

UNIT 17 | SESSION 4

GOD CAN ALWAYS BE TRUSTED

JEREMIAH 31

KEY PASSAGE:

Jeremiah 17:7

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Can God be trusted? Yes, God cannot lie or ever be wrong, so we can trust whatever He has said.

CHRIST CONNECTION:

God's words brought hope to God's people because His words were true. God can always be trusted. Jeremiah told about a day when God would forgive sin and change people's hearts. Jesus' death and resurrection provides forgiveness of sins. Through Jesus, we have new hearts and life with God forever.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



LEADER Bible Study

There’s a strong likelihood that you have had to repeat a message to the same person multiple times, whether that person is a spouse, child, coworker, or friend. Some things are so important they are worth repeating. And some people are so quick to forget, we must repeat.

For example, each of my four children have gone through seasons when brushing their teeth was such a chore that you would have thought they were being asked to eat nails. My wife and I would remind them dozens of times in the morning and dozens of times in the evening to brush their teeth, and yet still we would later find evidence that it didn’t happen. I feel confident none of them were belligerent in wanting their teeth to rot, but we were loving enough to remind them that this was likely to happen if they didn’t remember to complete this menial task a couple of times a day.

In Jeremiah 31, there is a phrase that is repeated by the Lord to the hearer of these words. The phrase, “the LORD’s declaration” occurs 10 times in these 40 verses. These words even appear at times in the middle of a thought or sentence, uniquely placed to garner great attention. In addition the phrase, “This is what the Lord says” occurs seven times. Clearly, the Lord wants the hearers to be abundantly clear from whom

these words are coming.

We are most certainly forgetful people, often forgetting the smallest of details and even the most significant of facts. The Lord knows us on the deepest level and knows how great our need is for direct reminders.

Jeremiah 31 contains difficult truths and delightful promises. God knows that the hearer is likely to bristle at the warnings and rejoice in the hope, but he also seemingly wants to ensure that we who read these words do not forget that they are His words.

As we read the Bible, it is crucial that we recall the voice behind the words: the voice of God. Only God has the highest authority, holds all knowledge, and is perfectly good. Maybe you need to remember as you read and listen to God’s Word that this is the Lord’s declaration.

DOCTRINE TO KNOW

God is truthful: In God, there is no falsehood (Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18). Everything He says can be trusted. Telling the truth is one way we bear the image of God.



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

| **SAY** “ What is something you’ve been really excited for? Why did it make you excited? ”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Write God’s Law on Your Heart” on the activity page.

| **SAY** “ Our hearts do not naturally love God. Because of sin, we turn away from God and love other things before Him. But God made a way for us to have new hearts. In our Bible story, we will learn about how God made it possible to give us new hearts. ”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: HOPE FOR IT

Before the session, write 5–10 hopeful and discouraging phrases on separate index cards. Examples may include winning a baseball tournament, getting an A on a test, breaking your video game, losing your favorite necklace, leading someone to Jesus, etc.

Select volunteers to choose one of the index cards, read it aloud, and say if the phrase is hopeful or discouraging. Discuss why it is either hopeful or not. Repeat until all of the index cards have been chosen.

| **SAY** “ We can hope for certain things to happen, like getting an A on a test. But things do not always go the way we hope. It’s important to remember that no matter what we face, we can always hope in God’s Word. Today, we will learn about a time when God’s people needed to be reminded of the hope they had in God’s promises. ”

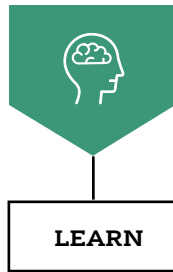
OPTION 2: SADNESS INTO JOY



Guide kids to sit in a circle. Choose one volunteer to be It and stand in the middle of the circle. Instruct him to choose a kid from the circle and try to make him smile or laugh within 30 seconds. Instruct the kid who is not It to resist laughing, if he can. Explain that if he laughs, he is out of the game. If he does not laugh or smile, allow him to be the new It. Continue playing, allowing others to have a turn being It.

| **SAY** “ You all tried so hard to make others laugh! We don’t always feel like laughing or being joyful all the time, do we? God’s people had times when they were sad too. In today’s Bible story, God said He would turn His people’s sadness into joy. ”





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Hello, everyone! My name is [your name]. I’m so glad you are here today! I brought my Bible with me. Did you bring your Bible with you today? Show me your Bible if you did! [Distribute Bibles to those who need one.] As we read from our Bibles, we remember that every word from God is true and that we can trust whatever God has said.

In today’s Bible story, we will learn that God’s people needed hope. Their sin led to a time of suffering and they needed hope for their future. The Lord spoke to His people through Jeremiah and gave them a great promise they could trust in. ”

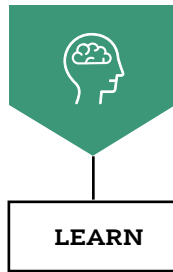
2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

SAY “ Our big picture question is, **Can God be trusted?** What do you think? [Allow kids to respond.] **God cannot lie or ever be wrong, so we can trust whatever He has said.** When we trust God, we can live joyfully and courageously. We know that God is with us and that He will provide for us. We can trust Him to help us remember that life in Jesus is best. Let’s say our big picture question together. **Can God be trusted? Yes, God cannot lie or ever be wrong, so we can trust whatever He has said.** ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ God brought His people back to Jerusalem just like He promised. After 70 years in Babylon, King Cyrus sent God’s people back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. God also used King Cyrus to give His people whatever they needed. When their neighbors tried to stop their work, God sent prophets to encourage them and give them hope. God’s plans could not be stopped and the people eventually completed the temple. Today, we will continue to learn that God can be trusted. ”



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Jeremiah 31. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “God Can Always Be Trusted.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

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“**Jeremiah was a prophet to the people of Judah** from the time Josiah was king, through the invasion of their enemies, and during the Jews’ exile in Babylon. **He warned the people of God’s judgment because of their sin. But even though the people disobeyed, God had not abandoned them. His love never stopped, and God had a good plan for His people.**”

God spoke through Jeremiah. This is what the Lord said: **“On the day when I restore My people to their land, I will be the God of all the families of Israel. They will be My people.”** God’s people had been divided, but God was going to bring them back together.

The people suffered in exile, but God said, “You will make music again. You will dance with joy!” God was going to bring His people back home. He had scattered Israel, but **He would gather them again. He would watch over them like a shepherd guards his flock.**

God said, “I will turn their mourning into joy, comfort them, and bring happiness out of grief. My people will be satisfied with My goodness.”

God declared, **“There is hope for your future!”**

Jeremiah told the people of Judah that God had a plan to change their hearts. God promised a new and better covenant so they could be saved from their sins.

God said that the new covenant would not be like the old covenant. **In the old covenant, the people had God’s commands in writing. They disobeyed His commands and had to make sacrifices every year for their sin. In the new covenant, God was going to write His law on their hearts.** That means **He would give His people the power to obey His commands. God said, “I will forgive their wrongdoing and never again remember their sin.”**

Christ Connection: God’s words brought hope to God’s people because His words were true. God can always be trusted. Jeremiah told about a day when God would forgive sin and change people’s hearts. Jesus’ death and resurrection provides forgiveness of sins. Through Jesus, we have new hearts and life with God forever. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Display thumbs up: Lead kids to give a thumbs up when they hear God’s promises in the Bible story.

Make the sign for Jesus: Teach kids the sign for Jesus. (Hold your hands up, palms facing. Touch the middle finger of one hand to the palm of the other hand. Repeat, using the opposite finger to opposite hand.) Every time God mentions restoration or a new covenant in the story, lead kids to make the sign for Jesus.



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2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Before God’s people ever went into exile in Babylon, God used Jeremiah to warn the people of Judah what would happen. The people of Judah ignored Jeremiah’s words and God punished their sin. The people of Judah were sad and afraid as they were taken away to Babylon. How did Jeremiah give the people hope? **[Allow responses.]** Jeremiah told the people that not only was God going to bring them back home to Judah, but He was also going to give them a way for their sins to be forgiven forever.

Jeremiah told the people that God was going to give them a new covenant. What were some things Jeremiah said about the new covenant? **[Allow responses.]** God’s law was going to be written on hearts, it would wash away our sin forever, and it would help us obey Him.

How did God fulfill His promise to give us a new covenant? **[Allow responses.]** God fulfilled this promise through Jesus! In Christ, we have the forgiveness of sins, new hearts that can love God rightly, and we are given the power to say ‘no’ to sin. God words will never fail and we can always trust Him. ”

3 CHRIST CONNECTION

SAY “ God’s words brought hope to God’s people because His words were true. God can always be trusted. Jeremiah told about a day when God would forgive sin and change people’s hearts. Jesus’ death and resurrection provides forgiveness of sins. Through Jesus, we have new hearts and life with God forever. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 17, Session 4” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. What should we do when we keep messing up and do the wrong thing?
2. What are some ways we can see how God changes hearts?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Explain that Hudson Taylor trusted God would meet his every need during his time as a missionary in China. Hudson was able to build relationships with the Chinese people and learned Mandarin so he could tell them about Jesus. Help kids understand that the China Inland Mission (CIM) that Taylor founded is still in operation today under another name to support missionaries in China.

SAY “ The CIM, under Taylor’s leadership, established 20 mission stations, brought 849 missionaries to China while he was there, trained over 700 Chinese workers, raised money, and



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| developed a witnessing Chinese church of over 125,000 people. ”

Pray, thanking God for missionaries, like Hudson Taylor, who were faithful to tell people in China about Jesus and for missionaries serving in other countries throughout the world.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Jeremiah 17:7 together.

SAY “ We can trust everything God says. We can worship Him joyfully and live our lives without fear! Trusting God gives us hope regardless of our situation. ”

Form kids into teams of four or five. Distribute a sticky note to each kid. Lead kids from each team to each take a few of the words from the key passage and write them on their sticky notes. Lead each team to choose a wall to place their sticky notes on in random order. Then direct kids to have a seat in the middle of the room. Tell kids that when you say “Go,” each team will race to their sticky notes and attempt to put them in the correct order.

Lead kids to sing “Trust In the Lord (Jeremiah 17:7).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ God, thank You for teaching us that everything You say is right and true. We know that we can always trust You. Thank You for making a way for us to be saved. Help us obey You and share Your love with those around us. Amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**

