

Friends Who Make a Way

Ages 10–12 • Romans 12:10



A preteen session on the four friends who carried their friend to Jesus and made a way through the roof. It includes a lesson, a memory verse, a Raise the Roof craft about removing barriers, a stretcher team challenge, verse cards, a family note, and a 7-day Make-a-Way challenge.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- 1 **Leader page**
- 2 **Lesson: Through the Roof**
- 3 **Memory verse**
- 4 **Craft: Raise the Roof**
- 5 **Raise the Roof template**
- 6 **Team challenge: Make a Way**
- 7 **Verse cards + family note**
- 8 **7-day Make-a-Way challenge**

FOR LEADERS

Before you teach

Preteens care about loyalty, friendship, and fairness. This story shows friends who wouldn't let anything stop them from bringing their friend to Jesus, and it asks: what barriers keep people from belonging at church today?

3.21

World Down Syndrome Day is March 21. It stands for **three** copies of chromosome **21**.

47

Most people have 46 chromosomes. People with Down syndrome have 47. It happens naturally, in every kind of family.

Socks!

People around the world wear fun, mismatched socks on 3.21 to celebrate that different is good.

SESSION AT A GLANCE (ABOUT 55 MINUTES)

Welcome	Sock check + “would you rather” warm-up. (5 min)
Lesson	Mark 2:1-12: through the roof. (15 min)
Verse	Romans 12:10. (5 min)
Craft	Raise the Roof. (12 min)
Challenge	Make a Way stretcher challenge. (12 min)
Pray & go	Prayer, verse card, and 7-day challenge. (5 min)

WELCOMING EVERY CHILD

- Talk with parents ahead of time: what helps their child thrive? Any sensory, communication, or mobility needs?
- Offer a buddy (a trained teen or adult) to any child who'd benefit. Buddies are friends, not babysitters.
- Use visuals: a picture schedule, the verse with pictures, and show-then-tell instructions.
- Keep a calm corner with fidgets and headphones. Taking a break is always okay.
- Give every child a real role: handing out supplies, holding the Bible, leading a motion.
- Never single out a child with Down syndrome as the example. Today is about how God made **all of us**.

THE BIG IDEA

Real friends make a way so everyone can belong.

The four friends didn't let a crowd or a roof stop them. We can be friends who notice barriers and remove them, so that everyone, including people with Down syndrome, has a real place in God's family.

ROCK YOUR SOCKS SUNDAY

Invite the whole church, kids, and leaders to wear fun, mismatched socks the Sunday closest to 3.21. **March 21, 2027 is itself a Sunday**, a perfect fit! Snap a feet photo (with permission) and share it with **#Celebrate321**.

Scripture quotations are from the Berean Standard Bible (BSB), public domain. Swap in your church's preferred translation anytime.



Through the Roof

Four friends carry a man who couldn't walk to Jesus. When the crowd blocks the door, they make a way through the roof.

15 MIN

LARGE GROUP OR SMALL GROUPS

BIBLE • WHITEBOARD

TEACH IT

1

Picture it

Read Mark 2:1-5.

SAY

The house is packed. There's no room, not even at the door. What would YOU have done?

2

The friends' choice

Highlight verse 4.

SAY

They didn't give up. They climbed up, dug through the roof, and lowered their friend down right in front of Jesus. That's commitment!

3

Jesus notices

Read verse 5.

SAY

Jesus saw THEIR faith. The friends mattered to the story. So did the man. Jesus welcomed him and spoke to him as "Son."

4

Barriers today

On the whiteboard, list barriers that keep people from belonging: stairs, loud rooms, nobody saying hi, people staring, assumptions, not being invited.

SAY

The crowd wasn't trying to be mean. They just didn't make room. Sometimes we do that without realizing it.

5

Make a way

Brainstorm how students can remove barriers at church and school.

SAY

People with Down syndrome and other disabilities belong in God's family. We can be the friends who make room, invite, sit with, and include.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Mark 2:1-12

Have a student read Mark 2:1-5 aloud. Ask the group to picture the scene: packed house, no way in.

TALK ABOUT IT

1. Why do you think the friends worked so hard?
2. What "crowds" or barriers keep people from belonging today?
3. Who might feel left out at our church? How could we make a way?
4. What does it look like to be a friend, not just a helper?

LEADER NOTE

This is a healing story, but keep the focus on the **friends** and on Jesus' welcome. Avoid suggesting that people with Down syndrome or other disabilities need to be "fixed" to belong. They already belong, fully and right now.

PRAY TOGETHER

Jesus, thank You for welcoming everyone. Give me eyes to notice when someone is left out, and the courage to make a way. Help our church be a place where everyone belongs. Amen.

MEMORY VERSE

Hide it in your heart

Preteens can memorize the full verse. Break it into two halves, then challenge them to live it this week.

“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Outdo yourselves in honoring one another.”

ROMANS 12:10 • BSB



LEARN IT IN CHUNKS

Be devoted	Hand on heart: this is a promise
to one another	Point around the circle
in brotherly love.	Link arms with the people next to you
Outdo yourselves	Pretend to race
in honoring one another.	Bow to your neighbor

VERSE GAMES

Verse relay

Tape each phrase to a cup. Teams race to stack the cups in order.

Disappearing verse

Write it on the board. Erase one word each round until everyone can say it from memory.

Honor challenge

The “outdo” part is a challenge! Kids write one way to honor someone this week on a sticky note.

CRAFT

1

Raise the Roof

A house card with lift-up roof shingles. Under each shingle, students write a barrier that keeps people from belonging. On the back, they write how to remove it.

12 MIN

TABLES

MESS: LOW

GET READY

- ☐ Print the **Raise the Roof template** on cardstock (house + shingles).
- ☐ Cut out shingles ahead of time, or let students cut.
- ☐ Have glue sticks ready (glue only the top edge of each shingle so it lifts).

MATERIALS

- Raise the Roof template (cardstock)
- Scissors and glue sticks
- Markers or pens
- Optional: sticky notes

MAKE IT WORK FOR EVERY CHILD

- Offer a word bank of barriers (stairs, loud, no one says hi, not invited, staring, rushing).
- Students can work in pairs.
- Allow drawings instead of words.

STEP BY STEP

1

Glue the house

Cut out the house. Glue only the top edge of each shingle onto the roof.

2

Name the barriers

Under each shingle, write one barrier to belonging (at church, school, or in your neighborhood).

3

Make a way

On the back of each shingle, write how you could remove that barrier.

4

Look inside

In the house, draw people of all kinds together: that's the goal!

SAY

When we remove barriers, everyone can get to Jesus, and everyone can belong.

TALK WHILE YOU MAKE IT

- "Which barrier do you see most often?"
- "Which one could YOU remove this week?"
- "Who helped make a way for you once?"

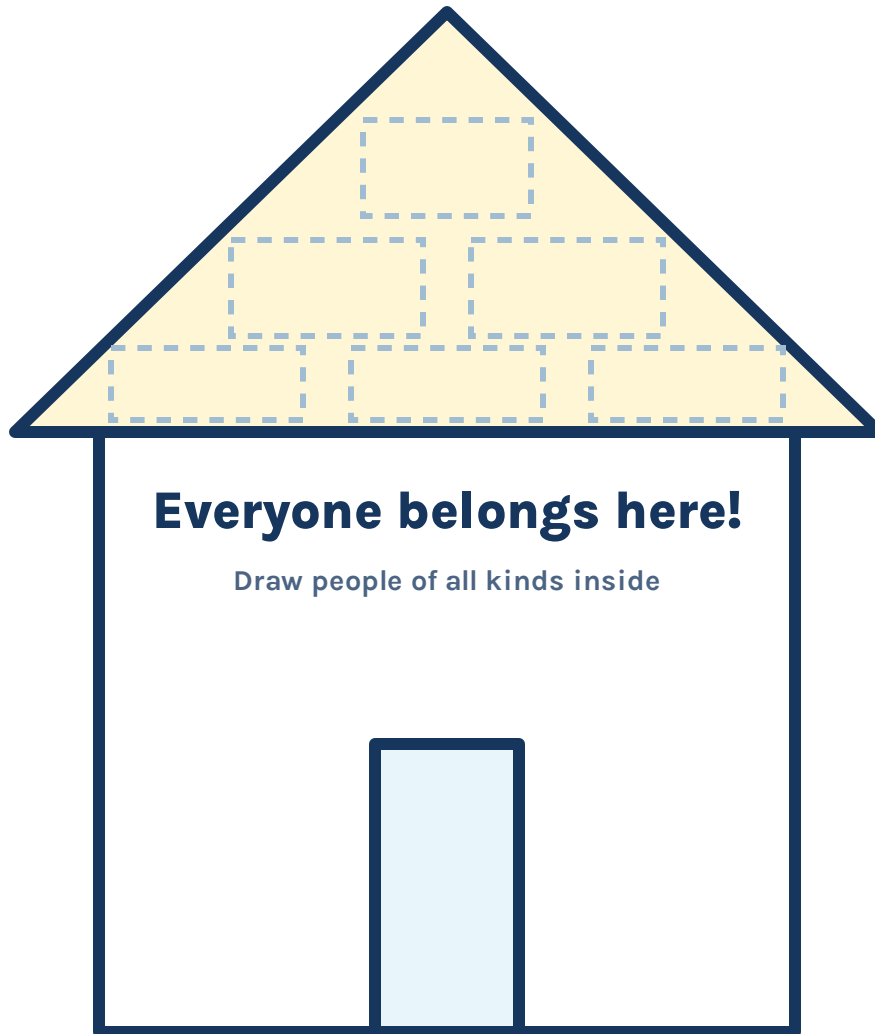
TIE IT BACK

♥ **Real friends make a way so everyone can belong.** "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Outdo yourselves in honoring one another." (Romans 12:10)

CRAFT TEMPLATE

Raise the Roof: template

Cut out the house and the 6 shingles. Glue **ONLY** the top edge of each shingle onto a roof box so it lifts up.



CUT OUT 6 SHINGLES



Under each shingle: a **barrier**. On the back of the shingle: how to **make a way**.

CHALLENGE

2

Make a Way Stretcher Challenge

Teams of four carry a stuffed animal “friend” on a towel through an obstacle course, and figure out how to get past every barrier together.

12 MIN

TEAMS OF 4-5

LARGE ROOM OR OUTSIDE

MESS: LOW

GET READY

- ☐ Set up a simple course: chairs to weave through, a table to go under, a “crowd” zone (a few volunteers standing close together).
- ☐ One towel and one stuffed animal per team.
- ☐ Mark a finish line: “Jesus.”

MATERIALS

- Towels (one per team)
- Stuffed animals
- Chairs, table, and tape
- Timer

MAKE IT WORK FOR EVERY CHILD

- Every team member holds a corner or guides. There’s a job for everyone.
- Keep the course wide enough for wheelchairs or walkers.
- Make it collaborative: every team that finishes wins.

STEP BY STEP

1

Explain

Teams must get their “friend” to the finish without dropping them.

2

Go!

Teams work through the course. The “crowd” blocks the way until teams find a creative way around.

3

Round 2

Add a new barrier. Teams have 30 seconds to plan first.

4

Debrief

Gather together.

SAY

What did it take to get your friend through? Communication, teamwork, creativity. That’s what making a way looks like in real life.

TALK ABOUT IT

- “What was the hardest barrier? How did you get past it?”
- “What real barriers could our group help remove at church?”

TIE IT BACK



Real friends make a way so everyone can belong. “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Outdo yourselves in honoring one another.” (Romans 12:10)

TAKE-HOME

Memory verse cards & family note



"Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Outdo yourselves in honoring one another."

ROMANS 12:10

Celebrate 3.21 · #Celebrate321

"Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Outdo yourselves in honoring one another."

ROMANS 12:10

Celebrate 3.21 · #Celebrate321

"Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Outdo yourselves in honoring one another."

ROMANS 12:10

Celebrate 3.21 · #Celebrate321

"Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Outdo yourselves in honoring one another."

ROMANS 12:10

Celebrate 3.21 · #Celebrate321

FOR FAMILIES

Today we learned: friends make a way



Today your preteen studied Mark 2, where four friends made a way through a roof to bring their friend to Jesus. We talked about barriers that keep people from belonging, and how to remove them, especially for people with Down syndrome and other disabilities. World Down Syndrome Day is March 21 (3/21), for three copies of chromosome 21.

ASK YOUR CHILD

"What barriers did you write on your roof?" and "What's your Make-a-Way challenge this week?"

TRY AT HOME

Do the 7-day Make-a-Way challenge together as a family. Say Romans 12:10 at dinner each night.

PRAY TOGETHER AT HOME

Jesus, thank You for welcoming everyone. Give me eyes to notice when someone is left out, and the courage to make a way. Help our church be a place where everyone belongs. Amen.

Wear fun, mismatched socks on 3.21 and share a feet photo with [#Celebrate321](#). More free family resources at [Celebrate321.org](#).

TAKE-HOME CHALLENGE

7-Day Make-a-Way Challenge

Be the kind of friend who makes a way. Do one each day, and write who you did it for or what happened.

Day 1**Sit with someone new (at church, lunch, or on the bus).**☐ Done!**Day 2****Learn someone's name you didn't know.**☐ Done!**Day 3****Invite someone into your game or group.**☐ Done!**Day 4****Notice one barrier at church or school. Tell a leader about it.**☐ Done!**Day 5****Honor someone: tell them something you admire.**☐ Done!**Day 6****Be patient: give someone time to talk or finish without jumping in.**☐ Done!**Day 7****Pray for a friend by name, and tell them you did.**☐ Done!

"Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Outdo yourselves in honoring one another." Romans 12:10