

GOD PROMISED A NEW COVENANT

JEREMIAH 17; 31



CHRIST CONNECTION: The people couldn't follow the old rules perfectly, so God made a new promise. When we trust in Jesus, we are part of this new promise, and God's teachings stay in our hearts forever.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.

KEY PASSAGE: The LORD is good to everyone. Psalm 145:9

STORY POINT: God promised forgiveness to those who trust in Him.



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

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

The people of Judah faced the same problem we face today: sin. Failing to abide by and uphold the law was a constant reminder they were sinful and fell short of God's standards. Jeremiah told the people those who put their trust in mankind are cursed because men are sinful and imperfect. He also said people cannot save themselves. But Jeremiah shared good news. He told the people 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 is able to 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 5:3).

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 want to love and obey Him.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10-15 MINUTES

Greet preschoolers and open the session



LEARN

25-30 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers the story of the gospel



LOVE

Lead preschoolers to love the God of the gospel

30-40 MINUTES



LIVE

Lead preschoolers to live the mission of the gospel



BONUS

60-65 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers for an additional hour



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a supply of the following items available during all teaching sessions: Allergy Alert, Bibles, washable markers, crayons, scissors (adult use), blunt-tipped scissors, construction paper, copy paper, glue sticks, glue, tape, baby dolls, blocks, play dough, and a beanbag.

WELCOME

Play a happy game

- Big Picture Question Poster



LEARN

Talk about shepherds

- walking staff with hook

Tell the Bible story

- “God Promised a New Covenant” video (optional)

Review the Bible story

- Bible Story Picture Poster
- whiteboard or large paper
- dry erase marker

Learn and practice the key passage phrase

- Key Passage Phrase Marker



LOVE

Create a sheep on the hillside picture

- blue, green, and white construction paper
- cotton balls, 3 or 4 per child

Toss and say

- buckets, 3
- beanbags, 3



LIVE

Build a key passage phrase puzzle

- poster board
- Key Passage Phrase Marker
- painter's tape

Missions activity

- shallow bin with sand
- plastic animal figures

Snack and transition

- hand sanitizer (optional)
- “Match Sheep” activity page, 1 per child
- Big Picture Cards for Families



BONUS

Say the key passage phrase

- Key Passage Phrase Marker
- plush sheep

Gather sheep

- cotton balls
- painter's tape
- tongs

Make a heart wreath

- paper plates
- construction paper heart cut-outs of varying size and color



WELCOME Preschoolers

Provide as many learning activities as possible from the Love and Live sections to give preschoolers choices to learn. Incorporate the Bible story, the Christ Connection, and key passage phrase in your conversations as the preschoolers engage in learning activities throughout the session.

Use the following activity to greet children as they enter the classroom. Talk about the big picture question and answer. After each child completes the welcome activity, encourage him to participate in the activities provided from the Love and Live sections of the leader guide.

PLAY A HAPPY GAME

Display the Big Picture Question Poster within sight of children. Assist children in sitting together in a large circle. Play worship music while children pass a beanbag. Stop the music at random times and encourage the child holding the beanbag to share something that makes them happy. Continue play as time allows.

SAY **“**I am so glad you came to church today! We will continue learning about prophets God sent to talk to the people of Judah. Today, we are learning about the prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah told the people that God wanted to make a new promise to them. **GOD PROMISED FORGIVENESS TO THOSE WHO TRUST IN HIM.** Jeremiah said that God’s new promise was good news! You named some things that make you happy, such as your family and friends and your favorite toys and foods. Many of those things are blessings from God. Our big picture question and answer says, **What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.** God was good and loving to make a new promise to the people. We know that the Lord is good to everyone. God shows us His love by giving us the things we need. **”**

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 TALK ABOUT SHEPHERDS

Greet the preschoolers in group time. Show a walking staff with hook. Discuss how a shepherd might use a staff and hook to care for sheep. Remind the children that a good shepherd protects their sheep.

SAY Shepherds love and care for their sheep. In our story today, we will learn that God loves and cares for His people like a shepherd cares for the sheep. Listen carefully to learn how God used Jeremiah to share His promise with the people.

2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Open your Bible to Jeremiah 17: 31. Tell the Bible story using the following summary. You may choose to review the Bible story by showing the video.

GOD PROMISED A NEW COVENANT

SAY God sent a helper—a prophet named Jeremiah—to talk to His people because the people were doing wrong things. Jeremiah said that if the people trust in God, they will be like strong trees. Jeremiah also said that sometimes our hearts can trick us, but God knows what's in our hearts, and He gives us what we need.

Jeremiah told the people that sometimes we think we'll be happy if we do things our own way instead of God's way, and that is why we sin. We need God's help to do what is right.

Then Jeremiah shared happy news. He said that God was going to make a new promise to His people. God said, “I will be your God, and you will be My people. I love you so much, and I will take care of you like a shepherd takes care of his sheep. I will make you happy again. I will forgive your sins.”

Christ Connection: The people couldn't follow the old rules perfectly, so God made a new promise. When we trust in Jesus, we are part of this new promise, and God's teachings stay in our hearts forever.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

3 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

Display the Bible Story Picture Poster within easy sight of preschoolers. Draw a simple tree, heart, smiling face, and a sheep on a whiteboard or large sheet of paper. Point to each object as you review the things Jeremiah said about God. After you review the story, call out the name of each picture and encourage children to play out each item.

SAY Do you remember what Jeremiah said about strong trees? [Allow responses.] He said that if we trust in God, we will be like strong trees. Trees grow tall and strong even when there are storms. Trust in God, and you will be strong like a tree. Jeremiah said that sometimes our hearts will trick us but God knows what is in our hearts. He knows when we are sad or happy. He knows when we need a friend or a hug. God loves us! He gives us the things we need! Jeremiah also said that he had happy news. He said that God was going to make a new promise because He loved us. **GOD PROMISED FORGIVENESS TO THOSE WHO TRUST IN HIM.** Jeremiah said that God would take care of us like a good shepherd cares for his sheep. **”**

4 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush”:

The LORD is good to everyone,
Everyone, everyone.
The LORD is good to everyone,
Psalm 145:9

5 LEARN AND PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at Psalm 145:9. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage phrase. Lead children to say the key passage phrase while they pretend to be sheep.

SAY The key passage phrase reminds us that God cares for us like a good shepherd cares for his sheep. God protects us. He is the our good Shepherd! **”**

6 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for caring for us and being our Good Shepherd.

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





LOVE

THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God because of what we learned

1 PRETEND TO BE A STRONG TREE



Guide the children to scatter around the room and pretend to be trees. Suggest that they hold out their arms like branches. Pretend to be the wind and walk around the room blowing or waving your arms like the wind. Let different children pretend to be the wind and blow around the room.

SAY God sent the prophet Jeremiah to talk to His people. God wanted His people to be strong and to stop doing wrong things. Jeremiah said that if the people trusted in God, they would be like strong trees. Jeremiah said that sometimes our hearts trick us but that God knows what we need and will give it to us. The Bible tells us that the Lord is good to everyone.

2 CREATE A SHEEP ON THE HILLSIDE PICTURE

Give each child a sheet of blue construction paper, glue stick, white, blue, and green construction paper, blunt-tipped scissors, and three or four cotton balls. Guide children to tear strips of green paper and glue across the bottom of their light blue paper to make hills and fields. Suggest that they tear a strip of blue paper to add to the green hills for a creek and white paper to create white clouds in the sky. Assist preschool in gluing several cotton balls on the hillside to create sheep.

SAY God told Jeremiah to tell the people that He would take care of His people like a shepherd takes care of his sheep. God said that He loves His people, and **GOD PROMISED FORGIVENESS TO THOSE WHO TRUST IN HIM**. A shepherd watching the sheep in your picture would lead them to the creek for water to drink and would let them eat the grass on the hillside. He would stay alert and watch for enemies like wild animals that would harm the sheep. God promised us that He would care for us!

3 TOSS AND SAY

Write holy, good, and loving on three sheets of paper. Tape one paper to each bucket. Set up the buckets in a row. Invite preschoolers to try tossing a beanbag into each bucket. Give each child a turn with three beanbags. Encourage preschoolers to cheer for each other as they toss beanbags. At the end of each turn, ask the big picture question to the entire group. Ask, **“What is God like?”** Invite preschoolers to respond with, **“God is holy, good, and loving.”**

SAY Our big picture question asks, **What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.** Jeremiah helped God’s people know these things about God as he told them about the new promise God was making with them. God promised to be with them and take care of them. God promised to turn their sadness into joy. God promised that He would put His teachings in their hearts and forgive their sins forever. This promise came true in Jesus. When we trust in Jesus, we are part of this new promise, and God’s teachings are with us forever.

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





LIVE

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE for God out of love

1 BUILD A KEY PASSAGE PHRASE PUZZLE

Before the session, write the words of the key passage phrase on a sheet of poster board. Cut the poster into several puzzle pieces. Hide the pieces in a designated area of your room or underneath chairs. Place the Key Passage Marker at Psalm 145:9. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage phrase aloud. Lead preschoolers to find the puzzle pieces. Invite the children who find pieces to come to the front and help assemble the puzzle. Attach it to a wall with painter's tape. Read the key passage phrase. Instruct preschoolers to repeat it together several times.

SAY You took the broken pieces of the puzzle and put them together to make it new again. Even though God's people broke their promises to Him by disobeying, God still cared for them. God is good to everyone. He gave His people a new promise. **GOD PROMISED FORGIVENESS TO THOSE WHO TRUST IN HIM.** When we trust in Jesus, we are part of this new promise. **“**

2 MISSIONS ACTIVITY

Fill a shallow bin with sand and place animal figures inside. Encourage preschoolers to take turns playing with the sand sensory bin while you tell the missions story. Lead a prayer for Youcef and the other believers in Libya. Ask God to give them strength and courage as they work to tell others about Jesus.

SAY A desert is a dry place covered with sand. The country of Libya is almost entirely desert. You can see sand in many places of Libya. A man from Libya named Youcef believed that Jesus is the Son of God after he read a New Testament that a friend gave to him. Youcef wants more people to believe Jesus is God's Son. **“**

3 SNACK AND TRANSITION



Post an Allergy Alert. Serve the snack. As children eat, review and talk about the Bible story. When children finish their snack, lead them to complete the activity page. As they work, continue talking about the Bible story and emphasize the Christ Connection.

SAY The people couldn't follow the old rules perfectly, so God made a new promise. When we trust in Jesus, we are part of this new promise, and God's teachings stay in our hearts forever. **“**

Remember to communicate helpful information to the bonus teaching hour leaders. If parents are picking up children at this time, tell them something their child did well during the session. Distribute Big Picture Cards for Families. Encourage parents to engage with the family discussion starters and family activities during the week.



BONUS Teaching Hour Group Time

1 PLAY A FOUR CORNERS GAME



Write numbers 1–4 on separate sheets of paper. Tape one paper in each corner of the room. Invite preschoolers to move to one of the papers while you count to three with your eyes closed. Before opening your eyes, say a number between one and four. Open your eyes. Lead one or two of the children at the numbered corner you named to share something they remember from today's Bible story. Repeat activity as time allows. Assist as needed with prompts to help preschoolers remember the story.

2 TALK ABOUT THE BIBLE STORY

Open the Bible to Jeremiah 17: 31. Use the summarized points below to talk about the Bible story:

GOD PROMISED A NEW COVENANT

- God sent a helper named Jeremiah to talk to His people because they were doing wrong things.
- Jeremiah said that if people trust in God, they will be strong like trees, but sometimes our hearts can trick us.
- Jeremiah explained that we need God's help to do what is right because doing things our own way leads to sin.
- Jeremiah shared happy news: God was going to make a new promise to His people, saying, "I will be your God, and you will be My people. I will forgive your sins."

3 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush":

The LORD is good to everyone,
Everyone, everyone.
The LORD is good to everyone,
Psalm 145:9

4 SAY THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at Psalm 145:9. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Lead children to say the key passage phrase while passing a plush sheep. Remind children that **GOD PROMISED FORGIVENESS TO THOSE WHO TRUST IN HIM.**

5 PRAY

Pray, praising God for always keeping His promises. Ask Him to help us trust Him even when it's hard.



BONUS Teaching Hour Activities

6 DRAW WAYS GOD HELPS

Give each child a large piece of paper, markers, and crayons. Ask them to draw ways that God helps us. Prompt them as needed to draw things like their church and parents who teach them how to live, trees and plants that provide food and shade for us, the sun that keeps us warm, and the Bible that tells us about God. Encourage children to thank God for His good gifts.

SAY **“**We heard today about the prophet Jeremiah, who told the people that God loved them. Jeremiah reminded us that God cares for us and that we are like a strong tree if we trust in God. **GOD PROMISED FORGIVENESS TO THOSE WHO TRUST IN HIM.** God says that He will take care of us like a shepherd takes care of his sheep. **”**

7 GATHER SHEEP

Make several squares on the floor using painter's tape to form "sheep pens." Scatter several cotton balls to use as "sheep," and spread them out on the floor. Provide preschoolers with tongs and encourage them to pick up the sheep and place them in the pens. Play several rounds so each child has an opportunity to gather sheep.

SAY **“**Jeremiah was a special messenger of God called a prophet. Today we will learn about several messages he told God's people. One of these messages was that God would take care of His people like a shepherd takes care of his sheep. You helped take care of our sheep by helping them into their pens. **”**

8 CREATE A HEART WREATH

Before the session, prepare a wreath base for each child by cutting out the center of a paper plate, leaving just the rim. Then, cut out heart shapes in various sizes from different-colored construction paper. During the activity, give each child a paper plate wreath, some paper hearts, and a glue stick. Encourage children to glue the hearts around the rim of their plate, creating a colorful heart wreath. To extend the activity, help children personalize their wreaths by writing names of people they love on the hearts. Assist with spelling or writing as needed.

SAY **“**Whose name did you write on your hearts? Why did you choose that person? [Allow responses.] God sent Jeremiah to give a special message to His people. Jeremiah explained to the people that sometimes our hearts trick us and tell us we should do things our way instead of trusting in God's way. Jeremiah reminded the people that we need God's teachings in our hearts to help us do what is right. When we trust in Jesus, we are part of this promise, and God's teachings are with us forever. **”**

Release preschoolers to parents according to your church's security procedure. Tell them something their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session.