Dear Parents,

 We all want our child to be a good friend; someone who is kind, generous, and compassionate toward others. Learning to be a good friend only happens through practice. Our children will learn to be a good friend as they experience real friendship with real people. These interactions can be messy. Our child will hurt others and others will hurt our child, but that reality shouldn’t deter us from helping our child be a great friend.

 Research shows that kids with good friendships feel better about themselves, perform better in school, and are better equipped to grow into well-adjusted adults. We know there are great benefits to having good friends and being a good friend, but HOW do we help our kids BE a good friend? Check out this video, then well look at a few practical suggestions on HOW to help your child be a good friend.

<https://vimeo.com/parentministry/review/95865873/b2a992df3a>

 Our children have personalities, and maybe you’ve found yourself saying, “My child has a BIG personality!” Expecting all these personalities to mesh harmoniously to produce precious, genuine friendships in childhood is a tall order. But there are steps we can take to help our child be a good friend.

 I’m sure you’ve listened in on conversations between your child and their friends, watched them play with others in the backyard, or at a practice. You’ve probably heard and seen things that made you cringe, and, more than likely, you also had moments that made you proud. A good beginning step is to do some coaching AFTER those keen observations. Let your child know what you saw, not in a demeaning way, just what you observed, and let them know a better way they could handle the situation next time. Or if they handled the situation perfectly, praise them for that! Those one-to-one coaching moments truly will help them be a better friend.

 The Bible gives us some incredible insight into the traits of a good friend. These are the traits we want to be developing in our children to help them be the BEST FRIEND they can be:

1. John 15:13 “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends”. A good friend is sacrificial. This doesn’t mean they let people walk all over them, but it does mean that sometimes your child plays what the other kid wants instead of what he/she always wants.
2. Proverbs 17:17 “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.” Unconditional love is the mark of a good friend, meaning your child is loyal, stays put even through conflict.
3. Proverbs 27:9 “Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of a friend springs from their heartfelt advice.” Good friends give good advice, wise counsel. This is from the overflow of a heart that seeks God.
4. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 “True friends strengthen and help one another.”

The best thing you can do is talk often with your child about the qualities of a true friend. Pray with them that God would help them be a good friend, and over time you’ll help your child become a friend “who sticks closer than a brother.”

Building Young Disciples, Pastor Sarah