

October 26, 2022

Dear CRE student,

We missed you at CRE on October 27<sup>th</sup>! So that you keep up with the other people in your group, we ask that you complete the following:

1. Read the following and respond to each scenario. Below, different scenarios will be presented in which someone has broken their word or mislead. Rate the breaking of the word by calling it 1) a jerk move 2) kinda funny 3) very offensive or 4) causing long-term harm. Please also share why you rated each scenario the way you did.

Scenario 1: You are in an unfamiliar city looking for a particular restaurant. You discover that you got the name wrong and the map app you're using brought you out of the way. You stop to see if you can get the right name of the place you are looking for. The person you talk to for help seems nice enough, but intentionally gives you another wrong name and you get more lost. How do you rate the stranger intentionally giving you a wrong direction?

Scenario 2: A father gets caught up in his family's favorite team's run in the playoffs. In his enthusiasm, he tells his ten-year-old son, "If they win the championship, then I am buying you a jersey!" The team did indeed win the championship, but the dad said he kept forgetting to order the jersey and actually never did buy it. What do you think about the dad leaving his son hanging?

Scenario 3: There is a guy who thinks every girl is in love with him. Whenever he meets a new girl, he tells his friends, "I can tell she wants me to ask her out." His other friends get tired of it and want to teach him a lesson. They catfish him. One of his friends sets up fake social media accounts. They get photos of someone he doesn't know and starts to pretend that this person is sincerely in love with him. What do you think about the "catfishing" friends?

Scenario 4: You have confided something very personal to a friend and they promise they won't tell anyone. Later in the week, you are talking to a different friend. This person repeats to you something that you know you only told to the first friend. What do you think about the friend who couldn't keep it to themselves?

Scenario 5: A mom is worried about her daughter because of a troubling change in behavior. While the daughter is at school one day, the mom reads the daughter's journal entries. What do you think about the nosey mom?

Scenario 6: You and a friend have been making plans to see a movie that you have been waiting for. In fact, your plans included going to the midnight show so that you can see it as soon as it comes out. While you're getting ready, you get a text and the friend ditches without

an explanation. The friend asks if you want to go tomorrow night instead. You discover that they ditched you so that they could hang out with other friends. What do you think about the ditching friend?

2. Read the following and then answer the questions at the end of this section.

In each of the scenarios we talked about, there wasn't a legal contract that laid out roles and responsibilities between the people. But to differing degrees, there was a breaking of trust. We can often think that contracts are the best and most binding tool we have when we are trying to build a trusting relationship. We know of contracts, but covenants are actually a deeper bond. I would first like offer definitions for these two words: contract and covenant. First contract.

Contract - An agreement between two parties that states what the two parties will do for each other that is enforceable by law.

Covenant - An agreement between two parties that permanently impacts each person's identity, but it is not enforced by law.

There are others, but here are some characteristics of a contract:

- They may be for a set amount of time
- They specify what each party is going to do for the other party
- They are enforced by an outside agency, such as federal, state, or local law enforcement
- If one of the parties doesn't uphold their part of the contract, then the contract is voided

Again, there are others, but here are some of the characteristics of a covenant:

- There is no set amount of time. It is forever.
- Like a contract, there are roles for each party
- It is enforced by the trust between the parties
- One party's failure to uphold the agreement doesn't cancel the relationship

Because we are talking about matters of faith, below we find in the Bible two covenants. The first is a covenant that God made with someone and the second is a covenant between two people.

In the first, we are going to see a character named Abraham. He is revered as the common ancestor in faith for the Jewish people, Muslims, and Christians. This story tells of when God chose Abraham.

Genesis 17:1-8.

*When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said: I am God the Almighty. Walk in my presence and be blameless. Between you and me I will establish my covenant, and I will multiply you exceedingly. Abram fell face down and God said to him: For my part, here is my covenant with you: you are to become the father of a multitude of nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I am making you the father of*

*a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fertile; I will make nations of you; kings will stem from you. I will maintain my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout the ages as an everlasting covenant, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. I will give to you and to your descendants after you the land in which you are now residing as aliens, the whole land of Canaan, as a permanent possession; and I will be their God.*

Note the following:

God made a promise to Abram

That promise is fulfilled

There are an estimated 14 million Jews in the world, 1.8 billion Muslims, and 2.3 billion Christians, all of whom revere Abraham as the father in faith

God said the covenant would last forever

God asked for Abraham and his descendants to walk closely with God and to be “blameless”

Despite Abraham’s descendants’ not following the covenant, the Bible is the story of God keeping the promise he made in the covenant

We will now look at the covenant between David and Jonathan that is found in the book of 1 Samuel.

God promised to Abraham that he would make a nation comprised of his descendants. That promise was fulfilled. The Bible continues the story of how a nation of Abraham’s descendants, called Israel, was formed and how Israel eventually had a king. In the book of 1 Samuel, we read the story of two of Israel’s kings. The first is King Saul and the second is King David. In the first scripture passage we read, there was an example of a covenant made between God and Abraham. In this next scripture passage we are going to read about a covenant between two people. The first person is one of King Saul’s sons named Jonathan and the second is his friend, David, who would become king after Saul. The passage we are about to read comes after David’s famous defeat of Goliath.

To introduce this passage, remember that this takes place after the familiar story of David defeating Goliath. Everyone in Israel is impressed with David, but a bond of brotherhood is formed between Jonathan and David. Even after each of them married and had their own families, their covenant of trust remained with each other.

1 Samuel 18:1-3.

*By the time David finished speaking with Saul, Jonathan’s life became bound up with David’s life; he loved him as his very self. Saul retained David on that day and did not allow him to return to his father’s house. Jonathan and David made a covenant, because Jonathan loved him as his very self.*

David's fame grew among the people of Israel to such a point that King Saul became extremely envious of David. He saw David as a threat and started a plot to kill young David. Because of the covenant between Jonathan and David, Jonathan sought to protect David

1 Samuel 20:1-4.

*David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and went to Jonathan. "What have I done?" he asked him. "What crime or what offense does your father hold against me that he seeks my life?" Jonathan answered him: "Heaven forbid that you should die! My father does nothing, great or small, without telling me. Why, then, should my father conceal this from me? It cannot be true!" But David replied: "Your father is well aware that I am favored with your friendship, so he has decided, 'Jonathan must not know about this or he will be grieved.' Nevertheless, as the LORD lives and as you live, there is only a step between me and death." Jonathan then said to David, "I will do whatever you say."*

Jonathan helped to save David's life and there was a promise that the bond between them would last through their descendants.

Everyone who has been baptized is in a covenant with God just as God and Abraham were in a covenant with each other. But everyone who has been baptized is also in a covenant with each other just as David and Jonathan were in a covenant with each other

While all the baptized are in a covenant with each other, there are smaller groups of people who join together to make a commitment to be together and form a smaller community. Covenants, then, are eternal relationships that are built on trust and on being true to one's word.

So far, we have thought about trust and relationships. We have also heard about God's covenant with Abraham. We just heard about David's covenant relationship with Jonathan. Communities are built on relationships. Good communities accept the members for who they are and allow them to fully be themselves. Think about some of the good communities in which you have been a member—maybe your family, a club at school, a sports team, your parish, or youth ministry.

- *What are some of the qualities of those communities?*
- *What is needed to maintain a good community environment?*
- *What role do relationships play in maintaining a good community?*
- *Are promises being made within a healthy community, either spoken or unspoken? If so, what are they?*

3. Read the following and complete the activity at the end of the section.

In one of the earlier sessions, it was mentioned that 85% of teenagers believe in God. However, our belief in God or our doubts about God are very personal. Because of that, we might be reluctant to talk about God. Yet, the idea of God is so big that it is something that needs to be talked about it. Consider these ideas about God.

- There is a Creator of everything
- This Creator knows us personally

- This Creator invites us to be in a relationship
- This Creator has vision for the people we are to become

These ideas are big enough that we need a safe place to explore these questions. That is what we are asking. We are asking for you to trust this group with your thoughts and feelings about God and your own life.

We are asking you to trust this group. We are also asking you to be trustworthy. We ask that this be a safe place. Safe from judgement and safe from ridicule. It is to be a place that we can discover more about who we are and about who God is. We ask you to trust the group and we ask for you to be trustworthy in the group.

- *List the qualities you want to have in our CRE community.*
- *List the things you need to do to make the qualities thrive in this community.*

#### 4. Closing prayer

Loving God, you have blessed your people with many sacred promises throughout time. Your ultimate promise and covenant were made in your son, Jesus. As we listen to your Word, help us to reflect on the promise we can make as a community tonight and how that will help us.

Jeremiah 31:33.

*But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days—oracle of the lord. I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

Prayer Leader: Through Jesus, God has written the new covenant on our hearts. It is a law of love that we are called to share with each other. God made this promise with us.

Loving God, we thank you for your ultimate promise, Jesus Christ. He lived a life of faith, hope, love, compassion, service, and justice. Jesus calls us all to live this life, a life that leads to a deeper and lasting happiness. As a community, help us to support each other and model the life that Jesus lived by upholding this promise to each other. We ask this in your name. Amen.

Please complete and submit by our next class. You may email it to [rotramelm@stjohn23rd.org](mailto:rotramelm@stjohn23rd.org) or turn it in to your catechist/small group leader.

Peace and Blessings,

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