

Friends and enemies

Biblical Material: Proverbs 27.6

'Better the blow of a friend than the kiss of an enemy.'

You will need:

- A large sheet of paper.
- A large felt-tipped pen.

Introduction

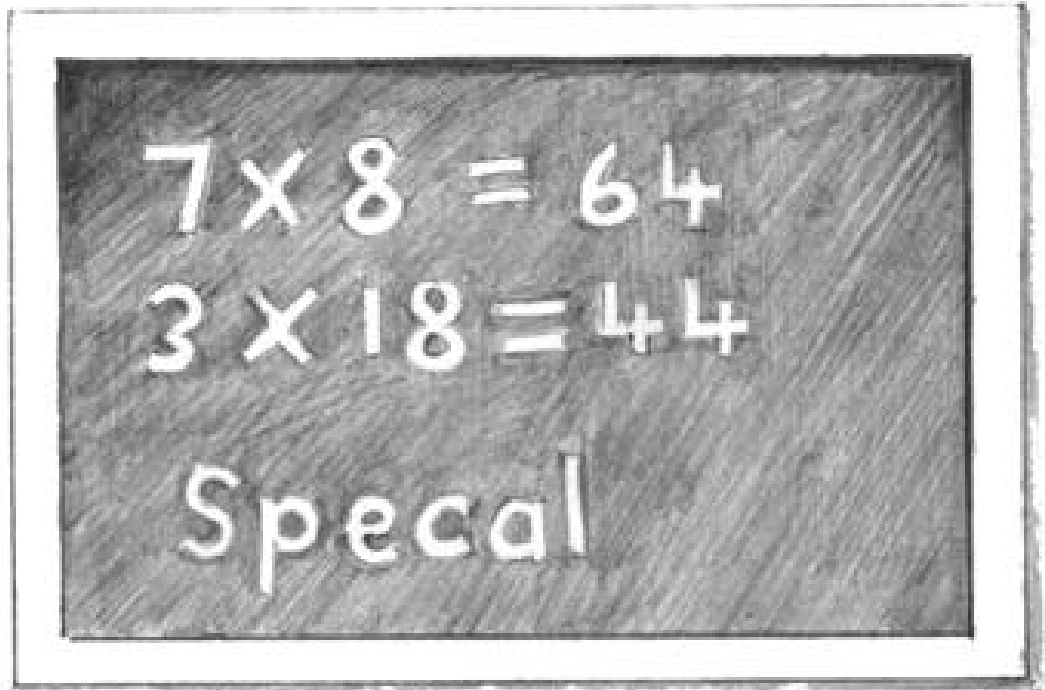
Write up some simple maths problems and deliberately put in the wrong answer. Ask the pupils to correct your work. Do the same with some spelling. It is not pleasant getting back

work with corrections on it. It can be upsetting to see our mistakes corrected.

Core Material

People need their mistakes correcting in order to learn. It is the same in life. People who care about their friends, correct them when they go wrong. It might be an unpleasant experience but it can help people to change. It is easy to think that true friends are those who say nice things, and dismiss people who point out mistakes as enemies. The Bible calls criticism by someone who cares for us 'the blow of a friend,' because criticism by a friend can feel like a slap in the face. It is not advising people to hit each other!

The opposite of 'the blow of a friend,' is 'the kiss of an enemy'. Kissing was the way people greeted each other in Biblical times. It was an outward sign of friendship. Some people pretend to be friends, have all the outward show, say all the right things but don't really care. Jesus had a friend called Judas who eventually betrayed him to his enemies. You can find this story in Mark 14.43-50. Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss, the normal



greeting of a friend. (See the drawing on page 82). He had the outward show of friendship but no more.

Prayer/Reflection

Show the picture of Judas' betrayal (it can be enlarged or copied onto an acetate). Judas is about to kiss Jesus. The artist has caught the moment just before it happens. Judas still has a few seconds to make his choice.

The example of Judas stands as a warning that the outward show of friendship is not always the real thing. Give us the judgement not to reject our friends when they risk telling us we are making a mistake. What feels like a slap in the face might be real friendship.

Note. For guidance on prayers and reflections see pages 9-11.