

# Keeping a Promise

By Susan Vogt



For those of us who are married, our wedding vows are a promise of lifelong commitment. This religious promise is called a covenant.

## For

Adult / Couple

## Season

Spring

## Needed

Memory of your wedding

## Prepare in Advance

- Invite your spouse to do this activity with you
- If you are not married, use the variation at the end.

## Activity Plan

1. Calm your spirit and open your mind and heart to God's presence.
2. Read or recall (either with your spouse or by yourself)
  - Genesis 9:12-17 God's covenant with Noah that the rainbow would be a sign of God's promise that "the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh" (see last page).
  - Genesis 17:1-22 God's covenant with Abraham that his wife, Sarah, would conceive in her old age and that their descendants would be many and rule many nations (see last page).
3. Ponder the nature of a covenant. A "Covenant" is a sacred promise. It is different from a contract. For example:

### Contract

conditional  
legal agreement  
specific limits  
can be broken  
50/50  
Old Testament (10 commandments)  
the law

### Covenant

promise  
spiritual bond  
unlimited  
unbreakable  
100/100 (total)  
New Testament (2 great commandments)  
the spirit

4. Ponder your marriage vows. Marriage vows between two Christians are more than a contract but rather they are a covenant. The essential ingredients of Matrimony are that the union be:



- Exclusive (just one spouse)
- Faithful
- Unconditional (a covenant, not just a contract)
- Permanent

5. Renew your marriage vows:

- “I \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.”
- Look through your wedding photos if you like. Toast yourselves.

### **Variation**

If you are not married, you can still honor promises that you make either to the other parent of your child(ren) and to other family members, especially your children.

- Are you reliable in keeping your commitments to your children either as a custodial parent or a visiting parent?
- How do you care for aging parents or relatives that may have come on hard times? Do you keep your promises to visit? Find ways to share your life with them, not just your money or holidays.



## **Genesis 9:12-17**

### **God's covenant with Noah**

And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth."

So God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth."

## **Genesis 17:1-22**

### **God's covenant with Abraham**

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty ; walk before me faithfully and be blameless. Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers."

Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram ; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God."

Then God said to Abraham, "As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come. This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner—those who are not your offspring. Whether born in your household or bought with your money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant."

God also said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her."

Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?" And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!"

Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation. But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year." When he had finished speaking with Abraham, God went up from him.

