

SESSION

2

BUILDING FRIENDSHIP

▶ THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

We are familiar with business contracts and marriage covenants, but we rarely think of our friendships in terms of a covenant. It's not likely a formal agreement, but we often recognize a bond between friends that goes beyond just a shared interest or affinity. In the Book of 1 Samuel, David and Jonathan gave us an example of what such a covenant looks like.

▶ THE POINT

Strong friendships grow because of shared commitment.

▶ THE PASSAGE

1 Samuel 18:1-4; 19:4-7; 20:10-13

THE SETTING

Following David's stunning victory over Goliath, Saul promoted him and brought him into the king's court. Soon Saul gave David command of Israel's army. With each battle success, David became more of a hero in the minds of the people, becoming more popular than Saul. Saul's son, Jonathan, developed a strong friendship with David. Jonathan had already commanded the army to win two significant victories (13:1-4; 14:1-46), so David's courage likely attracted Jonathan to David.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

1 SAMUEL 18:1-4; 19:4-7; 20:10-13

¹ As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. ² And Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house. ³ Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. ⁴ And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt.

⁴ And Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, "Let not the king sin against his servant David, because he has not sinned against you, and because his deeds have brought good to you." ⁵ For he took his life in his hand and he struck down the Philistine, and the LORD worked a great salvation for all Israel. You saw it, and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood by killing David without cause?" ⁶ And Saul listened to the voice of Jonathan. Saul swore, "As the LORD lives, he shall not be put to death." ⁷ And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan reported to him all these things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as before.

¹⁰ Then David said to Jonathan, "Who will tell me if your father answers you roughly?" ¹¹ And Jonathan said to David, "Come, let us go out into the field." So they both went out into the field. ¹² And Jonathan said to David, "The LORD, the God of Israel, be witness! When I have sounded out my father, about this time tomorrow, or the third day, behold, if he is well disposed toward David, shall I not then send and disclose it to you? ¹³ But should it please my father to do you harm, the LORD do so to Jonathan and more also if I do not disclose it to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. May the LORD be with you, as he has been with my father.

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PREPARE

LEADER LIVE IT OUT

1

Building Friendship | 1 Samuel 18:1-4; 19:4-7; 20:10-13

In today's world, most of us are continually surrounded by others. But proximity doesn't necessarily mean connection. It's possible to spend time with others without being "with" them in a meaningful way. For instance, sharing meals is a great way to foster strong relational connections with family and friends. Sadly, how many times do we see families in restaurants and each member is devoting their attention to their phones instead of each other. Similarly, being where God is doesn't equate to focusing one's attentions and affections on Him.

- ▶ **Leading students well means establishing a healthy connection. But your connection with God is even more important. As you prepare to lead and love students, put yourself in the position to be not only around God, but truly "with" Him.**

Prepare: While you prepare for this session, it is critical to allow the truth of Scripture to challenge your heart. God works in our hearts as we teach others His Word.

ONE CONVERSATION™

2

Scripture: Building Friendship **Topic:** 1 Samuel 18:1-4; 19:4-7; 20:10-13

THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE: We are familiar with business contracts and marriage covenants, but we rarely think of our friendships in terms of a covenant. It's not likely a formal agreement, but we often recognize a bond between friends that goes beyond just a shared interest or affinity. In the Book of 1 Samuel, David and Jonathan gave us an example of what such a covenant looks like.

THE POINT: Strong friendships grow because of shared commitment.

- What do you enjoy most about your friendships?
- What are some practical ways to demonstrate selflessness in our friendships?
- What risks do we take when we stand up for our friends?
- How do you typically respond when a friendship becomes complicated?

Discuss the following quote: "They are rich who have true friends."¹—Thomas Fuller

1. Thomas Fuller, *Gnomologia: Adagies and Proverbs; Wise Sentences and Witty Sayings, Ancient and Modern, Foreign and British* (London: B. Barker, 1732), 215.

LIVE IT OUT: Your student has been encouraged to take practical steps to take his or her faith and Live It Out in the Personal Study Guide.

Here are some ways you can encourage your students to live out their faith with Christ personally, in community, and in their culture:

- ▶ **Christ:** Spend time with your student discussing his or her relationship with Jesus. Take time to prayer for the relationship to grow between your student and Jesus.
- ▶ **Community:** Discuss with your student ways that he or she can promote unity and love in the church and student ministry.
- ▶ **Culture:** Help your student identify lost friends that need to hear the gospel and make a plan that can be put into action.

Follow Up: Don't forget to text a picture of the **One Conversation** section to parents or post it on Facebook and tag them after the session. This will equip them for further family discussion.



ENGAGE (15 MINUTES)

THE POINT STRONG FRIENDSHIPS GROW BECAUSE OF SHARED COMMITMENT.



THE POINT

1 Engage: Begin the session with one or more of the **Engage Options** on the next page (optional).

2 Discuss: Ask students, "What do you enjoy most about your friendships?"

3 Guide: Call attention to **The Point**. Keep coming back to it throughout the session.

4 Read: Summarize the **Bible Meets Life** for your group.

5 Pray: Transition into the session by asking God to help students understand the characteristics of true, God-honoring friendships.

3

STRONG FRIENDSHIPS GROW BECAUSE OF SHARED COMMITMENT.

4 THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

FACT:

IN THE U.S. TODAY, 94% OF TEENAGERS REGULARLY USE FACEBOOK, AND 425 IS THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF "FRIENDS" FOR AMERICAN TEENS.¹

How many friends do you have? Before you answer, let's clarify. Whereas you may be tempted to quickly check your social media profiles to see exactly how many "friends" are following you, this isn't necessarily an indication of how many true friends are in your life. In our disposable, fast-food world, it's easy to breeze through life with thousands of loose connections but with very few truly meaningful relationships. And for many, though we live among masses of people, we feel lonely and isolated.

A better way to ask the question may be, how many close, personal friendships do you have? Though friendships are like fingerprints in that no two are exactly alike, there are certain qualities that characterize really good ones. What are a few of these characteristics?

In 1 Samuel, we have a front-row view of a relationship between friends who are powerfully devoted to one another. As we observe their relationship, we have a great opportunity to learn how to build meaningful friendships that last.

ENGAGE OPTIONS

LEAD WITH ACTION

Make a list of 10 or more “common interests” (plays an instrument, loves math, plays tennis, etc.). Have students search to find someone that shares at least three of their common interests apart from their group of close friends. Award a prize to the first to finish. Say, **“We should establish relationships with people outside of our normal group of friends. God can use even small similarities to bring people together for His purposes.”**

LEAD WITH ATMOSPHERE

Have students tweet images of themselves hanging out with their friends. Create a slideshow that displays some of the tweets throughout the session. Say, **“Friendship is an important part of our daily life. We’re going to explore God’s special plan for friendships.”**

LEAD WITH MEDIA

Search the Internet for “Friendship - Animated Short Film.” Play the video as you begin the session. Say, **“Friendships are special and impact the way we live. Think about how God has used your friendships to impact your life.”**

NOTE: Always make sure you preview any video clip you show students and ensure that it is appropriate for your church and ministry.

FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS

Place students in groups of three, making sure they are not with their closest friends. Have students come up with five mutual interests within their groups, and then have them share their interests with the leaders. Say, “We should establish relationships with people outside of our normal group of friends. God can use even small similarities to bring people together for His purposes.”

SECOND OPTION

Create a slideshow with images of students hanging out with their friends. Play the slideshow as students enter. Say, “Friendship is an important part of our daily life. We’re going to explore God’s special plan for friendships.”

LEADER PACK ELEMENTS

If you have the optional Leader Pack, consider one of the following:

DVD: Play the *Unit 1 Session 2 DVD* opener to introduce the session and get everyone on the same page.

Item 2: Consider using the *Building Friendship* poster to begin engaging students in the session. Ask students for qualities that are necessary for friendship and use their answers to fill in the empty blocks on the poster.



IMPART (10 MINUTES)

THE POINT STRONG FRIENDSHIPS GROW BECAUSE OF SHARED COMMITMENT.

1 **Read:** Invite a student to read the passage aloud.

2 **Ask:** Allow each of the students time to share their thoughts.

3 **Discuss:** Summarize the paragraph then discuss the prompt.

4 **Summarize:** Share your thoughts and highlight the covenant between Jonathan and David.

5 **Connect:** Emphasize the main points.

6 **Engage:** Encourage students to share via social media.



2 WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL WAYS TO DEMONSTRATE SELFLESSNESS IN OUR FRIENDSHIPS?

1 ▶ 1 SAMUEL 18:1-4

3 Chemistry. Love at first sight. Sparks fly. We're all aware that, in certain cases, there can be an instant connection between two people. We most often associate this with romantic attraction, but that's certainly not always the case.

▶ Describe a time when you "hit it off" with someone:

4 We're not exactly sure why Jonathan was so strongly drawn to David. It could have been his desire to honor God even at great risk, his diligence in carrying out the King's orders, or his humility. Either way, he saw in David the marks of a man of God and devoted himself to David in genuine friendship. He even "loved him as much as he loved himself."

As a sign of his love, Jonathan made a covenant with David—a solemn promise which is much more than a nod or a handshake. To seal this promise, Jonathan gave David his armor, a great honor in their culture. He also gave David his royal robe. Even though Jonathan was the rightful heir to Saul's throne, he humbly deferred in recognizing David as God's sovereignly ordained future king of Israel.

5 Friendship is about love, humility, service, and sacrifice, and there are many lessons we can learn from Jonathan. We should all strive to be this kind of friend.

6 *Friendship is about love, humility, service, and sacrifice. We should all strive to be this kind of friend! #rel8status*

COMMENTARY

1 SAMUEL 18:1-4

As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt. 1 SAMUEL 18:1-4

Verses 1-2. Strong friends exhibit selflessness. Immediately after the battle following David's defeat of Goliath, Saul summoned David and questioned him about his family background (1 Sam 17:57-58). Saul decided David should serve in the royal court on a permanent basis.

Apparently that conversation lasted for some time, as Saul's son, Jonathan, listened as his father interviewed David. Perhaps David's confidence and clarity impressed Jonathan, who obviously admired David for his bravery and leadership, especially since Jonathan had witnessed David's glorious defeat of Goliath.

That conversation clinched it for Jonathan, who immediately was bound to David in close friendship. More than his victory over Goliath, David's words, his faith in God, and his humility had an indelible impression on Jonathan. From this point forward, these two men would enjoy a lasting commitment as kindred spirits.

The Hebrew word literally meant "to chain or to tie together." Jonathan pledged his soul to David, which the biblical writer emphasized by stating that Jonathan loved him as much as he loved himself. The relationship between Jonathan and David surpassed the human level, for they both trusted the Lord and shared the same concerns and convictions.

Verses 3-4. Jonathan loved David, and at some point, that love inspired Jonathan to initiate a covenant with David. Though the terms were not stated, at the very least the two men pledged their friendship and absolute loyalty to one another, meaning they would always look after the needs and welfare of one another.

As Saul's oldest son, Jonathan stood in line for the throne of Israel. The Lord had already rejected Saul as king and therefore had instructed Samuel to anoint David as the next king (vv. 1-13). Jonathan sealed the covenant by removing his robe and giving it to David. "Robe" in this case denotes a royal robe worn by the crown prince. Therefore, when Jonathan gave this robe to David to wear, it equaled Jonathan renouncing his claim to the throne. Jonathan also gave to David his military tunic, his sword, his bow, and his belt, thus symbolizing that the two soldiers had indeed become knit together in a unique relationship. Together, these gifts represented Jonathan's willingness to relinquish his hopes for his father's throne, to acknowledge the Lord's choice, and to express his loyalty to David.

Tip: Spend ample time preparing to lead the session each week but focus mainly on your personal spiritual walk and allow God to use the overflow of that in your leading of the group.

Just as Jonathan laid aside his right to royalty and gave it to David, Jesus has done the same for His children. Jesus for a time laid aside His own robes of glory to come to the earth in order to die for us (Phil. 2:5-8). Jesus proved His uncommon love for us through the cross. Through the cross and His resurrection, Jesus established a covenant through which we might be clothed in His robes of righteousness.



IMPART (10 MINUTES)

THE POINT STRONG FRIENDSHIPS GROW BECAUSE OF SHARED COMMITMENT.

- 1** **Read:** Ask a student to read the passage.
- 2** **Discuss:** Introduce this section and allow two or three students to briefly respond to the question.
- 3** **Summarize:** Share your thoughts on this section.
- 4** **Do:** Ask students to read the quote and answer the question. Discuss as a group.
- 5** **Connect:** Help students connect the ideas of this passage to their lives.
- 6** **Ask:** Allow students the opportunity to share their thoughts.

1 ▶ **1 SAMUEL 19:4-7**

2 In today's technologically driven culture, we live largely in the pursuit of pleasure and entertainment. When any given interest no longer keeps us entertained, we'll discard it and move on to the next good thing.

▶ **Where do you see evidence of this in your life?**

3 Unfortunately, our friendships are not altogether different. On social media, we're quick to unfriend those who no longer interest us, not to mention those who post something with which we disagree.

However, this wasn't the case with Jonathan. David was very popular with all of Israel—except Saul. The king became wildly jealous to the point of determining to kill David. He even commanded all his servants and Jonathan to kill David. It would have been convenient for Jonathan to go along with his father's desires. But because of his love for David and his commitment to God, Jonathan refused, putting himself at risk by standing between the violent king and David.

5 Many would have responded differently, but Jonathan and David had a covenant, and they were devoted to one another. This was no casual, loosely-connected friendship. This is a picture of Christlike devotion—a love willing to lay down one's life for a friend (John 15:13).

6 **WHAT RISKS DO WE TAKE WHEN WE STAND UP FOR OUR FRIENDS?** ?

4

"Let those be thy choicest companions who have made Christ their chief companion." —Thomas Brooks

Scripture teaches that if we spend time with wise friends, we too will become wise, but if we spend time with people who aren't in line with God, we will suffer harm (Prov. 13:20). Describe a few ways your friends have influenced you to grow closer to Christ.



COMMENTARY

1 SAMUEL 19:4-7

And Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, "Let not the king sin against his servant David, because he has not sinned against you, and because his deeds have brought good to you. For he took his life in his hand and he struck down the Philistine, and the LORD worked a great salvation for all Israel. You saw it, and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood by killing David without cause?" And Saul listened to the voice of Jonathan. Saul swore, "As the LORD lives, he shall not be put to death." And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan reported to him all these things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as before. 1 SAMUEL 19:4-7

Verses 4-5. Strong friends serve as advocates for each other. Because of David's popularity with both the army and the people, Saul considered David a serious threat to his throne. Driven by his insane, paranoid jealousy, Saul plotted David's death (1 Sam. 18:10–19:1). Jonathan warned David of the assassination plot (vv. 2-3).

The true strength of Jonathan's covenant commitment came not only when he helped David with information about Saul's schemes but when he spoke well of David to his father Saul. Jonathan's actions did not come without great risk to himself, thus demonstrating the depth of his commitment to David. Jonathan modestly yet boldly pointed out to Saul the grievous wickedness involved in his conduct toward David. Jonathan delivered a needed word of correction to his father. He urged Saul to reverse his conspiracy to kill David by reminding his father about the great service David had performed. Saul knew that David had killed the Philistine. But in his twisted mind, Saul thought David had done that so he could become famous and take the throne. Saul's wicked mindset made him think he needed to kill this grasping traitor before the traitor killed him.

By pointing out that David's actions brought good to Saul, Jonathan underscored David's loyalty to Saul by attempting to bring his father back to reality. David's actions had always benefited Saul. Furthermore, Jonathan suggested to him that, when David had taken his life in his hands and killed Goliath, Saul had rejoiced just like everyone else. Jonathan pointed out the undeniable fact that Saul knew: the Lord was with David. Therefore, to act in a hostile manner, Saul would have committed a terrible evil against innocent blood by killing David for no reason.

Verses 6-7. For the moment, Jonathan's words made at least a temporary impression on Saul as he listened to Jonathan's advice. Saul heeded the voice of Jonathan and pledged not to kill David. By swearing an oath, he showed that God had genuinely touched Saul's heart. God had used Jonathan as the instrument of His work—it was not the work of Jonathan. Knowing the end of the story, Saul's promise seems hollow to us. Although Saul soon changed his mind, the promise would remain accurate. Yet it would have nothing to do with Saul because he kept trying to kill David. The heart change in Saul would last only momentarily, but God Himself would protect David from Saul's evil intent.

So Jonathan had played the major role in interceding and protecting David. Having negotiated the reconciliation, he called David and told him of his success. Jonathan then accompanied David back to Saul's royal household, where he served him as he did before. At least for a little while, Jonathan, the one who had the most to gain from David's death, had successfully stood in the gap for David, which would spare him from Saul's attacks.

Jonathan's example of loyalty provides us with a good model for our relationships with our friends. Strong friends will serve as advocates for one another.



IMPART (10 MINUTES)

THE POINT STRONG FRIENDSHIPS GROW BECAUSE OF SHARED COMMITMENT.

1 Do: Allow students time to finish the optional **Action Point** (p. 20) in the PSG.

2 Ask: Read the question aloud, then invite students to briefly respond.

3 Read: Select a student to read the passage for the group.

4 Summarize: Share your thoughts on this section, emphasizing the complications of the situation.

5 Connect: Help students understand the blessings that come from true friendships and connect biblical truths to their lives.

6 Do: Direct students to complete the **Action Point**. Discuss your answers as a group.

2 HOW DO YOU TYPICALLY RESPOND WHEN A FRIENDSHIP BECOMES COMPLICATED?

3 ▶ 1 SAMUEL 20:10-13

4 Saul was a very temperamental king, and his attitude toward David seemed to change with the wind. Even after swearing never to do him harm, Saul threw a spear at David and, when he missed, sent servants to David's house the next morning to kill him.

It would be understandable that Jonathan may have been torn between loyalty to David and submission to his father, but for Jonathan, there was no internal conflict. He loved his friend and valued their bond even above his own welfare. He made a promise to David: *If I ever hear that my father has evil intentions, I will warn you.* In return, Jonathan asked that David, once he became king, would still remember him and his family.

5 Fast forward through the lives of these friends and we can see that Jonathan was true to his word, sticking with David through many ups and downs. David, likewise, honored Jonathan and, years after his death, brought Jonathan's crippled son into his own house. The Bible says, "Mephibosheth ate at David's table just like one of the king's sons" (2 Sam. 9:11).

Friendship involves keeping promises, and we reflect Jesus' love through unwavering and selfless devotion to the friends He's given us.

6 ACTION POINT

Most people are online these days, and the average teen spends nine hours a day on social media.³ The problem with social media is that we don't always relate personally with the people we engage with online. Jesus teaches that it's important to love people in real and tangible ways.

List ways you can develop better friendships in real life:

- >
- >
- >



COMMENTARY

1 SAMUEL 20:10-13

Then David said to Jonathan, "Who will tell me if your father answers you roughly?" And Jonathan said to David, "Come, let us go out into the field." So they both went out into the field. And Jonathan said to David, "The LORD, the God of Israel, be witness! When I have sounded out my father, about this time tomorrow, or the third day, behold, if he is well disposed toward David, shall I not then send and disclose it to you? But should it please my father to do you harm, the LORD do so to Jonathan and more also if I do not disclose it to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. May the LORD be with you, as he has been with my father. 1 SAMUEL 20:10-13

Strong friends maintain and fulfill their commitment to each other. After multiple attempts on his life, David had no reason to doubt Saul's resolve to kill him. David went to Jonathan, the only person he knew who might bring about reconciliation and who might be able to tell him what he had done to arouse Saul's violent anger. At first, Jonathan insisted his father had no plans to kill David. David proposed a passive plan by which Jonathan could learn the truth. By not attending the regular monthly dinner engagement with Saul, David knew Saul would notice his absence and ask about it. If Saul responded favorably to Jonathan's explanation, it would mean Saul was at peace with David and David would have no reason to fear. If, however, Saul reacted in anger, then Jonathan would know Saul's resolve to kill David.

Verse 10. Jonathan's loyalty demanded an unbreakable friendship and a spirit of brotherly love. David further laid out the details of his plans to prove his charge against Saul to Jonathan.

Verse 11. By now Jonathan appeared to have grasped the possibility that David's claim might have merit. Rather than immediately answering David's question, Jonathan took David into the fields. If Saul truly wanted to kill David, they had to guard their conversation. They did not go to the field for a change of scenery. They went where curious eyes and finely tuned ears could not discern what they said. Should someone have overheard their conversation and reported it to Saul, Jonathan's life would have been endangered too.

Verses 12-13. Jonathan swore an oath to David, promising to report Saul's state of mind to David. He pledged his loyalty to David, promising to send word if Saul spoke favorably about David. However, if Saul intended to do harm to David, Jonathan would bring warning. To affirm his loyalty, Jonathan pronounced a curse on himself if he betrayed David. Then, amazingly and humbly, Jonathan offered a blessing upon David, a blessing that acknowledged David as the future king of Israel. In the spiritual relationship between David and Jonathan, sometimes David seemed stronger spiritually while at other times, Jonathan showed more strength. But no matter what, their bond could not be broken. Strong friends maintain and fulfill their commitment to each other no matter the severity of the circumstances.

God loves and cares for His people; therefore, He often places people in our lives who will encourage and assist us during times of difficulty. Proverbs 17:17 says, "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." Most of us know about "fair-weather" friends who abandon us when problems arise. True friends stay the course through all of life's ups and downs, no matter what the situation. When trouble comes, we find out who our true friends are.

Tip: Plan to be missional as a group. Select a project your group can adopt to help give hope to the community for the sake of the gospel.



IMPACT (10 MINUTES)

THE POINT STRONG FRIENDSHIPS GROW BECAUSE OF SHARED COMMITMENT.



LIVE IT OUT

1 Discuss: Read and discuss the quote with students.

2 Guide: The **Christ** portion of the **Live It Out** section encourages students to dig deeply into God's Word and examine their motives for serving others. Remember the **Bible Reading Plan** provides students with a custom reading plan to stay in God's Word and follows along with each session.

1 "THEY ARE RICH WHO HAVE TRUE FRIENDS."⁴
— THOMAS FULLER

2 CHRIST

All friendships have common foundational elements. How do these characterize your relationship with Jesus?

BIBLE READING PLAN

- DAY 1
PROVERBS 5:1-23
- DAY 2
PROVERBS 6:1-19
- DAY 3
PROVERBS 6:20-35
- DAY 4
PROVERBS 7:1-27
- DAY 5
PROVERBS 8:1-21
- DAY 6
PROVERBS 8:22-36
- DAY 7
PROVERBS 9:1-18

Trust
(a pattern of fulfilled promises)

Devotion
(time spent together)

Sacrifice
(a desire for the good of another)

What others would you add?



3 COMMUNITY

Community entails the idea of unity among members of a group. A strong oneness existed between Jonathan and David, and we would do well to seek the same in our churches.

➤ **What can you do this week to promote love and unity with others in your student ministry?**

4 CULTURE

Did you know Jesus prayed for you? In John 17:20-23, Jesus prayed specifically that you would live in unity with other believers, so the world would see God's glory.

➤ **Discuss with your group ways you can unify this week in order to share the gospel with your lost friends. List your best ideas and put them into action.**

3 Guide: As you guide your students through the **Community** section, remember to emphasize the importance of community with believers outside of group.

4 Guide: The **Culture** section equips students to apply this session to their lives every week. Help students see themselves and others through the lens of God's Word to develop a lifestyle of investing in others for the gospel.

5 Pray: Close in prayer asking that students would grow in their desire to be godly friends and friends of God.

6 Follow Up: This week connect with your students by texting them each morning.