

Donnybrook

16 January 2022

On friendship

Welcome

Schools are open again but as we know schools are not just about classes and learning. Being at school is a chance to connect again with a wider group of friends. One of the things we learned during the lockdown was how much we miss our friends and how important our friendships are to us all.

Topic

This morning, I'm going to ask you to stand back and think about your friends.

Steps

Friends bring great richness into our lives, because everybody has different gifts. You could picture for a minute your three closest friends: what is to you like about them? It might be something very simple: I feel good when I'm with them or they are fun to be with. Sometimes particular gifts stand out: sports or music-making or cooking. Often, it is just that we like talking and we are good listeners to each other. The trick is to enjoy the variety – and appreciate the different gifts of each one. Everybody has gifts, even if the wrapping is sometimes too much!

In the closer friendships, we know that friends are "there" for us. It can also happen even in close friendships that there are blips, we fall out or we disagree. When that happens, the trick is to realise that no matter what, we still want to be friends. So, instead of saying "my friend is wrong and I'm annoyed," it is more helpful to say we are friends and we have a problem and we can solve together. Nearly everything can be made better with a bit of extra generosity and a bit of extra kindness.

Finally, I can always ask myself, how good a friend am I? What kind of friend am I? It would be good to start positively: I am a good friend because... It is no harm to name my own gifts. This is what I bring to the table. It also helps to go on to ask: how could I be a better friend? All our important friendships "work" because it is *not* all about me. On the contrary, all important friendship work because I'm putting the other person first.

Conclusion

Jesus also had lots of friends, men and women. He also got invited to weddings, as we heard. Often we think of the people around Jesus as disciples – which really means pupils or students. But at one point in John's Gospel, Jesus says: I no longer call you servants, I call you friends. These words are spoken to us all.