

# God Remains Faithful

**Objective:** Students will be able to 1) summarize the Exodus event and the struggles of the Israelites as they tried to keep the Law of the Lord and 2) state that God promises to send a New Covenant for His people.

## **For the Catechist**

Living according to God's Law was difficult for the Israelites even though they wanted to show God how much they loved Him and were grateful for everything He had done for them. We have much in common with the Israelites in this respect. We also want to love and thank God by living the way He asks, but we find it very difficult. We, just like the Israelites, are easily distracted by other activities and events.

But God always remains faithful to His people. God did even more for His people because they were unable to be faithful to the covenant. He promised them a New Covenant. We believe God sent Jesus Christ as the New Covenant to save us from eternal death and grant us eternal life.

**Jesse Tree.** The Jesse tree takes its name from Jesse, the father of King David (Mt 1:6), ancestor of Christ. Yet the Jesse tree is more than a genealogical family tree. It is rather a spiritual genealogy, like our Church's Sunday of the Ancestors. It traces the spiritual antecedents of Christ, that is the great figures of the Old Testament, who prepared consciously or not for His coming.

## **Background Reading**

*(Direct quotations from the sources noted)*

"Instead of abandoning Israel, however, God chose to restructure the covenant with His people. Through the prophets, He promised to supply what His people lacked: God would make them capable of being faithful to Him. In many respects, the prophets' promises of a new covenant coincide with their announcement of a new creation. What promises to bestow on the people so as to enable them to uphold a responsible relationship with Him is nothing less than His own Spirit" (OTB 76).

## **Lesson Plan Overview**

**Opening:** "Bless The Lord"

**Introduction:** Discussion of distractions

**Need:** bell, clock that ticks loudly, newspaper, hammer

**Read Text Aloud:** Have the students volunteer to read the text aloud or have the students read sections silently.

### **Activity Tracks:**

Choose a basic, group, or craft activity (detailed on the pages that follow) to reinforce the lesson.

- *Basic:* The Law of the Lord
- *Group:* We Need to Follow the Rules
- *Craft:* Jesse Tree Project  
Part 1

**Closing:** Psalm 105/106:1-5

## **Icon Packets:**

*Come Bless the Lord:*  
St. Elias, the Prophet

## **Teaching Pics**

### **Prophets: We Need Them Always**

"The role of the prophets in the Old Testament deserves special attention. A large portion of the Old Testament is the record of the sayings of the prophets. More than any other group, they were responsible for forming the people's awareness of God's plan for the human race and of how one should act to fulfill it. The prophets were chosen by God to speak in His name and given special gifts and authority to fulfill this mission. This is why the prophets' teaching often begin with the words, 'Thus says the Lord.'"

"The prophets were the people's 'conscience.' They continually preached of God's faithfulness to His covenants and exhorted the people to be faithful. Often the prophet's moral teachings would upset the authorities who were less interested in the Law of God than in their own positions.... The prophet's persistence in this role often led to persecution and death, down to the time of John the Baptist who was beheaded for decrying the immorality of King Herod. The Lord Jesus Himself was crucified in part for challenging the behavior of the religious leaders.

"Prophets are needed for all times. They stirred up the awareness of Israel to realize that God's actions were not limited to earlier times but applied to the present and the future as well....

"The duty of prophets today is to proclaim that God is still acting and that He will come again in the future" (*LLI* 39-41).

### **The Need for a King**

"Once in the promised land, the people of Israel considered themselves to be under the immediate sovereignty of their God. They formed a loose confederacy of tribes led politically by various 'judges,' and led religiously by prophets and priests. The most well-known judge is Samson whose story is told in Judges 13-16. Despite the periodic emergence of a judge, the ultimate ruler of the chosen people could be only the Lord Himself. Eventually, however, the people felt themselves to be at a disadvantage with respect to the neighboring kingdoms. They demanded, 'There must be a king over us. We too must be like other nations, with a king to rule us and lead us in warfare and fight our battles' (1 Kgs/1Sam 8:20 NAB).

"As a result of these demands, the prophet Samuel chose Saul and anointed him as king (1 Kgs/1 Sam 10:1). Saul would eventually prove to be an unworthy king, and the reign would be given to David. He established the basic kingdom and even set up a fair sized empire over neighboring regions. David was a very complicated character, who did much wrong; still he was faithful to God's trust until the end of his life. The Scriptures would be able to call him, 'the anointed of the God of Jacob, the sweet psalmist of Israel' (2 Kgs/2Sam 23:1 RSV). Later kings were often not faithful, but God remained faithful to the promises He had made to David and to His people.

"The choosing of a king is portrayed in the Old Testament as a failure of confidence in the leadership of the invisible God, but the Lord transformed this new situation into the beginning of new blessings. Part of the mystery of God's love for us is that He continually brings good from what is bad. Final salvation for all the world came through the life and death of His only Son. The kingship of Israel was made the office of Messianic hope. It was promised to David through the prophet Nathan that 'your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall stand firm forever' (2 Kgs/2 Sam 7:16 NAB). This and similar passages became the basis for the hope of the people that one day a Messiah would come, sent by God, to lead them to salvation" (*LLI* 37-38).

# *The Lesson Plan*

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## **Opening**

*Today we will pray the words we sing during the Divine Liturgy. [Give out the prayer from last week.] Let's pray "Bless the Lord." This is the same opening prayer as last week. Did you hear it in church since then?*

## **Introduction**

*Let's turn to our New Testaments. This morning we are going to read Luke 10:25-28. Let's begin with a moment of silence. Why do we have a moment of silence before we begin reading the Scriptures? (We want to think only about God.) Okay, will someone volunteer to read while the rest of us follow in our New Testament? [While the student is reading, walk to the place where you have the bell, the clock, and the newspaper. Make noise as you rearrange them. When the student is done reading, join the group and ask the following:] Did we hear this message before? (Yes) When? (Last week) Were any of you bothered by what I was doing while you were reading? Why? [Let the children share.] You are right—it is hard to pay attention when someone is doing something else. Did you want to follow, but you just gave up? Why? Now let's read the Greatest Commandment aloud with all of us paying attention. Before we start reading aloud, let's sit quietly for a few seconds and think about God helping us learn to listen to His Words always. Read verse 27.*

*Let's turn to our lesson to learn how God helps the Israelites.*

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## God Remains Faithful



When the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, they felt abandoned, persecuted, and miserable. But God cared for them. He heard their plea for help and called Moses to lead them out of Egypt.

At Mount Sinai God made a covenant with the Israelites, and He asked that they obey His Law as a sign of their love for Him. "So Moses went and summoned the elders of the people. When he set before them all that the Lord had ordered him to tell them, the people all answered together, 'Everything the Lord has said, we will do.' Then Moses brought back to the Lord the response of the people" (Exodus 19:7-8).

God's people very quickly found it hard to keep their promise. They often failed to keep their part of the covenant. They worshipped false gods; they doubted God's promises; and they fought among themselves.

God With Us Grade 4

Unit 2: Blessed Are You, O Lord, Thank Us Your Commandments

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### Reading of Text

As the children read aloud, help them interact with the text using the comments or questions below which are keyed to the text phrases (in bold type).

**Then Moses brought back to the Lord the response of the people" (Exodus 19:7-8).**

*What was the response? ("Everything the Lord has said, we will do.") Why did they promise to follow God's Law? (To show God how grateful they were for everything He had done for them.)*

**... they fought among themselves.**

*What did the people start to do? (Worship false gods, doubt God's promises and fight among themselves.) Are you surprised? [Let the children share.] Why do you think it was so hard for them to follow God's Law? (Some possibilities: Their neighbors were not following God's Law; they were tired of being good; they forgot why they were following the Law.) Does something like this happen to us? Do we forget to pray? Do we find it too hard to live the way God wants? [Let the children share.]*

The following story from the Old Testament Book of Exodus tells about one way the Israelites broke their covenant with God. This is the story about what happened while they were waiting for Moses to come down from the mountain where he was talking to God.



When the people became angry at Moses' delay in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said to him, "Come make us a god who will be our leader; as for the man Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has happened to him." Aaron replied, "Have your wives and sons and daughters take off the golden earrings they are wearing, and bring them to me." So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron, who accepted their offering, and fashioning the gold with a graving tool, made a molten calf. Then they cried out, "This is your god, O Israel, who brought you out of the land of Egypt." On seeing this, Aaron built an altar before the calf and proclaimed, "Tomorrow is a feast of the Lord." Early the next day the people offered holocausts and brought peace offerings. Then they sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to revel. (Exodus 32:1-6)

These people were worshipping the golden calf instead of God as they had promised. They were being unfaithful to God Who had done so much for them. They were forgetting about God, the covenant, and the commandments. They thought it was too difficult to keep their promise to live by God's Law.

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**They thought it was too difficult to keep their promise to live by God's Law.**

*What are all the things God did for the Israelites? (He called them to be His people; He made a covenant with them; He gave them the Ten Commandments.) What did God ask in return? (That they follow His Law)*

**The prophets reminded the people to trust God and His promises and to be faithful to God as they promised.**

*What is a prophet? (People who receive messages from God and deliver these message to the people.) What happened to some of the prophets? (They were killed.)*

God continued to be faithful to His covenant. He did not give up on the Israelites. Each time they turned away from Him, God called them back to Himself.

For hundreds of years, the Israelites tried to live as God's people. Yet, they did not remain the holy nation that God had called them to be. Even though the Israelites wanted to follow God, they found it hard trying to live the way God wanted. They fought with each other so much that they divided their own nation in a civil war.

God still remained faithful to His covenant. God wanted to help His people stay faithful to Him. He chose certain individuals to remind the Israelites of their promise to keep the covenant. These people are called prophets. Prophets are people who receive messages from God and deliver these messages to the people. The prophets reminded the people to trust God and His promises and to be faithful to God as they had promised.

The prophets were calling the people back to God, but most of the Israelites did not listen. They did not want to hear what the prophets told them. They ignored what the prophets said and sometimes they even killed them.

Because the Israelites were unable to be faithful to God's covenant, God did even more to help them. He promised them a New Covenant. God wanted His people to know that He remains faithful always. He wanted to help them remain faithful to Him.



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**... we are able to hear the truth and follow God's Law.**

*What did the prophet Jeremiah tell the Israelites? (God will send them a New Covenant, and God will forgive them of all their sins.) Who do we believe is the New Covenant? (Jesus Christ) Why? (Through Christ, we are forgiven our sins and granted eternal life.) What does the Holy Spirit help us do? (Follow God's Law)*

**Words to Remember:** [Read the words together, and use them to introduce, summarize, and/or review the lesson.]

The prophet Jeremiah told the Israelites about the New Covenant.



The days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers the day I took them by the hand to lead them forth from the land of Egypt, for they broke my covenant and I had to show myself their master, says the LORD. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after these days, says the LORD. I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer will they have need to teach their friends and kinsmen how to know the LORD. All, from the least to the greatest, shall know me, says the LORD, for I will forgive their evildoing and remember their sin no more.

(Jeremiah 31:31-34)

Through Jeremiah, God promised to make a New Covenant with His people. As Christians, we believe that God kept this promise by sending His Son to be our Savior. Jesus is God's New Covenant. He is the One Who came to forgive our evildoing and give us eternal life. He is the One Who sent His Holy Spirit to dwell in us. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we are able to hear the truth and follow God's Law.

**Words to Remember:**

**Holocaust:** An offering which is burned up to show that it is completely given to God.

**Prophets:** People who received messages from God and delivered these messages to the people.

**Jeremiah:** A prophet who told the Israelites about the New Covenant.

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## Activity Tracks

### Basic: The Law of the Lord

[This worksheet is in the student text.]

*Today we will need our New Testament to complete the crossword puzzle. Before we begin our activity, let's be silent for a moment and think about God talking to us. That is what happens every time we read Scripture. [Remain silent for a moment.]*

### The Law of the Lord

Complete the acoustic about the Law of the Lord by looking up the Bible verses in your New Testament and finding the missing words.

I. God told Moses to remove his sandals because the ground was **HOLY**.  
 A. God spoke to Moses on Mount **SINAI**.  
 W. The Israelites heard from God and did not **WORSHIP**.

D. An agreement between God and man is called a **COVENANT**.  
 F. The Israelites broke the covenant when they worshipped a golden **CALF**.

**DESERT**  
**LIGHT**  
**ISRAELITES**

**LOVE**  
**GOD**  
**NEIGHBOR**  
**KINGDOM**

I. God did wonderful deeds for His people and led them through the Acts 2:26.  
 W. God is 1 John 1:5.  
 E. God's chosen people were called Acts 2:21.

L. Acts 11:15 is the fulfillment of the Law.  
 O. You shall love the Lord your God 10:27.  
 R. You shall love your neighbor 12:22 as yourself.  
 D. Then you will live in God's love 1:12.

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**Group:** We Need to Follow the Rules

*Materials:* Scenarios worksheet, notecards

*Our lesson told us how hard it was for the Israelites to follow rules. Sometimes it is hard for us to follow rules also. Today I have some cards that identify some things we are expected to do. I am going to ask you to pick a card and think about what would happen if we did not do what the card says. When it is your turn, read your card and then tell us why it is good we do the things mentioned on the card. Explain what would happen if we did not.*

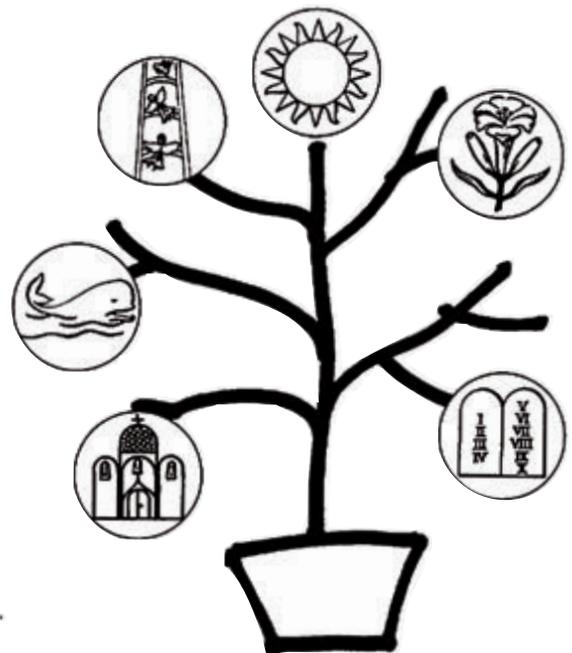
[Another possibility is to have the students act out a scene that shows what happens.]

**Craft:** Jesse Tree Project

**Part 1**

*Materials:* Jesse Tree worksheets, scissors, markers, envelopes [one per student if each students is doing a separate one]

[Have sample ready to show children.] *Today we are going to begin making our Jesse Tree. The Jesse tree takes its name from Jesse, the father of King David (Mt 1:6), an ancestor of Christ. This tree is more than a family tree. It identifies the great figures of the Old Testament who prepared consciously or not for Jesus Christ's coming. We remember these forefathers on the two Sundays before the Feast of the Nativity. Because we have many symbols that will help us remember these people, we will work on this project for the next three weeks. Let's begin by coloring the symbols and cutting them out. Place the ones you complete in an envelope [with your name]. [Explanation of each symbol is found on p.245]*



**Closing:**

[Psalm 105/106 can be found at the end of this lesson in this Teacher Manual. Use this page to add to their booklets if you are completing that activity.]

*Today we are praying only parts of a much longer psalm. The entire psalm identifies how the Israelites disobeyed God after He saved them and identifies how God is always faithful to His people. At the end of the psalm, we praise God for being faithful even though we are so unfaithful. Let's be silent for a few moments to help us get ready to pray.*

**Psalm 105/106**

Give thanks to the Lord, who is good,  
whose love endures forever....  
We have sinned like our ancestors;  
we have done wrong and are guilty....  
Our ancestors in Egypt  
did not attend to your wonders.  
They did not remember your great love;  
they defied the Most High at the Red Sea.  
Yet he saved them for his name's sake  
to make his power known.  
He roared at the Red Sea and it dried up.  
He led them through the deep as through a desert  
Next they despised the beautiful land;  
they did not believe the promise.  
In their tents they complained  
they did not obey the Lord  
Still God had regard for their affliction  
When he heard their wailing.  
For their sake he remembered his covenant  
and relented in his abundant love ....  
Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,  
from everlasting to everlasting!  
Let all the people say, Amen!  
Hallelujah!

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*Holocaust*

*Prophets*

*Jeremiah*

People who received messages from God and delivered these messages to the people.

An offering which is burned up to show that it is completely given to God.

A prophet who told the Israelites about the New Covenant.

Duplicate onto heavier paper or paste these statements onto note cards to make cards to be used for the activity.

We drive slower (about 35 mph)  
in towns, but on the superhighways we  
drive 65 mph.

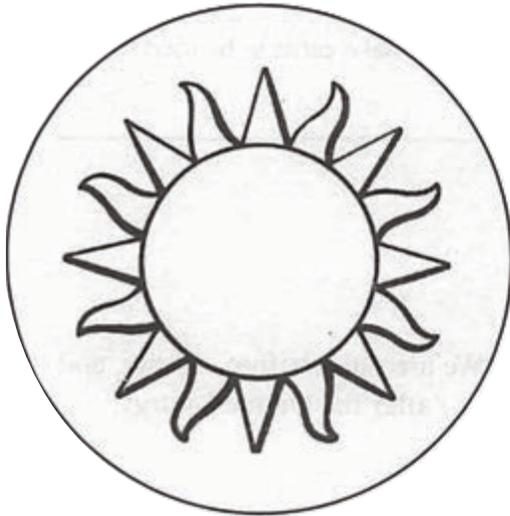
We are quiet before, during, and  
after the Divine Liturgy.

We wear seat belts when  
we are in the car.

We attend our religious  
instruction classes every week.

We park our cars only where they are  
allowed to be parked.

We attend Divine Liturgy every Sunday.



Sun



Altar



Ark



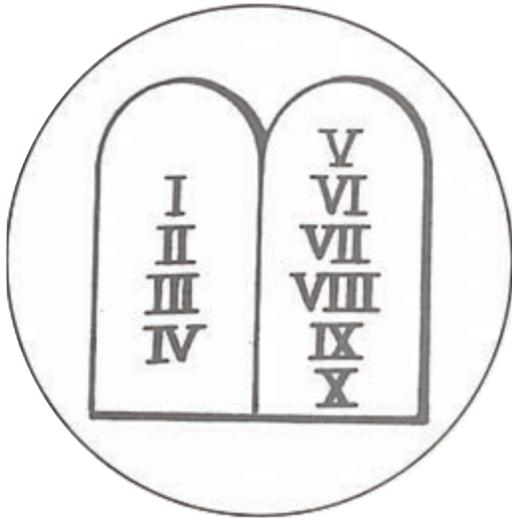
Pillar of Fire



Burning Bush



Jacob's Ladder



Tablets of the Law



Flower



Fish



Bethlehem (Church)



Lock



Tools