

God's Promise to Zechariah and Elizabeth

The Point: God does what he promises.

Scripture Connect: Luke 1:5–20, 57–64

Supplies for all Session 6 activities options: pencils, prepared poster, wastebasket, coins (3 per child), paper, markers, Bible

The Basics for Leaders

God promised that Zechariah and Elizabeth would have a baby—and what a baby! Their son would grow up to be part of the greatest story ever. He'd point straight at the Savior, letting everyone know that God had shown up in person.

But there was a problem: Elizabeth couldn't have children. That is, without God's power she couldn't have children.

Zechariah and Elizabeth knew all about God. Zechariah was a priest, and Elizabeth came from a long line of priests. They'd grown up learning about God and had given their lives to serving God. They were rock solid, but somewhere along the line they'd missed an important lesson. It's the lesson you'll share with your kids today.

It doesn't matter if God's awesome promises seem impossible. God's good at impossible. God does impossible with one hand tied behind his back!

48 13 Very Awesome Promises and How God Always Keeps Them

As you experience this session with your kids, celebrate with them the truth that God does for us what he promises—always.

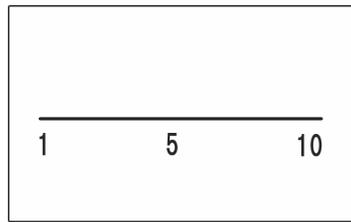
OPENING ACTIVITY—OPTION 1

HOWZITGOIN’

Time: about 5 minutes, depending on attendance

Supplies: pencils, prepared poster

Before kids arrive, draw a line on a poster. Write a 1 on the left end of the line, a 10 on the right, and a 5 in the middle. As kids arrive, ask them to pencil in their initials on the line.



Say: If this past week was so awful you wish you’d slept through it, place your initials by the 1. If it was a great week you wish you could repeat, put your initials by the 10. Place your initials anywhere on the line that shows how you feel about this past week—except exactly on the 5. Because there’s no such thing as a week that’s exactly half good and half bad!

After kids have signed in, give them 30 seconds each to explain why they placed their initials where they did. Be sure to include your own initials and explain your placement on the line. Kids will begin to express themselves more over time, and hearing their stories will help you adapt this lesson to make it relevant to your kids’ lives.

OPENING ACTIVITY—OPTION 2

CALL IT COIN TOSS

Time: about 10 minutes

Supplies: wastebasket, coins (3 per child)

Place a wastebasket on the floor. Have kids form a circle, shoulder to shoulder, around it. Give each child three coins.

Ask: How many of you predict (that is, say ahead of time) that you can toss your three coins into the basket without missing?

Have them predict, then toss, and then retrieve their coins. Form the circle again, but have kids turn so they're facing away from the wastebasket. Repeat the "predict, toss, and retrieve" process, having kids toss their coins *over* their shoulders. Do the activity again from two steps away, and then five. Kids' ability to predict accurately will fade the farther they get from the wastebasket.

Gather coins and have kids sit together. Discuss:

- **What happened to your predictions as we played the game? Why?**
- **What made it easy or hard to make predictions that were on target?**

Say: **We all make predictions about what we think will happen. And we also make promises about what we are *sure* will happen. Maybe you've promised a parent you'll clean your room or turn in a homework assignment on time. We're sure we'll come through, but sometimes we don't.**

I'll bet we've all made a promise that we didn't keep. For me it was ... (Briefly share a promise you made that you didn't keep. You'll model the sort of response you hope to hear from kids.)

Then say:

- **Now it's your turn. Tell about a promise you didn't keep. What was the promise, and why didn't you keep it?**

After kids share, thank them and say: **Today we'll talk about an awesome promise that God made to a married couple. And the promise was hard to believe. But first, let's see what sort of predictions and promises you have about yourself!**

Awesome Promises Game

WONDER WORDS

Time: about 10 minutes

Supplies: paper, markers

Give each child a sheet of paper and a marker. Say: **Time to make some predictions and promises. Think about what you'll be doing in a week.**

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Write some words or draw pictures of what you think you'll be doing in a week. Write or draw small—I'll ask you to add more in a minute.

Assure kids that spelling isn't important in this activity. Give them several minutes to write or draw.

Say: **Now think about five years from now. How old will that make you?** (pause to let kids do the math) **Write or draw what you think you'll be doing then.**

Pause for several minutes as kids write or draw.

Then say: **Now think about when you'll be a grown-up. Write or draw what you think you'll be doing then.**

Pause for several minutes as kids write or draw.

Ask kids to take turns showing what they wrote or drew. If you have lots of kids, group them into groups of two or three and let them show their papers in those smaller groups. The goal is for everyone to have the chance to talk.

Then ask the whole group to gather in a circle and discuss:

- **How sure are you that what you think you'll be doing in a week will really happen? Why?**
- **How sure are you of your predictions for five years from now? For your grown-up years? Why?**
- **If I promised you that something on your sheet of paper would happen, how sure would you be that it would happen?**

Say: **I don't know your future. I can't know it. But God knows. And when God promises something will happen for you in the future, you can count on it. A couple named Zechariah and Elizabeth learned that God does for us what he promises. Let's hear their story now.**

(Note: Keep the kids' papers for the Wonder Words Prayer activity.)

Awesome Promises Bible Story

2 KIDS = 1 ACTOR

Time: about 15 minutes

Supplies: Bible

(Note: Depending on your group, you may want to read the Scripture aloud once and then have your volunteer actors perform during a second read.)

Ask for two volunteers of the same sex and approximately the same size. Have them stand in the front of the room, facing the rest of the kids, one behind the other. The child in the rear will extend his or her arms under the front person's arms, and the front person will place his or her arms behind the other's back.

As they act out the story you read, the front person will provide voices and facial expressions; the person in the back will provide hand movements.

Ask your "actor" to act out the actions of all the characters as you read aloud Luke 1:5–20, 57–64.

Lead the rest of the kids in applauding your volunteers' efforts and then, as a group, discuss:

- **God made Zechariah unable to speak. Do you think that was a fair punishment for doubting that God would keep a promise?**
- **If God punished you for doubting him, how much trouble would you be in? Why?**
- **When you hear "God does for us what he promises," how do you feel?**
- **What's a promise that you're afraid God won't keep?**

Say: **When Zechariah's voice was returned, the first thing he did was praise God. Let's use our voices to praise God through our prayers.**

CLOSING PRAYER

WONDER WORDS PRAYER

Time: about 5 minutes

Supplies: Bible, kids' papers from the Wonder Words activity

Ask kids to stand and to pick up their Wonder Words papers. Place the Bible on a chair or stool.

Say: **Some kids are scared of the future. They worry that a day will come when they don't have any friends or their families won't have any money. I don't know what will come in my life or yours, but I do know this: God promises to be with us no matter what. I don't have to be afraid of what's coming, and you don't have to be afraid either.**

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Pray: **God, thank you for loving us. We trust you with our lives and our futures. We know you'll do for us what you've promised.**

Then say to the kids: **If you'd like to trust your future to God, place your Wonder Words paper on the Bible. Then come back and we'll thank God for being with us.**

After those kids who want to place their papers on the Bible do so, invite them to pray out loud, thanking and praising God.

Close by praying: **Thank you for always being true to your Word, God. In Jesus's name, amen.**

EXTRA-TIME ACTIVITY—OPTION 1

HEADS OR TAILS

Time: about 10 minutes

Supplies: coins (3 per child)

Give each child three coins. Form kids into groups of three. Ask children to, in their groups, each flip a coin at the same time (tossing the coins in the air and catching them will work for kids who can't flip coins). After they flip coins they will compare their coins. If two of the coins are the same (heads or tails) and one coin is different, whoever has the different coin will take the other two pennies. In this game, being unusual actually pays!

Continue to play. The game in each group ends when one child runs out of coins. Then the two kids with coins count how many coins they have, and the one with the most is crowned Coin King (or Queen).

After playing for a few minutes, collect the pennies and have kids discuss:

- **When you started this game, did you expect to win? Why?**
- **How do you feel about starting things when you don't know how they'll turn out?**
- **If you could know for sure how one thing in your life is going to turn out, what would you choose to know about? Why did you choose that?**

Say: **Zechariah and Elizabeth didn't know what their future would hold. Then they were given a promise by God. We can trust all of God's promises. God always does what he promises to do.**

EXTRA-TIME ACTIVITY—OPTION 2

BLESSINGS

Time: about 10 minutes

Supplies: none

Ask children to separate around the room and sit quietly on the floor. Say: **I don't know what's coming in your future, but I know God has given you gifts and talents he'll use as you move into your future.**

Move from child to child. When you reach each child, take the child's hand (or place your hand on his or her shoulder), look into the child's eyes, and briefly bless the child. Using the child's name, say something like: (Child's name), **God loves you very much and has given you the gift of a great sense of humor** (or whatever attribute you wish to affirm). **I know God will use you and your gift in the future if you give your future to him.**

EXTRA-TIME ACTIVITY—OPTION 3

INQUIRING MINDS WANT TO KNOW

Time: about 5 minutes

Supplies: none

Gather kids in a circle. Ask: **God always does what he promises to do. What promise of God do you wish he *wouldn't* keep—if any?**