



Promise. Power. Peace.
Leader's Notes

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

An artist once painted "peace" as a mother bird taking care of her young in the midst of a storm, waves rolling and crashing against the cliffs rising out of the sea. The bird's nest perched on a cliff is safe from the storm and waves in a notch in the cliff. Share with a partner or your small group how you might visualize "peace."

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 a discussion.

In this study, we will look at how God's promises, power, and peace can be our strength during trials. As we endure the storms and uncertainties of life, God promises to be with us always. He gives us His Spirit in Holy Baptism, the faith to believe in our Savior, and the power to witness boldly for the sake of the Gospel. We can live our lives secure in His hope and peace — ... *the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding* ... (Philippians 4:7).

Opening Prayer: Almighty God, You are awesome in power and might. We know that we sin against you daily in thought, word, and deed. We thank You for seeing our hopeless condition and promising a Savior from sin. You kept that promise by giving Your Son Jesus. He lived a perfect life, suffered, died for our sins, and rose to life again. We thank You that we have received the promised Holy Spirit through Baptism. We rejoice that the Spirit gives us faith and power to witness to others about the Good News of salvation in Jesus. During trying times, we thank You for giving us Your promised peace and hope for eternal life. In the name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

Promise.

1. Read **Genesis 3:15**. Discuss why this passage is God's first promise of a Savior, the "protoevangelium" (Greek *protos* meaning "first" and *evangelion* meaning "good news" or "gospel").

Genesis 3:15: I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

As God curses the devil, He promises that there will be warfare between the devil and her offspring (singular), the Savior Jesus. To kill a snake, you must crush the head. Jesus will defeat the devil (bruise — or crush — your head) — to do so He will die for the sins of all people (bruise his heel) but rise to life again.

2. Discuss **John 3:16–17, Romans 3:23–25, Romans 5:8–9, Romans 16:20, and Galatians 4:4–5**. How did God keep His first promise of a Savior in Genesis and what benefits are received?

John 3:16–17: ¹⁶“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.” *Salvation, eternal life*

Romans 3:23–25: ³For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. *Justification (covered in Jesus' righteousness), grace, redemption*

Romans 5:8–9: ⁸ But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. *Salvation, forgiveness, saved from God's wrath*

Romans 16:20: ²⁰ The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. *Jesus defeat of the devil becomes the believer's victory as well*

Galatians 4:4–5: ⁴ But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. *In Jesus, we are made sons and daughters of God, with all the benefits of heirs (redemption, eternal life)*

3. What does our Savior promise in **John 14:15–17** and **Acts 1:8**?

John 14:15–17: ¹⁵ “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

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.”

The Holy Spirit will be with us.

4. What might this promise have meant to His disciples as they prepared to tell the Good News of salvation in Jesus to all nations (see **Matthew 28:16–20a**)?

Matthew 28:16–20a: ¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”

The assurance that they would not be alone in their efforts, the Spirit would give them the power to witness; the Spirit of truth would guide them as they baptized and taught others about Jesus

5. Read **Acts 2:1–4**. When and how was God's promise to send the Holy Spirit fulfilled?

How does God give His Spirit to His disciples today (see **Acts 2:38–39**)?

Acts 2:1–4: ¹ When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

On Pentecost; the sound of a mighty wind; tongues as of fire rested on them; the Spirit guided their words as they spoke in other languages about Jesus.

Acts 2:38–39: ³⁸ And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”

Holy Baptism

Faith Talk: Share with a partner or the small group what your Baptism means to you every day. Be specific.

Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share. Answers could include: I know I am a child of God; the Spirit gives me faith in Jesus and keeps me daily believing even when I face hardship or trials; the Spirit gives me power to witness to the Good News about Jesus

6. What does Jesus promise in **Matthew 28:20b**? *He will always be with them*
What might this promise have meant to His followers as they watched His ascension into heaven (see **Luke 24:51–53** and **Acts 1:9**)?

Matthew 28:20b: ^{20b} “**And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.**”

Luke 24:51–53: ⁵¹ While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵² And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³ and were continually in the temple blessing God.

Acts 1:9: ⁹ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

Perhaps it gave them great comfort to know that He had promised His Spirit to them and that He would always be there — guiding, protecting, and leading them — even though they could not see Him. He is faithful to His promises.

7. How can remembering Jesus’ promise to be with us always change the way we might live out particularly lonely or turbulent days?

Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share. Answers could include: the comfort and assurance that God will lead me through even the rough patches; He loves me and wants only the best for me

8. In **Revelation 2:10c**, we read words of promise from our Lord: “*Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.*” See **Jeremiah 29:11**, **James 1:12**, and **1 John 2:25**. Discuss how the promise of eternal life can sustain the believer through even the hardest of trials.

Jeremiah 29:11: ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

James 1:12: Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

1 John 2:25: ²⁵ And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life.

Amid battling sickness, disease, depression, or death, we have the sure hope and promise from our powerful God that when we die, we will be in heaven with Jesus

Power.

9. Read **Mark 4:35–41**. How does Jesus demonstrate His power as the Lord of creation?

Mark 4:35–41: ³⁵ On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.” ³⁶ And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. ³⁷ And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. ³⁸ But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” ³⁹ And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰ He said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?” ⁴¹ And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

The wind and the waves listened to His command, ceased, and became calm.

Faith Talk:

What does knowing our God is awesome and powerful — bigger than any spiritual, emotional, or physical storm — mean to you? Share with a partner or a small group.

Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share.

10. *If time permits:* Read **Psalms 107:23–32**. Compare the differences and similarities with **Mark 4:35–41**.

Psalm 107:23–32:²³ Some went down to the sea in ships, doing business on the great waters; ²⁴ they saw the deeds of the Lord, his wondrous works in the deep. ²⁵ For he commanded and raised the stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea. ²⁶ They mounted up to heaven; they went down to the depths; their courage melted away in their evil plight; ²⁷ they reeled and staggered like drunken men and were at their wits' end. ²⁸ Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.²⁹ He made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed. ³⁰ Then they were glad that the waters were quiet, and he brought them to their desired haven. ³¹ Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man! ³² Let them extol him in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.

Verses 23–27 depict the waves causing the boat to be lifted up and tossed about and the men unable to stand on its deck; verse 28 shows them asking the Lord for deliverance; verses 29–30 shows God stilling the storm, hushing the waves, and quieting the waters

Mark 4:35–41 ³⁵ On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.” ³⁶ And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. ³⁷ And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. ³⁸ But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” ³⁹ And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰ He said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?” ⁴¹ And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

11. Read **Matthew 9:2**, **Luke 4:36**, and **6:19**. How did Jesus show His power and authority over evil in the world?

Matthew 9:2: ² And behold, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.” ³ And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, “This man is blaspheming.” ⁴ But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts? ⁵ For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk’? ⁶ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he then said to the paralytic—“Rise, pick up your bed and go home.” ⁷ And he rose and went home. ⁸ When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

Healed a paralytic both spiritually and physically

Luke 4:36: And they were all amazed and said to one another, “What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!”

Cast out evil and unclean spirits

Luke 6:19: And all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came out from him and healed them all.

Healed an entire crowd at the same time

12. See **Ephesians 3:14–19**. How does the Triune God strengthen us with power to be filled with the fullness of God in our *inner being*?

Ephesians 3:14–19: ¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶ that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

The Father strengthens us with power through His Spirit in our inner being; Christ dwells in our hearts through faith; we know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge; filled with all the fullness of God.

13. Read **Romans 1:16**, **Mark 16:16**, and **Luke 22:19–20**. What does the Spirit use in our lives to give us the power to witness boldly to the Gospel? *Means of Grace*

Romans 1:16: ¹⁶For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. *Word of God*

Mark 16:16: ¹⁶Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. *Holy Baptism*

Luke 22:19–20: ¹⁹And 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.” ²⁰And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. *The Lord’s Supper*

14. See **Colossians 3:1–17**. How do Spirit-filled believers strive to live their new lives in Christ? Make a list of these new life characteristics.

Colossians 3:1–17: ¹ If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. ⁵ Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ On account of these the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸ But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. ¹¹ Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. ¹² Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

List of characteristics could include: Put to death the earthly in you and put on compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, bearing with one another, forgiving each other, love one another, let Christ’s peace rule in your heart, be thankful; let the Word of Christ dwell in you, teach, admonish; and sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

Peace.

15. According to **Ephesians 2:13–22**, how is Christ Jesus our peace with God?

Ephesians 2:13–22: ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. ¹⁷ And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy

temple in the Lord. ²² In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Through His death, He has brought us near to God, breaking down the barrier of sin between us and God; He has preached peace to all (Jews and Gentiles) and made us members of God's family, joined together as the Holy Christian Church — a holy temple in the Lord.

16. What promise does Jesus give in **John 14:27** and **16:33**?

John 14:27: ²⁷ **Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.**

His peace; not a worldly peace;

John 16:33: ³³ **I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."**

We will have trials in the world, but since Christ has overcome the world, we are promised His peace

Faith Talk:

As you consider the trustworthy promises of God and His power to fulfill those promises, why can you have ... *the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding* ... (Philippians 4:7)?

Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share.

Faith Talk:

How could you describe God's peace to a friend who is experiencing trials and tribulations?

Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share.

17. Read again **Colossians 3:1–17**, focusing on **verses 15–17**. List creative ways that you could actively share the peace of God with your friend in need.

Colossians 3:15–17: ¹⁵ **And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.**

Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share. Encourage creative and active ideas about sharing God's peace with a friend in need.

Together read the following benediction from **Romans 15:13**:

¹³ *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.*

Faith Walk:

1. Thank God for steadfastly keeping His promises to His children through the merits of Jesus Christ.
2. Praise God for His powerful work in our lives through the Holy Spirit.
3. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you boldly tell others about the Good News of salvation in Jesus.
4. Proclaim the peace of God which we have through our Lord and Savior.

Closing: Pray, sing, or listen to "When Peace, like a River" (LSB 763).
