FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

Reflect: In today's story we heard about 12 of Jesus' closest friends. What is a friend? As a family list some characteristics of a true friend.

We could summarize our list by saying true friendship CARES.

C - Challenges one another to make Godly choices and decisions
A - Accepts one another - John 13:20 "Whoever accepts anyone I send accepts Me, whoever accepts Me accepts the One who sent Me." Friends reach out to others in Jesus' name with love and compassion.
R - Respects one another - 1 Peter 2:17 - "Show proper respect to everyone." Each person is uniquely created by God with a special purpose.
E - Encourages one another - Hebrews 3:13 - "encourage one another daily!", A friend encourages others - daily! This goes hand in hand with respect, as we encourage each other in living God's unique plan for us.
S - Sticks with you - Proverbs 18:24 - "...there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." - Be a forever friend - Jesus is our example!

A true friend CARES. How can we SHARE our friendship with others? Jesus told us to go and make disciples - let's look at 5 ways we can SHARE with others:

S - Show kindness Kindness may mean taking homework to a sick friend, not saying mean words when we don't agree with someone; Kindness is shown in little things like a friendly hi or a smile…even to classmates we don't know yet or have never met.
H - Honor one another! To honor a friend is to care about them at all times - not only when they invite you to a water park or share their candy. Do we show honor to one another in our words, thoughts, and action? Romans 12:10 - "Be zealous for kindness toward one another." A - Always forgive! To forgive can be hard to do when someone hurts us, but Jesus is our example and He gives us the strength to forgive. Colossians 3:13 - "Forgive one another.
R - Remember to pray together. God commands us to pray for one another because He knows it will help us become better friends in His family. Deuteronomy 4:7 - "...The Lord God is near to us when we pray to Him." God moves in relation to our prayers.
E - Encourage friends to do right! One Person can have difficulty making a right choice, but when 2 or 3 friends stand with him or her, the choice is much easier. Let's encourage our friends to make holy, Godly choices and decisions.
C - Challenges others to do right! Jesus is our example and He gives us the strength to live out our friends' challenges.
A - Accepts one another as a fellow traveler. We may have heard mean things about.

How can we SHARE our friendship with others? The Lord Jesus Christ gave us the definition of a true friend. "Greater love has no one than this; that he lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command. 16 "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. 17 And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever, 18 even to classmate we don't know yet or have never met...

Jesus is the pure example of a true friend, for He laid down His life for His "friends". What is more, anyone may become His friend by trusting in Him as their own personal Savior, being born again, and receiving new life in Him as their own personal Savior. "For this is the love of God that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. 15 For whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. 16 In this the love of God was made manifest in our hearts, that we love one another, as He commanded us. 17 And this is His commandment, that we love one another as He has loved us. 18 No man has seen God at any time. 19 The love we have for one another shows that we live in Him and He in Us. 20 This is the message which we have heard from Him and which we declare to you, that God is love. 21 And he who abides in love abide in God, and God in him. 22 Herein is love, not that we loved one another, but that He gave us His life. 23 And this is the love of God that we keep His commandments. 24 And His commandments are not burdensome. 25 For whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. 26 We love because He first loved us. 27 And if anyone says I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who loves his brother abides in the commandment of God. 28 And he who loves his brother abides in the commandment of God. 29 And he who abides in the commandment of God abides in Christ, and Christ in him. 30 Herein is love, not that we loved one another, but that He gave us His life."

Remember: Pick one of the Bible verses listed above to focus on this week.
Ideas: Write this passage down and hang it on the refrigerator. Say it together as a family during meal time each day. Write it on a chalk or white board and erase a couple of words each day until you can say it by memory.

Respond: "Dear Jesus, thank you for being our friend and a wonderful example of true friendship. Help us to be a true friend that CARES. Help us also SHARE your message of love with everyone we meet… Amen!" Adapted from a devotional by Debbie Stevens of Family Worship Center of Lansdale, PA.

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The Apostle’s Creed
I believe ___ God the Father Almighty, maker ___ heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ, His _____ son, our Lord.
Who _____ conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, _____ crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hell; the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended _______ heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; ______ thence He shall ____________ to judge the quick and the dead.
I believe _____the Holy Ghost; the Holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, _____ ressurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Lord’s Prayer
Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.