

People of the Promise





Bobbi Tull

or the Lord gives wisdom;
from his mouth comes knowledge
and understanding. . . .
—Proverbs 2:6

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SESSION 1
PEOPLE OF THE PROMISE



Benedict: Establishing a Rule

words to remember

The beginning of wisdom is the most sincere desire for instruction, and concern for instruction is love of her, and love of her is the keeping of her laws, and giving heed to her laws is assurance of immortality, and immortality brings one near to God; so the desire for wisdom leads to a kingdom.

—Wisdom 6:17-20

prayer Almighty and everlasting God, your precepts are the wisdom of a loving Father: Give us grace, following the teaching and example of your servant Benedict, to walk with loving and willing hearts in the school of the Lord's service; let your ears be open to our prayers; and prosper with your blessing the work of our hands; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Collect for Benedict
Lesser Feasts and Fasts, July 11

COMMENTARY

Some of Saint Benedict's rules don't make sense to me. My parents' rules sometimes don't make sense either. I don't understand a lot of rules in my life. Why do we have them? Why should I obey them?

I am told that following rules will make me a better person. For example, I am not ever allowed to talk back to my parents. It is disrespectful and hurts their feelings. I get in trouble for doing that all of the time. I usually feel sorry for what I have done and wish that I had not done it.

But my parents always forgive me. Jesus forgives us when we break the rules, too. His love is like my parents' love for me.

—Mike, Grade 8

Youth prayer

Dear Lord, please help us understand the rules of our parents and Saint Benedict. Help us follow the rules even when we don't understand them. Thank you for forgiving us when we break the rules. Amen.

—Mike, Grade 8

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Proverbs 8:14-17

Tuesday—Ecclesiastes 7:11-13

Wednesday—Matthew 5:17-19

Thursday—Romans 7:4-6

Friday—Galatians 5:13-15

Saturday—II Timothy 2:1-5

voices



The rule of joy and the law of duty seem to me all one.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.

For us, with the rule of right and wrong given to us by Christ, there is nothing for which we have no standard. And there is no greatness where there is not simplicity, goodness, and truth.

Leo Tolstoy

Where love rules, there is no will to power; and where power predominates, there love is lacking.

Carl Jung

[Benedict] gave them a new way of looking at life precisely because they were to learn to put God at the very center of their lives.

Basil Hume





Bobbi Tull

—Romans 5:1

herefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. . .

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SESSION 2

PEOPLE OF THE PROMISE

Martin Luther: Reforming the Church



words to remember

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

—II Corinthians 5:17

prayer

Grant, Lord God, to all who have been baptized into the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ, that, as we have put away the old life of sin, so we may be renewed in the spirit of our minds, and live in righteousness and true holiness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

For all Baptized Christians
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 252-3

COMMENTARY

Martin Luther believed that we are “justified by faith,” or that we get into heaven by God’s grace and our faith. The leaders of the Church at that time had different views. They told people that they had to pay priests to pray for them and their loved ones in order to get to heaven. Luther felt strongly that he had to prove them wrong.

Luther’s beliefs about faith and his courage to question the use of prayers for pay resulted in his being excommunicated or expelled from the Church. That action played an important role in the Protestant Reformation.

Luther’s key teachings became part of the Protestant faith: only your faith in God will save you. You can give the Church a million dollars every Sunday or nothing at all. What matters is your faith in God.

—Mara, Grade 9

Youth prayer

Give me the courage like Luther had to be able to keep my beliefs in you strong, no matter what others may do or say. May I have faith in your Son to know that believing in you is what will get me into your kingdom and nothing else. May I have strength to carry this out, and the power to love and serve you forever. *Amen.*

—Mara, Grade 9

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Isaiah 1:25-26

Tuesday—Jeremiah 6:27-30

Wednesday—Matthew 3:7-10

Thursday—Luke 16:14-15

Friday—I Corinthians 6:9-11

Saturday—I Timothy 4:14-16

voices



The only reason people want to be masters of the future is to change the past.

Milan Kundera

You say you want a revolution
Well you know
we all want to change the world. . .
But when you talk about destruction
Don't you know that you can count
me out.

Paul McCartney

The order is
Rapidly fadin'.
And the first one now
Will later be last
For the times they are a-changin'.

Bob Dylan



—Isaiah 61:1

he spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners. . .



SESSION 3
PEOPLE OF THE PROMISE

Absalom Jones: Courage to Be Free



words to remember

For whoever was called in the Lord as a slave is a freed person belonging to the Lord, just as whoever was free when called is a slave of Christ. You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of human masters.

—1 Corinthians 7:22-23

prayer

Set us free, heavenly Father, from every bond of prejudice and fear; that, honoring the steadfast courage of your servant Absalom Jones, we may show forth in our lives the reconciling love and true freedom of the children of God, which you have given us in your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Collect for Absalom Jones
Lesser Feasts and Fasts, February 13

COMMENTARY

I think Absalom Jones was a very courageous person. If we still had slavery, I don't think many people would face the leaders of the Church like he did.

I wish there were more people like Absalom Jones. The way the people of his church treated the African Americans was wrong. Sometimes I feel guilty for how my ancestors treated people who were different from them.

At least Absalom Jones had enough courage to stand up for what he believed was right. He is one of the most courageous people in the Episcopal Church.

—Erin, Grade 8

Youth prayer

Dear God,
Help me to stand up for freedom like Absalom Jones did. Help clear the world of racism and hate so that everyone can live in peace. Help peace find it's way into everyone's heart so that the world will be a better place to live in.

—Erin, Grade 8

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Judges 8:22-23
Tuesday—Ezekiel 34:27-28
Wednesday—John 8:31-32

Thursday—Romans 6:6-8
Friday—I Corinthians 9:19-23
Saturday—Galatians 5:1, 13

voices



When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must . . . undergo the fatigue of supporting it.

Thomas Paine

It is my certain conviction that no man loses his freedom except through his own weakness.

Gandhi





—Mark 7:37

They were astounded beyond measure, saying, "He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."



SESSION 4
PEOPLE OF THE PROMISE

Thomas Gallaudet: Apostle to the Deaf



words to remember

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

—Isaiah 35:5-6a

prayer O Loving God,
whose will it is that everyone should come to you and be saved: We bless your holy Name for your servant Thomas Gallaudet whose labors with and for those who are deaf we commemorate today, and we pray that you will continually move your Church to respond in love to the needs of all people; through Jesus Christ, who opened the ears of the deaf, and who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

Collect for Thomas Gallaudet
Lesser Feasts and Fasts, August 27

COMMENTARY

Thomas Gallaudet was an apostle in his ministry to the deaf. Since his father had started a school for the deaf and his mother was deaf, he had grown up around many deaf people. He saw what it was like to be deaf, and he became concerned that deaf people should be able to worship God as easily as others.

After becoming an Episcopal priest, Thomas Gallaudet founded the first church for the deaf. Then other churches started providing ways for deaf people to worship. Those actions brought God's love into many people's lives.

Even though we are young, we can be like Thomas Gallaudet by helping others learn about God. We can visit nursing homes or hospitals to show God's love to the people there. We can take the Good News to people everywhere who need God's love.

—Christin, Grade 7

Youth prayer

Thank you, God, for letting me hear my family and friends. I'm thankful that Thomas Gallaudet had the idea of signing for a Sunday School class for the deaf so they could understand more about God. Thank you for people who sign the sermon and prayers and hymns for deaf people in church so they can know that God loves them. Amen.

—Cindy, Grade 8

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

- Monday—Leviticus 19:14
- Tuesday—Psalm 38:13-15
- Wednesday—Isaiah 43:8-9

- Thursday—Jeremiah 5:21-23
- Friday—Matthew 11:1-6
- Saturday—Mark 8:17-21

voices



Are we disposed to be the number of those who, having eyes, see not, and having ears, hear not, the things which so nearly concern their temporal salvation? For my part, whatever anguish of spirit it may cost, I am willing to know the whole truth; to know the worst, and to provide for it.

Patrick Henry

The mystery of language was revealed to me. I knew then that "w-a-i-e-r" meant the wonderful cool something that was flowing over my hand. That living word awakened my soul, gave it light, joy, set it free!

Helen Keller

God grant that I may know
Such little use for sound
That I shall lightly hear
The chain by which I'm bound. . .
God, since I cannot hear,
Grant Thou this boon to me;
A vision strong and clear
The way of life to see. . .

Emery Edwin Vinson





—Psalm 33:20

Our soul waits for the Lord;
he is our help and shield.

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SESSION 5
PEOPLE OF THE PROMISE

Kamehameha & Emma: Crowns of glory



words to remember

One who rules over people justly,
ruling in the fear of God,
is like the light of morning,
like the sun rising on a cloudless morning,
gleaming from the rain on the grassy land.

—II Samuel 23:3b-4

prayer

O Sovereign God,
who raised up
Kamehameha and
Emma to be rulers in Hawaii, and
inspired and enabled them to be diligent
in good works for the welfare of their
people and the good of your Church:
Receive our thanks for their witness to
the Gospel; and grant that we, with
them, may attain to the crown of glory
that never fades away; through Jesus
Christ our Savior and Redeemer, who
with you and the Holy Spirit lives and
reigns, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Collect for Kamehameha and Emma
Lesser Feasts and Fasts, November 28

COMMENTARY

Power doesn't always come to those who are going to make good decisions. With some people, power can become an obsession. They can become so caught up in how much power they have that they forget to consider the needs of other people.

Most of us will not be a king or queen like Kamehameha and Emma. But it's important for all of us, even if we have very few chances to influence others, to stop, think, and pray about whether our actions are right. If we do this, the world will be a better place.

—Jordan, Grade 8

Youth prayer

Dear Lord, help us think about others when we make decisions. Help us take time to stop and think whether our decision is good. Forgive us when we make greedy or unjust decisions.

—Jordan, Grade 8

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Deuteronomy 17:18-20
Tuesday—Psalm 2:10-11
Wednesday—Ecclesiastes 9:17-18

Thursday—Proverbs 20:26
Friday—Matthew 20:25-28
Saturday—I Timothy 2:1-2

voices



You are our protector,
You are our guardian and defender.
You are courage.
You are our haven and our hope. . .
You are our eternal life,
Great and wonderful Lord.

St. Francis of Assisi

He who has more learning than good deeds is like a tree with many branches but weak roots; the first great storm will throw it to the ground. He whose good works are greater than his knowledge is like a tree with fewer branches but with strong and spreading roots, a tree which all the winds of heaven cannot uproot.

Talmud

I expect to pass through this world but once; any good thing therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now; let me not defer or neglect it for I shall not pass this way again.

Proverb





—Psalm 84:3

Even the sparrow finds a home,
and the swallow a nest for
herself, where she may lay her
young, at your altars, O Lord of
hosts, my King and my God.

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SESSION 6

PEOPLE OF THE PROMISE

William Muhlenberg: Compassion for the Poor



words to remember

The poor are disliked even by their neighbors,
but the rich have many friends.

Those who despise their neighbors are sinners,
but happy are those who are kind to the poor.

—Proverbs 14:20-21

prayer

Do not let your Church close its eyes, O Lord, to the plight of the poor and neglected, the homeless and destitute, the old and the sick, the lonely and those who have none to care for them. Give us the vision and compassion with which you so richly endowed your servant William Augustus Muhlenberg, that we may labor tirelessly to heal those who are broken in body or spirit, and to turn their sorrow into joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Collect for William Muhlenberg
Lesser Feasts and Fasts, April 8

COMMENTARY

We often forget that we were all created equal in God's eyes. God made each of us different, but we are all his children, and he loves us all. It doesn't matter if we are rich or poor, or somewhere in between.

Other people are just as deserving of love as we are. Shouldn't we love everyone if God does? Shouldn't we love each other as brothers and sisters? God doesn't want us to judge other people because they are poorer or richer than we are. God wants us to help others feel his love and know he is there for them.

We need to love all people because we are all loved equally by God. We can do this with God's help.

—Annah, Grade 9

Youth prayer

God, help us remember that we cannot buy love. Please give us strength and courage to love others, regardless of how poor or rich they are. Help us welcome those who are rejected because of where they live or what they wear. Show us how we can help others to see and feel your love. Help us to not forget or overlook those who need our help and your love. Help us share the good news.

—Annah, Grade 9

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Psalm 140:12-13

Tuesday—Isaiah 58:7-9

Wednesday—

Lamentations 3:19-23

Thursday—Matthew 26:8-11

Friday—Mark 2:3-5

Saturday—Galatians 2:9-10

voices



... Creation calls thee God;
[Humanity] names thee Father; but
Solomon names thee Compassion,
and that is the most beautiful of all
thy names.

Victor Hugo

If your everyday life seems poor to
you, do not accuse it; accuse your-
self, tell yourself you are not poet
enough to summon up its riches;
since for the Creator there is no
poverty and no poor or unimportant
place.

Rainer Maria Rilke

Half an hour spent with Christ's
poor is worth far more than half a
million spent on them. It is neces-
sary to a sane Christianity.

Evelyn Underhill



—Matthew 25:36

was naked and you gave me
clothing, I was sick and you
took care of me, I was in
prison and you visited me.



SESSION 7
PEOPLE OF THE PROMISE

Florence Nightingale: Nursing the Sick



words to remember

And he gave skill to human beings
that he might be glorified in his marvelous works.
By them the physician heals and takes away pain;
the pharmacist makes a mixture from them.
God's works will never be finished;
and from him health spreads over all the earth.

—Sirach 38:6-8

prayer Life-giving God, you
alone have power
over life and death, over health and
sickness: Give power, wisdom and gen-
tleness to those who follow the exam-
ple of your servant Florence Nightingale,
that they, bearing with them your
Presence, may not only heal but bless,
and shine as lanterns of hope in the
darkest hours of pain and fear; through
Jesus Christ, the healer of body and
soul, who lives and reigns with you and
the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and
ever. *Amen.*

Collect for Florence Nightingale
Lesser Feasts and Fasts, May 18

COMMENTARY

We are often forced to do what society thinks we should do and not what we want to do. We are faced with peer pressure every day at school, and are hard pressed to rise above it. You may do something that you like to do, but if others tell you that it is dumb and meaningless, you stop doing it because you want to fit in.

Florence Nightingale was a person who took charge of her life and kept to her task even when her family and friends told her it was useless. If we stop doing something we think contributes to society because of peer pressure, we cheat ourselves out of great experiences. If we continue our tasks like Florence Nightingale, we will benefit from them and so will society.

—Peter, Grade 8

Youth prayer

Dear Lord,

We ask that we may only do things that are pleasing in your sight, and that you may help us to find the strength to accomplish our goals, individually and as a community. And we ask that you help us to stay on the path that we know is right, and if we stray, grant us the courage to get back on track. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

—Peter, Grade 8

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Exodus 23:25

Tuesday—Isaiah 33:24

Wednesday—Matthew 4:23-25

Thursday—Matthew 14:35-36

Friday—Mark 2:3-5

Saturday—Acts 5:12-16

voices



I don't see why any [one] who believes in medicine would shy at the faith cure.

Finley Peter Dunne

It may seem a strange principle to enunciate as the very first requirement in a Hospital that it should do the sick no harm.

Florence Nightingale

Illness is the night-side of life, a more onerous citizenship. Everyone who is born holds dual citizenship, in the kingdom of the well and in the kingdom of the sick.

Susan Sontag

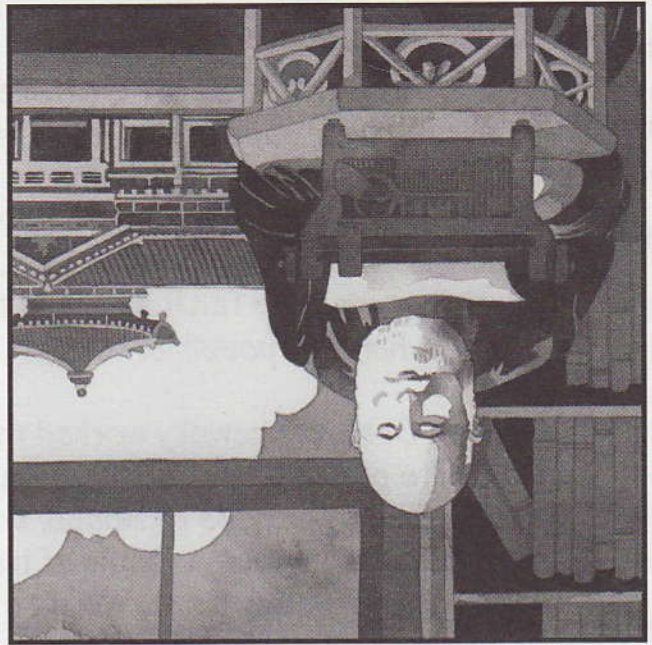
Wise [people] should consider that health is the greatest of human blessings, and learn how by [their] own thoughts to derive benefit from illness.

Hippocrates



—II Corinthians 4:15

es, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanks-giving, to the glory of God.



SESSION 8

PEOPLE OF THE PROMISE

Joseph Schereschewsky: Missionary to China



words to remember

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

—Matthew 28:18-20

prayer

O God, in your providence you called Joseph Schereschewsky from his home in Eastern Europe to the ministry of this Church, and sent him as a missionary to China, upholding him in his infirmity, that he might translate the Holy Scriptures into languages of that land. Lead us, we pray, to commit our lives and talents to you, in the confidence that when you give your servants any work to do, you also supply the strength to do it; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Collect for Joseph Schereschewsky
Lesser Feasts and Fasts, October 14

COMMENTARY

The story of Joseph Schereschewsky

illustrates our missionary responsibilities, a very important aspect of our role as Christians. As more and more people of our generation lose their faith in God, it is important that we keep faith and help to spread our beliefs whenever possible.

Joseph Schereschewsky worked most of his adult life so that the people of China would have a Bible. Because of illness, the work was very painstaking. As a result of his efforts, many Chinese have God's Word to live by.

It is important that we follow his example and open the minds of our peers to Christianity. Although we may not accomplish as much as Joseph Schereschewsky, he is an inspiration to overcome obstacles, prejudices, and hardships to fulfill our role as Christians.

—Matthew, Grade 9

Youth prayer

Almighty God, we ask that you give us all the strength to spread your word, even when we are challenged by the harshest obstacles. We ask that you help us to use Joseph Schereschewsky as an example, so that we may go into your world and spread your love to all people, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

—Matthew, Grade 9

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—II Kings 7:9

Tuesday—Psalm 116:10

Wednesday—Jonah 3:4-5

Thursday—Luke 24:45-48

Friday—John 20:21

Saturday—Romans 1:18-20

voices



It is good news, worthy of all acceptance! and yet not too good to be true.

Matthew Henry

Get on board, little children,
There's room for many a more. . .
The Gospel train's a-coming.

Get on Board, Little Children

Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere;
Go, tell it on the mountain,
that Jesus Christ is born.

John W. Work, Jr.

. . . God knew best. He kept me
for the work for which I am best
fitted.

Joseph Schereschewsky





—Psalm 147:4

[The Lord] determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names.

SESSION 9

PEOPLE OF THE PROMISE

Madeleine L'Engle: Sharing the Story



words to remember

For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

—Ephesians 2:10

prayer Almighty God our heavenly Father, you declare your glory and show forth your handiwork in the heavens and in the earth: Deliver us in our various occupations from the service of self alone, that we may do the work you give us to do in truth and beauty and for the common good; for the sake of him who came among us as one who serve, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

For Vocation in Daily Work
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 261

COMMENTARY

Every life matters, for God has given life to each and every one of us. Madeleine L'Engle believed this and has written about the importance of unconditional love for everyone.

Her writing also emphasizes the influence we have on other people and how important it is that we show love. I think we all should make a genuine effort to be kinder to everyone, even if they are different from us. Sometimes we need to put our own popularity on the line by showing compassion for others.

Madeleine L'Engle also writes about the importance of family. Family members need to respect each other and treat one another with understanding. You need your family to help you get through tough times when you are facing the worst of life's problems. Through commitment and love, you can help each other get through the roughest times.

—Timothy, Grade 8

Youth prayer

Help us be mindful of our families, to love them and to help each other through life's adversities. Give us strength to love, even if it would be easier to feel scorn and hatred. Thank you for the gift of life, and let us use our lives for good, helping those who are less fortunate, and loving our neighbor as ourselves. All this we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

—Timothy, Grade 8

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Exodus 35:10

Tuesday—Psalm 139:14

Wednesday—Luke 8:16-17

Thursday—Romans 1:11-12

Friday—I Corinthians 12:4-6

Saturday—Philippians 1:3-6

voices

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Although a writer of stories works constantly to train an observant and accurate memory, remembering is not necessarily a conscious act; it is often something which happens to me, rather than something I do.

Madeleine L'Engle

It is not easy thing to tell a story plainly and distinctly by mouth; but to tell one on paper is difficult indeed, so many snares lie in the way. People are afraid to put down what is common on paper, they seek to embellish their narratives, as they think by philosophic speculations and reflections; they are anxious to shine, and people who are anxious to shine can never tell a plain story.

George Borrow

In a story as in a play, you must make up your mind what your point is and stick to it like grim death.

W. Somerset Maugham

The true writer has nothing to say. What counts is the way he says it.

Alain Robbe-Grillet

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