

# Pinky Promise

By George Halitzka

for use as  
**STEP 1**

**Lesson 9****Focus:**

Keeping promises builds relationships.

**Lesson 9****Bible Basis:**

Genesis 29:13-30;  
31:38-45, 51-53

**Lesson 9****Memory Verse:**

The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in people who are truthful. —Proverbs 12:22

**Students will discuss the potential consequences of broken promises and the benefits of keeping your word.**

**Materials:**

Internet access

Suppose that after church today, you go somewhere and meet a cute guy or girl. You start talking—and okay, maybe you're flirting a little. Not only is this person cute, he or she seems sweet and funny, too! You quickly develop a major crush.

A few minutes later, however, your mom tells you it's time to go home. You summon all your courage and ask, "Um, could we maybe . . . I dunno, share phone numbers—so we can text later?"

Your crush quickly agrees. "If you text me, I promise to text you back," he or she says.

You can't believe how amazing this is. As soon as you get home, you text your cutie.

Strangely, he or she doesn't answer.

You figure, "Well, it's Sunday. Maybe he or she has family stuff going on." So, you text again on Monday. No response. You try on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Nothing. You're getting discouraged but refuse to give up. This person is *really* cute!

You text once more on Friday, and this time, you get a reply—sort of. Your crush sends back two words: "Can't talk."

Less than a week ago, this person gave you his or her phone number and *promised* to text you back. But you've texted six times now and got back a grand total of two words in response.

➤ **If this happened in real life, what would you think about your crush who hasn't bothered texting back?** (Students would likely be frustrated that their crush didn't keep his or her promise. They might realize this person probably doesn't like them back.)

➤ **On the other hand, what would you think about your crush if he or she kept the promise and immediately texted back on Sunday?** (Students would likely be excited that their crush kept his or her word. They would probably conclude that this person *does* like them back.)

**Promises are a big deal. When we break them, bad things happen to our relationships. People feel like they can't trust us anymore. On the other hand, when we keep promises, good things happen! In fact, keeping a promise might even save a life. That's what happens in this short film.**

Show students the following video [2:23]:

KEEPING THE PROMISE

<https://youtu.be/IBDpic-i26s>

➤ **What promise did the mom and her son make to each other?** (They “pinky promised” to always wear their seatbelts.)

➤ **What was the result of the mom keeping her promise?** (Her life was saved when she got into a car accident.)

➤ **What are some common promises that middle schoolers make to other people?** (Make sure your students understand that by a “promise,” you mean any time one person makes a commitment to someone else. It doesn't necessarily involve using the word “promise.”)

➤ **Let's take a closer look at one of the promises that we just discussed. What will happen if that promise is kept? What if it's broken?** (Help students identify potential positive and negative consequences of several of the promises that the class brainstormed in the previous question.)

**Besides safety issues like wearing your seatbelt, there are few promises that are a matter of life and death. But keeping promises *will* always strengthen your relationships by building trust. Breaking promises will always damage your relationships by destroying trust.**

**The Bible shows us a vivid example of what happens when promises get broken. Let's read a story about two men named Jacob and Laban.**

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

# Pinky Promise

for use as  
**STEP 4** 

**Lesson 9****Focus:**

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31:38-45, 51-53

**Lesson 9****Memory Verse:**

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**Materials:**

- Paper
- Pens/pencils

**Today in the story of Jacob and Laban, we saw that broken promises break relationships. Thankfully, the opposite is also true: keeping promises builds relationships!**

**Making a promise doesn't always involve saying the words "I promise." Jesus taught that our word should be our bond (see Matthew 5:37). In other words, when we say we'll do something—whether it's technically a "promise" or not—we need to follow through.**

**Hand each student a sheet of paper and a pencil. As we wrap up our lesson, let's think about a commitment that you've broken to someone in your life during the past week or so. Whether it was big or small, all of us make mistakes. For better or for worse, it isn't hard to think of ways that people break promises. Focus on just one commitment that you haven't kept. Write it on the front of your paper.**

**Now, here comes the hard part. Turn your paper over and write down something you can do to rebuild trust with the person who was hurt by your broken promise.**

➤ **What are some ways to rebuild trust after a broken promise?** (Students may suggest things like offering a sincere apology, following through on the promise even if it's late, or doing something kind for the person to try and make up for the neglected commitment.)

**Hopefully, you have some ideas about ways to help heal a broken promise! If you haven't already, write down one idea that applies to your situation on the back of your paper.**

**This week, actually *do* what you wrote down! Keep tabs on what happened—you'll probably be pleasantly surprised at the results—and share about it if you like next week.**

**Keeping promises builds relationships—that's why it's so important to keep our word. But even when we break a promise, it doesn't have to mean the end of a relationship. We can rebuild trust when we work to make things right.**

Close in prayer.

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