

Faith Adventures Youth Resource

Free to use – please acknowledge when using beyond local church children's and youth work so others can find and use the resource themselves.

Embedded in Faith Adventures: Children Together, this youth resource is intergenerational in nature and designed to foster God-connection in church, home and beyond.

For guidance on the purpose of the resource and how to use it as a launch pad for your engagement with children and families, please use this link: www.bit.ly/How-To-FAYR

Title: Genesis 22: 15-18

Theme: Promises......

Contents:

Introduction	. 1
Together	.2
Experience	.3
Explore	.4
Express	.5
Handouts	. 7

Introduction: What would be helpful to know in my planning?

A new month means a new theme – we promised to keep things moving. And 'promises' is the theme we'll be looking at this month. In today's session we'll be looking at the difference between promises we make and promises that God has made. Sometimes a promise can seem to be a threat and that might be brought up in the first two verses of today's passage.

You know your group (and your co-workers) best so you should decide whether or not to use the full passage or start at with a God who is merciful and kind, but we must remember that Jesus promised us a new relationship with God.

There might be conversations in your group about Abraham and Sarah having more descendants than there are stars in the sky - and we can remember that the three Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) all trace their origins to Abraham and Sarah. As Christians, we too are children of Abraham.

The image of 'stars in the sky' is used regularly throughout the book of Genesis. It may be that your church recently held a Light Party or similar to commemorate All Hallows Eve and you can make a link back to what you explored there.

Sometimes it is difficult to see the stars – because of clouds, light pollution, or because our nearest star, the sun, is shining so brightly. That doesn't mean the stars aren't there. God is always with us, too, even when God is obscured by other things.

Triggers: Be aware that the content of this week, especially if you use the full passage, may evoke feelings for those who face abuse and violence. This week may also elicit difficult emotions for those for whom broken promises are a way of life.

Together – prayer and games

Use this opening prayer or encourage young people to open the session with a prayer of their own.

All mighty God,

Be with us as we learn more about you through stories and people in the Bible.

Help us to walk in your way and follow your path.

Be with us as we make decisions that affect our lives, and the lives of those around us.

Amen

Alternatively, you may join with the widget prayer found in Faith Adventures: Children together or else the Lord's prayer found at the end of this session.

Active game - Bring me

A fun run around game, where the youngsters race to bring you certain items. You need to know that the items can be found somewhere in the building, and you may have placed certain items that the group will need. You might need to explain which rooms are in use if the building is a multi-use space.

Sit in groups of three or more, or it can be played individually.

Give everyone a few minutes to go and collect anything they think you might mention in the game, and create a little store of their own. They might want to agree who will be doing the running each time.

The leader stands central to all groups and shouts 'Bring me...' They then mention an object and then it's the first person/group to bring that item(s) to you that gets the point. The difference with this game is that you will ask for a specific number of items each time, to link in with the story (number of stars and grains of sand)

Here's some suggestions of things you could ask for: five pencils nine toilet roll squares three paper clips

six human hairs, all different 10cm of sellotape four cups six grains of rice three matching socks one felt tip in each colour of the rainbow two shoelaces (not in a shoe) someone older than 20 yrs two friends

Quieter game - Count the...

Can you devise a method in which you could count the grains of sand in a bowl or the numbers of hairs on a head or stars in the sky?

Once you have had a go at this play "Minute to win it" with a bowl of rice and some chopsticks or tweezers. Set a minute's timer and see how many grains of rice can be transferred to an empty bowl. Count each person's bowl of rice after a minute. Who managed to transfer the most?

Experience – Bible story and songs

Hear, watch and sing the Bible story

This link takes you to the International Children's version.

https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%2022%3A15-18&version=NIV

You may wish to research different versions of this reading on www.biblegateway.com Recommended versions to try are NRSV, Easy-to-read, The Message, NIRV

Genesis 22:15-18

¹⁵ The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time. ¹⁶ The angel said, "The Lord says, 'You did not keep back your son, your only son, from me. Because you did this, I make you this promise by my own name: ¹⁷ I will surely bless you and give you many descendants. They will be as many as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. And they will capture the cities of their enemies. ¹⁸ Through your descendants all the nations on the earth will be blessed. This is because you obeyed me."

The Holy Bible, International Children's Bible® Copyright© 1986, 1988, 1999, 2015 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission.

Watch: Godly Play Abraham and Isaac By Joyfulnoisechoir https://youtu.be/-r49c qLLwl?si=M7onnkbBFRHYzr20

An opportunity for reflection

- I wonder if you noticed anything new in the story
- I wonder what you appreciated about that story telling

Explore – ways into the theme

Ideas and activities to explore this week's Bible passage together

A new way to explore the theme

This is a new way to explore the Bible passage and the theme for this week.

Alternatively, you may wish to use the explore section from this week's Faith Adventures: Children Together to guide your exploration of the theme this week.

Retelling

This could come after using the scripted retelling found in FACT or as a stand-alone activity.

Split into groups or keep as one large group and act out/retell the promises of God within this Bible passage. Could this be extended to include other promises in the Bible? How many other promises can you find? Google can be helpful in finding the answers to this.

Modern parables

This section includes references to TV programmes, films, books, TED talks, TikTok etc. aimed at this age group that will have been widely seen, or where a clip is available to use as a stimulus for discussion. You may also enjoy the picture book recommended for Faith Adventures: Children Together and explore the relevance of the story to the theme of the session in more depth - young people and adults are often well tuned in to the deeper meanings in materials aimed at younger people and the authors are often very aware of the adults reading the books to or with younger ones.

Watch these two clips from *Home Alone 2*. The first is Kevin making a promise, the second looks at whether he keeps it or not:

Don't make promises you can't keep by Bigvik https://youtu.be/P8LWIE-ISZM?si=q2NjattO8dHFV7JA

Turtle doves gift from Kevin by Leo San https://youtu.be/eNCc3rq_sul?si=6dxpRMjQ6kzZ8oZC

- The woman says, "Don't make promises you can't keep." How did she know it was a promise when Kevin didn't use the word "promise"?
- What impact will Kevin's promise, if kept, make to the woman?

Group discussion

- What does it mean to make a promise?
- If God could promise you one thing what would you want it to be?
- Are there promises made on your behalf?
- What's the strongest promise you can make? Is it a pinky promise/blood brothers promise/cross my heart promise/other?

Personal reflection

- I wonder if Abraham struggled to believe God's promise
- I wonder if the Bible passage means we are all related to Abraham and each other
- I wonder if we make promises to God



Express – prayer and creative activities

Praying together: enabling your group to respond spiritually

Praying together

Prayers Respond to the theme by writing or saying a short prayer. Alternatively use the creative prayer from Faith Adventures: Children Together for this session or use the prayer activity below. Alternatively, light a candle and play some music while you listen and talk to God together.

This prayer is based on the lyrics of the song "Way maker". After listening to the song and focusing on God, say the prayer together. You could split into five groups and take a paragraph each or everyone could take a line. Alternatively, one person could read the whole prayer, with all joining in with "Amen" at the end.

Way Maker by integrity music – https://youtu.be/29lxnsqOkmQ?si=JsW6VcUk3r6n3ugl

Way maker, miracle worker, promise keeper, light in the darkness, our God. that is who you are.

You are here, you're moving in our midst, we worship you. You are here, you're working in this place, we worship You.

You are here, touching every heart, we worship you. You are here, healing every heart, we worship you.

You are here, turning lives around, we worship you. You are here, mending every heart, we worship you.

Way maker, miracle worker. promise keeper, light in the darkness, our God, that is who you are.



Amen

Responding together

This is an opportunity for a social justice challenge, some research, craftivism, or a craft or STEM activity. You may have a specific activity chosen but free choice is also an option. Here are some suggestions for this week's theme. Choose whatever will work best for your group.

Abrahamic

God promised Abraham and Sarah that their descendants would be 'as many as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore' and so we can call ourselves children of Abraham, but so can Jews and Muslims. Why, then, are we three different religions if we all share the same origin?

As a research project, look at how, and when, the three faiths became distinct from one another – and why. This link may help you.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zw3vcxs#zpwd239

Challenge

Discipleship doesn't stop when you walk out of the church door – it is a part of everyday life. Take a challenge with you and try to make it part of your week.

You may think of your own suggestion of what you as an individual or a group might do in the coming week in response to what you have explored today. If not, here are some suggestions:

- Use one of the "conversation starter" questions or the question below to talk with someone of a different generation or from a different setting and share your questions, thoughts, insights together. What is one promise you hope someone will keep?
- Research something suggested by JPIT Resources (jpit.uk) or Commitment for Life (cforl.co.uk)
- This week can you make an intentional effort to only say "promise" if you really mean to keep it? If the word "promise" isn't one you'd usually use, could you include it in your language this week? How does it feel to use the word? How does it feel to keep your promise?

Thank you for exploring the **Genesis** passage with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing sharon.lloyd@urc.org.uk or by sharing it on www.bit.ly/FACT_FB









