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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.

Jesus is the ‘Yes’ to God’s promises

Bible reference... John 3:16
2 Corinthians 1:19-20
Galatians 3:29
Ephesians 1:3
1 Peter 2:9-10
1 John 5:11-13

Lesson aim... To help the children understand that all of God’s promises are ‘yes’ in Jesus—God keeps all his promises through Jesus. In adult terms, Jesus is the fulfilment of God’s promises in the Old Testament. Thus we are tying together the Bible’s teaching on promises from the Old to the New Testament and their culmination in Christ, but without using the terms ‘Old and New Covenants’. Please note that it is very difficult to summarise these great truths, but in this lesson we try to help the children begin to understand how Jesus is the fulfilment of God’s promises in the Old Testament.

Main message... Jesus is the ‘yes’ to all God’s promises.

Memory verse... 2 Corinthians 1, verse 20, says about Jesus ‘for it is he who is the “Yes” to all of God’s promises’. We will learn this next week.

Vocabulary... descendants—means children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren...
blessing—a blessing is a good thing that comes from God.
heaven—is where God and his son, Jesus live. We can’t see heaven but we know that it is the most wonderful place ever.
nation—a country (or land) and the people who live there.

Story preparation... Before the lesson (for instance as children arrive at Sunday School), you need to make some promises to some children—see details in the *Introduction*. Print pages 13-15 and colour . You will need to cover the lower half of each page with a piece of paper or cardboard held on with blu-tack. In the story, you ‘uncover’ the bottom half when indicated. In order to tell the story, it would be ideal if the three pages could be attached to a wall or pinboard or

easel, as illustrated below. You may want to show page 9 in the story and read the verse.

Display of pages 13-15:

(i)	(ii)	(iii)
(iv)	(v)	(vi)

Introduction...

[You will need to make some promises to some children before the lesson—you are promising to show one child ('Lauren') a friend of yours with the same name, you are promising to show another child ('Glen') your pet (dog). And you are promising to show a third child ('Julie') someone from your family (your sister). Obviously you could use different promises, just adjust the Introduction accordingly.]

“Before today’s lesson I made some promises. I promised Lauren that I would show her a friend of mine called Lauren, because they both have the same name. I promised Glen that I would show him my dog because he likes dogs. I promised Julie that I would show her my sister. Well I have some photos here and I’m going to show them. Lauren, here is my friend Lauren. Now can everyone see this photo *[show whole class]*. Glen, here is my dog. Now can everyone see this photo *[show whole class]*. Julie, here is my sister. Now can everyone see this photo? *[show whole class]*

“I made some promises and then I kept them. I said ‘yes’ to each of my promises to Lauren, Glen and Julie when I kept my promise and showed the photos. Sometimes I can keep a promise today, and I could do something even better later. I showed Glen a photo of my dog today, but if I brought my dog in to meet Glen that would be an even better ‘yes’ to my promise. I showed Julie a photo of my sister today, but on another day I might bring my sister to meet Julie. That would be an even better ‘yes’ to my promise.

“We’ve been hearing about God keeping his promises to the Israelites. We’re going to hear today about an even better ‘yes’ to all God’s promises.

(Only do this if necessary: “Before we begin, let’s quickly check that you can remember what some words mean. God promised Abraham descendants. Do you remember what descendants means? God promised Abraham and his descendants blessing. Do you remember what blessing means?”)

‘People in the Bible’...

[Show class Bible] “Here’s our Bible. Can anyone remember what the first part of the Bible is called? It’s called the Old Testament *[move your hand from the beginning to the end of the Old Testament on chart]*. It’s the part of the Bible before Jesus was on earth. The Old Testament tells us about the promises God made to lots of people. See if you can tell me who they are when I point to them *[point to each of them]*...God made promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and Joshua. And also the Israelites. All these people are in the first part of the Bible *[show class Bible and put Genesis to Joshua between your fingers]*. There are a lot more stories in the rest of the Old Testament *[put Judges to Malachi between your fingers]*. And then there comes the New Testament *[show New Testament in Bible, then put Bible down]*. The New Testament tells us about Jesus *[point to Jesus on the chart]*.

Clapping rhyme...

This reinforces what we have just said about promises in the Old Testament and is an opportunity for the children to have a concentration break. You clap in each line where indicated with the underlining. So in both stanzas, the first three lines have 4 claps in each line and the fourth line has three claps. There’s a copy of the words of the clapping rhyme on page 10. Cover the last stanza for now.

God made a promise to A-bra-ham.
God made a promise to I-saac.
God made a promise to Ja-cob.
God makes promises!

God kept his promise to A-bra-ham.
God kept his promise to I-saac.
God kept his promise to Ja-cob.
God keeps his promises!

Story...

“Let’s see if we can remember the promises God made to Abraham. *[point to (i)]* God promised Abraham descendants who would be God’s people. *[point to (ii)]* God promised Abraham’s descendants land. *[point to (iii)]* And God promised to bless Abraham and his descendants. God kept those promises to the Israelites. There were lots of descendants and they were blessed and Joshua led them into Canaan, the Promised land. God said ‘Yes’ to all his promises back then.

“That was many, many years ago—hundreds and hundreds of years ago. And God kept those promises. Each of the promises was a ‘yes’ back then.

“The promises that God gave his people, the Israelites, are also for us. That’s because of Jesus. A book of the Bible with a long name, 2 Corinthians, says (in 2 Corinthians 1 verses 19 and 20), that ‘Jesus Christ, the Son of God...is the “Yes” to all of God’s promises’. It also says that Jesus ‘is God’s “Yes”’. So God keeps his promises in a special way through Jesus.

[read (i)] “God promised Abraham descendants who would be God’s people. *[uncover (iv)]* Because of Jesus we can be God’s people, too. When we believe that Jesus is God’s son, and live with Jesus as our king, then God calls us his people. People who live with Jesus as their king are God’s people in an even better way than the Israelites were.

(For older children you could add the following: “The Bible says (in Galatians 3 verse 29) that ‘if you belong to Christ, then you are the descendants of Abraham and will receive what God has promised.’ When we believe in Jesus we are some of those descendants! And we receive what God promised them.”)

[read (ii)] “God promised Abraham’s descendants land. *[uncover (v)]* Because of Jesus, God promises God’s people heaven. We can look forward to the best place of all—heaven. Heaven is where God lives and it’s even better than the Promised land. We’re going to hear more about heaven soon.

[uncover (vi)] “Because of Jesus, God’s people today are blessed. God promised Abraham that all the nations would be blessed. Because of Jesus, people who live in lots of different countries all over the world are blessed. Because of Jesus, God says ‘Yes’ to his promise to bless us too. God blesses us in lots and lots of ways.”

Conclusion...

“God keeps all his promises and he keeps them best of all for us in Jesus. Jesus is the ‘yes’ to all God’s promises.”

What about us?...

“It’s important to know the promises that God made hundreds and hundreds of years ago in his book, the Bible. When we know the promises God has made we also know how he has kept his promises. The very exciting thing is that the promises God made are for us—for you and me—because of what Jesus has done. It’s very exciting that we can be God’s people. It’s very exciting that we can look forward to heaven. And it’s very exciting that God blesses us. We’ll hear more about some of the ways he has blessed us in the next few weeks at Sunday School.

“We have lots of things to thank God for. We can thank God that all his promises are ‘yes’ in Jesus. And we can thank God that his promises are for us because of Jesus. Jesus is the ‘yes’ to all God’s promises!”

Pray...

Thanking God that all his promises are 'yes' in Jesus. Thanking God that his promises are for us because of Jesus.

Clapping rhyme...

If you have time and would like to add another stanza to the clapping rhyme, then here it is. You clap in each line where indicated with the underlining. So the first three lines have 4 claps in each line and the fourth line has three claps.

God makes promises to us.

God keeps promises to us.

Jesus is the 'yes' to
all of God's promises.

Activity suggestions...

1. Colouring booklet

Before the lesson, print pages 16-17, cut in half and assemble as a booklet with pages (i)-(iv). In the lesson, read the booklet. The children then colour it.

2. Caption box

Some of the options for this activity are suitable for younger children. Each child will need a tissue box, biscuit box or milk carton (or similar sized box). Print page 11 (one per two children), cut out each caption and place all four in an envelope for every child. Decide before the lesson how the children are going to 'cover' the outside of their box/carton and prepare accordingly. The options include:

- contact paper shapes—you roughly cut contact paper into shapes keeping the backing on, the children peel and stick;
- pasting—coloured paper, doiley segments, coloured patty case segments which you have cut out beforehand—it is important that you check that the glue will adhere to the surface of the box/carton;
- stickers—check first that stickers adhere to the surface of the box/carton. You could give each child a sheet of plain computer address labels which they can make patterns on by making swirly lines with felt pens. An option for boys is that they could draw road markings on their sheet of address labels, then cover their box with 'roads' and then either you could give them a few car stickers, or draw a (simple) car on a few labels (older children can draw their own). Or you could give each child a sheet of plain

computer address labels for them to cover their box and then give them other stickers (like plain circle stickers) to add over the white label stickers;

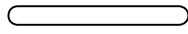
- drawing—you will need to cut a piece of plain paper to a size which wraps around the box. The children draw a picture or decoration on the paper. Once completed, the teacher wraps it around the box and secures it with cellotape.

Once completed, the children attach the captions which are in their envelope to each side of the box.

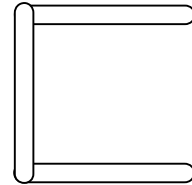
3. Paddle pop stick frame

For this activity, you will need paddle pop sticks (which can be purchased at craft shops or school craft suppliers) and child-friendly PVA glue. Print page 12 and cut out one box for each child. In the lesson, the children make a paddle pop stick frame in the following way:

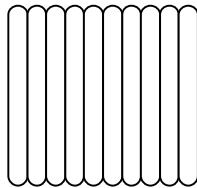
1. lay down two paddle pop sticks horizontally like so:



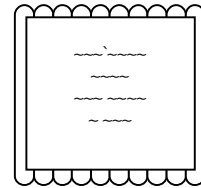
2. place glue on these two sticks and then add a paddle pop stick like so:



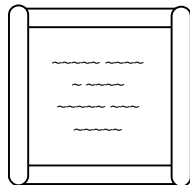
3. continue adding paddle pop sticks until the two original sticks are covered



4. then paste the verse onto the sticks (don't use too much glue on the paper):



5. then glue four more paddle pop sticks around the edge, thus framing the verse:



6. decorate the paddle pop stick frame with glitter glue.

4. Drawing

Before the lesson, print page 18 for each child. In the lesson read the text. The children draw a picture of God's people.

Memory verse...

2 Corinthians 1, verse 20, says about Jesus 'for it is he who is the "Yes" to all of God's promises'.

We read this in today's story. We will be learning it as a memory verse next week.



2 Corinthians 1, verse

20, says about Jesus:

'for it is he who is the

"Yes" to all of God's

promises'.

God made a promise to Abraham.

God made a promise to Isaac.

God made a promise to Jacob.

God makes promises!

God kept his promise to Abraham.

God kept his promise to Isaac.

God kept his promise to Jacob.

God keeps his promises!

God makes promises to us.

God keeps promises to us.

Jesus is the 'yes' to
all of God's promises.

Captions for activity #2:

<p>God's promises are 'yes' in Jesus.</p>	<p>God promised Abraham's descendants they would be God's people. Because of Jesus, we can be God's people too.</p>
<p>God promised Abraham's descendants land. Because of Jesus, God promises God's people heaven.</p>	<p>God promised to bless Abraham, his descendants and all the nations. Because of Jesus, God's people today are blessed.</p>
<p>God's promises are yes in Jesus.</p>	<p>God promised Abraham's descendants they would be God's people. Because of Jesus, we can be God's people too.</p>
<p>God promised Abraham's descendants land. Because of Jesus, God promises God's people heaven.</p>	<p>God promised to bless Abraham, his descendants and all the nations. Because of Jesus, God's people today are blessed.</p>

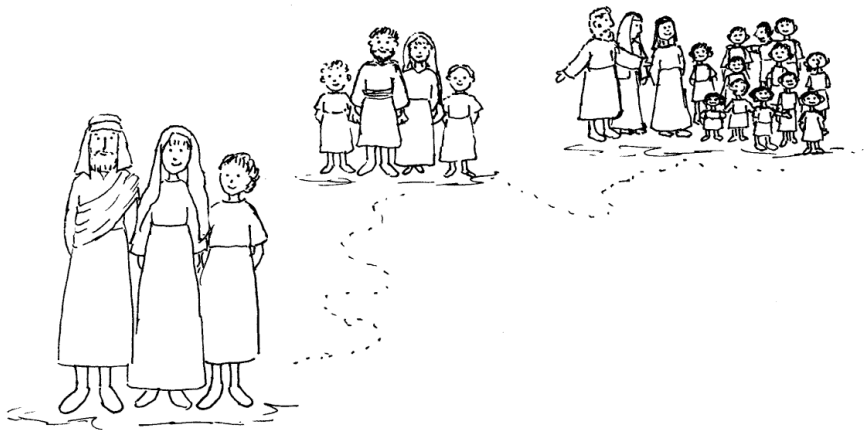
Captions for activity #3:

Jesus is
the 'yes' to
all God's
promises.

Jesus is
the 'yes' to
all God's
promises.

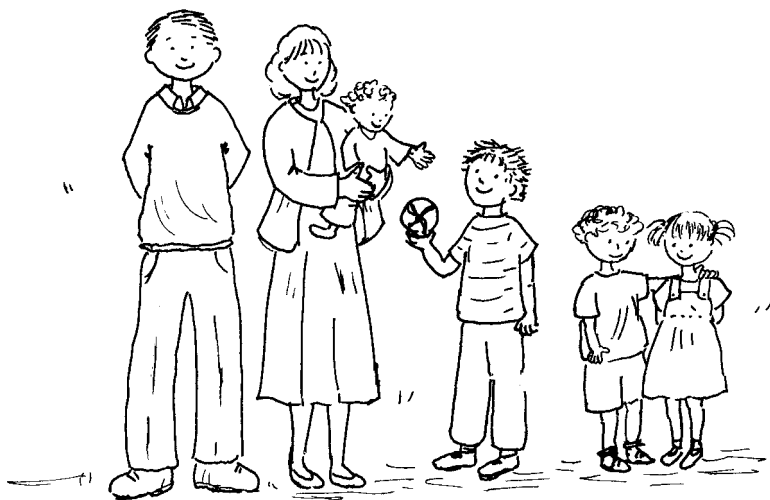
(i)

God promised Abraham descendants who would be God's people.



(iv)

Because of Jesus we can be God's people too.



(ii)

God promised Abraham's descendants land.



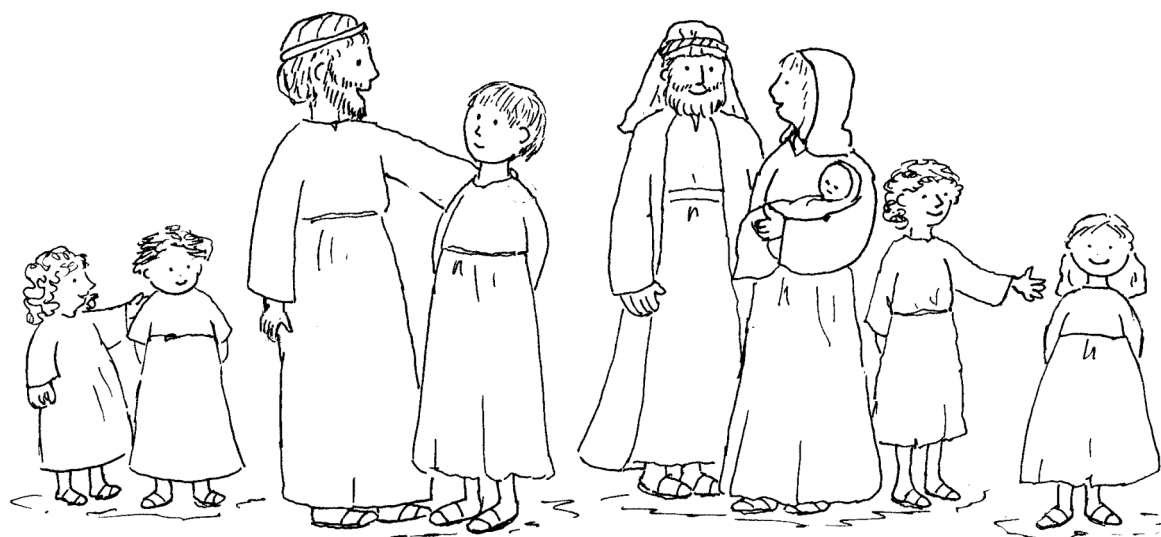
(v)

Because of Jesus, God promises God's people heaven. We don't know what heaven looks like, but we know it will be the best place ever!



(iii)

God promised to bless Abraham and his descendants. God also promised that all the nations would be blessed.



(vi)

Because of Jesus, God's people today are blessed. God's people live in lots and lots of different countries all over the world.



(i)

- God promised Abraham descendants who would be **God's people**.
- God promised Abraham's descendants **land**.
- God promised to **bless** Abraham and his descendants. God also promised that all the nations would be blessed.

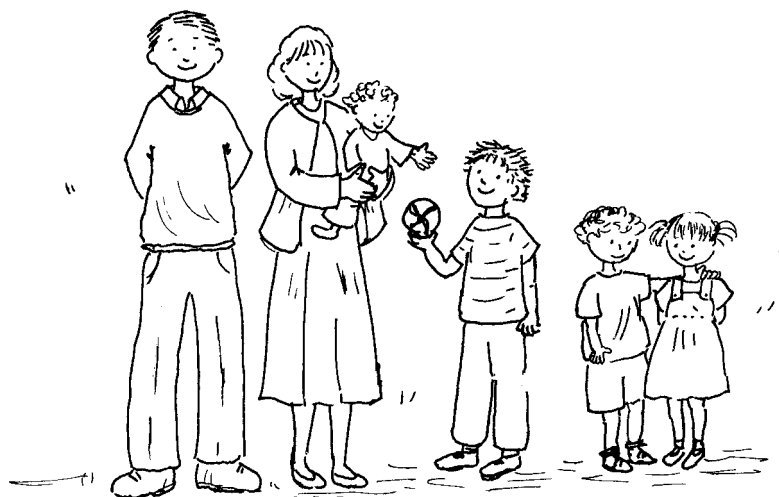
God's promises are 'yes' in Jesus



2 Corinthians 1, verses 19 and 20

(ii)

Because of Jesus we can be **God's people** too.



(iii)

Because of Jesus, God promises God's people heaven. We don't know what heaven looks like, but we know it will be the best place ever!



(iv)

Because of Jesus, God's people today are blessed. God's people live in lots and lots of different countries all over the world.



God's promises are 'yes' in Jesus.



2 Corinthians 1, verses 19-20

<p>God promised Abraham's descendants they would be God's people. Because of Jesus, we can be God's people too.</p>	<p>God promised Abraham's descendants land. Because of Jesus, God promises God's people heaven.</p>	<p>God promised to bless Abraham, his descendants and all the nations. Because of Jesus, God's people today are blessed.</p>
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