

January 2026 – Promises of God

Please note Bible stories and themes may occasionally differ from this overview.

We discover that God makes special promises with people in the Bible such as Noah, Abraham, Solomon and David. We consider how God chooses to bless the world through real people, and what it means for us to remember and honour God's covenant with his people.

Session 1 **3/4 January**

Session Aim: To follow Noah as an example of obedience

Bible Ref: Genesis 6:5-22; 7:13-16; 8:6-11; 9:12-17

Today's fruit

God saw Noah's **goodness** in a world full of pain. We can be examples of **goodness** and truth in the world today.

Noah's courage and God's promise

The grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Adam and Eve led to many, many people spreading throughout the earth. Most people forgot about God, except one man called Noah.

Because God's beautiful world had become corrupt and dark, God cleaned everything and everyone from the face of the earth with a flood of 40 days and nights of rain. He instructed Noah and his three sons – Shem, Ham and Japheth – with their wives, to build a huge boat called the ark. It would have windows and a door, through which one pair of every living creature would board the giant boat.

People laughed at Noah as he followed God's instructions for the huge ship, but eventually those rains came and flooded the earth.

When the rain stopped, the ark stopped on a mountain called Ararat. Noah sent out a raven to check for dry land, but it found nothing. A week later he sent out a dove, which returned carrying an olive leaf. Noah now knew there were trees appearing on dry ground and that it was safe to leave the ark.

God put a rainbow in the sky as a sign to Noah and his family that he would never flood the earth again.

Think about

Is it easy to forget about God when we are not with other people who love and follow him? Are there places or times when it feels difficult to follow God?

We read in the Bible that Noah was righteous and walked faithfully with God. Noah followed God and showed goodness and faithfulness too. How might Noah have felt to be chosen for this job? Noah was also obedient when God asked him to build a boat. Have you ever followed God's way? Is it always easy?

Consider how rainbows are made. The science is brilliant and helps us remember that God creates beautiful things. What do you do when you see rainbows?

Have you heard of the word 'covenant' before? What does it mean? Noah's story tells us that God chose to make a covenant, a special promise, with Noah. What was God's special promise? How can we remember God's covenant with Noah?

God chose to make a special promise to Noah, and to all of humankind. God promised that he would never again flood the whole earth. We can choose to remember and honour the covenant God made. What are some ways we can remember and honour God's special promise? Is it important to do that?

Session 2

10/11 January

Session Aim: To ask our honest questions

Bible Ref: Genesis 22

Today's fruit

We show **faithfulness** when we trust that God will provide what we need.

Abraham's trust and God's promise

In Abraham's day it was common for people to burn sacrifices to God by offering animals as gifts. Abraham had already trusted God by going to Canaan and believing that he and Sarah would have their own child, Isaac. But then he felt that God asked him to do something unimaginable – sacrifice his own son.

Abraham set off with a bundle of wood on a donkey and his son Isaac, who didn't know what the journey was for. Isaac asked where the sacrifice was, and Abraham told him that God would provide it. So Isaac was shocked when Abraham tied him up and prepared to sacrifice – but Abraham heard a voice which stopped him. He knew it was an angel, who reassured Abraham that he had shown that he trusted God by being willing to do ANYTHING he asked.

Just then a ram appeared, caught in a nearby bush, and Abraham sacrificed this instead. He asked Isaac for forgiveness and had learnt again that God would provide and fulfil his promises.

Think about

Today is about God providing for Abraham. Sometimes things don't make any sense to us, and we need to allow God to provide what we need as we take steps forward.

This seems like a shocking act for Abraham to perform; it is indeed a terrible and brutal practice. But it is a relief to know that he didn't need to carry it out in the end.

It is important to balance stories in the Bible with other stories. We know that Jesus wants us to love our parents and parents to love their children.

How do you feel when parts of the Bible confuse you? Who can you talk to? Where do you go with your questions? Abraham was also working out what it meant to follow God.

Key Dates (optional)

11 January: Covenant Sunday

Within The Salvation Army this is a day for renewing promises. The Bible shows how God gives himself in Jesus to the world. Many people will make decisions or promises to work with God for good within the world today, to break new ground and bring hope.

Session 3

17/18 January

Session Aim: To make wise decisions like Solomon

Bible Ref: 1 Kings 3:17-28

Today's fruit

We can help bring **peace** into situations that are difficult.

Solomon's decision and God's promise

Solomon was in his early twenties when he became king. In his prayers, he asked God for the gift of wisdom because he knew that kings need to make many difficult decisions that affect other people.

There were two women who had recently had baby boys. Sadly, one of the babies had died and the women had an argument about which baby was still alive and who it belonged to. Solomon asked for his sword to be brought, as if he was going to chop the child into two pieces! It seems he did this just to make the women be honest, and it worked. One said, 'Yes, neither of us should have him!' but the other said, 'I would rather see him given away than harmed.'

Solomon then knew who the real mother was because she cared so much for the life of the child.

Think about

Solomon showed wisdom in settling this argument, and sometimes we need to do that with our friends. Are you good at settling disputes at school? How do you come to an answer? Solomon prayed for wisdom, and we can too. Is it important for us to be people who are peaceful? I wonder when we might need to pray to God for wisdom?

Is there someone you can think of who needs peace and care?

Session 4

24/25 January

Session Aim: To learn that God sees within a person

Bible Ref: 1 Samuel 16:1-23

Today's fruit

Goodness is evident in the way David used his music to help Saul to stay calm.

Goodness is also seen in the way Samuel chose David, not judging by outward appearances.

David's gift and God's promise

After God rejected Saul as king, Samuel felt that God was leading him to a man called Jesse who lived in Bethlehem. Jesse had many sons, one of whom would be the new king. But Samuel was worried for his life; what would Saul say when he found out?

Jesse showed Samuel ten of his sons, but none of them was God's chosen one, even though their appearance was impressive. They might have been tall or handsome,

but Samuel knew that God looks at the heart – at who the person really is on the inside.

David was the youngest son, outside looking after sheep. Samuel felt God direct him that David was the chosen one. As was the custom, Samuel poured olive oil over David as a sign, and God's Spirit was with David from then on.

Meanwhile God's Spirit had left Saul and Saul became angry. His servants suggested listening to music; Saul demanded they find him a harp player, and David was recommended. Saul sent for David and Jesse agreed. So David served Saul and his music enabled Saul to remain calm.

Think about

Sometimes following God's direction can make us afraid, like Samuel. Have you ever wondered if you have 'heard' God correctly?

Samuel seemed to get directions from God all the time. How did he have this connection, and do you ever feel it?

David was the youngest son, but he was the one who was chosen. In what ways do we judge people by their outside appearance?

Saul was an angry man. How do you stay calm, or what do you turn to when life feels tough? David became Saul's playlist, and his music was used by God.