

Sixth Grade: Lesson 6: Covenants in the Bible

Lesson Objective:

The notion of covenant is fundamental to our understanding of God's plan for us and is the lens through which we read Scripture. Through the various covenants, God binds Himself to humanity, and as a result, the human race is transformed and able to reach its ultimate end: eternal life with God.

Covenant is about relationship. This lesson introduces the youth to the notion of covenant and the series of covenants in the Old Testament. Youth should be reminded that these covenants prepared God's people for the New Covenant in Jesus Christ. In addition, youth can be invited to reflect on their relationship with Jesus through the lens of covenant.

Learning Outcomes: Students Will ...

- Define covenant as a “solemn agreement between human beings or between God and a human being involving mutual commitments or guarantees”.
- Understand that the words “covenant” and “testament” can be used interchangeably (CCC Glossary: Testament)
- Explore the Jewish roots of our Christian faith: covenant (Exodus 34:10-28), sacrifice (CCC 2099-2100), twelve tribes (Exod 1:1-14, 28, 29, 40), Passover (Exod 12), Suffering Servant (Isa 52:13-53:12, Lamb of God (John 1:29).
- Identify Old Testament ideas of tithing and Jubilee debt forgiveness (Lev 25:8-22).6.
- Compare Israel's faithfulness or unfaithfulness to the Old Covenant with today's culture.

Materials Needed:

- Prayer space items, Bible, pencils
- Copies Needed: Salvation History Timeline, Review of the Covenants Handout, Triptychs work sheet, Review a Biblical Painting, Covenant or Contract activity, Create your own Timeline (optional), The Old Testament Covenants

As Students Enter Class:

- A suggestion is to have students look over the timeline handout from today's lesson. Ask them to share their thoughts at the start of class.

Beginning of Class:

- Invite students to gather around the prayer space. Ask a student to select a traditional Catholic prayer to recite all together. Invite students to share any special intentions they would like to add to today's prayer.

Lesson Order	Implementation Ideas
Lesson 6 Video	<p>This lesson is 1:30 in length.</p> <p>Highlights: The Bible is the living word of God. By virtue of your Baptism, you entered a covenant relationship with God. A covenant is a solemn promise between God and human beings. It is a commitment that binds two together.</p> <p>In the Bible we see the word covenant and testament used interchangeably. A covenant is more than a contract because it covers the whole of the persons involved. It makes two parts one. A human example of this is the Sacrament of Marriage.</p> <p>Covenants began in the OT where they prepared God's people for the final and everlasting covenant with Jesus Christ.</p>
The Covenants of the Bible	<p>This video is 20:25 minutes long. Carla uses images to help explain this topic.</p> <p>Highlights: Covenants of the Bible unite the entire Bible throughout scripture. A covenant is a relationship God established with human beings. God gradually prepares people for the coming of Christ as His ultimate covenant. God's covenants often have stipulations or conditions. These details bind God and His people together.</p> <p>The 4 parts that accompany the making of a covenant are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Sacrifice 2) Oaths or Promises

- 3) Shared Meal
- 4) Reminders or Signs

Let's look at these more closely:

Sacrifice:

In the OT an animal was often used as a sacrifice; sometimes it was other valuable items, such as grain or oil.

In the NT, sacrifice is shown through prayer, almsgiving, and praise. It is important to note that Jesus is the supreme sacrifice and is ever present in the Eucharist.

Oath:

An oath is a way for people to call upon God to make a guarantee of God's faithfulness. Both God and people promise to abide by the covenant.

Shared Meal:

The covenant meal means **to share in the blessings of God's work in Christ**, and the meal means that we come before him as the one covenant people of God.

Example: Abraham's covenant meal was bread and wine.

In Moses's covenant meal, God gave the Israelites meat for dinner and then all the bread they could eat in the morning.

Reminder/Sign:

These could be physical objects or words written down, such as the 10 Commandments

God gave to Moses. The purpose of this component is to remind us of our covenant relationship with God.

Major Covenants:

1. Adam/Eve - creation
2. Noah – after the flood
3. Abraham – in his land and people
4. Israel – through Moses
5. David – through his dynasty
6. Jesus – through His blood, which completes the previous covenants

In each covenant, we see a growth pattern.

- 1) Adam and Eve – a couple
- 2) Noah – extends to a family
- 3) Abraham – effects a tribe
- 4) Moses – impacts an entire nation
- 5) David – the nation grows into a kingdom
- 6) Jesus – impacts all people world-wide; universal

The Covenant with Adam and Eve:

Read Genesis 1:26 – 2 and Genesis 2:15-17: God made human beings in His likeness. He gave them power over the Earth and animals. He made male and female (Adam and Eve). We see how God marries Adam and Eve, blesses them, and encourages them to have many children. Later we will learn how Adam and Eve break their covenant with God by eating the forbidden fruit off a tree God told them not to use.

Discussion: Encourage students to share their thoughts and questions they have about

covenants. Try to tie in the fact that even at the very beginning of creation, God gave Adam and Eve a choice to follow his rules.

The Covenant with Abraham:

The next covenant is with Abraham is 99 years old and God said I will make a covenant with you and give you many descendants. I promise you will be an ancestor of many nations. The sign of this covenant is land. Also, all males had to be circumcised, which is a physical sign of the new covenant.

The Covenant with Moses:

This covenant with Moses also covers all of Israel, one holy nation. In Exodus 19: 3-6, Moses went up the mountain to meet with God. He is to tell the Israelites, Jacob descendants, that they saw what God did to the Egyptians and how he brought them here (to the promised land). If you obey this covenant, you will be my chosen people. A people dedicated to me alone and you will serve me as priests. The covenant continues up to Chapter 24. God gives Moses the 10 Commandments, as a means to help the Israelites follow God's will.

In Exodus, Ch. 24, signs of prayer and a meal are revealed. Moses built an Alter at the foot of the mountain. Animals were sacrificed. He saved half of the blood and placed it into bowls. When the time came, he tossed the blood on the people as a seal of the covenant they made with God.

God's Covenant with David:

2 Samuel 7: 8-19

I took you from the fields and made you the leader of Israel. I promise to keep you safe from enemies. One of your sons will build me a temple and I will make your kingdom last forever. This covenant blesses David and his kingdom. The sign of this covenant is David's throne and a promise for future descendants. In all of the covenants we read, the people were unfaithful and broke the covenant in some way. However, God never gives up and he loves them with an everlasting covenant: JESUS.

JESUS:

Read Luke 22:14-20 This describes the Lord's Supper also known as the Last Supper on Holy Thursday. Jesus establishes the Catholic Church and shares how in every Mass, the consecrated host is truly Jesus, present in the Eucharist.

Activities	<p><u>Salvation history timeline handout</u></p> <p>Allow students some time to review this handout and then have a class discussion. Ask students if they have any questions. Highlight the progression of the Covenants and how they move from one holy couple, to one holy family, tribe, then nation. Ask students why do they think the covenants grow and become larger. Lastly, ask where are we on this timeline?</p> <p><u>Review the Covenants in Salvation History:</u></p> <p>Read this together with students. Allow time for questions or sharing of thoughts as you progress through the pages. Depending on level of engagement, use the lines at the end for students to engage in a reader's</p>
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	response. What do they think about the Covenants. Were they needed? Helpful? Etc...
Triptychs: See attached page for the CCC passages.	Read CCC 78, 81, and 84 with students then explain the directions and have students work on this activity.
Art and Scripture Activity	Students look at the painting and answer the question. If time is a concern, this could be used as an opening activity for the next class.
Covenant or Contract	Do this all together; read the scripture passage from Exodus 19-24 and then answer the questions.
Create Your Own Timeline of Salvation History	Since there are many activities in this lesson, this one could be optional.
Old Testament Covenants	Consider doing this activity using a Jigsaw Strategy (see attached description).
Closing Activity	Model a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the covenant we have with Jesus

CCC (Catechism of the Catholic Church)

78: This living transmission, accomplished in the Holy Spirit, is called Tradition, since it is distinct from Sacred Scripture, though closely connected to it. Through Tradition, "the Church, in her doctrine, life and worship, perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that she herself is, all that she believes." "The sayings of the holy Fathers are a witness to the life-giving presence of this Tradition, showing how its riches are poured out in the practice and life of the Church, in her belief and her prayer."

81: "Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit."

"And [Holy] Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It transmits it to the successors of the apostles so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may faithfully preserve, expound and spread it abroad by their preaching."

84: The apostles entrusted the "Sacred deposit" of the faith (the depositum fidei), contained in Sacred Scripture and Tradition, to the whole of the Church. "By adhering to [this heritage] the entire holy people, united to its pastors, remains always faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the

brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. So, in maintaining, practicing and professing the faith that has been handed on, there should be a remarkable harmony between the bishops and the faithful."

Jigsaw Strategy:

- Assign 2-3 students to each of the Covenants (depending on class size).
- Give each group time to read their portion and write the answers on their papers.
- Then each group presents their answers to the rest of class – teaching them what they learned. (It's like they became the expert on their covenant).
- When everyone has presented, the sheet should be filled in by all students