another leader] or talk to your Small Group leader. We want to tell you more about God's love for you!

(**PRAY** your own prayer or conclude with this one . . .)

PRAY Dear God, thank You that You love us and invite us into a relationship with You. Thank You for a new GEMS season and for every girl and leader gathered here. We're thankful that in You, we have a safe place to belong. Please use our time together at club to grow our love for You and for one another. In the powerful and loving name of Jesus, amen.

***LISTEN** carefully to each girl. Acknowledge her feelings. Answer her questions as you are able. If she asks questions you don't have answers for, let her know you don't know but will look for answers. Ask your pastor or Club Coordinator for help if you need it. Share your faith story as appropriate, and pray. Pray with lonely girls who need to know they are not alone. Pray with girls who want to have a relationship with Jesus.

.....
: Need resources to help you lead a child to :
: Christ? See page 12 and watch the **Gospel** :
: **Message Series** videos at gemsgc.org/gospel. :
.....

(Dismiss to Small Groups.)

CONNECT WITH GEMS GROWN-UPS



[Time: 15–20 minutes, depending on Q&A time]

Hold a brief grown-ups (parents/grandparents/caregivers) meeting at the beginning or end of your first club gathering.

COLLECT REGISTRATION FORMS. Have GEMS Grown-Ups fill out a club registration form for their girls. A sample form can be found in the back of this book and in the *Friended* Online Resources.

DISTRIBUTE A GEMS SCHEDULE AND GEMS GROWN-UP LETTER. A GEMS Grown-Up Letter is available in the *Friended* Online Resources. It can be personalized for your club. Distribute a personalized club schedule with all the dates and details for meetings, special events, and GEMS Sunday.

THANK GROWN-UPS. You may want to say . . . Thank you for entrusting your girls to our club! Club is a place where she can belong and be loved. Your girls matter to you. They matter to God and to us, too! As GEMS leaders, we are committed to modeling the kind of relationship with Jesus and with other leaders that girls look up to and want for their own lives. We will share the Truth of God's Word with enthusiasm and passion, and we're going to have a lot of fun, too! As we get to know your girls, we want to get to know you, too. So thank you for being here. Your presence is a gift.

NOTE: This message is expanded on the GEMS ReFresh Message: "Friended for GEMS Grown-Ups."

SHARE THE MESSAGE OF FRIENDED WITH GROWN-UPS: You may want to say . . . The theme for this club season is *Friended*. He calls us friends!

If you could give your girl one piece of advice about friendship that would stick with her for life, what would it be? Whether she's having a best-friends-forever day or she's been bullied, unfriended, lied to, or left out, what do you want her to always remember?

As her GEMS leaders, it's our prayer that she will always remember that she is friended. The God who created Heaven and earth calls her friend! Because when a girl—when *we*—know who God is and what it means to be His friend, it impacts all of our relationships. Everything changes when being God's friend is the foundation of all our friendships!

This is your girl's reality: Mean girls can torment, best friends can change with the seasons, and even the most trusted friend can suddenly unfriend her with a snap of her fingers or a tap on her screen. But the Almighty God is a Friend who will never fail, walk out, or give up on her.

Being God's friend is no ordinary friendship. We can't even comprehend Him. He is perfect, powerful, and mighty. There is no Friend like God!

So along with all the fun girls will experience at club, we have a twofold friendship aim. We want you to know about it so you can pray for us and grow with us!

GOAL #1: We want to grow in our relationship with God.

Will you join us? Some of you may be wondering what a relationship with God is all about, others are new Christians, and others grew up in the faith. No matter our story, God is inviting all of us into a closer relationship with Him. He calls us to Himself and meets us right where we are with His selfless, pursuing love.

At GEMS, we're helping girls and grown-ups grow in their faith. So if you're not sure how to pray, what it means to be a Christian, or you don't have a Bible or wonder where to begin reading, please reach out. I mean that. And know you're not the only one. Maybe this is exactly why you're here! Belonging to God's family is the best decision you could ever make. Please, if you have questions, talk to one of the GEMS leaders or reach out to the GEMS Staff at gemsgc.org. We care about you and your girls!

Our first goal is to grow together in our relationship with God.

GOAL #2: We want to grow in our friendships with others. We'll do that by focusing on these five "One Anothers" found in God's Word: love one another, serve one another, pray for one another, accept one another, and be kind to one another. You'll see these "One Anothers" in the girls' take-home activity sheets, service projects, fun nights, and crafts. And it's our prayer you'll see these "One Anothers" in all their relationships, including the one they have with you.

Friendship matters. That is why we'll be memorizing John 15:15, this season's theme verse. We always want to remember what Jesus says about us! (*Read from your Bible.*) He said, "*I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.*"

When our girls know they are friended, anxiety lifts and loneliness dissipates. They'll stop trying to fit in, measure up, or seek approval. And we'll see the world change, one friendship at a time.

I'm committed to growing with your girls, I pray you are, too! So is this team . . .

INTRODUCE YOUR GEMS CLUB TEAM. Introduce each leader by name and role within your club.

COMMUNICATE EXPECTATIONS.

PICK UP/DROP OFF TIMES AND EXPECTATIONS.

Do you require grown-ups to come into the building to check their girls in and out? If so, what is the process?

GEMS SCHEDULE/PLANS. Direct their attention to the club schedule and highlight the events that specifically involve them—GEMS & Gals Night, GEMS & Gents Night, GEMS Sunday, fundraisers, etc. Encourage them to add these dates to their phones and calendars.

CLUB SPECIFICS. What do you expect of the girls and their grown-ups? What can they expect from you and your club? How will you regularly communicate with them? Will you use print or emailed newsletters, a club Facebook page, or text messages?

TECHNOLOGY PLAN. Technology is native to our kids, so it's important to communicate what that looks like at your club. Tell the GEMS and their grown-ups the acceptable times and places technology can be used at club.

CLOSE WITH Q&A AND PRAYER.

Dismiss with joy and anticipation!



CRAFT

POCKET ROCK

[Time: 20 minutes]



LEADER TIP: Time required for any craft depends on how much prep work is done in advance, how many helping hands are available to the girls, and a girl's age and individual abilities. For a quick craft overview, be sure to watch "Friended Crafts" on GEMS ReFresh. Visit gemsrefresh.org for more information. **NOTE:** If you have the time, have girls make extras to gift to others!

SUPPLIES

- ◆ Paint in various colors
- ◆ Paintbrushes (one per girl)
- ◆ Small rocks or pebbles (one per girl—about pocket-sized)
- ◆ A-to-Z Who God Is List—download from *Friended* Online Resources or use the A-to-Z Who God Is Bookmarks they received in Large Group

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Give your girls time to read through the A-to-Z Who God Is List. **SAY** Friends get to know one another. God knows us, so let's get to know Him more by looking at words He gives us in the Bible to describe Him.
2. Give each girl a rock and paint, and encourage her to paint a word or verse from the A-to-Z Who God Is List onto her rock.
3. If girls have time, they can fill the rest of their rocks with drawings, Truth reminders, or other details.
4. Once the paint has dried, girls may put their rocks in their pockets to help them remember the Truth of who God is wherever they go.

LEADER NOTE: As the girls work on the craft, ask the Craft & Chat questions.

CRAFT & CHAT QUESTIONS

- ◆ If you could make a new friend with anyone in the world, who would you choose and why?
- ◆ What would you do if you could spend the day with your new friend? What are your favorite drinks and snacks?
- ◆ Look at the A-to-Z Who God Is List. Did you learn anything new about God from this list? What was your favorite discovery and why? **NOTE:** If time allows, take turns reading through the A-to-Z list!

(Dismiss to Large Group space for Dismissal.)

NOTE: Any supplies needed are found under the Dismissal list at the beginning of this lesson.



DISMISSAL

[Time: 3 minutes]

LEADER NOTE: Have music playing as girls return to the Large Group room. Once everyone is in the room, close with a “Real Talk” video. Then wrap up your meeting and close in prayer. Remind them when you’re going to meet again. Use your own words or follow the guide provided.



REAL TALK

SAY It is time for a “Real Talk” video. We have something really special to share with you. Please turn your attention to the screen.

NOTE: Show the Intro Video first, then the Lesson One “Real Talk” video. That way, the girls will get to know the “Real Talk” Team they’ll be hearing from all season!

LEADER TIP: If there are technical difficulties, please use the script below.

INTRO VIDEO “REAL TALK” TEXT

ALL: Hey, girls!

SERENA: And welcome to your first “Real Talk” video! My name is Serena . . .

MACY: My name is Macy . . .

KAMARAH: And my name is Kamarah, and we are your “Real Talk” Team. We aren’t afraid to talk about real challenges, real struggles, and real Truths with all of you.

MACY: We know that it’s not easy being a girl today, and we also know that each and every one of you matter.

SERENA: Plus, it’s not all that long ago that we were your age!

KAMARAH: That’s why we’re so excited to be with you through these videos. We want you to know how important you are, and to remind you that you are not alone.

SERENA: This year, you'll hear from us in eight different videos.

MACY: We'll share some of our stories with you . . .

KAMARAH: Talk about the lessons you learned . . .

SERENA: And leave you with a challenge to make you think. It's a challenge we will be doing with you!

KAMARAH: We can't wait to share more with you this year!

ALL: Let's do this!

LESSON ONE "REAL TALK" TEXT

Hi girls! I'm Serena, and I'm so glad you're here! How many of you are at your very first GEMS Club meeting? I still remember my first club meeting. I joined GEMS because my friends were doing it, and I wanted to hang out with them. But what I remember most from that first meeting was doing motions with the theme song because I loved to dance. What do you remember most from your first club meeting? Here's what I'm hoping you'll remember from this one: the God who made the world and everything in it invites you to be His Friend. Wow!

As you get ready to leave club today, I want you to hold your pocket rock in your hand and think about the word you chose from the A-to-Z Who God Is List. I have the rock I made here with me—and I picked "Patient." I love remembering that our God is patient because I am *not*. I want to know my future now and get things now, which is why waiting on God can be hard for me. But even though I have trouble waiting, God is patient with me . . . always. I am so, so grateful for His patience. AND I get to have HIM for my best and truest friend! Can you believe that?! And He invites the same for you, too!

This week, I encourage you to take out your rock from time to time and remember that God wants to be your Lord and Friend. If you're feeling lonely or misunderstood, take out your rock. If you're feeling frustrated or

are tempted to be mean to someone, take out your rock. And if you see someone who maybe could use a friend, let her share your rock! Tell her about who God is and help her see how she can have a relationship with Him, too.

Thanks so much for coming to GEMS, everyone!

See you next time!

(After the video is finished . . .)

SAY Girls, we are beyond grateful you joined us at our first club meeting this year. We hope to see you at every club gathering! Plus, we encourage you to always invite a friend.

We'd love that! Between now and our next meeting, get to know God more by talking to Him in prayer and reviewing your A-to-Z Who God Is List, too! And never forget, He knows everything about you and loves you so!

Please touch your heart and say, "God invites us to be His friend." Keep your hand over your heart while we pray together.

(PRAY) your own prayer or use the one below.)



PRAY Dear God, thank You for a new GEMS year and for each girl who is part of this club. Thank You for all we learned and for the laughter, too! Help all of us to spend more time with You so we can get to know You more. Thank You for loving us first and inviting us to belong to You as friends. In the name of Jesus, amen.

OPTIONAL: Distribute the GEMS Club Invite to help girls invite their friends to your next club meeting. Give high fives, hugs, and words of encouragement.



SAMPLE
DO NOT REPRODUCE

WRITER REQUESTS

FRIENDED

JOHN 15:15

SMALL GROUP LEADER'S GUIDE
GRADES 1-3



LESSON 1

DATE OF LESSON _____

WHAT IS FRIENDED?

PURPOSE: Introduce GEMS girls and their grown-ups to this season's study: *Friended. He calls us friends!*

BIBLE VERSE: *Abraham believed God . . . and he was called God's friend* (James 2:23).

MEMORY VERSE: *I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you* (John 15:15).

SMALL GROUP SUPPLY LIST

- ☐ Lesson One *GEMS Journals* for Grades 1-3 (includes link to this lesson's "Real Talk" video)
- ☐ Small Group Welcome: One Word Answer. (No supplies needed)
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Pencils or pens, scissors, sticky notes, and crayons, *Friended* colored pencils, or markers

CRAFT SUPPLIES

- Pocket Rock
- ☐ Paint in various colors
 - ☐ Paintbrushes (one per girl)
 - ☐ Small rocks or pebbles (one per girl—about pocket-sized)
 - ☐ A-to-Z Who God Is List—download from *Friended* Online Resources or use the A-to-Z Who God Is Bookmarks they received in Large Group

SMALL GROUP WELCOME

[Time: 5 minutes]



LEADER TIP: Building relationships with your girls matters! Calling **them** by name (check to make sure **you** are pronouncing their names correctly!) may be the most important way to show **them** you really care. **One** way to learn **their** names outside of club is to pray for them by name. It's a double blessing in strengthening your relationship with God and one another!

SAV: Welcome to our Small Group! My name is _____, and I'm so excited to be your GEMS Small Group Leader this year. I can't wait to get to know each one of you better and for you to learn more about each other, too.

Some of you may be new to GEMS, while others may have been part of club for some time. Whoever you are, you're welcome here. This is a place for fun and friendship. Together, we will learn what it means to be friends of God and friends to one another. You're part of something that is called the GEMS Sisterhood. And it's even more special because you're here!

Let's get to know the friends or the sisters in this group by checking in with each other.

ONE WORD ANSWER

SUPPLIES: None

1. Have your girls go around the circle and share their name and one word to describe how they're doing. If you have time, they can take a few minutes to explain their words, if they choose. Also, make sure your girls know they can pick any word. The sillier or more random the word, the more fun this game can be!
2. Continue until each girl and leader has participated.

LEADER TIP: Always make sure each girl has a chance to share. Thank her by name and affirm each response with kindness. It lets her know she was seen and heard. Be sure you share, too.

SAY: Thank you for sharing! Whether your word was _____ or _____ (reiterate their responses), we're glad you are here. We care about you and how you're doing.

Most of all, God cares about you. The God of the universe loves you more than you can ever know. He loves you so much, He invites you to be His friend. That's incredible! Let's talk more about that together.

(Give girls their *GEMS Journals*.)

GEMS JOURNALS



[Time: 15 minutes]

Use the *GEMS Journals* to guide your conversation during Small Group time. Encourage your girls to tear off the bookmark on the second page of their *GEMS Journals* and share it with their grown-ups after Small Group time. Content contained in the *GEMS Journals* is outlined in boxes for you to review.

LEADER NOTE: Take the *What is a Friend? Quiz* with your girls and talk about what it means to be a good friend. Listen to your girls as they respond. What do they know about friendship? Try to learn their names and get an understanding of where they're coming from. This is your chance to get to know them better!

WHAT IS A FRIEND? QUIZ

Our big, amazing God has invited you to be His friend! Do you know what it means to be a good friend? Choose "Friend" or "Not a Friend" for each question below. Then talk about your choices with your group.

1. You play with a girl who always makes you do what she wants to do. Is she being a good friend or not?

Friend

Not a Friend

2. You sit by a girl who is new, but really kind. She wants to hang out with you more. Is she a friend?

Friend

Not a Friend

3. You have a friend who is nice to you when it's just the two of you, but is mean in front of others. Is she being a friend?

Friend

Not a Friend

4. You're having trouble getting to know people on your new team. Then, a girl invites you to get ice cream with her after a game. Is she a friend?

Friend

Not a Friend

5. You and your sister fight a lot, but you know that deep down you love each other. Is she a friend?

Friend

Not a Friend

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Knowing who your true friends are isn't always easy. Sometimes your friends say or do things that aren't very friend-like. Other times, new friends can surprise you. How do real friends talk or act?

ANSWERS: 1. Not a Friend, 2. Friend, 3. Not a Friend, 4. Friend, 5. Friend

LEADER NOTE: Go through the *God's Word Is Truth* section with your girls. Start by reading the verses at the top together, and then read the lesson summary below. Follow up with the response questions, and make sure your girls are coloring this section in their *GEMS Journals* while you read and talk through these questions and answers.

GOD'S WORD IS TRUTH

READ: Genesis 12:1-3, Genesis 15:5, James 2:23, and John 15:13-15

Listen as your leader shares about what you learned today and color in the drawing.

SAY: Today you learned about Abram. God called Abram to follow Him. That meant Abram would have to leave everything behind. But Abram said yes. He obeyed God and went. He stepped into a new life and a new friendship with God, and that changed everything! God blessed him and changed his name to Abraham. And the God of the universe who is perfect, a King, and Lord of all called Abraham His friend! Wow! And that's not all—this same God invites you to be His friend, too!

LEADER NOTE: The following questions will help your girls think through the lesson and apply it to their own lives.

Q1: Reread Genesis 12:1-3. What did God ask Abram to do? **God asked Abram to leave everything behind—his home, his family, and everything familiar—to go to a land God would show to Him. And Abram did!**

Q2: God invites you to be His friend. Imagine what would happen if every single day you remembered that God loves you and is with you. How would being His friend change how you think, talk, and act? **Personal responses may include thinking about others' needs more than your own, using encouraging, positive words when you speak, and loving others with your actions.**

Q3: How can you get to know God as your Friend this week? **Personal responses may include spending time with God, praying to Him, reading His Word (the book of John is a great place to start), or going out in His creation and thanking Him for all you see.**

Q4: Imagine you're telling a friend about your GEMS Club meeting. What would you share with your friend about what you learned today? **Personal responses.**

LEADER NOTE: Give your girls a chance to pick the emoji that best describes their response to this lesson. Make sure you take the time to hear from each girl, especially if any of your girls have questions about the lesson.

EMOJI RESPONSE

Pick an emoji from the list below to show your response to this lesson, and share with your group!

Confused Face
Excited Face
Hug Emoji
Worried Face
Heart Eyes

LEADER NOTE: Talk about *The Friendled Theme* with your girls and ask if they have any questions about what it means for them. As they color in the *Friendled* sign, talk about John 15:15. What does it mean to them to have the God of their universe as their friend?

THE FRIENDLED THEME

This year at GEMS, you are going to learn what it means for God to invite you to be His friend, and how to be a "One Another" friend!

Friendled. He calls us friends!

Color in the sign for this year's theme and talk about John 15:15 with your group.

LEADER NOTE: Guide your girls through the *Be My Friend!* activity. Make sure everyone gets a chance to share their interests with the group, and gets to sign each *GEMS Journal*. You may want to take notes on their responses, so you can remember some of these details about your girls!

BE MY FRIEND!

Get to know the girls in your group! Fill in the blanks below and share your answers.

1. My favorite color is _____.
2. This is my _____ year at GEMS.
3. My least favorite food is _____.
4. I have _____ brothers and sisters.
5. My favorite animal is a _____.

After your friends share, have each of them sign your *GEMS Journal* below. Learn their names so you can be a good friend to them!

LEADER NOTE: Now's your chance to emphasize the importance of memorizing verses to your girls. Memorizing God's Word matters! As you help your girls complete this memory verse activity, make sure they understand the value of knowing God's Word by heart.

SAY: Memorize this verse to learn more about what God's Son, Jesus, has done for you. Jesus made it possible for you to become God's friend!

VERSE TO PRACTICE

Memorize this verse to learn more about what God's Son, Jesus, has done for you. Look up John 15:15 for help.

*I have called you _____, for _____
that I learned from my _____ I have made
_____ to you. _____ 15:_____*

LEADER NOTE: Cut along the bookmark line and read the *A Friend of God* Bookmark with your girls. Along with memorizing a Bible verse at each club meeting, challenge your group to memorize the A-to-Z Who God Is List, too. Use A-B-C blocks or letters as fun visuals, or have girls create movements to help remember each important Truth about God. Ask the girls to take their bookmark home and share it with their grown-ups and then put it in their Bibles or journals to remind them of all they've learned at GEMS.

A FRIEND OF GOD

God, the One who made everything, wants to be friends with you! Think about all the things you learned about God today. How can you share one of the A-to-Z Truths below with a friend?

Awesome. Beautiful. Caring. Dependable.
Ever-Present. Faithful. Good. Holy. I AM. Just.
Kind. Loving. Mighty. Near. Our Only God.
Patient. Quick to Forgive. Righteous. Strong.
Trustworthy. Unchanging. Victorious. Wise.
eXcellent. Yearns for Us. Zealous.

Don't forget to practice your memory verse!

*I have called you friends, for everything that I
learned from my Father I have made known to you.
John 15:15*

LEADER NOTE: Go through the A-to-Z Who God Is List with your girls, and ask if they have any questions about the traits on the list. Make sure you read through the list ahead of time so you are prepared to answer any questions they have. Then talk through the *God Is...* activity with your girls.

GOD IS...

Pick one word from our A-to-Z Who God Is List to help you focus on a trait of God this week. Draw or doodle that trait in the space below and fill in the sentences. Share with your group what you chose and why!

This week, I learned that God is _____
(A-to-Z trait). That means He _____
_____.

LEADER NOTE: Guide your girls through a conversation about friendship. Ask them to think about the things their friends do or say if they're having trouble defining what it means to be a friend. If they have questions about God or friendship that you can't answer, let them know that you will either find answers for them or that some questions won't always have answers. No matter what, encourage them to keep asking questions! Remind them that God knows everything and they don't need to know everything in order to know He cares for them and they can trust Him.

FRIENDED

Talk about friendship with your group. As you talk about being a friend of God, color in the bubble letters below. Make sure you hang on to your *GEMS Journal* so you can look back at the end of the year!

LEADER NOTE: Talk through the bookmark with your girls and encourage them to share it with their grown-ups. This is how they can bring the lesson home!

"REAL TALK" VIDEOS



Our "Real Talk" Team is here to introduce themselves and talk about friendship! Meet the team and watch this week's "Real Talk" videos at bit.ly/FriendedRealTalkIntro and bit.ly/FriendedRealTalk1.

TALKING TOGETHER

THE THEME for this week is that you are invited to be a friend of God!

TELL your grown-up about the message in **John 15:15** and share one thing you learned about being a friend.

TRY IT yourself this week: **who do you need to invite to your GEMS Club?** Invite that new friend to your next GEMS Club meeting!

LET'S PRAY

[Time: 5 minutes]



LEADER TIP: Prayer strengthens our relationship with God, and is one of the greatest things we can do for one another. Teach girls that to pray they don't have to use fancy words or long sentences. All they need to do is talk and listen to God. Whether we pray aloud or silently, He hears.

SAY: Today we learned that the all-powerful Creator God invites YOU to become His friend! Talking to God is an important part of spending time with Him. You can tell Him anything! Let's start by talking to God together now.

LEADER NOTE: Before you pray, direct the girls to the things you talked about together. What can they thank God for? Maybe it's that He invites them to be His friend. What can they ask God for? Maybe they want to learn more about Him and how to be good friends to one another. Invite girls to pray aloud, or pray for the group. Pray your own prayer or use the one below.

PRAY: God, You are our Creator and our Rock. Thank You for caring for each one of us and inviting us to become Your friend. We're sorry for all the ways we are not good friends to others. Help us to learn how to become friends to one another, starting with the lesson we heard together. We love You. In Jesus' name, amen.



CRAFT

POCKET ROCK

[Time: 20 minutes]



LEADER TIP: Time required for any craft depends on how much prep work is done in advance, how many helping hands are available to the girls, and a girl's age and individual abilities. *For a quick craft overview, be sure to watch "Friendened Crafts" on GEMS ReFresh. Visit gemsrefresh.org for more information.* **NOTE:** If you have the time, have girls make extras to gift to others!

SUPPLIES

- ◆ Paint in various colors
- ◆ Paintbrushes (one per girl)
- ◆ Small rocks or pebbles (one per girl—about pocket-sized)
- ◆ A-to-Z Who God Is List—download from *Friendened Online Resources* or use the A-to-Z Who God Is Bookmarks they received in Large Group

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Give your girls time to read through the A-to-Z Who God Is List. **SAV** Friends get to know one another. God knows us, so let's get to know Him more by looking at words He gives us in the Bible to describe Him.
2. Give each girl a rock and paint, and encourage her to paint a word or verse from the A-to-Z Who God Is List onto her rock.
3. If girls have time, they can fill the rest of their rocks with drawings, Truth reminders, or other details.
4. Once the paint has dried, girls may put their rocks in their pockets to help them remember the Truth of who God is wherever they go.

LEADER NOTE: As the girls work on the craft, ask the Craft & Chat questions.

CRAFT & CHAT QUESTIONS



- ◆ If you could make a new friend with anyone in the world, who would you choose and why?
- ◆ What would you do if you could spend the day with your new friend? What are your favorite drinks and snacks?
- ◆ Look at the A-to-Z Who God Is List. Did you learn anything new about God from this list? What was your favorite discovery and why? **NOTE:** If time allows, take turns reading through the A-to-Z list!

(Dismiss to Large Group space for Dismissal.)



SAMPLE
DO NOT REPRODUCE

FRIENDED

JOHN 15:15

LESSON ONE ○ GRADES 1-3

WHAT IS A FRIEND?

Our big, amazing God has invited you to be His friend! Do you know what it means to be a good friend? Choose "Friend" or "Not a Friend" for each question below. Then talk about your choices with your group.

1

You play with a girl who always makes you do what she wants to do. Is she being a good friend or not?

FRIEND
NOT A FRIEND

2

You sit by a girl who is new, but really kind. She wants to hang out with you more. Is she a friend?

FRIEND
NOT A FRIEND

3

You have a friend who is nice to you when it's just the two of you, but is mean in front of others. Is she being a friend?

FRIEND
NOT A FRIEND

4

You're having trouble getting to know people on your new team. Then, a girl invites you to get ice cream with her after a game. Is she a friend?

FRIEND
NOT A FRIEND

5

You and your sister fight a lot, but you know that deep down you love each other. Is she a friend?

FRIEND
NOT A FRIEND

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Knowing who your true friends are isn't always easy.

Sometimes your friends say or do things that aren't very friend-like. Other times, new friends can surprise you.

How do real friends talk or act?

ANSWERS:

1. Not a Friend
2. Friend
3. Not a Friend
4. Friend
5. Friend



THE FRIENDED THEME

This year at GEMS,
you are going to
learn what it means
for God to invite
you to be His friend,
and how to be a
“One Another”
friend!

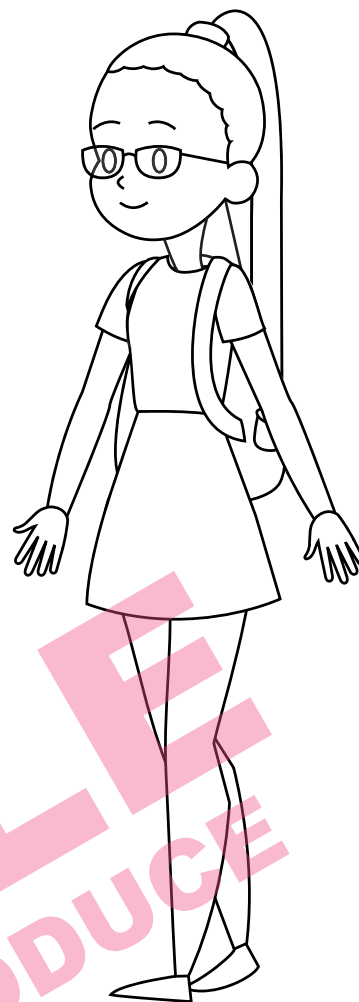
FRIENDED. HE CALLS US FRIENDS!

Color in the sign for
this year's theme
and talk about
John 15:15 with
your group.

GOD'S WORD IS TRUTH

Today's lesson is found in
Genesis 12:1-3, Genesis 15:5,
James 2:23, and John 15:13-15.

Listen as your leader shares
about what you learned today
and color in the drawing.



EMOJI RESPONSE

Pick an emoji from the list below to show your response to
this lesson, and share with your group!



FRIENDED

JOHN 15:15

BE MY FRIEND!

Get to know the girls in your group! Fill in the blanks below and share your answers.

1. My favorite color is _____.
2. This is my _____ year at GEMS.
3. My least favorite food is _____.
4. I have _____ brothers and sisters.
5. My favorite animal is a _____.

After your friends share, have each of them sign your *GEMS Journal* below. Learn their names so you can be a good friend to them!



A FRIEND OF GOD

God, the One who made everything, wants to be friends with you! Think about all the things you learned about God today. How can you share one of the A-to-Z Truths below with a friend?

Awesome. Beautiful.
Caring. Dependable.
Ever-Present. Faithful.
Good. Holy. I AM. Just.
Kind. Loving. Mighty.
Near. Our Only God.
Patient. Quick to Forgive.
Righteous. Strong.
Trustworthy. Unchanging.
Victorious. Wise.
eXcellent. Years for Us.
Zealous.

VERSE TO PRACTICE

Memorize this verse to learn more about what God's Son, Jesus, has done for you. Look up John 15:15 for help.

I have called you _____, for _____ that I
learned from my _____ I have made _____
to you. _____ 15:_____

Don't forget to practice your memory verse!

**I have called
you friends,
for everything
that I learned
from my Father
I have made
known to you.**

John 15:15





REAL TALK Videos

Our "Real Talk" Team is here to introduce themselves and talk about friendship! Meet the team and watch this week's "Real Talk" videos at bit.ly/FriendedRealTalkIntro and bit.ly/FriendedRealTalk1.

GOD IS...

Pick one word from our A-to-Z Who God Is List to help you focus on a trait of God this week. Draw or doodle that trait in the space below and fill in these sentences. Share with your group what you chose and why!

This week, I learned that God is _____ (A-to-Z trait).

That means He _____.



Talking Together

THE THEME for this week is that you are invited to be a friend of God!

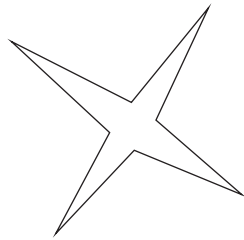
TELL your grown-up about the message in **John 15:15** and share one thing you learned about being a friend.

TRY IT yourself this week: **who do you need to invite to your GEMS Club?**

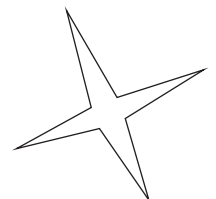
Invite that new friend to your next GEMS Club meeting!

FRIENDED

Talk about friendship with your group. As you talk about being a friend of God, color in the bubble letters below. Make sure you hang on to your *GEMS Journal* so you can look back at the end of the year!



FRIENDED



FRIENDED

JOHN 15:15

SMALL GROUP LEADER'S GUIDE
GRADES 4-6



LESSON 1

DATE OF LESSON _____

WHAT IS FRIENDED?

PURPOSE: Introduce GEMS girls and their grown-ups to this season's study: *Friended. He calls us friends!*

BIBLE VERSE: *Abraham believed God . . . and he was called God's friend* (James 2:23).

MEMORY VERSE: *I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you* (John 15:15).

SMALL GROUP SUPPLY LIST

- ☐ Lesson One *GEMS Journals* for Grades 4-6 (includes link to this lesson's "Real Talk" video)
- ☐ Small Group Welcome: One Word Answer. (No supplies needed)
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Pencils or pens, scissors, sticky notes, and crayons, *Friended* colored pencils, or markers

CRAFT SUPPLIES

- Pocket Rock
- ☐ Paint in various colors
 - ☐ Paintbrushes (one per girl)
 - ☐ Small rocks or pebbles (one per girl—about pocket-sized)
 - ☐ A-to-Z Who God Is List—download from *Friended* Online Resources or use the A-to-Z Who God Is Bookmarks they received in Large Group

SMALL GROUP WELCOME

[Time: 5 minutes]



LEADER TIP: Building relationships with your girls matters! Calling them by name (double check that **you are pronouncing** their names correctly!) **may be the most important way** to show **them you really care**. **One way** to learn their names outside of club is to pray for them by name. It's a double blessing in strengthening your relationship with God and one another!

SAY: Welcome to our Small Group! My name is _____, and I'm so excited to be your GEMS Small Group Leader this year. I can't wait to get to know each one of you better and for you to learn more about each other, too.

Some of you may be new to GEMS, while others may have been part of club for some time. Whoever you are, you're welcome here. This is a place for fun and friendship. Together, we will learn what it means to be friends of God and friends to one another. You're part of something that is called the GEMS Sisterhood. And it's even more special because you're here!

Let's get to know the friends or the sisters in this group by checking in with each other.

ONE WORD ANSWER

SUPPLIES: None

1. Have your girls go around the circle and share their name and one word to describe how they're doing. If you have time, they can take a few minutes to explain their words, if they choose. Also, make sure your girls know they can pick any word. The sillier or more random the word, the more fun this game can be!
2. Continue until each girl and leader has participated.

LEADER TIP: Always make sure each girl has a chance to share. Thank her by name and affirm each response with kindness. It lets her know she was seen and heard. Be sure you share, too!

SAY: Thank you for sharing! Whether your word was _____ or _____ (reiterate their responses), we're glad you are here. We care about you and how you're doing!

Most of all, God cares about you. The God of the universe loves you more than you can ever know. He loves you so much, He invites you to be His friend. That's incredible! Let's talk more about that together.

(Give girls their *GEMS Journals*.)

GEMS JOURNALS

[Time: 15 minutes]



Use the *GEMS Journals* to guide your conversation during Small Group time. Encourage your girls to tear off the bookmark on the second page of their *GEMS Journals* and share it with their grown-ups after Small Group time. Content contained in the *GEMS Journals* is outlined in boxes for you to review.

LEADER NOTE: Take *The Friendship Test* with your girls, and go over their results together. Are they surprised by their results? Do they think they have some work to do in the friendship arena? Continue the conversation about friendship with them, and take notes about where they are at in their understanding of friendship.

THE FRIENDSHIP TEST

Friendship matters. Are you a good friend? Take this quiz to find out! Choose the options most like you, and check your results at the end.

1. Your friend wants to tell you about a boring dream she had. You . . .
 - a. Listen and ask questions.
 - b. Listen a bit before zoning out.
 - c. Change the subject.
2. You know your friend has a concert coming up, so you . . .
 - a. Plan to go with friends so you can support her!
 - b. Remember last minute and barely make it.
 - c. Remind yourself to ask about it later.
3. You go out after school and your friend needs to borrow money. You . . .
 - a. Take care of it. You want to help!
 - b. Share a milkshake with your friend.
 - c. Hold her to an IOU until she pays you back.
4. You meet new people who could be great friends, but your lifelong friend is still hanging around. You . . .
 - a. Help her get to know your new friends, too!
 - b. Spend as much time with both as you can.
 - c. Tell your friend you need time with new people.

5. Your friend is crying about something a little silly, so you . . .
- Comfort her and give her time to let it out.
 - Offer support, but tell her it's not a big deal.
 - Tell her to get over it because it's not worth her time.

Mostly A's: Best Friends Forever

If you chose mostly A's, then you are a good friend. You are always ready to help your friends and make them feel loved. That's great!

Mostly B's: Friendship Fever

If you chose mostly B's, then you've got a case of the friendship fever. Sometimes you're there for your friends, and sometimes you're not. Whatever happens, remember a true friend loves at all times.

Mostly C's: Fair-Weather Friend

If you chose mostly C's, you might be a fair-weather friend, and are only a friend when it's convenient. But being a good friend matters. God made us to need others, and that's why we're learning about friendship this year!

LEADER NOTE: Go through the *God's Word Is Truth* section with your girls. Start by reading the verses at the top together, and then read the lesson summary below. Follow up with the response questions, and make sure your girls are coloring this section in their *GEMS Journals* while you read and talk through these questions and answers.

GOD'S WORD IS TRUTH

READ: Genesis 12:1-3, James 2:23, and John 15:15

Listen as your leader shares about what you learned today and draw or doodle in the *Friend of God* outline below.

SAV: Remember Abram? Abram was an ordinary guy who got an extraordinary call from God. God told him to go, and he went. It cost him everything, but Abram chose to follow God and go. He stepped into a new life that changed everything! And later, after God changed his name to Abraham, God gave him another name: friend. But Abraham's not the only one who gets to be a friend of God. God also wants a relationship with you! You are invited to be a friend of God, too!

LEADER NOTE: The following questions will help your girls think through the lesson and apply it to their own lives.

Q1: Reread Genesis 12:1-3. What did God call Abram? What do you know about God? What do you know about Abram? **God changed Abram's name to Abraham, and called Abram His friend! Personal responses may include that God is our Creator who loves us, and who wants us to be His friends, too. Abram listened to God and left everything behind to follow God's call.**

Q2: Imagine how it would feel to hear God say, "_____ (your name) is My friend." Would anything change for you in the way you saw yourself or treated your friends? If so, what? Good news! You don't have to imagine being God's friend. The God who created everything has invited you to be His friend! **Personal responses may include that girls would feel valued, loved, and seen. They may treat themselves and others with more love, and show more care in how they act and speak.**

Q4: Imagine you're telling a friend about your GEMS Club meeting. What would you share with your friend about what you learned today? **Personal responses.**

LEADER NOTE: Talk through the *Digging Deeper* section with your girls. Listen to their questions and provide answers if you have them. If you don't have answers, tell your girls that you'll find answers for them, or that there are some things we just don't know. Try to encourage their curiosity and make them feel heard, without minimizing their questions.

Read John 15:13-15. What are some traits of a true friendship, and how does being God's friend make you a better friend? Write your response below and talk about your answers with the group. Make sure you talk to your leader if you have questions!

[illegible]

Write John 15:15 in your own words.

Talk with your group about what you look for in a friend, and then work together to come up with a quality to go with each letter in the word “friend.”

D

LEADER NOTE: Now's your chance to emphasize the importance of memorizing verses to your girls. Memorizing God's Word matters! As you help your girls complete this memory verse activity, make sure they understand the value of what they're doing.

SAY: God loves you and cares about you and your friendships. Memorize this verse to help you always remember that you can be a friend of God!

VERSE TO REMEMBER

Memorize this verse to help you remember that you can be a friend of God! Try to fill in the blanks below from memory.

I have _____ you _____, for
 _____ that I _____
 from my _____ I have _____
 _____ to you. _____ 15:

LEADER NOTE: Cut along the bookmark line and read *The Friendship Challenge* Bookmark with your girls. Ask the girls to take their bookmark home and share it with their grown-ups and then put it in their Bible to remind them of all they've learned at GEMS.

THE FRIENDSHIP CHALLENGE

Get to know God more this week by spending time with Him. Fill in a heart below whenever you spend time with God. The almighty God cares and knows you. And friends take time for friends!

Don't forget to practice your memory verse!

I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.
 John 15:15

LEADER NOTE: Talk through the A-to-Z Who God Is List with your girls and explain any of the traits on the list that they don't understand. If they have questions you can't answer, find answers for them or tell them there are just some things about God we'll never know.

GETTING TO KNOW GOD

Choose your favorite of God's amazing traits from this A-to-Z list, and write or draw it in the space below.

Awesome. Beautiful. Caring. Dependable. Ever-Present. Faithful. Good. Holy. I AM. Just. Kind. Loving. Mighty. Near. Our Only God. Patient. Quick to Forgive. Righteous. Strong. Trustworthy. Unchanging. Victorious. Wise. eXcellent. Yearns for Us. Zealous.

LEADER NOTE: Help your girls think through their schedules and make time for God every single day. Take this opportunity to challenge yourself to do the same (if you don't already)! Give them examples of ways they can spend time with God to help them know they can do it.

MAKING TIME

Being a good friend means spending time with your friends. To help you think about how you can spend time with God, fill out the daily schedule below. How will you remember to think about Him in all you say and do? Write it in your schedule!

8am _____	Make Sure to Include:
9am _____	Breakfast
10am _____	Lunch
11am _____	Dinner
12pm _____	Sleep
1pm _____	School
2pm _____	Homework
3pm _____	Chores
4pm _____	Time with Friends
5pm _____	Time with God

6pm _____

7pm _____

8pm _____

LEADER NOTE: Talk through the bookmark with your girls and encourage them to share it with their grown-ups. This is their chance to bring the lesson home!

“REAL TALK” VIDEOS

Our “Real Talk” Team is here to introduce themselves and talk about friendship! Meet the team and watch this week’s “Real Talk” videos at bit.ly/FriendedRealTalkIntro and bit.ly/FriendedRealTalk1.

HERE AND AT HOME

HEAR: This week’s theme: you are invited to be a friend of God!

HOME: Bring home the message in **John 15:15** and share one thing you learned about God and being His friend.

HEART: Take this message to heart and spend time with God this week. What did you learn about Him?

LET’S PRAY

[Time: 5 minutes]



LEADER TIP: Prayer strengthens our relationship with God, and is one of the greatest things we can do for one another. Teach girls that to pray they don’t have to use fancy words or long sentences. All they need to do is talk and listen to God. Whether we pray aloud or silently, He hears.

SAY: Today we learned that the all-powerful Creator God invites YOU to become His friend! Talking to God is an important part of spending time with Him. You can tell Him anything! Let’s start by talking to God together now.

LEADER NOTE: Before you pray, direct the girls to the things you talked about together. What can they thank God for? Maybe it’s that He invites them to be His friend. What can they ask God for? Maybe they want to learn more about Him and how to be good friends to one another. Invite girls to pray aloud, or pray for the group. Pray your own prayer or use the one below.

PRAY: God, You are our Creator and our Rock. Thank You for caring for each one of us and inviting us to become Your friend. We’re sorry for all the ways we are not good friends to others. Help us to learn how to become friends to one another, starting with the lesson we heard together. We love You. In Jesus’ name, amen.



CRAFT

POCKET ROCK

[Time: 20 minutes]



LEADER TIP: Time required for any craft depends on how much prep work is done in advance, how many helping hands are available to the girls, and a girl's age and individual abilities. *For a quick craft overview, be sure to watch "Friended Crafts" on GEMS ReFresh. Visit gemsrefresh.org for more information.* **NOTE:** If you have the time, have girls make extras to gift to others!

SUPPLIES

- ◆ Paint in various colors
- ◆ Paintbrushes (one per girl)
- ◆ Small rocks or pebbles (one per girl—about pocket-sized)
- ◆ A-to-Z Who God Is List—download from *Friended* Online Resources or use the A-to-Z Who God Is Bookmarks they received in Large Group

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Give your girls time to read through the A-to-Z Who God Is List. **SAY** Friends get to know one another. God knows us, so let's get to know Him more by looking at words He gives us in the Bible to describe Him.
2. Give each girl a rock and paint, and encourage her to paint a word or verse from the A-to-Z Who God Is List onto her rock.
3. If girls have time, they can fill the rest of their rocks with drawings, Truth reminders, or other details.
4. Once the paint has dried, girls may put their rocks in their pockets to help them remember the Truth of who God is wherever they go.

LEADER NOTE: As the girls work on the craft, ask the Craft & Chat questions.

CRAFT & CHAT QUESTIONS



- ◆ If you could make a new friend with anyone in the world, who would you choose and why?
- ◆ What would you do if you could spend the day with your new friend? What are your favorite drinks and snacks?
- ◆ Look at the A-to-Z Who God Is List. Did you learn anything new about God from this list? What was your favorite discovery and why? **NOTE:** If time allows, take turns reading through the A-to-Z list!

(Dismiss to Large Group space for Dismissal.)



SAMPLE
DO NOT REPRODUCE

FRIENDED

JOHN 15:15

LESSON ONE ○ GRADES 4-6

THE FRIENDSHIP TEST

Friendship matters. Are you a good friend? Take this quiz to find out! Choose the options most like you, and check your results at the end.

1 Your friend wants to tell you about a boring dream she had. You . . .

- a. Listen and ask questions.
- b. Listen a bit before zoning out.
- c. Change the subject.

2 You know your friend has a concert coming up, so you . . .

- a. Plan to go with friends so you can support her!
- b. Remember last minute and barely make it.
- c. Remind yourself to ask about it later.

3 You go out after school and your friend needs to borrow money. You . . .

- a. Take care of it. You want to help!
- b. Share a milkshake with your friend.
- c. Hold her to an IOU until she pays you back.

4 You meet new people who could be great friends, but your lifelong friend is still hanging around. You . . .

- a. Help her get to know your new friends, too!
- b. Spend as much time with both as you can.
- c. Tell your friend you need time with new people.

5 Your friend is crying about something a little silly, so you . . .

- a. Comfort her and give her time to let it out.
- b. Offer support, but tell her it's not a big deal.
- c. Tell her to get over it because it's not worth her time.



MOSTLY A'S:

Best Friends Forever

If you chose mostly A's, then you are a good friend. You are always ready to help your friends and make them feel loved. That's great!

MOSTLY B'S:

Friendship Fever

If you chose mostly B's, then you've got a case of the friendship fever. Sometimes you're there for your friends, and sometimes you're not. Whatever happens, remember a true friend loves at all times.

MOSTLY C'S:

Fair-Weather Friend

If you chose mostly C's, you might be a fair-weather friend, and are only a friend when it's convenient. But being a good friend matters. God made us to need others, and that's why we're learning about friendship this year!

THE FRIENDED THEME

This year at GEMS,
you're going to learn
about what it means
for the almighty God
to invite you to be His
friend, and how
to be a "One
Another" friend!

FRIENDED.
He Calls us
FRIENDS!

Write John 15:15 in
your own words.

GOD'S WORD IS TRUTH

Read Genesis 12:1-3, James 2:23, and John 15:15. Listen as
your leader shares about what you learned today and draw or
doodle in the *Friend of God* outline below.

FRIEND
OF
GOOD

DIGGING DEEPER

Read John 15:13-15. What are some traits of a true friendship,
and how does being God's friend make you a better friend?
Write your response below and talk about your answers with
the group. Make sure you talk to your leader if you have
questions!

.....

.....

.....

.....

BEING A FRIEND

Talk with your group about what you look for in a friend, and then work together to come up with a quality to go with each letter in the word "friend."

F

R

I

E

N

D

Verse to Remember

Memorize this verse to help you remember that you can be a friend of God! Try to fill in the blanks below from memory.

I have _____ you _____, for _____

that I _____ from my _____ I have _____

_____ to you. _____ 15:_____

THE FRIENDSHIP CHALLENGE

Get to know God more this week by spending time with Him. Fill in a heart below whenever you spend time with God. The almighty God cares and knows you. And friends take time for friends!



Don't forget to practice your memory verse!

I have called
you friends, for
everything that I
learned from my
father I have made
known to you.

John 15:15





REAL TALK Videos

Our "Real Talk" Team is here to introduce themselves and talk about friendship! Meet the team and watch this week's "Real Talk" videos at bit.ly/FriendedRealTalkIntro and bit.ly/FriendedRealTalk1.



HERE AND AT HOME

HEAR:

This week's theme: you are invited to be a friend of God!

HOME:

Bring home the message in **John 15:15** and share one thing you learned about God and being His friend.

HEART:

Take this message to heart and spend time with God this week. What did you learn about Him?

GETTING TO KNOW GOD

Choose your favorite of God's amazing traits from this A-to-Z list, and write or draw it in the space below.

Awesome. Beautiful. Caring. Dependable. Ever-Present. Faithful. Good. Holy. I AM. Just. Kind. Loving. Mighty. Near. Our Only God. Patient. Quick to Forgive. Righteous. Strong. Trustworthy. Unchanging. Victorious. Wise. eXcellent. Years for Us. Zealous.

Making time

Being a good friend means spending time with your friends. To help you think about how you can spend time with God, fill out the daily schedule below. How will you remember to think about Him in all you say and do? Write it in your schedule!

8am	_____
9am	_____
10am	_____
11am	_____
12pm	_____
1pm	_____
2pm	_____
3pm	_____
4pm	_____
5pm	_____
6pm	_____
7pm	_____
8pm	_____

Make sure to include:

Breakfast
Lunch
Dinner
Sleep
School
Homework
Chores
Time with Friends
Time with God



FRIENDED

JOHN 15:15

SMALL GROUP LEADER'S GUIDE
GRADES 7-8



LESSON 1

DATE OF LESSON _____

WHAT IS FRIENDED?

PURPOSE: Introduce GEMS girls and their grown-ups to this season's study: *Friended. He calls us friends!*

BIBLE VERSE: *Abraham believed God . . . and he was called God's friend* (James 2:23).

MEMORY VERSE: *I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you* (John 15:15).

SMALL GROUP SUPPLY LIST

- ☐ Lesson One *GEMS Journals* for Grades 7-8 (includes link to this lesson's "Real Talk" video)
- ☐ Small Group Welcome: One Word Answer. (No supplies needed)
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Pencils or pens, scissors, sticky notes, and crayons, *Friended* colored pencils, or markers

CRAFT SUPPLIES

- Pocket Rock
- ☐ Paint in various colors
 - ☐ Paintbrushes (one per girl)
 - ☐ Small rocks or pebbles (one per girl—about pocket-sized)
 - ☐ A-to-Z Who God Is List—download from *Friended* Online Resources or use the A-to-Z Who God Is Bookmarks they received in Large Group

SMALL GROUP WELCOME

[Time: 5 minutes]



LEADER TIP: Building relationships with your girls matters! Calling them by name (double check that you are pronouncing their names correctly!) may be the most important way to show them you really care. One way to learn their names outside of club is to pray for them by name. It's a double blessing in strengthening your relationship with God and one another!

SAY: Welcome to our Small Group! My name is _____, and I'm so excited to be your GEMS Small Group Leader this year. I can't wait to get to know each one of you better and for you to learn more about each other, too.

Some of you may be new to GEMS, while others may have been part of club for some time. Whoever you are, you're welcome here. This is a place for fun and friendship. Together, we will learn what it means to be friends of God and friends to one another. You're part of something that is called the GEMS Sisterhood. And it's even more special because you're here!

Let's get to know the friends or the sisters in this group by checking in with each other.

ONE WORD ANSWER

SUPPLIES: None

1. Have your girls go around the circle and share their name and one word to describe how they're doing. If you have time, they can take a few minutes to explain their words, if they choose. Also, make sure your girls know they can pick any word. The sillier or more random the word, the more fun this game can be!
2. Continue until each girl and leader has participated.

LEADER TIP: Always make sure each girl has a chance to share. Thank her by name and affirm each response with kindness. It lets her know she was seen and heard. Be sure you share, too!

SAY: Thank you for sharing! Whether your word was _____ or _____ (reiterate their responses), we're glad you are here. We care about you and how you're doing!

Most of all, God cares about you. The God of the universe loves you more than you can ever know. He loves you so much, He invites you to be His friend. That's incredible! Let's talk more about that together.

(Give girls their *GEMS Journals*.)

GEMS JOURNALS

[Time: 15 minutes]



Use the *GEMS Journals* to guide your conversation during Small Group time. Encourage your girls to tear off the bookmark on the second page of their *GEMS Journals* and share it with their grown-ups after Small Group time. Content contained in the *GEMS Journals* is outlined in boxes for you to review.

LEADER NOTE: Take the *Friend or Foe?* quiz with your girls, and talk about what it means to be a good friend. Make sure you ask your girls questions about friendship that give them the space to share as much as they wish. They may feel uncomfortable sharing more personal details and might say more if they can speak more generally. Follow up with the *Speak Up* section to keep the conversation going if your girls are willing!

FRIEND OR FOE?

Being a good friend is important. Are you a good friend? Take this quiz to learn more! Choose the options most like you, and then discuss with your group.

1. Your friend is being bullied, so you quickly step in and stand up for her.
Absolutely!
Maybe.
No, probably not.
2. You have to choose between doing what you want and doing what your friend wants. You choose the thing she wants to do.
Absolutely!
Maybe.
No, probably not.
3. Your friend needs help with a situation, so you listen and get a trusted grown-up to help.
Absolutely!
Maybe.
No, probably not.
4. Your friend shares a funny but embarrassing secret with you. You want to tell, but you keep it a secret.
Absolutely!
Maybe.
No, probably not.
5. You start an inside joke with one of your friends and leave everyone else out. Who cares? They have their own jokes.
Absolutely!
Maybe.
No, probably not.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

After taking this quiz, would you say you are a good friend? Talk about it with your group. Are you surprised by your results from this quiz, or not?

SPEAK UP

Keep the conversation going! Define friendship or the qualities a good friend has. What's tough about being a good friend? What's the best part of being a good friend? Why aren't all friendships good? Think of someone in your life you could befriend. Write down that person's name.

LEADER NOTE: Go through the *God's Word Is Truth* section with your girls. Start by reading the verses at the top together, and then read the lesson summary below, which is also in the girls' *GEMS Journals*. Give your girls time to color and doodle in the next section of their *GEMS Journals* before moving on to the following response questions and possible answers.

GOD'S WORD IS TRUTH

READ: Read Genesis 12:1-3, Genesis 15:5, James 2:23, and John 15:13-15

God called Abram to follow Him, which meant leaving everything he loved behind. Abram chose to go and trusted God with his needs. God provided for Abram and gave Abram a new name, Abraham. God also called Abraham His friend!

Doodle in the word *Friend* below and think about what it means to have God invite you to be His friend.

WAIT! THERE'S MORE...

One of Abraham's descendants would come to earth to save us all: God's Son, Jesus. He is a Savior, Lord, and Friend! Through Jesus, we are invited to become friends of the almighty God.

LEADER NOTE: The following questions will help your girls think through the lesson and apply it to their own lives. Two are already in the girls' *GEMS Journals*, and the other two are bonus questions.

BONUS Q1: Reread Genesis 12:1-3. What do you know about God and Abram? What did God call Abram, and why did this name matter? **Personal responses may include that God called Abram to leave everything behind and go to the land He would show to Abram. Abram trusted God and left. God changed Abram's name to Abraham and called him His friend. Being a friend of God changes everything, and clearly changed Abraham's life. The more Abraham got to know God, the more he loved and trusted Him. God became Abraham's everything!**

Q2: Imagine the person you most admire calling you his/her friend. How would you respond?

Personal responses may include that they would be shocked, delighted, giddy, or excited. They might be nervous or worried, or they may feel loved and appreciated.

Q3: Read John 15:13-15. How does knowing you could be a friend of God change the way you act, feel, think, or speak?

Personal responses may include that they want to get to know Jesus more as Savior and Friend, and it may make them think twice before they speak, act with greater kindness, think positively of others, etc.

BONUS Q4: Imagine you're telling a friend about your GEMS Club meeting. What would you share with your friend about what you learned today? **Personal responses.**

LEADER NOTE: Talk about *The Friendened Theme* with your girls and ask if they have any questions about what it means for them. Then discuss how they chose to write John 15:15 in their own words.

THE FRIENDED THEME

This year at GEMS, you are going to learn about what it means to be invited to be friends with the almighty God, and how to be a “One Another” friend!

Friendened. He calls us friends!

Write John 15:15 in your own words.

LEADER NOTE: Ask girls to complete the *Know Your Friends* activity. How well do they know themselves? How well do they know others? Test yourself, too! Remind girls that even if they don’t know some things about themselves, there’s always more to learn.

KNOW YOUR FRIENDS

What do you know about yourself? What do you know about your friends? Take this quiz to find out!

Do you know your...

	Yes	No	Don't Know
1. Favorite Song	___	___	___
2. Strength	___	___	___
3. Least Favorite Food	___	___	___
4. Best Feature	___	___	___
5. Favorite Movie	___	___	___
6. Person You Most Admire	___	___	___
7. Goal in Life	___	___	___
8. Weakness	___	___	___
9. Go-To in Sadness	___	___	___
10. Closest Friend	___	___	___

HOW DID IT GO? Getting to know yourself is a lifelong journey. And so is getting to know God, who made you, sees you, and invites you to be His friend! He knows everything about you! In order to get to know Him and your friends, you need to spend time getting to know them better. That’s what “One Another” friends do!

LEADER NOTE: Now’s your chance to emphasize the importance of memorizing verses to your girls. Memorizing God’s Word matters! As you help your girls complete this memory verse activity, make sure they understand the value of what they’re doing.

VERSE TO PRACTICE

Practice this verse until you can say it without any help!

*I have _____ you _____, for _____
that I _____ from my _____ I have
_____ to you. _____ 15:_____*

LEADER NOTE: Cut along the bookmark line and read *The Friendship Challenge Bookmark* with your girls. Along with memorizing a Bible verse at each club meeting, challenge your group to memorize the A-to-Z Who God Is List, too. Use A-B-C blocks or letters as fun visuals, or have girls create movements to help remember each important Truth about God. Ask the girls to take their bookmark home and share it with their grown-ups and then put it in their Bibles or journals to remind them of all they’ve learned at GEMS.

THE FRIENDSHIP CHALLENGE

Being a good friend means being there for your friends. This week, be there! Connect with your friends as much as you can. For each day you reach out to someone, cross out a phone below.

Don’t forget to practice your memory verse!

*I have called you friends, for everything that I
learned from my Father I have made known to you.
John 15:15*

LEADER NOTE: Choose the best activity from our list for you to do with your Small Group, or come up with an activity of your own. Make sure your girls feel like this time is special for them, so they know how important it is for them to continue coming to GEMS as older girls.

CALLING ALL FRIENDS

Practice being a good friend, starting with your GEMS Small Group!

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Get to know the girls in your group! Ask the girls in your group some fun or funky “get to know you” questions. Make sure everyone gets the chance to answer!

OUT AND ABOUT

Get to know God together! Go for a nature walk and talk about how nature tells you about its Creator. Or, go to a busier area and talk about the people you see. What do you learn about God together?

FIND A FRIEND

Challenge your group to make some new friends. Visit a home for veterans, elderly care facility, or others in your community who may need a friend. Share God’s love together!

LEADER NOTE: Talk through the A-to-Z Who is God List with your girls and ask them if they have any questions about the traits on the list. If your girls have questions you can’t answer, let them know you’ll find answers for them, or share with them that there are some things we’ll never know about God.

SPENDING TIME WITH GOD

Look at the A-to-Z Who God Is List below. Assign each word to a day and spend time each day journaling through this list. As you go, color in each word until the list is complete!

Awesome. Beautiful. Caring. Dependable. Ever-Present. Faithful. Good. Holy. I AM. Just. Kind. Loving. Mighty. Near. Our Only God. Patient. Quick to Forgive. Righteous. Strong. Trustworthy. Unchanging. Victorious. Wise. eXcellent. Yearns for Us. Zealous.

LEADER NOTE: Chat about the bookmark with your girls and encourage them to share it with their grown-ups. This is how your girls can bring the lesson home!

“REAL TALK” VIDEOS



Our “Real Talk” Team is here to introduce themselves and talk about friendship! Meet the team and watch this week’s “Real Talk” videos at bit.ly/FriendedRealTalkIntro and bit.ly/FriendedRealTalk1.

#YOURFRIENDEDHIGHLIGHTS

(highlights from today in 260 characters or fewer)

You left knowing God invites you to be a **friend of God**. **John 15:15** taught you that God’s Son, Jesus, calls you friend! You’re challenged to pray, journal, and worship through the A-to-Z Who God Is List this week. #Friended

LET’S PRAY

[Time: 5 minutes]



LEADER TIP: Prayer strengthens our relationship with God, and is one of the greatest things we can do for one another. Teach girls that to pray they don’t have to use fancy words or long sentences. All they need to do is talk and listen to God. Whether we pray aloud or silently, He hears.

SAY: Today we learned that the all-powerful Creator God invites YOU to become His friend! Talking to God is an important part of spending time with Him. You can tell Him anything! Let’s start by talking to God together now.

LEADER NOTE: Before you pray, direct the girls to the things you talked about together. What can they thank God for? Maybe it's that He invites them to be His friend. What can they ask God for? Maybe they want to learn more about Him and how to be good friends to one another. Invite girls to pray aloud, or pray for the group. Pray your own prayer or use the one below.

PRAY: God, You are our Creator and our Rock. Thank You for caring for each one of us and inviting us to become Your friend. We're sorry for all the ways we are not good friends to others. Help us to learn how to become friends to one another, starting with the lesson we heard together. We love You. In Jesus' name, amen.



CRAFT

POCKET ROCK

[Time: 20 minutes]



LEADER TIP: Time required for any craft depends on how much prep work is done in advance, how many helping hands are available to the girls, and a girl's age and individual abilities. *For a quick craft overview, be sure to watch "Friended Crafts" on GEMS ReFresh. Visit gemsrefresh.org for more information.* **NOTE:** If you have the time, have girls make extras to gift to others!

SUPPLIES

- ◆ Paint in various colors
- ◆ Paintbrushes (one per girl)
- ◆ Small rocks or pebbles (one per girl—about pocket-sized)
- ◆ A-to-Z Who God Is List—download from *Friended Online Resources* or use the A-to-Z Who God Is Bookmarks they received in Large Group

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Give your girls time to read through the A-to-Z Who God Is List. **SAV** Friends get to know one another. **God** knows us, so let's get to know Him **more** by looking at words He gives us in the Bible to describe Him.
2. Give each girl a rock and paint, and encourage her to paint a word or verse from the A-to-Z Who God Is List onto her rock.
3. If girls have time, they can fill the rest of their rocks with drawings, Truth reminders, or other details.
4. Once the paint has dried, girls may put their rocks in their pockets to help them remember the Truth of who God is wherever they go.

LEADER NOTE: As the girls work on the craft, ask the Craft & Chat questions.

CRAFT & CHAT QUESTIONS

- ◆ If you could make a new friend with anyone in the world, who would you choose and why?
- ◆ What would you do if you could spend the day with your new friend? What are your favorite drinks and snacks?
- ◆ Look at the A-to-Z Who God Is List. Did you learn anything new about God from this list? What was your favorite discovery and why? **NOTE:** If time allows, take turns reading through the A-to-Z list!



(Dismiss to Large Group space for Dismissal.)



Use this space to reflect on your club gathering. What went well? What could be improved? Where did you see the Lord working?

SAMPLE
DO NOT REPRODUCE

PRAYER REQUESTS

FRIENDED

JOHN 15:15

LESSON ONE ○ GRADES 7-8

Friend or Foe?

Being a good friend is important. Are you a good friend? Take this quiz to learn more! Choose the options most like you, and then discuss with your group.

Your friend is being bullied, so you quickly step in and stand up for her.

- 1 Absolutely!
Maybe.
No, probably not.

You have to choose between doing what you want and doing what your friend wants. You choose the thing she wants to do.

- 2 Absolutely!
Maybe.
No, probably not.

Your friend needs help with a situation, so you listen and get a trusted grown-up to help.

- 3 Absolutely!
Maybe.
No, probably not.

Your friend shares a funny but embarrassing secret with you. You want to tell, but you keep it a secret.

- 4 Absolutely!
Maybe.
No, probably not.

You start an inside joke with one of your friends and leave everyone else out. Who cares? They have their own jokes.

- 5 Absolutely!
Maybe.
No, probably not.

What do you think?

After taking this quiz, would you say you are a good friend? Talk about it with your group. Are you surprised by your results from this quiz, or not?



Keep the conversation going! Define friendship or the qualities a good friend has.

WHAT'S TOUGH ABOUT BEING A GOOD FRIEND?

WHAT'S THE BEST PART OF BEING A GOOD FRIEND?

WHY AREN'T ALL FRIENDSHIPS GOOD?

Think of someone in your life you could befriend. Write down that person's name.

.....

the Friended theme

This year at GEMS,
you are going to learn
about what it means to
be invited to be friends
with the almighty God,
and how to be a "One
Another" friend!

**Friended.
He calls us
friends!**

Write John 15:15 in
your own words.



God's Word Is Truth

**Read Genesis 12:1-3, Genesis 15:5, James 2:23,
and John 15:13-15.**

God called Abram to follow Him, which meant leaving
everything he loved behind. Abram chose to go and trusted
God with his needs. God provided for Abram and gave
Abram a new name, Abraham. God also called Abraham
His friend!

**Doodle in the word Friend below and think about what it
means to have God invite you to be His friend.**

FRIEND

Wait! There's more...

One of Abraham's descendants would come to earth to
save us all: God's Son, Jesus. He is a Savior, Lord, and Friend!
Through Jesus, we are invited to become friends of the
almighty God.

Imagine the person you most admire calling you his/her
friend. How would you respond?

Read John 15:13-15. How does knowing you could be a
friend of God change the way you act, feel, think, or speak?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Know Your Friends

What do you know about yourself? What do you know about your friends? Take this quiz to find out!

Do You know Your...	Yes	No	Don't Know
1. Favorite Song	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Strength	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Least Favorite Food	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Best Feature	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Favorite Movie	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Person You Most Admire	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Goal in Life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Weakness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Go-to in Sadness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Closest Friend	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How did it go? Getting to know yourself is a lifelong journey. And so is getting to know God, who made you, sees you, and invites you to be His friend! He knows everything about you! In order to get to know Him and your friends, you need to spend time getting to know them better. That's what "One Another" friends do!

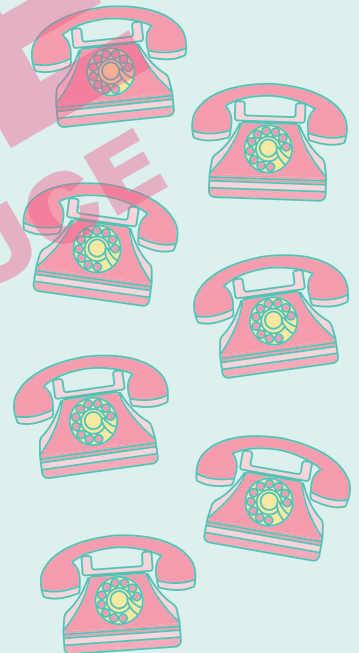
Verse to Practice

Practice this verse until you can say it without any help!

I have _____ you _____, for _____
 that I _____ from my _____ I have _____
 _____ to you. _____ 15:_____

The Friendship Challenge

Being a good friend means being there for your friends. This week, be there! Connect with your friends as much as you can. For each day you reach out to someone, cross out a phone below.



Don't forget to practice your memory verse!

**I have called
 you friends, for
 everything that
 I learned from
 my Father I have
 made known
 to you.**

John 15:15





REAL TALK Videos

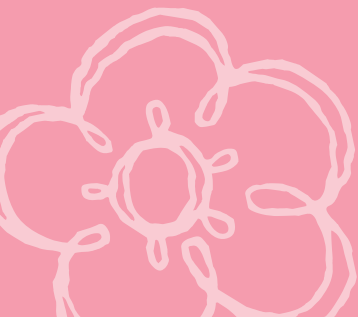
Our "Real Talk" Team is here to introduce themselves and talk about friendship! Meet the team and watch this week's "Real Talk" videos at bit.ly/FriendedRealTalkIntro and bit.ly/FriendedRealTalk1.

#YOUR FRIENDED Highlights

(highlights from today in 260 characters or fewer)

You left knowing God invites you to be a friend of God. John 15:15 taught you that God's Son, Jesus, calls you friend! You're challenged to pray, journal, and worship through the A-to-Z Who God Is List this week.

#Friended



Calling All Friends

Practice being a good friend, starting with your GEMS Small Group!

Getting to Know You

Get to know the girls in your group! Ask the girls in your group some fun or funky "get to know you" questions. Make sure everyone gets the chance to answer!

Out and About

Get to know God together! Go for a nature walk and talk about how nature tells you about its Creator. Or, go to a busier area and talk about the people you see. What do you learn about God together?

Find a Friend

Challenge your group to make some new friends. Visit a home for veterans, elderly care facility, or others in your community who may need a friend. Share God's love together!

Spending Time with God

Look at the A-to-Z Who God Is List below. Assign each word to a day and spend time each day journaling through this list. As you go, color in each word until the list is complete!

AWESOME. BEAUTIFUL. CARING.
DEPENDABLE. EVER-PRESENT.
FAITHFUL. GOOD. HOLY. I AM.
JUST. KIND. LOVING. MIGHTY. NEAR.
OUR ONLY GOD. PATIENT. QUICK
TO FORGIVE. RIGHTEOUS. STRONG.
TRUSTWORTHY. UNCHANGING.
VICTORIOUS. WISE. EXCELLENT.
YEARNS FOR US. ZEALOUS.