

READY-TO-USE ALL-AGE SERVICE

The everlasting promise



MEETING AIM

To discover that God keeps his promises.



BIBLE PASSAGE

Isaiah 7:10-14; 9:2-7;
Micah 5:2-5



KEY VERSE

"For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us" Isaiah 9:6.

+ PRAYER AND WORSHIP ACTIVITY

Option 1



You will need: paper strips and sticky tape in a dispenser at the end of every row of seats

Demonstrate how to make a Möbius strip: take a simple strip of paper, give it a half-twist and stick the ends together. This loop has a never-ending edge. If you pinch one edge and pull the loop gently through, your fingers will eventually travel along both edges without stopping or letting go. In a time of quiet, encourage everyone to follow the edges of their Möbius strips. As they do so, thank God for his never-ending promise to be our God and for his love that never lets go. You could add more loops to turn these Möbius strips into a paper chain of prayer.

Option 2



You will need: PowerPoint presentation as detailed below

Invite everyone to suggest signs and symbols of promises. Is there something special you do when you make a promise (eg pinky promise, cross your heart)? Are there any special words (eg "I swear")? Are there any physical signs of a promise (eg wedding ring, Bible)?

Show your presentation with the words and images below. (If you don't have access to a projector, print out photographs and ask a volunteer to read the words.) You may like to play some appropriate music in the background. Ask the congregation to reflect on these signs of God's promises to his people:

- A rainbow with the words: "I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life." (Genesis 9:15).

- A starry sky over a beach with the words: "I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore." (Genesis 22:17).
- The cross with the words: "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).

+ STORY



You will need: rope or masking tape; printouts of the verses below

Before the service, create a labyrinth or winding path around your church to represent God's journey through history with his people. You could create a simple Bronze Age labyrinth (search Google images). Display the verses at various points along the way, like milestones. Make the milestones large and special-looking eg paste text on gold cardboard milestones or place large-print readings inside glittery gold gift bags.

- To Noah: "I will remember my covenant between me and you." Genesis 9:15.
- To Abraham: "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you." Genesis 12:2.
- To David: "My love will never be taken away ... Your house and your kingdom will endure for ever before me." 2 Samuel 7:15-16.
- To Jeremiah, about the people of Israel: "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." Jeremiah 31:33.
- To the prophets, about the promised saviour (the Messiah): Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7; Micah 5:4-5. You could also offer sheets with the full readings (Isaiah 7:10-14; 9:2-7; Micah 5:2-5) with these verses in bold / bigger font.

Invite the congregation in all-age groups to walk along the path you have created, stopping at each station and reading God's promises aloud.

+ REFLECTIVE RESPONSE TO THE STORY

Option 1



Invite people to walk along the labyrinth or path and reflect on their own journey with God.

When has he felt close or far away? When have you felt that he has kept his promise

to love and look after you? Provide a sitting-still option for this activity: print out your labyrinth design with stations marked and the texts included beneath the design. An A4 sheet should be the right size for people to 'walk' the labyrinth with their fingers and ask themselves the same questions.

Option 2



You will need: Bibles or printouts of today's readings (Isaiah 7:10-14; 9:2-7; Micah 5:2-5); felt-tip pens; large sheets of paper with a Superman 'S' badge and 'Saviour (Messiah)' underneath

Ask your congregation to divide into all-age groups, where there will be options to read, write, draw, think and discuss. Each group gathers around a 'Superman' sheet. Explain that in the time of the prophets, the Jewish people needed a big hero - a saviour or Messiah - to rescue them from their enemies. Ask: who needs a saviour to rescue them today? Who or what do they need rescuing from?

Invite groups to write or draw people or situations in need of help. Some members of the group may continue with this, while others may read today's texts more closely and consider: what promises do these prophets make about Jesus the Messiah? They can think, discuss and add their answers to the Superman sheet (eg he will bring everlasting peace).

+ GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Ask your congregation to divide into all-age groups and discuss the following questions:

- I wonder which of God's promises you like best.
- I wonder if there is a promise we could take away and still have all the promises we need.
- When have you felt that God has kept or not kept his promises?
- What would you like to ask God about his promises?

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