



FAITHWEAVER

Weaving faith into today's families **NOW**[®]



**WINTER
SUNDAY SCHOOL**

**MIDDLE SCHOOL
LEADER GUIDE**

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Group

Group resources really work!

This Group resource incorporates our R.E.A.L. approach to ministry. It reinforces a growing friendship with Jesus, encourages long-term learning, and results in life transformation, because it's:



Relational

Person-to-person interaction enhances spiritual growth and builds Christian friendships.

Experiential

What we experience through action and discussion sticks with us up to 9 times longer than what we simply hear or read.

Applicable

The aim of ministry is to equip people to be both hearers and doers of God's Word.

Lifelong

Experiences transform the heart, moving faith beyond the walls of church and into everyday life for years to come.

Group

FaithWeaver NOW® Bible Curriculum, Middle School Bible Studies, Winter

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Cover Photography: © iStockPhoto.com/LattaPictures

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ISBN 978-1-4707-6628-3

Printed in the United States of America.



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*We recommend rearranging the studies so that Study 4 aligns with the week of Christmas.



The future of Sunday school + family ministry is NOW.



No doubt about it, the world is changing. Families used to go to church every week. Kids used to have longer attention spans. Teachers used to have more time to prepare. And didn't our budgets used to be bigger?

Even the Sunday school Bible curriculum you used just a couple of years ago is already out of date. But there's one thing that's never changed: the need to grow families closer to Jesus.

That's why we created FaithWeaver NOW®, and it's different from anything you've ever seen before!

It combines Sunday school with family ministry. ■■■■

Sure, you've seen Sunday school aimed at families. But FaithWeaver NOW actually hits the target by having everyone in the family learning about the same Scripture each week.

It's simpler and easier. ■■■■

Sometimes change is a wonderful thing. Gone are the days when you needed to spend hours preparing your lessons and hunting for supplies. FaithWeaver NOW will have you and your team ready to go in a snap.

It's made for NOW. ■■■■

Life is complicated and full of distractions. FaithWeaver NOW keeps faith on track through even the most frenzied lifestyles.

What makes FaithWeaver NOW the perfect curriculum for TODAY's church?

- Families learn the same Bible passage in age-appropriate ways.
- Kids don't just hear the Word. They experience it.
- Simple and easy lessons fit even the busiest lives.
- Kids see God in their everyday world.
- The Scope & Sequence goes through the Bible every three years.
- You can customize it however you like, with both print and digital versions.



Create a vibrant family ministry that's new...that's wow...that's NOW. FaithWeaver NOW gives you a fresh strategy for being more successful than ever in bringing families closer to Jesus.

Thom Schultz Joani Schultz

Thom and Joani Schultz
Chairman and Chief Creative Officer
Group Publishing, Inc.





Prophets Foretell Jesus' Coming

Jeremiah 33:14-16

Because early adolescents are on a roller coaster trying to figure out who they are and how they fit in the world, they tend not to be the most reliable people. This can mean a lot of broken promises in their lives, both promises they've made and promises they've received. Broken promises can easily lead to broken hearts as feelings of betrayal or guilt weigh them down. Use this study to encourage your students that God will always be faithful to them, God will always keep his promises, God will love and forgive them no matter how many promises they've kept or broken, and God can even help them keep their promises.



► Bible Point

Jesus fulfilled God's promise.

Key Verse

"All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel'—which means, 'God with us'" (Matthew 1:22-23).

Weaving Faith Into Life

Students will consider what promises Jesus has fulfilled in their own lives.

| STUDY | WHAT STUDENTS DO | SUPPLIES | EASY PREP |
|-------------------------------|---|---|--|
| 1 Faith Connection | Heads or Tails? <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Play a guessing game, and discuss what <i>prophecy</i> means. | Bible Trek, coins, pens | Remove the Study 1 pages from each Bible Trek student book. |
| | Media Connection (Option) <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Watch a movie clip, and talk about promises. | Bible Trek, pens, video player, movie <i>It Could Happen to You</i> | Remove the Study 1 pages from each Bible Trek student book. Cue <i>it Could Happen to You</i> to 00:25:39, when Charlie says, "About our little agreement." |
| 2 Bible Exploration | Choose Your Own Adventure <i>(about 25 min.)</i> Adventure 1: What's in a Promise? Analyze the promises found in Jeremiah 33:14-16. Adventure 2: Promising Artists Create artwork to help understand that God kept his promise when Jesus was born. | Bibles, Bible Trek, pens Bibles, Bible Trek, paint, paintbrushes, sponges, paper | Set out the supplies for each adventure at different stations. |

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.



| STUDY | WHAT STUDENTS DO | SUPPLIES | EASY PREP |
|--|---|------------------|---|
| 3 Weaving Faith Into Life | My Promise <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Reflect on what God's promises in Jeremiah mean for them. | Bibles | |
| | Make or Break <i>(about 15 min.)</i> Analyze 3 promises, and compare them with the promise of Jesus. | paper, pens | |
| 4 Lasting Impressions | Daily Challenges <i>(about 5 min.)</i> Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word. | Bible Trek, pens | |
| | Weaving Faith at Home <i>(about 2 min.)</i> Talk about how to share what they learned with their families. | Bible Trek | Tear out the letter to parents from each Bible Trek student book. |

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.



Heads or Tails? Supplies

Bible Trek
coins
pens

Heads or Tails? Easy Prep

Remove the Study 1
pages from each Bible
Trek student book.

Media Connection Supplies

Bible Trek
pens
video player
movie *It Could Happen
to You*

Media Connection Easy Prep

Remove the Study 1
pages from each Bible
Trek student book.

Cue *It Could Happen to
You* to 00:25:39, when
Charlie says, “About our
little agreement.”

1 FAITH CONNECTION

Heads or Tails?

What You'll Do

Have students form pairs. Give each pair a coin and a pen. Also distribute this week's Bible Trek pages, and have students find the “Heads or Tails?” section. Say: **We're going to play a guessing game. In the next five minutes, flip your coin as many times as you can. Before each flip, write on your Bible Trek page a guess of how it will land—heads or tails. Then flip the coin, and note whether you were right or wrong.**

After five minutes, have pairs compare how many correct guesses they had.

Talk With Students

Lead students in this discussion.

Ask:

- Explain whether you tried to use any logic to make your guesses.
- What's something in your life you wish you could accurately predict the outcome of?
- Today we're going to learn about prophecy. How is prophecy like or unlike guessing how a coin will land?

Say: **Prophecy might seem a lot like really good guesswork or psychic powers. But it's not. Prophecy is God speaking to us through people. Prophets didn't have to guess what would happen—they just repeated what God said. Often this was about things that would happen in the future, but it wasn't a guess because God knew! Sometimes God made promises through the prophets, and that's what we'll explore today—how ► JESUS FULFILLED GOD'S PROMISE.**

Say: **To think more about promises—let's consider the questions in the “Think It Over” section of our Bible Trek pages.** Have students write answers to the questions in the “Think It Over” section.

Media Connection (Option)

Tip In general, federal copyright laws do not allow you to use videos or DVDs (even ones you own) for any purpose other than home viewing. Your church can obtain a license from Christian Video Licensing International for a small fee. Just visit cvli.com or call 1-888-771-2854 for more information.

Many movie clips are available at youtube.com. This clip is also available at wingclips.com under the title “Promise Is a Promise.”

What You'll Do

Instead of doing the “Heads or Tails?” activity, watch a clip from *It Could Happen to You*. Set up the clip by saying: **In this movie, Charlie was a customer at a restaurant and realized he couldn't pay the tip. He promised the waitress he'd come back and give her half of his winnings if he won the lottery. He didn't expect he'd win—but he did! We'll see what happened when he went back to the restaurant.** Begin the clip at 00:25:39, when Charlie says, “About our little agreement.” In this clip, Charlie gives the waitress a choice between him keeping his promise or doubling her current tip. Not knowing that he won the lottery, she picks that anyway, and ends up with half of his \$4 million winnings. End the clip at 00:30:01, when Yvonne and Charlie hug.

Talk With Students

Lead students in this discussion.

Ask:

- Do you think Charlie really had to keep his promise? Explain.
- Tell about a promise you wish you hadn't made.
- How big a deal is it to keep a promise?

Say: **People make promises a lot. Sometimes they don't think they'll really have to follow through, just as Charlie thought when he made his promise. And sometimes, unlike Charlie, people don't follow through on their promises. But God always does. Today we'll explore some promises he made through the prophet Jeremiah and consider how ► JESUS FULFILLED GOD'S PROMISE.**

To think more about promises, let's consider the questions in the “Think It Over” section of our Bible Trek pages. Distribute the Bible Trek pages and pens, and have students write answers to the questions in the “Think It Over” section.

BIBLE EXPLORATION

Choose Your Own Adventure

What You'll Do

Say: **In our adventures today, we have two activities you can choose from. Adventure 1 uses analysis, and Adventure 2 uses painting. The directions are on your Bible Trek papers. Look them over and decide which activity you want to do. You can work with the others who choose the same activity.** Allow time for students to decide which adventure they want to do. Summaries of each adventure follow.

ADVENTURE 1—ANALYSIS: WHAT'S IN A PROMISE?

In this adventure, students will analyze the promises in the Bible passage.



Choose Your Own Adventure Supplies

- Bibles
- Bible Trek
- Adventure 1**
- pens
- Adventure 2**
- paint
- paintbrushes
- sponges
- paper

Choose Your Own Adventure Easy Prep

Set out the supplies for each adventure at different stations.



ADVENTURE 2—PAINTING: PROMISING ARTISTS

In this adventure, students will create artwork to help them understand the promises in the Bible passage.

Say: **After you finish your adventure, you'll present some of what you experienced, so keep that in mind. When everyone has finished, we'll talk about what we've learned. You have 20 minutes to complete your adventures.** While students are working, move between the stations, and offer assistance as needed. Let groups know when they have about five minutes left so they can wrap up their work.

After 20 minutes, have your groups take turns presenting what they experienced.

Talk With Students ■■■■

Lead students in this discussion.

Ask:

- What do you think about the way God fulfilled his promises?
- In what ways might Jesus have been like or unlike what you'd expect based on God's promises?
- Unlike Jeremiah, we can look *back* at when Jesus was born. What does it mean to you that Jesus came to earth?

Say: **Sometimes when we get caught up in everyday problems and busyness, we can lose focus on what a miracle it is that ► JESUS FULFILLED GOD'S PROMISE. Because of Jesus, we can trust in God's goodness. We can believe that God is with us. Let's consider that further.**

.....

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

My Promise

What You'll Do ■■■■

Say: **God's promises in Jeremiah weren't just for the Israelites back then. The promises we read today were about Jesus—and Jesus is for everyone! Let's consider how these promises apply to our lives.**

Have students spread out and get somewhere comfortable where they can reflect without distraction.

Say: **As I read our Bible passage again, listen for a line that jumps out at you as a promise for you.** Read aloud Jeremiah 33:14-16.

My Promise
Supplies

.....

Bibles



Allow about a minute for silent reflection, and then read the promises below along with the following points to reflect on.

- **God will do what is just and right. How has he done that for you? How do you wish he would do that for you?** (Pause for reflection.)
- **God promised to save Judah and give safety to Jerusalem. How has God kept you safe? In what areas do you feel unsafe?** (Pause for reflection.)
- **God called Jesus “The Lord Our Righteous Savior.” How has Jesus’ role as Savior made a difference in your life?** (Pause for reflection.)
- **In the Key Verse, Matthew 1:22-23, Jesus is called Immanuel—God with us. How have you experienced God’s presence? How would you like to experience his presence?** (Pause for reflection.)

Talk With Students

Lead everyone in this discussion.

Ask:

- **Explain which promise means the most to you.**
- **Which of these promises (if any) does it seem as if God isn’t keeping? How can you trust in God even when it feels as if God isn’t keeping his promises?**
- **What will you do this week to appreciate God’s promises fulfilled in Jesus?**

Say: It took a really long time for God to fulfill his promises by sending Jesus. We know ► **JESUS FULFILLED GOD’S PROMISE**, but there were a lot of people who were born and died between when Jeremiah made this prophecy and when Jesus was born. Sometimes it might seem as if God isn’t keeping his promises. But we can trust that in the end, he is faithful to keep all his promises. And in the meantime, we can trust that Jesus is God with us—no matter what we face.

Make or Break

What You’ll Do

Have students each fold a piece of paper in thirds. Provide pens.

Say: **Think of three promises people have made to you: one promise that was fulfilled, one promise that was broken, and one promise that has not yet been fulfilled or broken. In each of the three columns you created on your paper, draw or write something to show how you feel about these promises and the people who made them.**

Remind your students not to mention names or specific circumstances that others will easily identify. Gossip is always a temptation and can quickly sidetrack the study. Help students concentrate on their feelings and responsibility rather than on what this or that person did or didn’t do to hurt them.

After a few minutes, ask students to form small groups and share what they wrote or drew.



Make or Break Supplies

.....
paper
pens



Talk With Students

Lead students in this discussion.

Ask:

- Which column do you have the strongest feelings about? Why?
- In which of the three columns would you put God based on what we've explored today? Explain.
- In what way is Jesus a better or worse fulfillment of God's promises than people might have expected?

Say: **How we treat the promises we make can greatly affect the relationships we have with others. God made a promise to his people—including us—in Jeremiah. And when Jesus came, ► JESUS FULFILLED GOD'S PROMISE. We can trust that God will never fall into that "broken promises" column—and Jesus is a reason to hang on to that faith!**

4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

Daily Challenges Supplies

Bible Trek
pens

What You'll Do

Direct students to the Daily Challenges in their Bible Trek pages and have them choose one to do this week. They can choose one or more of these three options:

- **Make or buy a simple Christmas decoration to give away. Explain to the person you give it to what it means to you that Jesus fulfilled God's promise.**
- **Before bedtime three nights this week, spend five minutes sketching a picture of one time that day you knew God was with you.**
- **Make a list of any promises you've made (at least three!), and do what you can to fulfill them.**

Talk With Students

Lead students in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What's a practical way you're going to do your Daily Challenge? Include a time, a place, and other ideas.**

Say: **At the time Jeremiah prophesied, things were not great for the Israelites. And they were about to get worse! But God made a promise to them, and ► JESUS FULFILLED GOD'S PROMISE and became God with us. Let's appreciate God's promise fulfilled this week by following through with our Daily Challenges.**



Weaving Faith at Home

Hand out a letter to parents from the Bible Trek student books, one to each student. Also encourage students to talk with their parents about the Daily Challenges they chose and what they learned about Jesus. Students can also do the activities on the “Bringing It Home” section of their Bible Trek pages with their families.

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church’s families! Available at group.com/digital.

Close with prayer. Have students fill in the end of the prayer with places they go or things they experience. Pray: **Dear Jesus, thank you that you are God with us. Thank you that you are with us when...** (allow time for students to respond). **In your name, amen.**



Weaving Faith at Home Supplies

Bible Trek

Weaving Faith at Home Easy Prep

Tear out the letter to parents from each Bible Trek student book.



FaithWeaver NOW is for today's Sunday school teachers. It's developed by real Sunday school teachers, examined by real ministry leaders, and tested and approved by thousands of churches so you get great lessons that work with today's families.

This quarter you'll explore these Bible passages:

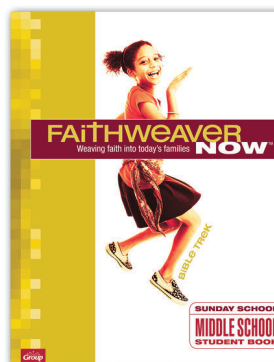
| | BIBLE CONTENT/SCRIPTURE | KEY VERSE | BIBLE POINT |
|---------|--|--|--|
| WEEK 1 | Prophets Foretell Jesus' Coming (Jeremiah 33:14-16) | "All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel'—which means, 'God with us'" (Matthew 1:22-23). | Jesus fulfilled God's promise. |
| WEEK 2 | Zachariah Prophesies About Jesus (Luke 1:68-79) | "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him" (John 3:17). | The world needs Jesus. |
| WEEK 3 | John Prepares People for Jesus' Coming (Luke 3:7-18) | "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). | Repenting prepares us for Jesus. |
| WEEK 4 | The Son of God Is Born! (Luke 1:26-45; 2:1-20) | "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). | Celebrate Jesus' birth. |
| WEEK 5 | Jesus Grows Up (Luke 2:39-52) | "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). | Jesus is special. |
| WEEK 6 | The Word Became Flesh (John 1:1-18) | "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12). | We can be God's children. |
| WEEK 7 | Satan Tempts Jesus (Luke 4:1-13) | "Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted" (Hebrews 2:18). | Jesus helps us resist temptation. |
| WEEK 8 | Jesus Performs His First Miracle (John 2:1-11) | "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31). | Jesus can do miracles. |
| WEEK 9 | Jesus Teaches in a Synagogue (Luke 4:14-21) | "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost" (Luke 19:10). | Jesus came for all people. |
| WEEK 10 | Jesus Is Rejected in His Hometown (Luke 4:22-30) | "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength" (Deuteronomy 6:5). | Believe in Jesus. |
| WEEK 11 | Moses and Elijah Appear With Jesus (Luke 9:28-36) | "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). | Jesus is God's Son. |
| WEEK 12 | Jesus Teaches About Rewards (Luke 6:17-26) | "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things" (Colossians 3:2). | Jesus blesses people who have faith. |
| WEEK 13 | Jesus Teaches About Loving Enemies (Luke 6:27-38) | "Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:31). | Jesus says to treat others as we want to be treated. |

PLUS...

Access all these **FREE FaithWeaver NOW digital resources** at group.com/digital:

- **FREE digital copies of Leader Guides** in PDF format so you can easily download any lesson for your ministry. Sharing lessons with busy volunteers couldn't be easier! *See inside for activation code.*
- **A FREE downloadable Director Manual** to help you structure your program for maximum effectiveness.
- **FREE weekly FamilyConnect pages** you can print out or email to parents to help families grow together in faith throughout the week.

Don't forget...



***Get a colorful, age-appropriate student book for every student! Each week, you'll get...**

- Engaging activities that bring the Bible to life for every student
- Easy faith conversation-starters for students to take home
- Meaningful at-home activities for families to dig into Scripture

***You'll need one per student. Sold separately.**



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