

The Savior's Playbook

Bible Story: The Savior's Playbook (Jesus encourages the disciples) • *John 14–16 (Supporting: John 12–13)*

Bottom Line: Whatever happens, remember what Jesus promised.

Memory Verse: “In this world you will have trouble. But be encouraged! I have won the battle over the world.” *John 16:33b, NIV*

Life App: Hope—believing that something good can come out of something bad.

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

Get to Know You Activity

What You Do:

Chat with kids about promises:

- What promises have they kept and what promises have they broken?
- What promises have been made to them?
- Have more of the promises made to them been kept or broken?

1. Encouraging Words (*application activity / review the Bible story*)

What You Need: “Encouraging Words” Activity Page; 1 for each Small Group, Bible

What You Do:

- Tell kids they are going to pretend they're at the Last Supper with Jesus. To help make the Bible come alive, assign each kid a disciple's name. You can repeat names as necessary. Use the better-known names like Peter, James, John, Andrew, Matthew, Thomas.
- Explain that in those days, tables were very low, and people lounged on the ground with their feet out behind them, instead of sitting in chairs.
- Once kids are in place around your “table,” ask them to review today's Bible story. Make sure they mention the following points:
 - The Jewish leaders did not like how popular Jesus was getting.
 - The Jewish leaders wanted to arrest and kill Jesus.
 - Jesus met with His disciples to eat the Passover meal together.
 - He told them what was about to happen.
 - The disciples were confused.
 - Jesus encouraged His disciples.
 - He promised they would have peace because of Him.
 - Jesus' friends forgot to hold onto the hope He had given them.
- Then tell kids you're going to read them some encouraging words, similar to what Jesus told His disciples.
- Read the “Encouraging Words” Activity Page.
- Ask kids if they would like to add any encouraging words they think Jesus would give them.

What You Say:

“Jesus gave His disciples some very encouraging words, but when things didn’t turn out the way they wanted them to, they forgot all of **His promises** to them. They lost hope. Let’s not lose hope when things get hard. We know Jesus has promised us many amazing things.

“We often have special meals for remembering special occasions. Special meals require special settings and special preparations. The meal Jesus was sharing with His disciples wasn’t just any meal. It was the most special holiday meal of the entire year. It was a meal that they ate every year to remember the great miracles God did through Moses to rescue the Jews from Egypt. This meal was already a time when the disciples were setting the table to remember special things that God had done, and Jesus used it as a way to tell them that God was about to do something even more amazing and special than He did rescuing the Jews from Egypt. He was about to rescue all of us from our sin.

[Make It Personal] (Tell kids about a tradition or action you take that reminds you of God's promises.) “To the disciples, this special meal reminded them that even in the worst times, they could rely on the promises of God because of what He had done in the past. Jesus used this meal to remind them that He was about to fulfill all of God’s promises of salvation. By taking the punishment for our sin on the cross, Jesus made it possible for Him to be with us forever. Jesus promised His disciples that He would always be with them. That includes us too. We can know that no matter how badly we mess up, Jesus will forgive us. No matter how dark life seems and **[Bottom Line] whatever happens, remember what Jesus promised.** He is always with us.

2. Keep It Up (memory verse activity)

PART 1: What You Need: Beach ball with Memory Verse written on it

What You Do:

- Tell kids to keep the beach ball in the air as long as they can without it touching the floor, ceiling, walls, furniture, or someone’s body part other than a knee.
- Every time the ball hits the floor, ceiling, wall, or furniture, they will all say the verse.
- When it hits someone’s body part other than a knee, that person says the verse.
- If they can’t remember the words, they can use the ball for help.

What You Say:

“This is a very important promise from Jesus. The first part—that we are going to have trouble in this world—doesn’t sound too good, but we can be encouraged by the rest of the promises that Jesus gave to the disciples: to take away our sin, to always be with us through the Holy Spirit, and to make a place for us to live in heaven when we die. We can also be encouraged by the last part of this verse where Jesus promises us that His power has overcome any evil the world can throw at Him. **[Bottom Line] Whatever happens, remember what Jesus promised.**”

PART 2: What You Need: Sticky notes, markers, large poster board with Memory verse written on it.

What You Do:

- Looked up the verse,
- Point to the word TROUBLE (will have a box around it).

- Pass out sticky notes and a marker to each student. Encourage them to write one example of the type of trouble we can expect in the world on a sticky note. Give them just a few minutes to do this.
- Tell them that there are only two rules: 1) One example only on each sticky note and 2) no talking.
- Once they've written down a few examples, ask them to bring the notes up to the verse. Stick all the notes in the area around the verse.
- Then challenge kids to sort the notes into categories or similar ideas **WITHOUT** talking! They will have to find other ways to communicate.
- Sum up what you came up with after another few minutes of moving the sticky notes around. For example, are there certain types of troubles that kids thought of more than others? (weather, sickness, death, school, family)
- End on a high note by making the verse more light-hearted. Show how you can substitute the word "trouble" out for other words, like "bad stuff" or "not-so-great things."
- And after you say, "In this world you will have trouble," you can stop and say, "Dun, dun, dun," in a deep voice very dramatically. Get kids to do it with you.
- Then move on to "BUT"—emphasize this as a turning point.
- For "Be encouraged!" let kids come up with a sound effect.
- Talk about how Jesus says, "I have won the battle over the world." This is good news, people!
- Take suggestions for what can replace "I have won the battle over the world" and try them out. (ex: *"I have given you shelter," "I have given you great friends," or anything that goes along with the troubles the kids came up with*).
- Decide on one as a group and put it all together. Emphasize that we're not making light of the trouble this life has, but choosing to focus on what Jesus does for us.

Additional discussion questions:

- Which promise or characteristic of Jesus is your favorite? (*Answers could be pretty much anything that's true of Jesus, but may include: His constant presence, His continual love, grace for anytime we've messed up, His gift of salvation, etc.*) Why did you choose that one?
- When have you felt comforted by God's presence in a difficult time? Does God's presence change how you feel when you remember that time? Do you think your feelings would be different if you hadn't experienced God in that situation?

Pray and Dismiss

What You Need: A piece of plastic ware for each kid

What You Do:

- Give each kid a plastic spoon, fork, or knife.
- Remind them of the promises that Jesus made to the disciples and to us during the Last Supper: to take away our sin, to always be with us through the Holy Spirit, and to make a place for us to live forever in heaven.
- Tell them at the next meal they eat to show their parents the plastic ware and tell them about the promises of Jesus before they pray for their food. Pray a prayer as an example of a prayer they could pray thanking Jesus for those promises.
- Ask if any one would like to pray for the group.

What You Say:

“Jesus, thank You for Your promises to us. Help us to remember Your promises when times get hard. Don’t let us forget your promises and lose hope like the disciples did. Help us to rely on Your Holy Spirit to remember all that You have taught us. In Jesus’ name, amen. **[Bottom Line]**
Whatever happens, remember what Jesus promised.”

****PLEASE KEEP KIDS IN THEIR SMALL GROUPS UNTIL ALL KIDS HAVE BEEN PICKED UP****