



A Study for Children  
on the Promises of God

By Sally Michael

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## PREFACE

Allow yourself to imagine with me an analogy that might help explain the reason this curriculum was written, as well as the prayerful hope of the outcome of these lessons on the promises of God.

Suppose you are pleasantly splashing about in an innertube on a gently flowing river. It is a sunny day, everything looks bright and cheerful, and you are enjoying a nice relaxing ride downstream. There are tree roots on the side of the river, which you know you can use to pull yourself out of the water. You don't really need the roots right now, but you are glad to know that they are there when you do.

However, up ahead there are rapids. As you turn the bend in the river, all of a sudden you realize that you are "in over your head". You twist around to see if there is a way to get out of the water before you hit the rapids, and as you do, you lose your innertube-- and you can't swim. You bob up and down in the water, gulping for air and your only thought is to get to the edge of the river and grab a tree root. You have one hope and you focus all your efforts and energy on the tree root. If you can only get to a root, it will be your salvation. Using supreme effort and determination, you reach the edge of the river but you are swept underwater over and over, barely emerging from the water for a gulp of air before you are pushed under again. You blindly reach out in your wild descent and your hand grabs a tree root.

But your troubles are not over because the bank is too high and too steep to scale. Until help comes, and you are rescued from your trouble, you fiercely hold onto the root. Hours pass, during which time your arm begins to ache, you are continually submerged, you swallow mouthfuls of water, your body is numb from the cold, but you know you cannot let go because the tree root is your only hope of survival. To let go would mean destruction. So although you are weary and you feel like giving up, you can't because you have nowhere else to turn.

The promises of God are like that. On the one level, they are a source of peace and beauty, a calm reassurance of future hope, and a comfort. On the other level, they are a matter of life or death. When things are going fine, it is nice to know that "they are out there". They are a gentle source of comfort and you know that if you need them, you can reach out to them. But if you have ever been "in over your head"-- if you have felt yourself sinking in desperation, if you have been overwhelmed by floods of troubles; they are a matter of life or death. What gets you through the "really hard times" is hanging onto the tree root of the promises of God. Once you have had one of these "life and death" experiences through which the promises of God has carried you, you will never be the same and you will never view the promises merely as "a source of peace and beauty, a calm reassurance of future hope, and a comfort"; they are a matter of life and death.

My first "life and death" experience of the promises of God took place when I was twenty-eight years old. At that time, my husband and I were in the midst of a foreign adoption. We flew overseas to pick up our daughter and came home empty-handed. For eight long months we battled the ups and downs of bad news/good news and the emotions of long distance parenting. Finally the day came for us to return to continue the adoption process, but nothing progressed. So we spent six months in a foreign country trying to keep from despair and to bring home a child who was already our daughter in our hearts.

What kept us from giving up and going home? What kept us believing in the goodness of God in spite of foreign officials who told us to give up, an American consulate who told us to go home and forget about this child because the situation was hopeless, and our own fears and doubts?

The promises of God. Promises like,

*Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning (Psalm 30:5b)\*;*

*Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me?*

*Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God. (Psalm 42:11)\*; and*

*I waited patiently for the LORD; he inclined to me and heard my cry.*

*He drew me up from the desolate pit, out of the miry bog; and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the LORD. (Psalm 40:1-3)\**

The promises of God keep us from sinking. They are precious and they are powerful because behind these promises is the all-powerful, all-knowing, faithful, patient, gracious, unchanging, sovereign Ruler of the universe. God Almighty backs up every one of His promises. He is watching to see that His word is performed (Jeremiah 1:12).

This curriculum has been written in the hope that when children find themselves experiencing troubles-- both the everyday battles of faith and the more important troubles, they will turn to the promises of God. May they learn that the promises of God are more than adequate to help them fight the daily fight of faith in things such as victory over a bad attitude, forgiving an offense, bending their will to give up their own desires for the good of another, and trusting God for a particular need, so that at the time when they face their first "life and death" faith experience, they will grab for the firm, secure tree root of the promises of God-- and they will come through victorious.

May the next generation trust in the never-failing promises of God,

Sally Michael

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	5
PREFACE	7
INTRODUCTION	11

LESSONS *(All pages in this part are found in the section labeled LESSONS.)*

Lesson 1	PROMISES	1
Lesson 2	PROMISES TO BELIEVERS	7
Lesson 3	PROMISES TO UNBELIEVERS	13
Lesson 4	GOD ALWAYS KEEPS HIS PROMISES	19
Lesson 5	FAILURE TO TRUST IN THE PROMISES	25
*Lesson 6	GOD IS FAITHFUL TO ALL HIS PROMISES	31
Lesson 7	TRUSTING IN THE PROMISES	37
Lesson 8	CONDITIONAL PROMISES	43
Lesson 9	PROMISE: SALVATION FOR ALL WHO CALL	49
Lesson 10	PROMISE: GOD WILL FORGIVE YOU	55
*Lesson 11	PROMISE: GOD WILL BE WITH YOU	61
Lesson 12	PROMISE: NOTHING CAN SEPARATE YOU FROM GOD'S LOVE	67
Lesson 13	PROMISE: GOD WILL COMPLETE HIS WORK IN YOU	73
Lesson 14	PROMISE: YOU WILL BEAR FRUIT	79
*Lesson 15	PROMISE: GOD HEARS YOUR PRAYERS	85
Lesson 16	PROMISE: THE LORD WILL GUIDE YOU	89
*Lesson 17	PROMISE: GOD WILL PROVIDE YOUR NEEDS	97
Lesson 18	PROMISE: GOD WILL NOT WITHHOLD ANY GOOD THING	103
Lesson 19	PROMISE: GOD WILL FIGHT FOR YOU	109
Lesson 20	PROMISE: GOD IS SLOW TO ANGER	115
Lesson 21	PROMISE: GOD WILL GIVE YOU STRENGTH	121
Lesson 22	PROMISE: THOUGH YOU STUMBLE, YOU WILL NOT FALL	127
Lesson 23	PROMISE: GOD WILL DISCIPLINE YOU	133
Lesson 24	PROMISE: GOD PLANS GOOD FOR YOU	139
Lesson 25	PROMISE: GOD WILL BE WITH YOU IN THE HARD TIMES	145
Lesson 26	PROMISE: GOD WILL NOT BRING ANY UNNECESSARY SUFFERING INTO YOUR LIFE	151
Lesson 27	PROMISE: IF YOU PERSEVERE UNDER TRIAL, YOU WILL BE REWARDED	157
Lesson 28	PROMISE: THE LORD WILL KEEP YOU FROM HARM	163

Lesson 29	PROMISE: GOD WILL DELIVER YOU FROM ALL YOUR TROUBLES	169
Lesson 30	PROMISE: JOY COMES IN THE MORNING!	175
Lesson 31	PROMISE: ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD	181
Lesson 32	PROMISE: GOD WILL NOT REJECT HIS PEOPLE	187
Lesson 33	GOD WILL NOT FORGET HIS PROMISES	193
Lesson 34	LOOK UP, NOT DOWN	199
Lesson 35	GOD IS ACCOMPLISHING HIS PURPOSES	205
Lesson 36	GOD IS NOT SLOW IN KEEPING HIS PROMISES	211
Lesson 37	FIGHTING THE FIGHT OF FAITH	217
Lesson 38	STANDING ON THE PROMISES OF GOD	223
Lesson 39	TRUSTING IN THE PROMISES LEADS TO OBEDIENCE	231
Lesson 40	PROMISE: ETERNAL LIFE	237

**APPENDIX** (*All pages in this part are found in the section labeled APPENDIX*)

- A NOTE TO PARENTS
- A WORD ABOUT "TELL THE NEXT GENERATION" SHEETS
- A WORD ABOUT "GROWING IN FAITH" SHEETS
- THE GOAL OF GOD IN REDEMPTIVE HISTORY
- A NOTE ON RESOURCES

**TAKE HOME SHEETS** (*All pages in this part are found in the section labeled TAKE HOME SHEETS.*)

- LESSON TAKE HOME SHEETS (1-40)

\*Lessons with the asterisk are lessons which can be omitted if time does not allow for all forty lessons. Lesson 4 and Lesson 6 teach the same truth but from a different perspective (God is a promise keeper because His character is trustworthy-- Lesson 4; God keeps His promises as shown in a specific incident) because it is such an important truth. Lessons 11, 15, 17 contain familiar truth.

## LESSON 1: PROMISES

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SCRIPTURE: **Psalm 145:9; Genesis 9:12-17**

### MEMORY VERSE:

***The LORD is good to all;  
he has compassion on all he has made.  
Psalm 145:9***

### KEY THEMES:

- **The Bible contains many promises.**
- Some of the promises of the Bible are for all people; some are for particular people.
- God is good to all; God has compassion on all people.

### WORSHIP SONGS:

<i>Standing on the Promises (1<sup>st</sup> verse)</i>	R. Kelso Carter Music
<i>My God is So Big</i>	Traditional
<i>Every Promise in the Book is Mine</i>	Traditional

### VISUALS & MATERIALS:

Bible; button for each child and adult leaders (Note: eventually each person will need a button but they will be given out over the course of the study so only one button needs to be ready for lesson one), bag of candy.

### PREPARATION:

- Study the scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the children in your class.
- Purchase a bag of candy.
- Make an activity sheet captioned "God Keeps His Promises".

## INTRODUCTION

- Show children the “button” saying “God always keeps His promises”. Pin the button on your shirt while commenting about how nice the pin is.

*EXAMPLE: Do you like my button? Isn't it nice? Can anyone read the words on my button? Do you know what I like about this button? Would you like a button like mine ?*

- State that you will give every child a button to keep; but that you are not going to give everyone a button now. Tell the children that you will give the buttons at different times in the following weeks (over the course of the study). Tell the children that you PROMISE to give them each a button.

This is an activity that will carry over through the whole study. Children will be given buttons at different times to help them learn to trust in a promise and to show the trustworthiness of the person making the promise. It is very important to write down the names of all the children you are making the promise to and to make sure that by the end of the study each child has received a button. If there are any visitors in the class, you should give them a button now in case they do not return; OR restate your promise as applying to all regular attenders.

## LESSON

- Ask the children if they understand what you mean when you say, “I promise.”
- Define promise for the children:

*A promise is when a person says that he will do or not do something.*

- Give some examples of promises, such as:

*EXAMPLES: If your mom says, “I will take you to the park”, that is a promise. Your mom is saying that she will do something; she will take you to the park.*

*If your dad says, “I promise that I will not pull your tooth out. I will only wiggle it to see how loose it is”, he is making a promise. He is saying that he will not do something-- he will not pull out your tooth; and he is saying that he will do something-- he will only wiggle your tooth.*

*When I said that I would give you a button, I was making a promise. I said that I would do something; I would give you a button.*

- Explain that to make a promise is a serious thing. It is saying that you are going to do or not going to do something. It is not pretend, but you should really mean what you say.
- Explain that the Bible is full of promises. Ask the children if they know any of the promises in the Bible. List their answers (such as):

*EXAMPLES: “I will be with you always.”  
“For I know the plans I have for you... plans for good and not to harm you.”  
“Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you.”*

It is not necessary to have a comprehensive list. Just a few examples will make the point. You may want to write them on a chalk board.

THEME: There are many promises in the Bible.

You may need to help children understand that God is the writer of the Bible. This should not be a lengthy discussion.

- Ask the children who made those promises. Explain that since the Bible is the Word of God, when God says those things, He is making a promise.
- Explain that when the Bible says something like, "He is slow to anger", God is saying something about Himself -- that He is slow to anger. Since God is the writer of the Bible, and He is saying things about what He is like; God is making promises about the kind of person He is. He is saying that He will do something -- He will not get angry quickly or easily.
- Explain that there are different kinds of promises. Show a bag of candy. Using the bag of candy, demonstrate that some promises are universal and some are particular.

**EXAMPLES:** *If I say, "I am going to give a piece of candy to everyone", who is this promise for? [everyone]*

*If I say, "I promise to give a piece of candy to all the girls", who is this promise for? Will the boys get a piece of candy? Would (boy's name) or (boy's name) get a piece of candy? Why?*

*If I said, "(name of child in the room) will get a piece of candy", who is that promise for?*

THEME: Some promises are for all people and some promises are for particular people.

Walk carefully through this discussion. At the response of "everyone", use specific names of children in the room to demonstrate the concept of everyone. Will (name) get a piece of candy?

- Emphasize that some promises are for all people and some promises are only for specific people.
- Look up *Psalm 145:9*.

*The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.*

- Ask the children what this verse promises. Ask them who the promise is for. Reinforce this point by asking if this promise is for all kinds of people, such as:

**EXAMPLES:** *Does God promise to be good to (child's name?) Does He promise to be good and kind to your mom?...to (pastor's name?)... to (name of a famous person?) to a bad person?*

Have a sword drill with this verse. (See directions on page 26 of the Introduction.)

THEME: God is good to all.

THEME: God has compassion on all people.

You may need to define compassion, kindness, forgiveness, tenderness.

- Reinforce the point that God promises good to everyone--even evil people. Explain that everyone is undeserving of the goodness of God, but God is gracious, kind, merciful and good, and He promises good to all.
- Look up *Genesis 9:12-17*.

*And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a*

You may want to have a sword drill with this passage. After the children have located the passage, assign each verse to a different child.

You may need to define "covenant". (an agreement of God with man)

*covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, 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. Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth. So God said to Noah, 'This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth.'*

■ Ask the children what is promised in this passage. Ask who the promise is for. Ask the children what sign God gave to show that He has made a promise and that He will keep His promise.

Show a picture or drawing of a rainbow.

■ Ask the children if the world has been destroyed by a flood since the flood in the time of Noah. Tell the children that whenever they see a rainbow it should remind them that God keeps his promises.

■ Tell the children that the promises of God are a present to us. We do not deserve the promises; God does not owe us anything. Because God is good and gracious He has given us promises of blessing.

■ Remind the children in closing that you have made a promise to all of them to give them a button, and tell them that you will keep your promise. Set the buttons in a spot that they can see but which is not accessible to them.

■ You may want to end the lesson by giving each of the children a piece of candy from the bag of candy you used for demonstration purposes. You may want to first give a piece of candy to all the girls, then to all the boys demonstrating once again that some promises are unique to a particular group or individual.

#### APPLICATION

*Do you like it when someone promises you something? Is it hard to wait for promises to be fulfilled (for a person to give you what they have promised?) Is it hard to wait for your button? Do you think (teacher's name) will give you what he promised? Do you think that it is fair that some people will not have to wait long and others will wait a long time? Why or why not? Is it hard to trust in promises? Is it harder when it takes a long time for a promise to be fulfilled?*

*Do you think it is fair that God is good to all? What would happen if God were only good to those who are deserving? Is anyone deserving of the goodness of God? Why is God good to all? (What does that tell you about God?) Are you grateful that God is good to you even though you don't deserve it?*

Application can most effectively be done in a small group setting. The questions are just suggestions of possible directions to take the discussion. Pray for wisdom and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you. Be sensitive to the answers and the needs of the children.

Have the children work on their workbook pages while you discuss the questions. This will hold their attention longer and will encourage them to open up without having to look you directly in the eye. Also, if you uncover a particular need of one child, then the other children will be occupied.

Be sure to pray for the children and encourage them to pray for each other.

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## ACTIVITIES

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- If the children did not work on the workbook page during the discussion, they can work on it now.
- You may want to work on a large project such as a bulletin board about promises.
- Make rainbows that say, "God keeps His promises." (You may want to make one great big rainbow mural for the classroom.)

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## SEND HOME

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- *Tell the Next Generation* and *Growing in Faith* sheet
- *A Note to Parents*
- *Tell the Next Generation* and *Growing in Faith* explanation for parents

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## NOTE

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- EXPLANATION OF THE USE OF THE BUTTON:

The promise to give the children a button will be used throughout the course of this study. The purpose of this activity is two-fold:

1. To help children to learn to trust in a promise.
2. To show the children the character of a trustworthy promise giver.

Frequently during the study, you will need to remind children of the promise of the button. Wear your button each week and create an interest in and a desire for the button. After a few weeks, give out the first button to a child. The buttons should be given out periodically throughout the course of the study and should extend the length of the study (40 weeks). The frequency and the number of buttons you give out will depend on the number of children in your class.

From time to time you should mention the button and restate your promise to give everyone a button. You may even want to ask specific children if they have a button and if they think they will get a button.

The order in which you give out the buttons to the children can be random, but if there is a child who demonstrates that he particularly needs to learn to trust in a promise or who needs to learn how to wait patiently, you may want to hold off giving this child a button until later. Do not discourage a child to the point of despair, but a little discomfort is good, as the purpose of this exercise is to help children learn to trust. Just as we sometimes get discouraged waiting for the fulfillment of God's promises, some children may get discouraged waiting for you to fulfill your promise. You may need to encourage them from time to time. Do not allow a child to gloat over the other children when he has received a button and others haven't yet.

After a child receives his button, you may want to encourage him to wear it every week. You may want to keep the buttons in the classroom if you are afraid they will get lost, or you may choose to send the buttons home with the children. Buttons should be given to the adults periodically as well, and worn weekly by the adults after they are received.

Children may complain that it is not “fair” that some will have to wait longer than others. You may need to explain that even though all the children have been promised a button, no one deserves a button. You are giving away the buttons out of the goodness of your heart. Since you are the giver, you have the right to decide when the children will receive the buttons. Explain that you are not giving out the buttons in this manner to be unkind, but that you are trying to teach the children something about trust. (In reality, the child who waits the longest will have the most opportunity to develop trust; so if someone wanted to complain about unfairness, he should complain about the disadvantage of receiving the button early!)

It is VERY IMPORTANT that every child you have promised a button receives a button. You want to demonstrate that you keep your promises. By the last lesson every child should have received a button. If visitors are told that everyone will receive a button, they should be given a button at that time in case they do not return.

It is also important to send home the parents’ letter regarding the buttons so that parents understand the point of this exercise, and so that parents encourage children at home, and not give in to a child’s complaint about not yet getting a button.

# Lesson 1

## PROMISES

### SCRIPTURE:

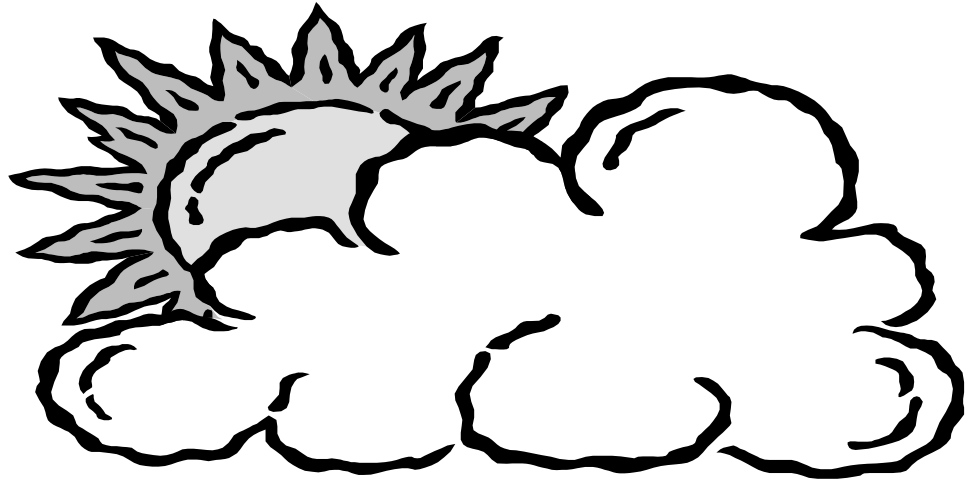
Psalm 145:9  
Genesis 9:12-17

### MEMORY VERSE:

*Psalm 145:9 — The LORD is good to all;  
he has compassion on all he has made.*

### KEY THEMES:

- The Bible contains many promises.
- Some of the promises of the Bible are for all people; some for particular people.
- God is good to all; God has compassion on all people.



P R O M I S E

**A** is when a person says  
**that he will do**  
**or will not do**  
**something**

*Decorate the word "PROMISE" and make a nice border for this poster.*

