

Activity: Cord of Three Strands

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**FAMILY TIME
TRAINING**

Teaching Goal: We are not meant to live in isolation. God made us to be in relationship with others, and with Him.

Scripture: Proverbs 18:24 One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work. If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Materials: 4 sturdy cups (coffee mugs or glasses)
Dirt or water to fill one of the cups
3 steak knives

I. Lesson and Discussion

✓ Words written in **bold** are when the leader is speaking. Feel free to use your own words.

A. **ACTIVITY:** Turn 3 of the cups upside down. Fill a fourth cup with dirt or water. Place the 4 cups, along with the 3 steak knives in the center of the table. **Kids, the dirt in this one cup represents the troubles in life (or the water represents the tears from when we have those troubles). And each steak knife represents a person.**

Balance the handle of one of the steak knives sideways across the bottom of one of the upside-down cups, with the sharp end pointing off the edge creating something like a “diving board.” **Kids, do you think I can safely balance the cup with dirt (or water) on the end of this knife?** *They will likely answer no, which is true, you cannot.* Lightly begin to rest the cup of dirt (or water) on the sharp end of the knife, demonstrating that it will not work.

Do you see how this one person cannot bear his troubles alone? Sometimes we think we can handle difficult things on our own. But that is not how we are created; God made us to live in relationship with others. We can and should support each other, especially in times of trouble. Feel free to expand the discussion by sharing examples from your own life, of when you were helped in times of trouble, or when you had the chance to help someone else.

We are talking about friends who aren’t just there for us in the fun times, but in the tough times as well. Invite a volunteer to read Proverbs 18:24. Discuss the different kinds of friends talked about in this verse, unreliable ones compared to those who stick by us in times of trouble. Again, share stories from your own life. Encourage your kids to share examples from their lives as well.

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Then,



arrange the three upside-down cups in a triangle, about a steak knife's distance from each other. Balance a steak knife on each of the three cups with the handles balanced on the cup bottoms and the sharp ends pointing toward the middle. Intersect the sharp ends of all three knives creating a small triangle in the very center of them. You are interweaving the three knives. Each knife should weave **UNDER** the first knife it crosses and **OVER** the second one it crosses. See the first photo included in this activity.

Do you think I can safely balance the cup of dirt (or water) on these three knives? *They may answer yes or no.* Go ahead and balance the cup of dirt (or water) on top of the intersection of the three interwoven knives. See the second photo included in this activity.

Invite a volunteer to read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12. **These words tell us that two are better than one, and that three is even better. When we are having a bad day, isn't it great when a friend or family member comes alongside us, to help us feel better? When we fail at something, isn't it great when someone encourages us to try again? Also, how much easier is it when we all work together to accomplish a task (clearing the table, cleaning the garage, shoveling the driveway)? We can encourage each other, even when the work is hard and we are feeling discouraged. Plus, the hard job gets done faster too! I challenge you to find ways you can be a friend this week by supporting others.**

II. Close in Prayer

III. Pass It On: Make an extra copy of this lesson and *pass it on* to another family.