Adapted from Leading Little Ones to God by Marian M. Schoolland (Eerdmans Publishing Co.) For more downloadable teachings see: www.altogetherlovely.org (FREE TEACHINGS)

Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®.

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Do you ever make promises?

And do you always keep your promises?

- Maybe you promised someone you would be good.
- But it's so hard to be good all the time.
- If you are "not good", you are not keeping your promise, are you?
- People "break" their promises very often.
- Sometimes they forget. Sometimes they make promises they just "cannot" keep.

 God "NEVER" breaks a promise. God never makes promises He cannot keep.

 And He never "forgets". God's promises are "Sure & True).

God is "FAITHFUL".

- The Bible tells us that God promised the Israelites, that He would bring them to a new land.
- It was a beautiful land, with houses and farms, beautiful gardens and parks, and all kinds of good things to eat.
- But the land was far away. It was far across a big, dry desert.

 Besides that, there were enemies – people who did not "want" the Israelites to have that land.

They sent soldiers to fight against the Israelites.

It looked as if God could not keep His promise!

But God took care of His people in the desert.

 He gave them plenty to eat, He showed them the way, and He helped them when they had to fight.

- At last they were "almost" there. They could "see" the land, across the River Jordan.
- But the river was "wide" and "deep". And there was no bridge.
- Not everybody could swim little babies, little lambs, and many people cannot swim.

• Oh, no! It looked as if they would "never" get there after all.

 There was no way to make a boat for all the people.

 Then Joshua, their leader, said to the people,
 "Get ready to go across the river. God will keep His promise in a wonderful way."

In the morning they were ready.

Joshua told the priests to go first.

 They carried the Ark. The Ark was a beautiful box all covered with gold.

was a sign of God's presence with His people.

- The priests started out. Soon they were down to the water.
- They stepped "into" the water, and all at once the river "stopped".
- The way ran "away" on one side of the priests.
- On the "other side", far up the river, it piled up high.

 God did not let it run down to where the priests stood.

 And soon the ground under the feet of the priests was dry.

 There was a dry "path" right where the river had been.

The priests walked on down the path.

 Halfway across the river, the priests stood still and let all the people walk past them.

• When the people were on the other side, the priests went too, last of all.

So God took "all" His people across the river.

And then what happened?

 The people turned to look, and they saw the water come tumbling down.

The river was wide and deep again.

God "had" kept His promise!

 He had brought them to the new land, with its farms and parks and gardens.

 He took that land away from the wicked people who lived there, to give it to the people who loved Him.

 So the LORD gave Israel all the land he had sworn to give their forefathers, and they took possession of it and settled there. The LORD gave them rest on every side, just as he had sworn to their forefathers. Not one of their enemies withstood them; the LORD handed all their enemies over to them. Not one of all the LORD's good promises to the house of Israel failed; every one was fulfilled. (Joshua 21:43-45)

LET'S PRAY:

- Father, it is good to know that You are Faithful and Almighty, always keeping Your promises.
- And Your promises to us are so wonderful.
- You kept all Your promises to the Israelites.
- And You will keep all Your promises to us, Your children.

- Lord, teach us to "wait" for Your promises.
- Lord, teach us to "trust You" for Your promises.
- Lord, YOU are faithful.
- Lord, You <u>ARE</u> faithful.
- Lord, You are <u>FAITHFUL</u>.
- In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT

- a) Was it hard for God to keep His promises to His people?
- b) What promises did God keep in the Bible? Can you think of any examples?
- c) What are some of His promises to us?
- d) What does it mean to be "faithful"?

MEMORY VERSE:

If we are faithless,
he will remain faithful,
for he cannot disown himself.
(2 Timothy 2:13)

SUGGESTED READING:

- So the LORD gave Israel all the land he had sworn to give their forefathers, and they took possession of it and settled there.
- The LORD gave them rest on every side, just as he had sworn to their forefathers. Not one of their enemies withstood them; the LORD handed all their enemies over to them.
- Not one of all the LORD's good promises to the house of Israel failed; every one was fulfilled. (Josh. 21:43-45)

- Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands. (Deuteronomy 7:9)
- He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he. (Deut.32:4)

- To the faithful you show yourself faithful, to the blameless you show yourself blameless, (Psalm 18:25)
- For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does. (Psalm 33:4)
- Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations.
 The LORD is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made. (Psalm 145:13)

- the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them-- the Lord, who remains faithful forever. (Psalm 146:6)
- for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones. (Proverbs 2:8)
- God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful. (1 Cor.1:9)

- But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. (2 Thessalonians 3:3)
- 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)

 This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus. (Rev.14:12)

• LET'S PRAY: