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“People can hurt others when they don't keep their promises, just like I hurt you.”

Inspire (for parents)

“But Mom ... you *promised!*” I was in trouble now. I remember the promise well. I had promised my gregarious kindergartner that he could invite a friend for a playdate. According to my five year old, “playdates” make or break a kindergarten social life. At that moment I wasn't as concerned about his kindergarten social life as I was about breaking his trust. I had said the “P” word. I *promised*, and now I could not honor my promise. I had an appointment that I could not break. So why did I promise my son a playdate when I had an appointment? I suspect it was in the height of impatience as my son begged and I absentmindedly said, “Yes, you can have a friend over ... Yes, I promise.”

I felt horrible. I could not take the promise back and reverse the damage. I had failed to live up to his expectations of me. I needed to ask my sobbing five year old for forgiveness. It was a humbling and teachable moment.

When the sobbing subsided, I told my son that I was sorry. Amidst the tears, he listened with interest as I admitted that people (even moms) don't always keep their promises. I explained,

“People can hurt others when they don't keep their promises, just like I hurt you. At times, it will be hard to trust a person's promise, but you can *always* trust God's promises. He will keep every promise that He gives.”

I may have been the one who learned the most important lesson that day. Promises hold a lot of power. They can either build or break trust. Knowing this, I am grateful for God's promise from 2 Timothy 2:13 (NirV), “Even if we are not faithful, he will remain faithful. He must be true to himself.” God always keeps His promises!

by Sue Funkhouser

Getting Started

Scripture: Numbers 13; 14:26–33; Joshua 5:13–6:27 (Joshua and Jericho)

Main Point: God Always Keeps His Promises

This resource is designed to allow your family to have time in God's Word **before your children attend church**. Because God's plan is for parents to be the spiritual nurturers of their children's faith, we know that as you grow spiritually, your children will grow spiritually as well.

Equip (for parents)

God made a promise to the Israelites. Although they had been in the desert for 40 years, they were about to enter the land of Canaan—the land God promised to Abraham many years before. Upon first inspection, the people were fearful of what awaited them in this new place: giants, strong armies, fortified cities, and potential hostility—all of which the people of Israel felt ill-equipped to handle. However, God was with His people. He had raised up a new leader who was serving under Moses' leadership and would take them into the land. God would be with Joshua just as He was with Moses. He would go before His people, conquering all of the obstacles they would face.

After the death of Moses, God appointed Joshua as his successor. Various acts of service had prepared him to lead Israel into the new era. Educated and informed in the principles of governing, he had been groomed for leadership. God promised Joshua, “I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. ... No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Joshua 1:3, 5).

God gave specific instructions to Joshua for successfully taking the city. Following each of God's instructions, none of the priests, armed men, Joshua, or any of God's people had to pick up a weapon to fight for the destruction of the city. God gave it over to His people just as He had said. He had gone before them. He was their defense, their strength, their provider, and their God. He fulfilled each promise He made to His people. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. ☺

REMEMBER VERSE

Love one another. You must love one another, just as I have loved you.

John 13:34 (NirV)

Support (for parents & kids)

This week > **JUST FOR FUN**, gather some materials (couch or bed pillows, etc.) to represent the walls of Jericho. Find some open floor space in your home and allow your children to build the “walls” of Jericho, arranging the items in a circle so you'll be able to march around them when the time comes.

As you read **Joshua 6:1–16**, follow along by marching around the pillows each time the passage talks about marching around the city. Then, as you read verse 15, march around the “wall” seven times and give a loud shout! Ask your children: Who made the walls fall? Talk with them about how important it is to listen for and follow God's instructions, even when they don't always make sense. Remind your children that God was with Joshua and was leading the way.

Share with your children that what they just heard was part of The Big God Story, and they'll hear more about how God keeps His promises in church this week. Close your time by praying and acknowledging that God is the leader of our lives. ☺