



HIS Faithfulness to All Generations

Leader's Guide

(Leaders and participants are encouraged to look up Bible passages for most effective study. Passages are printed below for ease in presentation. "If time permits" sections can be done at home.)

Share with a partner or your small group the definition of the word "faithful." As a group, make a list of synonyms for this word.

Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share. Make it clear that everything confided within the group stays within the group. The leader should start to begin discussion. For discussion purposes, definition of "faithful" at www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/faithful: 1. steadfast in affection or allegiance 2. firm in adherence to promises or in observance of duty 3. given with strong assurance 4. true to the facts, to a standard, or to an original. Synonym answers could include: loyal, devoted, trustworthy, dependable, reliable, dedicated, binding, conscientious, committed, constant, correct, true, realistic, authentic, accurate, truthful, believable or steadfast.

In this study, we begin by looking at Psalm 89:1 where the Psalmist declares: *I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord, forever; with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations.* Our focus will be on God's faithfulness and steadfast love throughout all generations and our response(s) to that faithfulness.

Opening Prayer: Dear Faithful Lord, You created the world and sustain it year by year. We know we sin daily and are often faithless to You. However, we rejoice that Your faithfulness never fails. We thank You for giving Your Son Jesus Who faithfully lived a perfect life, suffered, died for our sins, and rose to life again. We thank You that, through Word and Sacraments, Your Holy Spirit gives and keeps us in faith to believe in Jesus. We praise You that the Spirit sanctifies us and gives us the power to faithfully witness about Jesus to the generations. Bless our study of Your Word. In the name of Jesus we boldly pray, Amen.

HIS Faithfulness

Our Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — is faithful. According to **Deuteronomy 7:6-9**, who were the children of Israel in God's eyes? _____

Holy to the Lord, chosen, His treasured possession, God's covenant people – loved by Him
Deuteronomy 7:6-9: ⁶"For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. ⁷It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, ⁸but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. ⁹Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations.

Read **Genesis 12:1-3** and **Exodus 6:6-8**. What was the covenant that God made with His chosen people?

He promised to bless His people and they would be a blessing to the families of the earth; He would make them a great nation and make their name great; He promised to deliver them and give them the Promised Land

Genesis 12:1-3: Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ²And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Exodus 6:6-8: ⁶Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. ⁷I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. ⁸I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the Lord.'

Read Genesis 49:10, Psalm 89:2-4, and 2 Samuel 7:8-16. What covenant did God make with Judah and David? _____

The Savior-King would descend from the tribe of Judah and David; He promised that their kingdom would be established forever. How was He faithful in keeping that covenant? _____

God sent His Son Jesus (Descendant of Judah and David) to be our Savior from sin and death – He rose to new life and He reigns in heaven forever; because He lives, believers in Jesus, look forward to eternal life in heaven, His forever-kingdom

Genesis 49:10: ¹⁰ The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

Psalm 89:2-4: ² For I said, "Steadfast love will be built up forever; in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness." ³ You have said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: ⁴ 'I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.'"

2 Samuel 7:8-16: ⁸ Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. ⁹ And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰ And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹ from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. ¹² When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, ¹⁵ but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. ¹⁶ And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.'"

If time permits: Cite specific examples of God's faithfulness to His people from the Old Testament.

Answers will vary, but could include: the promise to Adam and Eve after the Fall of a Savior (Genesis 3:15); relief from famine due to the blessing of Joseph in Egypt; the release from slavery to the Egyptians and leading and sustaining the children of Israel through the wilderness and to the Promised Land; victory to the Israelites led by Joshua at the battle of Jericho; many other victorious battles; building the temple during Solomon's wealthy reign; rebuilding of Jerusalem after it was destroyed (Ezra/Nehemiah); God's remnant people were preserved even in the face of exile and destruction

Discuss 2 Timothy 2:13. What do the words, *for he cannot deny himself*, tell us about the nature of God?

Faithfulness is part of who God is – His faithfulness thankfully does not depend on ours

2 Timothy 2:13: ¹³ if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.

In the First Article of the Apostles' Creed, we confess: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." In Martin Luther's explanation of this article, we are reminded that God created the world, has given us a body and soul, and all that is needed to sustain our lives. He faithfully guards and defends us from all evil. All this He does because of His steadfast and faithful love for us. Read **Psalms 40:11; 46:1; 89:5-14; and 100:5**. What does the Psalmist specifically praise God for in these verses? _____

Psalm 40:11: ¹¹ As for you, O LORD, you will not restrain your mercy from me; your steadfast love and your faithfulness will ever preserve me!

God is merciful; His steadfast love and faithfulness preserve

Psalm 46:1: ¹ God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

He helps in times of trouble and is a Refuge and Strength; He protects us

Psalm 89:5-14: ⁵ Let the heavens praise your wonders, O Lord, your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones! ⁶ For who in the skies can be compared to the Lord? Who among the heavenly beings is like the Lord, ⁷ a God greatly to be feared in the council of the holy ones, and awesome above all who are around him? ⁸ O Lord God of hosts, who is mighty as you are, O Lord, with your faithfulness all around you? ⁹ You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, you still them. ¹⁰ You crushed Rahab like a carcass; you scattered your enemies with your mighty arm. ¹¹ The heavens are yours; the earth also is yours; the world and all that is in it, you have founded them. ¹² The north and the south, you have created them; Tabor and Hermon joyously praise your name. ¹³ You have a mighty arm; strong is your hand, high your right hand. ¹⁴ Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before you.

God is Creator; He is mighty and faithful; He defeats the enemies of His people; He is awesome

Psalm 100:5: ⁵ For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.
God is good; His steadfast love and faithfulness endure forever and to all generations

Many of the Psalms recount the marvelous things that God has done in the lives of His people. What does **Psalm 105:5** tell God's chosen people to do? _____ (For further study, read Psalms 105 and 106 that recount God's deeds of old.)

To remember God's works, miracles, and His Word

Psalm 105:5: ⁵ Remember the wondrous works that he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he uttered.

Read **Jeremiah 31:1-3**. Even when the Israelites strayed and worshipped false gods, even when they were in exile in foreign lands, what does God once again declare to them? _____

They are His covenant people; He loves them forever; He is faithful to them

Jeremiah 31:1-3: ¹ "At that time, declares the LORD, I will be the God of all the clans of Israel, and they shall be my people." ² Thus says the LORD: "The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness; when Israel sought for rest, ³ the LORD appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.

Faith Talk: When discussing God's faithfulness in the present and the future, why is it important to remember His faithfulness in the past?

We can learn from God's faithfulness and adherence to all His promises, as we experience the crisis and joys of the present, and into the future.

Read **Philippians 2:5-11**. What do these words encourage us to remember and believe? _____

That Jesus was born as True Man, lived a perfect life, suffered and died for our sins, rose from the dead, and lives and reigns for eternity.

Compare this Bible verse with the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed that begins: [I believe] "in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord ..." How could both be used as witnessing tools? _____

Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share.

Philippians 2:5-11: ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The Second Article: And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead. [from *Luther's Small Catechism*]

According to **Lamentations 3:21-24** and **1 Corinthians 1:4-9**, what does our faithful God promise His people in Christ Jesus? _____

His mercies never come to an end and are new every morning, hope in Him, grace in Christ, He will faithfully sustain believers until the end, believers are clothed in Christ's righteousness (guiltless), fellowship with Christ Jesus

Lamentations 3:21-24: ²¹ But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: ²² The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; ²³ they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. ²⁴ "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."

1 Corinthians 1:4-9: ⁴ I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵ that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— ⁶ even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— ⁷ so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸ who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Faith Talk: Share with a partner or the small group how Jesus faithfully fulfilled His saving work for the world. **Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share.**

In the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed, we confess that we believe "in the Holy Spirit ..." Our Savior Jesus gives us His Spirit to bring us to faith in Him, and to keep us in that faith — sanctifying, leading, and guiding. How does the Spirit work in our lives in the following verses?

John 17:17 and 2 Peter 1:19-21 _____

All of God's inherent Word – Law and Gospel

John 17:17: ¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

2 Peter 1:19-21: ¹⁹ And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, ²⁰ knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹ For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 6:3-4 _____

Baptism

Romans 6:3-4: ³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

Luke 22:19-20 _____

The Lord's Supper – Holy Communion

Luke 22:19-20: ¹⁹ And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ²⁰ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."

What do the following verses promise to all Christians? **1 Corinthians 10:13** _____; **Galatians 5:22-25** _____; **2 Thessalonians 3:3** _____; **1 John 1:5-9** _____; and **Revelation 2:10b** _____

1 Corinthians 10:13: ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

We will not be tempted beyond what we can endure

Galatians 5:22-25: ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

God's Spirit lives in us, and through the Spirit's power, we live in step with the Spirit; we are given the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control

2 Thessalonians 3:3: ³ But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one. **God will protect and guard us against the devil's wiles.**

1 John 1:5-9: ⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Forgiveness in the Name of Jesus

Revelation 2:10b: ^{10b} Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Eternal life

To All Generations

God's faithfulness to His people elicits responses from God's redeemed and Spirit-driven people! Psalm 89:1b reads: ... *with my mouth will I make known your faithfulness to all generations*. How do we specifically use our mouths to proclaim God's faithfulness?

Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share. Answers could include: speaking, singing, participating in worship liturgy and responses, perhaps even writing

Read **Deuteronomy 6:4-9** and **Psalm 40:10**. How is God's faithfulness shared? _____

Teaching and sharing all the time about God and His commands, one-on-one and in congregations, through the generations (father or mother to son or daughter, grandparents to grandchildren, aunts or uncles to their nieces and nephews), speaking of God's faithfulness and steadfast love

Deuteronomy 6:4-9: ⁴ "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall

talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Psalm 40:10: ¹⁰ I have not hidden your deliverance within my heart; I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation; I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness from the great congregation.

What does Jesus entreat His followers to do in **Mark 16:15** and **Acts 1:8**? _____

Proclaim the Gospel – salvation in Jesus Christ – to the world

Mark 16:15: ¹⁵ And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.

Acts 1:8: ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Hebrews 11 is all about the great Old Testament "heroes of faith" — men and women who believed in God and had faith in the coming Messiah. The writer of Hebrews continues on into Hebrews 12 with the word, *Therefore...* Read **Hebrews 12:1-2**.

Hebrews 12:1-2: ¹Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Faith Talk: Who has been a "witness" in your life of God's faithfulness in Jesus Christ? Share with a partner or the small group.

Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share.

Faith Talk: The mission statement of the LWML reads: "As Lutheran Women in Mission, we joyfully proclaim Christ, support missions, and equip women to honor God by serving others." How does this statement encourage each of us in specific ways to be a witness to our Lord's steadfast love and faithfulness?

Proclaim Christ, support missions, equip for service

What activities or programs does your women's group use to fulfill this mission statement? Share ideas for future activities.

Answers will vary, but encourage all to share.

Faith Walk:

1. Thank God for His steadfast love and faithfulness to all generations.
2. Thank God for a mentor and witness of God's faithfulness in Jesus Christ in your life. Place a contribution in your Mite Box in his/her honor.
3. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you proclaim boldly the Good News about salvation in Jesus.
4. Serve the Lord with gladness! Attend an LWML event or Bible study.

Closing: Pray, sing, or listen to "I Will Sing of the Mercies of the Lord" based on Psalm 89:1 (KJV)
"All God's People Sing" Hymn 133 [words below].

I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever,

I will sing, I will sing,

I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever,

I will sing of the mercies of the Lord.

With my mouth will I make known

Thy faithfulness, Thy faithfulness,

With my mouth will I make known

Thy faithfulness to all generations,

I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever,

I will sing of the mercies of the Lord.

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