



St Helen's
Bishopsgate

Joshua

Teaching material
for 5-11's

Trust our promise-keeping God



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The 'material' of Sunday school



The unfolding story of the Bible is revealed progressively through 66 books. These books were written by human authors who were inspired by the Holy Spirit. They were written with an agenda to a real audience. **Through these books, by His Spirit, God works.** He gives new life and discipled His people.

At Sunday school our desire is to teach through books of the Bible and allow our teaching to be directed by the Biblical author. We want to make the *main point* of our teaching the main point the author is teaching. We want the *aim* of our teaching to be the aim the author had. When we think about *how* we teach, we want to use the literary style, techniques, and content the Biblical author uses. In short, **we want to teach the Biblical author's point, for the Biblical author's purpose, using the Biblical author's practice.** The more clearly this is done, the more clearly the children will have heard the living God speak to them. As we strive to do this, we pray the fruit would be thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.

The team at St Helen's has worked hard studying some key books of the Bible. As we have done so we have endeavoured to write our material following the principles above.

5-11's material

The 5-11's material is presented as example talks. An example talk has several functions.

Firstly, it is a talk. This talk could be given verbatim, adapted, used for ideas, or ignored by the individual assigned to give the talk. For less experienced leaders they may wish to read verbatim the example talk, adding in props and visuals. For more experienced leaders they may wish to chop, change, and adapt the example talk as they see fit. For very experienced leaders they may wish to ignore the example talk and write their own, only looking at the example to see another voice on the passage.

Secondly, it is a commentary on the passage. For those not giving the talk the example helps them to understand the passage, how it can be taught, and areas of application. It will also indicate what the speaker might say so that everyone can align their group time with this.

Additionally, there is space for working. Use this to help you prepare for your group discussion and activity.

Teaching program | Joshua

Trust our promise-keeping God

Introduction to the book of Joshua

The book of Joshua isn't just a fun bedtime storybook. Neither is it a purely historical account of the people of Israel. The book of Joshua is designed to give us great confidence in the Lord – more specifically: that he is a promise keeper. The Lord has made us many good promises, but can we trust him to fulfil them?

The Lord had made the Israelites many **good promises**. He had promised to deliver them from Egypt and bring them to the Promised Land. He had promised to drive the nations out of this land, devoting them to destruction. He had promised to give the land to each of his people as an inheritance, and to live with them and bless them. Overall, God had promised his people rest. But will he keep his promise?

In **chapters 1-5** we have confirmation that the Lord has delivered his people out of Egypt. Here, a new Moses, as part of a new generation, through another Passover leave the wilderness and enter the land, fulfilling God's promise to Moses at the burning bush. God has kept his promise! In **chapters 6-12** we see the Lord delivering the land into the Israelites hands and destroying his enemies. Jericho gives us a 'pilot episode': the Lord does the work, and those who don't serve him are devoted to destruction; themes which carry through the rest of the section as city after city and king after king is conquered and totally destroyed. God has kept his promise! In **chapters 13-21** we see the land allotted to the people. Land is given to each tribe, and each clan, and each individual, all have an inheritance and all receive rest. God has kept his promise! **Chapter 21:45** conclude these sections: "Not one of all the Lord's good promises to Israel failed; every one was fulfilled." Far from being a promise breaker, God is a promise keeper.

"But, just as all the good things the Lord your God has promised you have come to you, so he will bring on you all the evil things he has threatened, until the Lord your God has destroyed you from this good land he has given you; If you violate the covenant of the Lord your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them" Joshua 23:15&16. **Chapters 22-24** explain that though they must serve the Lord and keep his covenant, in order to keep the good things he has given them, they won't. In the rest of the Old Testament we see the people abandoning the Lord, and as a promise keeper, the Lord keeps his promise and removes them from all the good things he had given them.

This final section shows the reader the need for a **better covenant**. We need a covenant which only promises good to us, a covenant which is not reliant on us, and a covenant which deals with the problem of sin. This is the new covenant we have as Christians. In this new covenant God promises to deal with sin and to give us hearts which know and serve him. Those who put their trust in Jesus have received this promise and now nothing will jeopardise us from receiving the other promises God has made.

These **better promises** God has made to us, are similar to the promises he had made to the Israelites. God has, and furthermore will, deliver us from sin and death. God will mightily do all that's needed for us to enter the eternal rest and will totally destroy all who don't serve him. God will give each of us rest in his new creation, where we will each have an inheritance, live with him, and be blessed by him. I wonder which promises excite you the most.

Will God keep his promises to us? Yes! God is a promise keeper. Just as he kept his promises to the Israelites, we can totally trust him to keep his better promises to us.

Memory verse

'Not one of all the LORD's good promises to Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.' Joshua 21:45

Teaching plan

Week/ Talk	Passage	Title	Big idea
1	Genesis 12:7a	The LORD's promise	See the promises the LORD makes to his people.
2	Joshua 1	Hero handover time!	Know that Jesus is our mighty leader.
3	Ch. 2-5	Delivery	Know that the LORD will deliver his people.
4	Ch. 6-8	Victory	Have confidence that nothing stops God from keeping his promises.
5	Ch. 9-12	Destruction!	Know that one day God will destroy all his enemies.
6	Ch. 13-21	Inheritance	God's children receive their inheritance
7	Ch. 21:43-45	Promise keeper	Be sure that God will keep all of his amazing promises.
8	Ch. 22-24	And they lived ever after.	Be joyous that you will have a happy ending.

The LORD's promise

Big Idea | See the promises the LORD makes to his people.

Introduction

Let me tell you about a promise a friend made to me. This was a pinkie promise so we got our little fingers and put them together; and my friend promised me that when I next see him, he's going to give me a giant bar of Cadbury Dairy Milk. Not a small bar, not a medium sized bar, but a giant bar of Cadbury Dairy Milk. Mmm yummy, my favourite – what a good promise! This is a promise I hope my friend can keep. I hope that he is a promise keeper. I'll tell you what, if my friend does keep his promise, then I'll bring it in and share it with you. But wouldn't it be rubbish if he didn't keep his promise – if he wasn't a promise keeper. It would mean no chocolate for me, and no chocolate for you. My friend has made a really good promise, but do you think he will he keep it? Hmm.

This term we're thinking about whether God is a promise keeper, and whether he'll keep the promises he's made to each one of us. But before we look at the promises he's made to us, we're going to think about some promises he made to the Abraham.

Point 1.

The LORD's promise to Abraham

Towards the beginning of the Bible, you might remember a man named Abraham. God had told Abraham to pack up his things and travel to the land of Canaan. The land of Canaan was a good land. It was filled with forests and fruit trees. Fields for flocks and cool streams. It was a good land. When Abraham arrived, the LORD appeared to him and made him a promise. [\[Read Genesis 12:7a\]](#) What a good promise.

But you might remember that Abraham's offspring, the Israelites, ended up not in the land of Canaan, but in the land of Egypt – oh dear. Perhaps the LORD won't keep his promise. And whilst they were in Egypt Pharaoh forced them to work as slaves. They had to build cities for him, and if they were lazy, they'd be beaten by their slave masters. At one point Pharaoh ordered all the baby boys to be thrown into the river Nile. God's people had suffered a lot. They cried out for help. And God heard their cry. And he remembered his promise to Abraham. And he promises to rescue them. [\[Read Exodus 3:17\]](#) What a good promise.

But being stuck in Egypt wasn't the only problem. The good land God had promised already had people living in it. These people didn't serve God, they were evil, and they didn't like God's people. So God promised that he would get rid of them. [\[Exodus 23:31\]](#) Driving out the inhabitants would mean the land would be theirs. What a good promise.

And God promised that he would give each of his people an inheritance in the land. Each of them would have their own bit. [\[Read Numbers 33:53-54\]](#) Each person would have a place to call home. A place where their enemies wouldn't hurt them. A place where they would be wonderfully blessed by God. A place of rest. And in this place of rest, God would live with them. What a good promise.

God had promised to give his people the land of Canaan. Will he keep this good promise? Is God a promise keeper?

Use the 'How to prepare a Bible talk' section in the leader's handbook to help you.

Visuals and props

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Now you might be thinking, 'does it really matter whether God keeps his promise to them?' Yes it does. We need to know whether God is a promise keeper. Is he someone who, when he makes a promise, he keeps it? Because...

Point 2. The LORD's promise to us

... you might know that God has made a really amazing promise to us. It's like the promise God made to Abraham, but this promise is even greater. The LORD has promised to deliver us from this broken world of sin and death, and to bring us into his new creation. Have a listen to this [Read Isaiah 65:17, 19, 21, 23, 24]

God promises to make a whole new creation. This new creation will be perfect and good. Imagine all the good bits of this creation. It'll be wonderful and beautiful. It will be filled with the best foods and the finest drinks. When you pack your bags and go to work it won't be hard and boring, but enjoyable. You won't hear any crying because it will be a place of joy. The predator and the prey will not harm one another. Everyone will live forever because there won't be any death. Everyone will be blessed. And God himself, the good God who protects and provides for his people, will live with them. What an amazing promise!

And he promises to give those who trust him, an inheritance in this new creation. Each of his people will live with him there. It'll be a place we can call home. What an amazing promise! But is God a promise keeper? Can we totally trust him to keep the promise he has made to us?

Conclusion

Remember how my friend promised me a giant bar of Cadbury Dairy Milk. What a good promise. But imagine if he didn't keep it – that would be awful! No chocolate for me, and no chocolate for you. How much worse if God didn't keep his amazing promise to us! What if God doesn't keep his promise of delivering us from this broken world of sin and death. What if God doesn't keep his promise of giving you an inheritance in his new creation. Well we wouldn't have an eternity where we live with God and are blessed by him forever. It would be awful if God didn't keep his amazing promises to us. Is God a promise keeper? Can we totally trust him to keep the promise he has made to us?

To find out, this term we're looking at the book of Joshua. We're not reading Joshua just because it's a book of fun stories about battles, like a bedtime story book. We're not reading Joshua just because it's a book of true stories, like in a history book. We're reading Joshua to see whether we can totally trust God to keep his promise. If we see God keep his promise to Abraham, then we know he's a promise keeper; and if we know he's a promise keeper, we know he will keep his promise to us too.

Let's thank God for making us an amazing promise.

Pray

Notes/ thoughts/ workings/ personal response:

Discussion: Digging deeper / ACTS

Aim - Recap/ apply/ pray: _____


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Materials:

Use the 'How to lead a Digging deeper discussion' or 'How to lead ACTS prayer' section in the leader's handbook to help you prepare.

 **A.** God, I praise you _____

 **C.** God, I am sorry _____

 **T.** God, I thank you _____

 **S.** God, I ask you _____

Activity: _____

Use the 'How to prepare a e.g. memory verse/ game/ VIPP activity' section in the leader's handbook.

Materials

Hero handover time

Big Idea | Know that Jesus is our mighty leader.

Introduction

Here are my special binoculars. [Have a set of binoculars – perhaps jazz them up.] These aren't ordinary binoculars. When you look through ordinary binoculars, objects that are far away appear very close. When I look through these binoculars, I can see back in time. [Look through the binoculars] Wooooow I can see _____! Hmm, would you like to be able to look back too? Well wonderfully, anyone who is near my special binoculars is able to look back too. But what you've got to do is to make binoculars with your hands. Every time we want to look back you've got to put up your hands like this. [Demonstrate] Shall we all give it a go. [Let the children give it a go. Ask them what they see.] But as much as all of those things are interesting, we don't want to waste our time on them. We've got more important things to look at.

Last week we heard God making an amazing promise to us. He promised to deliver us from this broken world of sin and death, and to bring us into his new creation. What an amazing promise! But as we look forward to the new creation, can we be sure that God will keep his promise to us? To be sure, we need to get our special binoculars, look back, and see whether he kept or broke his promise to Abraham. Is God a promise keeper or a promise breaker? If he's a promise keeper, we can trust he'll keep his promise to us. But if he's a promise breaker then we can't trust him to keep his promise to us. So let's get our binoculars ready and take a look.

Point 1.

Joshua

Let's begin by looking back to the promise God made to Abraham. You'll remember from last week that God made Abraham a promise. Many, many, many, many, many years ago, God made an amazing promise. Get your binoculars out to see if you can spot it. [Look through the special binoculars.] God promised Abraham that his family would have a good land that they could call home. Is he going to keep this promise? Let's keep on looking back.

[Look through the special binoculars.] Now I can see desert. And there's a big river. And beyond the river is a beautiful green land. And I see people! Could this be Abraham's family, the Israelites? Let's check in the Bible. [Read 1:1-2] Yes, looking back I can see the Israelites. They're standing on the edge of the promised land. God must have rescued the Israelites from Egypt. Brought them through the wilderness. And brought them all the way to the edge of the promised land. But, there's a big river in the way, the River Jordan. Now it looks like they're about to go in. But Pause!! They need to get ready. God tells Joshua and the people to get ready before they go in. Like at the start of a race. They need to 'get ready', and 'get set', before they 'go'!

What they need to do is get a new leader. You might have heard that Moses had died. God had used Moses to rescue the Israelites out of Egypt. But now they need a new leader, like Moses, to bring them into the promised land. I wonder who it might be. Let's look back and see. [Read 1:1-6] Joshua is the new leader. He will be strong and courageous. He will conquer the promised land and lead the Israelites in. No one will be able to stand in his way. God tells Joshua that he must obey all that he has commanded. Joshua must keep all of God's rules. If Joshua does this, he will have good success.

Use the 'How to prepare a Bible talk' section in the leader's handbook to help you.

Visuals and props

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The Israelites have a new leader. And Joshua now gives an order [\[Read 1:10-11\]](#) The people are now 'ready', and 'set', but we'll have to wait until next week for the 'go!'

[\[Look through the special binoculars.\]](#) As we look back, so far it looks like God is keeping his promise to Abraham. He's given the Israelites a new leader who is strong and courageous. God will use Joshua to bring his people into the promised land.

Point 2. Jesus

We've looked back. This helps us to look forward and see that God will use another leader to bring us into the new creation. Many years later, just like Moses, Joshua died. God's people needed a new leader. After lots of other leaders, who also all died, in the end God sent Jesus. Jesus is God's mighty King, and Joshua points us forward to him. (Did you know that the names Jesus and Joshua are the same, just in a different language.)

Jesus is strong and courageous. When he first came, he didn't come wielding a big sword or leading strong armies into battle to conquer cities. In fact, Jesus looked weak, he didn't look mighty, especially when he died on the cross. But he was strong and courageous. As mighty King Jesus died, he was conquering our greatest enemies: sin and death. A leader this mighty will surely bring God's people into the new creation. He's already conquered the things that'll stop us from getting there!

Conclusion

God told Joshua to be strong and courageous. And even more so, our mighty king, Jesus, is strong and courageous. God told Joshua to obey all that he had commanded. And even more so, our mighty king, Jesus, was fully obedient to God.

Just as God will use Joshua to bring the Israelites into the promised land. God will use our mighty king, Jesus, to bring us into the new creation. Will God keep his promises? It looks like it: the Israelites have Joshua, we have Jesus. But we'll have to keep on looking back through our special binoculars to make sure.

Let's finish by thanking God for our mighty king, Jesus.

Pray

Notes/ thoughts/ workings/ personal response:

Discussion: Digging deeper / ACTS

Aim - Recap/ apply/ pray: _____


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Materials:

Use the 'How to lead a Digging deeper discussion' or 'How to lead ACTS prayer' section in the leader's handbook to help you prepare.

 **A.** God, I praise you _____

 **C.** God, I am sorry _____

 **T.** God, I thank you _____

 **S.** God, I ask you _____

Activity: _____

Use the 'How to prepare a e.g. memory verse/ game/ VIPP activity' section in the leader's handbook.

Materials

Delivery

Big Idea | Know that the LORD will deliver his people.

Introduction

[Leader walks in dressed as a postman/delivery man.]

Leader: 'Hi, I've got a delivery for _____.'

Yes that's me, thank you. I wonder what it is. [Unwrap box, which inside has the special binoculars.] Excellent, some new special binoculars! The last pair I had were pinched by a seagull. Now we're ready again to look back to the time of Joshua to see whether God is a promise keeper. This week we're going to see a delivery. But don't worry, it's a much more exciting delivery than receiving a package in the post. Let's take a look.

Point 1. Looking back: Delivery out of Egypt

Get your binoculars out. [Looking through the special binoculars] I spy with my little eye... some Pyramids, lots of sand, and the Israelites. Remember how the Israelites were slaves in Egypt under Pharaoh. But God made a promise. He promised to deliver them. To deliver them from Egypt and into the promised land. [Invite a volunteer to be an Israelite. Stick a 'label' on them saying, 'deliver to the promised land'.]

Get your binoculars out again. [Looking through the special binoculars] And now I see: The rivers are red. Frogs, a lot of frogs. Hail, the size of your head falling from the sky. And darkness. Remember how God sent mighty plagues against Pharaoh. And did Pharaoh finally let them go? Yes! The Israelites left Egypt; but wandered into a big obstacle, the Red Sea. The red sea was a very big, and very wet problem. [Get the children to pretend to be the sea: They could raise their arms and sway them back and forth. They could make splashing sounds. Get the Israelite volunteer to stand in front of them.] The Israelites were stuck. They couldn't go over it because there were no bridges. They couldn't go under it because there were no tunnels. They couldn't go across it because there were no boats. They were trapped! But what did God do? He parted the waters. [Get the children to part.] The waters rose up high on one side and rose up high on the other side, and the Israelites walked safely through on dry ground. [The Israelite volunteer can walk through.] Going through the Red Sea is like going through a door out of Egypt. Like a delivery man starting his delivery by taking a package from the warehouse, God has started his delivery by taking the Israelites out of Egypt. But it's not over yet. He still needs to deliver them into the promised land.

Point 2. Delivery into the promised land

Have a look through your binoculars again. [Look through the special binoculars] The Israelites have wandered through the wilderness and have got to the edge of the promised land. They've got a new leader, Joshua; look how strong and courageous he is. And now that they are ready and set, they can go in!

Use the 'How to prepare a Bible talk' section in the leader's handbook to help you.

Visuals and props

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But oh dear. There's a problem. A very big, and very wet problem. The river Jordan. The river Jordan was in the way. This river had a lot of water in it, like the river Thames. What's-more, the river had flooded. It had overflowed its banks which meant that the area around the river was covered with water too. This was a very big, and very wet problem. [Get the children to pretend to be the river Jordan: They could raise their arms and sway them back and forth. They could make splashing sounds. Get the Israelite volunteer to stand in front of them again.] How could the Israelites get to the other side without getting swept away? Maybe they could go over it, but there were no bridges. Maybe they could go under it, but there were no tunnels. Maybe they could catch a ride across it, but there were no boats. The Israelites were stuck. They couldn't get in. But have a listen to what happened [read 3:12-17]. Just like at the Red sea, God parted the waters and the Israelites walked through on dried ground. [Get the children to part and the Israelite to walk through the middle.] Like a delivery man finishing his delivery by passing a package to you at your front door, God has finished his delivery by bringing the Israelites into the promised land.

God has done it! He is the great deliverer. And he has kept his promise.

Point 3.

Looking forward: Delivery into the New Creation

We've looked back. And if he did it for them, do we think he'll do it for us too? Let's look forward.

Just like he promised to deliver the Israelites from Egypt to the promised land. God has promised to deliver us from this broken world of sin and death to his new creation. [On one side of a wall stick up a visual of this world and on the other side stick up a visual of the new creation.] It's like each of us has a label on us saying 'deliver to the new creation'. [Get a volunteer to have this new label stuck to them.] Do we think he'll be able to do it? We've learnt today that God is the greatest delivery man in the world. He picks up people from the most terrible of places and brings them to the most wonderful of places. Nothing gets in his way. He's got 100% success rate for delivering. He delivered the Israelites; he'll keep his promise and deliver you too.

Let's praise him that he always delivers his people.

Pray

Notes/ thoughts/ workings/ personal response:

Discussion: Digging deeper / ACTS

Aim - Recap/ apply/ pray: _____


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Materials:

Use the 'How to lead a Digging deeper discussion' or 'How to lead ACTS prayer' section in the leader's handbook to help you prepare.

 **A.** God, I praise you _____

 **C.** God, I am sorry _____

 **T.** God, I thank you _____

 **S.** God, I ask you _____

Activity: _____

Use the 'How to prepare a e.g. memory verse/ game/ VIPP activity' section in the leader's handbook.

Materials

Victory

Big Idea | Have confidence that nothing stops God from keeping his promises.

Introduction

Last time we looked back and saw God deliver the Israelites into the promised land. But there was a problem. Another big problem. They had come into the land, but there were already people living in it! Hmm, how can the Israelites move in when the locals hadn't moved out?

God had told the Israelites that the people of the land must be devoted to destruction. This is the punishment for sin. But also, if the people of the land were not destroyed, they would turn the Israelite's hearts away from God. But how could the Israelites conquer these people and not be destroyed by them themselves? This is how: the Lord would mightily fight for them. [Explain to the children that every time you say 'the Lord would mightily fight for them.' The children are to shout a war cry. Practice it with them a couple of times.] Today, we'll look back through our special binoculars and see the first two cities that Joshua and the people took.

Point 1. Jericho

[Looking through the special binoculars] The first city was: Jericho. [In the middle of a whiteboard or lots of sheets of paper draw/have a picture of Jericho. Leave enough space around the outside for further drawing.] Jericho had mighty walls. The Israelites couldn't get in. Let's pretend that we are an army – the Sunday school army. And let's pretend that we had a mission to conquer a city too. What would our battle plan be? [Have the children come up with a battle plan to take the city. Include tactics, types of weaponry, etc. Draw this battle plan on the whiteboard/sheets of paper.]

Let's have a look at what the Lord tells the Israelites to do. [Read 6:2–5] That's a strange battle plan. Where were the tanks? Where were the battering rams? Where were the catapults firing massive rocks at the city wall? The Israelites didn't have to do anything except march. The priests had to carry the Ark of the Covenant around the city walls. The people had to march with them; some in front of the ark, some behind. Whilst everyone marched together the priests would blow some trumpets. Toot toot! But everyone else had to remain quiet. Once they'd marched around the city they would head back to their camp for the night. That was it! No fighting. No shouting. No catapults or rams. Just marching. And they did that for 6 days! Because God wanted the Israelites to know that he, the Lord, would mightily fight for them. [Children shout a war cry.]

On the seventh day they marched around the city seven times. Then Joshua cried out... [Read 6:16b] When the people shouted and the priest blew the trumpets, the walls of Jericho came tumbling down. The Israelites had done nothing to bring those walls down. It was God. God had done it! The Lord had mightily fought for them. [Children shout a war cry.] He didn't need their help. Nothing could stand in his way. He won the victory. He was showing the Israelites that he is the one who will fight for them and win.

Now that the walls were down, God commanded the Israelites to fight. The Israelites were told to destroy the whole city of Jericho. They devoted the inhabitants to destruction.

Use the 'How to prepare a Bible talk' section in the leader's handbook to help you.

Visuals and props

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It had looked like the city of Jericho was in the way of God keeping his promise. It was another obstacle, like the river Jordan. Maybe God couldn't give them the promised land. But he had it under control. Nothing was going to stop him. Not even a mighty city. The Lord had mightily fought for them. [\[Children shout a war cry.\]](#)

Point 2. Ai

[\[This second point could be skipped and used with older children if time allows.\]](#)

That was the first city. If God is fighting for them, then surely conquering the rest of the land was going to be easy. But that's not quite what happened. With the next city, we see that the Lord mightily fights for his people, but only when they trust and obey him.

The next city that the Israelites went to attack was called Ai. But, God's people were beaten. What?! Some Israelites were killed. The rest ran away, chased by the enemy. Joshua was devastated. The Lord hadn't mightily fought for them. And he tells Joshua why. [\[Read 7:11–12\]](#) The Israelites had lost, not because God was weak, not because he couldn't fight for his people but because he wouldn't. The Israelites had lost because they hadn't obeyed him. One Israelite, a man called Achan, had ignored what God had said.

You see, when God won the battle of Jericho, he told the Israelites not to take any treasure from the city for themselves. They had to destroy everything and give all the treasure, the gold and silver, to the Lord. The Lord had won the battle, all the treasure had to go to him. But Achan had taken some treasure for himself. And so, God was angry. God would not let the Israelites win battles and disobey him at the same time. God had said that if they disobeyed him, he would punish them like he punishes the inhabitants of the land. He would have them devoted to destruction. And in this case, he tells Joshua to do that with Achan. Achan would have the same fate as the people of Jericho. Achan would be devoted to destruction. So Joshua and the people stoned him to death and burned up everything he owned. When they had destroyed Achan and his sin, it was time to go to battle against Ai again. This time the Lord mightily fought for them [\[children shout a war cry\]](#), and they conquered the city.

Conclusion

As we look back, we can see God keeping his promise to Abraham. Nothing can stand in the way. He will give the Israelites the promised land. He is a promise keeper. And as we look forward, we know that nothing will stand in the way of God keeping his promise to us. There are no people too strong, no walls too tall, no powers too powerful, to stop him. The Lord will mightily bring us into the new creation. So let's keep trusting in him.

Let's say sorry for when we don't think he can do it and ask him to help us keep trusting him.

Pray

Notes/ thoughts/ workings/ personal response:

Discussion: Digging deeper / ACTS

Aim - Recap/ apply/ pray: _____


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Materials:

Use the 'How to lead a Digging deeper discussion' or 'How to lead ACTS prayer' section in the leader's handbook to help you prepare.

 **A.** God, I praise you _____

 **C.** God, I am sorry _____

 **T.** God, I thank you _____

 **S.** God, I ask you _____

Activity: _____

Use the 'How to prepare a e.g. memory verse/ game/ VIPP activity' section in the leader's handbook.

Materials

Destruction

Big Idea | Know that one day God will destroy all his enemies.

Introduction

[Over a loudspeaker or shouted by a leader, 'Warning! Warning! This talk has scary content. Warning! Warning!']

Have you ever thought, when God creates his new creation, what is he going to do with everyone? What will happen to those in France and Germany? What will happen to the young and the old? What will happen to our teachers and friends? What will happen to all those who don't serve God? Today we'll find the answer. But I want to warn you, it's very serious, and it might be sad. [Over a loudspeaker or shouted by a leader, 'Warning! Warning! This talk has scary content. Warning! Warning!']

Point 1. Joshua conquered the land

Let's look back on the story in Joshua so far. [Looking through the special binoculars.] We've seen that God has brought the Israelites into the promised land. But last week we saw that there were some other people living in it! God had fought for his people and destroyed the walls of Jericho. But that was only the beginning. Because all throughout the land there were lots and lots and lots of other people. These people were the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. These people did not serve God. They were evil and did not praise him. How dare they. God is the one and only God. He made everything, he gave life to them, so he deserves their praise. Because they were God's enemies God had promised to destroy them. [Read Deuteronomy 9:1, 3, 4b] God promised that he would drive out all the evil people from the promised land and totally destroy them. It's right for him to destroy them. And he was going to use Joshua and his army to do this.

[Over a loudspeaker or shouted by a leader, 'Warning! Warning! This next bit has scary content. Warning! Warning!'] The next bit of Joshua involves lots of fights and battles. The kings of the land come up with their armies against Joshua and the Israelites. How scary! But Joshua leads the Israelites and fights back. Thankfully they've got God on their side who fights with them, and Joshua and the people win many battles. Let's have a look.

[Have a map of the promised land with the following places labelled: Makkedah, Libnah, Lachish, Horam, Eglon, Hebron, and Debir. Have appropriately sized pictures of a crossed-out crown for each of these places. Read Joshua 10:28-43 (below). At the same time, get a few children to act out what's going on – Joshua, attacking and destroying the kings of these cities. As Joshua destroys each king and city, place a crossed-out crown on the map where the city is labelled indicating that they have been conquered and destroyed.]

²⁸ That day Joshua took Makkedah. He put the city and its king to the sword and totally destroyed everyone in it. He left no survivors. And he did to the king of Makkedah as he had done to the king of Jericho.

²⁹ Then Joshua and all Israel with him moved on from Makkedah to Libnah and attacked it. ³⁰ The LORD also gave that city and its king into Israel's hand. The city and everyone in it Joshua put to the sword. He left no survivors there. And he did to its king as he had done to the king of Jericho.

Use the 'How to prepare a Bible talk' section in the leader's handbook to help you.

Visuals and props

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³¹Then Joshua and all Israel with him moved on from Libnah to Lachish; he took up positions against it and attacked it. ³²The LORD gave Lachish into Israel's hands, and Joshua took it on the second day. The city and everyone in it he put to the sword, just as he had done to Libnah. ³³Meanwhile, Horam king of Gezer had come up to help Lachish, but Joshua defeated him and his army – until no survivors were left.

³⁴ Then Joshua and all Israel with him moved on from Lachish to Eglon; they took up positions against it and attacked it. ³⁵They captured it that same day and put it to the sword and totally destroyed everyone in it, just as they had done to Lachish.

³⁶ Then Joshua and all Israel with him went up from Eglon to Hebron and attacked it. ³⁷ They took the city and put it to the sword, together with its king, its villages and everyone in it. They left no survivors. Just as at Eglon, they totally destroyed it and everyone in it.

³⁸ Then Joshua and all Israel with him turned round and attacked Debir. ³⁹They took the city, its king and its villages, and put them to the sword. Everyone in it they totally destroyed. They left no survivors. They did to Debir and its king as they had done to Libnah and its king and to Hebron.

Joshua conquered the Southern part of the land, and then went on to conquer the Northern part. Listen to this [\[Read 10:40-42/11:16-20\]](#). God has kept his promise. He has driven out the nations from the land and has totally destroyed them.

Point 2. Jesus will destroy all God's enemy's

In a similar way God has promised to one day destroy *all* his enemies. [\[Over a loudspeaker or shouted by a leader, 'Warning! Warning! This next bit has scary content. Warning! Warning!'\]](#)

God has promised to destroy the ungodly. [\[Read 2 Peter 3: 7\]](#) God has promised that one day Jesus will return. And when he returns, he will destroy all those who don't know him. It is right for him to destroy them. Jesus is the king of the universe. He deserves everyone's praise. So it's very silly for people to ignore him. In-fact it's a terrible crime. How dare people not serve King Jesus. Ignoring Jesus is to rebel against God's universal king, but people do. We might know of friends who ignore Jesus. We might know teachers who don't serve Jesus. These people are still enemies of God. Because they are his enemies, if they don't turn to him for forgiveness, God has promised that he will one day destroy them. Those who serve him will be safe, but those who don't will be destroyed.

But listen to this, [\[read 2 Peter 3:9\]](#). God is being patient with people. He is waiting to send Jesus back. He wants people to repent of their sin and turn to him. We can pray that our friends and teachers who don't yet serve king Jesus would turn to him and not be destroyed. Let's do that now.

Pray

Notes/ thoughts/ workings/ personal response:

Discussion: Digging deeper / ACTS

Aim - Recap/ apply/ pray: _____


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Materials:

Use the 'How to lead a Digging deeper discussion' or 'How to lead ACTS prayer' section in the leader's handbook to help you prepare.

 **A.** God, I praise you _____

 **C.** God, I am sorry _____

 **T.** God, I thank you _____

 **S.** God, I ask you _____

Activity: _____

Use the 'How to prepare a e.g. memory verse/ game/ VIPP activity' section in the leader's handbook.

Materials

Inheritance

Big Idea | God's children receive their inheritance.

Introduction

Let me show you something. [Show the children a family heirloom/something you've inherited.] This is a _____ which I inherited from my _____. They passed it onto me and it's now mine. When you grow up you might inherit something too. Something that's passed on to you. Maybe it'll be a _____ like mine. Maybe you'll receive some land or some money or a house or some prized possessions. You might need to wait many years to receive it, but it will one day belong to you.

God had promised Israel an inheritance. He had promised to give them the land of Canaan. This would be a place they could call home. A place where their enemies wouldn't hurt them. A place where they would be wonderfully blessed by him. A place of rest. In this place, God would live with them. Israel were God's children that he had delivered, and God promised that he would give his people an inheritance of land.

They had waited many years. Waited before they were in Egypt. Waited for the 400 years whilst they were in Egypt. Waited for the 40 years they were in the wilderness. Waited until they'd defeated the inhabitants of the land. But now, after years of waiting, we're going to look back and see that they finally got their inheritance.

Point 1. God gave his people their inheritance

God told Joshua [read 13:6b-8]. Israel had the land. And now needed to divide it up so that each person would get some. Like cutting a cake so that everyone can have a slice. Or like when your family moves house and you have to decide which bedroom will be your mum and dad's, which bedroom will be yours, and which bedrooms will be your brothers or sisters. Or like on Christmas morning as all the presents are sitting under the tree and they need to be handed out. My dad does this job. He looks at the name tags of each present and hands them out to all the family. God was going to give each of his people an inheritance of land. Let's look at who got what. [Show map of the land and stick name tags on: 'The Lord gave the tribe of ...eg. Dan... this bit' – stick name tag to appropriate part. Repeat for all the tribes.] Everyone got a piece of land. Everyone got their share of the inheritance. Just as God had promised.

Point 2. Caleb

Let me tell you about a man called Caleb. When Joshua was giving everyone their share of the land, there were a few people who got a special mention. One of these was Caleb. Caleb was a spy. Before the Israelites went over the river Jordan, into the promised land, they had sent in spies to spy out the land. These spies were to go and see what the land was like. Was it good or bad? Are the people strong or weak? Is the land fertile or desolate? Twelve spies went in to spy out the land. And when they came back, they reported all they had seen. They showed the people some fruit they had collected which included a ginormous bunch of grapes. They said it was a good land flowing with milk and honey. They said the people who lived there were very

Use the 'How to prepare a Bible talk' section in the leader's handbook to help you.

Visuals and props

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powerful, and the cities were fortified and very large. Caleb said, 'We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.' But the other spies said, 'We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are.' And they spread a bad report among the people. They said, 'The land we explored devours those living in it. We seemed like grasshoppers compared to the inhabitants.' At this the people grumbled and cried. Caleb pleaded with them saying, 'The Lord is with us and will give us the land'. But the people would not listen. The LORD was angry. He said, 'Not one of those who saw my glory and the signs I performed in Egypt, will ever see the land I promised. But because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it.' So the Israelites didn't go into the land straight away. They had to wait 40 years for that generation to die. But once 40 years was up, and they had come into the land, Caleb went to Joshua and asked for his inheritance. Caleb said to Joshua, [\[read 14:9-10, 12-13\]](#). Caleb had trusted that the Lord would give the Israelites their inheritance. Caleb was right to totally trust God. And now, Caleb got his share of the inheritance.

Point 3.

God will give us our inheritance

If we trust in Jesus, we are God's children. And just like the Israelites, he will give us the inheritance he has promised. The inheritance God has promised us is not a chunk of land on this earth, no, it's way better than that! The inheritance God has promised us is a place in his new creation. The Bible says that God will create a new heavens and a new earth. This new creation will be perfect and good. In it we will be wonderfully blessed; we will eat amazing foods and enjoy the beautiful landscape. It's a place that will be safe and happy. It'll be a place we can call home and we will live there with God.

God has promised each one of his people a part of it. We each get a slice of the cake. We each get our own room. We each get a present from under the tree with our name on. If you trust in Jesus, God has a place *for you* in the new creation. Just like Caleb, we will get our inheritance. What an amazing promise.

But it's a promise we're still waiting for. So as we wait, let's remember what happened to Caleb and the Israelites. God kept his promise to them and gave them their inheritance; he'll do the same for us. We can look forward with total trust that God will give us our inheritance too, just as he promised.

Let's thank God that he will give us an inheritance.

Pray

Notes/ thoughts/ workings/ personal response:

Discussion: Digging deeper / ACTS

Aim - Recap/ apply/ pray: _____


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Materials:

Use the 'How to lead a Digging deeper discussion' or 'How to lead ACTS prayer' section in the leader's handbook to help you prepare.

 **A.** God, I praise you _____

 **C.** God, I am sorry _____

 **T.** God, I thank you _____

 **S.** God, I ask you _____

Activity: _____

Use the 'How to prepare a e.g. memory verse/ game/ VIPP activity' section in the leader's handbook.

Materials

Promise keeper

Big Idea | Be sure that God will keep all of his amazing promises.

Introduction

Throughout the book of Joshua we've been asking the question: 'Will God keep his promises?'. God makes lots of promises and we want to know if he is a promise keeper. If someone makes you a promise, and keeps it, then you know they're a promise keeper. But if someone makes you a promise and breaks it, then they are a promise breaker. Is God a promise keeper, or a promise breaker?

It sometimes matters a lot whether someone is a promise keeper or a promise breaker. Sometimes it doesn't matter at all. Imagine if I had promised you that every time I came to Sunday school I would do a handstand when we sing. Would it matter if I kept this promise? No, not really. I would look very silly but it wouldn't really matter. But imagine if I promised that every time I came to Sunday school I'd bring a box of chocolates. Would it matter if I kept this promise? Yes it would. Because if I keep my promise, you all get chocolate, and if I don't, you get none. Even more so, God has made some amazing promises to us. It really matters whether he keeps his promises or not. So we want to know, is God a promise keeper or a promise breaker?

Point 1.

Looking back, God had kept all his good promises

Let's draw together our conclusions. We need to remember God's promises to the Israelites, and then see if God kept his promise. [\[Looking through the special binoculars.\]](#)

Promise #1: God had promised to deliver his people from Egypt and bring them to the promised land. This was a very important promise. If God was a promise breaker then they would still be slaves in Egypt, working under Pharaoh's rule. But if God was a promise keeper then they would be out of Egypt, no longer slaves, and safe from Pharaoh. Did God keep his promise? [\[Looking through the special binoculars.\]](#) Yes! God kept this good promise.

Promise #2: God had promised to destroy and remove the evil people of the land. This was a very important promise. If God was a promise breaker, then the land would still be full of inhabitants. There would be people living where the Israelites were supposed to live. And, these people might have destroyed the Israelites. But if God was a promise keeper, then no matter how strong and scary these people were, he would drive them out of the land. Did God keep his promise? [\[Looking through the special binoculars.\]](#) Yes! Listen to this verse from Joshua 21:44. God kept this good promise.

Promise #3: God had promised his people, including Caleb, an inheritance in the land, a place they could call home where they would live with him. If God was a promise breaker then none of his people would have got anything, they would have kept on wandering around homeless. But if God was a promise keeper, then each tribe would get their own country, and each clan would get their own city, and each person would get their own piece of good land to call their home. Did God keep his promise? [\[Looking through the special binoculars.\]](#) Yes! Listen to this verse from [Joshua 21:43](#). God kept this good promise.

After God had kept all these good promises, we read this from Joshua 21:45. God had kept all his good promises to Israel. Every single one. Not one promise was left out. Not one promise was un-

Use the 'How to prepare a Bible talk' section in the leader's handbook to help you.

Visuals and props

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fulfilled. Any good promise God had made, he had kept. He had kept his promise of deliverance. He had kept his promise of destroying his enemies. He had kept his promise of giving them the land. God had kept all his good promises.

We can conclude that God is a promise keeper. We can be totally sure that if God makes a promise, he will keep it. Sometimes I make promises and I don't keep them. Sometimes your mums or dads, or your teachers make you promises which they don't keep. Sometimes we make promises we don't keep. But God is not like us. When he makes a promise, he keeps it because God is a promise keeper. We can totally trust him to keep any promise he makes to us.

Point 3.

Looking forward, God will keep all his better promises to us

So what promises has he made to us?

Promise #1: God has promised to deliver us from this broken world of sin and death and to bring us into his new creation. Because God is a promise keeper, we can totally trust him to keep this promise. For anyone who puts their trust in Jesus, God will deliver them.

Promise #2: God has promised to destroy all his enemies. Those who ignore king Jesus will one day be destroyed by God. Because God is a promise keeper, we can totally trust him to keep this promise. For anyone who does not know him, he will destroy. But if you have put your trust in Jesus, then you will be safe because you are one of his people and he loves you.

Promise #3: God has promised to give each one of us a place in his new creation. The Bible says that God will create a new heavens and a new earth. This new creation will be perfect and good. In it we will be wonderfully blessed; we will eat amazing foods and enjoy the beautiful landscape. It's a place that will be safe and happy. It'll be a place we can call home and we will live there with God. What an amazing promise! Because God is a promise keeper, we can totally trust him to keep this promise. If you trust in Jesus, God has a place **for you** in the new creation which you will one day live in.

Conclusion

God has made us some amazing promises which are even better than the promises he made to the Israelites. Because God is a promise keeper, he will keep them all. We don't need to worry that God won't fulfil his promises to us. We don't need to worry that he'll break his promises. It's impossible for him to break his promises—he's a promise keeper. Think of a promise God has made to you. Maybe it's one of the better promises we've been looking at. How sure can you be that God will keep this promise? You can be 100% sure. You can have complete confidence and totally trust that God will keep this promise to you. God will keep all the amazing promises he has made to us.

Let's praise God for being a trustworthy promise keeper.

Pray

Notes/ thoughts/ workings/ personal response:

Discussion: Digging deeper / ACTS

Aim - Recap/ apply/ pray: _____


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Materials:

Use the 'How to lead a Digging deeper discussion' or 'How to lead ACTS prayer' section in the leader's handbook to help you prepare.

 **A.** God, I praise you _____

 **C.** God, I am sorry _____

 **T.** God, I thank you _____

 **S.** God, I ask you _____

Activity: _____

Use the 'How to prepare a e.g. memory verse/ game/ VIPP activity' section in the leader's handbook.

Materials

And they lived..... ever after.

Big Idea | Be joyous that you will have a happy ending.

Introduction

Here are some stories. Give me a thumbs up if they have a happy ending, or a thumbs down if they have a sad ending. [Show the children's some stories they will know.] What about the book of Joshua, do we think it'll have a happy ending or a sad ending? [Let the children guess with their thumbs but leave it open.] And what about us? [Let the children guess with their thumbs but leave it open.] Today we're going to find out.

Point 1. Joshua's goodbye speech

Let's jump back into the story, into the final few chapters. Now Joshua was pretty old. He knew it wasn't long until he'd die. So he gathered together all the people of Israel and gave a big goodbye speech. He told them [read 23:6-8]. Israel had a choice, hold onto God, or hold onto Idols. If they held onto God they could stay in the land, hooray! But if they turned to Idols, Joshua gives them a scary warning [read 23:15-16], uh oh!

Did you hear it? God had threatened to kick them out of the land if they turned to idols. They would lose all the good things he had given them. No more inheritance. No more peace. No more prosperity. So, Joshua told the people, 'hold fast to the Lord!' And the people said, 'we will!' But Joshua wasn't so sure [read 24:19-20]. Joshua knew the people. They were not able to serve God. They had bad hearts which would turn away. And Joshua knew what God would do. God wouldn't forgive them. He would kick them out of the land. It looked like it would be a sad ending [thumbs down].

Point 2. An unhappy ending

For 820 years the Israelites lived in the land. It started well: They were immensely blessed with life and prosperity. There was peace, and food, and fun, and happiness. The kingdom grew and became a superpower. But over time, instead of holding fast to God. Can you guess what they did? They began to let go. Gradually the people turned and bowed down to idols. They forgot who'd rescued them from Egypt and had given them the good land. They became like the sinful inhabitants of the land that they had devoted to destruction all those years ago when they first entered. And because they had turned away from him, God did what he threatened he'd do. He devoted them to destruction. Eight hundred and twenty years after they'd entered, he kicked them out of the land. This was a very unhappy ending [thumbs down]. I wonder whether you've ever read a book with such an unhappy ending.

Will it be an unhappy ending for us too? God has promised us an inheritance too – a place in his new creation, a place we can call home, a place we can live with him. But we sin. And we have bad hearts. Could we lose our inheritance like the Israelites lost theirs? Will we end up devoted to destruction like Achan, and the inhabitants of the land, and the Israelites? Maybe it's going to be a sad ending for us too [thumbs down].

Use the 'How to prepare a Bible talk' section in the leader's handbook to help you.

Visuals and props

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Point 3. Happily ever after

Thankfully the Bible story doesn't end there. So let's take a look to see what sort of ending it'll be. Through the Israelites, God was showing us that sin is a big problem. Sinners can't live with God. Sinners shouldn't be blessed by him. Sinners must be devoted to destruction. For us to live with God in his new creation, God needs to solve our sin problem. Which is what he does. Have a listen to another promise God has made us. [\[Read Jeremiah 31:33-34.\]](#)

God promises two things: [\[Have a box which you can draw these promises out of.\]](#)

1) God has promised to forgive your sins. Even though you have sinned against him, he will not punish you. You won't have a sticky ending like the inhabitants of the land who were devoted to destruction. When God judges the world, you will be safe. God has kept this promise – after all he is a promise keeper. If you trust in Jesus, what happened to the Israelites will not happen to you. God has forgiven your sin. Which means that when God judges the world, you will be safe, and can have a home in the new creation. What a happy ending! [\[Thumbs up\]](#)

2) A heart which holds fast. God promises you a heart which knows him and holds onto him. And if you've got this heart that holds, you will never turn away from God like the Israelites did. God has also kept this promise. If you trust in Jesus, he has put a new heart inside of you. It's a heart that holds. Which means that when you get to the new creation, you'll stay there forever. You'll never have to move out like the Israelites. You can't lose your inheritance. Your heart will forever hold onto God. What a happy ending! [\[Thumbs up\]](#)

Conclusion

Although it wasn't a happy ending for the Israelites, you will one day live in the new creation, and you will live happily ever after. The end.

Let's finish by thanking God for his good promises to us.

Pray

Notes/ thoughts/ workings/ personal response:

Discussion: Digging deeper / ACTS

Aim - Recap/ apply/ pray: _____


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Materials:

Use the 'How to lead a Digging deeper discussion' or 'How to lead ACTS prayer' section in the leader's handbook to help you prepare.

 **A.** God, I praise you _____

 **C.** God, I am sorry _____

 **T.** God, I thank you _____

 **S.** God, I ask you _____

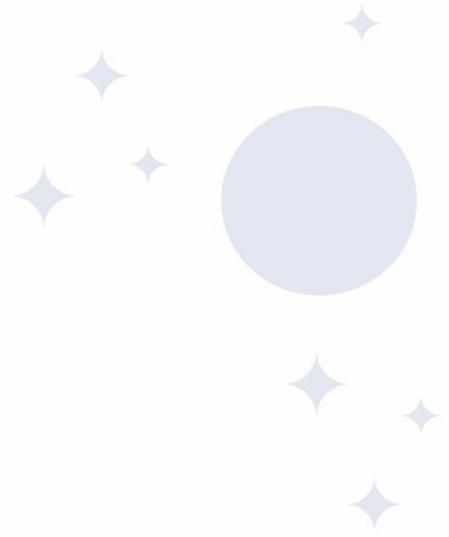
Activity: _____

Use the 'How to prepare a e.g. memory verse/ game/ VIPP activity' section in the leader's handbook.

Materials



St Helen's
Bishopsgate



St Helen's Children's Ministry

