



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

LESSON 47

WOMEN WHO STRUGGLED FOR FREEDOM

You may summarize the stories to tell about all four women in one lesson, choose just one woman's story to tell, tell each one over four successive weeks, or some other combination that works for your setting.

Summary of Today's Story

Over the years, the Episcopal Church has designated a number of men and women to be specially commemorated in the Church calendar. Many of these people are individuals whom the whole Church regards as "saints." Some of these people were martyrs, but many lived without persecution. Some are universally known, but some are known only in the Anglican Communion, and many are barely known to most people in the Church. Some were devout, all were faithful Christians, but none were perfect. All were models of the faith.

Today's lesson is about four 19th-century women whom the Church calls "liberators and prophets." We also call them saints and "Easter people" because they represent the Good News of Christ's resurrection to the world. In our Baptismal Covenant, we are asked, "Will you strive for justice

and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?" (BCP, p. 305) These women surely answered loudly and persistently, "I will, with God's help."

Look for these special qualities in the lives of the people that we are studying today:

- Vision and courage to stand against oppression and injustice
- Prophetic voices speaking God's word

When the Church Celebrates Their Ministry

July 20: Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Amelia Bloomer, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Ross Tubman, 19th century liberators and prophets

In the book *Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, now published as *Holy Women, Holy Men* (NY: Church Publishing Incorporated, 2010), you can find a short biography and Scripture readings, arranged by date, for these saints. The suggested Bible readings during this lesson's Prayer time are those included in *Lesser Feasts and Fasts* or *Holy Women, Holy Men*.



Weaving Our Story with the Biblical Story

In the nineteenth century (and even now), many people in the United States took for granted the idea that women and African Americans had not the worth of white males. Servitude, oppression and inequality were all accepted as part of the fabric of American society and even as part of natural law. Some people opposed such unjust ideas and practices but felt unable or powerless to “change the system.”

But these four women—Elizabeth, Amelia, Sojourner, and Harriet—courageously worked with prophetic vision for the liberation of all people. They worked to gain for the oppressed persons their rightful places as “children of God” as promised in the Bible. In doing so, they often had to challenge the common idea that the Bible itself justified such oppression. Their work was unrewarding, risky and even dangerous, and they did not live to see their prayers and hopes fulfilled.

But they forged the path for liberation of all people, and so they are true bearers of the prophetic word in our society. They are liberators not just of the oppressed—the women and the African Americans, for whom they so eloquently spoke and worked—but also of the oppressors who are slaves to unjust systems and hearts.

Thus in *Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, we call them “liberators and prophets.” They have given us a vision of freedom and dignity for all, fulfilling what we promise in our Baptismal Covenant, to strive for justice and peace.

We can also look around and ask whether people are still treated unjustly and oppressively. We know that there are still grave injustices in our world. We know that “equal pay for equal work” is still not a reality for many women. We know that African

American people still live under the burden of moral and economic debt that is bequeathed to them by the legacy of slavery. We know that Jews are too often still treated with hostility as if we can deny the heritage and religious tradition of our own Lord. We know that other groups still face discrimination and hostility.

So the work of these four women needs to be continued by us. Can we too see the vision of the reign of God as including all people? Can we live that out, by working for God’s justice in this world?



The Episcopal Thread

The Episcopal Church has always been a church active in the world. Episcopalians are also active in working for justice and peace, and in promoting the “social gospel.”

The Baptismal Covenant makes clear that work for justice and peace is something for all of us to do. All of us who have been baptized reaffirm this promise whenever there is a baptism in the church.

In the Episcopal Church, we regard them as “saints” not because they performed any miracles or lived perfect lives without sin. We call them “saints” because of their fidelity to Jesus Christ and their lives of devotion to following his example. We call them “saints” because they are examples for us, not of earthly perfection, but of ordinary people living extraordinary lives dedicated to Christ. They all have special qualities that can teach us how we too can be faithful Christians, following in his footsteps as they did.

The Episcopal Church, in its triennial General Convention, makes changes to the Church calendar, as more individuals are recognized as holy people for us. The calendar on pages 19-30 of the *Book of Common Prayer* lists, by date, the names of people who are commemorated as of the printing of the 1979 Prayer Book. Since then, many more people have been added. The companion book *Lesser*

Feasts and Fasts is a resource for the special days to be observed in the Church, including the various “saints” as designated by the Episcopal Church. It was updated every three years to reflect the triennial changes made by General Convention, and in its last reprinting in 2010, its title was changed to *Holy Women, Holy Men*. Information in these books is arranged by date—usually the date of their death, not their birth. For each person or persons commemorated there is a special prayer, Scripture readings and a brief biography.

Where Holy Eucharist, Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer are held daily in a church, these saints are often remembered on their day of commemoration. The officiant or celebrant will use the opening collect and the readings for the day’s worship. Often a brief homily will offer thoughts on why this person is important to us and what we can learn from her or him.



Gathering

As the children enter the room, engage them in a simple activity that relates to today’s lesson. You might

invite them to color a picture or work on a simple craft. See Gathering Activity Ideas in the Appendix (also downloadable) for suggestions.

Allow older children a brief time for socializing before beginning the lesson. This is a good time for children to form closer relationships with their church friends.

After all the children have arrived and had a few minutes of activity or fellowship time, gather them together and say a simple opening prayer.

- Heavenly Father, we thank you that you have brought us together today as your church family. Open our eyes and our ears so that we can hear your story and see your love in this room and in the world. We pray for all of us here, and for those not here, asking especially for your blessing on

those who are sick today. This we ask in Jesus’ name. *Amen*.

Or you may use this adaptation of the prayer prayed on the day that we celebrate the ministries of these women (from *Lesser Feasts and Fasts*):

- O God, whose Spirit makes us free: Be with us as you were with Elizabeth, Amelia, Sojourner, and Harriet. Help us to help all your children be safe and free from danger. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen*.



Telling the Story

Stories about today’s saints are printed at the end of the lesson plan (pp. 7-10) for you to use during storytelling. If you know additional interesting stories about your saint-for-the-day, share them with your children.

There are a number of children’s books on the Underground Railroad and on the story of the Drinking Gourd, including a children’s book by Jeanette Winter called *Follow the Drinking Gourd* (New York: Knopf, 1988) about the Underground Railroad. These would be good supplemental readings for children of all ages.

You may use any of these enhancements to bring the story to life for the children:

- puppets: hand puppets, stick puppets, marionettes
- flannel board with felt or paper figures
- expressive voice (*Tell the story with the enthusiasm and grit with which these women lived. They are us!*)
- drama (*Invite the children to act out the major roles.*)
- map of the eastern United States to show where the women lived and the route of the Underground Railroad

Let the children hear the story without analyzing it for them or discussing it. For now, simply let the story sink into their minds and hearts. Later, while having snacks, you can bring up the story again and invite the children to talk about it and explore its message.



Prayer

Set up a small worship center in your room.

Materials:

- small table with a cloth to cover it
- 2 candles or a single large Christ candle
- matches
- Bible
- cross
- optional:* flowers (real, artificial or handmade by the children)

Have the children set up a simple altar with the materials listed above. Invite them to place on the altar any drawings or crafts that they created during Gathering time. Then light the candles.

Read a verse of scripture from a Bible. If working mainly with older children, you might expand the reading to several verses.

Suggestions for the reading:

Luke 11:5-10 (perseverance in prayer)

Help familiarize the children with our liturgy by doing the reading as it is done in church. Read as follows:

Reader: A reading from the book of Luke: (*Read the selected passage.*)

Reader: The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Invite the children to sit in a circle and join in prayer. Say a brief prayer yourself, then invite prayers from each child in the circle:

- Invite prayers of thanks for God's work in our lives during the past week. Encourage them to see in their everyday lives, and even in the smallest things, how God is at work in them.

- Welcome any prayers of concern or petition for themselves or for others in need. Also include a prayer for all those in our community, nation and world who are burdened by injustice and hatred for them. Pray for the poor and for the rejected.
- Ask if anyone has had a birthday or celebrated a special day during the past week and give thanks for these special times.
- End by praying together the Lord's Prayer.

Carefully extinguish the candles.



Sharing

As you pass out snacks, say a simple grace, such as:

- Bless our families.
Bless the food that we eat.
Let us be a blessing
to everyone we meet. *Amen.*

If you wish, have children share a favorite grace from home or church camp. If everyone knows the prayer, pray it aloud together.

This is an excellent time, while sharing a snack, to begin talking about the story that the children have just heard. Wonder together about:

- Elizabeth, Amelia, Sojourner and Harriet seem like they were not afraid to stand up for what they believed was right, to stand up against what they saw was wrong or evil. Or were they afraid but they stood up anyway?
- How can we follow their example?
- Where are the unjust situations today? Is anyone treated unfairly at school? in the playground? Is there anyone who is always teased or bullied?
- How can we stand up and defend them? If you had a chance, how would you do it? Have you ever stood up for someone else who was being picked on or treated badly?



Memorization

There is no suggested Bible passage to memorize for this lesson.



Weaving the Family of God

As your time together draws to a close, take a few minutes to help the children summarize the story

and say what they learned today by asking questions such as:

- Who did we talk about today?
- Can you remember something that they did to help God and others?

Encourage the children to remember key words from the story, such as: *prophets, freedom, women.*



Closing Prayer

Before the children leave, say a closing prayer to send them into

the church worship service or back to their homes with God's love and blessing. The prayer can be very simple, such as this one:

- Almighty God, we thank you for the love that you give to us in your Son Jesus Christ. We thank you also for giving us such people as Elizabeth, Amelia, Sojourner and Harriet who are examples of how we can follow Jesus. Send us back to our families to love you just as you love us, and to love our families, friends and neighbors. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

End with a dismissal used in church, such as:

- Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

The children respond,

- Thanks be to God!



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

THE WOMEN WHO STRUGGLED FOR FREEDOM

Today we will hear some stories about four people who were important in the Church. Sometimes we call these people “saints.” We might also call them “Easter people.” When we say that somebody is a saint, it doesn’t mean that they are people with super powers. In our church, a saint is somebody who loves God and who tried to do what God wanted them to do. Some of these people are famous, and you may already know their names—St. Patrick, St. Nicholas, for example. But many saints are not famous at all. They didn’t do anything amazing that the whole world knows about, but they did God’s work. There may be saints like that whom you know—people like your grandmother who cared for her children when they were sick, your uncle who quietly gave his life savings to his church, or the stranger on the street who smiles and listens to homeless people and gives them hope and friendship. Saints are regular people like you and me who do God’s work. For the next few weeks in church school we will be hearing about some of the saints our Church wants us to know about.

(You may summarize the stories to tell about all four women in one lesson, choose just one woman’s story to tell, tell each one over four successive weeks or some other combination that works for your setting.)

Let me tell you about four amazing women who lived around a hundred years ago in the United States. They were all born in the early 1800s and died in the late 1800s or early 1900s. Their names are *Elizabeth, Amelia, Sojourner* and *Harriet*. When they were born, African-Americans were still slaves in the South, and women were not allowed to vote. Men did not think women could do much, and whites did not think that blacks were worth much. These four women fought to

uphold and affirm the dignity of every human being, even when their country did not. But today our church recognizes their leadership and calls them liberators and prophets.



Elizabeth Stanton and Amelia Bloomer were friends. Elizabeth spent her whole life trying to help women. She did this by talking to people about how unfairly women were treated. She preached hundreds of sermons and made hundreds of speeches all across the country. What a speaker she was!

It rankled Elizabeth that women were not allowed to vote, or own any land by themselves, or take certain jobs, just because they were women. They were not allowed to be priests in the church. And when they did work in a job, they got paid a lot less than men did. All of this unfairness made Elizabeth angry, and she scolded the church as well as the government for letting this situation happen. To her, people read the Bible in ways that were not right, in ways that made it look like women should not be treated equally to men.

Elizabeth also met with other women to form groups that would study the Bible and to form the groups that would fight for women's rights. She was far ahead of her time, in her struggle to help women. Eventually many of the reforms that she wanted for women did happen, but not until after she died.



Amelia Bloomer, Elizabeth's friend, also worked to help women. Her big project was making more comfortable clothes for women. She hated the tight corsets that women had to wear, which gave lots of women bad health problems. One day, she printed a picture of herself in her newspaper called *The Lily*. This was a picture of her wearing a pair of loose-fitting Turkish Trousers. She also began wearing these pants in public. This was at a time when women only wore long dresses. Soon, other women began to wear them, and the puffy billowy pants that we call "bloomers" (named after Amelia) were born. People were outraged! They thought she was indecent! From the pulpit, many priests attacked the women

who wore these clothes. She got to be very popular because she was so willing to argue with the clergy.

But she was also kind to them, and to everybody else. She became known for her hospitality to traveling clergy and reformers. (We can guess that these were the ones brave enough to talk with her!) She was also known for her kindness of heart and her love of truth and right. When she got older, she worked to establish churches, libraries and schoolhouses. Amelia and Elizabeth must have been great companions!

* * * * *

Now let us meet Sojourner Truth. “Sojourner Truth” was not her real name. She was born Isabella, a slave, and she was known as “Belle.”

With the help of some Quaker friends, Belle escaped from slavery. She ended up in a very poor part of New York City and saw how much people needed food, homes and warm clothing, so she set up a homeless shelter for women and worked there for a long time.

When she was 46, she heard God say to her, “Go east.” She went to Long Island and to Connecticut, finally ending up at a Quaker farm looking for work. “What is your name?” they asked her. She said, “My name is Sojourner.” (A sojourner is a person on a journey.) Then they asked, “What is your last name?” She had always used her slave master’s last name, but she now thought, “The only master I have now is God, and His name is Truth.” So that is what she gave as her last name: Truth.

Now called Sojourner Truth, she became a traveling preacher. She would go to religious revivals for white people and boldly ask if she could speak. Right away, people could tell that she was wise, witty and six feet tall. Not many people said no to her. When she spoke, she told a lot of stories from the Bible, and not many people knew that she could not read or write a single word. She just knew much of the Bible by heart. Then she would end her sermons by singing a hymn that she made up and talking about the evils of slavery. Her most famous speech, which you may hear someday, is called “Ain’t I a Woman.” For she struggled not only for

the freedom of African-American slaves but also for the liberation of women. She has been called “Miriam of the Later Exodus,” remembering Moses’ sister Miriam when the Hebrew slaves were freed from Egypt.



Harriet Ross Tubman was also born a slave. We know that she suffered beatings and a severe injury as a child, but she grew up to be strong and defiant. She refused to look “happy and smiling” to her slave owners. She loved to listen to Bible stories, especially the story of Moses and the Exodus.

When she was 24, she escaped to Canada. But she had to leave her own family and the other slaves behind. She could never forget them. Working with Quakers, she made more than 19 trips back and forth from Maryland to Canada with escaping slaves, between 1851 and 1861. She led more than three hundred people to Canada and to freedom, as part of the “Underground Railroad.” She was so good at this that \$40,000 was offered for anyone who could capture her. That was a huge amount of money in those days! Mostly for this brave work, she is known as “Moses of her People.”

Her work to free the slaves was very dangerous, but Harriet said that God guided her struggle against slavery. God had given her omens, dreams and warnings whenever danger was near, to protect her. She also saw the coming of the Civil War in a vision.

But before the war began, she went to New York and opened her home to African-American orphans and to helpless elderly people who had nowhere else to go. She also set up some schools for African-American children, even though she could not read or write herself.

When the war did come, Harriet joined the Northern Union Army as a cook and nurse. She cared for both Confederate and Union soldiers, helping anyone who was hurt, no matter what side they were on. She was also a spy and secret scout for the army. One day, she led 300 black troops on a raid to free 700 slaves. This action made her the first American woman to lead troops into military action.



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

THE STORY OF THE DRINKING GOURD

Harriet Ross Tubman was the most well-known “conductor” of the Underground Railroad. This was a secret network of people and places that hid escaped slaves on their dangerous journey to freedom—north usually to Canada. Another “conductor” was a one-legged sailor named Peg Leg Joe. Joe hired himself out as a worker on plantations. While he was there, he made friends with the slaves and taught them what sounded like a simple folk song, “Follow the Drinking Gourd.” But hidden in the lyrics of this song were the directions for following the Underground Railroad. The Drinking Gourd is the Big Dipper, which points to the North Star. If the escaped slaves followed the stars north, and then followed the rest of the directions in the song, they would eventually come to the Ohio River, where Peg Leg Joe would be waiting to ferry them across to the free states on the other side. From there, sympathetic people would guide them from one hiding place to another, until they finally arrived in Canada or in other safe places in the North.

On pages 16-17 are the lyrics to the song. The phrase “When the sun comes back, and the first quail calls” refers to the coming of spring, when it is safest to travel. “The dead trees” would have the signs that Peg Leg Joe marked, to show the fugitives that they are headed in the right direction.



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

FOLLOWING THE STAR TO FREEDOM for Preschool

In this game, children chase the “drinking gourd” star that reminds them of the way Harriet Tubman led people to freedom.

Materials:

flashlight

Directions:

1. Invite children to form two groups, lined up in relay-style lines.
2. Turn off the lights in the room. Tell the children that you will shine the flashlight on the floor, and the first person in each line is going to try to follow that star and step on it, and follow it “to freedom.” Tell them that when you say, “Now you’re free!” both players should run back to the end of their lines and let the next children try to find the star.
3. Shine the light around the room on the floor. End the light at the other end of the room from the children’s lines.
4. Play until every child has had a turn in following the star.



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

FOLLOW THAT STAR

for Preschool, Primary

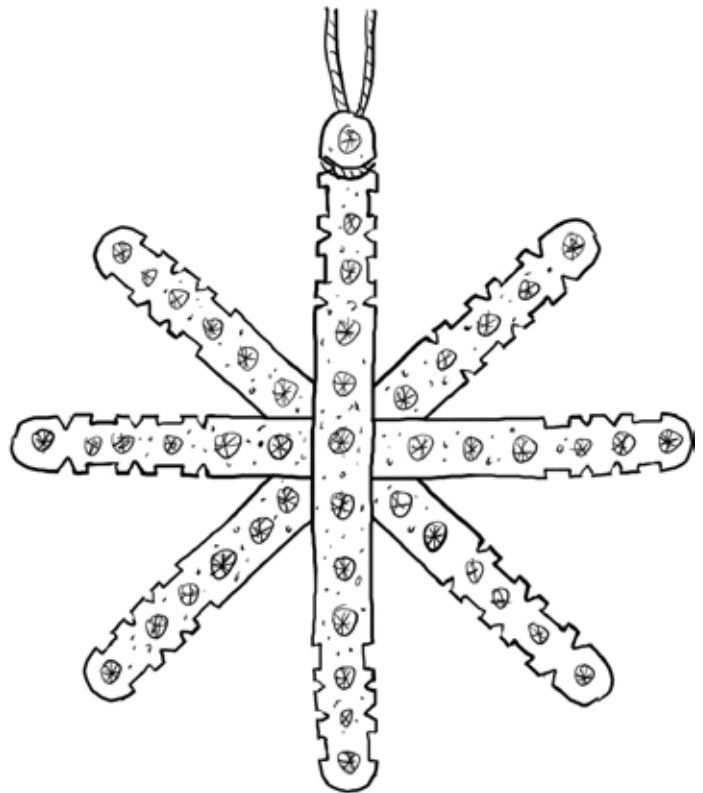
Children make a shiny star from craft sticks, glitter and sequins.

Materials:

notched craft sticks
glue
glitter in a shaker
shoe box or box lid
thread
scissors
optional: sequins

Directions:

1. Give each child four craft sticks.
2. Show the children how to glue the four sticks on top of each other in a star shape. (See illustration.)
3. For a fancy decorative effect, glue sequins onto the star.
4. Make dots of glue all over the star. Place in a shoebox or box lid and sprinkle glitter over the sticks.
Let the glue dry.
5. Have an adult help tie a length of thread around one of the notches to make a loop for hanging.





WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

POP-UP "DRINKING GOURD" STAR PICTURE

for Preschool, Primary

Children make a picture of the night sky with the Big Dipper and the North Star.

Materials:

"Drinking Gourd" star picture (p. 15) and "Drinking Gourd" words (pp. 16-17)
dark blue or black foam sheets or posterboard
dark blue or black construction paper
clear plastic report covers or transparencies
black pen
scissors
gold star stickers
hole punch
glue

Preparation:

Make a copy of the "Drinking Gourd" star picture and "Drinking Gourd" words for each child.

Directions:

Invite each child to make a picture as follows:

1. Put the clear plastic sheet on top of the star picture. Tape or paper clip them together so they stay together while you are working.
2. Carefully trace the star pictures onto the transparent sheet. Be sure to add the + inside the stars wherever you find them. These are the stars that will be 3-dimensional, the "drinking gourd" stars of the Big Dipper and the North Star. Can you see them?
3. Take off the paper with the star picture underneath the clear plastic sheet and put it aside or throw away.
4. Carefully put glue along the edge of a piece of dark blue or black construction paper. Put the plastic sheet on top of the construction paper.
5. Cut a piece of foam sheet to match the size of your picture. Cut a 2" border to make a frame. Glue this foam frame on top of the plastic sheet.
6. On the star pictures *without* the +, put a star sticker.
7. Use the unused part of the foam sheet to punch 8 holes. Carefully glue these holes to the stars *with* the +. Then put a star sticker on these holes. This will make these stars stand out more.
8. Cut out the "Drinking Gourd" words and glue them to the front of your frame.





WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

FOLLOW THE DRINKING GOURD

Follow the drinking gourd!

Follow the drinking gourd.

For the old man is a-waiting for to carry you to freedom

If you follow the drinking gourd.

When the sun comes back, and the first quail calls,

Follow the drinking gourd.

For the old man is a-waiting for to carry you to freedom

If you follow the drinking gourd.

(Refrain)

The riverbank makes a very good road,

The dead trees will show you the way.

Left foot, peg foot, traveling on,

Follow the drinking gourd.

(Refrain)

The river ends between two hills,

Follow the drinking gourd.

There's another river on the other side,

Follow the drinking gourd.

(Refrain)

When the great big river meets the little river,
Follow the drinking gourd.
For the old man is a-waiting for to carry you to freedom,
If you follow the drinking gourd.



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

TREASURE FREEDOM TRAIN

for Preschool, Primary, Elementary

Children make a train of treasures that lead to the freedom God gives.

Materials:

shoe boxes	poster board or other stiff cardboard
cardboard paper tubes	hole punch
spray paints	paper fasteners
newspaper	<i>optional:</i> magazines with lots of pictures
markers	<i>optional:</i> stickers with lots of different pictures
crayons	plain white paper
“locomotive parts” pictures (pp. 19-20)	scissors
	glue or tape

Preparation:

Make a copy of the “locomotive parts” pictures on the next page. Use these pictures to cut an engine room and four wheels for each child from poster board or cardboard. Punch a hole in each wheel.

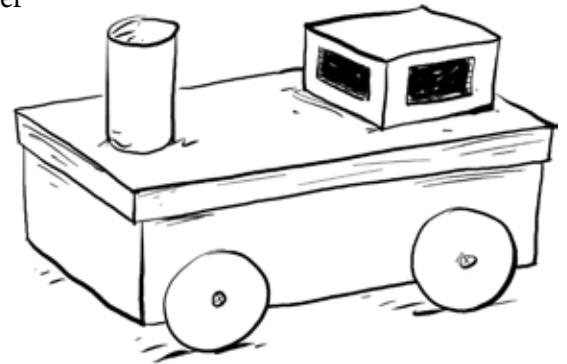
Directions:

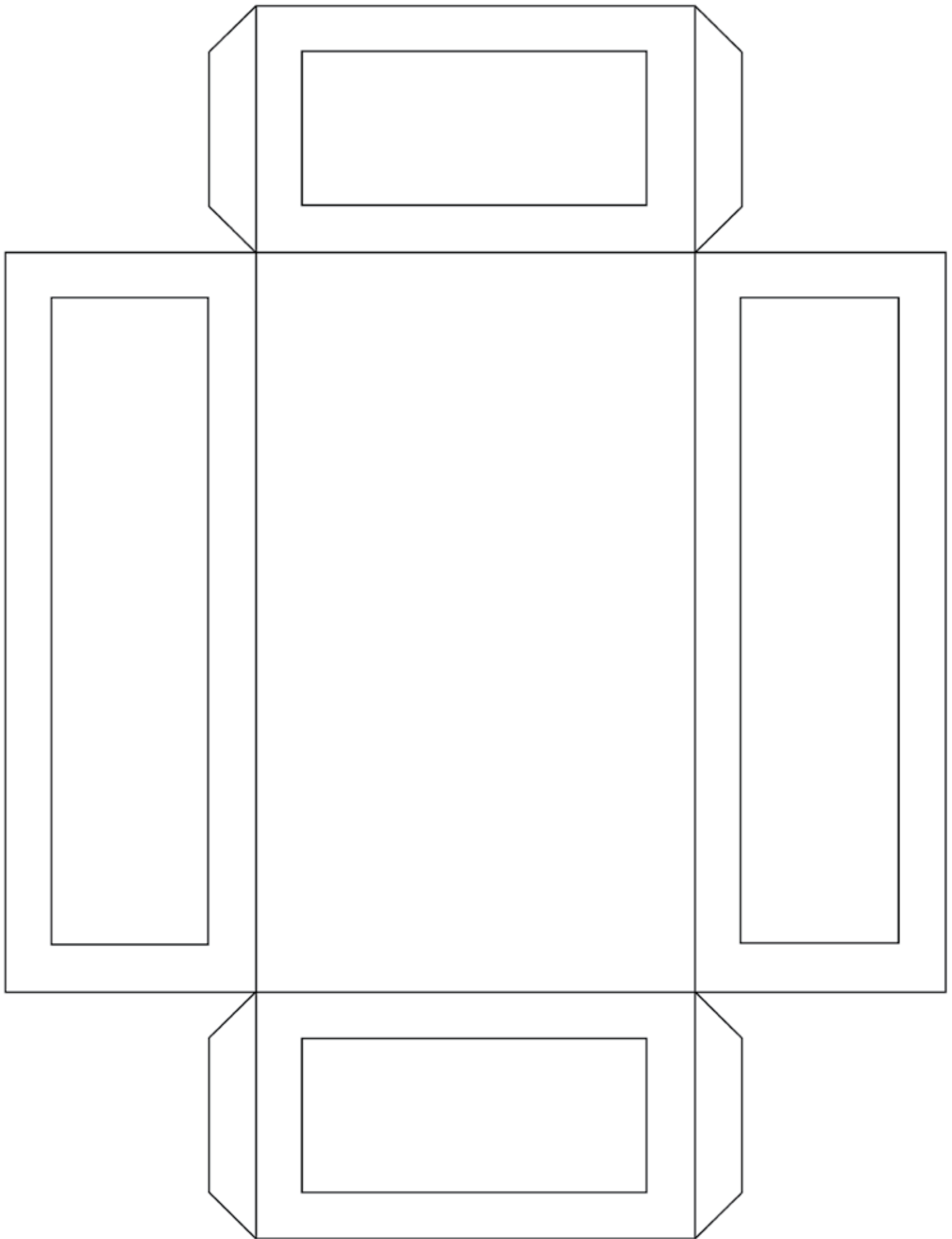
Invite each child to make a train as follows:

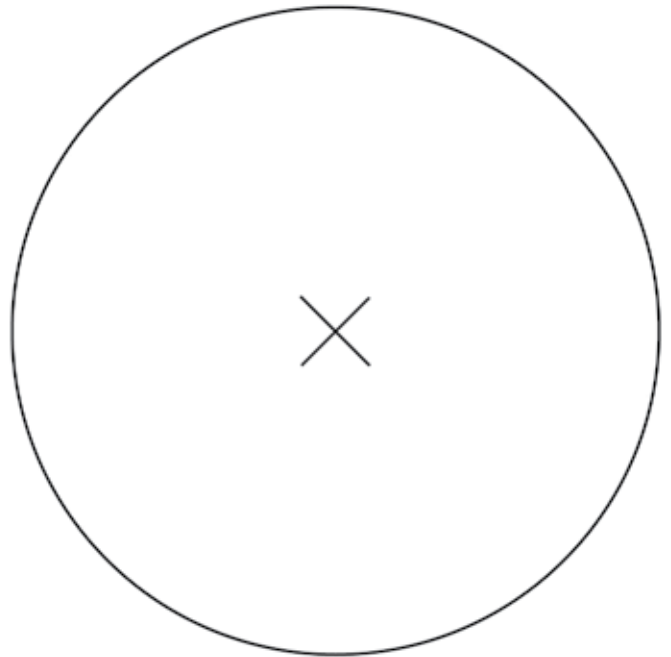
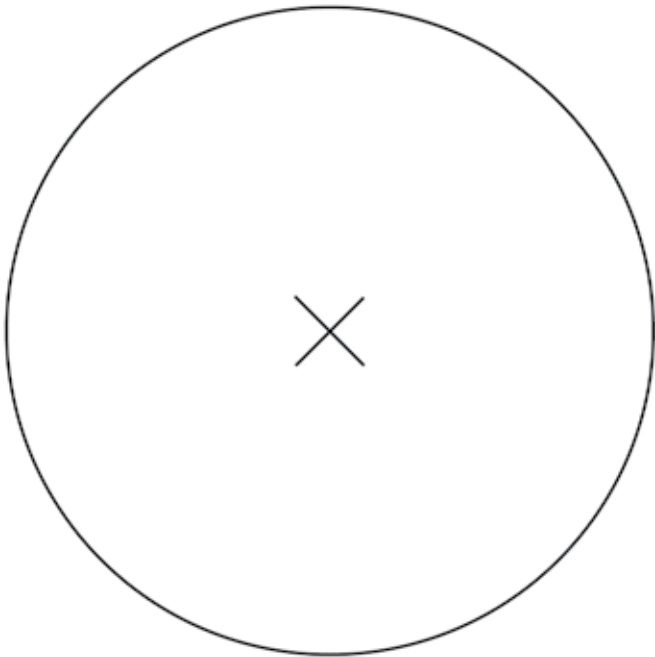
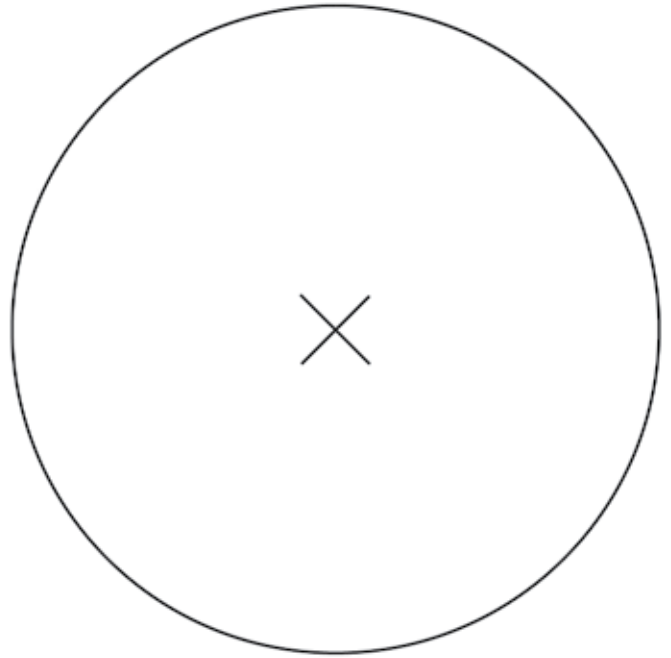
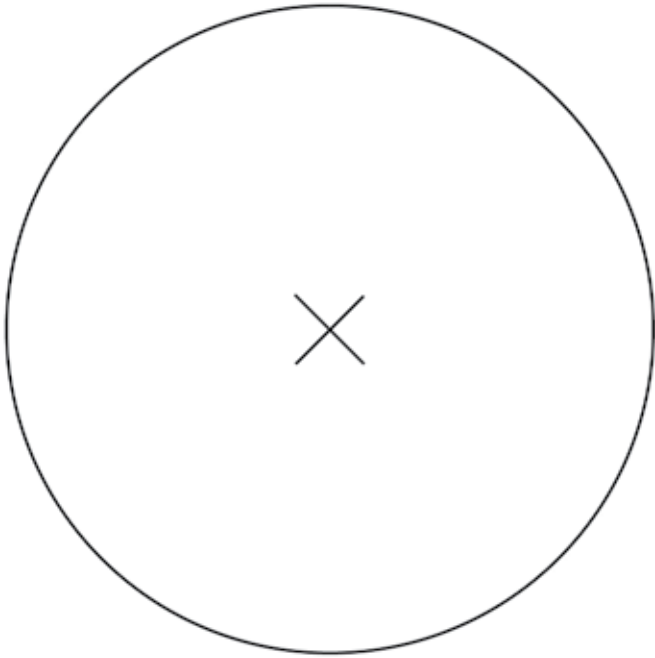
1. Fold the “engine room.” Glue or tape this on top of the shoebox lid, at one end.
2. Cut a paper tube to make a 3" length. Tape this to the other end of the lid.
3. Put the lid on the shoebox. Put the box on some newspaper and have an adult spray paint the outside.
4. When dry, punch the four wheels into the box, using the paper fasteners poked through the wheel holes, then through the box.
5. Cut the white paper into quarters. On each piece of paper, show:
 - the ways in which we can serve God (caring for our sick sibling by bringing her a blanket or glass of water, sharing our snack with a friend)
 - parts of our lives that we treasure (our family, our pets our skills and hobbies)
 - things that we love, that God has given to us

You can draw these things yourself, or illustrate with stickers or magazine pictures.

6. Put these “treasures of freedom” into your “train.”









WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

IMPOSSIBLE COOKIES

for Preschool, Primary, Elementary, Intermediate

Children make cookie dough and take it home for baking. These are called “Impossible Cookies” because it seems impossible to expect them to be done!

Materials and ingredients:

2 egg whites
2/3 cup white sugar
pinch of salt
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup chopped pecans or other nuts
1 cup chocolate chips
egg beater
mixing spoons
spatula
large zip lock baggies
baking instructions (p. 22)

Preparation:

Make a copy of the baking instructions for each child.

Have each child make a recipe, or make one or more recipes to share among all the children.

Directions:

1. Beat egg whites until frothy.
2. Add sugar a little at a time, beating until stiff.
3. Fold in remaining ingredients.
4. Scoop the dough into a zip lock bag and close securely.
5. Take home and bake according to instructions.

BAKING INSTRUCTIONS FOR “IMPOSSIBLE COOKIES”

- Heat oven to 350.
- Line a cookie sheet with brown paper. Drop dough by teaspoons onto the cookie sheet.
- Put the cookies into the oven and turn OFF the heat.
- Leave cookies in the oven overnight. In the morning they will be done.

IMPOSSIBLE!!



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

FREEDOM WANDS

for Preschool, Primary, Elementary, Intermediate

Children bend wire into special shapes to make their own bubble wands.

Materials:

For bubble wands

stiff wire, such as 14-gauge copper wire (pipe cleaners may be used for preschool children)

cinnamon sticks

optional: pliers

wire cutters

cookie cutters (We recommend shapes like stars, flowers or simpler shapes like circles. Also, the larger the cookie cutter, the better it will work for bubbles.)

For bubble mixture

1 cup water

1 cup liquid Dawn® detergent

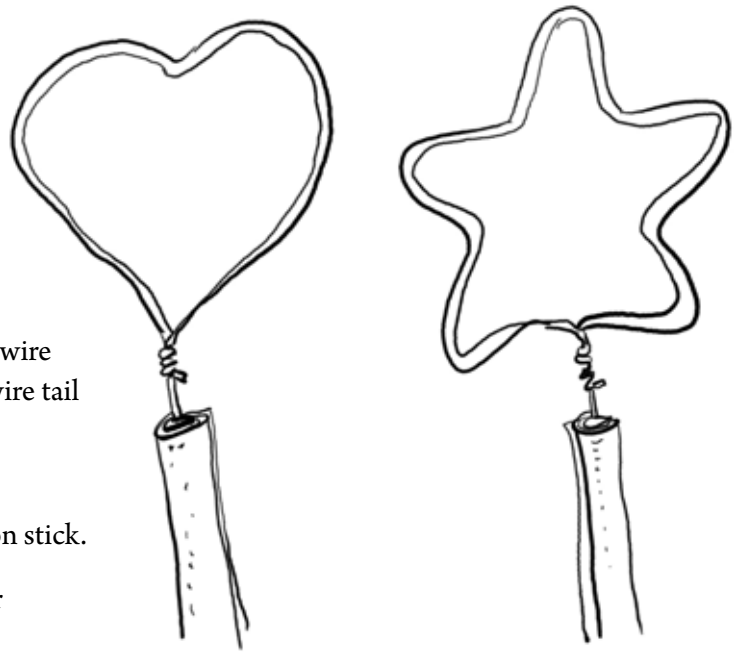
1 cup liquid glycerin (available at drugstores)

optional: food coloring

large cake pan or cookie sheet

Directions:

1. Take a long length of wire and a cookie cutter. Shape the wire around the outside edges of the cookie cutter, leaving a wire tail of about 1½".
2. Cut the wire, leaving a second 1½" tail. Twist the ends together. Insert the twisted ends into a hole in a cinnamon stick.
3. Mix the liquids together to make the bubble mixture. For colored bubbles, add a few drops of food coloring.
4. To make bubbles, dip the wand into the mix and slowly pull it out at an angle, so that a film of liquid stretches across it. Wave the wire through the air and then give your wrist a flick to set free a giant bubble.



Variation:

For a sturdier bubble wand, cut wooden dowels into 9" lengths. Drill a hole at one end for inserting the wire. You will need to do these tasks ahead of time.



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

WORD COLLAGE FRAME

for Elementary, Intermediate

Children make imaginative picture frames to celebrate their special qualities.

Materials:

- colorful poster board
- scissors
- markers or acrylic paints with thin paintbrushes
- optional:* copies of special words (pp. 25-26)
- glue sticks
- optional:* digital camera with printer

Preparation:

Make copies of the “Special Words” sheets, if you wish; children can also make up their own “special words.”

Directions:

Invite each child to make a picture frame as follows:

1. Cut poster board to make two sheets that are 8" x 10".
2. On one piece cut out the center. Make either a 4" x 6" center, or a 3" x 5" center, depending on the size of photograph you want to place inside.
3. Choose several “special words” out of the preprinted page and cut them out. Decorate the words and the white blank portions with paint or markers. Or make up your own words and decorate them. Or use a combination of preprinted and made-up words.
4. When you have finished decorating the words, glue them onto the frame
5. If you have a photograph to fit into the frame, glue it to the front of the solid piece of posterboard, then glue the frame on top.

COOL

WOW

LOVE

always

BE YOURSELF

AWESOME

SPECIAL PERSON

CHERISHED BY GOD

FOREVER

Loving and Loved

All yours, LORD

GREAT

FRIENDSHIPS

STRONG



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

“WHO WE ARE” COLLAGE FACES for Elementary, Intermediate

Children make a self-portrait filled with images that celebrate their special self!

Materials:

- poster board
- pencil
- magazines of many different varieties (for example, sports, teen, cooking, *National Geographic*®, music, tools, computer)
- catalogues
- wrapping paper with designs of different interests (like those in the magazines)
- scissors
- glue sticks

Directions:

Invite each child to make a collage as follows:

1. Go through the magazines and catalogues and find pictures of your favorite hobbies or interests. These may be sports, working with tools, music, food, animals, school, art, whatever! Cut out these pictures.
2. Cut a face shape from the posterboard.
3. Outline the poster board face shape on a sheet of wrapping paper of your choosing. Cut out this wrapping paper and glue it to the posterboard.
4. Use your magazine pictures to make the facial features for your face. Here are some ideas for fantastic faces:

Music buff: Use music wrapping paper or old sheet music as your face. Use guitar necks for spiky hair, a pair of CDs for eyes, a violin for a nose and a drum for a mouth of pleased surprise!

Tool lover: Use the picture of a saw for a nose, hammers for hair, gears for eyes and circular saws for the odd ears.

Food lover: Make strawberry or sausage nose, eggs for eyes and green pepper ears. Carrot pictures make great hair.

The Point:

We are all special in God's eyes, and we can rejoice in how God gives us freedom in Christ!



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

BALLOON STOMP

for Elementary, Intermediate

In this active game, children find clues hidden inside a balloon and try to recall whom the clue describes—Elizabeth, Amelia, Sojourner or Harriet.

Materials:

- balloons
- one-line clues (p. 29)

Preparation:

Make a copy of the “one-line clues.” Cut up the lines and insert them into balloons, one per balloon. Blow up the balloons.

Directions:

1. Designate one corner of your room for each of the four women. You may want to tape a sign on the wall of each corner to remind the children who will be going where.
2. Invite the children to form a circle in the center of the room, or line up. Put all of the balloons in the center of the circle or in a pile next to you opposite the line.
3. Have children count off, so that each child is assigned a different number.
4. Take a balloon and throw it into the air, calling out a number. The child assigned to that number needs to catch the balloon before it hits the floor and pop it.
5. They read the piece of paper inside and identify whom that paper is referring to. Allow others to help, if the child wishes. Then they go to that saint's corner of the room.
6. Play until all of the balloons have been popped.

Variation:

This is a simpler way to play. Place the balloons in a pile and have all of the children run to pop the balloons at your signal. They must then read the papers to identify “their” saint, and then find the other children who have the papers of that same “saint.” Time them to see which group is formed first.

BALLOON STOMP ONE-LINE CLUES

Spent life trying to help women	Underground railroad
Formed women's Bible study groups	Joined the Union Army in the Civil War
First to wear bloomers	Cook and nurse for army
Picture of herself wearing floppy pants	Spy and secret scout
Argued with the clergy about dress codes	Led a raid to free slaves
Hospitality to traveling clergy	First American woman to lead troops into battle
Did not use her real name	\$40,000 offered for her capture
God said to her, "Go east."	"Moses of Her People"
Traveling preacher	Helped slaves escape to Canada
"Miriam of the Later Exodus"	Mad that women couldn't do a lot of things
"Belle," an escaped slave	Would not wear a corset



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

CROSSING OVER TO FREEDOM

for Elementary, Intermediate

Children play this game—making a human bridge—to overcome obstacles to freedom.

Directions:

1. Say to the children, “All of the women in this lesson had a lot of obstacles to overcome, to promote their work for justice and liberation for all people, including women and African-Americans. Harriet Ross Tubman, in particular, risked her own life in order to help people to freedom. We are going to play a game that involves overcoming obstacles in order to reach a goal, like Harriet did.”
2. Divide the room into two territories: slave and free. Explain to the children that they must try to get across the river (the imaginary division), going from slavery to freedom.
3. As the leaders and the freedom-seekers needed to join together to gain their freedom, the children will work together to create a human bridge across the river.
4. One person begins by getting into a bridge-like position on the slave side of the river. One by one, each player will add to the bridge, standing or crouching in position. Each player must climb over or crawl under the players who are already in place, then take a place at the end as part of the bridge. Players can hold arms together to form hoops, and may choose any position they want.
4. When the last person on the slave side has added to the bridge, the first player in the bridge must go through or over the bridge and then place himself or herself at the end. Continue until you have reached the end of the journey on the free side of the river.

Variation:

Divide the group into two teams and have a relay race to “freedom.” Older children can have the rule that no player can be in the same position more than once, or that all players must have different positions from each other.



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

STORY AND THREADS

This lesson relates a story not found in the Bible. You will need, therefore, to send today's story home with children along with *Threads*. For each child, print out the remainder of the pages in this lesson, which includes both the story and *Threads*



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children

THE WOMEN WHO STRUGGLED FOR FREEDOM

Today we will hear some stories about four people who were important in the Church. Sometimes we call these people “saints.” We might also call them “Easter people.” When we say that somebody is a saint, it doesn’t mean that they are people with super powers. In our church, a saint is somebody who loves God and who tried to do what God wanted them to do. Some of these people are famous, and you may already know their names—St. Patrick, St. Nicholas, for example. But many saints are not famous at all. They didn’t do anything amazing that the whole world knows about, but they did God’s work. There may be saints like that whom you know—people like your grandmother who cared for her children when they were sick, your uncle who quietly gave his life savings to his church, or the stranger on the street who smiles and listens to homeless people and gives them hope and friendship. Saints are regular people like you and me who do God’s work. For the next few weeks in church school we will be hearing about some of the saints our Church wants us to know about.

(You may summarize the stories to tell about all four women in one lesson, choose just one woman’s story to tell, tell each one over four successive weeks or some other combination that works for your setting.)

Let me tell you about four amazing women who lived around a hundred years ago in the United States. They were all born in the early 1800s and died in the late 1800s or early 1900s. Their names are *Elizabeth, Amelia, Sojourner* and *Harriet*. When they were born, African-Americans were still slaves in the South, and women were not allowed to vote. Men did not think women could do much, and whites did not think that blacks were worth much. These four women fought to

uphold and affirm the dignity of every human being, even when their country did not. But today our church recognizes their leadership and calls them liberators and prophets.



Elizabeth Stanton and Amelia Bloomer were friends. Elizabeth spent her whole life trying to help women. She did this by talking to people about how unfairly women were treated. She preached hundreds of sermons and made hundreds of speeches all across the country. What a speaker she was!

It rankled Elizabeth that women were not allowed to vote, or own any land by themselves, or take certain jobs, just because they were women. They were not allowed to be priests in the church. And when they did work in a job, they got paid a lot less than men did. All of this unfairness made Elizabeth angry, and she scolded the church as well as the government for letting this situation happen. To her, people read the Bible in ways that were not right, in ways that made it look like women should not be treated equally to men.

Elizabeth also met with other women to form groups that would study the Bible and to form the groups that would fight for women's rights. She was far ahead of her time, in her struggle to help women. Eventually many of the reforms that she wanted for women did happen, but not until after she died.



Amelia Bloomer, Elizabeth's friend, also worked to help women. Her big project was making more comfortable clothes for women. She hated the tight corsets that women had to wear, which gave lots of women bad health problems. One day, she printed a picture of herself in her newspaper called *The Lily*. This was a picture of her wearing a pair of loose-fitting Turkish Trousers. She also began wearing these pants in public. This was at a time when women only wore long dresses. Soon, other women began to wear them, and the puffy billowy pants that we call "bloomers" (named after Amelia) were born. People were outraged! They thought she was indecent! From the pulpit, many priests attacked the women

who wore these clothes. She got to be very popular because she was so willing to argue with the clergy.

But she was also kind to them, and to everybody else. She became known for her hospitality to traveling clergy and reformers. (We can guess that these were the ones brave enough to talk with her!) She was also known for her kindness of heart and her love of truth and right. When she got older, she worked to establish churches, libraries and schoolhouses. Amelia and Elizabeth must have been great companions!

* * * * *

Now let us meet Sojourner Truth. “Sojourner Truth” was not her real name. She was born Isabella, a slave, and she was known as “Belle.”

With the help of some Quaker friends, Belle escaped from slavery. She ended up in a very poor part of New York City and saw how much people needed food, homes and warm clothing, so she set up a homeless shelter for women and worked there for a long time.

When she was 46, she heard God say to her, “Go east.” She went to Long Island and to Connecticut, finally ending up at a Quaker farm looking for work. “What is your name?” they asked her. She said, “My name is Sojourner.” (A sojourner is a person on a journey.) Then they asked, “What is your last name?” She had always used her slave master’s last name, but she now thought, “The only master I have now is God, and His name is Truth.” So that is what she gave as her last name: Truth.

Now called Sojourner Truth, she became a traveling preacher. She would go to religious revivals for white people and boldly ask if she could speak. Right away, people could tell that she was wise, witty and six feet tall. Not many people said no to her. When she spoke, she told a lot of stories from the Bible, and not many people knew that she could not read or write a single word. She just knew much of the Bible by heart. Then she would end her sermons by singing a hymn that she made up and talking about the evils of slavery. Her most famous speech, which you may hear someday, is called “Ain’t I a Woman.” For she struggled not only for

the freedom of African-American slaves but also for the liberation of women. She has been called “Miriam of the Later Exodus,” remembering Moses’ sister Miriam when the Hebrew slaves were freed from Egypt.



Harriet Ross Tubman was also born a slave. We know that she suffered beatings and a severe injury as a child, but she grew up to be strong and defiant. She refused to look “happy and smiling” to her slave owners. She loved to listen to Bible stories, especially the story of Moses and the Exodus.

When she was 24, she escaped to Canada. But she had to leave her own family and the other slaves behind. She could never forget them. Working with Quakers, she made more than 19 trips back and forth from Maryland to Canada with escaping slaves, between 1851 and 1861. She led more than three hundred people to Canada and to freedom, as part of the “Underground Railroad.” She was so good at this that \$40,000 was offered for anyone who could capture her. That was a huge amount of money in those days! Mostly for this brave work, she is known as “Moses of her People.”

Her work to free the slaves was very dangerous, but Harriet said that God guided her struggle against slavery. God had given her omens, dreams and warnings whenever danger was near, to protect her. She also saw the coming of the Civil War in a vision.

But before the war began, she went to New York and opened her home to African-American orphans and to helpless elderly people who had nowhere else to go. She also set up some schools for African-American children, even though she could not read or write herself.

When the war did come, Harriet joined the Northern Union Army as a cook and nurse. She cared for both Confederate and Union soldiers, helping anyone who was hurt, no matter what side they were on. She was also a spy and secret scout for the army. One day, she led 300 black troops on a raid to free 700 slaves. This action made her the first American woman to lead troops into military action.

LESSON 47: WOMEN WHO STRUGGLED FOR FREEDOM



We Believe . . .

The Episcopal Church has always been a church active in the world, working for justice and peace, and in promoting the “social gospel.”

Our Baptismal Covenant makes clear that work for justice and peace is something for all of us to do. All of us who have been baptized reaffirm this promise whenever there is a baptism in the church. We are asked, “Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?” (BCP, p. 305). The women featured in today’s stories—Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Amelia Bloomer, Sojourner Truth and Harriet Ross Tubman (July 20 for all)—surely answered loudly and persistently, “I will, with God’s help.”



Today’s Story

In the 19th century, many people in the United States took for granted the idea that women and African Americans had not the worth of white males. Servitude, oppression, and inequality were accepted parts of the fabric of society. Some people opposed such unjust ideas and practices but felt unable or powerless to “change the system.”

But these four women—Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Amelia Bloomer, Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman (July 20 for all)—courageously worked with prophetic vision for the liberation of all people, to gain for the oppressed persons their rightful places as “children of God.” They often had to challenge the common idea that the Bible itself justified such oppression. Their work was unrewarding, risky and even dangerous, and they did not live to see their prayers and hopes fulfilled.

But they forged the path for liberation of all people, and are true bearers of the prophetic word in our society. They are liberators not just of the oppressed—the women and the African Americans, for whom they so eloquently spoke and worked—but also of the oppressors who are slaves to unjust systems and hearts.

Thus we call them “liberators and prophets.”



Words of Faith

prophets – people who proclaim God’s will, even when it is unpopular

freedom – ability to be and to do, without chains

women – Elizabeth, Amelia, Sojourner and Harriet

We praise (and model!) the courage and faith of those who work for liberation and justice.



Sharing

Read the stories of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Amelia Bloomer, Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman, attached to this paper, or read from a storybook about one or more of them. If you have additional information about these liberators and prophets, share it with family members.

After reading one or more of the stories, wonder together about:

- Elizabeth, Amelia, Sojourner and Harriet seem like they were not afraid to stand up against what they saw was wrong or evil. Or were they afraid but they stood up anyway?
- How can we follow their example?
- Where are the unjust situations today? Who is always teased or bullied?
- How can we stand up and defend them? If you had a chance, how would you do it? When have you stood up for someone else who was being treated badly?



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

for Children



This Week at Home

- **Read a picture book (or two or three).** For all four of these pioneering women— Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Amelia Bloomer, Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman—you'll find children's picture books to share with family members. Visit your local bookstore or visit an online retailer (such as Amazon) for options. Even adults enjoy a good story told with great illustration!
- **Create a Big Family Book of Heroes of the Faith.** Bind together large sheets of construction paper or light poster board. Ask family members to draw a "saint" on each page, starting with the four women introduced in today's lesson, but including other saints and Christian heroes that you've been talking about and/or admire. Around each drawing include words that help you remember these heroes' stories as well as words that describe them. Add to your book in the future as you learn about other "heroes of the faith."
- **Make a list of the saintly qualities of these four prophetic women.** What do you have in common with them? Who are you most like? Who appeals to you the most? Talk about what each woman has in common and how they are different.
- **Discuss how the four women made a difference in the world.** How is society different because of them? What has changed? For example, how are women today seen, as opposed to a century ago? What can they do now that they were not allowed to do then?
- **Talk to a woman priest.** Ask how she thinks Elizabeth, Amelia, Sojourner and Harriet made a difference in her ability to become a priest. You may need to show them the story page from this lesson to remind them of the deeds that these women did.
- **Check out the baptismal promises in the Prayer Book (p. 304).** Which one or ones most exemplify the examples of the four women? How did they live up to these promises, even if these particular promises were not part of their religious upbringing? Can you think of one way in which you might fulfill each of these promises this week?



Household Prayer

Almighty God, thank you for the love that you give to us in your Son Jesus Christ. Thank you also for giving us such people as Elizabeth, Amelia, Sojourner and Harriet—examples of how we can follow Jesus. Help us to love you just as you love us, and to love our families, friends and neighbors. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ.
Amen.

