

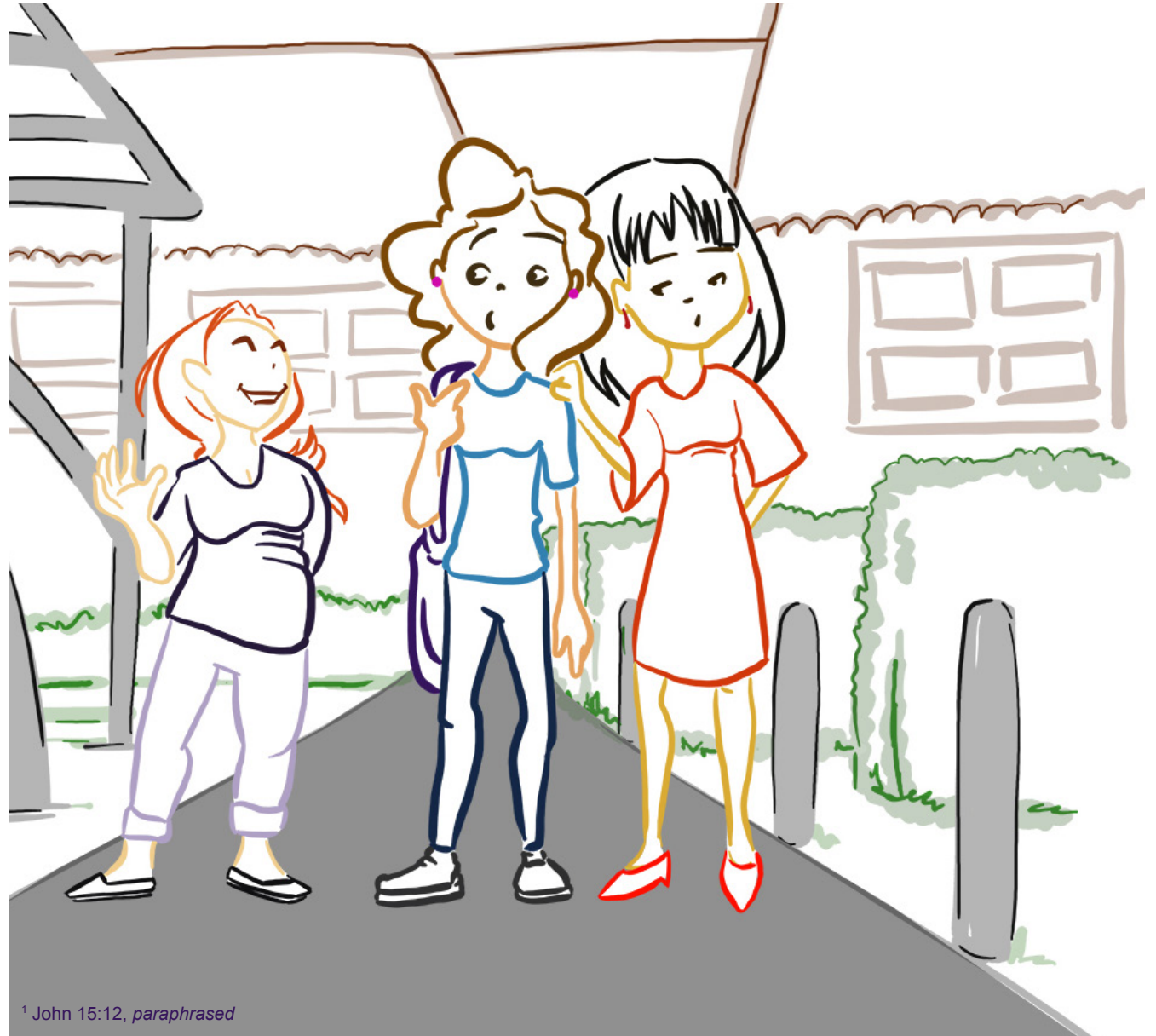
EXPAND YOUR CIRCLE OF FRIENDSHIP

Friendships can bring a lot into your life. Friendships give you someone to talk to, someone to share your thoughts and time with, someone to dream future dreams and interests with, and sometimes a friendship can simply be the reassurance of knowing that you have people who will be there to support you no matter what.

You probably won't be close friends with all those in your school or neighborhood. But don't close your heart and life to new friendships, even if you already have close friends. You can always expand your circle of friendship to make someone new feel included.

There are many ways to make someone feel welcome, to show them that there is someone who cares. There may be times when a classmate, a new kid in the neighborhood, or a sibling of one of your friends feels left out or alone. By expanding your circle of friendship to bring him or her in and getting to know that person, you can brighten his or her day.

Jesus is a friend to everyone, and the Bible encourages us to extend a hand of friendship to those who need it. In fact, it was one of His commandments that we show love to each other, as He has showed love to us.¹



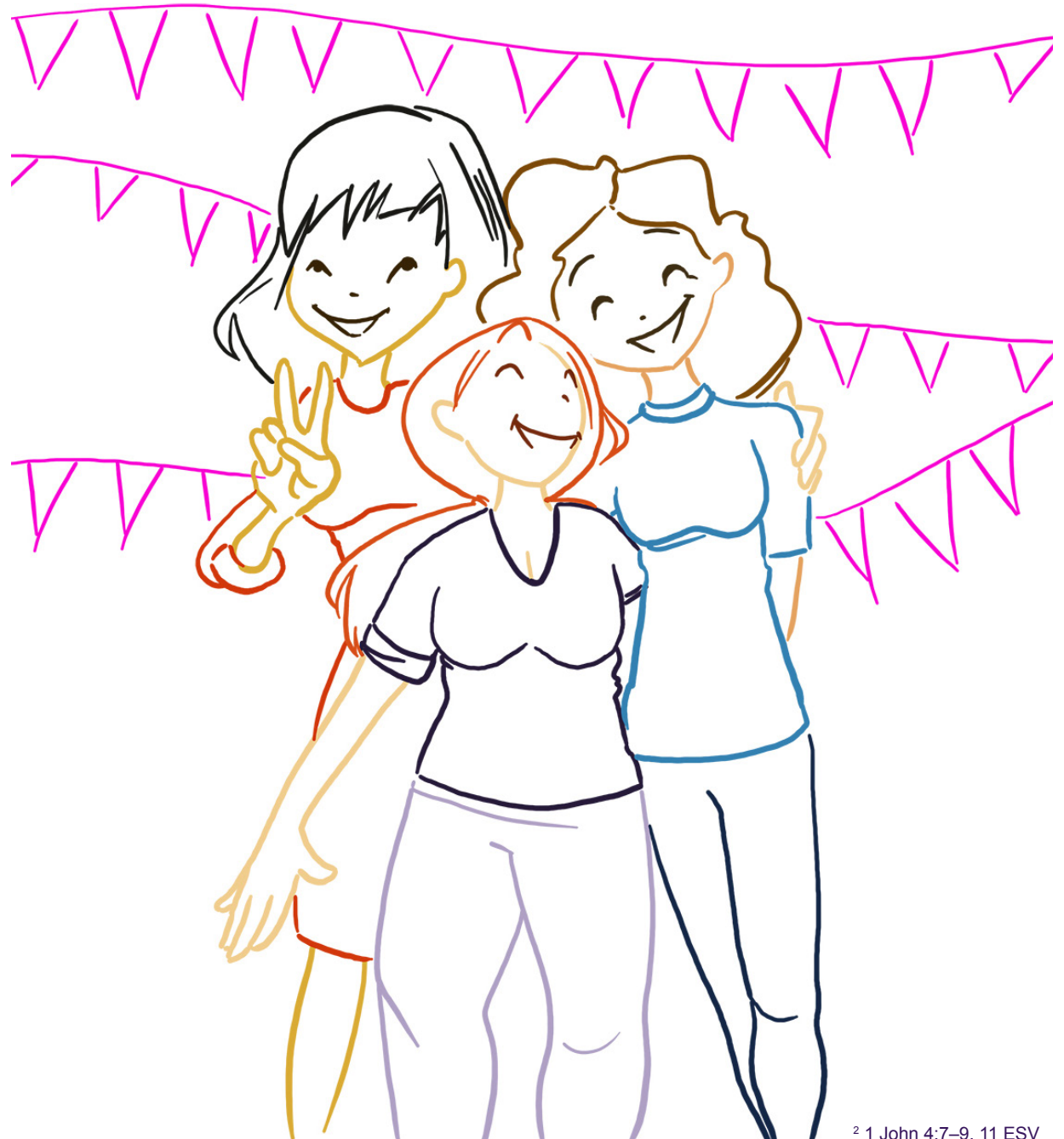
¹ John 15:12, *paraphrased*

Everybody has something to admire and appreciate, but sometimes it's not obvious, and you have to get to know that person better to discover it. Some people are easy to like the first time you meet them, but others don't always make the best first impression—perhaps because of shyness, or a bad day, or maybe you didn't immediately “click.” This shouldn't stop you from extending a hand of friendship, because some friendships take time to build, or sometimes that person might just pass through your life for a short time, and may need a little encouragement and hope during that time.

The Bible tells us: “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”²

You might wonder what you can do to be an example of God's love to others. One simple way is by being a friend—by looking for ways to bring others in, especially those who may not find it easy to make friends or are going through difficult times.

Expand your circle of friendship to someone new, and you may be surprised at how such a friendship can not only make someone else feel loved and welcomed, but also make your life a little brighter too!



S&S link: Character Building: Social Skills: Friendship-2c

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² 1 John 4:7–9, 11 ESV