

YOU CAN COUNT ON ME!

7-10

BIBLE VERSES: Ruth (whole book in summary), Matthew 21:28-31, Ephesians 6:5-8, Proverbs 27:6, Galatians 6:1, Colossians 4:14, 2 Timothy 4:10, Matthew 25:23

The aim of this session is to look at what being faithful means and to see how we can be faithful to God and to friends.

LEADER'S NOTES

What does it mean to be faithful when you are in junior school? Who should you be faithful to? How should you show your faithfulness? Why should you be faithful?

Faithful means more than staying with someone; it means being loyal, trustworthy and dependable. A faithful person does the duties that they are asked to do. They don't forget to feed the guinea pig and they make sure that their homework is finished on time. They work hard whether they are being watched or not. That sort of faithfulness is something that children need to learn – they will be beginning to take on responsibilities and need to realise that doing those duties well is one of the marks of someone who follows God. It is the sort of faithfulness that Paul commands in Ephesians 6:5-8 where he tells slaves to work well for their masters, as if they are working for God. We are faithful in what we do because we do everything to God's glory, cheerfully and as best we can.

As friends we should also be faithful, and there are activities in both the getting started and response sections of this session that deal with how to be a faithful friend. Children assume that they should stick by their friends no matter what and that they should keep their secrets and go along with their schemes. But that isn't always so. Suppose a friend confides that they are being abused at home or that they are planning to run away? A faithful friend would have to pass that information on to a responsible adult. Suppose a friend takes up smoking or wants you to join in with teasing a member of the class? A faithful friend – and especially a friend who wanted to please Jesus – would have to refuse to go along with it and explain what was wrong with that behaviour. Another question that puzzles all of us, child and adult alike, is how long should we stay faithful to a friend? Sometimes we feel that we are doing all the running and the friend isn't responding, so at what point do we let the relationship drop? Should we feel guilty for not being faithful to that person or is it okay to accept that we can't stay friends with everyone forever? There is an activity that discusses these questions.

Our ultimate responsibility in life is to remain faithful to God – whatever happens! “Though He slay me, yet I shall trust in Him,” said Job. We should be faithful servants even in the face of persecution. However, this has not been specifically raised in this session as it seemed better to limit the session to looking at how to show faithfulness to other people. Our faithfulness grows out of our relationship with God, as is shown in the Ephesians passage and in the memory verse – if we are faithful in small things, God will entrust bigger things to us!

As you plan this session, pray that God will help you to be faithful as you meet the needs of your group – and pray that it will grow!

HOP HOP HOP

GAME | 🧡 **WARMING UP**

Challenge the children to a hopping competition!

Ask who thinks they can hop the length of the room and let all that think they can do it have a go. Then see if anyone can manage to hop round the circumference of the hall. If you want to make it more interesting you could always create an obstacle course that they have to hop around.

Those who don't want to hop can choose someone to cheer for.

The Point: Just for fun.

EQUIPMENT

None

DURATION: 10 MINS.

JUNK CHALLENGE

COMPETITION | 🧑 **WATCHER** | 🧡 **WARMING UP**

Put the children into groups of no more than five. Each group can help themselves to what they want from the materials that you have provided. They should make a vehicle – a car or a boat and so forth. The vehicle needs to be able to move – it should have wheels that turn or runners or something like that.

When the vehicles have been completed they should all be lined up along a masking tape start line.

One child from each team is allowed to handle the vehicle, which can be pushed gently, once. The aim is to see which team's model goes farthest on one push.

You can have a second race in which every time the vehicle stops it is allowed to be pushed again, and see whose gets to the finish line first.

The Point: Just for fun.

EQUIPMENT

Boxes, newspaper, glue, Sellotape, split pins, scissors.

DURATION: 15 MINS.

SMELLING COMPETITION.

GAME | 🗂️ **WATCHER** | 📌 **WARMING UP**

Before the session, choose between 5 and 10 things that have a distinctive smell – herbs, tuna, blackcurrant drink, coffee and so on. Put some difficult ones in as well as easy ones. For teenage groups, you could for instance choose 10 spices and see which they recognise.

Put a little of each substance into a small food bag or a plastic tub if it will leak and put each into a carrier bag so that it can't be seen. Number each bag.

The children can play either individually, in pairs or in small groups. Give each group a piece of paper and a pen. They should number 1-10 down the paper (or 1-5 if you have 5 “smells”, etc).

The children should go to each bag and smell it. They should then guess what is in the bag and write it on their paper.

If you have limited numbers of helpers and an energetic group, one of the helpers could produce a bag and each group sniff it and make their guess before the next bag is produced. This avoids any possibility of cheating.

When all the groups have finished guessing, bring the group together.

Produce the bags in turn. For each bag ask the groups what they think is inside and then show them the right answer.

The Point: Just for fun.

EQUIPMENT

Smelly things (perfume, coke, different flavours of crisps, soap, herbs, and so on), carrier bags, paper and pen for each individual or team.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

CAN'T GET RID OF ME

VISUAL AND AUDIO CLIPS | 📺 **GETTING STARTED**

Summary: All cartoon creatures have been assigned to be “relocated”. However, Donkey bumps into Shrek the ogre just as he is about to be captured. He decided that he wants to be friends with Shrek – and from this point in, no matter what Shrek goes through, Donkey is there!

Start time: 6:40 – Donkey bumps into Shrek.

End time: 12:09 – Donkey lies down outside the house.

Clip length: 5 and a half mins

Watch the clip together and talk about these points:

- Donkey wants to be Shrek's friend. Why is that?
- Does Shrek want to be donkey's friend?
- How does Shrek try to lose donkey?
- Why do you think Donkey refuses to go away?
- In real life, do you sometimes find it hard to be friends with certain people because they don't seem to want friends?
- How hard do you think you should try to be friendly with people when they don't seem to want you around?
- When is it all right to give up on someone?

The Point: Donkey won't leave Shrek. No matter how horrible or unwelcoming he is, Donkey carries on following him.

The clip raises the question, how hard should we work at trying to win people over – when should we give up on them?

EQUIPMENT

A copy of “Shrek” and the means to play it.

DURATION: 15 MINS.

HOW FAITHFUL?

QUIZ |  **WATCHER** |  **GETTING STARTED**

 [Download activity worksheet](#)

Give out copies of the attached 'Personality Quiz' and ask the children to complete it honestly working alone. This should only take a couple of minutes!

When everyone has finished explain that everyone now needs to score their own answers. Be sure that it is understood that it is not about 'getting the highest score' – it is about finding out something about yourself.

The scoring works as follows:

- 1 point for every A
- 2 points for every B
- 4 points for every C

Ask them to add up their score and write it on the bottom of their sheet. Explain that nobody has to share their result with anyone unless they want to at the end.

Explain that the results generally mean the following:

Less than 15:

You are quite happy to please yourself and let everyone else pick up the pieces! You need to be careful not to be selfish, you need to remember other people and that sometimes we need to do things for them and not just ourselves.

Try to think more about other people and think of ways that you can help them. You will have better friends if they feel that they can trust you to be there for them if need be.

Between 15 and 25:

A lot of the time you like to do what you want, but you can see the need to help other people, even if it means putting yourself out.

Being faithful means being reliable and doing the things that you have promised or been asked to do. You are beginning to be faithful in some areas. Look at the things that you can't be bothered with at the moment and see what improvements you can make.

Between 25 and 40:

You are a faithful person. When you promise to do something, you do it and you do it well. When you make a commitment you stick to it and you put your friends first.

Being a faithful friend sometimes means telling people things that they don't want to hear, and you are able to do that as well. Well done! Keep it up!

Discuss these questions together:

- What do you think it means to be a faithful person?
- Do you think it is important to be reliable in little things, or is it only important to be reliable in important things?
- How can we be faithful to our friends?
- Should we carry on being faithful to our friends if they are ignoring us?

Finish the activity by saying that faithfulness also means reliability – if we are faithful that means that we will do things as well as we can and keep our promises. People will see that we are faithful in what we do and will realise that knowing God has made us different.

The Point: To open up the subject of faithfulness. This activity begins to look at what faithfulness is and asks the children how faithful they actually are!

EQUIPMENT

A copy of the 'Personality Quiz' sheet (attached) and a pen for everyone.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

WOOL PULL

ACTIVITY | WATCHER | GETTING STARTED

One child sits on a sheet. Another child gives the seated child one end of a piece of string. He keeps hold of the other end and pulls the seated child round the room.

If the string holds, another child joins the one sitting on the sheet and is pulled around the room as well.

More children are added until the string breaks or the child pulling can't manage any more!

You could repeat the activity with different children pulling and different types of wool, rope or string to see which is strongest. (Most wool won't even manage one child!). Watch out that the children don't burn their hands – get them to wear gloves if need be.

Use the activity to start a discussion and ask:

- Why did the string break? (The load got too heavy) When you are faithful to someone it is as if an invisible piece of string links you together. Sometimes it is hard to be faithful to someone, and it feels as if the string might break. Sometimes you have to make a decision not to be faithful to that person any more for all sorts of reasons – and the string is broken.
- What does it mean to be faithful to something or someone?
- Is it always easy being faithful?
- When we want to be faithful to a friend, how much pressure should we take from them? For instance, how long do we keep trying to make up quarrels? How often do we keep inviting them to our house even though we don't get invited back? How long should we stand for it if a friend keeps being nasty to us? And so on...
- How faithful should we be to God?
- Should we carry on trusting Him even if things go wrong for us?
- Should we admit to believing in Him even if we know we will suffer for it, either by being laughed at or by being persecuted?
- Have you ever felt at 'breaking point' because you feel you have been faithful but you are being taken advantage of? What do you do then?
- Are some people naturally more faithful than others are?

Say that some people find it easy to be faithful – they are the sort of people who relate easily to other people. However, one of the fruits of the spirit is faithfulness – that is, God helps us to become more faithful and reliable as we spend more time with Him. So even if we naturally give up easily, we can become more reliable and better able to cope with people.

In the activity, the string represents our faithfulness to a task or person, and the children sitting on the sheet are the things we are faithful to. Sometimes the burden can feel too great and sometimes it actually is too great! How can we know the difference?

The Point: If we are faithful we will keep going no matter how hard it is. A faithful friend will keep visiting regularly even when the friend is going through a hard time and telling them to go away. A faithful believer will continue to believe in God even when, like Job, everything is taken away and even if they are being persecuted.

But sometimes we feel that we have reached breaking point. When is it okay to give up on someone? How much pressure should we take before we decide enough is enough? This activity raises that point.

EQUIPMENT

A sheet or towel, wool, rope or string.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

TALENTED?

BIBLE STUDY | DIGGING IN

Begin by telling the story of the talents briefly and in your own words. (Basically, a man goes on a journey but before he goes he divides his property between 3 servants. One has 5 talents, one 2 and one 1 talent. The servants who had 5 and 2 talents worked hard and doubled their money, but the one who only had one talent buried it in the ground to keep it safe. When the owner returned he rewarded the men who had doubled their money but punished the one who had just left his talent in the ground. The story is found in Matthew 25:14ff.)

Ask the children why they think Jesus told this parable - what was he getting at? Explain that the talents represent gifts and abilities that God gives us: if we are faithful, we will use those abilities in the best way we can; if we are not faithful we will pretend that we don't have any abilities and won't bother to do anything with them!

We can use our abilities in God's kingdom, or in our lives at school or at home or at work – wherever we use them, if we use them in a good way we will bring glory to God.

Ask the children if they can think of examples of “talents” that people might have and how they could use them faithfully to serve God.

Divide into small groups. Each group should make 5 big coins out of card and one picture on each to represent the talents God has given us. Then, on smaller coins, they should write ways that you could use those talents. (One way per coin.) (For instance: big coin – singing. Little coins: sing in worship band in church. Become a singer and give money to charity. Sing lullabies to help children get to sleep. Go busking to raise money for charity.)

Make a collage together of the talents people have and the ways in which they can use them.

Challenge the children to think about what talents God has given them, and whether they are being faithful in the way that they are using it for his glory.

The Point: To think about being faithful with the abilities God has given us.

EQUIPMENT

Bibles, paper and pens.

DURATION: 15 MINS.

RUTH MOVES COUNTRY

BIBLE STUDY |  **WATCHER** |  **DIGGING IN**

If you have a large group you will need to divide them into smaller groups for this activity. Each group will need some modelling clay (plasticine will do) and a large board or sheet of lining paper divided into 3 sections.

Read each section of the story to the group, and when you have finished ask them to make a model to illustrate the scene.

While they are making their models, you can raise the questions following each section with the group before going on to the next section of the story.

Section 1:

A man called Elimelech, his wife Naomi and his two sons decided to move away from Bethlehem to the land of Moab.

Soon after they arrived, Elimelech died. His wife, Naomi, stayed in Moab with her sons, who chose wives and married. The family stayed there for ten years and then both the boys died.

Naomi was upset; she felt that she was alone in a foreign land where the people didn't understand either her or her love for God. She decided that she should move back to Bethlehem where her family was. She said goodbye to her daughters-in-law, but one of them, Ruth, decided to come back to Bethlehem with Naomi.

Ask the children to make a model that illustrates this part of the story. They could, for instance, make a graveyard with three graves in it, or they could make Naomi and family walking to their new land, or Naomi and Ruth waving goodbye to the other wife.

Give them a minute or so to discuss what to make and then, when they are underway, ask these questions:

- Why is Ruth faithful to Naomi and how does she show her faithfulness?
- What does Ruth give up when she moves to Bethlehem?
- How do you think she feels?

Section 2:

When Naomi returned home she was very poor. She and Ruth lived in a small house and they hadn't even got enough food.

Ruth said to Naomi that she would go and glean in the cornfields. Gleaning meant following the people who were harvesting the corn. Anything that the harvesters dropped, the people gleaning were allowed to pick up. But gleaning was hard work, and it could be dangerous because often the people who needed to go

gleaning were quite rough. However, if they wanted to eat, Ruth had to go gleaning and so she went!

Ask the children to make a model to illustrate this part of the story. For instance, Ruth and Naomi in a small house, Ruth gleaning, and so on.

Once the children are underway, discuss these questions:

- Do you think Ruth regretted going to Bethlehem with Naomi?
- How do you think Ruth felt about going gleaning?

Section 3:

Ruth asked to glean in one of the fields and the man in charge said that she could. When she got home, Naomi told her that the man whose fields she was gleaning was one of her relatives, a man called Boaz.

All the way through the harvest, Ruth gleaned in Boaz' fields. She met Boaz and he was very kind to her. Boaz had heard all about the way Ruth and come into a foreign country to look after Naomi, and he began to fall in love with her.

Before the winter, Boaz had married Ruth, and the next year they had a son called Obed.

God had blessed Ruth for her faithfulness to Naomi!

Ask the children to make a model of the 'happy ending'. For instance, a wedding, or Ruth with the baby

Once the sculptures are underway, discuss these questions with the group:

- Boaz fell in love with Ruth largely because of her personality – she was unselfish and faithful. How did Boaz learn about Ruth?
- Are you a faithful person? How can you show that by your lifestyle?

Why does God want us to be faithful people?

The Point: Ruth is the ultimate example of faithfulness to another person. She gave up her home, her family and her country and went to live in poverty with her mother in law.

When we make a commitment to someone or something we should be faithful to that commitment.

EQUIPMENT

Modelling clay.

DURATION: 20 MINS.

TWO SONS

Read the parable of the two sons, but stop half way through verse 31, as Jesus' explanation will confuse the children.

“A man had two sons and he said to one of them, “Son, go and work in my vineyard,” and the son said “I will not,” but then he was sorry and went and worked in the vineyard.

The man said to his second son, “Son, go and work in the vineyard,” and he said, “Yes, Dad,” But he didn't go.

Which of the two faithfully did what his father asked?”

Ask the children:

- Which son did what his father wanted?
- How was he faithful to his father?
- If you want to be faithful, it isn't enough to say the right words; you have to do the right deeds!
- If Jesus had told this parable today, he probably wouldn't have used a vineyard! What might he have used instead?

Ask the children to get into groups of three and to create a modern version of the parable that they can show to the rest of the group. Give them 2 minutes to work out a quick role-play and then let them show their version of the parable to the group.

When they have shown their versions of the story, ask what this parable can teach us about being faithful to God?

(We can all listen to what God wants us to do. We can learn what God wants by listening in our group or by reading the Bible. But the faithful people are the ones who do what God has asked them!)

The Point: In the parable, one of the sons said the right thing but the other did the right thing. Our words don't count at all unless they are followed up by our actions – being faithful is something we do, not something we talk about!

EQUIPMENT

Copies of the Bible story Matthew 21:28-31

DURATION: 15 MINS.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT FAITHFULNESS

BIBLE STUDY |  DIGGING IN

Choose one or two of these passages to read with your group, and discuss the questions raised:

Ephesians 6:5-8

- When we work what should our attitude be?
- How hard should we work?
- Should we work just as hard when we are being watched as we do when we are alone?
- Why should we be faithful in what we do?
- Who do you work for at home or at school?
- How can you put this passage into practise in your life?

Proverbs 27:6 and Galatians 6:1

- What does the writer of Proverbs mean when he talks about the “wounds” you might get from a friend?
- Why might you sometimes need to say something to your friend that isn't nice to hear?
- What sort of things might your friends do that are wrong?
- If your friend is doing something you know is wrong, what should you do to help them?

Colossians 4:14 and 2 Timothy 4:10

- What does Paul say about Demas in the two passages? What has changed?
- Demas had been a faithful friend to Paul. Why had he stopped being a friend?
- Do you think Demas was still being faithful to God?
- What lessons can we learn from Demas?
- How can we make sure that we stay faithful?

The Point: To look at what the Bible says about faithfulness.

EQUIPMENT

Bibles

DURATION: 15 MINS.

TAKE IT IN

FOOD AND COOKING | 🔄 RESPONSE

Ask each child to think of something that they need to be more faithful about: it can be something simple like remembering to feed the cat regularly, or something more spiritual like being faithful about reading the Bible.

Give each child a slice of bread and ask them to cut it into a shape that represents the thing they want to be faithful in – a cat or a Bible for instance. Then they should butter the bread and spread their choice of topping onto it.

As they eat their bread they can ask God to help them to be more faithful in that particular area.

The Point: To commit to be more faithful in a certain area.

EQUIPMENT

Sliced bread, butter, toppings, knives.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

A FAITHFUL FRIEND?

DISCUSSION |  **RESPONSE**

If your group is large you may want to divide them into smaller discussion groups for this exercise, each with a leader. If not, keep the group together.

Say that God wants us to be faithful to him, but one of the ways that we demonstrate faithfulness is in the way we treat our friends. However, being faithful to a friend doesn't always mean agreeing with them! Sometimes it means disagreeing, saying they are wrong, or even getting them into trouble!

Raise these scenarios and ask the group for suggestions as to how they could be faithful to a friend in these situations:

- A friend has started smoking the occasional cigarette, but his parents don't know!
- A friend has glandular fever and is going to be away from school for a long time.
- A friend is planning to bunk off school and wants you to come as well.
- You don't like the way your friend is talking to or about a new child in your class.
- You and your friend both auditioned for the school play. You got in but your friend didn't and now they are jealous of you.
- Your friend has been grounded for two weeks.
- Your friend has bought you a present and you really don't like it!
- Your friend has a serious problem at home and doesn't know what to do about it.

Optional: You could end the activity by asking the group to pray quietly that God would help them to be a faithful friend.

The Point: To think about how we can practically be faithful to other people.

EQUIPMENT

None

DURATION: 10 MINS.

ACROSTIC POEM

CRAFT IDEAS |  **WATCHER** |  **RESPONSE**

Give out pieces of scrap paper and ask the children to write the word FAITHFUL in capital letters down the side.

Next to the “F” they should write, "Father God, help me to be faithful."

By each other letter they should think of a sentence beginning with that letter, which is something they need help to be faithful with.

Next to the “L” they can finish: "Let me be a faithful person."

They will then have an acrostic prayer/poem.

When they have worked it out in rough they can copy it onto nice paper and decorate it.

Alternatively, they might want to make up a tune for it so that they can sing or rap it to the group later on.

Let any children who want to read out or perform their acrostics to the group.

Example:

Father God; help me to be faithful.
And remember to pray to you every day.
I need to get up in time to make my own lunch.
To remember to feed my pets,
Have time to listen to people when they are upset,
Find enthusiasm so that I can do my school work the best way I can,
Understand that it's important to do everything as well as I can do it.
Let me be a faithful person!

The Point: To help the children think about ways that they can be faithful, and to ask God to help them be more faithful in everything that they do.

EQUIPMENT

Scrap paper, neat paper, pencils, felt pens.

DURATION: 15 MINS.

GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT!

MEMORY VERSE |  WATCHER |  RESPONSE

 [Download activity worksheet](#)

“Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful in little things so now I will give you bigger things!” Matthew 25:23

Give out copies of the verse (attached). Ask the children to fill in the letters of the words “bigger” and “little”.

For the word “bigger” the children should trace the letters onto paper, cut them out and stick them over the letters on their sheet.

The word “little” should be filled in like a mosaic, using bits of screwed up tissue paper glued onto the letters or licking and sticking small squares of gummed paper over the space.

Read the verse together.

The Point: To encourage young people to learn the Bible.

EQUIPMENT

The verse written out on A4 paper, with Little and Big written in bubble letters that could be coloured in. Sticky paper, scissors, glue, tissue paper and other types of paper.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

FAITHFULLY YOURS - A DRAMA ABOUT BEING FAITHFUL

DRAMA

DOWNLOAD

 [3.04Faithful.pdf](#)
