

The Circle Maker

C h i l d r e n ' s C u r r i c u l u m

Early Elementary

ZONDERVAN

The Circle Maker Children's Curriculum

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Requests for information should be addressed to:

Zondervan, 3900 Sparks Dr. SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546

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Week 1:

Becoming A Circle Maker

Objective: To teach each child that God wants us to pray

Bible Story: Joshua and the Wall of Jericho (Joshua 6:1 – 16)

Memory Verse: “Tell God about everything. Ask and pray.” (Philippians 4:6b, NIrV)

Circle Maker Motto: God is looking for Circle Makers who know His promises and pray His promises.

Master Supplies List

- ☐ NIrV Bible
- ☐ Family Table Talk handout (one per child)
- ☐ Family Prayer Calendar (one per child)
- ☐ Whiteboard and dry-erase markers

Optional Supplies

You will need the following supplies based on which option(s) you choose in **Step 1: Getting Started** and **Step 3: Explore More**.

- ☐ **Getting Started 1:** Circle Maker Welcome Badge (one per child), washable markers and/or crayons, stickers, stick-on gems, other optional decorating supplies, glue or glue sticks as needed, yarn, scissors, hole punch
- ☐ **Getting Started 2:** Cell phone, newspaper, pre-written letter, copy of an email and/or a postcard
- ☐ **Getting Started 3:** Hula hoop, timer
- ☐ **Explore More 1:** Strips of colored construction paper, Praying God's Promises template, washable markers, glue sticks, a completed sample prayer chain
- ☐ **Explore More 2:** Prayer Cube template (one per child), child-safe scissors, washable markers, clear tape, a completed sample Prayer Cube

Step 1: Getting Started

As the children arrive to class, provide activities to help prepare them for the lesson. Select one of the following activities that will work best for your group, or create a variety of stations for the children to pick from within the classroom. Play music in the background to help create a fun and welcoming environment. Welcome the children as they arrive, and share the activities available. If you choose to create stations, you may want to have volunteers on hand to help. As the children work on these activities, remind them that the Storyteller will blow a trumpet when it's time to finish and move to the story time.

Option 1: Circle Maker Welcome Badge

Supplies: Circle Maker Welcome Badge template (one badge per child), washable markers and/or crayons, stick-on gems, other optional decorating supplies, glue or glue sticks as needed, yarn, scissors, hole punch

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy the Circle Maker Welcome Badge template onto card stock (one badge per child). Cut out the Circle Maker Welcome Badges and punch two holes in the top as indicated on the template. Cut 18" lengths of yarn.

Give each child a Circle Maker Welcome Badge and a length of yarn. Make available washable markers, crayons, stickers, and stick-on gems for the children to share. (If you provide optional decorating supplies, be sure to include glue or glue sticks, if needed.) Instruct the children to write their names on the back of their badges and string the length of yarn through the two holes. Assist children in tying the ends of the yarn together in order to make a necklace. Instruct the children to decorate their badges. Share your excitement for what the children are going to learn over the next few weeks! As the children color and decorate their badges,

SAY, "God is looking for Circle Makers. He wants us to know His promises and then pray His promises."

ASK, "How do we know God's promises to us?" (*Read the Bible, go to Sunday school, listen to church messages, etc.*)

Option 2: Talk to Me!

Supplies: Cell phone, newspaper, pre-written letter, copy of an email or a postcard

Ahead of Time: Gather the supplies needed and display them accordingly.

Display all the supplies on a table. As the children arrive, ask them to guess what the items on the table have in common. Share clues and guidance until they determine all the items are ways we talk, or communicate, with others.

ASK, "What is your favorite way to communicate with your family members and friends?" (*Let children respond.*)

SAY, “Today we’re going to learn about prayer. Prayer is how we talk, or communicate, with God. We may not get a phone call from God, but we can hear from Him as we read His letter to us, the Bible. We don’t need to send Him an email, but we can talk to Him anytime and anywhere as we pray to Him. God loves it when we talk to Him.”

Option 3: Let’s Be Circle Makers!

Supplies: Hula hoops, timer

Gather the children into circles of eight to ten children each. Pass out a hula hoop to each circle group, and instruct them to dangle a hula hoop through a pair of joined hands.

SAY, “When the timer starts, I want you to move the hoop around the circle by moving your bodies so the hoop goes through everyone in the circle without letting go of hands.”

Set the timer for two minutes. When the timer goes off,

SAY, “How far did the hula hoops make it around your circles? Did any of the hula hoops make it back to their original positions? Wow! Way to go! You all did a great job! Today we’re going to learn how God is looking for Circle Makers to join Him on an adventure in prayer. Are you ready?”

If time allows, continue the game, trying to lessen the time it takes for the hula hoop to make it around the circle.

Step 2: Present the Story

Supplies Needed: Pretend trumpet, whiteboard, dry-erase markers

(CUE: *As the Getting Started time comes to a close, have the Storyteller prepare to blow a pretend trumpet. When the Storyteller blows the trumpet, direct the children to the teaching area. The Storyteller will then lead the Bible story time. Ask volunteers to sit with the children, provide crowd control, and participate as directed by the Storyteller.*)



Storyteller: Good morning! It’s great to see you! Welcome to the Circle Maker! I’m so excited for today’s Bible story, but before we open God’s Word, I need to ask you a question. Are you ready? (*Children respond, “Yes!”*) Okay! So what is your favorite shape? I’ll give you a few seconds to think about it and then we’ll take a vote. (*Wait a few seconds.*) Okay, by a show of hands, whose favorite shape is a square? Thank you; you may put your hands down.

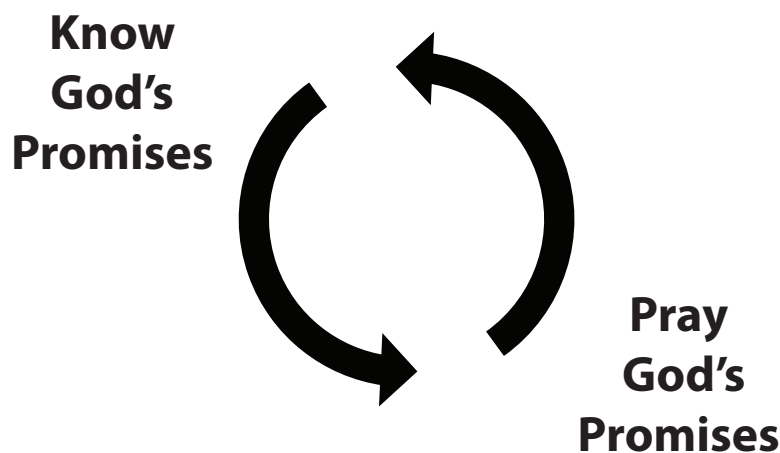
Whose favorite shape is a triangle? Thank you; you may put your hands down. Whose favorite shape is a trapezoid? Thank you; you may put your hands down. Whose favorite shape is a circle? Thank you; you may put your hands down. How many didn't vote? Just kidding.

So why are we talking about shapes? I'm glad you asked. For the next four weeks we're going to learn how to be Circle Makers. Can you say that with me, "Circle Maker"? (*Children respond.*) When I say the word "Circle Maker," I want you to make a big circle in front of you like this. (*Make a big circle with your arms in front of your body.*) Now be careful not to bump your neighbor, okay, Circle Makers! (*Make circle.*) Great job! Did you know God is looking for Circle Makers (*make circle*) that know His promises from the Bible and then pray His promises? Yes, God is looking for Circle Makers. (*Make circle.*) I wonder if anyone here today would like to learn more about being a Circle Maker? (*Make circle. Children respond, "Yes!"*) Great!

Let's start by thinking about prayer. What are some ways we can pray? (*Children respond.*) That's right — we can (*leader demonstrate*) pray standing up, sitting down, with our eyes open, with our eyes closed, kneeling, face down, with hands outstretched, with hands folded; we can write our prayers, cry our prayers, and even shout our prayers. There are lots of ways to pray. Praying is a way that we can talk to God, and God loves it when we talk to Him.

For the next four weeks we are going to learn a new way to pray — praying in circles. Now is praying in circles the only way to pray? (*Children respond, "No!"*) Of course not! Prayer is just talking to God and we can talk to Him any way and anywhere and anytime.

When we pray in circles, it kind of goes like this. We spend time getting to know God's promises — reading the Bible, going to church — and then we spend time talking to God, reminding Him of His promises, and it makes a big circle. Like this ...



(CUE: Use the whiteboard and dry-erase markers to draw a circle as shown. As you draw, SAY, "Know God's promises ... Pray God's promises!")

For example, God promises in the Bible that we do not have to be afraid. Over and over in the Bible God says, "Do not fear." So let's say you're joining a new sports team

and you don't know any of the kids on the team. Rather than getting scared and just quitting, you can think about God's promise, and then circle it, or pray God's promise.

Anyone have some ideas of what you might pray? (*Children respond.*) Great! Or you could say, "God, you say in the Bible that I don't have to fear, so please help me not to be afraid on this new team." That's circling one of God's promises. That's being a Circle Maker! (*Make circle.*) And God is looking for Circle Makers (*make circle*) to join Him on an adventure in prayer!

There's a story in the Bible where God calls some Circle Makers (*make circle*) and they watch God perform a miracle right before their very eyes! Let's take a look.

Today's Bible story involves Joshua and the wall of Jericho [jer-i-koh]. (*Say that with me ... Jericho.*) How many of you have heard this story? (*Children respond.*) Oh good! You can make sure I'm telling it correctly!

In today's story, God's chosen people, the Israelites, are finally going to make it to the place that God promised he would give to them — the Promised Land — an amazing land flowing with milk and honey, a land they've waited a long time to get to! Except there is a problem. Not only are there some not-so-nice people already living in the Promised Land, but when they get to the first big city — Jericho — there are walls surrounding it that are six feet wide (*extend arms horizontally*) and fifty feet high (*extend arms vertically while standing on your tiptoes*). Now that's tall!

Without a big army or any weapons, how are Joshua and the other Israelites supposed to get the mean people currently living there to leave their Promised Land? Let's find out. (*Open Bible.*) I'll be reading from the book of Joshua, chapter 6.

(CUE: *Read the story using your own NIV Bible or use the script supplied below.*)

Now as I read, I need you to listen for two things.

First, what promise does God give to Joshua?

And two, how does Joshua respond to God's promises?

Do you have your listening ears ready? (*Children respond.*) Great, then let's get started on today's story!

Joshua 6:1–5, 11–16, 20 (NIV)

¹The gates of Jericho were shut tight and guarded closely because of the people of Israel. No one went out. No one came in.

²Then the Lord spoke to Joshua. He said, "I have handed Jericho over to you. I have also handed its king and its fighting men over to you.

³"March around the city once with all of your fighting men. In fact, do it for six days. ⁴Have seven priests get trumpets that are made out of rams' horns. They must carry them in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times. Have the priests blow the trumpets as you march.

⁵"You will hear them blow a long blast on the trumpets. When you do, have all of the men give a loud shout. The wall of the city will fall down. Then the whole army will go up to the city. Every man will go straight in."

¹¹So he had the ark of the Lord carried around the city once. Then the men returned to camp. They spent the night there. ¹²Joshua got up early the next

morning. The priests went and got the ark of the Lord. ¹³The seven priests who were carrying the seven trumpets started out. They marched in front of the ark of the Lord. They blew the trumpets. Some of the fighting men marched ahead of them. The others followed behind the ark and guarded all of them. The priests kept blowing the trumpets. ¹⁴On the second day they marched around the city once. Then the men returned to camp. They did all of those things for six days. ¹⁵On the seventh day, they got up at sunrise. They marched around the city, just as they had done before. But on that day they went around it seven times. ¹⁶On the seventh time around, the priests blew a long blast on the trumpets. Then Joshua gave a command to the men. He said, “Shout! The Lord has given you the city!”

²⁰The priests blew the trumpets. As soon as the fighting men heard the sound, they gave a loud shout. Then the wall fell down.

Wow! So who can tell me what promise God gave to Joshua? (*Children respond.*) That’s right — God promised Joshua that His people would win the battle, didn’t He?

But God gave him some pretty unusual battle instructions. Who remembers what they were? (*Children respond.*) Yes, instead of trying to climb the walls, knock the walls down, or shoot fiery arrows over the walls to burn down the city, God told Joshua and the people to march around the city once a day for six days, and on the seventh day, to march around it seven times, blow trumpets (*blow pretend trumpet*), and give a shout. And, what did God say would happen if they followed those instructions? (*Children respond.*) Yes! God said the walls of Jericho would fall down and God’s people would be able to walk right into the city He had promised them.

Now, who can tell me how Joshua responded to God’s instructions? (*Children respond.*) Yes, Joshua obeyed God! Joshua listened to God’s promise, believed God, and then did what God told him to do.

Did God keep His promise to Joshua? Absolutely! The walls of the city tumbled down so that the Israelites could walk right in and take over the city of Jericho.

Do you all think the walls fell down because of the loud trumpets and shouting? No! The walls fell down because God kept His promise! Isn’t God amazing!

So did anyone notice where our circle shape was found in the story? (*Wait for a few responses.*) That’s right — the people of Israel made a big circle around the city of Jericho when they marched around it. It was God who kept His promise. It was God who performed the miracle of the walls falling down. Joshua and the Israelites took over the city of Jericho because they believed God’s promise and then obeyed His instructions!

So what are some things that we can learn from today’s story? (*Children respond. Possible answers may include: God can do anything; Joshua obeyed God.*)

Yes, that’s right! And there are two very important lessons I want us to remember. First, God keeps His promises. We can trust Him no matter what. Say that with me. (“*God keeps His promises.*”)

Two, just like the Israelites, we can draw a circle around the impossible situations in our lives and invite God to help us. We can be Circle Makers! (*Make circle.*)

So how do we do this? How can we be Circle Makers (*make circle*) in our homes and our schools and our neighborhoods?

For starters, we can get to know God's promises. Can you think of some ways we can get to know God's promises? (*Children respond.*) That's right — by spending time reading the Bible. What kinds of things does God promise us? Does God promise to provide food for us? Yes, He does. Does God want us to have clothes to wear? Sure. Does He promise us the latest video game or a new doll? Um, no.

God is not like a candy machine where we put money in and then get out whatever we want, is He? That's why it's important to read the Bible and know God's promises.

Remember there are two parts of the circle, right? The first part is knowing God's promises. Does anyone remember the other part? (*Point to whiteboard.*) That's right! Being a Circle Maker (*make circle*) also means spending time praying God's promises or talking to God.

During our time together these next four weeks, we'll be learning one new memory verse each week. This week's memory verse will really help us as Circle Makers. "Tell God about everything. Ask and pray" (Philippians 4:6b, NIV). Let's stand up and say that together. (CUE: *Have the children stand up and practice the hand motions along with repeating the words after you.*)

- **Tell God:** Point to the ceiling.
- **About everything:** Make a large sweeping motion with your right arm.
- **Ask:** Put your hands around your mouth, like you are making a megaphone.
- **And pray:** Fold hands in praying position.
- **Philippians 4:** Hold up four fingers on one hand.
- **6b:** Hold up five fingers on one hand and your thumb on the other hand.

God is looking for Circle Makers (*make circle*), friends. Would anyone here like to know God's promises and pray His promises, and join Him on an amazing adventure of prayer? (*Children respond.*) Oh good! Me too!

Let's pray: "Dear God, thank You for the Bible that's filled with Your promises. Thank You that You love us so very much. Thank You for inviting us to join you as Circle Makers. Help us to tell you about everything, and to ask and pray this week. In Jesus' name. Amen."

All right, gang, it's time to march just like the Israelites — but as quietly as you can — over to your activity times.



Step 3: Explore More

Choose from these activity options, depending on your available time frame, to help children explore the lesson further.

Option 1: Praying God's Promises Paper Chain

Supplies: Standard size colored construction paper, glue sticks, Praying God's Promises verse template, washable markers, child-safe scissors, a completed sample prayer chain

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy the Praying God's Promises verse template (one full sheet per child). Cut standard size sheets of construction paper into strips approximately 3" tall by 4" wide. Assemble one completed paper chain to use as a sample.

SAY, "God loves to make promises. We learned today that God is looking for Circle Makers who know His promises and pray His promises. Let's make a paper chain to remind us of some of God's powerful promises!"

Give each child a Praying God's Promises verse template along with a pair of scissors, a glue stick, and ten strips of construction paper. Instruct the children to cut apart the verse strips and then glue each one to a strip of colored construction paper. As the children cut apart the verse strips, read each promise aloud. Once the labels are glued onto the construction paper, instruct the children to make a paper chain by forming the strips into loops and gluing the ends together. As they are doing so,

ASK, "How might this promise help us as Circle Makers? How could we pray this promise?" (*Let children respond.*)

SAY, "As Circle Makers, we want to know God's promises! Tear off one promise each day and think about God's promises for His dearly loved children — like you, like me!"

Option 2: Prayer Cubes

Supplies: Prayer Cube template (one per child), child-safe scissors, washable markers, clear tape, a completed sample Prayer Cube

Optional Supplies: Whiteboard, dry-erase markers

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy the Prayer Cube template onto card stock (one per child). Assemble one Prayer Cube to use as a sample.

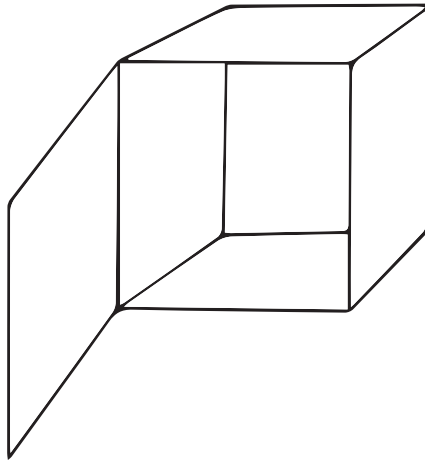
SAY, "We learned today that God wants us to pray His promises. God is looking for Circle Makers who know His promises and pray His promises! Let's make something to remind us to ask and pray every day!"

Give each child a prayer cube template and a pair of child-safe scissors. Instruct the children to carefully cut out the prayer cube template. As they are doing so, share

examples of friends, family members, neighbors, and others who they can be praying for. You may want to create a list on a whiteboard as a reference.

Next, ask the children to write on their cube the names of persons they'd like to pray for (one per square). Using the prepared sample, demonstrate how to fold the paper. Assist children in folding the paper, as needed. Make available clear tape for the children to share. Using the prepared sample, demonstrate how to fasten the sides to complete the cube.

SAY as you conclude, "As Circle Makers, our prayers are important to God. Keep this prayer cube somewhere in your room or home where you will see it every day. Remember, tell God about everything; ask and pray!"



Option 3: Circle Maker Message Game

Invite the children to sit in a circle or around a table.

SAY, "Has anyone here ever played the telephone game? (*Children respond.*) Okay, if you've never played the telephone game, here's how it goes. I'll start by whispering something in one person's ear. That person whispers the same message in the next person's ear, and we keep going around the circle until everyone has heard the message. Remember to say the message as quietly as possible in the next person's ear. When the last person in the circle has heard the message, he or she will say the message out loud. Are you ready? Great! I'll start."

Begin with one child and whisper one of the Circle Maker messages provided in his or her ear. Instruct the first child to whisper the same phrase in the ear of the

child to his or her left, and continue around the circle until the last child is told the message. Then instruct the last child to say what he or she heard out loud to see how close it was to the original message. Continue until all the messages have been shared.

Circle Maker Messages

- God is looking for Circle Makers.
- Tell God about everything. Ask and pray.
- God always hears us when we pray.
- We can pray anytime, morning, noon, or night.

If time remains, continue playing the Circle Maker Message Game, allowing the children to come up with their own Circle Maker messages.

Step 4: Go!

Supplies: Family Table Talk handout and Family Prayer Calendar (one of each per child)

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy the Family Table Talk handout and the Family Prayer Calendar (one of each per child).

As you prepare for dismissal, pray together and ask God to help each child to spend time praying to Him this week. Encourage the children to spend time memorizing Philippians 4:6b at home. Make sure each child leaves with his or her take-home activities, the Family Table Talk handout, and a Family Prayer Calendar.

As parents arrive, introduce them to the Family Table Talk handout and the Family Prayer Calendar. Encourage parents to spend time throughout the week praying through the verses on the prayer calendar and talking about ways to be Circle Makers!



The LORD himself will go ahead of you. He will be with you. He will never leave you.
— Deuteronomy 31:8a

Be strong and brave. Do not be afraid. Do not lose hope. I am the LORD your God. I will be with you everywhere you go. — Joshua 1:9

Call out to me. I will answer you. I will tell you great things you do not know. — Jeremiah 33:3a

I will always guide you.
— Isaiah 58:11

Come to me, all of you who are tired and are carrying heavy loads. I will give you rest. — Matthew 11:28

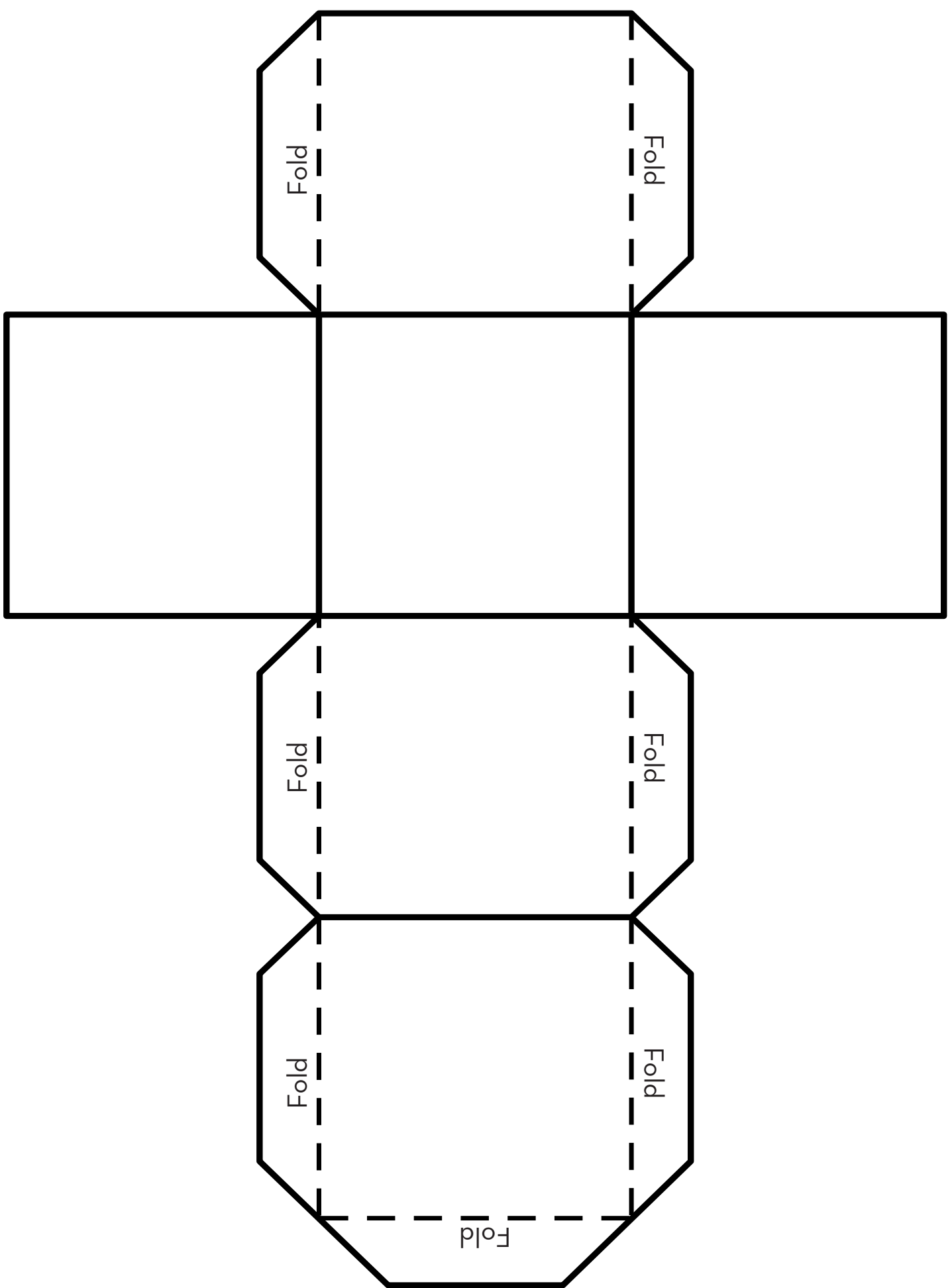
God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life.
— John 3:16

The Spirit doesn't make us weak and fearful. Instead, the Spirit gives us power and love.
— 2 Timothy 1:7

If any of you needs wisdom, you should ask God for it. He will give it to you. God gives freely to everyone. — James 1:5a

God is faithful and fair. If we confess our sins, he will forgive our sins. — 1 John 1:9

We love because he loved us first. — 1 John 4:19



Week 2:

Cloudy with a Chance of Quail

Objective: To teach each child that God wants us to trust Him

Bible Story: God Provides Meat for the People (Numbers 11)

Memory Verse: “The LORD will keep all his promises.” (Psalm 145:13b, NIV)

Circle Maker Motto: God is looking for Circle Makers who know His promises and pray His promises.

Master Supplies List

- ☐ NIV Bible
- ☐ Family Table Talk handout (one per child)
- ☐ Family Prayer Calendar (one per child)
- ☐ Bible, paper trumpet, whiteboard, dry-erase markers, one brown grocery sack, five random objects

Optional Supplies

You will need the following supplies based on which option(s) you choose in **Step 1: Getting Started** and **Step 3: Explore More**.

- ☐ **Getting Started 1:** Beads (assorted colors), elastic or cord for stringing beads, scissors, God Keeps His Promises Medallion template, card stock
- ☐ **Getting Started 2:** Plastic toy food, basket
- ☐ **Explore More 1:** Brown paper lunch sack (one per child), Paper Quail (five per child), Memory Verse label template, child-safe scissors, washable markers, glue sticks, a completed sample Trust Basket
- ☐ **Explore More 2:** Circle Maker Door Hanger (one per child), washable markers and/or crayons, glitter, glue, stickers, child-safe scissors
- ☐ **Explore More 3:** One sheet of white poster board, marker

Step 1: Getting Started

As the children arrive to class, provide activities to help prepare them for the lesson. Select one of the following activities that will work best for your group, or create a variety of stations for the children to pick from within the classroom. Play music in the background to help create a fun and welcoming environment. Welcome the children as they arrive, and share the activities available. If you choose to create stations, you may want to have volunteers on hand to help. As the children work on these activities, remind them that the Storyteller will blow a trumpet when it's time to finish and move to the story time.

Option 1: Circle Maker Bracelet

Supplies: Multi-colored beads, child-safe scissors, elastic string or cord for stringing beads cut into 10" lengths

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy the Circle Maker Medallion template onto card stock (one medallion per child). Cut out the medallions and punch a hole in both the right and the left side of each. Assemble one Circle Maker Bracelet to use as a sample.

Say, "God is looking for Circle Makers who know His promises and pray His promises. Let's make a colorful Circle Maker Bracelet to remind us of God's promises to us."

Give each child a length of elastic. Tie a large knot in one end of the elastic (or cord) to ensure that beads do not slip off. Make available an assortment of multi-colored beads for the children to share. Give each child a Circle Maker medallion. Instruct the children to begin stringing beads onto the elastic. After the children have added several beads, instruct them to add the Circle Maker medallion. Children may then continue stringing beads. Once all of the beads are added, assist children in tying a secure knot at the end of the elastic.

While the children are working on their bracelets,

SAY, "Today we'll learn how God kept His promise and provided food for the Israelites. We can trust God to give us what we need too. He is faithful to keep His promises. When you wear your Circle Maker Bracelet, may it remind you — God keeps His promises."

Option 2: Find the Food

Supplies: Plastic toy food, basket

SAY, "In today's Bible story we'll learn how the Israelites in the Bible had to trust God to provide food each day. God promised His people that He would take care of their needs, and He sent food to feed them when they were hungry. God always keeps His promises. Let's play a game to help us remember how God takes care of us, and

how we can trust Him for all of our needs. In our game, you will have to trust me to help you find your missing food.”

Show the children the food that will be hidden. Choose one child to be the seeker, and give him/her the empty basket to gather the food. The seeker covers his or her eyes while a volunteer hides the fake food. Once the food is hidden, everyone encourages the seeker by saying “warmer” as he or she nears the hidden food and “colder” as he or she moves away from the hidden food. When the seeker finds the food, choose two other children to be seeker and hider, and play again.

As the children are searching for the food, remind them God provided food to feed the Israelites when they were hungry.

SAY, “We can trust God to provide for all of our needs too.”

Option 3: Quail Round-Up

SAY, “God promised His children, the Israelites, that He would always take care of them while they were traveling to their Promised Land. He provided a bird called quail to feed them when they were hungry. God always keeps His promises. Let’s play a game to help us remember how God provided for the Israelites.”

Divide the children into two equal groups. Designate the first group to be Israelites and the other group to be Quail.

SAY, “Quail, I want you all to crouch down and waddle around like birds. Israelites, I want you all to get down on your knees and try to catch the Quail. You can catch the Quail by tagging them gently on the hand. Everyone ready? Let’s play!”

Continue playing until all the Quail have been caught.

SAY as you conclude, “Way to go, Israelites and Quail! Today we’re going to learn how God always provided food for the Israelites. We can trust God to give us what we need too. He is faithful to keep His promises.”

Step 2: Present the Story

Supplies Needed: Bible, pretend trumpet, whiteboard, dry-erase markers, one brown grocery sack, five random objects (any five items will work; for example: an old CD, TV remote, barrette, piece of fruit, crayon, or bouncy ball)

Ahead of Time: Place the five objects in the grocery sack and fold it securely shut.

(CUE: *As the Getting Started time comes to a close, have the Storyteller prepare to blow a pretend trumpet. When the Storyteller blows the trumpet, direct the children to the teaching area. The Storyteller will then lead the Bible story time. Ask volunteers to sit with the children, provide crowd control, and participate as directed by the Storyteller.*)



Storyteller: Good morning! It's great to see you! I'm so glad you are here for Circle Maker! Today we continue learning a new way to talk to God, or pray — praying in circles. Remember, God is looking for Circle Makers (*make circle with your arms*) — people just like you and me — who know His promises (*hold up Bible*) and pray His promises. We can be Circle Makers!

Today, we will learn how God sent His people, the Israelites, food when they were hungry. They named the food “manna” because they didn’t quite know what it was, and the word “manna” means, “What is it?” Can you say that with me? (*“What is it?”*)

Before we dig into our Bible story, let’s play a game called “What Is It?” I need a very brave volunteer. (*Pick a volunteer; have him/her come forward; welcome him/her to the game.*) Take out the grocery sack with the five random items inside and show it to the children.

I’m going to give our friendly volunteer here ten seconds to see if he/she can discover “What is it?” Let’s see if our volunteer can guess the five items in this bag just by touching them.

(*To the volunteer*) I’ll give you ten seconds to feel the items inside the bag — no peeking. I promise you there is nothing in the bag that would hurt you, bite you, or make you yelp. Promise. We’ll all be counting back from ten aloud, “10–9–8–7–6–5–4–3–2–1, and then we’ll all shout, “What is it?” Then we’ll see if you can name the five items. Everyone ready?

(CUE: *When the volunteer starts to feel the items, direct the kids to count back from ten aloud. When time is up, ask the volunteer to name the five items. If the volunteer guesses correctly, pull the item from the bag. If the volunteer has trouble, you may want to give him/her clues. When all five items are revealed, thank him/her for volunteering.*)

Wow, our volunteer was brave. Would you want to stick your hand in a bag when you didn’t know what was in it? What if there had been a big, long snake in the bag? Or a mousetrap? Or a super-sharp pencil? Why do you think our volunteer was willing to stick his/her hand in a deep, dark bag? (*Children respond. Possible answers may include: He/she is brave; it wasn’t that scary, etc.*)

That’s right. Also, I made a promise there wouldn’t be anything bad in the bag,

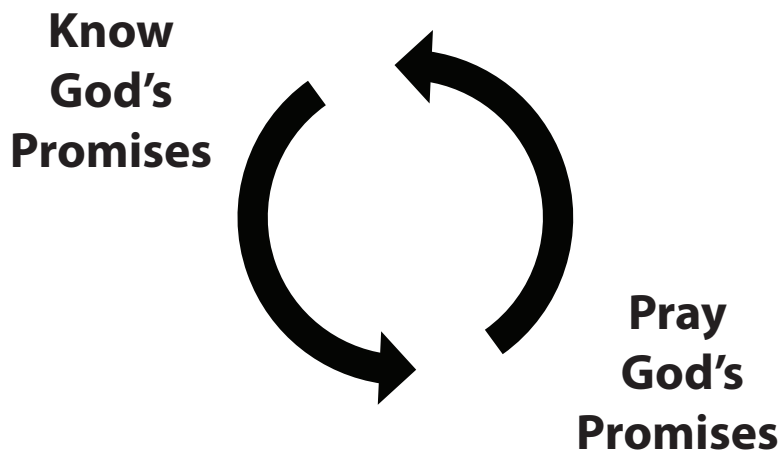
and hopefully you can trust that I'll keep my promise. Now there is Someone we can always trust, who will absolutely, positively keep His promises. Always.

Can anyone guess who I am talking about? (*Children respond.*) That's right — God!

God keeps all His promises. He is faithful in everything He does. And that's a good thing, especially for us to remember as Circle Makers (*make circle*).

If you were here last week, you may remember we talked about praying in circles. We spend time getting to know God's promises — by reading the Bible, going to church, or maybe having devotions at home or school — and then we spend time talking to God reminding Him of His promises, and it makes a big circle. Like this ...

(CUE: *Use the whiteboard and dry-erase markers to draw a circle as shown. As you draw, SAY, "Know God's promises ... Pray God's promises!"*)



Can anyone give me an example of something God has promised us in the Bible? (*Let children respond.*) That's right! Here's another good example. God promises in the Bible that He will never leave us. Let's say you're in your bed one night sleeping, and in the middle of the night you wake up to a really strange noise. At first you start to panic! Yikes! But then, rather than getting really scared and worried, you think about God's promise that He is with you always; and then you circle it, or pray God's promise back to him. "God, You promise that You are always with me. I pray You'd help me to remember You are always with me." Before you know it, you drift back to sleep, and in the morning you see a fallen branch in your yard that hit your bedroom window and made the strange noise. Knowing God's promises and praying God's promises. Make sense? Great!

And the more we know God's promises from the Bible, the more we can trust Him. God will keep all His promises. He is faithful in everything He does!

Are you ready to see what we can learn about being Circle Makers (*make circle*) from today's Bible story? Great! Me too!

Today's Bible story involves a man named Moses and God's chosen people called the Israelites. The Israelites had been slaves in Egypt, but God rescued them and had a new Promised Land He wanted them to enjoy. While the Israelites traveled in the

wilderness on their way to the Promised Land, God was always faithful and He made them a promise: He would always provide for their needs. Did you catch that? What did God promise Moses and the Israelites? (*Children respond, “He would always provide for their needs.”*)

Right! And God kept His promise. He gave them manna from heaven to eat every day and pure water to drink. But soon, even though God was providing for His people, they began to complain about what God gave to them. Can you help me make a grumbling noise like this? (*Storyteller grumbles, then children respond with grumbling.*)

In fact, they started to think that maybe it was better back in Egypt — even though they had been poor, overworked slaves there. Can you believe it?

So as I read today’s Bible story, I need you to listen for two very important things.

One, how does Moses respond when the people are complaining?

Two, how does God respond when the people are complaining?

Are you ready to take a listen? (*Children respond.*) Great!

(CUE: *Read the story using your own NIrV Bible or use the script supplied below.*)

Numbers 11:4 – 6, 10 – 11, 13, 18 – 21, 23 – 24, 31 – 32 (NIrV)

⁴Some people who were with them began to long for other food. Again the people of Israel began to cry out. They said, “We wish we had meat to eat.

⁵We remember the fish we ate in Egypt. It didn’t cost us anything. We also remember the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. ⁶But now we’ve lost all interest in eating. We never see anything but this manna!”

¹⁰Moses heard people from every family crying. They were sobbing at the entrances to their tents. The LORD burned with hot anger. So Moses became troubled. ¹¹He asked the LORD, “Why have you brought this trouble on me? Why aren’t you pleased with me? Why have you loaded me down with the troubles of all of these people? ¹³“Where can I get meat for all of these people? They keep crying out to me. They say, ‘Give us meat to eat!’”

Moses did not know what to do and was very troubled. However, Moses knew what to do when he was faced with an impossible situation. Pray! Moses took his problem to God, and then God gave Moses very specific instructions —

¹⁸“Tell the people . . . ‘The LORD heard you when you cried out. You said, “We wish we had meat to eat. We were better off in Egypt.” Now the LORD will give you meat. And you will eat it. ¹⁹You will not eat it for just one or two days. You will not eat it for just five, ten or 20 days. ²⁰Instead, you will eat it for a whole month. You will eat it until it comes out of your nose.’”

Wow! But Moses is wondering how God is going to do this, so he asks God . . .

²¹ “Here I am among 600,000 men on the march. And you say, ‘I will give them meat to eat for a whole month!’”

In other words, that’s a lot of meat, God. Are You sure You mean meat for a whole month?

²³The LORD answered Moses, “Am I not strong enough? Now you will see whether what I say will come true for you.”

²⁴So Moses went out. He told the people what the LORD had said . . .

Want to know what happened? Check this out!

³¹The LORD sent out a wind. It drove quail (*which is a wild bird, sort of like a chicken*) in from the Red Sea. It brought them down all around the camp. They were about three feet above the ground. They could be seen in every direction as far as a person could walk in a day. ³²The people went out all day and gathered quail. They gathered them all night and all the next day. No one gathered less than 60 bushels. Then they spread the quail out all around the camp.

Wow! Did God send them meat? (*Children respond.*) Absolutely!

Okay — were you listening for the two things I mentioned? What about the first one?

How does Moses respond when the people are complaining? (*Children respond. Possible answers may include: He complains to God. He even questions God’s ability to feed meat to that many people.*) But most importantly, Moses talked to God about his problem. Moses knew what to do when he was faced with an impossible situation. Pray!

How does God respond when the people are complaining? (*Children respond. Possible answers may include: He becomes sad because the people of Israel didn’t trust Him. He decides to go overboard in meeting their request — too much meat.*) God made a promise to His people, and He meant it. God wants us to trust Him to take care of us.

I have one more important question. Do you have your thinking caps on? Great! Who can remember what God had promised the Israelites? (*Children respond — God promised the Israelites He would always provide for their needs.*) Right! So did God keep His promise? (*Children respond.*) Yes! God always keeps His promises!

How in the world could God do that? Where do you get enough meat in one place to feed that many people? There weren’t any restaurants out in the middle of the desert, and even if there were, they couldn’t feed that many people. It seemed impossible. But guess what?

God is bigger and more powerful than we can imagine! Say that with me. (“*God is bigger and more powerful than we can imagine.*”)

Yes, God is bigger and more powerful than we can imagine. God tells Moses the people will eat meat for a month — not just a day, a month! — and then He performs a miracle. Do you know what a miracle is? (*Let children respond.*) A miracle is an act or event that can’t be explained in human terms or natural laws. It’s SUPERnatural. It’s beyond our thinking. Some Bible scholars think there might have been 105 million quail that fell that day. Wow! What a miracle! That’s a lot of birds! That’s something we can’t explain or understand with our human mind. That’s only something God, who is bigger and more powerful than we can imagine, could do. But God kept His promise to Moses and the people of Israel that they would have meat for a month — and boy did they! God always keeps His promises.

The quail miracle reminds me of one of my favorite Bible songs. It goes like this:
(CUE: *You may find a sample of this song online for reference.*)

My God is so big,
So strong and so mighty,
There's nothing my God cannot do.
(*clap, clap*)

Let's stand up and sing it together: (*repeat*)

As Circle Makers (*make circle*), the next time we're faced with a big problem or an impossible situation, let's not mumble and complain (*grrrr!*), but let's remember Moses' example and think about our circle. (*Point to whiteboard.*) We can know God's promises and pray God's promises! Remember, God is looking for Circle Makers, boys and girls. Would anyone here like to join God on an amazing adventure of prayer? (*Children respond.*) Oh good! Me too!

Remember, we'll be learning one new promise or memory verse each week. This week's memory verse will really help us as Circle Makers (*make circle*). "The LORD will keep all his promises" (Psalm 145:13b, NIV). Let's stand up and say that together. (CUE: *Have the children stand up and practice the hand motions along with repeating the words after you.*)

- **The Lord:** Point to the ceiling.
- **Will keep:** Make a fist with your left hand; with your right hand make a "V" and place both by one's chest. The right hand "V" gently pushes the back of the left hand fist, and both are moved toward one's heart.
- **All:** One hand circles around the other and comes back to the palm of the hand.
- **His promises:** Both flat hands come together, then open like a book.
- **Psalm 145:** Quickly hold up one finger, then four fingers, then five fingers on one hand.
- **13b:** Hold up both hands (ten fingers), then three fingers on one hand, and then just shout "b."

Let's pray: "Dear God, thank You for the Bible that's filled with Your promises. Thank You for inviting us to join you as Circle Makers. Help us to remember not to complain, but instead to know Your promises and pray Your promises. Thank You, God, that You are bigger and more powerful than we can ever imagine. In Jesus' name. Amen."

All right, gang, it's time to waddle like a quail — but as quietly as you can — over to your activity times.



Step 3: Explore More

Choose from these activity options, depending on your available time frame, to help children explore the lesson further.

Option 1: Trust Baskets

Supplies: Brown paper lunch sack (one per child), Paper Quail template, Memory Verse label template, child-safe scissors, washable markers, stapler, tape or glue sticks, a completed sample Trust Basket

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy the Paper Quail template (enough for five paper quail per child). Print and photocopy the Memory Verse label template (one label per child) and cut out the squares. Assemble one Trust Basket to use as a sample.

Give each child a brown paper lunch sack and a pair of child-safe scissors. Make available washable markers for the children to share. Instruct the children to write their name on the bottom of the lunch sack, and then cut about the first four inches from the top of the sack. Then, instruct the children to open the sack and roll the sides down to form a “basket.” Next, show the children how to use the previously cut portion of the sack to cut out a small strip to use as a handle for the basket. Make available glue sticks for the children to share. Instruct the children to glue the handle onto the basket. Give each child a memory verse label and instruct them to glue the label onto their basket. Next, give each child five pre-cut paper quail and ask the children to write out or draw on the quail items they can trust God to provide. (*Examples may include: food, water, clothes, house, etc.*) Once the quail are complete, have the children gather up their quail and put them in their basket.

SAY as you conclude, “Today we learned how God kept His promise and fed the Israelites when they were hungry. We can trust God to give us what we need too. When you see your Trust Basket at home you can remember, ‘I can trust God. He will keep all His promises.’”

Option: If additional time allows, put the children’s names on the back of their five individual quail papers. Collect all of the quail, and have an adult volunteer spread the quail around the classroom. When finished, invite the children to take their baskets and find and gather their five quail.

Option 2: Circle Maker Door Hanger

Supplies: Circle Maker Door Hanger template (one per child), washable markers and/or crayons, glitter, glue, stickers, child-safe scissors

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy the Circle Maker Door Hanger template onto card stock (one per child). Assemble one door hanger to use as a sample.

SAY, “God is looking for Circle Makers (*make circle*) who know His promises and pray His promises. Let’s make a door hanger to help us remember this week’s memory verse.”

Give each child a Circle Maker Door Hanger template and a pair of child-safe scissors. Make available washable markers and decorating supplies such as glitter, glue, and stickers for the children to share. Instruct the children to cut out the door hanger shape and write their name on the back of their door hanger. Assist children in cutting the dotted diagonal line and circle hanger shapes as needed. Encourage the children to be creative as they decorate their door hangers. As they are doing so,

ASK, “Why do you think people should know God’s promises? Do you find it easy or difficult to remember God’s promises? How can knowing God’s promises help us to trust Him more?”

As an option, you may want to share an example of how knowing God’s promises helped you trust God in your everyday life.

Option 3: Circle Maker Wave

Supplies: One sheet of white poster board, marker

Ahead of Time: On a sheet of white poster board write, “The Lord will keep all his promises” (Psalm 145:13b, NIrV).

Gather the children and invite them to move their chairs into a large circle.

ASK, “Have you ever gone to a football game or basketball game where the crowd does ‘the wave’? If not, no worries! We’re going to do our own Circle Maker Wave to help us learn this week’s memory verse.”

Hold up the poster board or display it somewhere that the children can easily see it.

SAY, “Remember our memory verse for this week? Let’s say it again together.” (Children repeat after the teacher: “The Lord will keep all his promises. Psalm 145:13b.”).

Assign one word from the verse (including the verse reference, if needed, depending on the number of children) to each child.

SAY, “When I say ‘go,’ we will start the wave. Whoever has the word ‘the’ should quickly stand up and say the assigned word while raising both of your hands in the air and then sit back down with your hands in your lap. Got it? Let’s do a few practice rounds.” (CUE: *Practice a couple of times.*)

Add excitement by doing a fast wave, slow-motion wave, etc. Continue playing as time and/or attention remains.

Step 4: Go!

Supplies: Family Table Talk handout and Family Prayer Calendar (one of each per child)

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy the Family Table Talk handout and Family Prayer Calendar (one of each per child).

As you prepare for dismissal, pray together and ask God to help each child to spend time praying to Him this week. Encourage the children to spend time memorizing Psalm 145:13b at home. Make sure each child leaves with his or her take-home activities, the Family Table Talk handout, and a Family Prayer Calendar.

As parents arrive, introduce them to the Family Table Talk handout and the Family Prayer Calendar. Encourage parents to spend time throughout the week praying through the verses on the prayer calendar and talking about ways to be Circle Makers!

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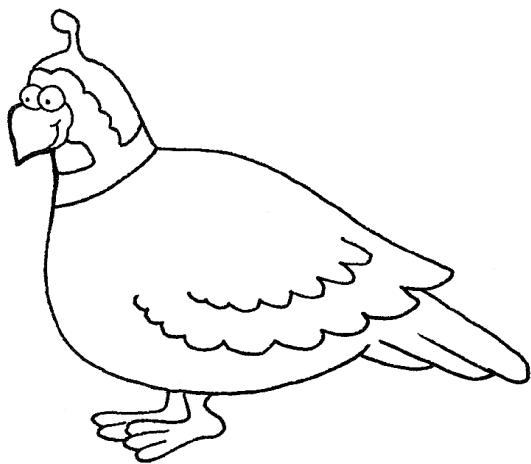
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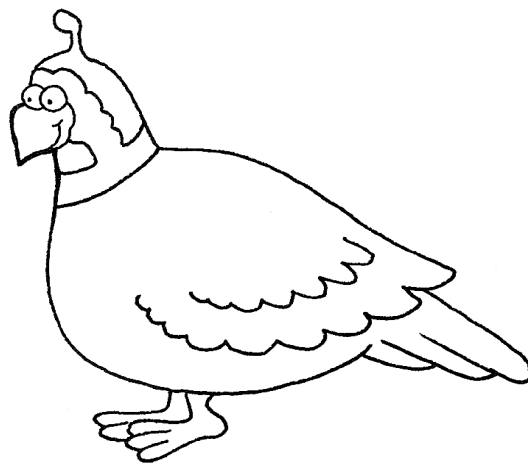
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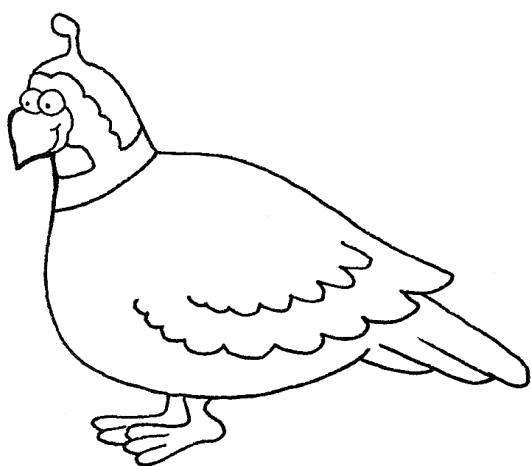
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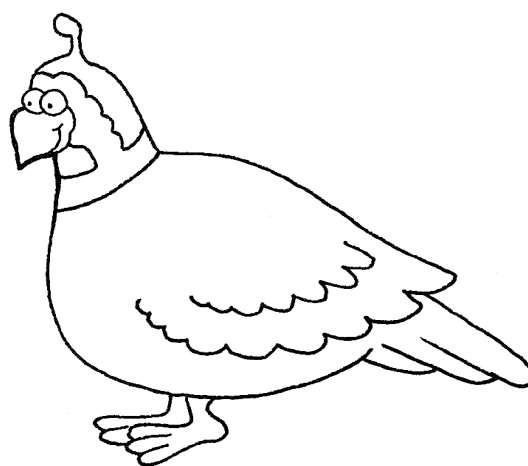
I can trust God for ...



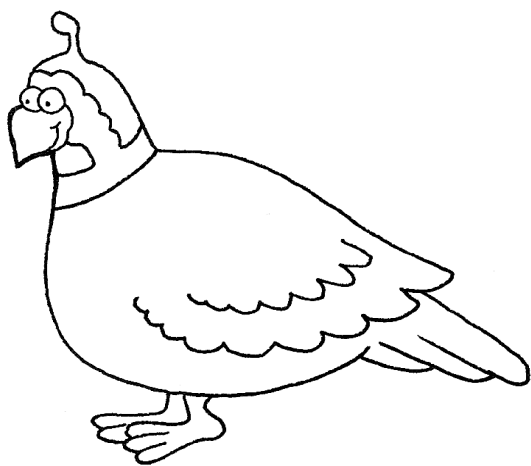
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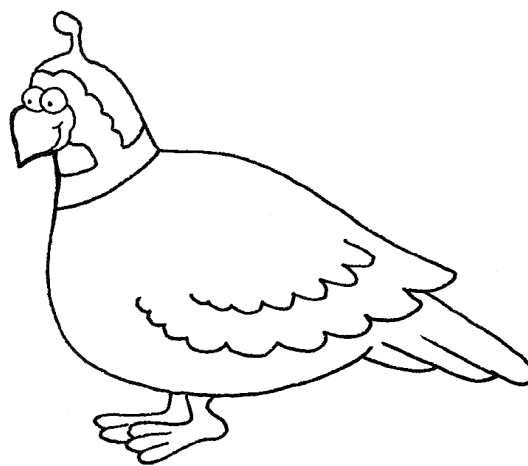
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I can trust God for ...



I can trust God for ...



I can trust God for ...

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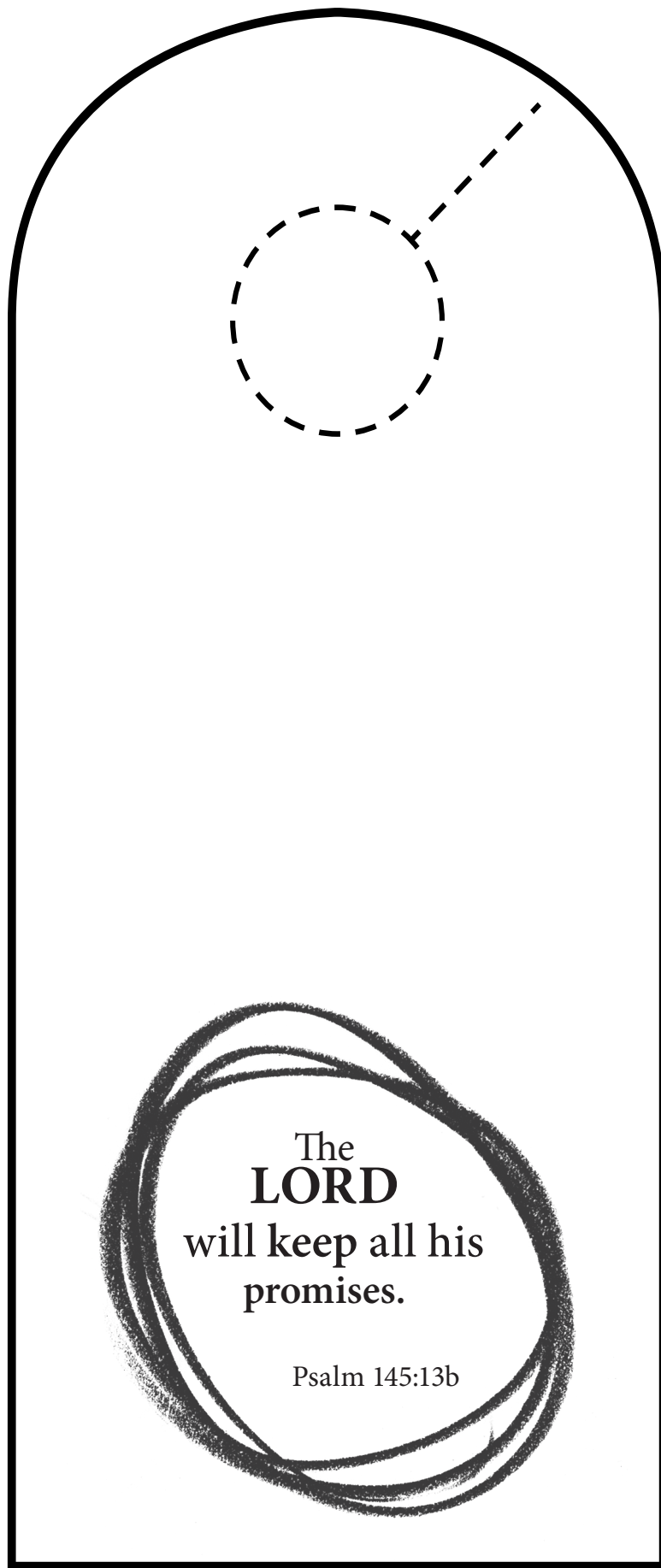
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Week 3:

Praying Hard and Praying Through

Objective: To teach each child that God wants us to always pray and never give up

Bible Story: The Parable of the Persistent Widow (Luke 18:1 – 5)

Memory Verse: “Never stop praying.” (1 Thessalonians 5:17, NIrV)

Circle Maker Motto: God is looking for Circle Makers who know His promises and pray His promises.

Master Supplies List

- ☐ NIrV Bible
- ☐ Family Table Talk handout (one per child)
- ☐ Family Calendar (one per child)
- ☐ Pretend trumpet
- ☐ Whiteboard and dry-erase markers
- ☐ Cardboard sign with one side saying “Persistent” and the other side, “Never Give Up!”

Optional Supplies

You will need the following supplies based on which option(s) you choose in **Step 1: Getting Started** and **Step 3: Explore More**.

- ☐ **Getting Started 1:** Large roll of butcher paper, markers and/or crayons
- ☐ **Getting Started 2:** Ring toss game base (or make your own with a two-liter soda), masking tape, rings
- ☐ **Explore More 1:** Jumbo craft sticks, washable markers, stickers, glitter, glue, string or yarn
- ☐ **Explore More 3:** Whistle, two cones, masking tape

Step 1: Getting Started

As the children arrive to class, provide activities to help prepare them for the lesson. Select one of the following activities that will work best for your group, or create a variety of stations for the children to pick from within the classroom. Play music in the background to help create a fun and welcoming environment. Welcome the children as they arrive, and share the activities available. If you choose to create stations, you may want to have volunteers on hand to help. As the children work on these activities, remind them that the Storyteller will blow a trumpet when it's time to finish and move to the story time.

Option 1: Circle Maker Prayer Mural

Supplies: Large roll of butcher paper, washable markers and/or crayons

SAY, "I'm so glad you are here! We've been learning that prayer is talking to God, and we can talk to God anytime and in all different ways. Let's make a prayer mural filled with drawings of all different people and things we can pray for!"

Spread out the large roll of paper on the floor or across tables. Instruct the children to draw pictures of people and/or things they want to pray for. You may suggest praying for their family, their teacher, neighbors, and/or people who are sick.

As the children draw,

ASK, "Is it easy or difficult for you to pray? Do you ever feel like giving up?" (*Let the children respond.*)

SAY, "Today we'll learn that God never gets tired of hearing from us. He loves when we talk to Him. In fact, God wants us to always pray and never give up!"

Hang up the completed mural somewhere in your classroom to remind the children to pray for the people and things they drew.

Option 2: Circle Maker Toss

Supplies: Ring toss game base (or make your own with a two-liter soda), masking tape, rings

Ahead of Time: Place the ring toss base (or two-liter soda bottle) on the floor. Tape two starting lines on the floor, one five to six feet away, and one eight feet away.

Note: If you have a large group of children, set up more than one ring toss game.

SAY, "Welcome, Circle Makers! Today we're going to use these 'circles' — also known as rings — to play Circle Maker Toss. Let's see who can toss the most rings over the base."

Have the children form a single-file line behind the closer masking tape line. Give each child three turns to toss the "circle" over the base, and then three turns to toss from the starting line that is further back. While the children are tossing the circles, encourage them with words such as, "keep circling," "don't give up," "you can do it!"

(CUE: Have a couple of “helpers” stand by the ring toss bases to return the “circles” to the next person in line. Continue until all the children have had a turn or until time is up.)

SAY as you conclude, “Awesome work! I love how everyone kept ‘circling’ and didn’t give up — even when it was difficult! Today we’ll learn how not giving up and prayer go together for Circle Makers! I’m so glad you are here!”

Option 3: Unjust Judge Says

Invite the children to play a game similar to the classic childhood game, Simon Says.

SAY, “Today we’ll hear a Bible story about an upset widow who tried to get help from an uncaring judge. He was not a kind judge; instead he was unjust — which means he was not fair. But that didn’t stop the widow! Refusing to give up, the widow begged the unjust judge to help her with her case. Thankfully, the judge finally did help her. Let’s play ‘Unjust Judge Says’ to see how the widow felt trying to get help from an unfair judge.”

SAY, “How many of you know how to play ‘Simon Says’? *(Children respond.)*” Here’s how our game today is going to work. If I say ‘Unjust Judge Says’ before my instructions, then you should follow my instructions. But if I don’t say ‘Unjust Judge Says’ first, you should stay where you are and ignore my instructions. Got it? Okay, listen carefully so that you follow the “judge’s” instructions. Remember, if you follow instructions without the words ‘Unjust Judge Says’ first, you’ll need to sit down.”

(CUE: Begin with one-step instructions such as “stand on your right foot,” and progress to two-step instructions such as “raise your hands in the air and hop on one foot.)

At the end of each round,

SAY, “Great job! Aren’t you glad our God is nothing like an uncaring, unjust judge! He never tries to trick us, and He never, ever gets tired of hearing from us. In fact, we’ll learn today God wants us to always pray and never give up!”

Step 2: Present the Story

Supplies Needed: NIV Bible, whiteboard, dry-erase markers, pretend trumpet, sign-size piece of cardboard, marker

Ahead of Time: Use the cardboard and marker to make a sign that says “Persistent” on one side and “Never Give Up!” on the other side.

(CUE: As the Getting Started time comes to a close, have the Storyteller prepare to blow a pretend trumpet. When the Storyteller blows the trumpet, direct the children to the teaching area. The Storyteller will then lead the Bible story time. Ask volunteers to sit with the children, provide crowd control, and participate as directed by the Storyteller.)



Storyteller: Good morning! It’s great to see you! I’m so glad you are here for Circle Maker! Today we continue learning a new way to talk to God, or pray — praying in circles. Remember, God is looking for Circle Makers *(make a circle with your arms)* — people just like you and me — who know His promises *(hold up Bible)* and pray His promises. We can be Circle Makers! *(Make circle.)*

Today we're going to talk about a very important characteristic of being a Circle Maker (*make circle*) — being persistent. Can you say that with me? (*Children respond.*) "Persistent" is a pretty big word. Does anyone know what it means to be persistent? (*Children respond.*) If we were to look up "persistent" in the dictionary, we'd learn it means "continuing to do something or to try to do something even though it is difficult or other people want you to stop."

(CUE: *You may want to insert a personal story of persistence here, or use examples below.*)

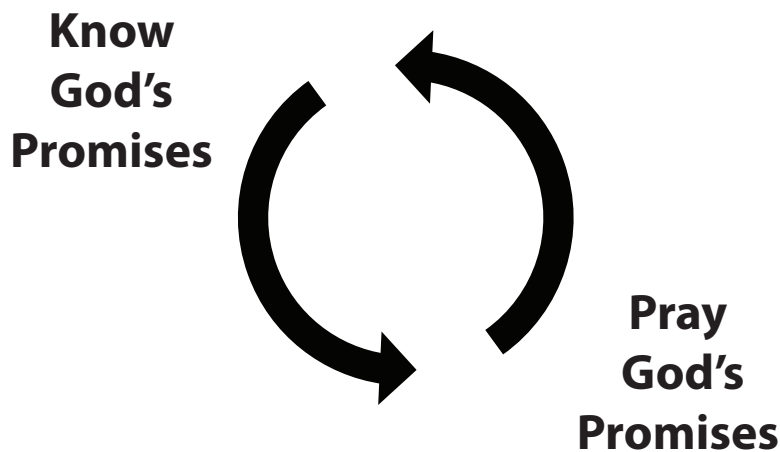
Let's say someone challenged me to hop on one leg for as long as I can, with my eyes closed and my arms sticking out like this (*Storyteller demonstrates*). Rather than giving up after a few minutes, what if I kept hopping for a whole hour? Or a whole day? That's being persistent, right?! (CUE: *Hold up the sign with the word "Persistent" showing.*)

Or maybe you decide to try one of the races at the school skating party, even though you know there are lots of older, really fast kids who are also racing. But you don't let that stop you. No way! You decide to race anyway! That's being persistent. (CUE: *Hold up the sign with the word "Persistent" showing.*)

Being persistent means continuing to do something or to try to do something even though it is difficult or other people want you to stop. Another way of saying to be persistent is saying, "Never give up." (*Flip the sign over so that the words "Never Give Up!" are showing.*) Can you say that with me, "Never give up!" (*Children respond; hold up sign.*) Great job!

As Circle Makers (*make circle*), we must be persistent (CUE: *hold up sign*) and never give up (CUE: *hold up sign*)!

If you were here the past couple of weeks, you may remember we talked about praying in circles. We spend time getting to know God's promises — by reading the Bible, going to church, or maybe having devotions at home or school — and then we spend time talking to God reminding Him of His promises, and it makes a big circle. Like this ...

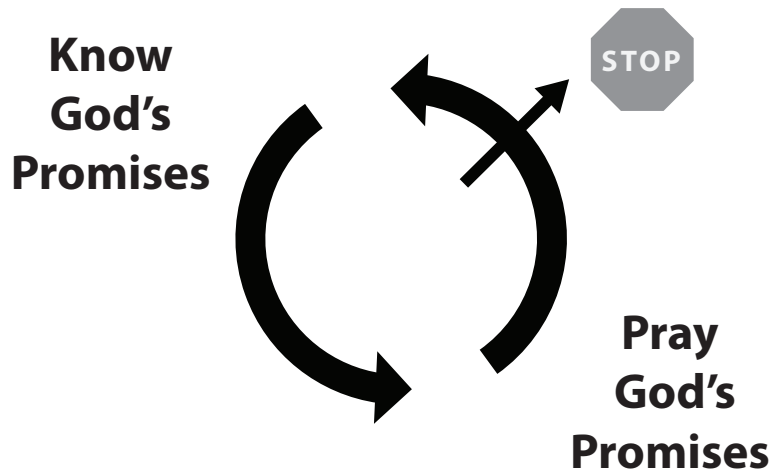


(CUE: *Use the whiteboard and dry-erase markers to draw a circle as shown. As you draw, SAY, "Know God's promises ... Pray God's promises!"*)

For example, God promises in the Bible that He will provide for us. We don't have to worry. So let's say you find out someone in your family is without a job. Rather than getting worried, you can think about God's promise that He will provide for you and your family, and then circle it, or pray God's promise back to Him. Make sense?

Can anyone think of another example? (*Possible response: God promises in the Bible, “I am always with you.” So if you are walking home from school and feel afraid, you can think about God’s promise, and then circle it, or pray God’s promise.*)

But what would happen if we stopped right here? (CUE: Draw a stop sign on whiteboard, similar to the image shown.)



Think back to our story from a couple of weeks ago. Remember that God had promised Joshua and the Israelites the Promised Land. When they came to the city of Jericho, there were not-so-nice people living there. Who remembers what God told Joshua to do? (*Children respond: God told Joshua and the people to march around the city once a day for six days, and on the seventh day, to march around it seven times, then blow loud trumpets and shout — and the walls would fall down.*) What if Joshua and the Israelites would have only walked around the wall six times instead of seven? What if they would have thought, “It’s no use!” and stopped praying and given up on seeing the walls of Jericho fall down?

If we’re going to be Circle Makers (*make circle*), we need to be persistent and (CUE: *hold up the sign that says “Never Give Up!”*) Can you all shout that with me? (*Children shout, “NEVER GIVE UP!”*) We must pray hard and pray through!

Are you ready to see what we can learn about being persistent Circle Makers (*make circle*) from today’s Bible story? (*Children respond.*) Great! Me too!

In today’s Bible story, we find Jesus telling His disciples a story about prayer that involves a widow and a judge in a small town. Do you know what a widow is? (*Children respond.*) Right, a widow is a woman whose husband has died.

As I read today’s Bible story, I need you to listen for two very important things.

What did the widow want?

How did the judge respond?

(CUE: *Read the story using your own NIV Bible or the script supplied below.*)

Luke 18:1–5 (NIV)

¹Jesus told his disciples a story. He wanted to show them that they should always pray and not give up. ²He said, “In a certain town there was a judge. He

didn't have any respect for God or care about people. ³A widow lived in that town. She came to the judge again and again. She kept begging him, "Make things right for me. Someone is doing me wrong."

⁴For some time the judge refused. But finally he said to himself, "I don't have any respect for God. I don't care about people. ⁵But this widow keeps bothering me. So I will see that things are made right for her. If I don't, she will wear me out by coming again and again!"

Okay—if you were listening carefully to the story, what did it say the widow wanted? (*Children respond.*) You got it ... she wanted to make things right. Jesus doesn't tell us what the exact problem was, does He? It seems somehow she or someone in her family had been hurt and she was going to the person she thought could help her. And who was that again? (*Children respond.*) Right, she went to the judge because she thought he could help her. The only problem was—the judge was not kind. He was unjust, or not fair to the people. Can you make a face like an unkind and unjust judge? (*Children respond.*) Wow. Great job! I wouldn't want to come and ask you for help! You definitely look unjust!

It sounds like the widow had come to the same judge once before and he either didn't help her or he ignored her. So the Bible says the widow kept coming and coming after him. It's kind of funny to think of how this may have happened. Maybe the judge was outside walking in the town and the widow asked him to help her. Or maybe the judge was buying food at the market and the widow ran up asking him to help her ... again. Maybe the judge was eating supper at home and the widow knocked and knocked on his door begging for help. This widow was persistent. She wasn't going to give up until she got the help she wanted! Finally, the judge had enough and made sure things were made right for the widow.

When I think about this Bible story and our role as Circle Makers (*make circle*), there are three very important lessons I want us to remember. I think these are pretty easy for us to remember—easy as A, B, C.

A—*Always pray and never give up.* What if the widow in our story had given up just one day before the judge finally decided to do something about her situation? (CUE: *Point to stop sign on circle.*) She would have missed out on having things made right. God wants us to trust Him and keep circling (*point to circle*)—praying hard and praying through. Never give up!

B—*Believe God is faithful.* Our God is NOT an unjust judge. We don't have to beg and plead and whine for God to answer our prayers. No way. Instead, Jesus was saying if this unfair judge eventually listened to the widow and answered her request, how much more quickly will a loving, kind God respond to one of His dearly loved kids. God is not an angry judge, but our faithful heavenly Father who wants us to talk to Him. He delights in hearing our prayers.

C—*Choose to pray God's promises.* What did we say the widow in the story wanted again? (*Children respond.*) You bet ... to have things made right. Now what if she had asked the judge for a million dollars? Or for permission to hurt the other person back? Does that seem like something the judge would have helped her with? (*Children respond.*) No way. But what she was asking for seemed like something that would fit

God's promises. In fact, the Bible says in Isaiah chapter 61 that God will make things right for those who have been treated unfairly. The widow knew God's promises and was praying God's promises — and so should we!

Let's review the A, B, Cs again . . .

- A — Always pray and never give up.
- B — Believe God is faithful.
- C — Choose to pray God's promises.

Unfortunately, too many people grow tired and quit praying. But if we want to see God's promises come true in our lives, the church, and the world, we need to never give up praying, even when we grow tired, feel foolish, or think the situation is hopeless. We need to pray hard and pray through!

This week's memory verse is a pretty easy one to remember, but it's also a great reminder for us as Circle Makers (*make circle*). "Never stop praying" (1 Thessalonians 5:17 NIrV). Let's stand up and say that together. (CUE: *Have the children stand up and practice the hand motions while repeating the words after you.*)

- **Never:** Hold up the pointer finger, and wave it back and forth as if to say, "No, no, no."
- **Stop:** Extend your left hand, palm upward. Sharply bring your open right hand down to your left palm at a right angle.
- **Praying:** Fold hands in praying position.
- **1 Thessalonians:** Hold up one finger.
- **5:** Hold up one hand (five fingers).
- **17:** Hold up both hands (ten fingers), then one hand (five fingers), and then two fingers (for a total of seventeen).

God is looking for Circle Makers (*make circle*), friends. Would anyone here like to know God's promises and never give up praying His promises, and join Him on an amazing adventure of prayer? (*Children respond.*) Oh good! Me too!

Let's pray: "Dear God, thank You for being faithful, loving, and kind. Forgive us for the times we give in, give up, and stop praying. Please give us Your power so we can pray hard and pray through. We want to always keep praying and never give up. In Jesus' name. Amen."



Step 3: Explore More

Choose from these activity options, depending on your available time frame, to help children explore the lesson further.

Option 1: Prayer Frames

Supplies: Jumbo craft sticks, washable markers, stickers, glitter, glue, string or yarn, whiteboard, dry-erase marker

Ahead of Time: Assemble one Prayer Frame to use as a sample. Write the words “Never Stop Praying” on the whiteboard. Cut string or yarn into 8” lengths.

Give each child four craft sticks and a length of string or yarn. Make available washable markers, stickers, stick-on gems, glitter, and glue for the children to share. Instruct the children to glue four jumbo craft sticks into a square to form a frame. Have them write the words from this week’s memory verse (“Never Stop Praying”) onto one of the craft sticks. Make sure that the whiteboard is in a place where the children can easily see it. Let the children know that they can look at the whiteboard if they need help writing out the words. After the children have written the words on their frame, instruct them to glue the string or yarn to the back of the frame to form a hanger and then decorate the front of the frame with markers, stickers, stick-on gems, and/or glitter and glue.

SAY as you conclude, “Your prayers are important to God. Take this frame home and add a picture of someone or something you want to remember to pray for. Keep this Prayer Frame somewhere in your room or home where you will see it every day. Remember God hears your prayers. Never give up praying!”

Option 2: Popcorn Prayers

SAY, “Today we learned we should always pray and never give up! The best way to grow as Circle Makers is to practice praying, so let’s pray together — popcorn style.”

Invite the children to sit in a circle, and then discuss the things children their age might want to pray about. For example, this might include a traveling parent, going to a new school, or having a sick family member. You may want to create a list on a whiteboard as a reference.

SAY, “Remember, praying is just another way of saying we’re talking to God. Let’s spend time in prayer together. When I say ‘start popping,’ jump up (or pop) one at a time and say something to pray about. After you’ve had a turn, sit down so another friend can pop up, and we can continue to pray until everyone has had a chance to pop up with prayer.”

Continue as time and/or attention allows.

SAY as you conclude, “Your prayers are important to God. Remember God loves it when you talk to Him and always hears your prayers. Never give up praying!”

Option 3: Circle Maker Relays

Supplies: Whistle, two cones, masking tape

Ahead of Time: Make a starting line with masking tape at one end of the room and set the cones in place.

Divide the children into two equally numbered teams.

SAY, “Today we’re going to have some Circle Maker relays to help us remember our memory verse — ‘Never stop praying’ (1 Thessalonians 5:17). The first relay is the One-Foot Relay. For the One-Foot Relay, choose one foot to hop on all the way to the cone. Then, when you get to the cone, shout our memory verse. After you reach the cone and shout the memory verse, switch feet and hop back to the starting line. Tag the next person in line until everyone has had a turn hopping and shouting the memory verse. Before we start, let’s say this week’s memory verse again together. Ready?” (*Children respond, “Never stop praying!”*)

(CUE: *Once each child has had a turn, he/she should sit down. When all the players on one team have completed the relay and are sitting down, they are the relay team winners for that round.*)

While the children are relaying, encourage them with words such as, “keep it up,” “don’t give up,” “you can do it!”

If time allows, switch up the relays. Ideas include a crab walk, frog hop, and backward shuffle.

After you’ve completed the final relay,

SAY, “Awesome work! I love how everyone kept going and didn’t give up — even when it was hard! You all were persistent!”

Step 4: Go!

Supplies: Family Table Talk handout and Family Prayer Calendar (one each per child)

Ahead of Time: Photocopy the Family Table Talk handout and the Family Prayer Calendar (one of each per child).

As you prepare for dismissal, pray together and ask God to help each child to spend time praying to God this week. Encourage the children to spend time memorizing 1 Thessalonians 5:17 at home. Make sure each child leaves with his or her take-home activities, including memory verse cards and Family Table Talk handout.

As parents arrive, introduce them to the Family Table Talk handout and the Family Prayer Calendar. Encourage parents to spend time throughout the week praying through the verses on the prayer calendar and talking about ways to be Circle Makers!

Week 4:

Praying Is Like Planting

Objective: To teach each child that God always hears our prayers but sometimes asks us to wait for the answer

Bible Story: Daniel's Prayer Delayed (Daniel 10:12 – 13)

Memory Verse: "I wait for the LORD to help me." (Psalm 130:5a, NIV)

Circle Maker Motto: God is looking for Circle Makers who know His promises and pray His promises.

Master Supplies List

- ☐ Family Table Talk handout (one per child)
- ☐ Family Prayer Calendar (one per child)
- ☐ Pretend trumpet
- ☐ Whiteboard and dry-erase markers
- ☐ Bag of unpopped microwave popcorn
- ☐ Bag of popped microwave popcorn
- ☐ Jar of popcorn kernels
- ☐ Adult volunteer to dress up and role-play as Daniel
- ☐ Scroll
- ☐ Large garden pot filled with potting soil
- ☐ Zippered plastic bag with seeds inside

Optional Supplies

You will need the following supplies based on which option(s) you choose in **Step 1: Getting Started** and **Step 3: Explore More**.

- ☐ **Getting Started 1:** God Always Hears My Prayers activity sheet (one per child), washable markers and/or crayons
- ☐ **Getting Started 2:** Chairs, music, music player
- ☐ **Getting Started 3:** Two large empty buckets, timer, masking tape, disposable cups (one per child), rubber bands, paper clips, and popped popcorn
- ☐ **Explore More 1:** Colored card stock, Praying Is Like Planting Book-mark template, seeds, washable markers and/or crayons, glue sticks, hole punch, ribbon
- ☐ **Explore More 2:** Clean garden pot, index cards, music, music player
- ☐ **Explore More 3:** Colored construction paper (3 sheets per child), stapler, Circle Maker Prayer Journal label template, washable markers and/or crayons, stickers, glitter, glue, other optional decorating supplies

Step 1: Getting Started

As the children arrive to class, provide activities to help prepare them for the lesson. Select one of the following activities that will work best for your group, or create a variety of stations for the children to pick from within the classroom. Play music in the background to help create a fun and welcoming environment. Welcome the children as they arrive, and share the activities available. If you choose to create stations, you may want to have volunteers on hand to help. As the children work on these activities, remind them that the Storyteller will blow a trumpet when it's time to finish and move to the story time.

Option 1: God Always Hears My Prayers Activity Sheet

Supplies: God Always Hears My Prayers activity sheet (one per child), washable markers and/or crayons

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy the God Always Hears My Prayers activity sheet (one per child).

SAY, "I'm so glad you are here! We've been learning how God is looking for Circle Makers that know His promises and pray His promises. God always hears your prayers — whether you are at home, school, in your neighborhood, at church, or anywhere else."

Give each child an activity sheet. Make available washable markers and crayons for the children to share. Instruct the children to color their activity sheet, drawing pictures in the circles of ways God might hear their prayers and/or help them in the various locations. Responses may include:

- School: praying before a spelling test; praying if they feel sad or alone
- Church: praying as you listen to the Bible story
- Home: praying with family around the dinner table
- Neighborhood: praying for your neighbors to know Jesus

As they are drawing,

ASK, "Is it easy or difficult for you to pray? What's the hardest part?" (*Let the children respond.*)

SAY, "Today we'll learn that God always hears our prayers but sometimes asks us to wait for the answer. I'm so glad that you are here."

Option 2: Circle Maker Musical Chairs

Supplies: Chairs, music, music player

Ahead of Time: Create a circle of chairs with the seats pointing outward.

Invite the children to play the classic childhood game Musical Chairs.

SAY, "Welcome, Circle Makers! Today we're going to play Circle Maker Chairs. I hope

you have your listening ears on — to win this game you have to listen closely to the music. Let's quickly review the rules: When the music begins, everyone must walk around the circle. Remember, listen carefully to the music. When the music stops, quickly sit in a chair. The person left without a chair will join me and take a seat over here. We'll take away another chair each round and keep playing until one person is left. Everyone ready?"

Confirm there are enough chairs for each child, and then remove one chair from the circle (i.e., if there are ten students, there should be nine chairs).

Continue playing as time/attention allows.

SAY as you conclude, "Awesome work! It was fun to watch everyone 'circling' and listening closely to the music. Today we'll learn how God is always listening to our prayers. I'm so glad you are here!"

Option 3: Popcorn Game

Supplies: Two large empty buckets, timer, masking tape, disposable cups (one per child), rubber bands, paper clips, and popped popcorn

Ahead of Time: Make a starting line at one end of the room with masking tape and put the two buckets on the other side of the room. Poke a hole in the bottom of each disposable cup and push a rubber band through the hole. Put a paper clip through the rubber band on the inside of the cup to help keep the rubber band from slipping out.

SAY, "Today we'll be talking about prayer and popcorn! We'll learn how God always hears our prayers, but sometimes He asks us to wait for the answer. I don't know about you, but sometimes I have a hard time waiting. Sometimes I want answers fast, fast, fast — just like microwave popcorn. Let's play a Popcorn Game to help us remember this important lesson."

(CUE: *Divide the children into two equal teams and have them line up behind the masking tape, opposite of the two large empty buckets. Give each child a cup.*)

SAY, "For this game I want you to attach your cup to your foot by pulling the rubber band around the middle of your shoe. Make sure your cup is on the top of your foot. (CUE: *Fill each child's cup with popped popcorn.*) When I say 'go,' you will send one teammate at a time down to the empty bucket. Your job is to try to dump the popcorn into the bucket without using your hands. Then, race back to your team and tag the next person in line. The team with the most popcorn inside their bucket after sixty seconds wins."

(CUE: *If time — and popcorn! — allows, play again. Switch up the game by having the children walk backward, sideways, or with their eyes closed.*)

SAY as you conclude, "This popcorn game took patience, didn't it? Praying does too. Today we'll learn how God always hears our prayers, but sometimes He asks us to wait for the answer."

Step 2: Present the Story

Supplies Needed: Whiteboard, dry-erase markers, pretend trumpet, bag of unpopped microwave popcorn, bag of popped microwave popcorn, jar of popcorn kernels, adult volunteer to dress up and role-play as Daniel, scroll, large garden pot filled with potting soil, and a zippered plastic bag filled with seeds

Ahead of Time: Pop a bag of microwave popcorn. Gather props and costume for the volunteer who will role-play as Daniel.

(CUE: *As the Getting Started time comes to a close, have the Storyteller prepare to blow a pretend trumpet. When the Storyteller blows the trumpet, direct the children to the teaching area. The Storyteller will then lead the Bible story time. Ask volunteers to sit with the children, provide crowd control, and participate as directed by the Storyteller.*)



Storyteller: Good morning! It's great to see you! I'm so glad you are here for Circle Maker! (*Make a circle with your arms.*)

I have a question for you all. How many of you like popcorn? Me too! Raise your hand if you make your popcorn at home in the microwave. In a popcorn popper? On a stove? (*Children respond.*)

My favorite way to make popcorn is with my microwave. (CUE: *Hold up bag of unpopped microwave popcorn.*) Just place it in the microwave, hit a few buttons, and in less than three minutes — voila! Hot, buttery, delicious popcorn! (CUE: *Hold up bag of popped microwave popcorn and eat a few pieces.*) Yum!

But when I was little, when we wanted popcorn, it seemed like it took forever! First, we had to take a pot out of the cabinet, pour some oil into it, put it on the stove, and then wait as the oil heated up. Then we would pour some popcorn kernels (CUE: *hold up jar of popcorn kernels*) into the hot oil, put a lid on the pot, and jiggle and shake the pot until we finally heard the first pop. Then we would shake the pot even harder as the rest of the kernels popped so they would not burn. Next we would pour the popcorn into a big bowl. If we wanted butter on our popcorn — and I always did — we melted it in another pan on the stove and poured it over the popcorn. Finally we would put on as much salt as we liked and we were ready to snack. Oh, and we had to clean up all the dishes when we were done and then put them away. It was delicious and fun ... but we sure had to wait a long time! And I don't always like to be patient and wait. Do you? (*Children respond.*)

We live in a world where everything comes pretty fast, or we want it to. It's not always easy to wait, is it? How many of you like running errands with a grown-up and having to wait — or be patient — while they make all their stops? (*Children respond.*) No fun!

Or how many of you like waiting for the weekend when you know you have a really super-fun birthday party to go to? (*Children respond.*) Waiting or being patient can be hard, right? Waiting can also be hard when we are praying to God about something.

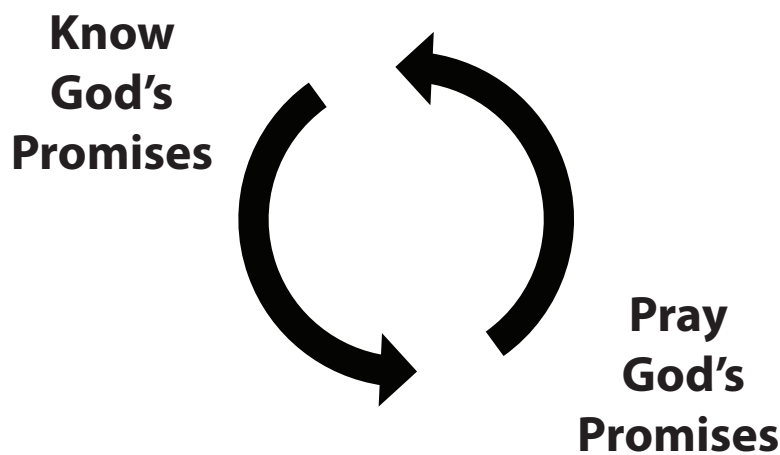
(CUE: *Insert a personal story of how you had to wait for something or you may modify the story below.*)

I can remember when my family was trying to sell our house so we could move

to a new home closer to school. We prayed that God would help us sell our home and bring the right buyers our way, and He did. But it took weeks and weeks and weeks of praying before someone bought our house. It was hard to wait. But God does not promise that He will answer our prayers at the speed of light or even the speed of a microwave, does He? (*Children respond, “No!”*)

As Circle Makers (*make circle*), we need to wait, or be patient, and always keep praying. We can be sure God always hears our prayers, but sometimes He asks us to wait for the answer.

Today’s Bible story involves a man who had to wait on God in prayer. His name is Daniel. How many of you have heard about Daniel before? (*Children respond.*) Daniel was definitely a Circle Maker (*make circle*). He knew God’s promises and prayed God’s promises.



(CUE: Use the whiteboard and dry-erase markers to draw a circle as shown. As you draw, SAY, “Know God’s promises . . . Pray God’s promises!”)

Daniel knew God had promised to watch over God’s people, the Israelites. Daniel knew God’s promises and prayed God promises too. Daniel was a man of prayer.

Now as I read today’s story, I need you to listen for two things. First, what did Daniel do when he needed help? And two, did God keep His promise to Daniel?

Do you have your listening ears ready? (*Children respond.*) Great!

Circle Makers (*make circle*), meet Daniel. (CUE: Have the adult volunteer come out dressed as Daniel; Storyteller whispers the next sentence.) Now we all know this isn’t the real Daniel, but we can pretend, right? Great.

(CUE: Daniel silently mimes while Storyteller shares story.)

The year was around 605 BC and Daniel was taken far, far from his home in Jerusalem to be a servant to mean King Nebuchadnezzar [Neb-uh-kuh d-nez-er] in the city of Babylon [Bab-uh-lon] because Jerusalem was destroyed and all of God’s people became slaves. (CUE: Daniel bows as if kneeling before a king.)

Daniel was very sad that his city was ruined, but he continued to trust and pray to God. Daniel didn’t just pray when he had a bad day. He prayed every day. The Bible tells us Daniel prayed on his knees three times a day (CUE: Daniel kneels to pray) — even though praying to God was against the law.

One day about sixty-seven years later, Daniel, who was still a servant in Babylon, was reading God's Word. (CUE: *Daniel pretends to read from the scroll prop.*) You know what he learned? God's Word said it was almost time for Daniel and God's people to be set free! Could it be true? Would God set them free? What do you think Daniel did? (*Children respond, "He prayed."*) That's right. The Bible tells us Daniel said, "I prayed to the LORD God. I begged him. I made many appeals to him. I didn't eat anything. I put on the rough clothing people wear when they're sad. And I sat down in ashes. I prayed to the LORD my God." (CUE: *Daniel pretends to be begging and praying earnestly.*)

Did you know you can read Daniel's whole prayer in the Bible? You can! Since Daniel's prayer is pretty long, I won't read the whole thing now, but do you want to hear just a part of it? Okay, here goes.

(CUE: *Daniel pretends to read the prayer from the scroll or silently appears to read as the story is told.*)

Daniel prayed:

"LORD, you are a great and wonderful God. You keep the covenant (or *the promise*) you made with all those who love you and obey your commandments. You show them your love." (Daniel 9:4)

Daniel knew God's promises, didn't He?

Let's say part of his prayer aloud. Can you say, "Lord, You are a great and wonderful God" with me? (*Children respond, "Lord, You are a great and wonderful God!"*)

And then a little while later, Daniel prayed:

"LORD, you saved your people before. So turn your great anger away from Jerusalem again. After all, it is your city." (Daniel 9:16)

And then Daniel cried out:

"LORD, please listen! LORD, please forgive us! LORD, hear our prayers! Our God, please don't wait. Your city and your people belong to you." (Daniel 9:19)

Wow! What a powerful prayer. Lord, please listen! Lord, please forgive us! Lord, hear our prayers!

Let's cry out aloud like Daniel did, "Lord, please listen! Lord, please forgive us! Lord, hear our prayers!" Can you say it with me? (*Children respond, "Lord, please listen! Lord, please forgive us! Lord, hear our prayers!"*) One more time. (*Children respond, "Lord, please listen! Lord, please forgive us! Lord, hear our prayers!"*)

Daniel kept praying. He kept circling. He had waited a long time for God to help him, didn't he? It had been sixty-seven years! But Daniel trusted God's promises.

Another time, Daniel had a vision, or a dream, about a great war. Daniel was very upset, so what do you think he did? (*Children respond.*) That's right — Daniel prayed hard for twenty-one days. How long? (*Children respond, "Twenty-one days."*) Yes! For twenty-one days Daniel prayed; he barely ate, and he cried out to God. You'll never believe what happened? An angel showed up! Listen to what the angel said to Daniel:

Daniel 10:12–13

“Do not be afraid, Daniel. You decided to get more understanding. (*Daniel wanted to know what was going on.*) You went without food as you worshiped your God. Since the first day you did those things, your words were heard. I have come to give you an answer. But the prince of Persia (*which was kind of like a bad angel*) opposed (*or stopped*) me for 21 days.”

For how long? (*Children respond, “Twenty-one days.”*)

“Then Michael (*who was a good, powerful angel*) came to help me. He is one of the leaders of the angels. He helped me win the battle over (*the bad angel*) the king of Persia.”

Wow! Can you imagine talking with an angel? Daniel did! And he had something important to tell Daniel. The angel told Daniel that since the first day Daniel started praying, God heard his words. God was listening the moment Daniel began to pray and had been paying attention the whole time.

So why didn’t God answer Daniel’s prayers right away? There was a war going on in the heavens with good angels and bad angels. But God was listening and God was working. God always hears our prayers!

Let’s thank our Daniel volunteer. (*Allow the children to clap and cheer as the Daniel volunteer leaves.*)

Okay — were you listening for the two things I mentioned? What about the first one?

What did Daniel do when he needed help? (*Children respond. Possible answers may include: he prayed, he cried.*) Daniel talked to God about everything. Daniel knew what to do when he was faced with a troubling situation. Pray!

And did God keep His promise to Daniel? (*Children respond. Possible answers may include: Yes, He heard Daniel’s prayers. He answered after a while.*) Yes! God always keeps His promises! God answers every prayer, and He keeps every promise. That is who He is. That is what He does. Sometimes God’s answer is “wait” — sometimes we don’t get the answer we want right away. But, God ALWAYS keeps His promises!

When I think about this Bible story and our role as Circle Makers (*make circle*), there are two very important things I want us to remember.

First, God always hears our prayers.

Can you say that with me? (*Children respond, “God always hears our prayers.”*) God isn’t asleep. He isn’t too busy for you. The very second you start praying, you have His attention. But since God knows everything, including the future, He knows what is best for us. And sometimes that means waiting for the answer to our prayer.

The second thing I want us to remember is that praying is like planting. (CUE: *Hold up the garden pot filled with potting soil and the zippered plastic bag of seeds.*)

We can think of our prayers like seeds that get planted in the ground, and then disappear for a season. (CUE: *Place the seed into the soil as you pray.*)

- God, please watch over my family.

- God, please help us sell our home so we can move.
- God, please help me have a new friend at school.

Eventually the seed grows into a plant or a flower, doesn't it? But it takes time. Just like we can't see what's going on with a seed planted in the dirt, we can't always see what God is doing with our prayers. And even though we can't see the seed, does that mean it is not doing its job? No way! We can trust that something is growing down there. Praying is like planting seeds. God always hears our prayers; we just don't know how or when He will answer them.

Our job as Circle Makers (*make circle*) is to keep circling (*point to whiteboard*), keep planting those seeds, and believe that God hears us and will keep His promises and answer our prayers in His perfect way.

This week's memory verse is a great reminder for us as Circle Makers. "I wait for the LORD to help me" (Psalm 130:5a). Let's stand up and say that together. (CUE: *Have the children stand up and practice the hand motions while repeating the words after you.*)

- **I:** Point to yourself.
- **Wait:** Put palms straight out like a crossing guard.
- **For the Lord:** Bow down to a king.
- **To help:** Close your left hand into an upright fist with your thumb sticking up. Place the outstretched palm of your right hand under your left fist and raise both hands. (The bottom hand lifts the fist hand like a helping hand.)
- **Me:** Point to yourself.
- **Psalm:** Open hands like a Bible.
- **130:** Hold up one (pointer finger), then three fingers, then form a zero — all with your right hand
- **5:** Hold up your left hand (five fingers).

God is looking for Circle Makers (*make circle*), friends. Would anyone here like to know God's promises and pray His promises, and join Him on an amazing adventure of prayer? (*Children respond.*) Oh good! Me too!

Let's pray: "Dear God. Thank You for the Bible. Thank You for Daniel's story and his love for prayer. Help us to be more like Daniel — praying, reading Your Word, and praying more. Thank You for loving us so much and for always hearing our prayers. In Jesus' name. Amen."

Okay, friends, it's time to head on over to your activity times.



Step 3: Explore More

Choose from these activity options, depending on your available time frame, to help children explore the lesson further.

Option 1: Praying Is Like Planting Bookmarks

Supplies: Praying Is Like Planting Bookmark template, colored card stock, flower or vegetable seeds, washable markers and/or crayons, glue, scissors, hole punch, thin ribbon

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy onto card stock the Praying Is Like Planting bookmark template (one bookmark per child). Cut out the bookmarks and punch a hole in the top of each. Complete one bookmark to use as a sample. Cut the ribbon into 6" lengths.

SAY, "Today we learned that praying is like planting. Let's make a bookmark to remind us of this important lesson."

Make available pre-cut bookmarks and a variety of seeds for the children to select from. Instruct each child to select a bookmark and a few seeds. Make available glue and washable markers and/or crayons for the children to share. Demonstrate to the children how to glue the seeds to the bookmark to make a fun design (ideas include flower, heart, and/or cross). Once the bookmarks are decorated, give each child a length of ribbon. Assist children, as needed, to thread the ribbon through the hole in the top of the bookmark and tie a knot to hold it on.

As the children decorate their bookmarks,

SAY, "Remember, we can think of our prayers like seeds that get planted in the ground, and then disappear for a season. While we wait and pray, we can still be sure God hears our prayers."

SAY as you conclude, "What awesome bookmarks! Now, I want you to keep this bookmark in a special place. When you see it, you will remember that God always hears your prayers, even though sometimes we have to wait for His answers."

Option 2: Memory Verse Shuffle

Supplies: Clean garden pot, nine index cards, music, music player

Ahead of Time: Write out this week's memory verse (Psalm 130:5a) on the index cards (one word per card and the reference on one card), and place the index cards into the flower pot.

SAY, "Let's play a game to help us remember our new memory verse. It's the Memory Verse Shuffle!"

Instruct the children to sit in a large circle on the floor.

SAY, “When I start the music, you’re going to pass around this flower pot. When the music stops, whoever is holding the flower pot will pull out one card and place that card on the floor in the middle of our circle. I’ll start the music again and when the music stops, the person holding the flower pot will pick another card and place it on the floor in the middle of our circle. Once all of the words have been picked from the flower pot, we’ll all work together to put the memory verse in the correct order. Ready? Okay, let’s get started.” (CUE: *Hand the flower pot to one person in the circle. Start the music.*)

Once the children have completed the Memory Verse Shuffle,

ASK, “How could this verse help you the next time you need help?” (*Let children respond. You may want to share a personal example of how this verse could/would help you.*)

SAY as you conclude, “Remember, God always keeps His promises. Now that you know this week’s verse, you can help the rest of your family memorize it at home too!”

Option 3: Circle Maker Prayer Journal

Supplies: Colored construction paper (3 sheets per child), stapler, Circle Maker Prayer Journal label template, scissors, washable markers and/or crayons, stickers, stick-on gems, glue sticks, other optional decorating supplies

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy the Circle Maker Prayer Journal label template (one label per child). Cut apart the labels. Assemble one Circle Maker Prayer Journal to use as a sample.

SAY, “We’ve been learning how God is looking for Circle Makers who know His promises and pray His promises. Let’s make a Circle Maker Prayer Journal so we can be like Daniel in the Bible and talk to God about everything too!”

Make available a variety of colored construction paper for the children to select from. Instruct the children to select three sheets each. Give each child a Circle Maker Prayer Journal label and a glue stick. Next, demonstrate how to line up the sheets of construction paper and fold the three sheets in half together, making a booklet. Have an adult volunteer assist the children in stapling the booklet page together on the center fold. Make available washable markers and/or crayons, stickers, stick-on gems, and other optional decorating supplies for the children to share. Instruct the children to write their names on the back of the booklet. Then, instruct the children to glue the label to the front of the journal and to decorate the journal cover.

As the children decorate their journal covers,

SAY, “This journal will help you keep track of your prayers. There is no right or wrong way to use this journal — just do whatever helps you pray to God. For example, you might want to use your journals to:

- Draw pictures or write out your prayers for others.
- Add pictures of people you want to pray for.
- Draw or write out your favorite Bible promises.

- Put a smiley face on a page when God answers your prayers.”

If time permits, assist the children as they work on the inside journal pages.

SAY as you conclude, “Your prayers are important to God! So keep this Circle Maker Journal somewhere in your room or home where you will see it — and hopefully use it — often. Remember God always hears your prayers!”

Step 4: Go!

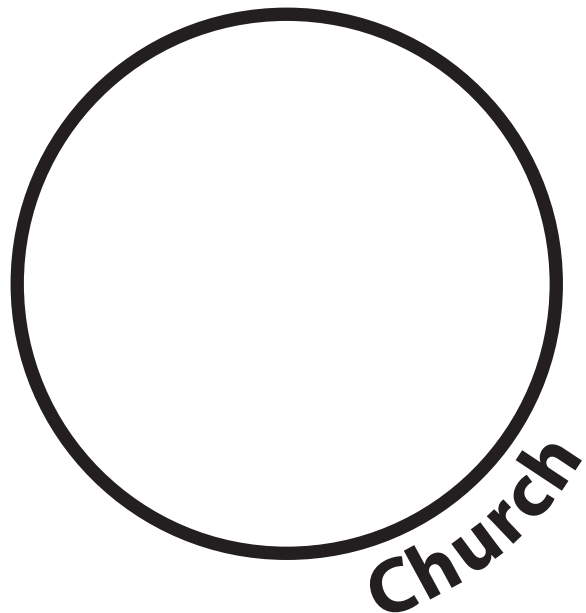
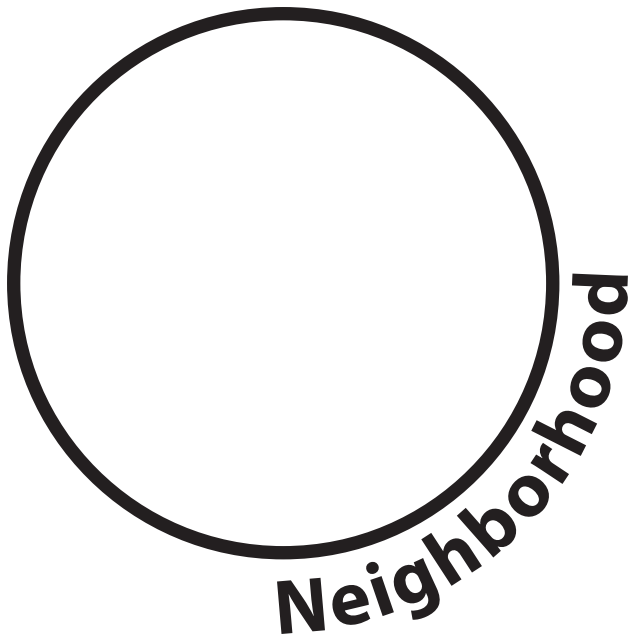
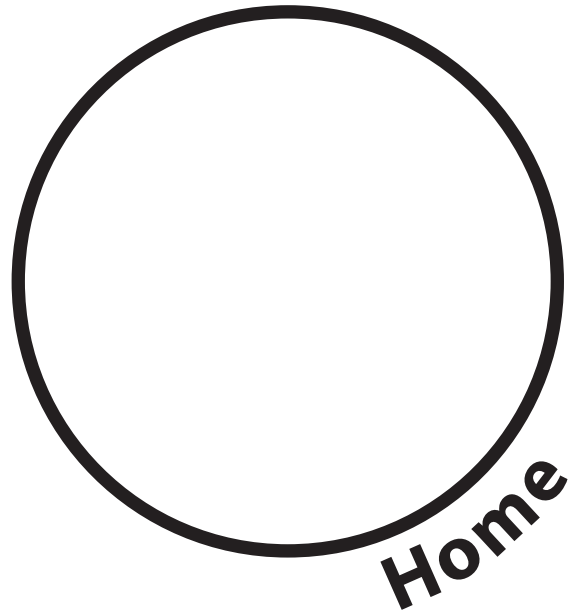
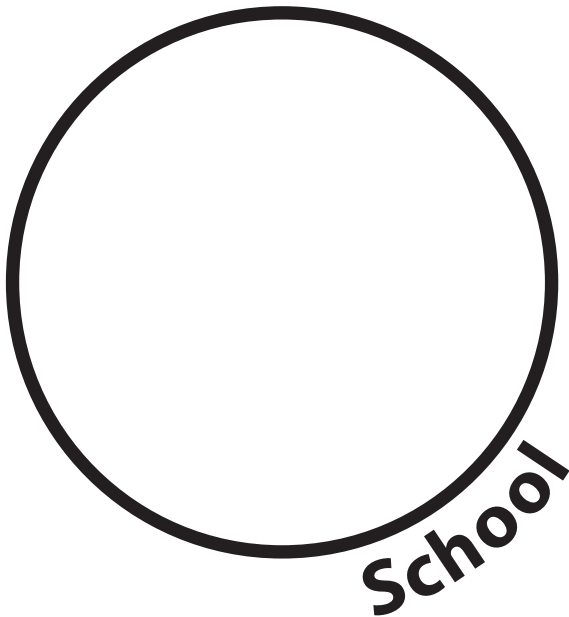
Supplies: Family Table Talk handout and Family Prayer Calendar (one of each per child)

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy the Family Table Talk handout and Family Prayer Calendar (one of each per child).

As you prepare for dismissal, pray together and ask God to help each child to spend time praying to God this week. Encourage the children to spend time memorizing Psalm 130:5a at home. Make sure each child leaves with his or her take-home activities, including memory verse cards and Family Table Talk handout and a Family Prayer Calendar.

As parents arrive, introduce them to the Family Table Talk handout and the Family Prayer Calendar. Encourage parents to spend time throughout the week praying through the verses on the prayer calendar and talking about ways to be Circle Makers!

GOD ALWAYS HEARS MY PRAYERS



"I wait for the Lord to help me."

Psalm 130:5a

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My Prayer Journal

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