

LESSON 6: Our Origin and Destiny

AIM

For the children to become familiar with the idea of God's wish for mankind, and how it relates to them in their daily living (2.2.8)

OUTCOME

Learners understand the idea of God as their origin and destiny.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- 1 **Show children a seed**, preferably an acorn, because such a mighty tree grows from it. Point out that, contained in one tiny seed, is an exact plan for what it will become. Jesus told a story about this. Read the Parable of the Mustard Seed [Matthew 13:31-32]. Everything, including us, develops according to a plan. Develop this idea in the following way, illustrating our origin as a seed, our journey through life as the growing tree, and our destiny as the fruit on the tree. Use natural objects - seeds, branches, fruits - or photographs as you develop the idea.
- 2 **Origin - We Come from God**: Revelation makes it possible for us to know God's plan for us. We find it revealed in the Bible which tells our story as the people of God. The Creation story in the book of Genesis tells us two wonderful things:
 - that God created us in his own image, and
 - that God breathes into us his own breath of life.

So we see that right from the beginning, God's people are related to him as intimately as a person is to their own breath. "We are God's handiwork." [Ephesians 2:10]
- 3 **Journey - We Walk with God**: Human beings were created in love to be happy. We could be described as the crown of God's creation. God has a plan for our world and each person has a special place in that plan. We are called to grow into the beings that God intends, and to share in the care and ordering of the world.
- 4 **Destiny - We Go to God**: God's plan is to draw all of Creation to himself, renewed and united with Christ. Scripture quotes that may be useful: [Ephesians 1:9-14; 1 John 4:13-17].
So God is both our source or beginning, our way and our destiny or end. God is the A to Z of our lives, or, as the Greek language spoken in Jesus' day puts it, our alpha (A) and our omega (Ω).
- 5 **Your Kingdom come**: We could say that God is King of our lives, and that our lives are full when we live in God's Kingdom. In the person of Jesus God's kingdom became visible and present among us. According to his plan, God's kingdom comes about in three ways:
 - The beginning was Jesus establishing the kingdom. This could be compared to the planting of seeds in a field.
 - The middle is the church continuing what Christ began, or the cultivating of the crop.
 - The end will be with the second coming of Christ at the time of harvesting the crop.



WHAT YOU NEED

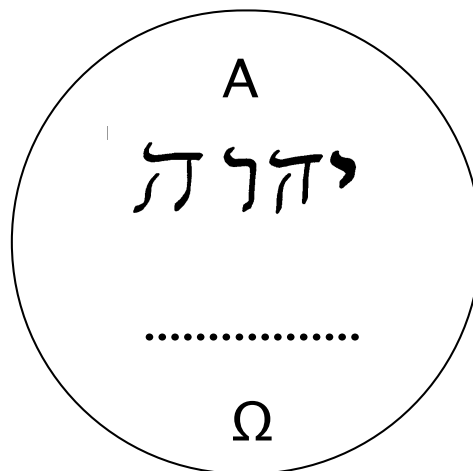
- * Seeds, branches, fruits (1)
- * Bible (1)(4)(7)(10)
- * Drawing materials (6)
- * Cardboard, scissors, coloured pencils (8)
- * A building plan (9)
- * 🎵 *Here I Am, Lord* (11)

However, God’s plan for his people didn’t end with the coming of Jesus. God sent his Holy Spirit (The Sanctifier) into Jesus’ followers, to give life to the community called Church so that its members could grow fully to become God’s children.

- 6 Learners are given time to reflect on the above while **drawing themselves** as a tree. Alternatively, they could make a triptych - one picture in three parts - drawing themselves as a seedling, a growing tree, and a tree laden with fruit.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 7 Matthew begins his gospel with a **genealogy** - a list of some of the people who played a part in carrying out God’ plan [Matthew 1:1-17]. Ask pupils to read it and pick out the names they are familiar with, for example Abraham, Joseph, and David, and to say what they did in God’s plan.
- 8 Make an *Alpha to Omega* **badge**. Learners cut a circular disc out of white cardboard, and on it they write in a decorative way the words or symbols Alpha and Omega. Between them they write the name of God, YHWH (pronounced Yahweh), and below it their own name. Yahweh is given in Hebrew in the illustration below.



- 9 The lesson could be developed around the idea of a **building**:
 - We Come from God: the plan (beginning),
 - We Walk with God: the construction work (life), and
 - We Go to God: the enjoyment of living in (end).
- 10 Tell the story of **Samuel’s call** [1 Samuel 3:1-4:1]. This story illustrates that God calls each of us to become something for others. We say that we each have a vocation or calling from God.
- 11 **Sing:** *Here I Am, Lord.*

LESSON 7: The Story of Israel

AIM

To give learners a broad overview of Biblical history (8.3.5)

OUTCOME

Learners have a broad overview of the history of Israel.



WHAT YOU NEED

- * Bible (1)
- * Worksheet (2) ⇨
- * Worksheet (3) ⇨
- * Bibles (4)

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- 1 **God's Plan for Israel:** The Bible is a record of God's plan for Israel as it unfolds in history. The story can best be portrayed in the form of a count down.
- 2 **Countdown:** Tell the story with the aid of a chart or table on the board like that on the worksheet, a copy of which each learner should have from the beginning. ⇨ You could begin with a brainstorm finding out what, if anything at all, the learners have heard about the story. They may recognise some of the names or events on the worksheet, and fill in what they know. Alternatively, you could keep the worksheet as an exercise after you have told the story.

→10 CREATION

God created a beautiful world for people to live in, in partnership with their Creator and Creation. Sadly Adam and Eve were misled and sin entered the world. At that time God made a promise that someday he would send a Redeemer, someone who would overcome the power of evil.

→9 RAINBOW COVENANT

As the population grew, so did sin. Only one just man, Noah, could be found and he and his family were saved in the Ark from the great flood by which God destroyed the earth. The population of the world started again with Noah's family. The rainbow is a sign of God's covenant of mercy and hope with all people.

→8 FATHER OF THE PEOPLE

Many years passed. The time came for God to begin a special nation of people who would be faithful to him as the one true God. He chose Abram and promised him that someday all the nations of the world would be blessed by his family. God changed his name to Abraham to show that he was beginning something new in God's plan.

→7 EXODUS

Abraham's grandson, Jacob and his family moved to Egypt because there was a food shortage. The Israelites lived peacefully in Egypt for over 400 years. Then a new Egyptian Pharaoh came to power. He was alarmed at the number and strength of the Israelites, and so he made them his slaves.

God chose Moses to lead his people to freedom. God gave them the Ten Commandments, his Law, which showed them how to live. God promised that if they followed his law, they would be blessed.

→6 THE PROMISED LAND

Joshua was chosen to lead the Israelites into freedom in Canaan, the Promised Land. After they had conquered the people living there, Joshua told the Israelites to choose between worshipping idols like the other people, and worshipping the one true God. The people promised to be faithful.

→5 THE JUDGES

When the people were settled in the Promised Land they were ruled by judges, wise men and women who were heroes in battle and filled with the Spirit of God. During this time the stories of people like Samson continued to help the Israelites understand that God gives power and strength to all who trust in God. The Israelites however, badly want to be ruled by a king, like other nations.

→4 THE KINGS

The first three were Saul, David and Solomon. They reigned in what is known as the Golden Age of Israel. God blessed them as long as they were obedient to him.

→3 THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

Solomon became greedy and proud. He no longer kept to the covenant, and on his death the kingdom was divided into Israel in the north and Judah in the south. This was the end of the Golden Age.

→2 THE PROPHETS

Finally, both the people of Israel and Judah were taken captive by enemy armies. During the long period of their exile they dreamed of having a king again, who, like David, would build them up into a great nation. The prophets foretold that one day a king would come. But he was not to be an earthly king: his would be the Kingdom of Heaven.

→1 AWAITING THE MESSIAH

When you are waiting for something, the time seems to go so slowly. Sometimes plans have to be changed. Things may happen unexpectedly. For 400 years after the prophet Malachi gave his message God seemed to be silent. God's people were ruled by a variety of nations – the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans. The Romans conquered all the surrounding nations and established peace. They also permitted different religions to flourish and so the Jewish people could worship God without fear. God's people had not been able to live up to the covenant. The Messiah, God's chosen One, would have to come and live with the people on earth and show and tell them how God wanted them to live.

→ ZERO HOUR!

God kept his promise to send a saviour to his people. Jesus, the Messiah was born of the Virgin Mary. John the Baptist recognised Jesus and prepared the way for him. The name Jesus means 'Yahweh is salvation'. Christ means 'anointed one' and comes from the Greek for Messiah. In everything he did, Jesus preached the Kingdom of God. Each time he taught the people, he invited them to be a part of God's kingdom by acting as he did.

- 3 **Worksheet:** If you kept the worksheet as an exercise after the story, give it now to the learners. They fill in the empty spaces with the names chosen from the given list. 📖 ⇨
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ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

4 Let the children write a short **newspaper article**, choosing from the following headlines. The relevant passages from Scripture are given in brackets. The children will need help in finding these passages. Later, in LESSON 18 and LESSON 19, they will gain more familiarity with the contents of the Bible, and how to look up references.

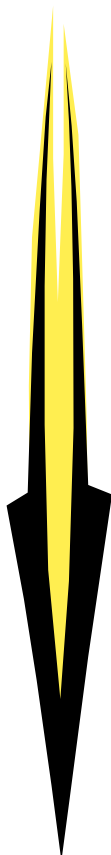
- BEAUTIFUL GARDEN NO LONGER HOME FOR ADAM AND EVE [Genesis 3]
- GOD SENDS GREAT FLOOD; NOAH AND FAMILY SAVED [Genesis 6:9-9:17]
- GOD PROMISES WORLDWIDE BLESSING THROUGH ABRAHAM [Genesis 11:27-12:9]
- GOD CALLS MOSES TO LEAD ISRAELITES FROM SLAVERY IN EGYPT [Exodus 3:1-4:18]
- GOD CHOOSES JOSHUA TO LEAD ISRAELITES INTO PROMISED LAND [Joshua 1]
- SAUL MADE FIRST KING OVER GOD'S PEOPLE [1Samuel 10:17-11:15]
- GOD'S PEOPLE TAKEN AS CAPTIVES TO ENEMY'S LAND [2Kings 24-25]
- JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD, IS BORN! [Matthew 2; Luke 2]

The learners display their articles arranged in the correct sequence on the class blackboard or school noticeboard under the heading: **SCRIPTURE REVEALS A BLUE PRINT FOR SALVATION.**

Countdown

THE STORY OF GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE

In the empty column fill in the names chosen from the list underneath the table.



10	CREATION	
9	RAINBOW COVENANT	
8	FATHER OF THE PEOPLE	
7	EXODUS	
6	THE PROMISED LAND	
5	THE JUDGES	
4	THE KINGS	
3	THE DIVIDED KINGDOM	
2	THE PROPHETS	
1	AWAITING THE MESSIAH	
0	ZERO HOUR - THE MESSIAH	

ABRAHAM

NOAH

JESUS

JOSHUA

MALACHI

MOSES

ADAM AND EVE

DAVID AND SOLOMON

ISAIAH AND JEREMIAH

JUDAH AND ISRAEL

SAMSON AND DEBORAH

LESSON 8: Partners with God

AIM

To bring the children to understand the idea of a covenant relationship between God and people (2.2.9)

OUTCOME

Learners understand the meaning and significance of a covenant between God and human beings.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1 Tell the story of the **Little Prince**.

There is a story about a Little Prince who lived on a faraway planet. One time, the prince came to earth and found himself in a desert. As he walked across the desert, he heard a voice cry, "Hello!" In front of him, he saw a small fox.

"Who are you and what do you want?" asked the Little Prince.

"I am a fox," said the fox. "Will you tame me?"

The Little Prince did not know what it meant to tame the fox. So the fox explained that he and the prince were now strangers. The Little Prince might hurt the fox. The fox was wild, and he might bite the prince. "But," said the fox, "if you tame me, we will establish ties. We will no longer be strangers. You will belong to me, and I will belong to you."

The prince began to tame the fox. Each day the prince sat quietly on the sand. The fox sat far away from him. Day by day, the prince and the fox moved closer to each other. Finally, one day the prince and the fox sat side by side. The prince put his arm around the fox. The fox lay his head on the little prince's shoulder. "Ah," said the fox, "you have tamed me. You belong to me, and I belong to you. Wherever you go in the universe, I will always be your fox, and you will always be my prince. We have established ties."

(Story adapted from chapter XXI of *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry)

2 Link the story with any of the following **biblical quotes**: Psalm 139; Isaiah 41:9-10, 13; Isaiah 43: 1-7; Jeremiah 29:11-14; Hosea 11:1-4. Ensure that the children understand that where the name Israel is used in referring to God's chosen people, they can replace it with their own name.

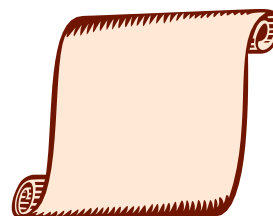
3 **Covenant**: Stress the fact that we are created by and for God. The Bible tells of how God chose a people and revealed herself to them. God trusted them with the creation, God's name and promises. With these chose people God made a covenant or agreement and blessed them with many gifts. Discuss agreements or contracts that children may enter into among themselves or at home or with their teacher.



WHAT YOU NEED

- * Story: The Little Prince (1)
- * Bible (2)
- * Worksheet: Illustration of a scroll (4) ⇒
- * Newspaper pictures and articles (5)
- * Ten Commandments and cardboard bookmarks (7)
- * Copies of the Covenant Renewal (8) ⇒

- 4 The learners make their own **personal covenant** with God. They write it on a scroll like this one, with a heading, *My Covenant with God*. They decorate the scroll. A worksheet is provided for this purpose. 📖 ➡



ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 5 Ask children to collect newspaper pictures and articles of people suffering. Paste them up near your class **Prayer Corner** and include these people in your daily prayers.
- 6 Ask children to write down one way that they can lighten a burden for someone else and build a 'wall' with these **promises** which can then be displayed.

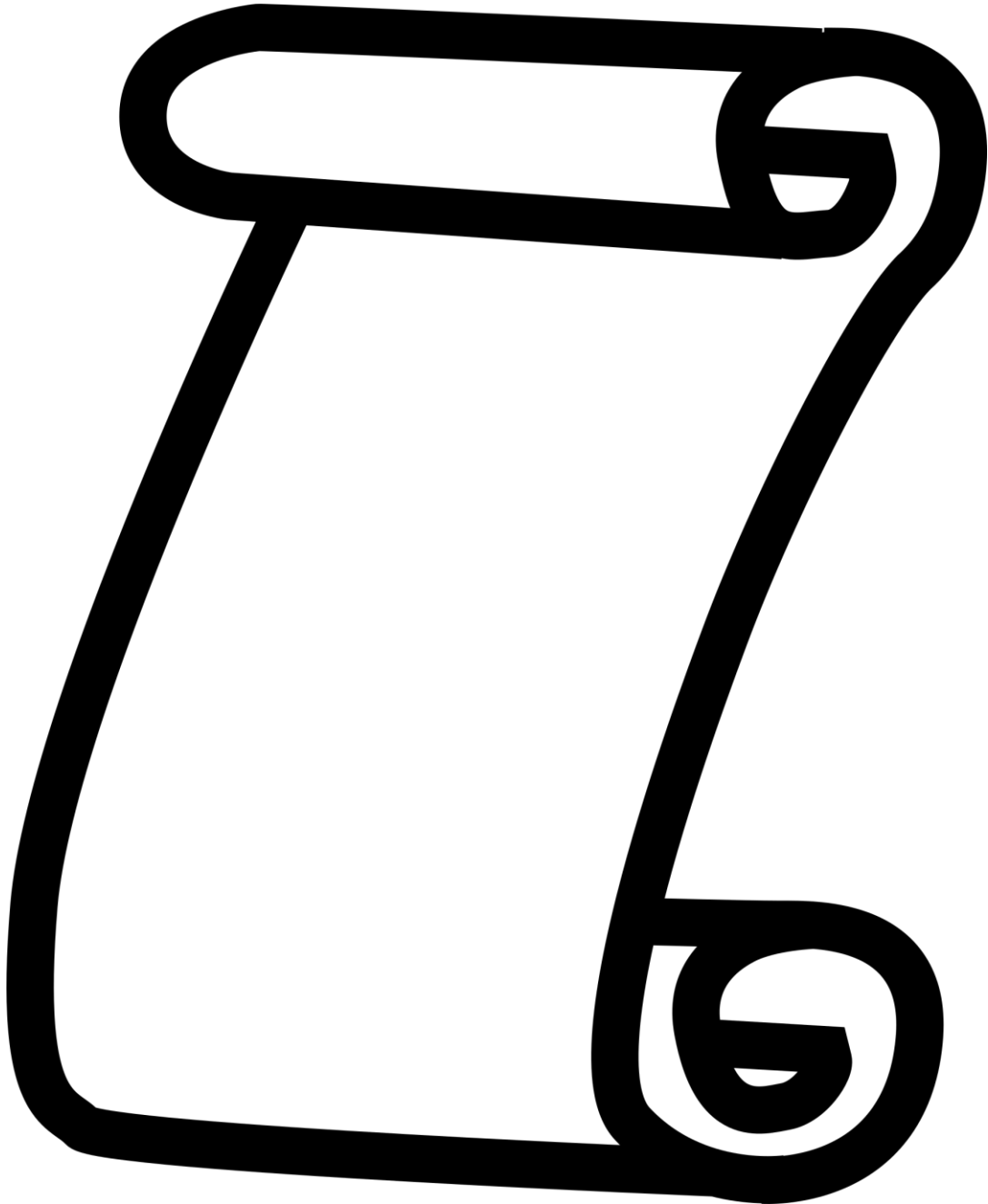
PROMISES TO KEEP

- 7 Let children learn the **Ten Commandments** [Exodus 20: 1-17]. You will need to supply them with a simplified list which may be written on a bookmark.
- 8 **A Covenant Renewal:** Arrange the chairs in a circle. Give the Bible a central place. Light a candle next to the open Book. 📖 ➡

TO REMEMBER

A covenant is an agreement between two people or groups, whereby the two promise to be faithful to one another.

My Personal Covenant



Covenant Renewal

LEADER

We come together today as the people of the covenant did long ago, to renew our covenant with God. We recall all the good things God has done for us from the beginning of our history as his children.

READER 1

We remember that he created us in her image;
that she called Abraham and Sarah and gave them a land;
that she saved his people from slavery in Egypt;
that she gave them a king when they wanted one;
that she forgave them again and again;
that she brought them home from exile;
and that in the fullness of time she sent her Son to them.

READER 2

We remember, too, God's goodness to use as well:
that he created and called each of us by name;
that he has cared for use every day of our lives;
that he brings us now to a new stage in our relationship with him.

LEADER

Let us take a moment now to ask ourselves in the silence of our hearts what God asks of us now. (Pause)

Let us stand and renew our covenant with God.

ALL

God, we thank you for creating and calling us to be your people. Make us worthy of your call. We want to serve you as you have commanded by loving you with all our hearts and our neighbour as ourselves. Amen.

LESSON 9: God's Promises

AIM

To further an understanding of the idea of God's covenant relationship with us by reflecting on the covenants recorded in the Scriptures (2.2.9)

OUTCOME

Learners understand that God invites people into a trusting relationship.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES


- 1 **Sing:** *I Will Never Forget You* or *I Will Be with You* or *Do Not Be Afraid*. Each of these songs reflects in its own way the faithfulness of God, caring for us.
- 2 **Two words** are important in today's lesson - 'friendship' and 'covenant'.

FRIENDSHIP: Discuss what makes a friend special. Lead children's response to the concept that friends are faithful and loyal. To have a friend I must be a friend. Get children to talk about being special and the importance of keeping promises.

COVENANT: From LESSON 8, a covenant is an agreement between two people or groups, whereby the two promise to be faithful to one another. It establishes a personal relationship between them. It is a serious promise or pledge, with both parties saying, "I'll do this if you'll do that". So a covenant calls for commitment. Put up a poster with the words

YOU SHALL BE MY PEOPLE,
AND I WILL BE YOUR GOD.

[Jeremiah 30:22]




- 3 In the Bible, which is the story of our ancestors in faith, we read of a number of **covenants** that God made with his people. Four will be studied in this lesson. One way of doing this will be to prepare four readers or groups of readers. After each reading, you may give a little further explanation, and the learners then fill in the relevant part of the worksheet.  ⇨

- 4 **Rainbow Covenant:** [Gen 9: 8-17]

In the story of Noah we read of the destruction of the earth because of sin. But we also read of God's love for his people and of his covenant with all living things. Noah is saved by his faithfulness. So too the world. God gives a rainbow as the sign of a covenant between himself and every living thing on earth.



WHAT YOU NEED

- *  *I Will Never Forget You* or *I Will Be with You* or *Do Not Be Afraid* (1)
- * Poster (2)
- *  Worksheet (3) ⇨
- * Bible (3)
- * Paint and paper for making a rainbow (9)
- * Copy of the Ten Commandments (10)
- * Covenant Renewal LESSON 8 (12)
- *  *Covenant* (14)

5 **Covenant with Abram** : [Genesis 17: 1-16]

God changed Abram and Sarai's names to Abraham and Sarah to show that they were the parents of a new nation and the father and mother of God's chosen people. God said to Abraham, "I will bless you abundantly and make you descendants as countless as the stars in the sky. In your descendants, all the nations of the earth shall find blessing".

6 **The Sinai Covenant:** [Exodus 19: 1-8; 24:1-8]

The Book of Exodus tells the story of how God used Moses to free the Israelites from slavery. Under God's protection they were 'going out' from Egypt, a land of slavery and death, to a new life of freedom in a land God had promised. This is called their 'exodus' or 'going out'. Once God had freed the Israelites from slavery, he wanted to help them use their freedom to live as his special people. God offered a covenant, not with a few people, but with the whole people of Israel.

The Covenant was made on Mount Sinai, after which God gave Moses his law for the people. Israel's Covenant with God was clearly defined in the Ten Commandments, which described their responsibilities to God and to each other as God's people. The Ten Commandments were meant to help them grow in freedom and responsibility, to respect God and others and to live in peace and harmony. This most solemn covenant was sealed with a sacrifice. In those days, blood was the sacred sign for life. So they were God's chosen people, called to be forever a community of faith and trust.

7 **The New Covenant:** [Luke 22:14-20]

After Moses there was a long period when the Israelites failed to keep their promise to God to be faithful to the law. A new agreement or covenant was needed. God promised through the prophets, "I will make a new covenant with you" [Jeremiah 31: 31]. "I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you." [Ezekiel 36: 26]

Jesus fulfilled these promises made by God through his prophets. He made a New Covenant for us with God. The law of this New Covenant is not written on stone tablets, but in our hearts - it is the Law of Love. "As I have loved you - you must love one another" [John 13: 34].

8 Followers of Jesus enter into a **covenant of new life** with God at baptism. Give each child a copy of the following text. Get them to decorate the first letter and put a beautiful frame around it. We begin our covenant relationship with God at Baptism.

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

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 9 In the Flood story, the rainbow is a symbol of God's presence calling his people to a new beginning. Make a **rainbow poster** and write on each colour different things that show God's presence in South Africa today.
- 10 Read the **Ten Commandments** and encourage the children to memorise them.

GRADE 4

- 11** Ask the children, with the help of their family, to select one **relative or ancestor** who is good example of a faithful person. It might be someone who uses his or her gifts to make life better for others.

Find out all you can about them.

Write a short profile describing the person.

Share it.

- 12** **Covenant renewal:** see LESSON 8 ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY 8.

- 13** **What's in a name?** Explain that in ancient times a person's name did not just tell you who he was. It also told you a great deal about his deeper identity.

Think about the way we use nicknames. The people of Israel had many names for God. They called him 'The Almighty', 'Lord', 'King'. When God gave his personal name to Moses at the Burning Bush, in Hebrew it was YHWH, pronounced Yahweh. It was written like this:

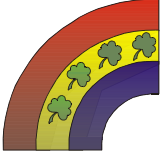

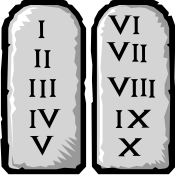
יְהוָה

It means "I am" or "He who really is". It told Moses that God was there for him and the people.

- 14** **Sing:** *Covenant*. This song has the chorus:

For you will be my people,
and I will be your God. [Jeremiah 30:22]

A Covenant Relationship

COVENANT MADE THROUGH	COVENANT MADE WITH	WHAT GOD WILL DO	WHAT MANKIND MUST DO
<p><i>Noah</i></p> <p>[Genesis 9:8-17]</p> 			
<p><i>Abraham</i></p> <p>[Genesis 17:1-16]</p> 			
<p><i>Moses</i></p>  <p>[Exodus 19:1-8]</p>			
<p><i>Jesus</i></p> <p>[Luke 22:14-20]</p> 