

A Friend Is . . .

Do you consider yourself a loner? Probably not. Odds are you want to belong, to have friends, and to be a friend. But being friends with someone is never automatic and not always easy. Friendship means openness, persistence, give-and-take.

In the space preceding each of the statements below, write the name of a friend that this statement reminds you of. You can use the name of the same friend more than once.

_____ A friend is someone who trusts you.

_____ A friend is someone who favors you by understanding you and accepting you for who you are, and not just for what you can do.

_____ A friend is someone to whom you return the favor by offering trust, understanding, and acceptance.

_____ A friend is someone who shares some of the same values, interests, and ideas as you, but who also has his or her own unique values, interests, and ideas.

_____ A friend is someone with whom you can share dreams, secrets, and feelings, and be sure that he or she would remain loyal to you.

_____ A friend is someone you can lean on for support.

_____ A friend is someone who knows you are not perfect and who lets you be “not perfect” without feeling embarrassed.

Write your own definition of a friend.

The F-R-I-E-N-D-L-Y Way to Friendship

A friend is one to whom one may pour out all the contents of one's heart, chaff and grain together, knowing that the gentlest of hands will take and sift it, keep what is worth keeping and with a breath of kindness blow the rest away.

Arabian Proverb

Although there are many ways to make, have, and be friends, here's one way that is easy to remember and live out—the F-R-I-E-N-D-L-Y way.

Figure out whom you want to be friends with and why.

Realize that you have to accept your friend for who he or she is; you and your friend do not have to think and act exactly alike.

Introduce yourself to others. There's a friend out there just waiting to find out who you are.

Expect some ups and downs in your friendship.

Never be pushy. Pushy people are no fun. A friend needs room to have other friends.

Dare to take some risks. A friendship requires taking a chance on another person and on yourself.

Learn that no one is perfect—not you, and not your friends. Friends give each other second chances. Friends are worth it.

Yearn to do what is best for your friend. What's best for him or her is generally what's best for you, as well.

Describe one F-R-I-E-N-D-L-Y thing you can do to make a new friend or to strengthen a friendship you already have.

F R I E N D L Y

What's Friendship All About?

For each statement below, circle whether you strongly agree (SA), agree (A), feel neutral (N), disagree (D) or strongly disagree (SD). Write the reason(s) for your choice.

You should be able to expect perfection in a true friend.

SA-----A-----N-----D-----SD

It's a good idea to show that you appreciate your friend's interests, even if they aren't the same as yours.

SA-----A-----N-----D-----SD

If a friend pleases you, tell him or her.

SA-----A-----N-----D-----SD

A true friend envisions the whole you, even the unfinished parts.

SA-----A-----N-----D-----SD

You can be friends with someone even if it's only one-sided.

SA-----A-----N-----D-----SD

A friend tells you the truth when you need to hear it.

SA-----A-----N-----D-----SD

A friend should be forgiving.

SA-----A-----N-----D-----SD

Making and keeping friends is easy.

SA-----A-----N-----D-----SD

I find it easy to understand why Jesus calls me his friend.

SA-----A-----N-----D-----SD

Anyone who observed my actions on a normal day would be able to tell that I was friends with Jesus.

SA-----A-----N-----D-----SD

Money Matters

Part 1: The accumulation of wealth seems to be a favorite pastime in our society today. Read the following statements. Check those statements that you agree with.

- _____ It is impossible to be rich and honest.
- _____ The best things in life are not free; the best things cost money.
- _____ Poverty is the worst of all evils.
- _____ Money makes the world go around.
- _____ Happiness consists in having enough, but not too much.
- _____ The person who dies with the most toys wins.
- _____ This is how you spell success—“\$ucce\$\$.”
- _____ Hard work is its own reward.
- _____ Money—you can’t take it with you.
- _____ “The love of money is the root of all evils.” (1 Tm 6:10)
- _____ Be not anxious about what you have, but about what you are.” (St. Gregory the Great)
- _____ Money is not the most important thing in the world. Love is. Fortunately, I just love money.
- _____ You are poor only when you want more than you have.



Part 2: Imagine you’ve won one million dollars in a lottery. List three specific things you would do with your windfall.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Friendship Qualities

As in the word “friendship” itself, a friend is like a ship that carries us and sticks by us consistently, whether the sea of life is tranquil or turbulent. Consider the qualities of friendship below. Add one other quality that you think is important. Then, use numbers 1 through 10 to rank them, 1 being the most important, 10 being the least important.

- _____ **Honesty** Friends accept each other for who they are, not what they might want the other to be.
- _____ **Openness** Friends are truthful, share warmth, and help each other solve problems.
- _____ **Freedom** A friend is someone we choose to be and to have.
- _____ **Dynamism** Friendships shift and change.
- _____ **Loyalty** Friends stand by each other, trust each other, have faith in each other.
- _____ **Joy** Friends enjoy each other’s company and get a kick out of each other. Friends rejoice when something good befalls the other.
- _____ **Patience** Friends don’t give up on each other; friends are in a friendship for the long haul.
- _____ **Respect** Friends show deep consideration for each other.
- _____ **Genuine** A friend is sincere, never phony or fake in who he or she is and in the ways he or she treats the other.



Look back at the quality you marked number 1. Tell why.

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

No matter how corny you may think it sounds, and no matter how difficult it might be to get your head around this reality, Jesus is the best friend you will ever have. So, what sort of friend are you to him? Rate how well you're doing when it comes to keeping your friendship going strong. Respond Yes (Y), No (N), or Sometimes (S) to the following:

_____ Jesus is tops in my life.

_____ I love the Lord above everything else.

_____ I'm honest with Jesus.

_____ I can tell Jesus what's on my mind, whether it's serious or silly.

_____ I let Jesus know I care deeply about our friendship by the way I act toward others.

_____ I regularly spend quality and quantity time with my friend Jesus, for example, by celebrating his presence in the Eucharist.

_____ I let others know that Jesus and I are friends.

_____ In many ways, I say thanks for the friendship of Jesus and its many benefits.



Of the eight requests Jesus makes of his friends, which is the most difficult for you to fulfill? Why?

Discipleship, a R.I.S.K.Y. Business

It is not enough for man simply to recover right ideas about God, or to obey his will in the isolated actions of his life. No, man must be refashioned as a living whole in the image of God. His whole form, body, soul, and spirit, must once more bear that image on earth.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Disciples of Jesus . . .

Recognize that Christ is alive and present in our world, present in the lives of all the people we come across, especially in “the least of these”—those who are the outcasts, the struggling, and the suffering poor. Recognizing this, disciples always put others first.

Invoke others to share the friendship they have with Jesus. Why? Because like all good news, that friendship needs to be shared, especially with people who are friendless. Like Jesus, disciples go out of their way—out of their comfort zones—to invite others into relationship. Like Jesus, this often gets disciples into trouble with the status quo. Like Jesus, disciples are convinced that it’s worth the trouble.

Stick together—discipleship is not a solo act. Jesus knew this. That’s why he gathered disciples around him. The first Christians knew this. That’s why they became the Church—a gathering of friends, a gathering that is never an exclusive clique, but a friendship group that’s always a mixed bag, always inclusive, always open-ended, always reaching out, always sent, always on mission and supportive of one another.

Keep their eyes and ears and hearts open. Jesus’ friends and disciples actually *see*—really *notice*—others, especially those in need, and there’s a world full of folks like that! These are folks who are lost and lonely, refugees and recluses, hungry and homeless, imprisoned and impaired, shut-in and shut out.

Yearn to be noticed. That is, disciples stick out. They speak out and stand up. Because disciples notice the needs of others, they become involved in the lives of others, and thus are determined to advocate for their rights and needs. Disciples stick out as people who care about, and who are known by, people in need.



Give us, O Lord, a steadfast heart, which no unworthy affection may drag downwards; give us an unconquered heart, which no tribulation can wear out; give us an upright heart, which no unworthy purpose may tempt aside. Bestow upon us also, O Lord, Our God, understanding to know you, diligence to seek you, wisdom to find you, and a faithfulness that may finally embrace you, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

St. Thomas Aquinas