

THIS WE KNOW

PART ONE:
THE PROMISES

CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Pre-written papers for ice breaker
- Copies of the downloadable “622 service” and “Prayers & Thanksgivings” booklets
- Copies of the lesson handout
- Copy of the leader's notes
- A white board, easel pad, or chalk board with markers/chalk
- OPTIONAL: Bibles (ESV or similar recommended)
- OPTIONAL: Have notebooks on hand for teens to take home and use as prayer journals if they wish

ICE BREAKER: HANGMAN (THE PROMISE VERSION)

This is the version of hangman you know but themed around verses related to promise-making. Encourage your teens to give their stick figure clothing and a position that they think of as consistent with making a vow – they can have artistic license to interpret that in their own way.

Ahead of time, write out some of the following scriptural phrases on scraps of paper. The teens take turns selecting one of the scraps and drawing out lines on a board or easel pad that correspond to the letters of the words in the phrase they have selected. The other teens take turns guessing letters and trying to guess what the full phrase is. Each time they guess a letter which is not there, part of the stick figure gets drawn until they have no more guesses left.

- Choose this day whom you will serve (Joshua 24:15)
- Commit your way to the Lord (Psalm 37:5)
- I perform my vows day after day (Psalm 61:8)
- No one can serve two masters (Matthew 6:24)
- Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts (Colossians 3:15)
- If this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail (Acts 5:38)
- They entered into a covenant to seek the Lord (2 Chronicles 15:12)
- Choose life, that you and your offspring may live (Deuteronomy 30:19)
- If we are faithless, he remains faithful (2 Timothy 2:13)
- You have need of endurance (Hebrews 10:36)

FOR LARGE GROUPS, PLAY IN TEAMS. FOR SMALL GROUPS PLAY AS INDIVIDUALS AND TAKE MULTIPLE TURNS. YOU MAY WANT TO ASSIGN BONUS POINTS IF THE TEENS CAN GUESS WHAT PART OF SCRIPTURE THE PHRASE COMES FROM.

622: BEGINNING WITH PRAYER

Begin the formal part of the lesson by saying together the first part of the order of service for young people in the booklet, up to the middle of page 4.

AT THIS POINT IN THE LESSON, ASK IF THE TEENS SUCCEEDED IN DOING LAST WEEK'S CHALLENGE, HOW IT WENT, AND WHETHER THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO SHARE.

DISCUSSION: WHO DECIDES?

As an introduction to the lesson ask the teens to discuss the following questions.

DEPENDING ON THE COMFORT LEVEL FOR SHARING IN YOUR GROUP, IT MAY BE EASIER TO HAVE THEM VOLUNTEER ANSWERS WITH ALL RESPONSES WRITTEN TOGETHER ON A BOARD.

- What are some things that your parents decide for you when you are born?
- What are some things that you wouldn't want to change? That you might want to change?
- What are some decisions that you must make for yourself?

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A few things worth pointing out (if they don't otherwise arise during the discussion):

- *When we are born, our parents name us and make all sort of decisions for us. They choose our clothing, our food, where we live, how we spend our time, and they choose what values and beliefs to share with us. They may baptize us into the Christian family until such time as we can decide for ourselves whether we wish to confirm that decision with our own.*
- *Hopefully we feel a sense of gratitude for what our parents have given to us, even if they have not always chosen perfectly. We may like the name they chose and would never consider changing it. Many of us, however, when we are old enough to choose our own clothing would much rather make that decision for ourselves. See what your teens come up with.*
- *Some decisions that we must take responsibility for as we grow into adulthood include choosing a post-secondary school, a career, deciding whether we will marry (and whom we will marry), etc. But we must also decide for ourselves what we believe, to whom we will look for guidance, and how we will live.*

THE LESSON: 1 TIMOTHY 6

The first part of the lesson (below) can be read aloud. Then the teens are asked to read the Bible text (either silently to themselves or aloud together), followed by some additional questions for discussion.

(IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP RESPOND TO QUESTIONS THAT MAY BE RAISED DURING THIS UNIT, WE RECOMMEND "DISCOVERING THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER: A HANDS-ON APPROACH, VOLUME 2: OUR LIFE IN THE CHURCH" BY SUE CARELESS.)

*"...Renounce the devil and all his works, believe in Christ, and obediently keep God's commandments".
(Baptism, BCP p. 525)*

*"Do you here, in the presence of God and of this Congregation, renounce the devil and all his works,
the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh? (I do.)
Do you believe the Christian Faith as it is set forth in the Apostles' Creed? (I do.)
Will you endeavour to keep God's holy will and commandments,
and to walk in the same all the days of your life? (I will, God being my helper.)"
(Confirmation, BCP p. 559)*

These are the three promises made in the Prayer Book liturgy of baptism, and then affirmed in the liturgy of confirmation. Do they seem really serious? They should. Baptism is a joyful celebration of new life, but it is also a solemn occasion on which we make public our decision to turn away from sin, we confess our belief in Jesus Christ, and we resolve to live in a new way. So when we choose to undertake either baptism or confirmation, we must solemnly consider the promises that we are making.

Should our life now follow a different course because we have made these promises? Absolutely. But that doesn't mean we will always get it right or stay on track. That's why, when we commit to walking in obedience throughout life (the third promise), our vow does not assume that this can be accomplished, except with God's grace. Instead of simply saying, "I will", we echo the humble dependence of the psalmist who wrote, "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth" (Psalm 124:8).

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St. Paul had the awesome responsibility of mentoring younger believers, including the young Church leader, Timothy. The letters of Paul included in the New Testament scriptures give us a window into these relationships, but also serve to instruct and encourage us in our faith to this day. Take a look at the concluding words of Paul's first letter to Timothy.

Refer to 1 Timothy 6:3-21.

(THE TEXT IS PROVIDED ON THE BACK OF THE HANDOUTS AND IN THESE LEADERS' NOTES SO THAT EVERYONE CAN MARK IT UP AND MAKE NOTES ON IT IF DESIRED. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN READ OUT OF A BIBLE).

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Read through the text. Then ask the teens to respond to what they've just read. Here are some questions to help guide the discussion.

- What did St. Paul see as a possible impediment to Timothy's faith and leadership?
- What sort of attitude did St. Paul want wealthy Christians to have?
- What did St. Paul want Timothy to focus on pursuing?
- From this passage, what do you think has the greatest relevance for us today?

A few notes and reflections for reference:

- *St. Paul was concerned about false teachers who were not teaching the true Gospel. He described them as conceited and motivated by greed, and having a harmful impact on the people who came under their teaching (v3-6, 20). Timothy needed to be sure he did not follow their lead (v11). St. Paul was also concerned to point Timothy towards a proper attitude towards wealth (v6-10, 17-19), because a wrong attitude towards wealth could bring about "all kinds of evils" (v10).*
- *The mature Christian recognizes that wealth is temporal (v7), and that the desire for wealth can be a temptation that leads to ruin (v8-9), sometimes leading people away from the faith (v10). Christians who have been blessed with wealth are exhorted to be humble, to place their trust in God and be grateful to him, and to be generous with what they've been given (v17-19).*
- *St. Paul was concerned with Timothy's own life as well as his leadership. He told Timothy to "pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness" (v11), and to live in the light of the "good confession" that he made (v12), keeping the commandment with a view to the future time when Jesus returns (v14). After many words on how not to lead, Timothy was exhorted to "guard the deposit" – the Gospel that he had received and was now passing on (v20).*
- *All of the concerns expressed by St. Paul are perennial. False teaching and false teachers have been present throughout the history of the Church and believers must always guard against them. The temptation to greed and a wrong attitude towards wealth is also something that all of us need to be reminded of so that we remain focused on God and on living according to the Gospel that we received and the "good confession" that we made.*

DURING EACH LESSON, IF THE TEENS RAISE THEOLOGICAL OR BIBLICAL QUESTIONS THAT YOU DON'T FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT ANSWERING, SAY SO, BUT LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU'LL FIND THE ANSWER AND RESPOND AT THE NEXT MEETING.

PREVIEW: AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Take a brief moment to look at the at-home challenge together.

THE WEEKLY "AT-HOME CHALLENGE" IS TYPICALLY A SIMPLE ASSIGNMENT TO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME IN PRIVATE PRAYER. ENCOURAGE THE TEENS TO GET NOTEBOOKS THAT CAN BE USED AS PRAYER JOURNALS. ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO SHOW THEIR JOURNAL OR THEIR PRIVATE PRAYERS TO ANYONE.

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE "FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES", WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON'T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

During this unit, we're going to take some of the prayers that come from the liturgies of Baptism and Confirmation and pray them for one another as a reminder and a renewal of commissioning.

Spend some time reflecting on and praying with the words of these prayers:

O Lord of hosts, before the might of whose presence the armies of evil are put to flight, deliver thy servants from the power of Satan. Amen.

Cast out of their hearts every evil imagination and every thing which exalts itself against the knowledge of thee; and bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Amen.

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Grant that they may have power and strength to have victory, and to triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh. Amen.

Grant that they may also be endued with heavenly virtues, and everlastingly rewarded, through thy mercy, O blessed Lord God, who dost live, and govern all things, world without end. Amen.

(FROM THE MINISTRATION OF HOLY BAPTISM TO SUCH AS ARE OF RIPER YEARS, BCP PAGE 536)

CLOSING PRAYERS (622 AGAIN)

Close with any prayers that might be appropriate in the context of the discussion of the day.

Before closing, ask the teens to listen quietly while you pray the words of the At-Home Challenge prayers over them.

AT THE END OF EACH LESSON, IF YOU FIND THAT YOU STILL HAVE LOTS OF TIME REMAINING, YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO TAKE SOME TIME TO EXPLORE THE “PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS” SECTION IN THE BCP (PAGES 39-62, OR YOU CAN USE THE DOWNLOADABLE BOOKLET). AS YOUR GROUP MEMBERS COME ACROSS PRAYERS THAT THEY FIND RELEVANT, PAUSE AND PRAY THEM TOGETHER.

Then finish with the “Grace”, the final prayer in the booklet.

1 TIMOTHY 6: THE “GOOD CONFESSION”

³If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, ⁴he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, ⁵and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain. ⁶Now there is great gain in godliness with contentment, ⁷for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. ⁸But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. ⁹But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

¹¹But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. ¹²Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. ¹³I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, ¹⁴to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honour and eternal dominion. Amen.

¹⁷As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. ¹⁸They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, ¹⁹thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

²⁰O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called “knowledge”, ²¹for by professing it some have swerved from the faith. Grace be with you.