

God Keeps His Promises

Lesson 21a — God Promises His Son

Lesson 21b — God Promises to Be With Us

Lesson 21c — God Promises to Take Care of Us

Lesson 21d — God Promises Us a Reward If We Finish the Race

Lesson 21e — God Promises Us Jesus Will Come Again

OVERVIEW

The focus of this unit of study is on the promises of God, with the main point being, of course, the fact that the promises are sure. The initial lesson, the prophecy and fulfillment of the birth of Jesus, opens our study with irrefutable evidence. The possibility of coincidence in the fulfillment of the 60 specific prophecies of Christ's birth, life, death, and resurrection is ruled out by the science of probability. The words of the men who recorded the promises of God may be completely depended upon, for their utterances have the stamp of divine authenticity upon them.

The remaining four lessons of the unit have a dual thrust — first, the fact that the promise was made, and secondly, what action we must take in order to receive the promise. As you teach each lesson, it is vital that

the students understand what action is required on their part. God's promises are not unconditional!

In the second lesson of this unit your students should see that God promises to be with us when we obey His directives. The next lesson brings out that God promises to take care of our needs if we seek Him first. On the following Sunday, we focus on the fact that there is a reward promised for those who finish the race. In the final lesson, we learn that Jesus will come again and that we must make preparation if we are to go to Heaven to be with Him.

This unit is primarily one of action! Make sure this is the emphasis you make.

GAMES FOR REVIEW

Make a rainbow out of cardboard. Use a different strip of color made from construction paper for each Sunday, five colors in all. Make small holes through it. Put questions on pieces of paper and insert through holes, so that all the questions for each Sunday are on the same strip of color. Let each child pick his own questions, alternating colors if you so desire. Have a small prize for those who guess the right answers.

Cut a piece of plywood approximately 3' x 4'. On it mark 12 spots and screw in cup hooks with point values marked next to them, (5,10,15,20,25,30,35,40,45, 50,55,60). On your paper have 12 questions marked from 5 to 60 depending on their difficulty. Have 12 volunteers come up and toss a canning jar ring to try to hook a point. If they do, they are asked the question that goes with that hook. If they can't answer, have someone from the department give the answer. If they

can't ring a hook, the next person tries. The one who answers the question with the most points wins the grand prize, with the rest of the department getting a small prize such as a balloon.

One at a time, show the children objects: angel, baby, crown, picture of Jesus, cloud, and ask them which promise or memory verse each reminds them of. The correct answer earns a prize.

CONTEST IDEAS

Make a game board from heavy cardboard (see Patterns). Use small pictures of faces with each child's name on it for their game piece that can be pinned on the board as they move along. They may move up one space for each thing done each Sunday, (attendance, bring Bible, missionary, memory verse, etc.). Sometimes a space may tell them they can receive a prize, a balloon, or a sticker. At the end of the contest those

TEXT Isaiah 7:14; 9:6,7; Matthew 1:21-23

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to tell of God's promise of a Savior, and explain how this promise was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus.

MEMORY VERSE Blessed be the LORD . . . there hath not failed one word of all his good promise. — I Kings 8:56

God Promises His Son

MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

BLESSED BE — Fists closed, thumbs at mouth, move hands down and away from body opening fingers.

THE LORD — Point up.

THERE HATH NOT FAILED — Left hand, palm up; shake head "no" as you place right hand palm up with only index and middle fingers extended on left palm, slide right hand off the edge of the left hand.

ONE WORD OF ALL HIS — Hold up one finger.

GOOD PROMISE — Hold right hand up as though affirming to something.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

An open Bible, with a cloud above and a base piece beneath is the visual illustration for this week's verse. (See pattern at the end of this lesson.) Cut apart the three pieces on the heavy black lines, and display them one section at a time as your students learn the verse.

BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction: Bring to class several boxes with pictures on the outside indicating the contents, as described under In-Class Activities. Explain to your class that in a sense the box "promises" what the contents will be. Verses in God's Word are God's promises of Jesus' birth.

1. Isaiah prophesied that God would give a sign: that a virgin would bear a son, whose name would be Immanuel.
2. God promised that this Child would bring real and lasting hope. The prophecy of Christ sitting on the throne of David will come to pass as surely as His birth.
3. The angel gives a message to Joseph revealing that Mary was to bear a special Son.

Climax: God's promise, given through Isaiah, was fulfilled when Jesus was born.

Conclusion: Because the promise of Jesus' birth was fulfilled, we can believe that the promises made to us will also be fulfilled.

Response: The students will be able to relate the promise and fulfillment studied in today's text, and will be able to explain that God will perform the promises He has made to us.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

At first glance the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 seems to have no connection with the birth of Christ.

Isaiah was standing before King Ahaz of Judah, who was about to be attacked by the kings of Syria and Israel. Isaiah told King Ahaz not to lose heart but to trust in God and ask for a sign. He refused to ask for a sign so Isaiah said God would give one anyway. The sign would be that a virgin would conceive and bear a son and before the child was old enough to know right from wrong Assyrians would come and destroy Ahaz's enemies. However, because of Judah's lack of faith, they, too, would be forsaken. This prophecy seems to find its immediate fulfillment in Isaiah 8:3,4 when Isaiah is given a son.

However, when the whole prophecy, from Isaiah 7:1 through 9:7, is considered, it becomes clear that God had much more in mind than just the local situation as is the case with most prophecies. This was indeed a prophecy of hope to a people without hope. God was promising to send a Child who would be called *Immanuel* which means "God with us." He would bring real and lasting hope and would be the manifestation of the eternal God (Isaiah 9:6,7), saving His people from the root cause of their trouble and establishing an everlasting Kingdom.

The birth of Jesus Christ beautifully fulfills this prophecy and, in fact, gives it its full meaning.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Bring a large wall calendar which shows the whole year and has space to write on it. Have the class help you write in important dates, such as their birthdays, youth camp, camp meeting, Easter, Christmas, first day of school. Explain how it is possible that some of these have already passed and you fully expect the other important events to happen. It was the same with the important birth of Jesus which was told to the prophets hundreds of years ago and they expected it to occur as

we expect our birthday to come each year. So did they expect God to keep His promise of a Savior.

On the preceding Sunday you could promise a special treat to each one in your class who would come the next Sunday believing that you would keep your promise.

Have each class member read a verse of the lesson out loud. Ask the class which verses were the promise and which were the fulfilling of this promise.

From felt, cut two pieces for each basic finger puppet (see Patterns). Using paint, marking pens, or scraps of material, decorate two finger puppets, one for Joseph and one for Mary. Cut manger and two squares from light cardboard, assemble according to instructions (see Patterns for 16c). Fill with “straw” (yarn) and a tiny baby doll. Use these to tell the story of Jesus’ birth.

Bring a large piece of parchment paper with a promise written on it concerning the birth of Jesus. Roll it up and tie it with a gold cord or ribbon. Have someone come to your class to present the promise at the appropriate time while you are telling the story. Use a picture of Baby Jesus to show the fulfillment.

Bring a box or boxes to class that picture what is inside. In a sense, the box “promises” what the contents will be. Verses in the Bible are God’s promises of Jesus’ birth. Put several small pictures of Jesus’ birth (perhaps taken from Christmas cards) in places in your Bible where you wish to read a verse pertaining to His birth.

QUESTIONS

What are some of the other names for Jesus?

What does it mean to be a *savior*?

Have you invited the Savior into your heart?

Name some promises in the Bible that you have believed and then watched come to pass.

Will all of God’s promises come to pass?

How did Isaiah know all about Jesus?

Jesus’ birth was a fulfillment of a promise. Name some other babies mentioned in the Bible that were born after God gave their parents a promise.

Talk about some promises you have made. Did you keep them?

What does “standing on the promises” mean?

Jesus is God’s promised Savior. What promise is given to us if we believe in Jesus?

PRESCHOOL SUGGESTIONS

Have gift boxes with things that represent good things and promises that God gives us. During class have the children open the boxes (one at a time) and discuss the promise the item represents. Examples: Heart — Love; Cross — Jesus’ coming to save us; Crown — Reward for those who make Heaven; Angel — God’s care for us.

In paper bags have some items that represent what we need to do to receive God’s promises. Take out during class and discuss. Examples: heart — offer love to Him; Bible — learn God’s promises; picture of folded hands — pray and talk to God.

Explain to your class that if something is important to us we make people “promises.” Have your little ones give examples of promises they have made or fulfilled by giving. Prepare some examples of your own, using pictures to illustrate. For example: I promise I will take you to the zoo (show zoo picture). I promise to tell you a secret (show children whispering). I promise to share my toys with you (show children sharing).

Rainbows always make us think of promises. Give each child a rainbow book (see Patterns). Let them color the rainbow on the front cover. When they open the cover they can see and color the picture of God’s promise come true.

REVIEW IDEAS

From attractive cardboard, or cardboard covered with Contact paper cut a box form and fold on dotted lines and glue as indicated (see Patterns). Tie with ribbon and promise the children that each one will receive a gift. Then give each one a box and have a sticker of Jesus or a small gift inside. God promised us Jesus as a Gift and He kept His promise too.

Use other teachers and/or students to help you dramatize several small skits illustrating the keeping of promises. Some suggestions: If you get an “A” in math, I will make you a chocolate cake. If you help me with this job, we’ll go fishing. If you save half the money, I will help you buy a new bike. Set up the situation with just one or two lines of dialogue, and then show the fulfillment of each promise. Close your review by briefly stating the unit theme — God Keeps His Promises.

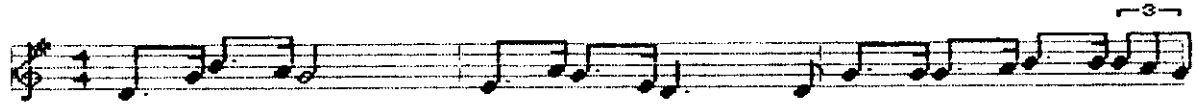
Show the students a contract that was dated a year ago. Tell them the contract says that one year from that date the full payment of \$100.00 (or whatever) will be made. The contract is signed, “Mr. Jones.” Tell them

this contract is the same as a promise. Next show them a check for \$100.00. Tell them this is Mr. Jones' payment — the fulfillment of his promise. Compare this contract to the promise God gave — the promise of a Savior. The fulfillment of His promise was Jesus.

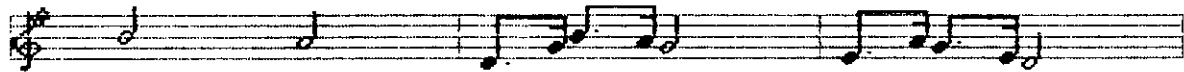
COORDINATING SONGS

"See God's Rainbow in the Sky" — Sunbeam Songs

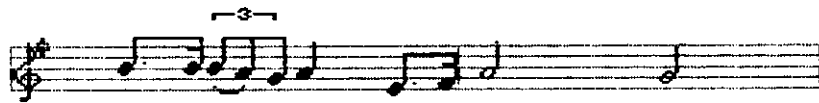
MEMORY VERSE SONG



Blessed be the Lord; Blessed be the Lord; there hath not failed one word of all his good



pro - mise. Blessed be the Lord; Blessed be the Lord;



Bless - ed be the Lord. Al - le - lu - ia.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED



TEXT Exodus 3:10-12; Joshua 3:7; Judges 6:14-16

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain that when God calls us to work for Him, He has promised to be with us as we obey Him.

MEMORY VERSE Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. — Matthew 28:20

God Promises to Be With Us

MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

LO — Touch index finger to right ear.

I — Point up.

AM WITH YOU — Touch fists to chest, move them away from body.

ALWAY — Point straight in front of you, rotate arm.

EVEN UNTO THE END — Make fists with both hands, but extend both little fingers, hold left hand still and strike left little finger with right little finger.

OF THE WORLD — Hold arms in a circle over head.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

A globe is the focal point of this week's memory verse illustration. (See pattern at the end of this lesson.) Cut apart the sections of the arrangement — the rays, the globe, and a base piece — and put them up on your display board in the correct order as your students learn the verse.

BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction: Use the In-Class Activity using a balloon as your opener for this session. Explain that even though we can't see God, we can feel His presence and see the results of His being with us.

1. Explain the work that God called Moses to do and the promise God made Him.
2. Describe the position Joshua held and God's promise to him.
3. Relate the Lord's promise to save Israel from the Midianites by the hand of Gideon.

Climax: God's assured help to these three men when He gave them some tasks to do, and He fulfilled that promise.

Conclusion: If we are obedient to God, He has promised to help us do any work that He gives us.

Response: The students will be able to explain that God's promise is to be with us, just as He was with these men of the Bible.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

These three men, Moses, Joshua, and Gideon, were not naturally strong leaders, but are accurately charac-

terized as willing followers. However, the One whom they were following was and is infinitely strong. With His promise to be with each of these men, they were given the power to accomplish great things.

God has also promised to be with us. In John 14:15-21, Jesus gave us those comforting words that although He was returning to Heaven He would send the Holy Spirit to dwell within us.

However, only those who seek to do God's will are entitled to His presence. Paul told the believers in Corinth that they were the temples of the Holy Spirit but they could not expect the Lord to remain with them if they were engaged in evil. I Corinthians 3:16,17; 6:15-20

The greatest part of our eternal reward will be the privilege of having the Lord's presence. "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Revelation 21:3).

In contrast, the greatest terror of Hell will be the eternal banishment from the presence of God. I John 1:5 says that "God is light" but Jesus said that the damned would be cast into outer darkness (Matthew 8:12 and 22:13), where none of the light of God's presence will enter.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Bring a job application to be filled out for a particular job. Explain how this is necessary for the employer to understand your experience, talents, and willingness to work in certain areas. When we get saved it is in a sense like giving our application to God. We promise to serve Him and to do whatever He calls us to do. Possibly bring a "pretend" application for each of the children to fill out. Example:

Application for Soldiers

in

THE LORD'S ARMY

Applicant must love Jesus and be willing to trust and serve Him.

Education (none needed)
Sunday school? _____
Number of years _____
Church? _____
Number of years _____
Do you love Jesus? _____
Have you told Him so? _____
Will you be faithful? _____
By Jesus' help will you live for Him day by day?

“ . . . Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men”
(Matthew 4:19).

Blow up a balloon. Ask your students what is in the balloon. When they say air, ask them how they know. They can't see it. Conclude that they can see that the balloon is inflated, they can feel the air when it comes out the end, etc. How do we know that Jesus is with us? Even though we can't see Him, we can feel His presence and see the results of His being with us.

Play the game “God Goes With Me” using the game board (see Patterns). Put your class into pairs to play the game. Give each player a different colored button. Have them place their buttons on the first square. Using a paper clip spinner to determine the number of moves, take turns moving buttons that many squares. The first player to get home wins. As you play the game, comment on how God is with you at the store, at church, etc., and how they can know God is with them, too, wherever they are.

Bring a number of items to show your students which are used together. These could be brush and paints, toothbrush and toothpaste, milk and cup, paper and pencil, etc. Explain to them that Jesus promised to be with us, and when He is, we are able to work most effectively.

QUESTIONS

Tell about a time when God helped you.

What is something you need help with today?

When Jesus asks you to work for Him, how will you know how to do this?

When we read how God helped people in the Bible, we can ask God to help us too. Name some people of the Bible whom God helped.

God promises us that He will be with us unto the end of the world. What does this mean?

Will God ever ask you to do something that is impossible for you to do? Why?

What is the most important thing we have to do to claim God's promises?

Do God's promises in the Old Testament apply to us today?

PRESCHOOL SUGGESTIONS

Bring a large picture or a stand-up figure of Jesus. Bring several objects representing times children might be afraid: a flashlight to represent being afraid of the dark, a stuffed dog to represent being afraid of a neighbor's dog, a piece of yellow paper cut like lightning to represent being afraid of storms, a picture of a large group of people to represent losing your Mom in a crowd. Explain how Jesus will be with us in each situation.

Cut two figures from felt: one to represent Jesus and the other us. Glue pieces of Velcro on the back of each and let the children pull the two figures apart and put them together.

Bring several sets of things that need to come in pairs. Some examples: two gloves, two shoes, two socks. Point out to your class that we do our best when Jesus is our partner.

Give each child a copy of the figure of Jesus looking down (see Patterns). Let them color and cut out the two children looking up. They can then be pasted in front of the Jesus figure.

REVIEW IDEAS

Have a teacher with pitcher, candle or flashlight, and trumpet. At the right time in the story have the lights go out and the teacher remove the pitcher to show forth its light. Have someone blow the trumpet. Have the children explain how God used the trumpet, pitcher, and lamp. Point out how God will use us and be with us if we are like lights for God.

Dramatize Alba Green's testimony, Tract No. 66, “Rescued by God From a Watery Grave.” Or use his story as a basis for an overhead.

Illustrate certain activities where we need someone right by us in order to be able to do something. For example, when we learn to ride a bike, Dad stays close by in case we start to wobble. When we learn to drive a car, a driving teacher sits beside us. When we learn to make a doll dress or bake cookies, Mom stands by to help or show us how. In the same way, God promises to be with us.

COORDINATING SONGS

“He Cannot Fail”

"Why Worry When You Can Pray?"
 "If You're Saved and You Know It"
 "This Little Light of Mine"
 "The Children's Friend" — by Gordon Hooker
 "Step by Step" — by Helen Miller Allen
 "God Is Good to Me" — Salvation Songs No. 4
 "All Through the Night" — Salvation Songs No. 4
 "God Is Mighty" — Sunbeam Songs

"My Lord Knows the Way" — Singpiration, Inc.

SUPPORT MATERIAL

Jesus Watches Over Me — Cut and color book, Standard Publishing
 I'm Not Afraid — by Kathy Downs, Standard Publishing
 God Cares for Us — Classroom pictures, 8 each of 6 pictures, Gospel Publishing

MEMORY VERSE SONG

Lo, I am with you al - way, e - ven un - to the
 end of the world. Lo, I am with you al - way
 even unto the end of the world.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

Lo, I am
 with you
 alway,
 even unto the
 end of the world.

Matthew 28:20

TEXT Matthew 6:25-34

OBJECTIVE The students will realize that as we seek God first He will take care of our needs.

MEMORY VERSE Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.
— Matthew 6:33

God Promises to Take Care of Us

MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

SEEK YE FIRST — Make letter “C” with both hands. Hold hands to eyes, look from side to side.

THE KINGDOM — Extend hands, palms down. Move left hand in a horizontal counterclockwise semicircle while simultaneously doing the same with the right hand only clockwise.

OF GOD — Point up.

AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS — Extend left hand, palm up. Place tips of right fingers on lips and move right hand down until back of right hand touches left palm.

AND ALL THESE THINGS — With right hand flat, palm down, make large circle horizontal and clockwise.

SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU — Imagine a vertical stick before you. Grab it with both hands and pull to chest.

Climax: God promises to take care of our needs if we will seek Him first.

Conclusion: It is to our benefit if we seek the things of God.

Response: The students will be able to explain that if they wish to be relieved from care and worry, they must put their trust in God. They will be able to tell some of the things for which we can trust Him.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the Scripture passage of Matthew 6:25-34, Jesus was teaching His followers that they could and should trust God, their heavenly Father, just as a small child trusts his parents. When a small child is hungry he simply asks for food with no thought or concern as to how the parent will provide that food. He lives a carefree life and leaves the concerns of his daily needs with his parents. Just so, we should leave the concern for our needs to God and spend our lives joyfully serving and pleasing Him. After all, God provides for the birds and clothes the whole earth and we are much more important to Him than these.

Moreover, we are repeatedly warned in Scripture to guard against the deceitfulness of riches. The world seeks after wealth but we should seek after God and holiness. These are the true riches. See Matthew 13:22; 19:23 and I Timothy 6:9.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Use a shadow box of Heaven as suggested in Lesson 1a. Instead of pictures of what we will see in Heaven, have pictures of how to seek His Kingdom such as: child praying, reading the Bible, witnessing, going to Sunday school, learning memory verse.

Have a collection of pictures on a posterboard showing some of the things God provides for us, such as: happy family, clothes, groceries, car, job. Label the poster **GOD GIVES US**.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

Our visual illustration of this week's verse features a large number one, a representation of Heaven, and a praying figure. Cut apart the pieces indicated. (See pattern at the end of this lesson.) Mount them on your display board one piece at a time as your students learn the verse.

BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction: Bring some pictures which represent things parents do for their children. Compare the needs they supply to the needs supplied by our heavenly Father.

1. We are admonished not to be concerned about what we shall eat or wear.
2. Point out that the birds neither sow nor reap, but God provides for them.
3. Flowers do not toil or spin, but God makes them beautiful.
4. God feeds the birds and clothes the flowers, and we are far more valuable.

Draw a simple house with the same number of windows and doors as you have students. Cut around three sides of each opening so a flap can be lifted. Behind the openings, paste pictures of each of your students. Ask them, "Who does Jesus promise to take care of?" and then let them lift each flap to see the pictures underneath.

Use the song, "Seek Ye First." Have your class help make a list of things we can seek from the Lord. They may enjoy arranging the words in an acrostic.

Give each child a piece of graph paper. Provide a set of fine-line markers, and let the children draw one or more items God provided for us by filling in squares on the paper.

QUESTIONS

Tell about some of the ways God takes care of you.

Some of you have heard people give their testimonies in church. Tell about a testimony you have heard that told of how God took care of someone. (If members of your class do not come to church, this is a chance to tell them about church services and testimonies. Perhaps you will also want to relate a testimony or two.)

What does God promise to do for us if we put Him first?

What are some things you think you will need help with this week?

Why must we seek God first if we want Him to take care of our needs?

Tell about someone you know who has prayed and for whom God has provided food or clothing.

How much does God know about us?

How much does God care about us?

How does God feel when we want to work out our own problems and do not ask Him for help?

PRESCHOOL SUGGESTIONS:

Show pictures or objects representative of things parents do for us. Plate and cup — give us food; sweater — give us clothes; picture of parent hugging — show us love. Compare this to our heavenly Father. He provides food, love, and the necessities of life because He loves us.

Make a picture wheel to illustrate the various things God provides for us (see Patterns). Put a picture of

Jesus on the top wheel, and the words GOD TAKES CARE OF MY NEEDS. Notch out one section of the top wheel. On the lower wheel, put pictures of home, food, bed, clothes, parents, church. Fasten the two wheels together with a brad. Let the children turn the wheel and tell about different things God has given us.

Give each child a copy of the picture of a sleeping child with Jesus watching over him (see Patterns). Allow them to color the picture as you talk about how Jesus has promised to take care of us.

Give each child a doll with a minimum of clothes. The child should pretend to do things to care for the baby: dress the doll, feed it a bottle, wrap it up, etc. When we love Jesus and do what He wants, He will take care of our needs, just like they take care of their dolly.

REVIEW IDEAS

Make a collage of pictures of birds, nests, weeds, flowers in fields, children, etc. Explain how they didn't make themselves. God made them and He watches over each one individually.

Have one or two children come up. Measure them and then have them stand up and stretch their muscles to see if they can grow taller. Measure them again. Have them think really hard on growing taller. Then measure them again. They can't change their height. God has us in His hands and He is the One who makes us grow taller and takes care of us.

Have someone tell a personal experience of a time when God protected them from danger. As an alternative, the experience could be acted out.

COORDINATING SONGS

"Got Any Rivers?"

"He's Got the Whole World in His Hands"

"O How He Loves You and Me"

"He Owns the Cattle on a Thousand Hills"

"After All He's Done for Me" — Salvation Songs No. 4

"In Jesus I Have My All" — Salvation Songs No. 4

"My Father Is a Billionaire" — Salvation Songs No. 2

"More Than a Millionaire"

"My God Shall Supply All Your Need"

SUPPORT MATERIAL

"God Cares for Us" — Classroom Pictures, 8 each of 6, Gospel Publishing

"Jesus Watches Over Me" — Cut and Color book, Standard Publishing

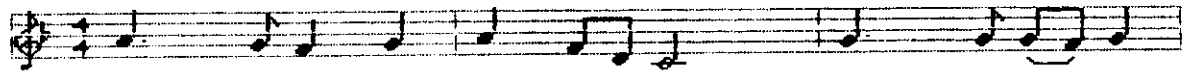
"I'm Not Afraid" — by Kathy Downs, Standard Publishing

"Afraid" — By Rochelle Nielsen Barsuhn, Standard Publishing

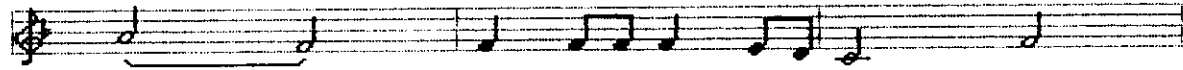
"When I'm Afraid" — by Sylvia Tester, Standard Publishing
"Jesus Is My Special Friend" — a Happy Day book,

Standard Publishing
"God, Why Am I So Afraid?" — by Donovan Marshall, Concordia

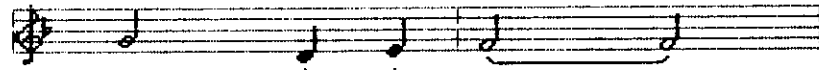
MEMORY VERSE SONG



Seek ye first the king - dom of God, and his right - eous -

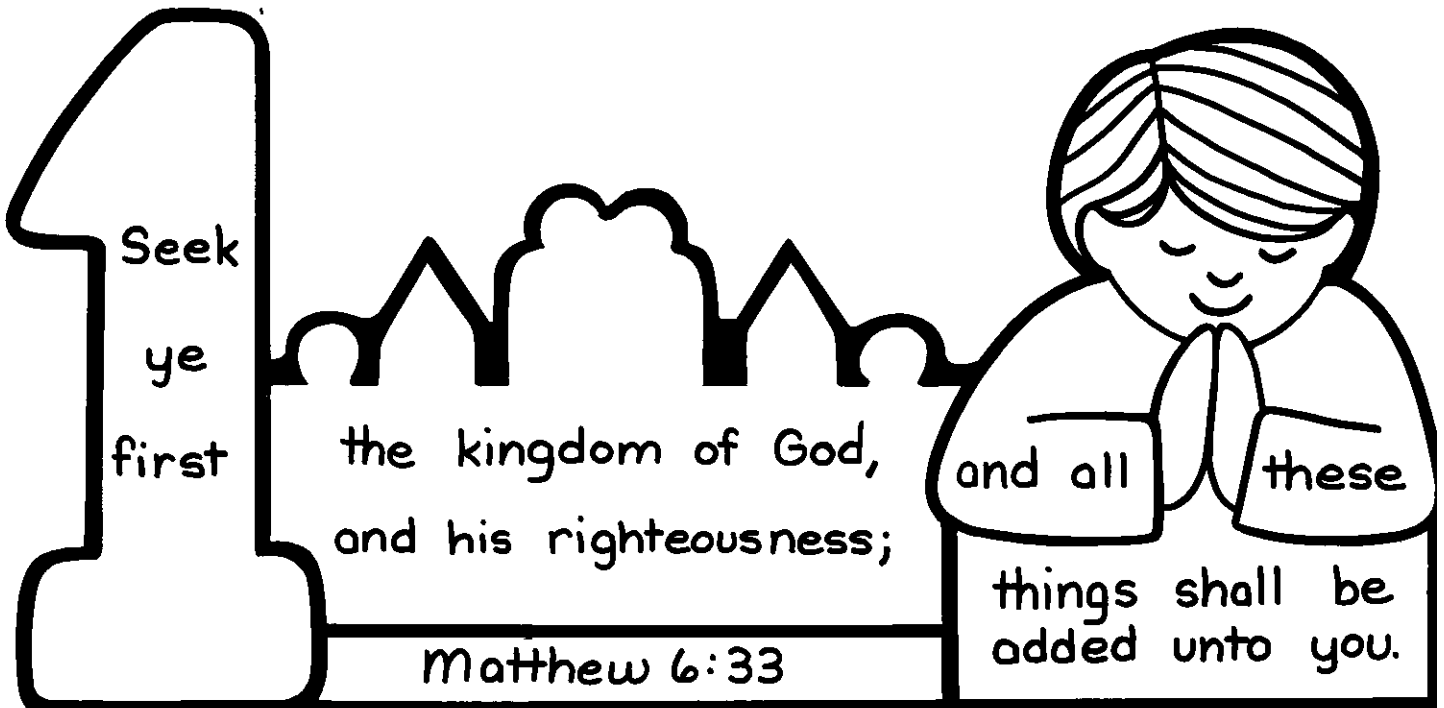


ness; - - and all these things shall be add - ed



un - to you.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED



TEXT I Corinthians 9:24-26; Hebrews 12:1,2; II Timothy 4:7,8

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain that they must be saved to be in the "race" toward Heaven. They can also explain that there is a reward for those who work for the Lord and finish the race.

MEMORY VERSE Ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.
— I Peter 5:4

God Promises Us a Reward If We Finish the Race

MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

YE — Point to an imaginary person.

SHALL RECEIVE — Imagine a vertical stick before you. Grab it with both hands and pull to chest.

A CROWN — Place an imaginary crown on your head.

OF GLORY — Extend left palm up, right finger tips touch left palm, raise right hand wiggling fingers.

THAT FADETH — Point with both index fingers to the right, snapping your wrists as you point.

NOT AWAY — As you are shaking your head "no," imagine a table before you; with the back of the right hand shoo a fly off the table.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

The crown of glory mentioned in the words of this week's memory verse is the focus of the visual illustration of the Scripture. (See pattern at the end of this lesson.) Cut apart the three sections as indicated by the heavy black lines. Put up the pieces one section at a time as your students learn the verse.

BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction: Bring a large trophy to class. Explain that often a trophy is given as the prize to the winner of a race or contest of some type. Often people will put much effort into winning, but usually the trophy is only awarded to the one who comes in first.

1. Paul likens our Christian life to running a race.
2. Explain the importance of running with patience, and what that might mean.
3. To be a part of the Christian race, sin must be put aside.

Climax: In the Christian race, anyone who completes the race will win the prize.

Conclusion: If we wish to complete the Christian race and obtain the prize, we must get started and keep going until the end.

Response: Your students should be able to tell how to

get into the Christian race, and name some things that would help us stay in the race. They will be able to explain what the reward will be for those who finish the race.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Paul said, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? (I Corinthians 9:24). This prize, or crown (verse 25) also referred to in II Timothy 4:5-8 and James 1:12 was not the regal crown of royalty but a wreath given to a victorious athlete or military leader. These were usually made of leaves and would soon wither. In contrast, the Christian who runs the race with patience (Hebrews 12:1), perseveres under trial (James 1:12), and ultimately finishes the course (II Timothy 4:7), will be given a "crown of glory that fadeth not away" (I Peter 5:4).

Just as an athlete must be willing to discipline himself and suffer hardship in order to win a prize, a Christian must also be willing to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and . . . run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1).

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Bring some information on a marathon that is coming up somewhere. Discuss how a person who wants to win the prize doesn't just suddenly show up on the day of the race. They prepare and work toward that goal, perhaps for years before. To receive the crown of glory and life from Jesus, we have to prepare ahead of time by getting saved and working for God.

Make a crown for each child with his/her name on it. Explain how when we are saved God has a crown just for us. When we work for Him He adds to that crown. Glue sequins on each one according to his/her attendance, bringing his/her Bible and Sunday school paper,

and knowing the memory verse. Talk about other ways we can work for Jesus in our home and neighborhood.

Give each child a crown (see Patterns) to cut out and color. Then give them the jewel shapes and let them draw in each jewel something they can do to help them stay in the race. Some thoughts might be: pray, read the Bible, help others, show love, tell others about Jesus.

Make clear to your class that to be a participant in the race toward Heaven, not just a spectator, we must be saved. To participate in a sport we must practice, learn rules, learn strategy, work on weak spots, etc. Bring things to visualize training and participation in a sport: jogging shoes, sweatshirts, weights, rule book. Compare these to the things we use to help us in our Christian race: Bible, prayer, going to church, witnessing, etc.

QUESTIONS

What do you have to do to get a crown?

How do you know there are crowns waiting for us in Heaven?

How can we run a "race" for Jesus?

Compare an earthly trophy with a heavenly crown.

How will people feel about us when we are working for a crown in Heaven?

How do people feel about us when we earn a trophy on this earth?

How can we be righteous?

Is it always easy to do things that are right when all your friends do not?

Why does the devil want to tempt us?

Is it a sin to be tempted? Explain.

How can we overcome temptation?

Where would you rather have honor, on earth or in Heaven? Why?

PRESCHOOL SUGGESTIONS

Give a paper crown to each child in the class (see Patterns). Let them color the crowns. Spread glue on the space drawn to represent jewels and let them sprinkle glitter on it.

Explain to your little ones that when they want something that is in front of them, they must reach out and take it. Illustrate this by passing a plate of cookies or putting out stickers for them. Jesus wants us to take the good things He has for us. These good things might be: learning our Bible story (show picture of a Bible), coming to Sunday school (show picture of children in Sunday school class), learning to share (show pictures of children sharing).

Make a batch of yellow finger Jello and cut into simple crown shapes. Use this as a snack for your children. Recipe for Finger Jello: Bring to a boil 2½ cups pineapple juice (or substitute one 3-ounce package lemon Jello and 2½ cups water). Pour over a mixture of four envelopes of Knox gelatin and ½ cup sugar. Stir until dissolved. Pour into greased 9" by 13" pan. Chill until firm.

Play a simple game with your students. Promise them a small prize (sticker, balloon) if they do something for you: sing a song, answer a question, say their memory verse, etc. Be sure that each child gets a prize. Compare this to the prize we get if we do what Jesus says and make it to Heaven.

REVIEW IDEAS

Bring an item or items which represent a secular reward: a trophy, laurel wreath, plaque, check, etc. Discuss the effort people will expend in order to receive such an award. However, in most secular events there is only one winner. In the race for Heaven, everyone who starts can be a winner.

Make paper plate puppets. Staple two plates together leaving a 6-inch opening in the bottom. (See Patterns as a suggestion for some possibilities.) to illustrate the different kinds of people who are in the race to Heaven, and those who are just spectators. You might want to use "Sleepy Sam" who has no time to read and pray, "Eager Edwin" who is always looking for ways to serve the Lord and be a better Christian, "Earnest Esther" who likes to tell people about Jesus, "Ornery Oswald" who never minds his Sunday school teacher and causes lots of trouble for others. After each puppet makes his appearance and is described, hold up a sign saying, "Is he in the race?" and have the audience respond.

COORDINATING SONGS

"Store Your Treasure" — Sunbeam Songs

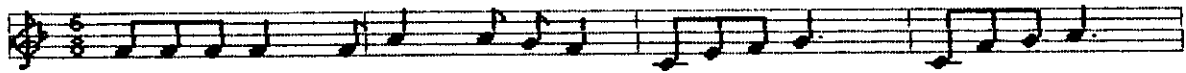
"I'm a Miner" — Sunbeam Songs

"Do, Lord"

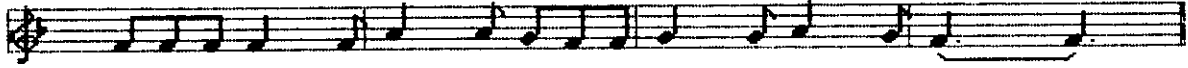
"Precious Jewels"

"I'm Laying up Treasures in Heaven" — Singspiration

MEMORY VERSE SONG

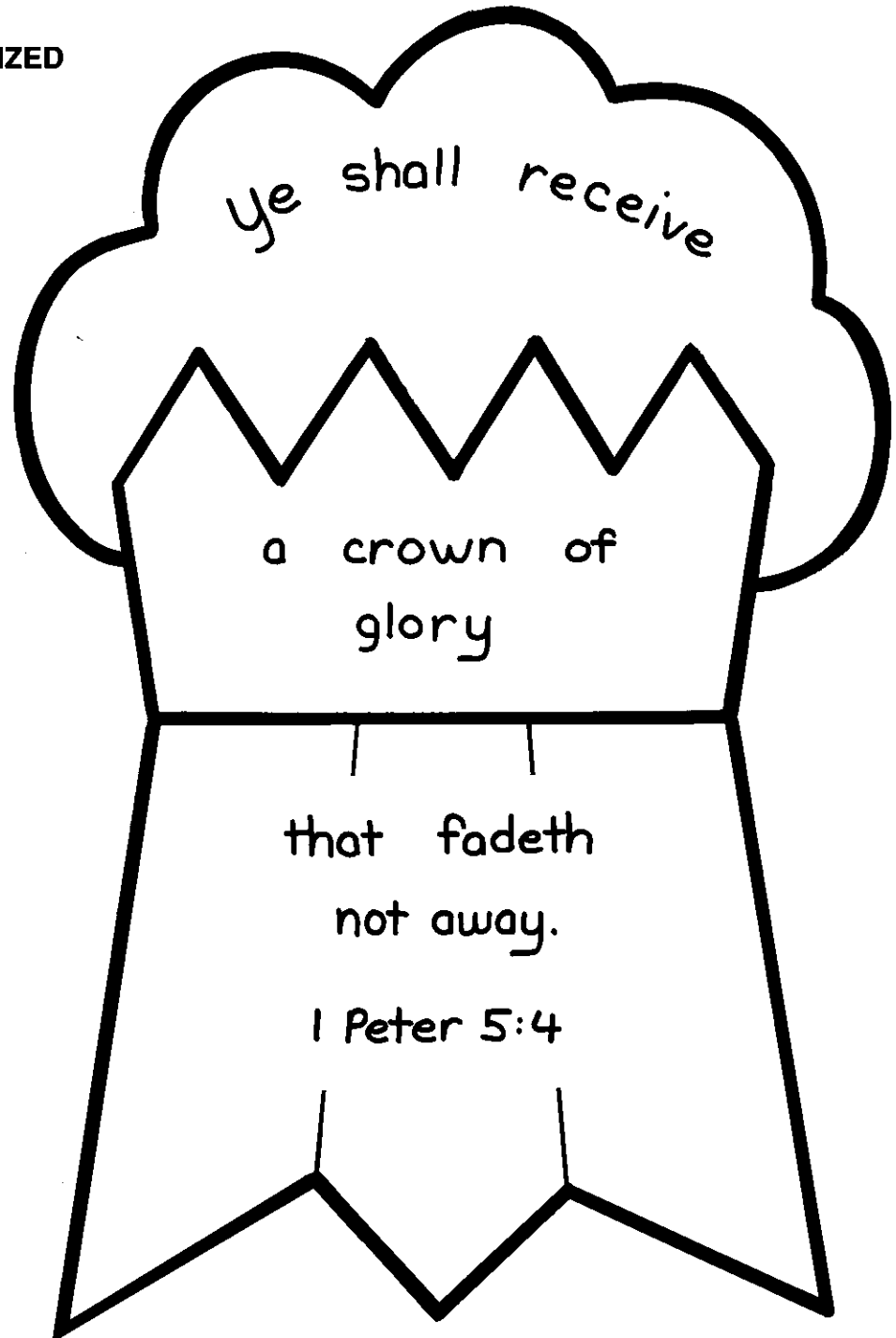


Ye shall receive a crown of glo - ry, Ye shall receive. Ye shall receive.



Ye shall receive a crown of glo - ry that fad - eth not a - way.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED



TEXT John 14:1-3; I Corinthians 15:51-53; Acts 1:9-11; Matthew 24:27-31

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to describe what will take place at the second coming of Jesus, and will realize that we must be ready for this event.

MEMORY VERSE For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. — Matthew 24:27

God Promises Us Jesus Will Come Again

MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

FOR AS THE LIGHTNING — Draw lightning in the air with your right index finger.

COMETH — Beckoning motion, using both arms.

OUT OF THE EAST — Point east.

AND SHINETH — Raise hands in front of face, palms out; vibrate hands as you move them away from each other.

EVEN UNTO THE WEST — Point west.

SO SHALL SO ALSO — Extend index fingers of both hands, palms down, place hands next to each other.

THE COMING — Beckoning motion, using both arms.

OF THE SON OF MAN BE — With right middle finger, touch left palm; with left middle finger, touch right palm (Jesus).

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

Rays of lightning and the figure of Jesus on a cloud portray the verse selected for memorization this week. (See pattern at the end of this lesson.) Cut apart the sections as indicated by the heavy black lines. Display them on your board one section at a time as your students learn the verse.

BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction: For an opener to your class session, replace the headlines of a current newspaper with a headline announcing the return of Jesus to earth. Ask your group to imagine what the reaction of people would be if they picked up the paper and read this. Some day this will happen!

1. Jesus has promised to come again and take us to a place that He has prepared for us.
2. Not everyone will go by way of death.
3. When Jesus was taken to Heaven, two angels confirmed that He will come again in like manner.

Climax: Someday Jesus will come again to earth, and His coming will be instantaneous.

Conclusion: It is absolutely necessary that we are sure we are ready for the coming of the Lord.

Response: The students will be able to explain that Christ has promised to return again to earth, and they will understand why it is important that we are ready for this event.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

One of the most often repeated promises of Scripture is that of the return of Jesus Christ. God had promised the coming of the Messiah and that promise was fulfilled beautifully in every detail. The Christian can also have full confidence in God's Word that His Son will come again.

When one views the antagonism of the world toward the righteous standard of God and His people, the Scripture, "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:20), brings real hope to those who are trusting in God.

In this world there will be injustices, persecutions, disappointments, but Jesus Christ will come back for those who are looking for Him and "shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Revelation 21:4).

However, we are repeatedly warned to hold with a very loose hand the things of this world and conduct our lives in a way that proves we are only pilgrims and strangers on this earth and our true citizenship is in Heaven. Hebrews 11:13-16

Although students of the Bible disagree as to their order and the amount of time that separates these

events, each of the following is associated with the second coming of Christ.

1. The literal return of Christ from Heaven to earth. Acts 1:9-11
2. The catching away (Rapture) of both the living and dead who are in Christ to be with Him forever. I Thesalonians 4:13-18
3. The final destruction of the old Heaven and earth and the beginning of the eternal kingdoms. II Peter 3:10,13

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Cut a slit from the top to bottom of a large posterboard, but not through the top and bottom ends. Glue cotton balls on the top third of the poster, including over the slit. At the bottom draw a hill and draw or glue pictures of disciples looking up. Glue a picture of Jesus to a popsicle stick. Hold the posterboard on your lap and tell the story. Put the picture of Jesus through the slit, keeping the popsicle stick on the back side and move Jesus up or down through the clouds as you tell the story.

Have a puppet come on stage and just stand there looking up. Have another puppet come up to take a look at him and start asking why the first puppet is looking up. The first puppet can answer by saying he is waiting for Jesus to come through the clouds. The second puppet could ask if he could do this too. The first one replies that he can, anyone can, but he needs to be ready. The second asks what this means. The first replies that he learned in Sunday school that he needed to be saved, reading his Bible, and working for Jesus by praying, witnessing, and constantly watching because Jesus may come at any time. Have the first puppet looking up whenever he is not talking. Have the second puppet say, "I would like to go to Sunday school; is it too late to go today?" Have the first puppet say, "No, but we had better go now so you will learn how to be ready." Puppets walk off stage.

Draw and cut out tiny figures from construction paper. Cut a strip of adhesive-backed magnetic tape into little pieces and attach one piece to the back of about half the figures. (The figures could also be cut from a catalog or magazine.) Place all the figures on a sheet of large construction paper on which a background has been drawn. Use a magnet to pull up some of the people.

Give each child a copy of the sun visors with the message "Jesus Is Coming" (see Patterns). Let them color and decorate the outlined visor with marking pens. Then cover the visor with clear adhesive paper, and cut

it out. Punch the holes as indicated, and thread a length of elastic thread through the holes, tying to fit the child's head.

Give each child a pair of glasses (see Patterns) with the words "I'm Watching for Jesus' Coming." (Enlarge or reduce to fit.) Make the glasses from colored construction paper. You may wish to reinforce them with clear adhesive paper before cutting out.

Replace the headlines of a current daily newspaper with a headline announcing the return of Jesus to earth. Use this to open your class session.

QUESTIONS

How will we know Jesus when He comes?

Will everyone see Jesus when He comes? Who will and why?

How do we know for sure that Jesus will come back for us?

God will give us spiritual bodies. How will they be different from the bodies we have now?

What should we do if someone tells us that Jesus is not coming back?

When is Jesus coming back?

Who will be with Jesus when He comes back?

If you are not saved will you go up when Jesus comes back?

PRESCHOOL SUGGESTIONS

Compare Jesus' coming to the anticipated arrival of a favorite aunt or grandparent. Show some of the things you might use to prepare: dust cloth (dust table), cake on platter (make special food), telephone (tell others you are expecting visitors). We also must prepare for Jesus' return. Show a picture of a child praying and a picture of a clean heart.

Give each of your children a copy of the picture of Jesus with arms stretched downward (see Patterns). Let them color the picture, and glue cotton on the clouds around His feet.

Give each child a magic slate. Let them draw happy faces to represent how we will feel when Jesus comes again.

REVIEW IDEAS

Act out some of the preparations which take place

when a family is expecting a special visitor. Some suggestions: Make up a bed, bake a special dish, invite some others over to visit, empty some dresser drawers. Compare this to the preparation we need to make to be ready for Jesus' return.

Darken the room and flash a camera to show how fast Jesus' coming will be. Just prior to the camera flash you might also want to incorporate a tape of a voice reading the memory verse.

Simulate a news broadcast that might take place just after the Lord has come. If you wish, dramatize the reaction of those who are listening to the broadcast.

COORDINATING SONGS

- "Jesus Is Coming"
- "By and By When Jesus Comes" — Salvation Songs No. 2
- "Countdown" — CEF

MEMORY VERSE SONG

For as the light - ning cometh out of the east and shin - eth ev - en unto the west; so shall al - so the com - ing of the Son of man be.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

