



# ARE YOU A *Safety- Pin Friend?*

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When Abel went missing, the Lord asked his brother Cain where he was. “Am I my brother’s keeper?” responded Cain.

In other words, Cain basically said, “How should I know? Watching out for him isn’t my job.”

Jesus Christ, in contrast, teaches us a much different message about caring for others. He said that we should treat other people the way we want to be treated, which includes helping each other, caring for each other, and watching out for each other (see Luke 6:31).

There are people all around you who are struggling with something. You may be struggling with hard times yourself. Whatever the case may be, you can make a difference by choosing to follow Jesus Christ.

## ***Safety-Pin Friends***

One group of friends found an unusual way to reach out to each other. They came from different family situations and backgrounds, but they all cared about each other and wanted to strengthen their friendship.

One of their friends was having a particularly hard time at home. She told them she sometimes wished she could disappear but kept her feelings hidden behind a smile because she was worried that others would judge her.

Her friends wanted her to know that she was safe with them and that the world was a better place because she was in it. So they came up with a plan: they would wear safety pins. Each of them wore a safety pin on their clothes each day to remind her, and each other, that they were committed to creating a safe, secure, trustworthy friendship—and that they wanted each other to stick around.

Years later, this young woman still remembers her safety-pin friends and is grateful for the security she felt knowing that they cared about her.

*What do you do to show your friends that you’re there for them?*

## What Can You Do?

No, you don't have to wear a safety pin to support your friends. But you can ask yourself what you can do to watch out for your friends, strengthen those who might be struggling, and be a safe friend for whoever needs your help.

"We, of all people, should be better at loving people instead of judging them. We, of all people, should be more inclusive," Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said. "Have compassion, making a difference' (Jude 1:22)—that's what we should do."<sup>1</sup>

So what can *you* do to help those around you? Below are some ideas that might get your creative juices flowing.

- Pray and ask God for help. This seems simple, but it can be a powerful tool. God knows your friends perfectly. He knows you perfectly and can help you be a compassionate friend.

What do they need? Then you can help someone in a unique, personal way.

- Remember that being a loving, supportive friend does *not* mean you are responsible for the actions of others. You are also not responsible for their happiness.
- Come up with something fun you can do with your friends, like wearing safety pins, to remind each other to be supportive. Some youth made goofy socks and committed to be "seekers of courage, kindness, and service" (which creates an acronym for *socks*). Another group checked in with each other using colors representing how they were feeling. If someone was feeling too "purple" one day, for example, the other friends knew that person needed extra love.
- Don't limit your friends! Jesus befriended people that the rest of the world despised. When you reach out to include others—especially those who are having trouble making friends—you are following His example.

Life can be tough sometimes. But you are strong, and you are powerful. Your kindness and thoughtfulness can change someone's life. Your friends need you! Seek the Lord's guidance, and He will support you through your trials and help you make the world a better place. **NE**

*The author is a member of the Church's suicide-prevention committee.*

### NOTES

1. Interview with Elder Renlund on Jan. 23, 2018.
2. Linda K. Burton, Oct. 2012 general conference.

"WE, OF ALL PEOPLE, SHOULD BE BETTER AT LOVING PEOPLE INSTEAD OF JUDGING THEM. WE, OF ALL PEOPLE, SHOULD BE MORE INCLUSIVE."

- Keep your eye out for signs that your friends might be struggling.
- Find small, personal ways to serve. As Sister Linda K. Burton, former Relief Society General President, once said, "First observe, then serve."<sup>2</sup> What do you notice about your friends? What are their likes and dislikes?



### READ MORE

Read "Ambassadors of Hope" in last month's issue to find out how one group of youth in Utah brought an extra dose of hope to their high school.