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■ Physical

Learning intention To describe and give reasons why friendships break down, how they can be repaired and strengthened.

Introduction and content

Life can be a series of ups and downs and relationships are always in need of building or rebuilding. The Christian word for this process is 'reconciliation' from the Latin word *conciliare* meaning 'calling together'. We always need to go into better relationships with God and each other.

Some reasons why friendships break down are: a breaking of trust, lack of honesty, bullying, being made unhappy, made to feel uncomfortable and violence which is never right. Bullying can be through actions, words, and things that others say through social media and on the internet (Cyber-bullying).

Friendships can be repaired and strengthened through seeking advice, recognising who to trust and who not to trust and discerning whether the friendship is life-enhancing or making us unhappy or uncomfortable. If any friendship makes us feel unsafe, we should find someone to talk to who will listen to our concerns.

This could be a family member, someone at school or someone from an outside agency. Children should be made aware that if they are not listened to the first time then they should ensure that they talk to somebody else who will listen and help.

Truly great friends are hard to find, difficult to leave, and impossible to forget.

Unknown

When we praise someone else, it is like God creating, we are breathing life into that person, breathing spirit into them.

Ronald Rolheiser, OM

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Questions to consider

- 1) What things trigger disagreements between friends and within friendship groups?
- 2) How do these make people feel?
- 3) What might be the best way to resolve conflict in friendships?
- 4) Healthy friendships make people feel included; how should we react if we or others feel lonely or excluded? What strategies could be used to ensure that they are included?
- 5) Why is violence never the answer?