

KIDS *of*
INTEGRITY

Faithfulness



In the schoolyard, friendships can be made and betrayed on a whim – and the hurt can be lasting. Help your children be faithful friends, and kids you can depend on too.

Read on for suggestions that motivate kids to be someone who:

- is confident God will never withdraw His love or break His promises
- is a loyal, supportive friend
- can be trusted to fulfil promises and commitments
- puts the welfare of others ahead of their own welfare.

In addition, this lesson helps address gossiping, betraying confidences and excluding others.

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Parents' prayer

Before you begin leading your children through this study on faithfulness, spend time alone with God interceding for His help. The sample prayer below will help guide you in praying for your children's character development.

If you prefer to personalize your prayers, read through the additional verses provided under "Scripture-guided prayer" for direction and inspiration.

Sample prayer

Faithful One, "For great is Your love, higher than the heavens; Your faithfulness reaches to the skies. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens, and let Your glory be over all the earth" (Psalm 108:4-5). "O Lord God Almighty, who is like You? You are mighty, O Lord, and Your faithfulness surrounds You" (Psalm 89:8). Jesus Christ, You are the same yesterday and today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). Thank you that I can trust You as a faithful friend.

Please fill me with Your Spirit so I can continue to be a faithful spouse, parent and friend – a trusted companion who is a worthy confidante. Please forgive me for my lack of faithfulness in _____. My desire is to be found faithful, not only at crucial times, but also in things seemingly insignificant. Above all else, I want to be a faithful servant of Yours who is obedient in following Your commands (1 Corinthians 4:2).

For _____ and _____, my children, I ask that they will grow in faithfulness to You and others. I pray that their loyalty will be evidenced in their willingness to stick with their friends in times of trouble and in their readiness to make sacrifices for others. Please fill _____ and _____ with Your Holy Spirit so the fruit of faithfulness is evidenced in their relationships with You and with others. When they are tempted to be unfaithful, please remind them that You guard the course of the just and protect the way of the faithful (Proverbs 2:8). And now, looking to the future, I ask that You will be preparing _____ and _____ to become faithful mates for the people You will help them choose as a spouse.

For our family, I pray that we will be loyal to one another and that our friendships will be characterized by sacrificial love. You promise to be faithful to those who are faithful (2 Samuel 22:26). I ask that You will find us faithful in all things. As David prayed for Israel and his son, Solomon, I pray for our family, “. . . keep this desire in the hearts of Your people forever, and keep [our] hearts loyal to You. And give [us] wholehearted devotion to keep Your commands, requirements and decrees . . .” (1 Chronicles 29:18-19). May the fruit of Your Holy Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control – be evidenced in our family so that others will know we belong to You (Galatians 5:22-23). Amen.

Scripture-guided prayer for parents

Read and pray through one or more of the selected Scriptures under each heading. Focus on listening to God and allowing His Spirit to direct you as you pray.

Character focus

Begin by letting God know how much you see and appreciate His faithfulness.

2 Samuel 22:26-37 | Psalm 57:9-11 | Psalm 89:1-2,5-8 | Malachi 3:6-12 | 2 Thessalonians 3:3-5

Heart search

Acknowledge when and how you have been less than faithful.

Proverbs 11:3 | Isaiah 53:6 | Mark 8:38 | James 4:17 | 1 John 1:8-9

Gratitude

Thank God for ways you have seen faithfulness within your family.

Family requests

Ask God to help you and your children to be faithful to Him and to each other.

Proverbs 2:7-8 | Proverbs 3:3-6 | Micah 6:8 | John 14:15-21 | 1 Corinthians 10:13

Kids talk with God

Use this section to help your children learn to reach out to God in all things. The sample prayers all begin with “Dear God,” however, you may use any other names for God your children are comfortable with (i.e. Jesus, Father God, Lord Jesus, Heavenly Father, Abba Father, Lord). If your children are ready to formulate their own original prayers, see the Bible verses provided under “Scripture-guided prayer for children” for inspiration.

Sample prayers

Dear God, I want to be a friend who loves at all times. Help me to be a loyal friend like Jonathan was to David. Amen.

Dear God, thank You that Your faithfulness reaches to the skies. Amen.

Dear God, a true friend is willing to make sacrifices or give things up for their friends. Please help me to be that kind of friend. Amen.

Dear God, You are faithful. I have not been faithful today. Please forgive me and help me to have Your love and faithfulness in my heart. Amen.

Think of a friend who is going through a hard time. Help your child to be a faithful friend by praying for the friend in need. Have your child ask God to show him/her how she can encourage this friend. Sample below:

Dear God, my friend _____ is having a hard time with _____. Can You please show me how I can encourage him/her? Amen.

Scripture-guided prayer for children

Read though one of the selected scriptures under each heading and help your children pray based on the verse you read. Encourage them to listen to God and allow His Spirit to guide them as they pray.

Character focus

Begin by letting God know how much you appreciate His faithfulness.

Deuteronomy 32:4 | Psalm 33:4 | Psalm 145:13

Heart search

Acknowledge when and how you have been unfaithful.

1 Corinthians 13:4,7 | James 4:17 | 1 John 1:8-9

Gratitude

Thank God for ways you and your family members have been faithful.

Personal requests

Ask God to help you, your siblings and parents be faithful to God and to each other.

Proverbs 3:3-4 | John 15:12-13 | 1 Corinthians 10:13

Speak a blessing

Your affirmation will give tremendous encouragement to your children as they strive to grow in the area of faithfulness. Use this section as a reminder to “speak a blessing” when you see this godly characteristic in your son or daughter.

- What a faithful friend/brother/sister you are, _____!
- You are a faithful son/daughter, _____. Thank you for choosing to _____.
- Faithfulness is such an important character quality. I am glad that you are faithful, _____.
- We are proud of you, _____, for being faithful.

Memory verses

Memorizing Scripture with your children helps God’s Spirit bring about lasting change. Choose a verse your children can learn in a pre-determined period of time and aim to review the verse at least once every day.

Deuteronomy 32:4 “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.”

Psalm 18:25 “To the faithful You show Yourself faithful”

Psalm 31:23 “Love the Lord, all His saints! The Lord preserves the faithful, but the proud He pays back in full.”

Psalm 33:4 “For the word of the Lord is right and true; He is faithful in all He does.”

Psalm 57:10 “For great is Your love, reaching to the heavens; Your faithfulness reaches to the skies.”

Psalm 89:2 “I will declare that Your love stands firm forever, that You established Your faithfulness in heaven itself.”

Psalm 89:8 “O Lord God Almighty, who is like You? You are mighty, O Lord, and Your faithfulness surrounds You.”

Psalm 101:6 “My eyes will be on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with Me; he whose walk is blameless will minister to Me.”

Psalm 145:13 “. . . The Lord is faithful to all His promises and loving toward all He has made.”

Proverbs 2:8 “. . . for He guards the course of the just and protects the way of His faithful ones.”

Proverbs 3:3-4 “Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.”

Proverbs 11:3 “The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.”

Proverbs 11:13 “A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret.”

Proverbs 13:15 “Good understanding wins favor, but the way of the unfaithful is hard.”

Proverbs 14:14 “The faithless will be fully repaid for their ways, and the good man rewarded for his.”

Proverbs 14:22 “Do not those who plot evil go astray? But those who plan what is good find love and faithfulness.”

Proverbs 17:17 “A friend loves at all times . . .”

Proverbs 18:24 “A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”

Proverbs 19:22 “What a man desires is unfailing love; better to be poor than a liar.”

Proverbs 25:19 “Like a bad tooth or a lame foot is reliance on the unfaithful in times of trouble.”

Proverbs 20:6 “Many a man claims to have unfailing love, but a faithful man who can find?”

Proverbs 28:20 “A faithful man will be richly blessed . . .”

John 15:13 “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”

1 Corinthians 1:9 “God, who has called you into fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.”

1 Corinthians 4:2 “Now it is required that those who have been given a trust, must prove faithful.”

1 Corinthians 13:7 “[Love] always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”

Galatians 5:22-23 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. . . .”

James 1:17 “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”

Kick-off craft

The craft suggested here will help remind your children to practice being faithful to others and is based on Proverbs 3:3-4: “Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.”

Friendship necklaces

Directions

- Purchase letter beads and make a necklace that says faithfulness or love. You can also buy beads depicting fruit to emphasize that love and faithfulness are both Fruits of the Spirit.

Have each child refer to their necklace as their “friendship necklace,” so it serves as a reminder to be a faithful friend.

If a child does not wear necklaces, he/she can make the necklace for a faithful friend, grandparent or one of his/her stuffed animals (who is a faithful friend to him/her). Alternatively, they may wish to make a zipper pull for a backpack.

Other ideas

Use this activity as a “faithfulness” play date and invite a friend over to make the necklaces.

Bible stories

This section provides Bible stories with the theme of faithfulness, along with questions that can be used as a guide for family discussions. Choose one that is most appropriate for your children. Before reading aloud, take a few minutes to review the story. If the Bible passage is too complex for your kids, paraphrase the story yourself or use the summary provided under “key concepts.”

Faithful friends

Before beginning the questions for discussion, explain the history of David’s friendship with Jonathan: Saul was the King of Israel. Unfortunately, Saul was not a king who pleased God, so God chose to give the honour of being the king to David (1 Samuel 15,16), a young man who worked for King Saul. David spent a lot of time in the palace and became very good friends with Saul’s son Jonathan. After some time, King Saul became so jealous of David that he wanted to kill him. Even so, Jonathan remained David’s best friend.

Questions for discussion

1. Do you have a best friend or some best friends?
2. Do you have a friend you love as much as you love yourself?
3. What would you give up for them?
4. Read 1 Samuel 18:1-4; 20:4. What does the Bible say that tells us that David and Jonathan were good friends?
5. Read 1 Samuel 19:1-7. What did Jonathan do to prove his love for David? Do you think this could have angered King Saul?
6. Would you speak the truth about one of your friends to defend him even if it might mean you could get yourself in trouble?
7. If someone was going to hurt your friend, would you be willing to defend him or her and risk getting hurt as well?

8. If another kid said that your friend was not allowed to play a game, would you be a faithful friend and say, “If you’re asking _____ not to play, then I am not going to play either”?
9. Read 1 Samuel 23:16-18. What did Jonathan do for David when he was in trouble?
10. What was Jonathan willing to give up for David?
11. Was Jonathan the kind of friend who you would like to have?
12. Was Jonathan the kind of friend who you would like to be?

Key concepts

Reading about the friendship between Jonathan and David shows us that true friends are faithful to each other even in difficult circumstances. Being a faithful friend means you are willing to give up your own valuable things for your friend. Jonathan gave up some of his physical possessions to David as well as his position as the next king of Israel. Jonathan also risked his life to defend David. Faithfulness means sticking by another person through hard times, not just in the easy times.

Your money or your heart

Read Matthew 23:23-26.

Note: You may choose to read a longer version of this story including Matthew 23:15-33.

Questions for discussion

1. Why was Jesus upset with the Pharisees?
2. What did Jesus say was more important to God than tithes or offering money?
3. Do you think God is more concerned about you giving money for offering at Sunday school or about how you treat others?
4. How can a kid be just?
5. How can you show mercy to others?
6. What do you think it means to be faithful?

Key concepts

Jesus was upset with the Pharisees because, on the outside, they made themselves look pretty good. They gave the required tenth of their spices and appeared to be righteous, but they did not have the proper attitude in their hearts. They did not practice justice, mercy or faithfulness. Instead, their hearts were full of self-indulgence, greed, hypocrisy and wickedness. To put this in kids' terms, God wouldn't care a lot about the money we put in the offering at Sunday School if we were not showing justice (being fair, taking turns), mercy (compassion for others who are not as fortunate) and being faithful (loyal to God and friends). Being faithful means that our actions match our words (1 John 3:18).

Faithful priests

Read Ezekiel 48:10-12.

Questions for discussion

1. Which priests were faithful?
2. How were the other priests unfaithful?
3. Read Ezekiel 48:10-12. What was the discipline for the unfaithful priests?
4. What was God's reward to the Zadokites?

Key concepts

God was not happy with the priests who served sacrifices to idols and made the house of Israel fall into sin. There was also a group of priests called the Zadokites who faithfully served God even when the other priests led Israel astray. God decided He would no longer allow the other priests to come near Him to serve in the holy parts of the temple. He gave this job to the Zadokites. The other priests were allowed to do all the other work in the temple, except come into God's presence or be near any of His holy things. God rewards those who are faithful by giving them privileges and honour. He is disappointed and angry with those who are unfaithful and disciplines them.

Mordecai is a faithful follower of the king

Read Esther 2:21-23; 6:1-11 and 7:10.

Questions for discussion

1. How were the officers who guarded the king's gate unfaithful?
2. How was Mordecai faithful to the king?
3. How was Mordecai eventually rewarded for his faithfulness?
4. If you were faithful like Mordecai, would you have liked to go for a ride on a horse and wear a special robe or is there some other way you would have liked to be honoured by the king?
5. How can you be faithful to your parents?
6. How can you be a faithful friend?

Key concepts

Mordecai was sitting by the king's gate when he overheard two of the king's officers who were the guards of his doorway, discussing how angry they were at King Xerxes. They were so angry with him that they made plans to kill him.

Mordecai overheard the plan and told Queen Esther about it. She reported to the king the plan made by the unfaithful guards and told him that Mordecai had given her the information. The king had the report investigated, and when he found out that it was true, he had the two unfaithful guards hanged on a gallows. All of this was recorded in the book of history kept for King Xerxes.

Much later, when the king could not sleep one night, he had someone read from the record book. They read him the story of how Mordecai saved his life by exposing the assassination plan made by the two unfaithful guards. The king then asked what kind of reward had been given to Mordecai. When he found out that nothing had been done, King Xerxes asked his helper, Haman, what should be done for a man whom the king wanted to honour. Haman thought the king wanted to honour him, so he suggested

the man should get to wear one of the king's royal robes and ride on a horse that the king had ridden with a royal crest on its head. Then, he suggested that one of the king's nobles lead the horse around the city saying, "This is what is done for the man the king delights to honour." In the end, Mordecai was honoured and rewarded for being faithful, and Haman was punished for his unfaithfulness (Esther 6:11, Esther 7:10).

Faithfulness rewarded

Note: These passages can be studied individually or together.

Questions for discussion

David: Read 1 Samuel 26:21-25 and 1 Kings 3:6.

1. How did David show he was a faithful servant of God and King Saul?
2. How did God reward this faithfulness?

Hezekiah: Read 2 Chronicles 31:20-21.

3. What did Hezekiah do to show he was a faithful servant of God?
4. How did God reward this faithfulness?

Abraham: Read Hebrews 11:8-12,17-19.

5. What did Abraham do to show he was a faithful servant of God?
6. How did God reward this faithfulness?

And for us!: Read Psalm 18:23-26 and Psalm 37:28-29.

7. How can we be faithful servants of God?
8. How does God reward faithfulness?

Key concepts

God honours those who are faithful! We are faithful to God when we obey His commandments and chose to do what is right. God shows His faithfulness to those who are faithful by protecting them. We can look at the way God cared for the faithful men and women of the Bible and trust that He will care for us, too.

David: David did not kill Saul, the man God placed as king over Israel, even though Saul was trying to kill

him. God rewarded David's faithfulness by allowing David to be king of Israel and his son Solomon to be crowned king after him.

Hezekiah: Hezekiah was faithful to follow God's commands. He removed idols and reopened the temple. The Bible says he trusted God. Hezekiah's faithfulness was rewarded through God giving him victory in battle and adding fifteen extra years to his life.

Abraham: Abraham was faithful because he followed God's directions to go to a far away and unknown land. Abraham also believed God would give him a son, even though he and his wife were very old. God rewarded Abraham's faithfulness by making his descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky.

A family secret

Questions for discussion

1. Do you like secrets?
2. Do you want to hear a special secret?

Read Psalm 78:1-8 quietly. Precede the reading by saying, "I have a special secret to share with you. It is a special secret that parents shared with their children way back in the days of the Bible. For years and years, parents have shared this special message with their children. Would you like to hear it, too?"

3. How has God has been faithful to our family?
4. If I said I would serve your favourite supper and then served something else, would you trust me? Or, if I said I would catch you when you jumped into the pool and then didn't, would you trust me?
5. Do you think you can trust God?

Key concepts

God is who He says He is and does what He says He will do. He is faithful to us and we can always trust Him.

As parents, we are faithful to do what we say we will do so that you, our children, can trust us. In turn, we expect you, our children, to be faithful

children – doing what you say you will do, so we can trust you, too.

Praise for a faithful God

Read Psalm 98.

Questions for discussion

1. In what ways is God faithful to us?
2. How would you like to praise God for His faithfulness?

Key concepts

God shows His faithfulness to us by loving us, caring for us and offering us salvation. He is worthy of our praise. Other verses about God and His faithfulness include Exodus 34:6, 1 Corinthians 1:9, Psalm 86:15, Psalm 89:8, Psalm 111:7-8, Psalm 117:2 and Psalm 146:6-10.

The good and faithful servant

Read Matthew 25:14-30.

Questions for discussion

1. Why was the master happy with the first two servants?
2. Why was he unhappy with the third servant?
3. How can we be faithful servants to God?
4. What talents has God given you?
5. How can you use them to honour God?

Key concepts

God has given us talents and resources. We need to use them in a way that is pleasing to Him. He is pleased when we are willing to use our talents and abilities to bring honour to Him. One way to honour God with our talents is to make sure that whenever someone compliments our special abilities, is to give the honour to God by saying, “Thank you. God has made me with _____” (“strong legs,” if someone compliments your running ability; “a creative mind,” if someone compliments your creative writing or drawing, etc.). This way, we bring honour to God instead of ourselves.

Creative discipline

Few parents enjoy their God-given responsibility of disciplining their children, and even fewer children enjoy being on the receiving end. The Bible tells us to expect discipline to be uncomfortable, but also promises positive results. This section will provide you with innovative suggestions to use when correcting your children, to help them learn to practice faithfulness.

For problems with unreliability

Biblical basis

Proverbs 25:19 “Like a bad tooth or a lame foot is reliance on the unfaithful in times of trouble.”

Suggested disciplinary action

Have your child walk around or run a race with a pebble in their shoe. Explain to your child that just as their sore foot did not serve him/her well in their race, so an unfaithful friend cannot be relied upon.

Affirmation

Take time to talk about how important it is that family members and friends be faithful to each other. Express to your child that you believe he/she is a faithful family member and friend that you can rely on. Pray with your child, asking that God would put love and faithfulness in his/her heart.

You may also wish to read or quote Proverbs 3:3-4: “Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.” End your talk by challenging your child to aim to have a reputation among friends and family members that he/she is faithful and can be trusted at all times.

Hands-on options

Often, we are consumed by the busyness of day-to-day living and we forget to look for opportunities to teach our children God-honouring character traits. These ideas require very little preparation, making it easy for you to share some simple but memorable lessons with your children. Read over the suggestions at the beginning of your week and choose one or two that will fit your schedule.

“I won’t be your friend”

drama / role play

For children who are dealing with an “I don’t want to be your friend” scenario, read Psalm 18:25. Emphasize that when we are faithful to God, He is faithful to us. He is a friend who will never leave us. Explain to your children that people will end up being unfaithful sometimes, but God will never let us down.

Encourage your children to focus on being a faithful friend, instead of worrying about who is or who isn’t their friend. Remind them that in order to have faithful friends, they need to be a faithful friend. Have your children act out scenarios that would likely occur on a day-to-day basis in their lives. Have your children practice being faithful friends who never say the words, “I don’t want to be your friend.”

When we are mistreated, we do not feel like being loyal in return. When one of your children is angry with a friend or sibling because he/she feels hurt by something they have said or done, have your child practice blessing the one who has hurt him/her (Luke 6:28). Have them pray for the person who has been unfaithful to them.

Relevant Scripture

Psalm 18:25 *“To the faithful You show Yourself faithful, to the blameless You show Yourself blameless.”*

Luke 6:28 *“Bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.”*

A faithful son / daughter

any time

Read 1 Corinthians 4:2 and explain that Jesus trusted the apostles with the Gospel message. The disciples proved faithful in sharing it or we wouldn’t know

about the Good News of knowing God as a friend and as our Saviour. Emphasize how glad we are that they were faithful to do what God asked them to do! Because the disciples were faithful to preach the Gospel message, we can know that when we confess our sins and accept God’s forgiveness, we can spend eternity with Him.

Next, choose a small task you can trust each child to do. This may include putting fruit into the fridge drawer after a grocery trip, straightening couch cushions or picking up toys. Ask them to do their assigned task and get a verbal agreement from them that they will in fact do it. When they complete the task, encourage them by thanking them for being faithful to do what they have said they will do. Throughout the time of your study of faithfulness, continue to trust them with more age-appropriate responsibilities.

Relevant Scripture

1 Corinthians 4:2 *“Now it is required that those who have been given a trust, must prove faithful.”*

To further the learning, while you are driving or working around the house, tell your children a story about a young boy or girl who proved to be trustworthy as he/she grew up. Modify it to suit your family situation. Here is a sample story:

Once, there was a young boy named Bryce who took great joy in being faithful to complete the small jobs his parents asked him to do. When he was three years old, Bryce started putting his dirty clothes in a laundry basket. At four, he was able to sweep the floor, and at five, he was unloading the dishwasher. By six, Bryce could help make pancakes for special family breakfasts. At seven, he began to take out the garbage. And by eight, he was keeping his own room clean!

As he grew in size, Bryce also grew in faithfulness. He was trustworthy with all of the responsibilities his parents gave him.

When he was nine, Bryce was ready to use a knife and help his parents cut food for family meals. At ten, he was folding and putting away all of his own laundry and was cleaning his own bathroom the

next year. By the time he turned twelve, Bryce could be trusted to stay at home alone for short periods of time. Then, Bryce turned thirteen and started to care for his younger siblings when his parents went out.

In junior high school, Bryce's parents didn't need to nag him about homework, as he was faithful to complete it without being reminded. Finally, Bryce turned sixteen and was old enough to take his driver's exam. When he passed the test, he was so excited! The one problem was that he did not own a car. A few weeks later, he wanted to drive to visit a friend and asked if he could borrow the family car.

Pause the story here and ask your children what you think his parents said. End the story with this conclusion:

Bryce's father said, "I know your room is clean, your homework is done and you have completed the chores your mom asked you to do after school. You have been a faithful son for sixteen years, serving and obeying your mother and me. I know that I can trust you to make good decisions, even if other kids are being foolish. Here are the keys to my car. Please be home by six o'clock for supper."

This is just one of many stories that can be told to illustrate that parents gain trust in their children when they are faithful and obedient.

Sing to the Lord another new Psalm

any time

Read through Psalm 136 and have your children say "God's love goes on forever," every time you pause at the end of each verse. Then have them list ways God shows your family that His love goes on forever. After listing ways that God is faithful, read through your list, creating your own Psalm of praise by having your children say, "God's love goes on forever," each time you pause. Pray together, thanking God for His faithfulness. You may even choose to put your Psalm to music. Then, you can really sing a psalm, praising God for His faithfulness (Colossians 3:16).

Relevant Scripture

Psalm 136:1 ". . . His love endures forever."

Colossians 3:16 "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God."

Faithfulness to the sky

physical activity

Go outside on a clear day. Talk about what it must have been like to live in Bible times when people spent most of their day outside. David was a special kind of farmer called a shepherd. Shepherds were always outside caring for their sheep! When David was outside and enjoying nature, he often wrote and sang praise songs to God called Psalms. Read one or more of the verses listed below. Just as the sky goes on forever, so does God's faithfulness. Use the following questions to stimulate more discussion.

Questions for discussion

- How far away is the sky?
- Can you reach the sky?
- Can a bird?
- Can a plane?

Relevant Scripture

Psalm 36:5 "Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens, Your faithfulness to the skies."

Psalm 57:9-10 "I will praise You, O Lord, among the nations; I will sing of You among the peoples. For great is Your love, reaching to the heavens; Your faithfulness reaches to the skies."

A faithful mouth

drama / role play

Read Proverbs 11:13, Proverbs 16:28 and Proverbs 17:17. Explain that people who are loyal and stay true to their word are considered faithful friends. Examples of faithfulness within friendship include keeping secrets, refusing to repeat unkind things others have said, being forgiving even if your feelings are hurt, and doing what you say you will do.

After your discussion, have your children role-play situations to practice faithfulness with friends or using stuffed animals and dolls. As you play with your

children, use the questions below to further illustrate the importance of being a trustworthy confidante and loyal friend.

Questions for discussion

- Would you like it if you told me a secret and I told someone else?
- Do you consider yourself a faithful friend?
- If your friend asked you to keep a secret, would you?
- If your friend hurt your feelings and then asked you to forgive him/her could you?
- When people say unkind things about other people and others spread this information around, it is called gossip. What would you do if someone said something unkind about your friend?
- How can we be faithful friends?

Relevant Scripture

Proverbs 11:13 “A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret.”

Proverbs 16:28 “A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends.”

Proverbs 17:17 “A friend loves at all times . . .”

Faithfulness is enduring

drive time

While doing errands, be on the lookout for old cars or trucks. Point out the vehicle to your children and mention how faithful that old car or truck must be for the owner to still be driving it around. If something is faithful, we trust it! Go on to explain that it is the same with people: Faithful people are trusted. Look for other old things as well, like old buildings, and discuss how they have stood the test of time.

Faithfulness can mean sacrifice

any time

Encourage your children to look for ways they can make sacrifices for friends and family members. For younger children, this can mean giving up treats or

toys. Thank God for providing for you and your family, and ask Him to help you all to be faithful friends who are willing to share _____ (name your children’s favourite toys or foods) with others. Use the questions for discussion listed below while driving or at mealtime.

Questions for discussion

- Do you have a favourite food or snack that is hard for you to share?
- Who could you share it with?
- Did you see anyone who needed you to make a sacrifice for them today?
- What did you do?
- What could you have done?

Man’s best friend

getting into nature

Dogs have been named man’s best friend for a reason. That reason is the character quality of faithfulness. Dogs are incredibly loyal to their masters.

If you have a dog, talk to your children about ways you can tell that your dog is faithful. Points to discuss include the dog waiting for you to come home, watching for your arrival, following you around the house or yard and staying close to you while you work or play, and choosing to come and be petted by its master rather than a stranger.

If you do not have a dog, take time to visit someone who has a dog and ask the owner how their dog exhibits the character trait of faithfulness.

When I was a child, we had a Pembroke Welsh Corgi named Betsy. When we were on a cross-Canada family holiday, we left her at a gas station by mistake. When we came back two hours later, our dog was waiting there for us to return. Our dog trusted that we would be faithful and return to get her. This is an example of how trust is established when we are faithful to those around us. In the Bible, God is referred to as our Master (Matthew 23:8, 2 Timothy 2:21).

Use the following questions to invite conversation and encourage your children to consider their own faithfulness. Close by reading Psalm 18:25. Pray with your children, asking that God would find you to be faithful to Him and to your family and friends.

Questions for discussion

- If you were a dog, what kind would you like to be?
- How can we tell that our dog is faithful?
- How can we be faithful to God?
- What are some ways we can spend time with God?
- What are some ways we know we can trust God?

Relevant Scripture

Psalm 18:25 *“To the faithful You show Yourself faithful . . .”*

God is our rock!

science with a twist

The purpose of this activity is to illustrate that God is as dependable as a rock.

You will need to find a large rock or concrete wall, a park with sand in it, small sticks, drinking straws and a bottle that will squirt or spritz water.

- 1 Prior to going outside on a walk, print out Psalm 18:30-31.
- 2 While you are on your walk, allow your children to stand up on a big rock or concrete wall. Take the verses along and read them while the kids are sitting on the rock. Talk about how firm the rock is and what a good foundation rock or concrete makes for a house.
- 3 Next, go to a park and have your children build and stand in a pile of sand.
- 4 To further extend the learning experience, have your children collect sticks and use them to build tiny houses using a firm and then a weak foundation. (If there are no trees around, you

may need to take ice cream sticks with you to the park.)

- 5 Use “homemade” wind or rain to illustrate the difference between building on a strong or weak foundation. To do this, have your children blow air through a straw and squirt water from a water bottle onto their houses. As you are playing, use the questions provided to invite more discussion.

Questions for discussion

- How was the sand different from the rock?
- Which house withstood the rainstorm better, the one on a firm foundation or the one on the weak foundation?
- Would we trust God if the Bible said He was like a pile of sand?

Relevant Scripture

Psalm 18:30-31 *“As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the Lord is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in Him. For who is God besides the Lord? And who is the Rock except our God?”*

“I love you” is forever

drama / role play

With your children, watch the part of your wedding video where you and your spouse exchange your wedding vows. Or, look at wedding photos and repeat the vows you said to each other.

Explain that mom and dad promised to keep loving each other forever if good things happened in life or even if bad things happened. Assure your kids of your love for each other. You can define *faithfulness* as *love that goes on forever*. Read Mark 10:6-9, and review the questions for discussion.

Questions for discussion

- Are you the kind of friend who sticks with a friend in times of trouble?
- What kind of trouble can you imagine your friend or brother getting into that they would need you to stick by them?

Relevant Scripture

Mark 10:6-9 “But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’ For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh. So they were no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.”

Faithfulness in nature

getting into nature

This nature lesson explores the idea that some species of animals are so faithful, they mate for life. Some examples include wolves, dolphins and Canada geese. The geese are so faithful to each other that if one is shot down or injured, its mate will stay with it and endure hardship to help it survive.

Tell a story about a Canada goose pair that made their nest near a raccoon den by mistake. After making their nest and laying eggs, the mother goose sat on the nest to keep the eggs warm so they could hatch.

The first night, the raccoon attacked and broke the mother’s wing, but the pair was able to drive it away. The second night, the raccoon returned and broke the mother goose’s other wing, but still the geese would not leave their nest. The third night, the raccoon managed to kill the mother goose, but the father goose stayed on the nest. One morning, the baby geese finally hatched, and the father goose was able to help the goslings escape to the water where they were safe (This example is from the book *Character Sketches: From the Pages of Scripture Illustrated in the World of Nature*, by Institute in Basic Life Principles. Rand McNally, 1976. www.iblp.org).

Close by comparing the story of the mother bird sacrificing her life for her children with God’s huge sacrifice of sending His Son Jesus to die on the cross so our sins could be forgiven. Read 1 John 1:9, emphasizing that God is faithful and just and will forgive our sins! The questions for discussion can be used to solidify this lesson.

Questions for discussion

- What sacrifice did Jesus make for us?
- Have you ever made a sacrifice for a friend?

- We don’t necessarily have to die for our friends, but what could we sacrifice to show our friends that we are loyal?

Relevant Scripture

1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

Recommended resources

For a list of children’s stories that reinforce the theme of this lesson, consult the home page for the **faithfulness** lesson at Kidsofintegrity.com.

Planning card for faithfulness

point form

God's way

I am demonstrating godly character when:

- I am faithful and loyal
- I can be trusted to do what I say I will do
- I am willing to put the needs of others before my own

My way

When I am tempted to:

- be unfaithful
- not do what I have said I would do
- think only of my needs

And God is pleased!

I know that I need to go to God for help.

This week, we will focus on learning about faithfulness by:

Date complete:

Daily reminders: PRAY! | Speak words of blessing and affirmation | Review memory verse

Memory verse:

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Planning card for faithfulness

calendar form

God's way

I am demonstrating godly character when:

- I am faithful and loyal
- I can be trusted to do what I say I will do
- I am willing to put the needs of others before my own

My way

When I am tempted to:

- be unfaithful
- not do what I have said I would do
- think only of my needs

And God is pleased!

I know that I need to go to God for help.

This week, we will focus on learning about faithfulness by:

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Daily reminders: **PRAY!** | Speak words of blessing and affirmation | Review memory verse

Memory verse: