

Church at Home Pack – 26th September 2021

Join us in church for our 10:30am service on Sunday or watch live at home on

<https://ccwsm.org.uk/service-type/sunday-service-online/>

If you like, join in with the discussion on Facebook with our church family (@ccwsm)!

In some sections we make several suggestions of ideas. Some may be more appropriate to you or the different people in your family or life group than others. We're not expecting you to do all of them (although you are very welcome to!) Choose the ones which best suit you.

Our verse for the year is the same as last year's verse as we think about the difference being with Jesus makes to our lives

When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

Acts 4:13

GATHER TOGETHER

A prayer to start –

Father God

We come together knowing that no matter what our difficulties

Or what is happening in the world around us

You keep your promises

You are in control

Help us to trust in you

Amen

Action reminder –

From the top of my head

(Touch head)

to the tips of my toes;

(Touch toes)

from the lobes of my ears

(Touch ear lobes)

to the end of my nose;

(Touch nose)

from my back, to my front

(Turn round)

to my wiggly fingers,

(stretch out arms and wiggle fingers)

God loves me!

(jump up and down)

READ TOGETHER

Ezra 1: 1:5



International Children's Bible (ICB)



1 It was the first year Cyrus was king of Persia. The Lord caused Cyrus to write an announcement and send it everywhere in his kingdom. And he also put it in writing. This happened so the Lord's message spoken by Jeremiah would come true. The announcement said:

2 This is what Cyrus king of Persia says:

The Lord, the God of heaven, has given all the kingdoms of the earth to me. And he has appointed me to build a Temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. **3** Now all of you who are God's people are free to go to Jerusalem. May your God be with you. And you may build the Temple of the Lord. He is the God of Israel, who is in Jerusalem. **4** Those who stay behind should support anyone who wants to go. Give them silver and gold, supplies and cattle. And give them special gifts for the Temple of God in Jerusalem.

5 Then the family leaders of Judah and Benjamin got ready to go to Jerusalem. So did the priests and the Levites. They were going to Jerusalem to build the Temple of the Lord. God made all these people want to go.

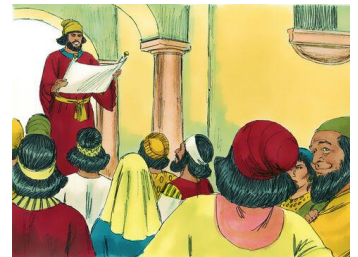
New International Version (NIV)

1 In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfil the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and also to put it in writing:

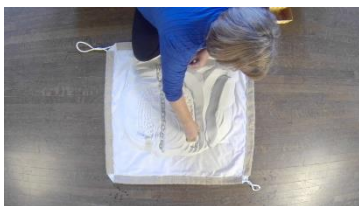
2 "This is what Cyrus king of Persia says:

"The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. **3** Any of his people among you may go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of the LORD, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem, and may their God be with them. **4** And in any locality where survivors may now be living, the people are to provide them with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with freewill offerings for the temple of God in Jerusalem."

5 Then the family heads of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and Levites—everyone whose heart God had moved—prepared to go up and build the house of the LORD in Jerusalem.



WATCH TOGETHER



Exile and Return – Goldy Play: <https://youtu.be/RG6E2SaVGeE>



A new beginning for the Middle East – The Cyrus Cylinder and Ancient Persia (The British Museum): <https://youtu.be/iokGgmrOj4Q>

TALK TOGETHER

- Can God work through anyone? Even people who don't know him?

STUDY TOGETHER

Angeline read **Jeremiah 25: 11b – 13 and 29: 10** in her sermon and explained that God had promised the Jews that he would punish Babylon and they would then be able to return home. God's people were in exile for 70 years. In the verse that follows, (**Jeremiah 29: 11**) God tells his people that he is in control and that his plans are for their good.

God can work anywhere and through anyone. Here he chooses to work through Cyrus, King of Persia.

Read Isaiah 44: 28 and 45: 1-6

(This prophecy from Isaiah came almost 150 years before the rule of Cyrus.)

Cyrus is referred to as shepherd and anointed -

- What do you think this means?
- What does this passage in Isaiah tell you about God?
- What does it tell you about Cyrus?

Read **2 Chronicles 36: 22 -23** and then **Ezra 1: 1-3**

- What do you notice?

Angeline explained that Cyrus thought he was acting on the instruction of his god, Marduk. He was in fact fulfilling the promise that God had made to his people years before.

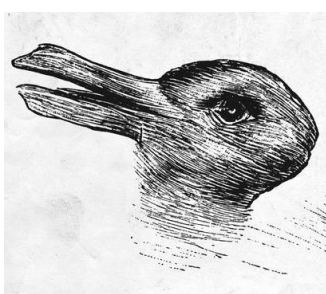
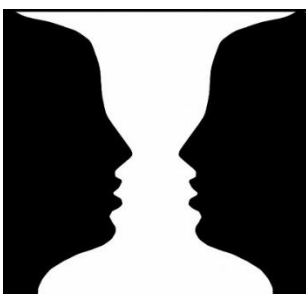
- What do the opening verses of Ezra tell you about God?
- Do these verses bring you comfort? Why?
- Are you able to trust that God can work anywhere and through anyone?
- How do these passages help when we think about the difficulties we see in the world around us?
- How do they help when we face personal difficulties?

PLAY TOGETHER

Two Perspectives?

In today's sermon we heard two different accounts of how the Jews were able to return to Jerusalem. Two different perspectives. Angeline reminded us that there are always two ways of looking at things. Just for fun, have a look at these pictures, what do you see?

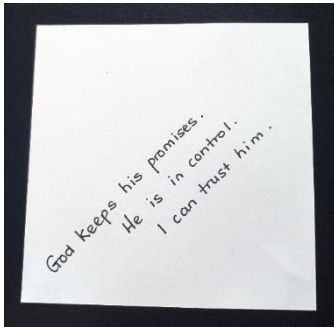
Two people or a vase, a duck or a rabbit, a frog or a horse? It depends on your perspective! Both are correct, both are part of the same picture.



MAKE TOGETHER

Pocket Promises

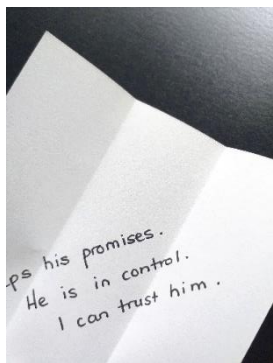
Sometimes when life is difficult and we see our world in chaos, we need a reminder that **God keeps his promises, he is in control and we can trust him.**



Take a small square of paper and write those words across it. Then, fold it into a heart to remind you of God's love for you and for his world. Keep it in your pocket for whenever you need it.

*The Bible is full of God's promises. Maybe there is one that is particularly special to you? You could write that inside your Pocket Promise heart instead.

Follow the pictures to see how to fold the heart:



1. Fold the square into thirds



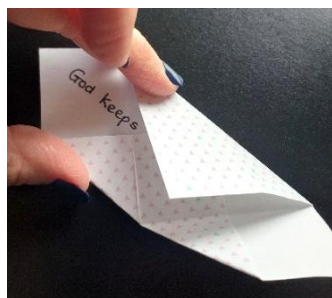
2. Fold the bottom right corner towards the left fold



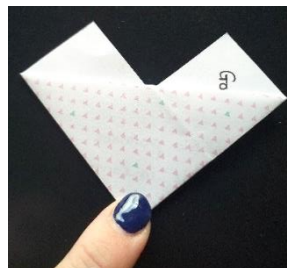
3. Now fold the right side to the same left fold



4. Fold the bottom left corner up to meet the fold in the middle (this is the bottom of your heart).



5. Open it up to fold the top down, inside and then close the side flaps over it.



6. Turn it over



7. Fold down the top and side points slightly to create softer edges for your heart.

8. You can use any paper you have, coloured, wrapping or decorate your own.



SING TOGETHER

Ancient of Days – City Alight: <https://youtu.be/PPpGphzScjA>

Way Maker – (Leeland) Integrity Music: <https://youtu.be/29lxnsqOkmQ>

Still in control – Mack Brock Music: https://youtu.be/sZnRzQ3_udE

Promises – Crossroads Kids: <https://youtu.be/yY3EogFlkCY>

REFLECT TOGETHER



There are so many promises in the Bible and so many examples of God keeping those promises! No matter what situation you might be facing or what state the world around us is in, we can be sure that every promise God makes, he keeps. He is faithful. He is in control and we can trust him.

As you think about that, listen to the words of this song:

<https://youtu.be/Sin3prv-tIU>

From the breaking of the dawn
To the setting of the sun,
I will stand on every promise of Your word.
Words of power, strong to save,
That will never pass away,
I will stand on every promise of Your word.
For Your covenant is sure,
And on this I am secure,
I can stand on every promise of Your word.

When I stumble and I sin,
Condemnation pressing in,
I will stand on every promise of Your word.
You are faithful to forgive,
That in freedom I might live,
So I stand on every promise of Your word.
Guilt to innocence restored:
You remember sins no more!
So I'll stand on every promise of Your word.

When I'm faced with anguished choice,
I will listen for Your voice,
And I'll stand on every promise of Your word.
Through this dark and troubled land
You will guide me with your hand
As I stand on every promise of Your word.
And you've promised to complete
Every work begun in me,
So I'll stand on every promise of Your word.

Hope that lifts me from despair,
Love that casts out every fear,
As I stand on every promise of Your word.
Not forsaken, not alone,
For the Comforter has come,
And I stand on every promise of Your word.
Grace sufficient, grace for me,
Grace for all who will believe,
We will stand on every promise of Your word.

PRAY TOGETHER

God is in Control – prayer drawing

Angeline reminded us that God is at work in global, national and local situations. He can work through rulers and leaders and he is with us and at work in us. He is in control.

Think of a situation or a decision that might be troubling you and begin to draw it, **BUT**, don't allow your pen or pencil to leave the paper. Draw it in one continuous line. It might not look like a work of art and it might even look really messy but remember, what looks chaotic and unsolvable to us is nothing of the sort to our faithful God. As you draw, remember that God's hand is on that situation constantly, his pen never leaves the page, he has a plan, he is in control and you can trust him. Finish your drawing by writing the words 'God is in control'



A Prayer of thanks based on Psalm 136

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
his steadfast love endures for ever.

Give thanks to the God of gods and Lord of lords,
his steadfast love endures for ever;

God has remembered us,
his steadfast love endures for ever;

and rescues us from our foes,
his steadfast love endures for ever.

Give thanks to the God of heaven,
for his steadfast love endures for ever.

Amen

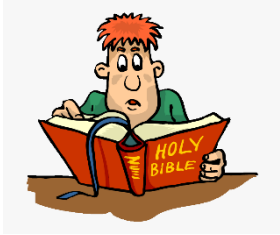
DO TOGETHER

Look for ways in which God is at work in global, national and local situations in the news.



Look for ways that God is at work in the people you meet and the situations you find yourself in this week. Is God working through someone who doesn't know it yet? Share what you see with your family, friends or Life Group.

Find a promise...



There are thousands of promises in the Bible. Find one. Write it down and carry it with you to remind you that God is a Promise Keeper. You might like to write it on a **Pocket Promise** from the **Make Together** section.

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*Action Reminder and Prayer based on Psalm 136 taken from
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