



Tune In Session Guide #4: Exploring Covenant and Covenant Prayer with Children and Young People



What is 3Generate 365?

3Generate 365 is a year-round process of engagement with children and young people in their local setting to enable them listen to God, discern what God is saying, deepen their faith and be confident in being evangelists sharing their faith with others.

Following 3Generate 365 the intention is that children and young people will attend the event in 2021, which they will have had the opportunity to co-create. This will be a culmination of their listening and discerning and their experiences of responding to God's call.

The 3Generate 365 Theme:

3Generate 365 will explore topics of prayer, being one body in Christ, prophecy and covenant.

Tune In! God is always speaking and is always there and we are 'tuning in' to what God may be saying to us. We can only have an authentic prophetic voice by noticing what we are seeing and hearing from God.

We will then be 'in Tune' for the 3Generate 2021 Assembly, where we will explore what it means to be in tune with each other and with God and how we all have a part to play as members of the Body of Christ.

How to Use these guides:

These 'Tune In' session guides are designed to be used within your own pattern of meetings with children's and/or youth groups. So, you will not need to organise and attend an additional meeting, just use this hours' worth of material, when you usually meet with your children's and/or youth groups.

I am producing six standalone session plans in total, with the first one being available to download from the beginning of March. With the second one coming out the beginning of April and so on for May and June. July's session will be linked to the London District Theme of Woven: God's Story, Your Story, Every Story. Plus, an additional session plan entitled 'On the Margins' where the young people explore what it means to be 'on the margins' of church and society, who is on the margins and what is God calling you to do about it? The idea being that each month you will run the 'Tune In' session with your children's or Youth group (or both) at a time suitable for you (they are crafted so they can be run online or face2face). If you would like me to facilitate one of the online 'Tune Ins' you are planning on running, then please do let me know and I'd be happy to attend.

They are created in such a way that you hear the voice of the children and young people. You then make a note of what the children and young people said during the session. these 'voices' are then e-mailed to me Brian Smith – Brian@MethodistLondon.org.uk They are then forwarded to the 3Generate Planning team for use at the 3Generate 2021 Youth Assembly.

These guides are based on the material available in the Toolbox section on the 3Generate 365 website and used with permission and can be found here:

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/children-youth-family-ministry/3generate/3generate-365/3generate-365-toolbox-for-group-leaders/>

Session #4: Exploring Covenant and Covenant Prayer with Children & Young People

Ice Breaker Introduction: Would You Rather?

This session is all about helping the children and young people explore what covenant means and making covenant prayers.

Play a game of 'Would You Rather?' – After reading the following choices put loud, get the children and young people to choose the option, they would rather have. Note if doing over zoom, then get them to either put their hand up or down to signify the answer they choose. If in person, get them to either stand up or sit down, or head to one side of the room or the other.

Would You Rather?....

- Be Hot or Cold?
- Play Football or Basketball?
- Read a Book or Listen to an Album?
- Be on Zoom or In-Person?
- Use public transport or a car?
- Go for a Walk or A Swim?
- Lose an Arm or a Leg?
- Be Rich or Beautiful?
- Live in a cosy home or a big empty house?
- Break a Promise or Not promise in the first place?

Bible Study: Covenants in the Bible

Play YouTube Video: Covenants <https://youtu.be/8ferLlsvlmI> by the Bible Project. As a way of introducing the idea of Covenant.

Below are several stories from the Bible where God makes a covenant (or promise) with the people. You may prefer to pick one or two of these stories to look at together as a group, or you could look at the stories in more depth over several weeks.

- Covenant with Adam: Genesis 1: 26-30, 2: 16-27
- Covenant with Noah: Genesis 9: 1-11 (background in Genesis 6-8)
- Covenant with Abraham: Gen 12: 1-4, 15: 13-20, 17: 1-12
- Covenant with Moses/Israel: Exodus 19: 3-8, 20:1-17, 24: 3-8

- New Covenant: Jeremiah 31: 31-34, Matthew 26:26-28

For each story...

1. Take some time to read/explain the story using the Bible references given (you may want to add more background to the stories).
2. Explore and discuss with the children and/or young people the two aspects of the covenant:
 - What was God's promise?
 - What was required of the people?
3. Allow some time for them to raise and discuss any questions they may have about the story. Do not feel like you need to have all the answers! Be on this journey together with your children and young people and encourage them to share their views and ideas in response to others' thoughts and questions.
4. Ask the young people how they might have responded to the covenant.

You may need to explain to the group about the overarching story of the Bible being that the people struggled to keep the covenants with God as they didn't remain faithful. Throughout the books in the Old Testament we see the people of Israel failing in their relationship with God, as their lives were not focused on or reliant on God. This is why God spoke about a 'New Covenant', which wasn't an outward set of requirements, but a relationship of the heart. Jesus' death is seen as establishing the new covenant, where people can be in a relationship with God, not through any actions that they have done, but because they have received forgiveness from God.

Introducing the Methodist Covenant Prayer:

Explain to the group that Methodists hold an annual Covenant Service to celebrate all that God means to them. They affirm that they will give their whole lives and all their choices to serve God. This first began in 1755 – over 250 years ago. Most churches hold the service in the New Year, but some hold it in September, at the beginning of the Methodist year.

The traditional Covenant Prayer (shown below) makes it very clear that this commitment is a serious one. It is about giving your whole life to God. Most people find it quite tough to say the prayer and really mean it. But the prayer is so central to the Christian life that other Churches also use it as a way of showing commitment to God.

Many people like to think they belong to themselves. But this prayer is about doing what God wants, not what we want. It can feel very hard to give up our own choices, but this prayer is like a love poem to God. It is only said by choice!

Spend some time reading the prayer together with the group and discussing any sections that don't make sense.

- Ask the young people what their initial response is to the prayer – do they like it?
- Which bits do they think would be the hardest to say and really mean it?

You may be able to find someone at your church who would be willing to speak to the children and young people about what the prayer means for them when they say it each year.

The Covenant Prayer

I am no longer my own but yours.
Your will, not mine, be done in all things,
wherever you may place me,
in all that I do
and in all that I may endure;
when there is work for me
and when there is none;
when I am troubled
and when I am at peace.
Your will be done
when I am valued
and when I am disregarded;
when I find fulfilment
and when it is lacking;
when I have all things,
and when I have nothing.
I willingly offer all I have and am
to serve you,
as and where you choose.
Glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours.
May it be so for ever.
Let this covenant now made on earth
be fulfilled in heaven.

Amen.

The Methodist Covenant Prayer - Activities:

Choose one or more of the following options:

Option 1: Rewrite the Prayer:

Ask the children and/or young people to rewrite the prayer in their own words, so they could use Emoji's, text message speech or even make it into a song. Depending on how creative your group is.

Option 2: Poetry: (maybe for older groups)

Ask the young people to write a seven-sentence poem using the stems from the prayer. Tell them it is a poem about a turning point in life. For example: I am no longer... In all that I do... When there is... When I am... When I have... I willingly... May it be... Or alternatively use these sentence starters: I am no longer... Line me up with... Let me be... Give me... I freely give... So now... Let it be...

Option 3: Prayer/Art Activity:

Ask the young people to illustrate the meaning of one line of the prayer. Or use the activity sheet in the handout section to design seven symbols, logos or pictures for the different sections of the prayer, which express the meaning of each section. The young people can sketch them in the blank column. You could even get the children and young people to create a big picture of the seven individually and then combine them to create a big storyboard/comic strip type display of all seven lines of the prayer.

Closing Worship:

Play YouTube Video: Promises (feat. Joe L Barnes & Naomi Raine) by Maverick City, which can be found here <https://youtu.be/q5m09rqOoxE>

Then handout (if running an online session, send the lyrics to them electronically beforehand) the lyrics (which can be found in the handout section) for the children and young people to follow along with the song, highlighting any words or lines that stand out for them.

Handouts

Methodist Covenant Prayer - Activity Sheet:

<p>I am no longer my own but yours. Your will, not mine, be done in all things,</p>	
<p>wherever you may place me, in all that I do and in all that I may endure; when there is work for me and when there is none; when I am troubled and when I am at peace.</p>	
<p>Your will be done when I am valued and when I am disregarded;</p>	
<p>when I find fulfilment and when it is lacking; when I have all things, and when I have nothing.</p>	

<p>I willingly offer all I have and am to serve you, as and where you choose.</p>	
<p>Glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours. May it be so for ever.</p>	
<p>Let this covenant now made on earth be fulfilled in heaven. Amen.</p>	

"Promises" - Lyrics
(feat. Joe L Barnes & Naomi Raine)

Faithful through the ages
God of Abraham
You're the God of covenant
And of faithful promises
Time and time again
You have proven
You'll do just what You said

Though the storms may come and the winds may blow
I'll remain steadfast
And let my heart learn, when You speak a word
It will come to pass

Great is Your faithfulness to me
Great is Your faithfulness to me
From the rising sun to the setting same, I will praise Your name
Great is Your faithfulness to me

When the seasons change
You remain the same

God from age to age
Though the earth may pass away
Your word remains the same, yea-eah
Your history can prove
There's nothing You can't do
You're faithful and true

Though the storms may come and the winds may blow
I'll remain steadfast
And let my heart learn, when You speak a word
It will come to pass

Great is Your faithfulness to me, Great is Your faithfulness to me
From the rising sun to the setting same, I will praise Your name
Great is Your faithfulness to me

Your faithfulness, it never runs out
It never runs out
Oh-oh, Your faithfulness
It never runs out (It never runs out)
It never runs out (It never runs out)

I put my faith in Jesus
My anchor to the ground
My hope and firm foundation
He'll never let me down
I put my faith in Jesus
My anchor to the ground
My hope and firm foundation (My hope and firm foundation)
He'll never let me down (He'll never let me down)
I put my faith in Jesus (Yes, I do)
My anchor to the ground
My hope and firm foundation (My hope and firm foundation)
He'll never let me down (He'll never let me down, never let me down)
I put my faith in Jesus (I put my faith in Jesus)
My anchor to the ground (My anchor to the ground)
My hope and firm foundation (He's my hope, my only hope, my only hope)
He'll never let me down (He'll never let me down)
He'll never let me down

Great is Your faithfulness to me
Great is Your faithfulness to me
From the rising sun to the setting same, I will praise Your name
In every season, great is Your faithfulness to me

I put my faith in Jesus
My anchor to the ground
My hope and firm foundation (He's my hope)
He'll never let me down (And He'll never let me down)

I put my faith in Jesus (I put my faith)
My anchor to the ground (My anchor)
My hope and firm foundation (He's my hope)
He'll never let me down (Never let me down)
I put my faith in Jesus
My anchor to the ground (My anchor to the ground)
My hope and firm foundation (My hope and)
He'll never let me down (Never let me down, never let me)
I put my faith in Jesus (I put my faith in Jesus)
My anchor to the ground (My anchor to the ground)
My hope and firm foundation (He's my hope and firm foundation)
He'll never let me down (He'll never let me down)
He'll never let me down (He'll never let me down)

Great is Your faithfulness to me
In every season, great is Your faithfulness to me
From the rising sun to the setting same, I will praise Your name
From the rising sun to the setting same, I will praise Your name

Let it go up and let it go down
I'll still bless You, I'll still praise You
From the rising sun to the setting same, I will praise Your name
Let it go up, then let it go down
And I'll still bless You, I'll still bless You
From the rising sun to the setting same, I will praise Your name
Let it go up, then let it come down
And I'll still bless You, I'll still bless You
From the rising sun to the setting same, I will praise Your name
I'll still bless You, I'll still bless You
I'll still bless You, great is
From the rising sun to the setting same, I will praise Your name

Great is Your faithfulness to me (I'll still bless You)
Great is Your faithfulness to me (I'll still bless You)
From the rising sun to the setting same, I will praise Your name (I'll still bless
You, I'll still bless You)
Great is Your faithfulness to me (I'll still bless You, I'll still bless You)

Yes, I'll still bless You
In the middle of the storm, in the middle of my trial
I'll still bless You
In the middle of the road, when I don't know where to go
I'll still bless You
In the middle of my storm, in the middle of my trial
I'll still bless You
When I'm in the middle of the road and I don't know which way to go
I'll still (I'll still bless You)
I'll still bless You
I'll still bless You (I'll still bless You)
I've got a reason to bless You, yeah
I've got a reason to bless You (I'll still bless You)
I've got a reason to bless Your name
You've been faithful, You've been faithful (I'll still bless You)
You've been so good to me, You've been so good
You've been so good to me
Let this place be filled with Your praise
Be filled with Your praise
We bless Your name
I'll still bless You, oh-oh-oh
I'll still bless You, oh-oh-oh
I'll still bless You, oh-oh-oh
I'll still bless You
Great is Your faithfulness

Great is Your faithfulness to me
Great is Your faithfulness to me
From the rising sun to the setting same, I will praise Your name
From the rising sun to the setting same, I will praise Your name
From the rising sun to the setting same, I will praise Your name
Great is Your faithfulness to me

Lyrics from <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/maverickcitymusic/promises.html>

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