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An introduction to the *Promises* syllabus, including hints and tips for running lessons, can be found in the file 'Promises introduction.pdf' on the *Teaching Little Ones: Promises* CD-ROM.

A list of all activity materials, including photographs, can be found in the file 'Activity materials.pdf' on the *Teaching Little Ones: Promises* CD-ROM.

More information about teaching Sunday School to young children can be found in Stephanie Carmichael's book, *Their God is so BIG*, available from Matthias Media. For more details visit www.matthiasmedia.com.au.

God keeps his promises

Bible reference... Numbers 23:19
Psalm 146:6

Lesson aim... For the children to understand that God always keeps his promises. We also briefly talk about the Bible, and introduce the Old and New Testaments and the fact that God's book, the Bible, is a big book made up of lots of little books.

Main message... God always keeps his promises.

Memory verse... Psalm 146, verse 6, 'He always keeps his promises'. See page 8 for actions and page 9 for a copy of the verse.

Story preparation... Find two soft toys (or puppets) or willing teachers for the *Introduction*. You will need a Bible (*Good News Bible*) for a class Bible. This is introduced today and will be at Sunday School each week. Place bookmarks in it for the beginning of the Old and the New Testament. Print the Memory Verse on page 9 for the *Story*. Have name tags for each child and some spares for new children. Prepare for the *Special activity*, too.

Special activity...

As this is the first lesson of the year, spend time getting to know each other. If this is a new group of children, give each child a name tag. Sit the children in a circle (if possible) and say your name and something about you. Then say each child's name and play "Pass the promise". It's a short game with three purposes: (1) it helps the children get to know each other; (2) it relates to the idea of promises; and (3) it gives the children a treat to look forward to. It requires a bit of advance preparation.

Preparation: You will need to print page 10 and cut along the lines. Place each caption into its own envelope and seal it. Before the lesson, write each child's name on an envelope. Bring spares along for any new children, and ensure that you have written their name on an envelope before you begin. Place all the envelopes in a paper bag. You will also need some stickers to hand out at the end of the lesson.

Instructions for the game: The children sit in a circle and pass the paper bag around the group. Either pass the bag around the circle stopping at each child in turn, or use music to pass it around like a game of 'pass the parcel'. When the paper bag comes to a child or when the music stops, the child holding the paper bag takes an envelope out of the bag

and gives it to the child whose name is on the front. You could also have the children saying something about themselves when each child receives their envelope (e.g. they say something like ... 'I like ice-cream/swimming/cats etc'). Please remember there may be shy children who don't want to talk. Don't pressure them, instead you say something you like about them (e.g. 'I like Tom's smile', 'I like Claire's dress').

When each child receives their envelope, they don't open it, but place it on the floor in front of them. Once all the envelopes have been distributed then *all the children open their envelopes at the same time*. The teacher reads the caption to the class (as they probably can't read it themselves). Emphasise the idea of it being a promise and they will get their sticker at the end of the lesson. Pass a container around the circle to put their rubbish in.

Introduction...

You need two soft toys (Tilly and Poppy), two puppets or two teachers. You could dress the soft toys (or teachers) in an amusing way to bring a laugh (as this will help the children feel more at ease on their first day of Sunday School). The purpose of the *Introduction* is to illustrate the idea of making a promise and keeping/not keeping it. The soft toys don't have to talk! You do the talking for them. Here's an idea of what to say:

"I have two friends here for you to meet. This is Tilly and this is Poppy. Tilly is sad today because Poppy promised to give her a chocolate. Poppy had a big bag of chocolates [*show paper bag*] and she was going to give one to Tilly. But do you know what Poppy did? Poppy ate all of her chocolates and didn't give any to Tilly. Look, there aren't any chocolates left [*show the empty bag*]. Poppy promised to give Tilly a chocolate but she ate them all herself and didn't give Tilly any. Poppy didn't keep her promise.

"Tilly is sad because Poppy promised to give her a chocolate and Poppy didn't keep her promise. I know what will make Tilly happy. I have a bag of stickers here [*show bag of stickers and look at Tilly as you talk*]. Tilly, I promised to give all the children a sticker at the end of the lesson today. I promise that I will give you a sticker too. You'll get a sticker at the end of the lesson, but now it's time to listen to the story." [*Place the paper bag out of sight. Tilly and Poppy can 'sit and listen' beside the children where they won't be a distraction.*]

Story...

"Here is our class Bible [*show your class Good News Bible*]. The Bible is a very special book because it is God's book and it is true. God's book, the Bible, is one big book made up of lots of little books and each little book has a name, like this book [*open to the first page of one book of the Bible, e.g. Genesis, and read its name saying something like, 'This is the first book in the Bible and it's called Genesis.'*] All the little books in the Bible are in the Old Testament or the New Testament. The first part of the Bible is called the Old Testament [*show 'Old Testament' title page*]. It was written a long, long time before God's Son, Jesus,

was born on earth. The other part of the Bible is called the New Testament [*flip through Old Testament to New Testament and show title page*]. The New Testament tells us about when God's Son, Jesus, lived on earth and after he died and went back to heaven. We're going to be hearing more about Jesus next week.

"We are going to read from a book in the Old Testament. Let's hear something that the Bible says about God in a book called Psalms [*open your Bible to Psalm 146:6*].

"Psalm 146, verse 6, is talking about God and says, 'He always keeps his promises.' [*show page 9*] Here's this verse written. This picture here [*point to Bible picture*] is a Bible. We'll see this picture often. It helps us remember that this comes from the Bible. I'll read the verse again [*read page 9 and point to the words as you read*].

"I'm going to read something else from the Bible. It's in a book called Numbers. Numbers 23, verse 19 says about God, 'Whatever he promises, he does'.

"God always keeps his promises. We've been talking about promises, like the promise that Poppy made to Tilly. Poppy didn't keep her promise, did she? But God *always* keeps his promises. Whatever God promises, he does.

"In the Bible we can read about God's promises and how he keeps them. God's promises are written down in the Bible so can we know about them. And this year at Sunday School we'll be hearing all about God's promises."

Conclusion...

"So when God makes a promise in his book, the Bible, we know that he will keep it. God always keeps his promises... not just sometimes... not just when he feels like it... God **always** keeps his promises. Whatever God promises, he does. How wonderful that God keeps his promises!"

What about us?...

"God's book, the Bible, is a very special book. It's the best book! At Sunday School we learn about God and his son Jesus, from the Bible. So we always have a Bible here at Sunday School—our class Bible. I hope that you have a Bible at home too, and can hear more from the Bible at home.

"Each week we'll be hearing something from the Bible. What we heard today is an important thing to remember—God always keeps his promises. We are going to talk to God now and thank him for keeping his promises."

Pray...

Thanking God that he keeps his promises. Pray that God will help us learn more about him and his son Jesus as we hear from his book, the Bible, here at Sunday School.

Activity suggestions...

1. Flag

This activity is suitable for children of all ages. Print page 13 for each child. Before the lesson, gather together items which could be used to decorate the flag, like coloured or patterned paper shapes, cellophane shapes, stickers and decide whether you (you could tape it or staple it), or the children (tape it), will be attaching the flag to the flagpole (you need a drinking straw or strip of cardboard for the flagpole). In the lesson, first read out the caption on the flag and explain that the children can decorate around the caption and on the other side of the flag. The children then decorate their flag with pasting and/or stickers (and drawing if they wish). If you haven't attached the flagpoles, then help the children attach their flag to a drinking straw or cardboard strip with cellotape or masking tape.

For older children, you could print page 14 instead of page 13. The children can colour the letters in the text as well as decorate the other side of the flag.

2. Poster

Print page 15 for each child. In the lesson, first read the text to the children. Decide before the lesson whether the children will fill in the page with colouring or pasting. If colouring, in the lesson the children colour in the pattern. If pasting, the children can fill in each shape of the pattern in a different way (e.g. in one or two shapes paste cellophane pieces, in one or two shapes paste scrunched pieces of crepe or tissue paper, in one or two shapes draw glitter glue stripes, etc) or in a different colour (e.g. one or two shapes green, one or two shapes red, one or two shapes blue, etc.) or a combination of both (one or two shapes green scrunched pieces of crepe paper, one or two shapes blue cellophane, etc).

Alternatively, you could paste the caption from page 16 (or page 11 for a smaller caption) onto a piece of cardboard which is larger than the caption (hence there will be a border of more than 3 cms around the caption which can be decorated) with two holes punched in the top. The children decorate around the edge of the cardboard by pasting collage items (e.g. you might have some tinsel left over from Christmas, paper shapes, segments of coloured party cases, foam shapes, gumnuts, pasta). Check that your glue is strong enough for the collage items (you might need child-friendly PVA glue). Once completed, the teacher threads string through the punched holes in the top so that it can be hung.

3. *Shaker*

This activity is suitable for younger children. The children decorate a shaker. To make the shaker either:

1. fold a paper plate in half, put rolled up pieces of aluminium foil inside, staple closed and place tape over the ends of the staples for safety. Paste on streamers, coloured paper shapes (which you have prepared beforehand) and/or stickers and a caption from page 12; or
2. put some uncooked rice or dried beans inside a small plastic softdrink bottle, place the lid on and secure firmly with tape. Decorate the outside with stickers or shapes cut from contact paper, and then add a caption from page 12. You could give each child a page of plain computer address labels for them to draw patterns or scribbles on, and then use as stickers to cover the bottle.

4. *Bible page*

Before the lesson, print page 17 for each child. In the lesson, before beginning the activity, read the page to the children and explain how they will be completing it. Also explain that even though the Bible is made up of lots of little books, there is only one big cover on the outside of the Bible. Then the children colour the word 'Bible', draw a picture of a big Bible in the first box, then a picture of little books in the second box (older children who can read and write could write the name of some books of the Bible on each of their little books but this will just be a selection—they can't draw all the books of the Bible!). If possible, read the text to the children as they are completing the activity.

* IMPORTANT: At the end of the lesson and activity, *don't forget* to give them their promised stickers!!

Memory verse...

Psalm 146, verse 6, 'He always keeps his promises'.

There are two options for learning this memory verse. As this is the first term of the year, we don't want to confuse the children with too many things to learn. If you are doing the action rhyme (which will be introduced next lesson) with the children, you might want to keep this memory verse simple and just repeat the words each week. The memory verse is written on page 9, but remember that most children will not be able to read it. This is for the teacher's benefit rather than for the children! If you would like to do some actions with the verse, then here are some suggestions. Before you begin, explain that the verse is talking about God—the word 'he' means 'God'. I have written the word 'he' instead of 'God' as that is how it appears in the *Good News Bible*.

Please note: Clasping hands together will be an action that will always be associated with the word 'promise' (or 'promises').

Actions to accompany verse:

Psalm 146	<i>no action</i>
verse 6	<i>show six fingers</i>
He	<i>point up</i>
always	<i>arms outstretched</i>
keeps	<i>clap hands together</i>
his	<i>point up</i>
promises	<i>clasp both hands together</i>



Psalm 146, verse 6,

'He always keeps his
promises'

Captions for Pass the Promise game:

<p>It's a promise: at the end of the lesson you will get a sticker</p>
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Psalm 146, verse 6

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Psalm 146, verse 6

**God always keeps his
promises**



Psalm 146, verse 6

Caption for activity #3

<p>God always keeps his promises</p>  <p>Psalm 146, verse 6</p>	<p>God always keeps his promises</p>  <p>Psalm 146, verse 6</p>	<p>God always keeps his promises</p>  <p>Psalm 146, verse 6</p>
<p>God always keeps his promises</p>  <p>Psalm 146, verse 6</p>	<p>God always keeps his promises</p>  <p>Psalm 146, verse 6</p>	<p>God always keeps his promises</p>  <p>Psalm 146, verse 6</p>
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God always keeps his promises



Psalm 146, verse 6

God always keeps
his promises



Psalm 146, verse 6

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Psalm 146,
verse 6

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Psalm 146,
verse 6

God's book the
Bible

is a big book



made up of lots of little books. And each book has a name.



The first part of the Bible is called the
Old Testament.

The other part of the Bible is called the
New Testament.