

God Promised a New Covenant

Jeremiah 17; 31

What is God like?

God is holy, good, and loving.

The Lord is good to all;
he has compassion on all he
has made.
Psalm 145:9

Story Point:

God promised His people a new covenant and forgiveness of sin forever



PREPARE HEARTS

- ☐ Welcome - Can You Trust It?
- ☐ Starter Activity - God Sees and Understands



ACTIVATE HEARTS

- ☐ 9:20 - Bible Lesson in LG2
- ☐ Review and discuss the Bible Story
- ☐ Reflection and Prayer
- ☐ Questions from Kids Video



ENGAGE HEARTS

- ☐ Key Passage Activity - Bible Verse Web
- ☐ Group Craft - Written on my Heart
- ☐ Group Activity - Promise Pass

SHEPHERD GUIDE

The prophet Jeremiah was a priest sent to speak the word of the Lord to His people. Jeremiah taught plainly about sin and how our disobedient hearts cannot be trusted. Jeremiah predicted God's judgment on Judah's sins through the nation of Babylon. Yet, Jeremiah also declared how God would make a new covenant with His people.

The people of Judah faced the same problem we face today: sin. Their failure to abide by and uphold the law was a constant reminder that they were sinful and fell short of God's standards. Jeremiah told the people that those who put their trust in mankind are cursed because men are sinful and imperfect. He also said that people cannot save themselves. But Jeremiah shared good news. He told the people that the person who trusts in the Lord will be strong and healthy, like a tree planted by water (Jeremiah 17:8).

Through Jeremiah, the Lord spoke of His everlasting love toward His people. He shared the promise of gathering His people, watching over them, and turning their mourning into joy. God promised His people a new covenant and eternal forgiveness of sin.

The old covenant required complete obedience to the law; yet no one can be justified by the law (Galatians 2:16). In His grace, God did what we cannot do. He promised a new covenant which would be accomplished by Him. Jesus is the fulfillment of the new covenant; He fulfilled the requirements of the law on our behalf. As Paul wrote, "For what the law could not do since it was weakened by the flesh, God did. He condemned sin in the flesh by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh as a sin offering" (Romans 8:3).

Forgiveness that lasts forever only comes through faith in Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:11). As you prepare to teach on God's promise of a new covenant, take time to thank Him for His forgiveness in your life. Remind boys and girls of how God changes believers' hearts to hearts that love and obey Him.

REMINDER: Our VIP meeting is from 8:30-8:40 in C1. Your supply bin will be in your classroom.

MAIN TAKEAWAYS: We want our kids to:

- *KNOW that God can change their heart to love and obey Him.
- *ASK God for forgiveness and a new heart.
- *RELY on God instead of their own power.



As children arrive - Welcome them by name and invite them to play with you and the other children. Use this time to get to know your kids - ask them about their week, about their likes and dislikes and about their school, family and friends.

Ways to connect - Play a game from the closet, color or draw together, build with legos/blocks, etc.

When most kids have arrived for first service (by 9:05ish), ask them to clean up the toys and find a seat at one of the tables to begin the class.

**Pen Pal Kit!!*



PREPARE HEARTS

OPENING QUESTIONS:

WELCOME

Can You Trust It?

activity page,
pencils,
markers

If you could make anything that you own brand new again, would you?
What would you choose to make new? Maybe a toy, bike, or art supplies.

Invite kids to complete the "Can You Trust It?" activity page.

Today, we will learn how God promised to provide the way for people's hearts to be made new and for sin to be forgiven.



STARTER

God Sees and Understands

- Heart cut-outs
- Magnifying glasses

Before the session, in size 1 or 2 font, print the sentences, "Our hearts are sick with sin. We cannot always understand or listen to our hearts. But God knows our hearts. God forgives and loves us!" (This will be done for you!)

Form kids into table groups and ask groups to read their sentences aloud. The font should be small enough that kids cannot read the sentences. Then give each group a magnifying glass. Invite kids to use the magnifying glass to read their sentences. Discuss how the magnifying glass helped them see so they could begin to understand what was on the paper.

SAY: Today, we will learn that our hearts cannot always be trusted because they are sinful. We don't always understand why we have certain desires or behave the way we do. But God always knows our hearts. He doesn't need a magnifying glass to be able to see and understand what is in our hearts. We'll learn that when we look to Jesus and trust in Him, God forgives our sin and gives us new hearts that want to follow Him.



ACTIVE MINDS

INTRODUCE THE BIBLE STORY

(Quick 1-2 minute review!)

9:20 – 9:35

K – 4th Grade in LG2

BIBLE STORY:

God Promised a New Covenant

Bibles, Powerpoint slides

Taught by the Bible Teacher:

Quick Review of where we are in the Big Story of the Bible and Big Picture Question:

What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.

Open your Bible to Jeremiah 17 and 31.

STORYTELLING OPTIONS / TIPS:

Show it: Show a small stone as you describe how the sin of people's hearts is like words carved into a stone.

List it: On a dry erase board, write a list of God's promises through the new covenant: God's teaching on people's hearts, He will be their God, His people will know Him, He will forgive their sin.

Review it: Review the old covenant God made with His people at Mount Sinai. Tell kids that under the old covenant God's people were commanded to obey all of God's laws. Share how the old covenant displayed guilt because no one could perfectly obey God's laws.

Recite it: Invite kids to recite Jeremiah 31:34 with you.

Before Babylon came and attacked Judah, God sent a prophet named Jeremiah to speak His words to God's people. Jeremiah said, "The sin of the people of Judah is like words carved into a stone—it can't be simply wiped away."

Jeremiah shared more of God's words, saying, "The person who trusts in other people is cursed, because people are sinful and imperfect. People cannot save themselves. The person who trusts in the Lord, however, will be strong and healthy, like a tree planted by water."

Through Jeremiah, God also said, "Our hearts are deceitful, and we cannot understand them. But God knows our hearts, and God is trustworthy. He gives each person what they deserve according to their character." Even though people have sinful, deceitful hearts, Jeremiah shared how God promised to make a new covenant with His people. Jeremiah said, "Look, the days are coming when I will make a new covenant with my people. It will be different from the old covenant I made with them when I freed them from Egypt. They broke that covenant, but they will not be able to break this one."

I will put my teaching within them and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. All my people will know me, from the least to the greatest. I will forgive them and never remember their sin."

CHRIST CONNECTION

Like God's people, we all have sinful hearts that do not obey God or love Him rightly. Through Jesus' death on the cross, God made a new covenant.

Those who trust in Jesus have their sin forgiven and have the law written on their hearts.



REVIEW AND DISCUSS

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Allow time to have the children think and process - however this works best for your class. We want our kids to feel known and heard!

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In small groups (or as a large group), talk through these questions.

Jeremiah was a prophet to Judah during the reign of the last five kings of Judah. The other week, we learned that Josiah was a good king who destroyed idols and led people to worship God. Yet, the Bible tells us that despite Josiah's godly leadership, God's people would still be punished for their sin (2 Kings 23:26-27). Jeremiah prophesied about this punishment, telling the people of Judah that God would send the nation of Babylon to destroy Judah and take the people captive (Jeremiah 25:8-9).

The people could not remove their sin or change their sinful hearts. Jeremiah said their sin was like words carved into stone. **What did God say was wrong with the people's hearts?** Look at Jeremiah 17:9. [Ask a volunteer to read Jeremiah 17:9 aloud.] God spoke through Jeremiah and said the people's hearts were deceitful. He said people cannot understand their own hearts because their hearts can't always be trusted. Our hearts lead us away from God because they are sinful.

But God gave the people hope. **What did God promise His people, despite their sin?** Look at Jeremiah 31:31,34. [Ask a volunteer to read Jeremiah 31:31,34 aloud.] God promised His people a new covenant and forgiveness of sin forever. The old covenant required people to obey all of God's laws and follow it perfectly! But no one can be perfect because all people are sinful. However, the new covenant would be accomplished by God. By God's grace He would forgive their sin. He would give them new hearts that desire to obey Him.

Who came to earth to fulfill the new covenant? [Allow responses.] Jesus, God's sinless Son, came to earth, died on the cross for sin, and rose again. Jesus' death paid the price we deserve for our sin. Through Jesus' death on the cross, God made a new covenant. Those who trust in Jesus have their sin forgiven and have the law written on their hearts.



Reflection and Prayer

Journal Page

Have children use their journal page. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions. Or, just talk about it together.

- **What does this story teach me about God?**

That God is faithful to keep His promises. He loves and forgives those who trust in Him. God knows our hearts, sees our sin, and loves us still. He wants to have a relationship with us, and made that possible through Jesus!

- **What does this story teach me about myself?**

That God loves me, even though He knows my sin-sick heart and sees my sin. I can trust God to love and care for me.



Questions from Kids Video

USB on TV

Show the “Unit 15, Session 3” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

- How can God be in all believer’s hearts at the same time?
- How can Christians show others that Jesus has changed their heart?



ENGAGE HEARTS

Key Passage Activity:

Bible Verse Web

- Key Passage Poster

Show the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Psalm 145:9 together.

Before the session, on a dry erase board, write the words of the key passage in random order all over the board. Then add in words that are not found in the key passage.

SAY Our key passage reminds us that God is good and merciful. We don't deserve the forgiveness given to us through the new covenant, but in His mercy and goodness, He did.

Invite a volunteer to come to the dry erase board, find, and circle the first word of the key passage. Then, have them pass the dry erase marker to another volunteer to come and find the second word, drawing a line from the first to the second. Repeat for the remaining volunteers and words. As each volunteer comes up to circle and connect the next word, have the whole class say the verse up to the point you have circled. So first round, - “The” second round, “The Lord” and so on.

Play again as time allows, adding in new words in each time.

Pray together:

God, Your Word reminds us how much You care for us. We praise You for being greater than the power of sin. Help us turn away from our own desires and follow You. Help our hearts love You more than anything else. Amen.



Written on My Heart

- Red construction paper hearts
- “God’s Word is in my heart” heart cut-out
- Glue sticks
- Markers

Pass out a red construction paper heart to every child, explaining that it represents their hearts. Then, have everyone open their Bible and read Jeremiah 31:33-34 together as a class.

“This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord.

“I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts.

I will be their God,
and they will be my people.

No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the Lord.

“For I will forgive their wickedness
and will remember their sins no more.”



Next, pass out the second, smaller heart with the prayer, “God, write your Word on my heart”. Have the children glue their smaller heart inside their larger heart.

ASK: What does this passage tell us about God? (He keeps His promises through his covenant, He is our God, we can know Him through His word and His spirit. He is forgiving, He doesn’t keep track of our sins, he chooses not to remember them.)

Have the children write some of these key words about God on the back of their hearts.

SAY: Apart from Jesus, our sin-sick hearts have a hard time loving God and wanting to obey Him. We love ourselves more than we love God, and we want to follow our own way. But when we trust in Jesus, God changes us. He gives us new hearts—hearts of flesh that are soft toward Him. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin and changes our hearts so we love Him and want to obey Him



Promise Pass

- Ball

Lead kids to sit in a circle.

Direct kids to pass around the ball while the music plays. When the music stops, the kid holding the ball answers a question about the promises found in the Bible story or completes a phrase you say, such as:

- Who said God would make a new covenant? (Jeremiah)
- God’s new covenant means... (God loves us.)
- God will write His law on... (our hearts.)
- What did God promise to forgive? (our sin)

SAY: Jeremiah told about a day when God would forgive sin and change people’s hearts. Jesus made these words come true. Just like the people of Judah, we need a heart change so that we can obey and follow God.