



# GOD'S MERCY AND COVENANTS STUDY SHEET

A covenant is a solemn promise that creates family bonds. Because God loves humanity so much, He entered into a series of covenants with us. These covenants show how God is always merciful and always keeps His promises.

GOD WANTED to be in a loving family relationship with His people from the very beginning. He created Adam and Eve in a family relationship with each other to be a sign of the relationship He wants to have with us. We call this special relationship a covenant.

A covenant is a solemn promise. It creates a sacred bond of kinship, or family relationship. It is made with a promise to give oneself entirely out of love for the other. A covenant is unbreakable, and there are consequences when a person in the covenant fails to keep his part. God cannot fail in His promises to us. Therefore, we can be confident that God's love will always succeed, no matter what.

In the Old Testament, God entered into five major covenants with His people. God drew us deeper into relationship with Him in each covenant. This was

fulfilled in the New Covenant in Jesus Christ. Through the Incarnation, God became man and poured out His love for us on the Cross.

God entered into each covenant with a mediator, or the human person who stood in for everyone else who was part of the covenant. God also made a sign for each covenant. These signs were outward representations of God's love for His people at the heart of each covenant.

First, God entered into a covenant relationship with Adam, the first man. His marriage to Eve, the first woman, became the sign of this covenant. Marriage represented the bond of love that God desired to have with His people. In fact, this covenant is the original blueprint for our lives! Because of the temptation of the serpent, Adam and Eve rejected God's love, and sin and death entered

the world. God did not leave us in sin and immediately promised us salvation. But we would need to be prepared to be saved.

Next, God entered into a covenant relationship with Noah, who represented his entire family. Through Noah and his faithfulness, God recreated the earth after the Great Flood. The flood waters washed away the wickedness of sin on the earth. God's creation began its journey toward salvation the same way we all do, with baptism. The sign of this covenant is the rainbow, which God placed in the sky to remind His people of His love.

God then entered into a covenant with Abraham, the Father of Faith. Abraham was the leader of a tribe of people who would become God's Chosen People. God made three promises to Abraham that revealed the plan for the rest of salvation: his descendants would inherit the Promised Land and become a great nation; they would become a line of kings with great power; and they would outnumber the stars and bless the entire world. The sign of this covenant is circumcision, which literally marked God's people as belonging to Him.

God fulfilled His first promise to Abraham in the next covenant with Moses. Moses led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt into the Promised Land. There God would make them a great nation. It was, however, a long journey to freedom. God worked many signs of His unending love through Moses. The Law, summed up by the Ten Commandments, was chief among

these signs. By the Law, God taught His people the meaning of love.

The last covenant of the Old Testament was with David. This covenant fulfilled God's second promise to Moses. God chose David to be a mighty king who would found a royal dynasty. The sign of this covenant was the Temple, a house for worship. David's son, Solomon, built the first Temple. It was a glorious visible symbol of God's dwelling place on Earth with His people. The covenant with David also prophesied the coming of the Messiah, God's own Son, who would save the world from sin. The Old Testament prophets continued to prepare for the Messiah and make God's loving forgiveness known throughout the world.

Finally, in the fullness of time, or the time of the fulfillment of God's promises, God entered into human history and assumed a human nature in the Person of Jesus Christ. God made His love for us known in the life, Passion, death, Resurrection, and Ascension of His only Son. Jesus willingly gave Himself on the Cross to pay the debt of sin so that we would not have to. His Resurrection defeated death. At the Last Supper, He left us the Eucharist as the everlasting sign of the New Covenant. By receiving the Eucharist, Jesus' true Body and Blood, we become united in Him as the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. In this way, we are made sons and daughters of God and restored to the covenant relationship with God that He desired for us from the beginning.