

Lead Me to Zion

Teaching Covenant Theology to Covenant Children
Ages 4 to 8

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Catechisms used are from First Catechism: Teaching Children Bible Truths (Suwanee, GA: Great Commission Publications, 2003).

Although many publishers do not capitalize terms, and particularly pronouns which refer to the Trinity, in this study CDM publications has capitalized those elements for clarity of reference.

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Introduction

Even though many Christian parents raise their children in covenant communities, many do not fully grasp what the word “covenant” truly means. Most Bible curriculums are taught as a collection of stories neatly told in chronological order. The Bible is more than that.

The Bible is the story of how God *created* His people, *called* His people, *loved* His people, and is yearning to *bring those people back into full relationship* with Him. God made covenant promises to His people with a love so strong that He was willing to give His Son’s life to save them. Through generations of covenant promises, God binds Himself more and more intimately with the people He chooses to love.

In his article, “Child Evangelism or Covenant Theology?”, Larry Ball writes that “most Presbyterians resort to typical evangelical and non-covenantal methodology” to evangelize their children. Knowing God should be more than a “ticket out of hell.” Having a true relationship with our Creator is to “glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever” (*Westminster Shorter Catechism*, Q.1).

Lead Me to Zion walks with children through the journey God takes to bind Himself to His chosen people. From the beginning, God makes covenant promises committing His heart to theirs.

In the **Covenant of Life**, God created an eternal bond of life with Adam and Eve. He gave them life, the gift of a garden, the joy of work, and the beauty of worship in exchange for their obedience to abstain from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Adam and Eve failed to keep their end of the Covenant of Life. They ate fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Sin and death entered the world.

The **Covenant of Redemption** began the moment mankind broke their side of the Covenant of Life. God took it upon Himself to hold His promises together in the Covenant of Redemption and set into action (through the Covenant of Commencement) a new covenant to save His people. The Covenant of Redemption would slowly unfold through multiple generations of God’s people. (See the Chart of the Covenants that follows.)

The **Covenant of Commencement** was the first step God took in restoring His people into right relationship with Himself. God promised to send a Rescuer to crush the power of Satan forever. A glimmer of hope was held out to Adam and Eve and all the generations that would follow after them.

In the **Covenant of Preservation**, God promised to preserve His people from catastrophic harm and destruction. Even though sin had crippled creation, God chose Noah and his family to shower grace upon.

In the **Covenant of Promise**, God promised to bring people from all nations into relationship with

Him through Abraham. Although old and married to a barren wife, Abraham was promised he would become the father of nations. His descendants, both physical and spiritual, are promised a land of their own and a holy King to rule them.

The **Covenant of Law** revealed His heart through His law. God gave Moses and the people of Israel the Ten Commandments and instructions for building a tabernacle for proper worship of Him. God travelled with His people wherever they went in a tent of worship.

In the **Covenant of the Kingdom**, God promised to give His people a King and Kingdom that would never fail or pass away. God would firmly establish His presence with His people.

In the **Covenant of Consummation**, God brought all these promises to bear in the person of Jesus Christ. O. Palmer Robertson writes in *The Christ of the Covenants*:

In the person of Jesus Christ, the covenants of God achieve incarnational unity. Because Jesus, as the Son of God and mediator of the covenant, cannot be divided, the covenants cannot be divided. He Himself guarantees the unity of the covenants, because He Himself is the heart of each of the various covenantal administrations.¹

The Church Universal, of which you and I are a part, continues the work Jesus set in motion. One day, Jesus Christ will return to set the groaning creation right when the Covenant of Consummation is fully realized. All things will be renewed, and God will dwell intimately among His people forever in perfect relationship in the City of Zion.

Lead Me to Zion is a resource to introduce children to the enduring covenantal love of God for His people. Covenant Theology is more than “church” knowledge or helpful facts regurgitated to win a trivia game. Covenant Theology “permeates the whole history of God’s forming a people for Himself.”² Covenantal love is inescapably seductive. It is the powerful love that binds us forever to our Creator.

¹ O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Philipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1980), 52.

² *Ibid.*, 45.

The Covenants³

(Covenant — a relationship God establishes and guarantees)

COVENANT OF LIFE

(Given to Adam): God gave them the gift of life, the Garden of Eden, work, and worship. They were to give full obedience in not eating of the forbidden fruit. The covenant was broken when they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

COVENANT OF REDEMPTION (GRACE)

Covenant of Commencement (Adam):	God promises a Savior to crush the power of sin.
Covenant of Preservation (Noah):	God keeps Noah and his family safe and promises to never destroy the earth again with a flood.
Covenant of Promise (Abraham):	God promises to make Abraham's name great, give him a promised land, and make all of Abraham's descendants into a great nation.
Covenant of Law (Moses):	God promises to make the nation of Israel His treasure and gives them His law.
Covenant of the Kingdom (David):	God promises to send a King who will reign forever.
Covenant of Consummation	<p>(Jesus Christ): All God's covenant promises are perfectly fulfilled in Jesus.</p> <p>(Church): God continues His work through the Church.</p> <p>(Zion): God will one day make everything new and live among His people forever.</p>

³ Based on Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 61-62. A decorated poster of this chart for the classroom is available from the PCA Bookstore.

How To Use *Lead Me to Zion*

Each lesson contains four main sections to aid in the discipleship of young hearts.

Thoughts for the Teacher

Understanding the covenant promises of God is key to teaching them well. Each lesson provides the teacher with instruction to grow in his or her understanding of the covenants of God. Showing that each covenant promise is fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ, each lesson directs the teacher's eyes to look at Christ. God always keeps His promises, and Jesus Christ is the perfect Promise-Keeper.

Mystery Bag

Children are naturally curious. By using an object concealed in a bag, students' curiosity and interest are piqued and engaged as they attempt to guess what item will be revealed. All items tie into the story or lesson being taught that day. With their attention "grabbed" early, students are more likely to listen to the stories being told.

Bible Lesson

Each Bible lesson breaks down Covenant Theology into "bite-sized" segments for children to easily understand. Concrete examples from the Bible are used to illustrate how the God of Creation is continually drawing His people to Himself. Teachers are encouraged to enhance the storytelling experience using pictures, coloring pages, flannel boards, or objects or toys found around the home.

Hands-on Learning

Young children learn best through movement, activities, and play. *Lead Me to Zion* provides crafts, movement activities, games, and puzzles to help students apply biblical lessons to their lives while engaging kinetic, auditory, and visual learning styles.