

Friends

GRADE 8, UNIT 1, SESSION 2

Faith Focus: Following the example of Church leaders, we are called to welcome all those who want to join the Church.

OUTCOMES

- Express the importance of community to our lives.
- Analyze how the Church is unified through love.
- Determine the importance of spreading the Gospel message through friendship.



About the Artist Colin Bootman was born in Trinidad but moved to the United States at age seven. Reading his first comic book was a life-changing experience that led him to become an artist. He attended the School of Visual Arts in New York City and studied photography, writing, and illustration. Bootman has illustrated numerous children's books and won many awards for his work. He has also authored and illustrated two books. Bootman also enjoys teaching and presenting to students.

Art-i-facts *Friends* is an oil painting on board. Bootman shows the inspiration he gets from the vibrant colors of his native country. The beautiful ocean blues of the girls' dresses draw attention to the closeness and joy the girls share. Their circle of friendship brings to mind the Holy Trinity. Love, just like that depicted by the three girls in this painting, is what we can experience through the Holy Trinity. This love leads us to help build God's kingdom.

CATECHIST DIRECTIONS

1 Begin

Display the Art Print while completing Session 2.

Briefly introduce and discuss the Art Print, using information from About the Artist and Artifacts. Ask:

How do you think these girls feel about one another? (They are good friends.) **How can you tell?** (They are hugging and forming a circle of friendship.) **How does Jesus expect us to treat our friends and others?** (with love and care) Say: **Friends have a special bond. They love and stand up for one another. Jesus showed us that friendship is a very special kind of community. We are united to one another in friendship just as the Holy Trinity is united—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Trinity is a model for a community of love.**

Read aloud John 15:13, "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." Invite young people to reflect on the verse and the artwork. Then have them pray a silent prayer asking Jesus to show them how to share his love and friendship. Following the prayer say: **Think about the love you experience through friends, family, and other communities in your life and how you can share that with others.**

2 Connect

Distribute the Blackline Master. Read aloud the title and discuss the opening question. Say: **Think about your best friend. What qualities does your friendship have?** Allow a few minutes for young people to think about the question. Then invite volunteers to share the qualities and traits they thought of. Say: **True friendship is built on love and trust, just like our friendship with Jesus.**

Invite volunteers to read aloud the first two paragraphs of Everyone Belongs. Say: **Jesus' love for us is a model for how we should treat one another. It is a model for how the Church acts as a community. Can you think of any other common beliefs that help unify the Church?** (Accept reasonable responses.)

Read aloud the remainder of Everyone Belongs. Ask: **How might we carry on and practice the tradition the Apostles demonstrated?** (Possible answers: by doing good actions, by helping those in need, by demonstrating love for one another, by including others in our lives)

Read aloud Unity at Work. Have young people complete the activity individually. Then have small groups discuss their responses. After several minutes, allow volunteers to share responses with the entire group. List these on the board and encourage young people to practice these over the coming days.

Our Catholic Character

Say: **We are all created in the image and likeness of God. The Church teaches to love and care for the dignity of life.** Read aloud the feature. Ask young people what they can do to help promote a culture of love.

IF TIME ALLOWS

If time allows, complete one or more of the activities below.

Expression: Music

Love Holds Us Together Ask young people to listen to the lyrics as you play "Hold Us Together" or another similar song about how we are united in God's love. Ask: **How do you and your friends support one another? How are you sharing God's love through your words and actions?** Have partners share their responses to the questions and their reflections.

Time: 15 minutes
Materials: "Hold Us Together" by Matt Maher, CD player or MP3 player

Expression: Art Studio

Linked by Love Say: **Friends shows the unity and closeness of three young girls.** Ask young people to design a new symbol to show the importance of unity among friends. Allow time for young people to draw and share their designs.

Time: 20 minutes
Materials: art supplies

Name _____ Date _____

Art Print 2 shows three friends hugging and forming a circle of friendship and love. How do you show God's love to your friends, family, and others?

Everyone Belongs

As members of the Church, we are part of a larger community. Our community is built on love for one another, just as the friendship depicted in the painting is. True friendship requires love, caring, and trust. These traits are all symbolized by the hug shown in the Art Print. As Catholics, our love and friendship with Jesus is part of what unifies our Church community.

The Church is also unified through its desire for everyone to be part of God's kingdom. We are all built in the image of God. We are all given a mission by Jesus. Salvation is a gift for all of us. Because of these common beliefs, we strive to be inclusive, not exclusive, just as Jesus teaches. Everyone belongs.

Without prejudice, the Apostles brought Jesus' message to everyone. After Cornelius sought out Peter, the Holy Spirit descended upon Cornelius (Acts of the Apostles 10:44), showing that Salvation is a gift for us all. Jesus' gift to us can also be seen through loving friendships and community.

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.
Matthew 18:20

Unity At Work

We often worry about what is popular and who is part of the "in" crowd. How can we bring examples of inclusion and unity into our own lives? On a separate sheet of paper, list three ways you can be more inclusive over the next week.

Our Catholic Character

The Church teaches that human life and dignity must be protected at every age and in every stage of life. As part of this community, we are called to promote life and actively defend it. We do this by practicing love for one another, by promoting life in every situation, and by working for justice and equality.

Friends



Colin Bootman, 2001.