

I'm going to make a friend

Teaching guide



Darren Chetty

Sandhya Prabhat

Introduction

I'm a friend Darren Chetty made a long time ago, so I was delighted to be asked to write some resources for his and Sandhya's book. Darren and I are both old hands at philosophy for children (P4C). Picture books are wonderfully economic ways of exploring ideas. They also allow words and text to sometimes pull in different directions – just as a good philosophical question does.

Because they contain more than meets the eye the first time round, books that are intended for a younger audience can be revisited with older children, with new eyes, to explore their themes with greater maturity. So, the resources here contain a mix of questions and activities for both KS1 and KS2. Choose the ones you think are most appropriate, and with younger classes, also throw a few of the more challenging ones at your brightest sparks. Each section starts with some quick questions or an exercise that might be particularly suitable for younger readers, but may be helpful with all as an easy way in.



Quick questions

- What do you **KNOW** about the child in the book?
 - What do you **BELIEVE** about them, even if you're not sure?
 - What can you only **GUESS** at?
 - Why is it you **KNOW** some things, **BELIEVE** others, and **GUESS** at others?
 - What can you tell me about the child?
 - What would you like to ask them? (For each answer given, check with the other children to see if they know the answer.)
-
- Notice that some of you think differently about these answers.
 - Why is that?
 - Is it because of you, or is it because of something in the story?

These initial questions explore the story but also establish that your class will have different answers to the questions, and different reasons for their answers. You want them to be comfortable with, and interested in, those differences in thinking.

I'm Going to Make A Friend packs a lot of ideas into very few words. So, to help open those ideas up for discussion, here are some ways you can **read** the book, **experiments** you can do, things you can **imagine**, and some ideas for what you could **write** or **create** in response. There are also some **warm-ups** which will help to get into the kind of talking and thinking each lesson explores.



Hello, I'm new here. I'm **NOT** scared.

Quick questions

- Have you ever told yourself something to make yourself feel better?
- Can you make your face show one thing while your words show another?
- How can you tell if someone is telling the truth?

Ask the children how they think you would be feeling and why when you say these words and pull the opposite face.

- I'm very happy.
- Oh, I'm so sad.
- No, I'm not cross.

Read

Look at the character's face without the words.

- Are they scared?
- Would you believe the picture or the words?
- Why would they tell themselves they are not scared, even though they are?
- Do you think they are lying to themselves?

Experiment

Try lying to yourself. Think of something that isn't true and say it to yourself like you mean it.

- Did you believe yourself? Why/why not?
- Have you ever lied to yourself and believed what you told yourself?
- Do you think people can lie to themselves? Why would they do that?

Imagine

Imagine someone believes they are going to lose a sporting match. The opponent is too good, and they're not feeling their best. But they say to themselves, "I'm going to win!"

- If they lose, were they lying when they said that?
- What if they win?



Write

Poems that mix the wildly imaginative with things that are a little closer to reality can have a real power to them.

Ten Things that Are Absolutely True, Honest

My great-great-great-great-grandmother... was a princess.
I like strawberries... with tomato sauce.
I am always right.

My dad is bigger than all your dads put together.
I used to be... a table.
I am always happy.

Don't you just love it when it doesn't snow after all and you still get to come into school?
I can do a handstand and be the right way up at the same time.
I always know what I'm doing.

Quick question:

- How do you know that each of these things isn't true?

Some are just very unlikely. Some are untrue because they are physically impossible, even if we can imagine them. There's also some irony and some downright logical impossibility in there, along with some of the untruths we might try to convey to the world, especially as teachers.

Write your own poem with some absolute super-whopper-fibs in it, a mix of exaggerations, nonsense, impossibilities. But add a few lines that are the sort of fibs we sometimes tell ourselves, or things we'd like to believe or like to be true, but we know are not. The true lines probably work well at the end of verses – but I don't really know, I haven't seen YOUR poem.



Everyone says I'll make new friends . . . but how **loooong** does it take?

Most accessible questions

If someone [fill with options below] are they your friend? Why? Why not?

...is in the same school as you...
...says hello to you...
...knows your name...
...plays one game with you...
...plays games with you every day at school...
...gets invited to play at your home...

Quick questions

- Can someone be your friend after just one game?
- How long does it take to make a friend?
- How do you know someone is your friend?

Warm-up

Warm Up Game - "As X As You Can"

With everyone in a circle, give the instruction to be "as dog as you can," "as cat as you can," "as elephant as you can," "as scared/dinosaur/table/stone/goblin/cloud/Ancient Roman/friendship/equality as you can," etc. By starting with animals and moving towards things that take more thought, you build up the challenge gradually. Everyone is playing the game simultaneously, so while it takes some boldness to join in, nobody is the focus of everyone's attention, so it is not too exposing.

Read

Look at each of the characters on this double-page spread in turn, starting with the background characters and finishing with the main character (don't forget the cat!).

Get everyone in the class to copy the physical and facial expression of each character.

- How would you be feeling if your body and face were like that?
- Say out loud what that character might be thinking.



An extension to this is to have children in small groups embody one character each, and voice what they might think as they look at each of the other characters.

Imagine

This is a story about an imaginary you. Put your hand up when you think the “you” in the story has made a friend.

You move house and go to a new school. Your teacher tells you to sit next to Alex and asks Alex to look after you. At breaktime, Alex shows you around the playground and field. At lunchtime, Alex asks you if you’d like to play a game with them and their friends. At the weekend, you’re at the local park with an adult and bump into Alex and their family. You go off to play while the adults chat. One lunchtime you and Alex are eating at the same table. You find out you have the same favourite TV programme and spend some time chatting about that after you’ve eaten. Your teacher asks if you’ve made any friends yet. You say, “Yes, Alex.” There’s an end-of-year trip. Everyone is asked to give the names of two people they’d like to share a room with. You and Alex both choose each other.

After the experiment, have the children in pairs share when they thought they had made a friend, and why, and take that forward into a class discussion.

Write

How would the story show the friendship ending? See if you can write it so that it builds up gradually, so people would have different opinions about quite when the friendship ends.



Perhaps I have to wait for them to see me.

Quick questions

- What does it mean to “see” someone?
- What does it feel like to be “seen”?
- How can we make sure nobody feels left out?
- What does it feel like if somebody doesn’t want to be friends?
- What does it feel like when somebody wants to be your friend?
- What can you do to make friends?

Experiment

Stand in a circle. Look at the floor.

The teacher says, “1, 2, 3... Look!”

On “Look!”, look across the circle at someone – you just look up in a direction and see who’s there.

If they’re looking at you at the same time, say “Yay!”

If they’re not, say “Oh.”

Keep on repeating – but don’t always look at the same person!

Afterwards, how did it feel when you were looking at each other compared to when you weren’t?

- How many people (at a rough guess) have gone past your eyes today?
- Is someone passing in front of your eyes enough for you to “see” them?
- How many people (at a rough guess) have you seen today?
- How do you have to see someone for it to be possible for them to become your friend?

Alternative for older children

Warm-ups

Yes, and (building on one another’s ideas)

In pairs, one person makes a suggestion for something to do. Their partner builds enthusiastically on their suggestion by saying, “Yes, and...” and so it continues, for example:

“Let’s go to the beach!”

“Yes, and let’s build a sandcastle!”

“Yes, and let’s make it big enough to use as a hotel!”

“Yes, and let’s use the money we make to start a chain of sand hotels!”



Yes, but (enjoying disagreement)

“Yes, but...” works in the same way except that the second person keeps rejecting the idea, and the first person persists in arguing for it. It’s best to demonstrate Yes, and... first.

“Let’s go to the beach!”

“Yes, but I don’t like swimming.”

“Yes, but you can sit on the beach!”

“Yes, but I’d get bored.”

“Yes, but you could read a book.”

Imagine

In pairs, one of you is the main character from the book, the other is a friend you had in the place they lived before.

Your grown-ups have arranged a video call between you.

If you’re the friend, you’re going to try and cheer the main character up with ideas for how to make friends and why they’ll make a friend soon.

If you’re the main character, you are really fed up and keep coming up with reasons for why your friend’s ideas won’t work.

Once you’ve let this run for a while, tell them to spin round on the spot three times. They’re now back to being their real selves. Remembering the conversation between the characters, who do they feel was closer to being right, and why.

Write

- Write a letter of advice to the main character about making friends at a new school.



I feel like I've been waiting here **forever**.

Quick questions

- When does time feel slow?
- When does time feel fast?
- How do you feel time?
- How do you feel when you're really, really bored?
- How do you feel when you're really, really excited?
- When does it feel like something is taking a very, very, very long time?

Experiment

Get the class to close their eyes. Say you're going to put on a stopwatch, and they should raise their hands when they think exactly a minute has gone by. Notice who is closest, and then let the stopwatch run on. Stop it when everyone has guessed or you get bored of the quiet!

Note that time too and restart the stopwatch when you start talking.

Tell them who was closest, and how much time had passed when you stopped the guessing.

Then, here are some questions you can start to discuss:

- How did you guess? Were you counting something, or noticing something?
- How do you feel time going by?
- Did it feel like a long time?
- When the stopwatch gets to the right time, say "We've been talking for X seconds now, the same amount of time as you were sitting with your eyes closed. Which felt longer – the sitting quietly or the talking?"
- What makes time feel like it's going faster or slower?
- Is time in our heads, or in clocks and watches, or somewhere else?

Theme: forever

- Why do we say forever when we don't mean it?
- Can anything last forever?
- What would you like to last forever?
- Should anything last forever?
- Does anything come after forever?



Imagine

Imagine a world where absolutely nothing was happening.
Would time still be passing?

Write

Spend some time trying to write something that will make the reader feel like time is going slowly, and the same time write something to make it feel like time is going really quickly.



I'm **really** good at making things.
So I'm going to make a **friend!**

Quick questions

Imagine the bestest friend you could ever have.

- What would you do with this bestest friend?
- What would be the best best game to play with your best best friend?
- What would be the best thing about your best best friend?
- What would your perfect friend like to do?
- What games would you play?
- Would a perfect friend get boring?

Talk

In pairs, go backwards and forwards coming up with answers to these questions:

- What would you and your ideal friend do together?
- What might be some of the things your ideal friend would say?
- What would they think?
- What would they feel?

Create

Now create a picture on a big sheet of paper. In the middle, draw a big cartoon version of your ideal friend.

Around the outside, quick cartoons of things you'd like to do with your friend.

Add speech bubbles with the things you'd want your friend to say.

In their head, write the things you'd hope they would think.

Near their heart, write the things you'd like them to feel.



Imagine

It's the year 2055 and you have a child who is just the age you are now, and like the child in the story, you've just moved house and they are feeling rather sad without their old friends.

But in 2055, there's a solution. If you've ever been to one of the biggest shopping centres, you might have seen a "Build-A-Bear" workshop where you make a teddy bear and get to take it home. Well, in 2055, they've gone one better. There's a "Build-A-Buddy" workshop in every big shopping centre. Here's some of their advertising:

Ever felt lonely?

Ever wanted a special friend who is always there for you?

Someone who knows everything you like, and likes everything about you?

Someone who makes you feel better, no matter what's happened or what you've done?

Choose from our huge range of human-like robots. Pick a personality, voice, interests, sense of humour, attitude towards farts – everything you need to build the buddy you've always wanted!

Your Build-A-Buddy can grow up with you (six-monthly body adjustments not included in purchase price).

And your Build-A-Buddy will always be there for you, waiting to play the games you love. Or to teach you some new games. Whatever you asked for! Your Build-A-Buddy will be EXACTLY the friend you wanted. After all, you built them!

Could your Build-A-Buddy be a friend? If not, why not?



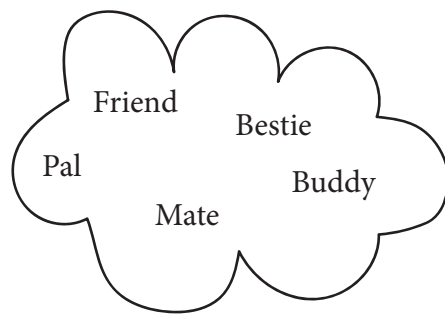
What **kind** of friend will I make?

Quick questions

- Can you have more than one kind of friend?
- How are your friends different to each other?
- What makes someone a good friend?

Talk

In pairs, go backwards and forwards coming up with answers to these questions:
What would you and your ideal friend do together?



Do all these mean the same or are there differences?
What other words that are similar to “friend” can you think of?

Questions for pairs

You can pick and choose between the questions in the list on the next page. They all feed into the final question which you can explore as a whole group – “What kinds of friends are there?”

Tip: It's good to change partners for each question to give a new impetus to the talk. You can do this with the class in two lines facing each other, with the person at the top of one line going to the bottom end after each question, and everyone shuffling up to speak to a new partner. Or for older children, use a...

Question wheel:

Get the class to stand round you in a circle. Pair up, one person in each pair puts their hand up, hands-up people take a step towards you and turn to face their partner. You now have an outside and an inside circle, and between questions, people on the outside can move round one space clockwise to find a new partner.

When thinking about these questions, you could think about your own friendships and the friendships of family or other people you know.



- Can you be friends with your family?
- Can you be friends with your enemies?
- Can you be friends with someone you don't like?
- What's most important – a friend being honest, kind, or laughing at the same stuff as you?
- What different ways could you meet a friend?
- What different ways could two friends help each other?
- What different interests could friends share?
- Can any two people be friends with each other?
- Can you be friends with an animal?
- Can two animals be friends? How can you tell?

Finish with: “What different kinds of friends could you have?” and carry that into a whole class discussion.

Tip: A great way to extend this activity with older children is to get them to make a “tree of friendship,” a taxonomy rather like the “tree of life” in which all living things have a place. This comes out differently with every group – sometimes it's based on how friendships form... the friends you make through your parents, versus more chosen friendships, for example, sometimes on the importance of different friendships, but all sorts of classifications are possible.

A philosopher's take

Aristotle thought there were three types of friendship.

1. Friendships of utility (usefulness) – friendships where you each got something out of the relationship that was useful to you, and that are based on what you can do for one another.
2. Friendships of interest – where you both enjoy the same activity or meeting place, and have a friendship built around that.
3. Friendships of character – where you are friends with someone because you each value the sort of person the other is. You might both be brave and kind, or you might value a friend's kindness while they value your cheerfulness.

Aristotle thought friendships of character were the most important and lasted the longest, and that friendships based on usefulness were the least important and could disappear quickly.

What do you think about what he thought? What are the best sorts of friendships?

Can people who are very unequal to one another still be friends?

Research

Ask their adults who their friends are and what different types of friends they have.



Will they have **other** friends? Or like **me** most of all?

Quick questions

- Would you rather have a friend whose only friend was you, or a friend who had lots of friends?
- Would a friend who liked you most of all be your best friend?
- Could your best friend have a different best friend to you?
- If your best friend got a new friend, would you be happy or sad?
- Do you like all your friends the same?
- What would make a friend like you most of all?

Stimulus story

Frizz and Shine were friends.
Someone walked up to Frizz and Shine and asked Shine,
“Will you be my friend?”
“No thanks,” said Frizz. “Shine already has a friend.”
Someone walked away.
“I might have liked another friend,” said Shine. “Then I would have had two.”
“Yes,” said Frizz. “But I would only have a half.”

In groups of four, two of you are Frizz, two of you are Shine. In each pair, one of you says what the character is thinking inside, and the other says what they say out loud. Keep the dialogue going.

Imagine Someone and Shine *did* become friends. What would happen for Frizz to be right?

What would happen for Frizz to be wrong?



Will they play how I want to play? Or have their **OWN** ideas?

Quick questions

- Is it more fun to choose what you play, or to let a friend choose?
- Do you and your friends always agree about what to play?
- What good ideas for playing have you had?
- What good ideas for playing have your friends had?
- If you could put yourself through a copying machine and make an exact copy of yourself, would you make a good friend to yourself?
- Do you like your friends because they are like you?
- Do you like your friends because they like you?

Put these two phrases at opposite ends of a physical space.

Birds of a feather flock together.

Opposites attract.

Explain what they mean.

- Which do you agree with more? (Talk in pairs.)
- Ask the class to stand by the one they agree with more. A few are likely to break the rules and stand in the middle. Share your reasons with those around you. (Talk in groups).
- Share reasons with the whole class. By talking about the same question in smaller groups, then presenting back to the class, it's easier for the less confident speakers to participate.

Tip: If you did the “Build-a-Buddy” session, you could refer back to that and ask if they would build a buddy who was more like them, or one who was more different.

A philosopher's take

Aristotle again. He also thought it was impossible for two people to truly be friends if they were not fairly equal to one another. So, masters and servants (or slaves in his day), rich and poor, adults and children couldn't be friends in his view. He thought that true friendships had to be the same both ways – you couldn't have one friend who was dependent on the other, or who would be embarrassed by not being able to afford to be as generous.



CRASH!

Should they **hug** me when I'm sad?
Or . . . perhaps I can offer them a **hug**
and **ask** if they are OK?

Quick questions

- What helps you feel better when you're sad?
- What things help other people when they're sad?
- How do you like to help other people when they're sad?

Do a "vote with your feet" on what you prefer if you're upset, standing at one end of the area. If you usually prefer someone to give you a hug, and the other if you prefer to have some space. Then share reasons in pairs with those around you, and move to whole class talk.

You might find there's a gendered response to this question. If there is, that can itself be an interesting question to explore. If more boys are opting for "give me space," is that how they really feel, or how they feel they should feel?

For young children, it can be helpful in this activity to break it down – start by all going to the "hug" side and think about what's good about that, then to the "give me space" side.

The deeper idea here is a real biggie – the notion that doing the right thing is about treating others as you would like to be treated... or is it?

Put this statement on the board:

"Do for others what you would like them to do for you."

Now put it into question – do they agree? Why?

Put up a second statement underneath:

"Don't do for others what you would like them to do for you. They might not like the same things."

How about that? Which do they agree with more? When is each one right? Share reasons with the whole class. By talking about the same question in three smaller groups, it's easier for the less confident speakers to participate.



Together, we might be able to put back the pieces

Quick questions

- What happens when friends have a fight or get cross?
- Can you be friends again after a fight?
- What can you do to be friends again?
- What happens when friends argue?
- Can you fix a friendship?
- How do you fix a friendship?

Talk

- What's the difference between two friends arguing and two people arguing who are not friends?
- How do you know you have moved on from an argument?
- How can a friendship be broken?
- How do you put back the pieces if a friendship has been broken?
- When shouldn't you put back the pieces of a friendship?



And **build** and **play**, until . . . we've **all** made a **friend**!

Quick questions

- What helps you make a friend?
- What makes it hard to make a friend?
- What do friends need to be good friends?
- Is there a secret to making friends?
- What stops people making friends?
- What are friendships made of?

Puppetry

It's time to make some friends, this time of the puppet kind!

You can opt for the traditional sock puppet, for which video guides abound. But it's much easier in every way to buy:

- A bag of plastic or disposable wooden spoons (two per puppet)
- Tissue paper of varying colours (three squares per puppet, about 30 cm square)
- Rubber bands (one per puppet)
- Thin ribbon, about 1 cm wide

Method

1. Scrunch up one piece of paper into a ball to form the head. Stick it to the bowl of the spoon with craft glue.
2. Place one square over the other to make a star shape, then place the head of the puppet in the centre. Pull the tissue paper over the head to form a sort of cloak, and secure it with the rubber band.
3. Poke a length of ribbon, about the length of the spoon, under the rubber band.
4. Stick the narrow end of the other spoon to the other end of the ribbon. This becomes the hand of the puppet, allowing a much wider range of gestures than a sock puppet.

It's good for the adults in the room to make their own puppets too, so that they can interact puppet-to-puppet – get your puppeteers warmed up with these exercises (having first established that these puppets never fight each other due to their propensity to fall apart!):



Make your puppet open the door to their house, walk up some imaginary stairs, pull back the bedclothes, and fall asleep, breathing deeply.

Make your puppet show these emotions:
Scared, happy, confused, cross, sad, friendly

Meet another puppet. See what voice your puppet has. Is it the same as your voice, or different?

Introduce your puppet to another puppet. The puppets tell each other about themselves. How old are they? What do they enjoy doing?

Now that their puppets have developed a bit of a character, go through some scenes:

1. Making friends. Try to make friends with another puppet. What do they talk about? What do they do? This time, it works.
2. Not making friends. Try to make friends with another puppet. This time, it doesn't go so well.
3. Maybe, maybe not. See what happens.
4. Two friends falling out. You could go back to the friend from scene 1.
5. Two friends making up.

After the puppetry, you can ask these questions:

- How similar were they to their puppets?
- Did their puppets have any good ideas about friendships?
- Where did their puppets go wrong in their friendships?
- Was there anything that made it easier for their puppets to make friends than in real life?
- Why isn't real life like that? Could it be?

If your class enjoy this, you might make the creation of more elaborate puppets the subject of an art project. The best resources for this are a big, random assortment of boxes and packing material – cereal boxes, corrugated cardboard, egg boxes, all the space-filling inserts (whether cardboard or bubble wrap), assorted rags... A few bits of tissue paper can add some colour, but “proper” art supplies are best avoided as you get a much more diverse set of puppets with a wider range of material.

A word of warning – it's easy, even as an adult, to get rather excessively attached to a puppet. You don't just play with a puppet; it plays with you. I have a glove puppet I picked up on holiday that has a possum-fur tail and putting it on is like being possessed by a right-wing Australian with an axe to grind. So, establish in advance that all puppets will remember how easily broken they are and avoid fighting!

