

**It All
Matters
to
JESUS**

.....
*Devotional Journal
for Girls*

JoAnne Simmons

BARBOUR BOOKS
An Imprint of Barbour Publishing, Inc.



How Much Is All— And How Much Does It All Matter?

Raise your hand if you like math. I'm sitting hard on my hands because I completely *don't*, but I sure hope some of you do because the world needs lots of people who are great at math.

Whether you like numbers or not, can you count to *all*?

That's like asking if you can count to infinity. You just can't do it. Well, you could try, but then you'd spend the rest of your life counting and you'd still never reach the end because (duh!) it's infinity—and who wants to count forever, no matter how much you like numbers?

The title of this book says it all matters to Jesus, emphasis on *all*. That means there is no number limit to what matters to God, and there are no limits on the types of things that matter to God.

If you're not a number lover, then maybe you're a word lover, and you like dictionaries. If you check *Merriam-Webster's* dictionary, you'll find definitions of *all* include, “the whole amount, quantity, or extent of” and “every” and “any whatever.” That pretty much covers every single thing we could think of, right? There is *nothing* that matters to us that does not matter to God.

And it's not true just because it's here in this book; it's true because *God's* book, His Word, the Bible, says it's true. Check out these verses:

First Peter 5:7 (NLT) says to, “Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.” Does it say just our big worries? No. It says *all*.

In the psalms we read, “Our LORD, we belong to you. We tell you what worries us, and you won't let us fall” (Psalm 55:22 CEV). We have all sorts of things that worry us, from super stressful things to things not quite so serious, but we can tell them *all* to God, and He won't let us down about them.

And no matter what, we can totally trust that “God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19 *ESV*). Every need, every worry, every fear, every problem, every frustration, every anger, every thought. It all matters to Jesus.

Every joy does too.

Your worries and problems aren’t the only things that matter to God. The happy things in your life—joy over getting a new pet or excitement over an upcoming birthday party for a friend or an accomplishment like finally sticking that landing in gymnastics—all those types of things matter to Him as well. He wants to share in your joy, and He wants you to thank and praise Him in all things, just like these verses say:

*The LORD is my strength and shield.
I trust him with all my heart.
He helps me, and my heart is filled with joy.
I burst out in songs of thanksgiving.*

PSALM 28:7 NLT

• • • • •

*Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.
Worship the LORD with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.*

PSALM 100:1–2 NIV

• • • • •

*Don’t worry about anything; instead,
pray about everything. Tell God what you need,
and thank him for all he has done.*

PHILIPPIANS 4:6 NLT

*And we know that for those who love
God all things work together for good, for those
who are called according to his purpose.*

ROMANS 8:28 ESV

So, now you might be wondering how much the things in your life, good or bad, matter to God. Just a little bit? Or a lot? The best way to answer that is to focus on how much God loves you. When someone really loves you, then every single aspect of your life, big or small, matters to that person in a big way. And God sure does love you in a ginormous way. You can't ever really wrap your mind around it, actually, but you can keep coming back to the following verses about God's love, reading them and memorizing them to help you remember just how much every detail of your life matters to God.

*But God shows his love for us in that while
we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

ROMANS 5:8 ESV

• • • • •

*For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels
nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come,
nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else
in all creation, will be able to separate us from the
love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

ROMANS 8:38–39 ESV

• • • • •

*For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so
great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him.*

PSALM 103:11 ESV

And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully.

EPHESIANS 3:18–19 NLT

• • • • •

This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

1 JOHN 4:10 NLT

• • • • •

How great is God's love for all who worship him? Greater than the distance between heaven and earth!

PSALM 103:11 CEV

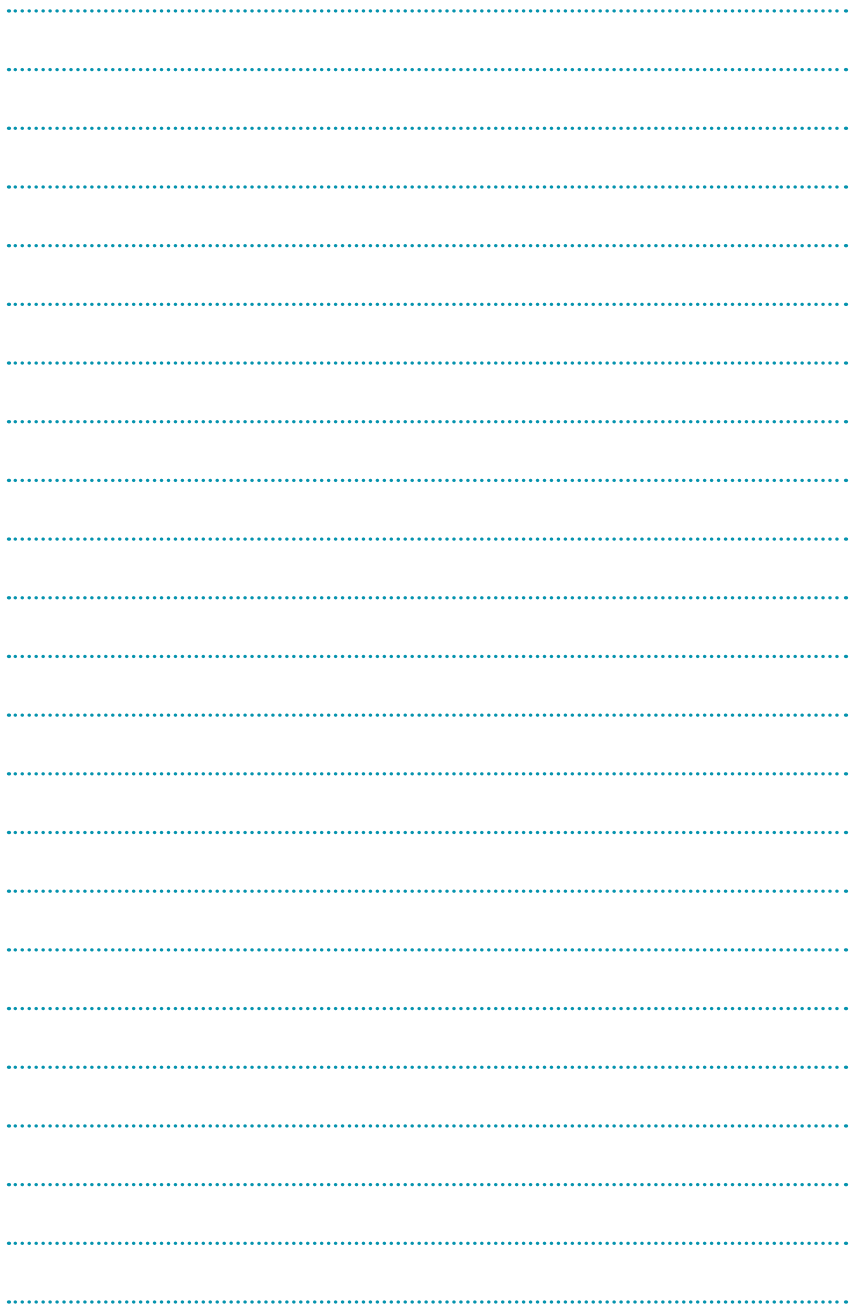
• • • • •

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

JOHN 3:16 NIV

And if there's any doubt left in your brain about how much God cares about any and every little detail of your life, then think about something for a moment. Do you think you could ever count all the hairs on your pretty head? They won't go to infinity, of course, but still—what a long and boring task that would be! I'm sure you can think of much more fun things to do like baking cookies with your BFF and eating gobs of chocolate chip cookie dough. (Will you save me some? Yum!)

God has done it though. He cares so much about every detail of your life that He's counted the exact number of hairs on your head.





Write About It!



What do you want to share with God today?

A series of 20 horizontal dotted lines for writing.



Can't Live with 'Em, Can't Live without 'Em

It's true—your family will absolutely drive you crazy sometimes, maybe even *a lot* of the time. Sometimes we feel like we just can't live with them anymore, but we sure can't live without them either! Maybe your little brother constantly messes with your stuff—even though you've made clear it's off-limits. (Didn't he see the huge sign on your door to KEEP OUT?) Maybe your teenage sister just doesn't understand you're not trying to bother her; you just think she's super cool and you want to know all about her. (Well, okay, maybe you shouldn't have been sneaking to read all the texts on her phone.)

Maybe you don't have siblings, but your parents are always on your case about homework or music practice when you just want to chill. Maybe your parents are divorced and you're tired of shuffling back and forth and being stuck in the middle.

Or [insert your own stressful family situation here]. Maybe it's none or all of the above, but we all have ways that our family members make us want to scream. And crazy or not, they're the people in our lives who've always got our backs, the people we love the very most, the people God has purposefully placed us with.

So, does Jesus care about your family? Does He care if you fight with your siblings? Does He care that it's hard to obey your parents sometimes? Does He care about the things that cause worry and stress and pain in your family? Does He care when you're missing your cousins you only get to see on Thanksgiving? Yes, yes, yes, and yes!

God's Word says in 1 Timothy 5:8, "People who don't take care of their relatives, and especially their own families, have given up their faith. They are worse than someone who doesn't have faith in the Lord"

(CEV). Those are strong words, and they make it pretty clear how important family is to Jesus and how important our family should be to us.

So, if you have siblings, how's that going? Do you fight a little or a lot? What ways could you work harder to get along with them? Start by looking for more ways to show love and respect for them.

If a little brother wants to be in your stuff, try to find some extra time to share your things with him. He might just want some attention from you. And if your sister wants you to stop bugging her, try talking things out and telling her why she's so fascinating to you.

Things won't ever be perfect, and your siblings will hurt your feelings and you'll both pick fights at times. But look up 1 Corinthians 13 in your Bible and work harder at loving them in the way those verses talk about love. Don't get upset too easily, and be quick to forgive and forget. God will bless your efforts for trying to do things His way, living in peace and love with your family members. And remember, don't ever stop asking for His help!

Here are some more excellent verses to encourage you in getting along with your siblings:

Ask God to bless everyone who mistreats you. Ask him to bless them and not to curse them. When others are happy, be happy with them, and when they are sad, be sad. Be friendly with everyone. Don't be proud and feel that you are smarter than others. Make friends with ordinary people. Don't mistreat someone who has mistreated you. But try to earn the respect of others, and do your best to live at peace with everyone.

ROMANS 12:14–18 CEV

Now, your parents. . .how well do you get along with them? I know it sometimes seems like they never get off your back. There are so

many chores and homework assignments and a bazillion times when you have to be patient or on your best behavior. You probably wonder sometimes, *Why can't I just do whatever I want?* But stop and think about all that your parents are doing for you. There's a lot of work and responsibility that goes into keeping you fed and clothed and learning and healthy and safe—and I bet you do have tons of fun in the midst of all that too, because your parents love you and want to give you nice things and good experiences. Be sure you show not just obedience and respect for your parents but love and appreciation also. The Bible has a *lot* to say about how to treat your parents. . . .

*A wise child brings joy to a father;
a foolish child brings grief to a mother.*

PROVERBS 10:1 NLT

• • • • •

*“Each of you must show great respect
for your mother and father.”*

LEVITICUS 19:3 NLT

• • • • •

*My children, listen when your father corrects you.
Pay attention and learn good judgment.*

PROVERBS 4:1 NLT

• • • • •

*Obey the teaching of your parents— always keep it
in mind and never forget it. Their teaching will guide
you when you walk, protect you when you sleep,
and talk to you when you are awake.*

PROVERBS 6:20–22 CEV

Children with good sense accept correction from their parents, but stubborn children ignore it completely.

PROVERBS 13:1 CEV

• • • • •

*Don't be a fool and disobey your parents.
Be smart! Accept correction.*

PROVERBS 15:5 CEV

• • • • •

“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.”

EXODUS 20:12 NKJV

• • • • •

Pay attention to your father, and don't neglect your mother when she grows old. Invest in truth and wisdom, discipline and good sense, and don't part with them. Make your father truly happy by living right and showing sound judgment. Make your parents proud, especially your mother.

PROVERBS 23:22–25 CEV

• • • • •

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”

EPHESIANS 6:1–3 ESV

Sometimes you might have a major worry for a family member—do you have a loved one who is sick? Maybe an aunt who's fighting cancer

or a grandparent who has to live in a nursing home? Jesus cares so much about them, and He is working on a place for us where there will never be any more pain and sickness and suffering.

Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!”

REVELATION 21:1–5 NIV

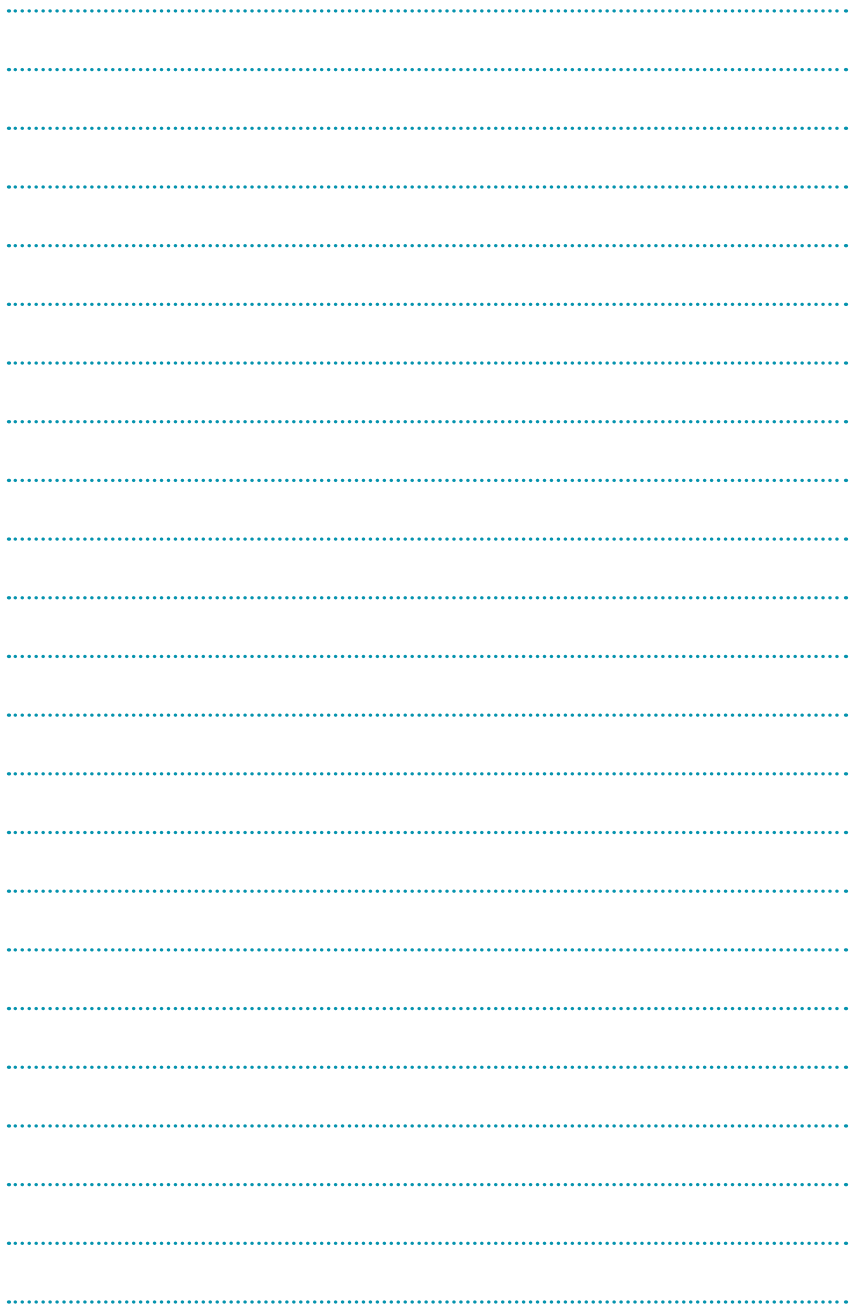
If you have a loved one who is suffering, do you know if they’ve accepted Jesus as their Savior? If not, think of ways you could share His love and the Gospel with them. (If you need help with this, go to page 25 on how to be sure you have Jesus as your BFF.)



Write About It!



How can you show more love for your family today?






Write About It!



Who in your family needs to experience God's love in a big way?

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.



BFFs and Bullies and Everyone in Between

Who's your BFF? Do you have just one or a whole bunch? Or maybe you're wishing you could find one. Well, before we go any further, don't ever forget who wants to be your #1, Top of the List, Best Friend Forever—

Jesus.

Just so we have this clear, have you asked Him to be your BFF? If you haven't, do you know how? It's so simple and fantastic to accept His love and forgiveness and ask Him to be your Savior and your very best friend. If you never have, then pray a prayer like this right now:

Dear God, I need You. I know that I mess up and do the wrong thing, but I believe Jesus died on the cross for my sins, and then He rose again and is alive right now. Please forgive me for all my mistakes and be my Savior. Please be my best friend forever and help me to follow You! Thank You for loving me and helping me. Thank You that everything about me matters to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

(Check out these scriptures to help you understand—John 3:16; Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; Romans 5:8; Romans 10:9–10.)

When Jesus is your BFF, He wants to help you in all your other friendships too. Have you had a fight with a friend recently? Has someone you thought was a good friend been ignoring you lately? Has a friend started acting so differently that you're not even sure you want to be friends anymore? Has a close friend moved away and you miss her terribly?

All these things matter to Jesus.

Or maybe you're blessed and nothing is going wrong with your friends right now, and you are thrilled to have one awesome BFF or maybe more than one! Great! Jesus wants us to have good friends, get along them, love them, and live in peace with them. Check out these verses from His Word:

A friend loves at all times.

PROVERBS 17:17 NIV

• • • • •

*There are "friends" who destroy each other,
but a real friend sticks closer than a brother.*

PROVERBS 18:24 NLT

• • • • •

*The heartfelt counsel of a friend is as
sweet as perfume and incense.*

PROVERBS 27:9 NLT

• • • • •

*Two are better than one, because they have a good
return for their labor: If either of them falls down,
one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls
and has no one to help them 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.*

ECCLESIASTES 4:9–12 NIV

As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.

PROVERBS 27:17 NLT

Unfortunately, things do go wrong with friends sometimes because we're all human and none of us is perfect—no matter how much we wish that we were.

Sometimes friends will make you feel left out and lonely. When that happens, talk it out with a parent or other trusted grown-up and see if there are ways you can work it out with that friend. And always remember that God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5 NIV). If there are times where you feel left out by friends, use that time to get closer to God. Let Him show you how much He loves you by spending extra time reading your Bible and listening to music that praises Him. You can also use the time to find ways to help others more, and you might be surprised at how God brings new friends into your life.

If you're not being left out, be thankful, and be careful not to leave someone else out. Be sensitive to ways that other friends feel, and find ways to include them if you think they're feeling like an outsider, whether it's at school or at church or on the playground or during a dance class or a team sport.

Do you feel like your friends are always getting you into trouble or pressuring you to do things that you know you shouldn't? Are there boys wanting to be more than just friends or other girls pressuring you to be more than just friends with a boy? Then here's the deal: you absolutely need to make some new friends and let the troublemakers go.

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 15:33, “Don't fool yourselves. Bad friends will destroy you” (CEV).

And in Proverbs 13:20 it says, “Wise friends make you wise, but you hurt yourself by going around with fools” (CEV).

Do you have friends who pick on you or tease too much—or maybe

they're not friends at all but downright bullies? Don't ever be afraid to get help from a parent, teacher, or other trusted grown-up in cases like this (no matter how much the bully threatens to make you miserable if you do), and remember that God sees and knows the hurt done to you. His Word says this:

Never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the LORD. Instead, "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads." Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.

ROMANS 12:19–21 NLT

Sometimes you've done the best you can and a friend still hurts or betrays you or bullies you too much—and you finally just have to let them go. Jesus knows these things will happen. He cares about your hurts, and He cares about your knowing that He is the one true friend who will never let you down.

With Jesus as your Savior, remember your purpose here on earth is to live in relationship with Him and share His love. Do your best to be loving and kind to everyone who comes into your life, for whatever time you get to count them as a friend, confident that nothing and no one can ever take away your greatest friend of all—Jesus.

God loves you and has chosen you as his own special people. So be gentle, kind, humble, meek, and patient. Put up with each other, and forgive anyone who does you wrong, just as Christ has

forgiven you. Love is more important than anything else. It is what ties everything completely together.

COLOSSIANS 3:12-14 CEV

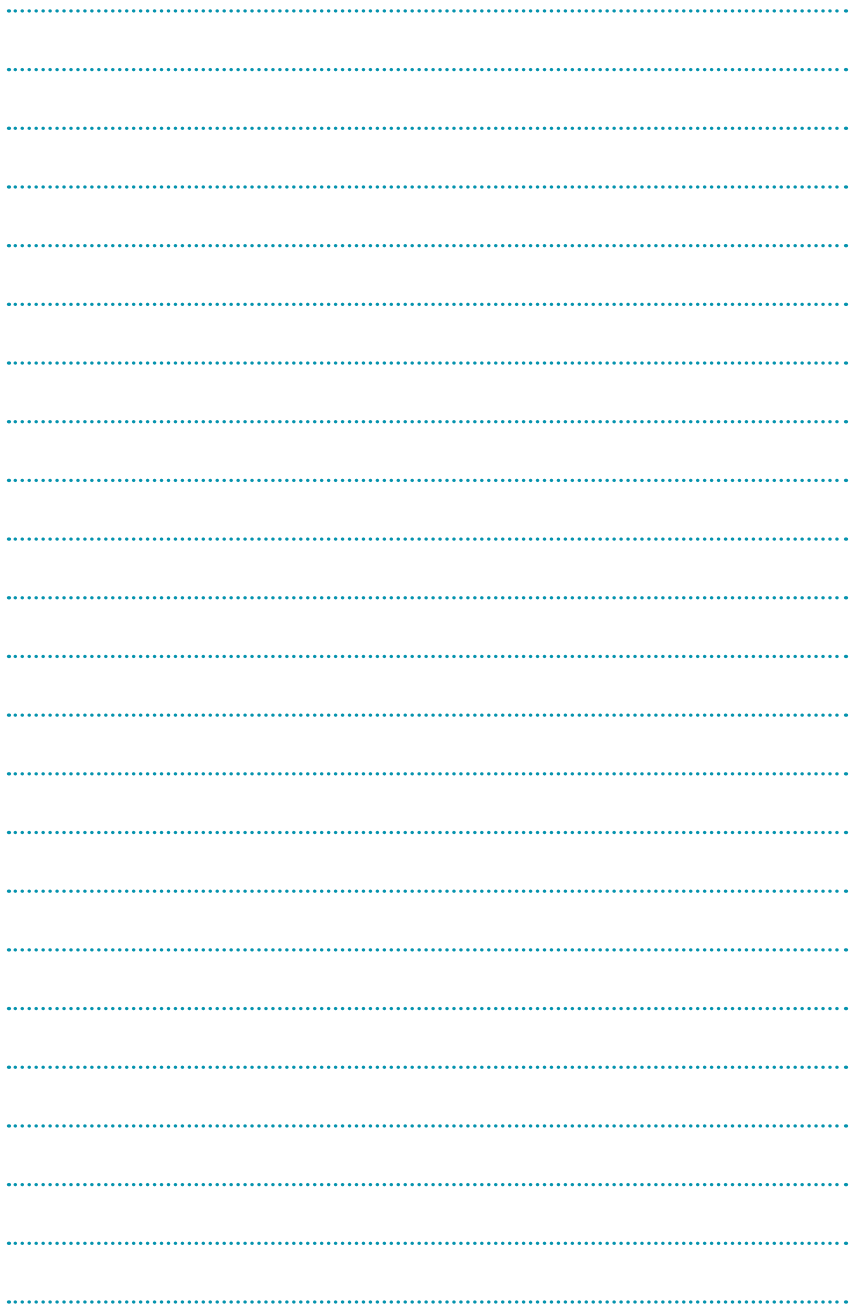


Write About It!



How can you be a better friend?

A series of 20 horizontal dotted lines for writing.





Write About It!



Have you ever been bullied? How did you handle it?

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.