

Aim: To consider what makes a friend good or bad and whether my friends are leading me in the wrong way.

Print the points of good and bad friends from Quiz.pdf; pin the titles on a board and have the children pin each point under the appropriate column.

Can you think of any other good or bad points to add?

Have you ever done something just because everyone else is doing it? What?

Have you ever done something bad or something you didn't really want to do because everyone else was doing it? (Yes / No)

What are some of the reasons that you might copy what your friends are doing? (To fit in; to be liked; not to be different or weird; so you don't upset your friends etc)

Object Lesson: Show a good and a bad fruit or vegetable.

What would happen if I left this bad _____ sitting with the good one?

The mould or rot from a bad fruit or vegetable will soon spread to any good ones near it; but if you quickly remove the bad one as soon as it turns bad, then the others should last a lot longer.

Sin is a bit like mould. When a person spends all of their time with people who do the wrong thing, after a while, they often start to do the same things too. Like a person who hears certain swear words all the time, will probably start using those swear words themselves. There is a difference though: the piece of fruit can't do anything to stop the mould; but there are things that a person can choose to do to stop the sin spreading to them.

Can you guess what number one is?

Pray about it. Everyday we should talk to God and ask Him to give us the strength and the wisdom to make good choices.

The book "Great Stories for Kids V3" has a good story about how to be a good influence on your friends instead of letting them get you in trouble. It says, if your friend tells you to do something that you are worried about you should:

1. *Ask questions – find out exactly what they are doing*
2. *Name the trouble – tell them what's wrong with it*
3. *Name the consequence – what will happen if you do it and get caught*
4. *Suggest something else to do*
5. *Go and do it; invite them along, but even if they don't come, you need to go away and there's a good chance they might follow you and then you will be stopping them from making a bad choice.*

Discuss: What are some things your friends might try to get you to do and how could you use these steps?

Use the Rate My Friends form to evaluate your friends – are they good friends or bad friends?

Think about your friends and ask yourself:

- Do they lead me to do bad things and get me in trouble?
- Can I use the steps from the previous section when they make bad choices or suggestions?
- Should I spend less time with them?

Chances are, if you follow the steps from before, (ask your friends what or why they want to do something; tell them what's wrong with it and what will happen; suggest something else and then go and do it), either they will follow you and you will be influencing them to do the right thing, or after a while you'll find you don't really spend a lot of time with them anyway. Either way, you'll find that you spend more of your time with people who are making the same good choices that you are.

And remember that your best source of strength is God; get in the habit of talking to Him everyday. Tell Him everything that happened and how you feel about it; ask Him if you have problems. You might not hear Him speak the answer, but He will give you ideas, or He might use other people to give you the answer; or He might work a miracle for you. But He loves you very much and He wants good things for you.