

2020

THE UNSHAKEABLE PROMISE

6 Events

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6 Events

we



Grand Rapids, Michigan

We'd like to hear from you! Please feel free to contact us at 1-800-333-8300 or editorial@faithaliveresources.org with your comments and questions about WE.

Faith Alive is grateful to Bonny Mulder Behnia and Laura Keeley for writing the events in this book, and for the contributions of Rachel Shugart and Michelle Rake to events 2, 4, and 6.

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WELCOME TO WE

You have in front of you an exciting new concept in faith nurture: a series of intergenerational events that can bring your entire church family closer as you learn about God and God's story.

With WE, your whole congregation gathers monthly, with all ages together. Why? Because to grow in faith, we need each other! To truly be the body of Christ we need the enthusiasm of children, the energy of teens, and the wisdom and experience of young adults through senior citizens. We all have things to teach each other, and we all can help point each other to God.

Why Intergenerational Learning?

In the past few years, many educators have begun to identify some drawbacks of the “silo” approach to faith nurture in which all age groups are separated. That approach has allowed churches to tailor their teaching to the learning abilities of particular groups, but it has also had some unintended negative results, such as

- a lack of community within the church family.
- the loss of opportunities to learn and grow with those who are in different places on the faith journey.
- parents' expectation that the church will be the primary source of faith nurture for their children.

As a result, many churches are looking for ways to rebuild community and spend time learning and growing together.

In the book *Intergenerational Faith Formation*, the authors contend, “There has never been a stronger need for intergenerational faith formation. . . . When we bring the different age groups together, we see a revitalization of the faith of the elders and a deeper understanding of the faith traditions on the part of the young” (Twenty-Third Publications, 2008, p. 14). They also argue that all-ages faith nurture empowers parents to share their faith more openly at home.

Why WE?

We're so excited that you've chosen WE—not just because it's a great program that's lots of fun, but because of what WE can do for your faith community:

- WE's event-based format makes it fun for people of all ages to grow together as they learn from each other and grow in faith as they hear God's story.
- WE complements EVERY church education, faith nurture, and children's ministry program. Whatever you're using now, you can use WE alongside it.
- WE is easy to set up and easy to use. And we've kept advance preparation to a minimum—a feature your volunteers will appreciate.
- It's cost-efficient—all you need is this book, inexpensive supplies, some great food, some volunteers, and you're ready to go!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How long does a WE event last?

Each WE event is designed to last about two hours, including a meal. If you serve only snacks or dessert, plan on an hour and a half or less.

Why include a meal?

A prepared meal is often a big draw for busy families. Sharing a meal also makes it easier for people to meet others and to feel more comfortable when it's time to interact and learn together. It's also a great time to try foods from the different ethnic groups in your church or community.

How many people should be seated at a table?

Plan for six to eight people per table. This ensures that everyone has a chance to talk and be easily heard. The session instructions also give you fun tips for making seat assignments to help people mingle and meet each other.

Will all ages really feel welcome?

Yes! Your WE group will be talking about open-ended questions that don't require extensive Bible knowledge or a "right" answer. The activities we've included are fun for all ages. No matter how old you are or where you are on your faith journey, a WE event is fun, informal, and faith-building.

Why is it important to give people something to take home?

When the event is over, the learning should continue! After each event, every household will receive a devotional guide to use before the next event. We've also provided suggestions for other take-home items to hand out at the end of an event. These are optional, but they're fun and meaningful!

How do WE events help people of all ages live out their faith?

During each event participants will be challenged to consider how they can or will live out what they have learned. In addition to occasional service opportunities built right into some events, we've also included an activity called "Take It Further" in which you'll find great ideas to help participants take what they've learned even further together.

Can we use WE for midweek family ministry or in a home church?

Absolutely! Although WE events are especially designed to involve your entire congregation, they will also work wonderfully in a family ministry, in a home church, in Christian school communities with parents and grandparents, and more! Anywhere an intergenerational group gathers, WE can work.

MAKING WE HAPPEN—PLANNING TIPS

WE: The Unshakeable Promise

The theme of this WE series is “The Unshakeable Promise.” In six events your church family will discover what a covenant is, how God made covenants with people through history, how God sent Jesus to be the covenant-keeper, and how the Holy Spirit enables us to live as God’s covenant people.

Gather Your Team

To make a WE event happen without doing all the work yourself, you’ll want to identify the following people to help. Some of these duties can be combined if your volunteer pool is small.

EVENT COORDINATOR/GREETER does the planning, promotes the event to the congregation and community, recruits volunteers, and gathers supplies. Also serves as the greeter by welcoming people, handing out nametags at the door, and passing out the take-home items before people leave.

EVENT HOST introduces the event, keeps it moving, and closes the event in prayer. Choose someone who’s outgoing, time-conscious, and comfortable in front of a crowd.

SONG LEADER provides musical accompaniment and teaches new songs. Consider asking a college student or musical teen to help in this way.

FOOD/CLEANUP COORDINATOR organizes the food for each event, whether it’s a served meal, a potluck, or a snack, and cleans up after the meal.

A/V TECHNICIAN sets up, tests, and runs the sound system and projection equipment if you’re using them for this event.

At your initial meeting with your team, spend some time helping everyone catch the WE vision. For help, see the document titled “Getting Started with WE” (a copy is in your event box, and you can also find it on the event CD) and the “Welcome to WE” and “FAQ” sections of this guide (pp. 5 and 6 respectively).

Set up a meeting two weeks before each WE event to go through the event outline together. Make sure each person on your team is clear about his or her role. Meet once more before each WE event to touch base and tie up loose ends.

Promote Your WE Event

On the WE event CD you'll find promotional items your church can use to spread the word about WE. We suggest you consider promoting the WE event in some of the following ways:

- Church bulletin announcement
- PowerPoint announcement before or after worship service
- Invitation emailed to members
- Postcard invitations sent to homes
- Posters displayed in common areas
- Fliers in member mailboxes

RSVPs

It's important to plan a way to gather RSVPs, whether it's on a signup sheet or by email. You'll need to know in advance how many people will be attending each WE event so you know how much food and activity materials to have on hand. But be sure to set extra places for last-minute attendees!

Room Setup

For every WE event you'll need the following:

- a welcome table by the door on which to place the nametags
- tables and chairs set up in groups of six to eight
- tables and tableware for food service
- sound amplification equipment, unless your group is very small
- projection equipment for song lyrics and PowerPoint (optional)

Any additional setup requirements will be noted in each event's instructions.

Event Supplies

At the beginning of each step in the event, we list the supplies needed and offer setup tips. Most of the supplies are basic, inexpensive things that you'll easily be able to find in your church or borrow.

Including People of All Abilities

Any time an intergenerational group gets together, there will be people with varying abilities. Consider the needs in your particular congregation, and make adjustments as appropriate. Here are some tips that may help:

- To assist those with hearing impairments or difficulties, hold all meetings in a room with a sound system if possible (or better yet, a hearing loop) and insist that anyone addressing the whole group use a microphone.
- If there are people in your church who have vision impairments, ask for volunteers to sit next to them, guide them as requested if movement is necessary, and describe any visual elements of the event.
- On your signup sheet, leave space for people to list dietary concerns or severe allergies.
- When choosing between activity options, consider the needs of anyone who has issues with mobility.

- If there are people in your church who don't like loud noises or a busy environment, consider designating one table a "quiet table" so they won't be as disturbed by loud talking or other noises that might bother them.
- Ask for volunteers to serve as assistants for people with intellectual disabilities. Ask the assistants to help explain instructions, guide the person through activities, or help in other ways.
- Make sure all children in your group feel included. When writing is called for, assist anyone who needs help. Make sure there's room for children to participate in all discussions and activities.
- Have translators available if there are people in your church who are learning English as a second language.

A Word about Sound Systems

If a sound system is available at your church, you'll find it to be very helpful for WE events. It's especially helpful for people who have hearing impairments, and it will ensure that everyone who speaks to the large group can be heard. If your meeting space is small or your church doesn't have sound equipment, make sure to ask everyone who addresses the large group to speak loudly and distinctly.

Music

Singing together is a great community builder. If there's a piano in your meeting space, that's perfect for accompaniment. If not, ask a guitarist to lead your singing. The theme song for *WE: The Unshakeable Promise* is "We Will Exalt You, God and King" (p. 10 in this book and in the Reproducibles.pdf file on the event CD). If it's unfamiliar to your group, have a song leader teach it to them. At the beginning of each WE event we also provide lists of other suggested songs that go with the event's theme.

Song suggestions are drawn from a variety of songbooks and other sources. Many of these songs can be found in the following hymnals and songbooks available from Faith Alive at www.FaithAliveResources.org or 1-800-333-8300:

- *Contemporary Songs for Worship*
- *Lift Up Your Hearts*
- *Psalms for All Seasons*
- *Psalter Hymnal*
- *Sing! A New Creation*
- *Sing With Me* (children's songbook)

WE events are also great times to have someone from another culture teach songs with new musical patterns or songs in a different language.

Take It Further

In the reproducible pages for each event you'll find cards that contain ideas for continuing the learning of the WE event in small groups, youth groups, and homes.

EVENT THEME SONG

WE WILL EXTOL YOU, GOD AND KING

Unison G D/F# Em C

1 We will ex - tol you, God and King, and
 2 Great is the Lord! In all his ways he's
 3 We con - tem - plate the splen - dor of the
 4 Now may your name be sung in ev - ery

Asus C/G G D/F# D

bless your ho - ly name.
 great - ly to be praised.
 world your hand has made.
 tongue in ev - ery place.

G D/F# Em C

Day af - ter day we'll sing your praise, for -
 Were we to search for end - less days, his
 Far great - er still the maj - es - ty we
 Sing - ing the fame of your great love in

G/B C F C6 D Am

ev - er and for - ev - er.
 great - ness none could fath - om.
 see in the Cre - a - tor!
 ev - ery gen - er - a - tion.

Refrain D G D G

One gen-er - a - tion will call to the next: "Our

G/B C2 A9/C# D7sus

God is good, and his hand is strong!"

D G Am Em

All of the world sings his mar - ve-lous acts, and

Bm Em Am D G

our voice will join with theirs in the song.

Words: Greg Scheer @ 2006 Faith Alive Christian Resources
 Music (SCARECROW 8.7 8.7 with refrain): Greg Scheer @ 2006 Faith Alive Christian Resources

EVENT 1

THE FIRST COVENANT

Scripture

Genesis 2, Genesis 6-9:17

Event Focus

In this event we'll discover that in the beginning, God created people to be God's covenant partners. Because people broke the covenant so badly, the world experienced the wrath and mercy of our covenant-keeping God.

This WE event, like all the others, has three steps:

Step 1: Welcome, Gathering, and Building Community

Gather as a group to enjoy some good food as you talk informally together about things related to Noah's story.

Step 2: Learning Experiences for All Ages

Enter the story through a participatory reading or a drama. Then live into the story as you do a fun activity with the people at your table.

Step 3: Reflect and Praise

Share what you've learned, praise God in song, and learn how to "take it further" with ideas for living out what you've learned.

These activities are designed to help WE participants

- understand what a covenant is and that we live in covenant with God, the world, and others.
- understand that failing to keep God's covenant has deep and serious consequences.
- feel sure that our God mercifully keeps his covenant even when people break it.
- identify ways that we see God's faithfulness in our lives and give God thanks.

SUPPLIES AND PREP

FOOD/CLEANUP COORDINATOR

Food Ideas

- Potluck dinner
- Food served "two by two": sloppy joes or sub sandwiches cut in half (everyone gets two halves), served with two apple slices, two orange slices, and two carrot sticks
- For dessert: Noah-themed treats
 - o Ice cream with two animals crackers standing up in it
 - o Blue Jell-O with gummy animals or fish
 - o Fruit pizza using rainbow-colored fruit such as strawberries, blueberries, kiwi, oranges, etc. (see recipe on p. 27 in this book and in the Reproducibles.pdf file on the event CD)

SONG LEADER

Suggested Music

- Event theme song: "We Will Extol You, God and King" (p. 10 in this book and in the Reproducibles.pdf files on the event CD)
- "Now Old Man Noah Built the Ark"
- "Who Built the Ark"
- "You Are Our God; We Are Your People"

STEP 1: Welcome, Gathering, and Building Community

EVENT COORDINATOR **Welcome** your WE group as they arrive. To encourage them to meet others in your church family, find a fun way to mix things up! Direct people to their tables using coded nametags (see Supplies and Prep box). Hand out the nametags in random order, but be sure to accommodate any young children who want to sit with a parent, or others who strongly desire to sit with family members or another attendee.

HOST **Begin** the event with a warm welcome. Then open with prayer and a Scripture reading using one of the options below:

- Read Isaiah 54:9-10.
- Read Psalm 136:1-9, 25-26, encouraging the whole group to say the words “His love endures forever.” Include a motion to signal them when it’s time to say those words.

HOST **Invite** participants to enjoy the good food together and use the dinner-table time as follows:

1. **Introduce** themselves to one another and tell the title of a favorite book.
2. As a group, **assign** one person to serve as table leader for the night.
3. **Point out** the conversation tents on each table. Encourage the table groups to use the questions on the tents to kick off their conversation during the meal and to help them prepare for the learning later.

FOOD/CLEANUP COORDINATOR When people are finished eating (allow about 30 minutes for a meal or 15 minutes for a snack), clear the tables to prepare for table activities.

EVENT COORDINATOR

Supplies and Prep for Step 1

- **Table decorations and nametags.** To encourage people to meet each other, group them at tables by the colors of the rainbow: red, orange, yellow, green, light blue, dark blue (indigo), and purple. If you have more than seven tables, add other colors such as aqua, chartreuse, and so on. If you wish, decorate the tables with matching colored helium balloons, plates, napkins, and crêpe paper. Use colored nametags that match the colors on the tables, or use white nametags decorated with the colors you have chosen. Provide nametags for all WE participants to wear—toddlers too! Randomly assigning people to tables, while

it makes some folks uncomfortable, is a good way to help people get to know each other. TIP: Be sure to match the number of nametags to the numbers of chairs around each table; if you have eight chairs at the “red” table, make eight red nametags.

- **Conversation Tents.** When you know how many tables you’ll have, print the same number of conversation tents (p. 18 in this book or in the Reproducibles.pdf file on the event CD) onto cardstock. Fold in half where indicated. Place one tent on each table before your WE group arrives.

STEP 2: Learning Experiences for All Ages

ENTER THE STORY

EVENT COORDINATOR Before the event, **choose** one of the following ways to present the story:

- Recruit two narrators and a helper to lead the presentation of the story of “Noah and the Covenant.”
- Recruit three readers to present the drama “Post-Ark.”

HOST **Invite** actors up to present your chosen drama.

HOST After the drama, **invite** table groups to take five minutes to share among themselves about what surprises them most about the story. Encourage them to make sure everyone gets a chance to speak. Then ask table groups to share some of their “surprises” with the larger group.

LIVE INTO THE STORY

HOST **Invite** table groups to live into this story using one of the activities outlined above (which the event coordinator has prepared in advance).

EVENT COORDINATOR

Supplies and Prep for Step 2

- **Choose one of the two dramas:** “Noah and the Covenant” **OR** “Post-Ark.” Make three copies, recruit three people to help present the drama, and schedule a practice session for them.
- Choose an activity: making rain sticks or self-portrait rainbows (see pp. 24 or 25 in this book and in the Reproducibles.pdf file on the event CD).
- If you choose to make rain sticks, collect the following supplies for each group and place each group’s supplies on a tray or in a bag:
 - **Rain Sticks Activity instructions** (p. 24 in this book and in the Reproducibles.pdf file on the event CD)
 - A **Bible**
 - **Blank white address labels** (the 2" x 4" or 5 cm x 10 cm size works best), four sheets per table
 - 2" x 24" (5 cm x 60 cm) **mailing tubes with end caps**, one or two per table. Make enough rain sticks so each household can go home with one. (You can buy mailing tubes in bulk online or in office supply stores for about a dollar each.)
 - 2" (5 cm) **nails** with large flat heads, 40 per rain stick

STEP 3: Reflect and Praise

HOST If you made rain sticks, have all the tables turn them over at the same time, and listen to the rain!

If you made a self-portrait rainbow, have the groups place their line of faces in rainbow order on a wall in your meeting space. Begin with the red table placing their faces in the top row. The orange table should put their faces in a row under the red table's faces, and so on. Admire the rainbow you have made of people who are in covenant with God!

HOST **Invite** each table group to send a representative forward to share briefly an example of how God has been faithful in his or her life.

HOST **Lead** the group in prayer:

Creator God, we praise you for creating the world, for separating the earth from the waters. We praise you for your faithfulness to Noah and his family, who were not destroyed by the flood. We praise you for being faithful to us too. May we, with all your children, live together knowing that you keep the promises of your covenant. Thank you for your great love for us. Amen.

SONG LEADER **Offer** praise to God by leading the group in singing the event theme song "We Will Extol You, God and King." If time allows, sing other songs of praise from the list of suggested music at the beginning of this event, or choose your own songs that fit this event's theme.

HOST **Introduce** the take-home items that your greeter will hand out to each household before they leave. Call their attention first to the take-home devotional guide. Encourage everyone to use this devotional at home for one week following this event. Be sure to point out the "Take It Further" cards. Other take-home options for this event are listed below; introduce any that you are providing:

- o **Dry pinto beans**, about 1/4 cup per rain stick
- o **Hammer**, one or two per table
- o A set of **markers** in the colors of the rainbow (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple), one set per table
- o **Masking tape**, one roll per table
- If you choose to make the **self-portrait rainbow**, gather the following supplies and place them in a basket or on a tray for each group:
 - o **Self-portrait Rainbow instructions** (p. 25 in this book and in the Reproducibles.pdf file on the event CD)
 - o A **Bible**
 - o Blank white **3" x 5" cards**, one per person (plus a few extras in case someone messes up)
 - o **Markers** sorted by color to match the colors of the table groups. The red table will only get red markers, the green table will only get green markers, and so on.
 - o **Masking tape**, one roll per table

- **“How Large Was the Ark?”** sheet. Encourage people to lay out the ark in a field or park.
- **Fruit Pizza recipe**
- **Rain Stick instructions** (and supply packet if you’re providing it)

HOST Read Psalm 103:13-19. Options: you can read this passage aloud yourself or arrange in advance for people of a variety of ages to read verses of the psalm to the group.

HOST Thank participants for coming and announce the date of the next WE event.

EVENT COORDINATOR Hand out take-home items as people leave.

EVENT COORDINATOR

Supplies and Prep for Step 3

- A copy of the event theme song “We Will Extol You, God and King” (p. 10 in this book or in the Reproducibles.pdf file on the event CD) for your song leader.
- **Optional take-home items:**
 - o A copy of the **“How Large Was the Ark?” sheet** (p. 26 in this book or in the Reproducibles.pdf file on the event CD). Make sure your host has a copy to show people at the end of the event.
 - o A copy of the **Fruit Pizza recipe** (p. 27 in this book or in the Reproducibles.pdf file on the event CD). Make sure your host has a copy to show people at the end of the event.
 - o A copy of the **Rain Stick instructions sheet** (p. 28 in this book or in the Reproducibles.pdf file on the event CD) for making rain sticks at home. **OPTIONAL:** If you wish and your budget allows, you can also make a rain stick supply packet for each household that includes a 2" x 24" mailing tube with end caps, four sheets of 2" x 4" address labels, 40 large-head 2" nails, and ¼ cup of dry pinto beans. Make sure your host has a copy of the instructions sheet (and the supply packet if you’re handing those out) to show people at the end of the event.

we The Unshakeable Promise

You have in your hands an exciting new concept in faith nurture! **we** is a series of fun, easy-to-use intergenerational events that get your whole church together for a rich learning celebration that brings unity to your community.

The events in **we** *The Unshakeable Promise* explore the amazing story of God's covenant with people, from Noah to the coming of the Holy Spirit.

The 6 events in this series include:

Event 1: The First Covenant (Noah)

Event 2: Covenant of Grace (Abraham)

Event 3: God Renews the Covenant (Sinai)

Event 4: The Covenant Keeper (Jesus)

Event 5: The New Covenant (The Lord's Supper)

Event 6: Living as God's Covenant People (The Holy Spirit)

This event guide includes:

- Planning and setup tips
- Clear and complete event outlines
- Lists of easy-to-find supplies
- **we** theme song and other music suggestions
- Reproducible pages to print or copy



www.WEcurriculum.org
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we