



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

LESSON 15

THE TROUBLE WITH JOB

Summary of Today's Story

Job is a good and righteous man. He is also rich, having sons and daughters, thousands of camels, sheep, oxen, donkeys and many servants. In heaven, Satan comes to God to complain that Job is good and loves God only because he is so rich. "But stretch out your hand now, and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face."

God allows Satan to bring misfortune to Job, to test his faithfulness to God. So one day, Job loses everything. Raiders, fire and hurricane destroy his houses, kill his children and servants and kill or carry away his animals. In response, Job worships God, saying, "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Later, in chapter 2, because Job stubbornly refuses to curse God, Satan gives him a terrible illness to test his faithfulness to the Lord. Job's three friends come to visit him, and the four of them talk about Job's disasters and why they happened.

In the other passage from Job for today's lesson, Job proclaims his faith and trust in God, even through his doubts and despair: "For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that at the last he will stand upon the earth..."

Where You'll Find Today's Story

In the Bible

We recommend the *New Revised Standard Version Bible*.

Job 1; 19:21-27; 42:10-17

In Children's Bibles

If you plan to use a children's Bible for storytelling, write the page numbers of today's story in the space below.

In Our Sunday Lectionary

Today's story is told in church on the following Sunday:

Year A: Holy Saturday

Year B: Holy Saturday (RCL); Proper 22 (RCL)

Year C: Holy Saturday (RCL); Proper 27

At the end of this fable, God comes to Job and assures him of God's power, final wisdom and sovereignty. Then God gives back to Job twice as much as he had before.



Weaving Our Story with the Biblical Story

September 11. Natural disasters. Human evil. Personal and social

tragedy... Where is God in our troubled world and our troubled lives? Are we just getting what we deserve? If not, why do these things happen to us?

Job certainly gets a near-lethal dose of trouble, all undeserved. Now he questions God. Has his faith in God been shaken? Does he still trust God, trust in God's goodness and care for him?

It is clear that we are subject to a physical world—including other human beings—that shows no partiality for “good people.” Our experience as a community shows us that one generation receives “the baggage” of the previous generations. With respect to persons, we as individuals are born with vastly different socioeconomic positions, physical and mental capabilities and other givens of “nature” that have nothing to do with our deserving.

Our reality includes the natural world, and the natural world and the human world interact, often regardless of our intervention. It would be ridiculous to place responsibility or blame on the victims of 9/11, or for such events happening to a person as cancer and other quite natural illnesses, or for a meteor falling on one's house, or for hereditary factors such as spina bifida or impaired intelligence. We don't always get what we deserve; we often get merely the interaction between the human world and the natural world with its unbreakable physical laws. So Job suffers calamities not of his doing, a rich

man made poor, a sheik stripped of his heirs, a godly man stricken with unexplainable adversity.

God does not hold an individual responsible for all of our circumstances but only for the use to which we subsequently put those circumstances. To God, we are not accountable for our social situation or our biological heredity. But we are responsible for our choices. We are free to turn from one way of life to another, and it is what we make of our past in the present, in order to become the future, to which God does hold us accountable. God sees our possibility for conversion and repentance—turning around—and for transformation—fashioning ourselves as a child of God. This is how Job responds to his condition, in that famous passage “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (1:21). Job blessed God! Not understanding what happened to him so suddenly, Job got up and worshiped.

The apostle Paul wrote that we “see through a glass, darkly” (1 Corinthians 13:12, KJV). The external things that happen to us are not signs of God's opinion of us. God's judgment, mercy, forgiveness and grace are not always clear to us, and that is why we are told “do not condemn, and you will not be condemned” (Luke 6:37), and why we are given the parable of the weeds among the wheat (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43).

God gives us the opportunity for transformation of our own past, in the present, into a new future, but only God can really judge our deserving. Yet, God is not about “deserving” or about “responsibility for our actions” but about justice and mercy. As the Holy Week hymn “Ah, Holy Jesus” says, “...think on thy pity and thy love unswerving, not my deserving.”

We already know how we stand with God: God loves us absolutely and unconditionally. We need to be sure—even before any troubles happen to us—how *God* stands with *us*. We need to have a foundation of trust and faith in God's love and

goodness so that even when earthshaking disasters happen, that foundation may be shaken but will never fall.

This was Job's experience. Although his faith may be shaken, his trust and reliance on God never wavers during this entire story. For this trust and faith, God then rewards Job.



The Episcopal Thread

The beginning anthem of Burial Rite II contains the Job 19:25 passage: "For I know that my Redeemer lives..." (see p. 491 in the *Book of Common Prayer*).

This passage is also one of the Old Testament readings in the Liturgy of the Word in Burial Rite II (p. 494). Job has a confidence in God that we echo in our remembrance of the life of a loved one.

Look also at prayers for the sick in the Ministration to the Sick, pages 453-461 (prayers are on pp. 458-461) and the prayers on pages 814-835. What prayers might be said for Job?



Gathering

As the children enter the room, greet them and engage them in a simple activity that

relates to today's lesson. On pages 11-12, you'll find several Gathering Activity handouts to use if you wish.

Allow older intermediate children time to say hello to each other and to renew their bonds of friendship before beginning the lesson. Their relationships with each other in the church are important in building up our church community.

After all the children have arrived and had a few minutes of activity or fellowship time, gather them together and say a simple opening prayer, such as this one:

- Gracious and loving God, we thank you for our church family here today. We thank you that you have made us your people and your family. Now guide us as we work and play together, so that we can hear your stories and know of your love for us. Be with us today, Lord, we pray in Jesus' name. *Amen.*



Telling the Story

Read aloud today's story from a children's Bible, showing the pictures, tell the story in your own words, or read from the version of the story we provide, found on pages 7-10.

Leave out the long talks between Job and his "friends." The focus is on Job as a man of thankfulness to God and trust in God, no matter what has happened to him.

Today's story includes Job 1, which tells about the disasters which Job experiences and his response, "Blessed be the Name of the Lord," and Job 42:10-17, which describes God ultimately blessing Job.

At the end of your storytelling, read Job 19:21-27, which includes the passage, "For I know that my Redeemer lives..."

Alternate or Additional Readings:

- A good contemporary reading which can be a supplement to this story is *Alexander and the No Good, Terrible, Horrible, Very Bad Day* by Judy Viorst (NY: Atheneum Books, 2009). Here children can relate to a time when everything goes wrong all at once. You can tell this story at this time, or wait until the *Sharing* time to read it.

Let the children hear the Bible story without analyzing it for them or discussing it. For now, simply let the story sink into their minds and hearts. Later, while having snacks, you can bring up the story again and invite the children to talk about it and explore its message.



Prayer

Set up a small worship center in your room.

Materials:

small table with a cloth to cover it
2 candles or 1 large Christ candle
matches
Bible
cross
optional: flowers (real, artificial or handmade by the children)

Have the children set up a simple altar with the materials listed above. Invite them to place on the altar any drawings or crafts that they created during Gathering time. Then light the candles.

Read a verse or two of today's scripture from a Bible so that the children connect the story they heard with the Bible, which is the word of God. If working mainly with older children, you might expand the reading to several verses.

Suggestions for the reading:

For younger children: Job 1:21

For older children: Job 1:21 and 19:25-27

Help the children become familiar with our liturgy by doing the reading as it is done in church. Read as follows:

Reader: A reading from the book of Job: (*read the selected passage*).

Reader: The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Invite the children to sit in a circle and join in prayer. Say a brief prayer yourself then invite prayers from each child in the circle:

- Invite prayers of thanks for God's work in our lives during the past week. Where have we seen God in our lives?
- Welcome any prayers of concern or petition for us or for others who may need God's help or comfort. If you know of any children or families in periods of transition (a new baby, a move to a new house, a change in jobs, a new school), pray for God's love and guidance to carry them through these new times.
- Ask if anyone has had a birthday or celebrated a special day during the past week and give thanks for these special times.
- End the prayer time by praying together the Lord's Prayer.

Carefully extinguish the candles.



Sharing

Pass out snacks and say a simple grace, such as this one, simplified from the Prayer Book language:

- Give us grateful hearts, O Lord, for all your mercies, and make us mindful of the needs of others, in Jesus' name. *Amen.*

Or this one:

- Loving God, for the food which is set before us, and for the people who prepared it for us, we give you thanks, in Jesus' name. *Amen.*

Or have a child share a favorite grace that he or she has learned at home or at church camp. If everyone knows it, all can pray it together.

Mealtime often puts us into a good, and talkative, and open mood! Now is a good time to share feelings and reactions to the fable about Job—for it is a fable. Children who are upset about the death of innocents in order to teach Job and the devil a lesson can be reassured that this is not a true story. You may use these questions to guide your discussion:



Take-Home Paper

At the end of this lesson you will find a two-page take-home paper for families called *Threads*. *Threads* provides parents with a briefer version of the information on scripture and Episcopal faith found in the introduction to the lesson, as well as multiple suggestions for household activities and prayer. Parents can use *Threads* to continue each child's classroom experience at home throughout the week. We suggest duplicating and distributing these two pages to children and/or their parents at the end of each lesson.



Memorization

Older intermediate children may learn by heart Job's responses:

"The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21).

or

- "For I know that my Redeemer lives,
and that at the last he will stand upon the earth;
and after my skin has been thus destroyed,
then in my flesh I shall see God,
whom I shall see on my side,
and my eyes shall behold, and not another"
(Job 19:25-27).

Both of these passages can serve as spiritual guideposts to anyone in times of trouble or loss.

Suggestions for ways to help the children with their memorization can be found on page 15 in the Appendix at the back of this document.



Weaving God's Beloved Community

God's beloved community is woven as our own stories connect to the story of God and to the stories of the people around us.

To help the children to weave their stories into the stories of God in the Bible, help them summarize the story they just heard so they can say easily what they have learned today. They will then be able to articulate the story to their families and also to remember these stories more easily, if put in simple words. You may use *Summary of the Story* above if you wish, or tell your own summary, or draw out the children's own wording by asking simple questions such as:

- Who was our story about today?
- What happened to Job?
- What did Job say about God?



Closing Prayer

Before the children leave, say a closing prayer to send them into the church worship service or

back to their homes with God's love and blessing.

The prayer can be very simple, such as this one:

- Almighty and merciful God, we know that you love us and take care of us even when we don't know you are there. Help us to be as thankful of you and aware of your goodness as Job was, even when things went very bad for him. Help us to trust you and not blame you when we are down, to know that you are always there with us even when we suffer and struggle. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen*.

End with a dismissal used in church, such as:

- Let us go forth rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

The children say:

- Thanks be to God!



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

Job 1, Job 19:21-17; 42:10-17

Meet Job

Job is a good man. God knows that, and so does Satan. He always does the right thing, and he always loves God.

Job is also very rich and very happy. He lives on a big farm with his wife and their ten children. It is a happy family. When the children are grown up, they build their own homes nearby. And then they have parties, with food and drinks and games and laughing with each other.

Besides a happy family, Job also has seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred oxen, and five hundred donkeys. And then he has many servants to take care of his household and his property. Job is happy, and he is a good man.

God and Satan Have a Talk about Job

In this story, Satan is not the devil. Satan is one of the beings who live in heaven with God. The heavenly beings meet with God every once in a while, and today Satan has something to say. He has just come in late for the meeting.

God says to Satan, “Where have you just been?”

Satan says to God, “Why I have been going to and fro on the earth, and I have been walking up and down on it.”

God says, “The earth! So you have been among my people! Have you met Job yet? He is such a good man! He loves God and never does wrong.”

Satan looks disgusted. “Well, of course he is!” says Satan. “That’s because you protect him. You put a fence around him and his house and everything he has, so nothing bad can happen to him. With a charmed life like that, of course he loves God and never does wrong! Why should he? But I tell you what—just

stretch out your hand and give him some trouble in his life, and he will curse you to your face!”

God says, “I see your point. I will put him into your hands—only do not hurt him!”

So Satan turns around and goes out. Job is about to have some trouble.

Disaster!

One day, a servant runs into Job’s house with some bad news. “Some men came and stole your oxen and your donkeys!” While he was saying this, another servant comes running up. “Job, there was a fire in the field, and all of your sheep got burned! You have lost every single one of your 7,000 sheep!” And while this servant is speaking, another one comes in. “Sir! Some soldiers from Chaldea attacked your camels and took them away!”

Job stands there, stunned. He has just lost all of his animals, in just one minute. What more can happen?

Just then, another servant comes running in. “Sir! Your sons and daughters were having lunch together, and a big wind came and knocked down the house. The house fell down and killed them all! I am so sorry! All of your children are dead!” Then the servant begins to cry.

Job falls down on his knees, crying. He cries out, “I came into the world with nothing, and I will leave the world with nothing! The Lord gave to me, and the Lord has taken away! Blessed be the name of the Lord!”

So instead of cursing God as Satan thought he would, Job blesses God for what God gave to him in his life.

God and Satan Have Another Talk

It’s time for another meeting with God. The heavenly beings file into God’s room in heaven. Then Satan comes striding in.

God says to Satan, “Where have you just been?”

Satan says to God, “Why I have been going to and fro on the earth, and I have been walking up and down on it.”

God says, “The earth! So you have been among my people! Have you met Job yet? He is such a good man! He loves God and never does wrong. And he is still good, even after what you did to him!”

Satan looks disgusted. “Well, all I did was make him lose his things. I never touched his body. But make his body hurt, and he will curse you to your face!”

God says, “You can try that with him. But do not kill him.”

So Satan turns around and goes out. Right away, he goes to visit Job.

More Troubles to Come

One day, Job wakes up. He is hurting, badly. He is covered with sores, from the top of his head to the soles of his feet, and they hurt!

But Job does not curse God for his troubles. He just thinks, “Well, I have received good things from God, why should I not receive bad things every once in a while? I still love God.”

His wife is angry at God for making such bad things happen to them. Three friends come to visit Job, and they are full of advice for Job. “You must have done something wrong, Job. God must be punishing you. Maybe you should figure out why you are being punished, for you must deserve all this bad fortune!”

Job does pray to God, “Why is this happening to me, God?” But he never doubts that God is a good God who loves him. He says, “Even though everyone hates me now, because my disease makes me ugly, and I no longer am rich, God is still with me!”

Then Job says, “I know that my Redeemer lives, and that at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after I am dead and gone from this earth, I will see God. My eyes will see him!”

Satan Gives Up

Job wonders and wonders why these things are happening to him, but he will not curse God!

Finally Satan says to God, “I give up! Your servant Job is a good man. I give him back to you.”

So one day, God comes to Job in the middle of a whirlwind. As Job sits outside with the wind whirling around him, he hears God telling him how God made the heavens and the earth, how God cares for the animals of the earth, how God brings the rain and grows the grass and rules the oceans.

Job listens as God tells Job all the secrets of creating the world. One might think that hearing God tell God's own story of creation would be the greatest gift that Job might receive. And it may have been. But God also gives back the riches that Job used to have. By the time Job is an old man, he has more children, and more animals than he had before.

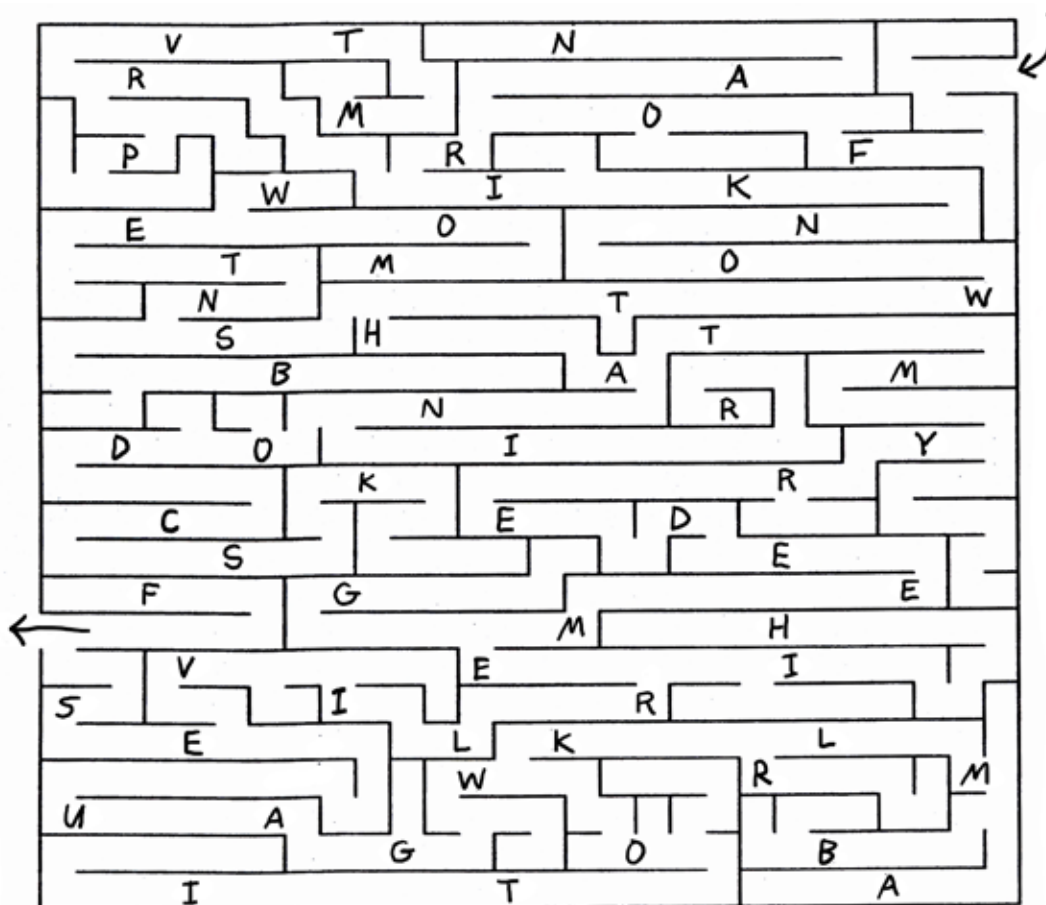


WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

GATHERING ACTIVITY: JOB'S CONFIDENCE IN GOD

Job had lost everything, and yet he still trusted God. Why? Follow the maze and pick up the letters along the way, to tell why. Put the letters at the bottom of the page to find out what Job has to say about God.



“ _____
_____ ” (Job 19:25).



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

GATHERING ACTIVITY: JOB HAS FAITH IN GOD

Use the number clues to find out what Job thinks about God. The numbers underneath the spaces correspond to the letters that you need to write in the spaces.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
1	13	25	19	6	4	14	22	12	8	18	10	23	2	7	16	3	20	17	26	21	11	9	15	5	24

4 7 20 12 18 2 7 9 26 22 1 26 23 5 20 6 19 6 6 23 6 20

10 12 11 6 17



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

BLANKET FOR JOB

Preschool

Children use sponge shapes to decorate flannel fabric with paint, making a warm blanket for comfort.

Materials:

- flannel material
- tempera paints
- sponges cut into cross shapes
- water
- painting shirts or smocks

Preparation:

Cut the sponges into the shape of a cross. Cut flannel material into the size of a small blanket. Prepare your work area for painting.

Directions:

1. Give each child a piece of flannel material.
2. Invite the children to dip a damp sponge into paint, then lightly press it onto the blanket. They may make one cross design on the blanket or many.
3. Let the blanket dry before allowing children to take them home. Unfortunately, if painted, this blanket is not washable.



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

A HUG FROM GOD

Preschool

Children use paper, crayons and heart stickers create a “hug” that’s made to fit them.

Materials:

- 4' length of butcher paper, 1 per child
- scissors
- crayons
- heart stickers

Directions:

1. Lay the strip of butcher paper on the floor. Invite each child to lie down with arms on their paper. Outline the arms. When the child gets up, draw lines to connect the outline of the two arms.
2. In the middle, write *God Loves You*.
3. Then invite them to cut out the arms and decorate with crayons and heart stickers.





WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

PRAYER BOOK

Preschool, Primary

Children create a simple prayer book from sturdy paper, decorating the cover with their hand shapes and coloring a picture of themselves inside.

Materials:

card stock paper, 8½" x 11"
pencil
crayons
glue
scissors
scripture verse (p. 16)
optional: digital camera with printer and printer paper



Preparation:

Cut the paper in half to 8½" x 5½". Then fold each half in half to make a folded page.

Directions:

1. *(Done by an adult leader for each child):* Lay the paper down, fold up (the inside of book is facing down). Place the left hand on the right side, with the thumb touching the edge. Use a pencil or crayon to trace around the hand. Then place the right hand on the left side, with the thumb touching the edge. Again, trace around the hand.
2. Invite the children to color each hand.
3. Cut out the scripture verse and glue it to the inside of the book.
4. Color a picture of yourself on the inside
5. Decorate the inside of the book.

Variation:

Take an picture of the child, print it and glue it to the inside of the book.



**Blessed be name of the
the Lord.**

(Job 1:21)



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

REDEEMER CANDLE

Primary, Elementary

The light of God our Redeemer shines even in our darkest moments. Children make this Redeemer Candle that will glow through the darkest paper that covers the glass.

Materials:

- black construction paper
- small jar, such as a baby food jar or a bit larger, 1 per child
- glue
- small pillar candle or votive with holder that will fit into the jar, 1 per child
- scissors

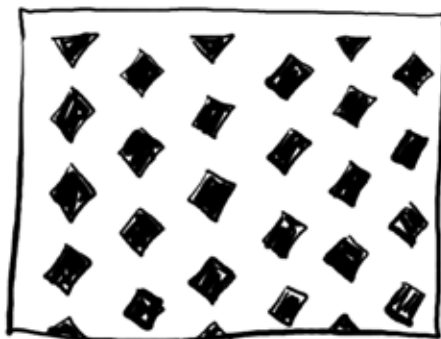
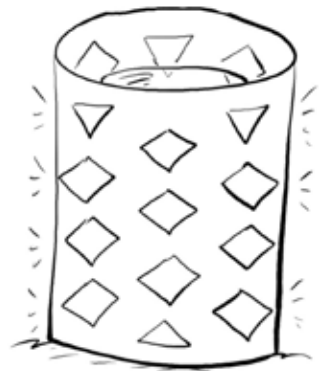
Preparation:

Cut the black construction paper to fit the jar, overlapping the edges a bit to allow for gluing them together.

Directions:

Invite each child to make a candleholder as follows:

1. Fold the black paper once, then once again, then again.
2. Cut tiny triangles into the folds at various places in the paper. Unfold.
3. Glue the paper around the jar.
4. Put a candle in the jar. When the candle is lit, the light will shine through the diamond holes that you have made.





WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

DISASTER!

Primary, Elementary, Intermediate

This game is like Blob, where the Blob here is called *Disaster*. In this game, everyone who is not part of the *Disaster* is like Job, trying to stay alive as long as possible. You need a fairly large open space.

Directions:

1. Pick one child to be *Disaster*.
2. Anyone who is tagged by the *Disaster* must join hands and become part of it. The *Disaster* tries to devour everyone, while everyone else tries to stay alive by avoiding being caught by it.
3. The last child to be uncaught can be the next *Disaster*.



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

JOB GETS AROUND

Primary, Elementary, Intermediate

In this game, children move through a human obstacle course. Like Job we persevere, knowing that God is with us and supporting us on our journey.

Directions:

1. Have children form a loose line, at arm's length from each other. The first person in line is *Job*.
2. Tell children that they can choose to be an "around, left, right, over or under":
 - *Around* means that you walk completely around the player.
 - *Left* means that you walk to the left to pass the player.
 - *Right* means that you walk to right of the player to pass him.
 - *Over* means that you leapfrog over the bent player to get by him.
 - *Under* means that you crawl under his or her legs to get by him.
3. *Job* proceeds down the line, doing as told by each "obstacle."
4. After *Job* passes the next player, that next player then becomes *Job* and follows the first *Job*.
5. When *Job* reaches the end of the line, he then becomes an obstacle. Play continues until all have passed the first *Job*.



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

UPS AND DOWNS

Primary, Elementary, Intermediate

In this game, children think about their likes, dislikes and other feelings and share them by standing on an appropriate spot on the floor. We can be assured that though life has its ups and downs, God is always with us.

Preparation:

Place 10 pieces of tape in a line on the floor, representing 1 through 10. Tapes should be a few feet apart from each other.

Directions:

1. Tell children that “1” means “awful” and “10” means “great,” while “5” means “average.” When you ask the questions (below), have each child decide how he or she feels and then stand on or near the corresponding tape mark. If more than one child lands on the same number, have them squeeze together without pushing each other off.
2. Use the questions below or make up your own or both. The faster you ask questions, the more fun. You can make up your own situations, making them progressively more challenging for older children.
3. After the game, talk about Job's troubles and how they would compare. Then discuss, how is it that Job could then say, “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the Name of the Lord.”?

Questions:

- How much do you like to play sports?
- How was your week?
- How was school last week?
- How was breakfast today?
- What's your bedroom like?
- How do you like bowling?
- How do you like recess at school?
- How does it feel to forgive someone?
- How do you feel today?



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

GETTING IN TOUCH WITH GOD

Elementary

This game is an object lesson. Children bounce and throw balls, trying to reach a target and consider the difference distance and closeness make.

Materials:

light, small bouncy balls, 1 per child
wastebasket

Directions:

Invite the children to play the game as follows:

1. Explain that they are to try to hit a certain part of the ceiling with their ball, by bouncing the ball on the floor and having it hit the ceiling at that spot. (Pick a different spot for each child.) Let them try for a few minutes. You may want to have one child go at a time.
2. Stop the action. Ask:
 - How many of you were able to hit that spot every time? most times? even one time?"
3. Discuss:
 - When we pray, does it sometimes feel like we are like our ball, trying to reach God but only getting in touch every once in a while?
 - How can we get closer to God than our balls can get to that spot on the ceiling?
4. Next, have children try to throw their ball into a wastebasket from 10' away. After five tries for each child, have them throw their ball into the wastebasket from only 5' away.
5. Stop the action. Discuss:
 - Which was easier, throwing the ball into the wastebasket from 10' or from 5' away?
 - Our relationship to God is like that. The closer we get to God, the easier it is for us to be in touch with God and the more we can be "in sync" with what God wants us to do.



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

NEWS FLASH

Elementary, Intermediate

Children organize themselves into a news team to cover the story of Job, the disasters he experienced and his relationship with God.

Materials:

- video camera
- something resembling a microphone
- any props as you wish

Directions:

1. Pick your news team: the *anchor person*, the *news reporter on the street*, the *camera person*. Then pick your story characters: *Job, his family, his servant, his three friends, God and Satan*. If you have a lot of children, some can even be the *house, animals* and other incidental parts of the news.
2. As a group, decide what news stories you will cover. For example, have someone report on:
 - a news conference with God
 - a panel discussion with God and Satan
 - the just-happened disaster that hit Job or a scene of the disaster happening.
3. Videotape the *anchor* reporting on the news, and the *news reporter* on the street telling about the happenings. Have the characters act out the scenes as they are being reported on.

Variation:

Instead of a TV news show, use a photo camera to take pictures. Then write some stories for a class “newspaper,” adding the photos. This is a project that may take more than one session.



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

TILE HANGING

Elementary, Intermediate

Children choose a Bible passage from Job to paint on ceramic tiles and glue them to ribbon to make a wall hanging.

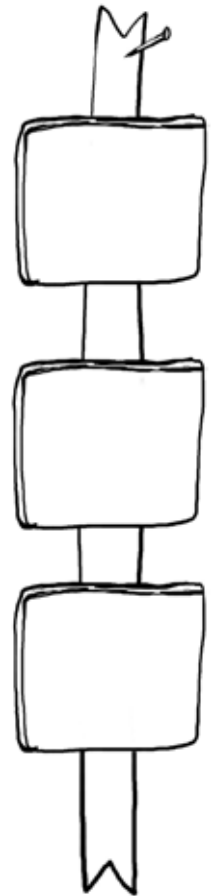
Materials:

small to medium tiles, not glazed
paints
paintbrushes
thick ribbon
very strong glue
scissors

Directions:

Invite each child to make a hanging as follows:

1. Give each person several tiles.
2. Invite children to write on the tiles a quote from Job, either *The Lord gives...* (Job 1:21), *For I know that my Redeemer lives...* (Job 19:25) or another passage. Use paint and a paintbrush to either write one word or phrase per tile, the whole sentence on one tile with illustrations on other tiles, or any way that your imagination takes you.
3. Line up the tiles from top to bottom, then turn over so that the back side is facing you. Space the tiles so that they are around 1" apart.
4. Cut a long length of ribbon that is longer than the length of the tiles as they are lined up. Glue this ribbon to the backs of the tiles, using strong glue. Let dry completely before picking it up.





WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

WORDS OF WISDOM

Intermediate

Children make their own magnetic word kits, using the words of wisdom from Job and adding other words of guidance and love.

Materials:

adhesive magnetic strips (available at craft stores), 1 strip per child
plain white paper
pens, pencils or markers
scissors
small plastic sandwich bags or boxes, 1 per child

Directions:

Invite each child to make a set of word magnets as follows:

1. Cut paper to fit the magnetic strips. Remove the protective backing from the strips and add the paper.
2. Straighten out the strip on the table.
 - Write the words of Job:
For I Know That My Redeemer Lives...
and
The Lord Gives and the Lord Has Taken Away...
 - Also make up other words that are appropriate, and random connecting verbs, nouns, adjectives, etc., such as *Is, Are, Love, God, You, Your, Peace*, etc.
3. Cut up the strips between the words, and put them into the bag or box for storage.



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

WIRE SCULPTURE

Intermediate

Children use wire and gold foil to create literal or symbolic expressions of Job's troubles and of God's presence.

Materials:

thin flexible wire
clay or craft foam base
gold foil
scissors

Directions:

Invite the children to make their sculpture as follows:

1. Use long wires to create your representation of what Job experienced in the disaster that befell him and his family. This could be an accurate picture like a house on fire or an abstract symbolic representation. Use your imagination!
2. Set the scene on clay or foam.
3. Separately, use gold foil to make a small hand—the hand of God. Also make a heart—the compassion and mercy of God.
4. In the center of your sculpture, place the hand of God and the heart of God, reminding us that God is present and active in our lives caring for us even in our troubles.



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

CONVERSATION JUMP START: GOD'S ANSWERING MACHINE

Intermediate

Older children have a conversation about God's answers to prayer.

Materials:

paper
pens or pencils

Discussion:

You might introduce the topic by asking:

- Do we sometimes think that God doesn't hear our prayers?
- What if God had an answering machine? What would it say?

Invite children to get together in small groups or to work individually, writing down what they think an answering machine message by God might say.

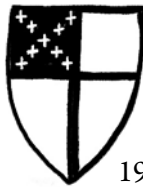
Regather to share participants' "answering machine tapes." Then discuss:

- Does God hear our prayers? *not* hear our prayers?
- When might we get an answer from God, but perhaps misunderstand the answer? (What might God say to us that we mistake for not answering our prayers?)
- What might we do to hear God better?



Intermediate

LESSON 15: THE TROUBLE WITH JOB



We Believe . . .

The beginning anthem of Burial Rite II contains the Job 19:25 passage: “For I know that my Redeemer lives...” (see p. 491 in the *Book of Common Prayer*). This passage is also one of the Old Testament readings in the Liturgy of the Word in Burial Rite II (p. 494). Job has a confidence in God that we echo in our remembrance of the life of a loved one.

Look also at prayers for the sick in the Ministration to the Sick, pages 453-461 (prayers are on pp. 458-461), and the prayers on pages 814-835. What prayers might be said for Job?



Today's Story



Job 1; 19:21-27; 42:10-17

God does not hold an individual responsible for all of our circumstances but only for the use to which we subsequently put those circumstances. It is what we make of our past in the present, in order to become the future, to which God does hold us accountable. God sees our possibility for conversion and repentance—turning around—and for transformation—fashioning ourselves as a child of God. This is how Job responds to his condition, in that famous passage “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (1:21). Job blessed God! Not understanding what happened to him so suddenly, Job got up and worshipped.

We already know how we stand with God: God loves us absolutely and unconditionally. We need to be sure—even before any troubles happen to us—how God stands with *us*. We need to have a foundation of trust and faith in God’s love and goodness so that even when earthshaking disasters happen, that foundation may be shaken but will never fall.

This was Job’s experience. Although his faith may be shaken, his reliance on God never wavers. For this trust and faith, God rewards Job.



Words to Remember

Then Job arose, tore his robe, shaved his head, and fell on the ground and worshipped. He said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return there; the LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away, blessed be the name of the LORD.”

—Job 1:20-21





Sharing

Read the story of Job from a children's Bible, showing the pictures, or from your family Bible.

A great contemporary reading which can supplement the story of Job is *Alexander and the No Good, Terrible, Horrible, Very Bad Day* by Judy Viorst (NY: Atheneum Books, 2009). Here family members can relate to a time when everything goes wrong all at once. Let family members who are comfortable readers take turns reading portions of the story to each other.

You could also discuss:

- When bad things happen to people and bad events pile up, how do we respond?
- As part of God's beloved community, how can we respond best to disasters and bad things happening to people?



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children



This Week at Home

- **For teens and adults up for a challenge, watch Terrence Malick's 2012 film *Tree of Life* (Fox Searchlight),** a powerful, imaginative and at times puzzling story of a 1950s family enduring loss. It opens with a quote from the book of Job and at one level is a retelling of Job's story. It is nonlinear and impressionistic—not your typical movie—and requires both openness and thoughtfulness as you watch it, but yields a lot worth talking about, including a final scene of reconciliation, restoration and “heaven.” You'll find a study guide here: <https://inaspaciousplace.wordpress.com/2011/07/10/questions-for-terrence-malicks-the-tree-of-life/>.
- **Talk about how to help in times of crisis.** Most of the book of Job follows the narrative of Job's abysmally ineffective friends as they offer advice and “comfort.” Select a few of these passages to read (starting with Job's complaint in 3:1-26, then found in chapters 4–27). What are Job's friends doing that isn't helpful? (*placing blame, calling for repentance, critiquing, etc.*) What could they have done instead? (*been present, acknowledged the suffering*) As a family, talk about the best ways to help others, stressing the importance of simply “being with” and not trying to fix things or talk people out of their sorrow, anger or grief.
- **Draw a picture of your favorite or most treasured possession(s).** Then think about them as gifts or loans from God. As Job said, “The Lord has given and the Lord has taken away.” Discuss with your family, do you feel differently about your treasured possessions if you can see them as things that really belongs to God and are on loan to you? Can you feel less possessive? And then can you bless, or thank God for being allowed to enjoy it, even if it is later taken away or lost?
- **Read the prayer “For a Person in Trouble or Bereavement” on page 831 of the *Book of Common Prayer*.** This prayer uses old-fashioned language. Read it aloud, and then, using paper and pencil, rewrite it so that it is easily understandable to all. For example, instead of “nourish his soul with patience,” you might write “give him patience.” Save your prayer to use for anyone you know who is “in trouble or bereavement.”



Household Prayer

Almighty and merciful God, you love us and take care of us even when we don't know you are there. Help us to trust you and not blame you when we are down, to know that you are with us even when we struggle. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen*

