

## WE CELEBRATE GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

All Activity Sheets

### KEY WORDS

FAITHFULNESS FIDELITY

### BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Luke 2:21-40

### LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help students be certain that God always fulfills his promises, trust in God's promises of salvation, and demonstrate these truths in their daily lives

### MEMORY VERSE

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14, NIV\*).

### PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

Preadolescents live in a fast-paced world of changes. Many times parents, although well intentioned, are caught in that rhythm, and it is difficult for them to remember everything they promised their children. It is not unusual for preadolescents to get mad at their parents or friends when they fail to keep their promises.

The encouraging truth of this lesson is that from the beginning of mankind, down through the centuries, and to our present day, God has always remained faithful. He does not forget what he said he will do. He always keeps his promises.

When studying the history of God's faithfulness to Anna and Simeon, the students will feel encouraged. God made us many promises: salvation, victory over temptation and sin, and an eternal home in heaven. The record of God's promises fulfilled throughout history is perfect. Today's students can count on God to be faithful to them too.

As a preadolescent teacher, you're someone important in the process of building student faith. Faithful Christians are a visible expression of what God's faithfulness is. Ask him to help you be the faithful teacher to help build in your students an unwavering faith in him.

## BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Fidelity or faithfulness is not an easy quality to find these days. Unfortunately, there are always those who promise easily and with equal ease break their promises. Too often, preadolescents are victims of that unfaithfulness. One mother told how her ex-husband had repeatedly promised her children that he would take them to have fun together. However, time after time, he broke his word without a phone call or explanation!

Contrary to that story, today's text is a story of faithfulness, both divine and human. As we saw in the previous lessons, God always keeps his promises. In this lesson, we'll see again how God was faithful, both with Joseph and Mary and with Simeon and Anna.

Jesus was born to Jewish parents. Joseph and Mary lived in harmony with the law of Moses and religious customs of the people of God. The law required the circumcision of male children on the eighth day, and the purification of the mother 40 days after her son was born. Joseph and Mary faithfully obeyed both customs.

The circumcision ceremony symbolized the separation between Jews and Gentiles, and emphasized the special relationship they had with God. As part of that event, Joseph and Mary officially named their son Jesus, just as God had indicated through their messenger angels.

After the birth of a son, according to the ceremony, for 40 days the mother was considered impure and could not enter the temple. On the 40th day the parents went to the temple to present to the priest a sacrifice and an offering for sin. The wealthy people brought a lamb for the sacrifice, and a dove or pigeon for the sin offering. And the poor, like Joseph and Mary, could bring two turtledoves or two pigeons. Again we see their faithfulness in doing what was required, regardless of the cost that would require.

That day, God confirmed the birth of the Messiah - as a fulfillment of his promise - to two special people: Simeon and Anna.

Even in times of moral and spiritual decline, God has his devoted followers. Simeon was one of those men. The Holy Spirit had revealed to him that before he died, he would see the promised Messiah. That day, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Simeon had gone to the temple. When Joseph and Mary arrived with the baby Simeon met them there.

While Simeon took the child in his arms, his prophetic vision allowed him to see in Jesus the One who would bring us salvation. His prophecy about Jesus included these two important truths:

That Jesus is the Savior of the world, and not only of the Jews, but Gentiles as well.

That while Jesus came to bring salvation to the whole world, man's response determines who will have the experience of salvation.

Anna, whose name means "full of grace," was pious as well, and highly respected as a prophetess. She also recognized in the infant Jesus the promised Savior. Because of her age and reputation, her report would surely have had even more credibility.

Reflect a few moments about God's faithfulness to you. How has this affected your life? In what ways were you and are you faithful to God? And what about the preadolescent group?

## INTRODUCE THE LESSON

Use these activities to help focus the preadolescents' attention and prepare them to learn today's biblical truth.

### Coat of arms

Say: "During this month, we have been talking about the fact that Jesus is God and man at the same time. Since he is God, he is equal to God in everything. Today we'll learn about one of God's special qualities: his faithfulness. We'll see what that means, and why God's faithfulness is important to us.

Ask: "What's so special about Christmas?"

Then request that they discuss their responses with the entire group.

Ask: "Why talk about Jesus?" (Jesus is the reason for Christmas. If he had not been born to be our Savior, that special day would not exist.)

Ask: "Being with family and friends is what makes Christmas so special, right?" (Again, the meaning of Christmas comes from the birth of Jesus, the Savior.)

Say: "Jesus was a good man, but how can we be sure that he is the Son of God? Other countries and religions have their special holidays too. Christmas does not have to be more special than other celebrations. What's so great about Christmas?" (While Jesus became a man, he was also God. At Christmas we celebrate the incarnation, the moment in which God became man, and in that way he came to live with us and was our Savior. That makes Christmas different and more special than any other important event.)

Remind them: "In these last three sessions, we have remembered how God promised, prepared and made possible the incarnation, that is, the birth of the Savior. We saw how God fulfilled his promises. Today we'll learn about another promise that he fulfilled."

## TEACH THE LESSON

### God's amazing faithfulness

Carefully study Luke 2:21-40 before this session. Tell the Bible story in your own words based on Luke 2:21-40.

After the story, tell them: "The title of today's Bible story is 'God's amazing faithfulness.' What does faithfulness mean?"

Allow the students to respond. Ask the preadolescents to give you some examples of faithfulness. (Those who keep their promises. God is always faithful and wants his children to be faithful. People who come to work and do well are faithful. Those who join a church and live as God teaches them are faithful. Those who keep their promises are faithful.)

Reflect on the following questions:

Ask: "Who was faithful in this story?" (Everyone. Joseph and Mary were faithful to their religious duties. Simeon and Anna faithfully served God. God faithfully fulfilled his promise to send a Savior and allow Simeon to see him before he died.)

Ask: "Is it important for us that God is faithful and keeps his promises?" (Yes, it is very important, because we could not trust him if he broke them.)

Say, "In your own words, summarize what this Bible story teaches you." (God is faithful; we can trust him, etc.) Clarify any misunderstandings that the students may have.

## CONNECT THE LESSON

Use these activities to help the students connect the biblical truth with their lives.

**Important word:** Fidelity

If possible write the word "Fidelity" on the blackboard. Explain that fidelity means that God is faithful because he does not change. He never stops loving and helping us, he always was and always will be. He offers us forgiveness, peace, his presence, strength and hope. He is faithful to each one of us.

### "Great is your faithfulness"

Before the session, ask a member of your church's praise team to sing a hymn in the group that talks about God's faithfulness. If possible, ask a musician to accompany them with a guitar, piano or other instrument.

In the group, introduce your visitor and say: "Today (say the name of the visitor) came to sing to our group a hymn that speaks about God's faithfulness."

After the song, explain what the lyrics say. If you need to, clarify the terms they do not understand. Let the students also sing the song along with the visitor.

## PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

Say the memory verse two or three times with the group.

Ask the students to put the stars with the text of the month on the mural to review it together. Remove the stars and mix them up

well. Then, call someone to put them back up in the correct order. When finished, repeat the verse together. Do the activity again, allowing a different student to participate each time.

### **We celebrate God's faithfulness**

Hand out Student Activity Sheet #417-D and guide the group through this exercise.

Point out the phrase: "full of grace and truth." Discuss what they think that phrase says about Jesus.

Say: "In the original language of the Bible, those words mean 'inexhaustible love and faithfulness.' Jesus is full of inexhaustible love and faithfulness because he is God. Inexhaustible means his love can never be used up. His love never, ever ends."

## **WRAP-UP**

### **Pray**

Thank God for his faithfulness. Then tell them: "It is important to know that God fulfilled the promise he had made to Simeon. But what promises can we expect God to fulfill for us today?"

### **Encourage**

Provide time for them to write a thank you letter to God. If they do not have writing materials, encourage them to think about what they want to thank God for. Encourage those who can write a letter to God to read it to you.

End by praying together for each other, asking God that the group would learn to trust that he always keeps his promises, and to believe that despite the fact that people fail us, God never lets us down.

### **Invite**

Tell the students the next session will begin a new unit. It is important for them to attend.