



SESSION TWENTY-NINE:
new promise

SESSION OVERVIEW

SUPPLIES

- ▶ **Echo the Story DVD/video** for this session
- ▶ **Echo the Story Sketch Journals** for every participant
- ▶ Markers, pens, and colored pencils

① **rewind** THE STORY [8 MINUTES]

The Story So Far video begins with a two-minute interaction for your group. Following this interaction, the video will show a fast-paced, animated review of the previous sessions' stories.

② **prepare** FOR THE STORY [10 MINUTES]

Participants will draw their own version of this session's story symbol in their Sketch Journals. Then, a participant will read a section from the Sketch Journal that helps ready the group for imaginative listening.

③ **imagine** THE STORY [5 MINUTES]

The leader will now tell this session's Bible story. A carefully crafted narrative script of the story is provided in this Leader Guide.

④ **capture** WHAT YOU NOTICE [5 MINUTES]

The leader will ask someone of a different gender to do a second telling of the story. During this telling, participants will use their Sketch Journals to capture aspects of the story that stand out to them.

⑤ **remix** THE STORY * TIME PERMITTING [10 MINUTES]

Participants will be invited to choose from two REMIX activities (included in the Sketch Journal) that guide them to retell part of the Bible story in their own unique way.

⑥ **connect** TO YOUR STORY [20 MINUTES]

Finally, the leader will guide a group dialogue where participants are asked to share their observations and insights from the story. Dialogue questions are provided in this Leader Guide.

THE STORY SO FAR VIDEO

Leader Says:

Right now we're going to continue our journey through the Bible.

We're going to start with a short video. The first two minutes give you a chance to answer a question with a partner.

After the timer finishes, the next part of the video will start right away, reviewing the stories from our last few sessions. So find a partner and get ready, because this video moves really fast. You'll have to pay attention and listen carefully. *Are you ready?*

► CUE: Play The Story So Far video for this session.

Even though this is written like a script, please personalize the "Leader Says" parts. You'll be more effective if you're not just reading directly from the page!



prepare FOR THE STORY



DRAW THE STORY SYMBOL

- ▶ CUE: If you collected the Sketch Journals last session, pass them out to each participant. Remember to give Sketch Journals to any new people joining your group. Provide pens, markers, and colored pencils for participants to use.

Leader Says:

Our Sketch Journals are an important part of our Echo experience. They'll give us space to express our creativity, explore our questions, and capture the thoughts and ideas that these stories spark in us.

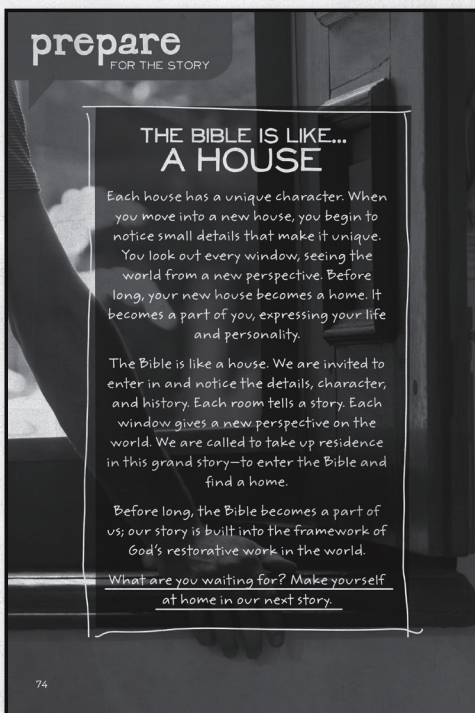
Each story will have its own **symbol** as a visual reminder of what happens in the story. Right now, turn to **page 72** and *draw your own version* of the symbol for the next story: NEW PROMISE (cup and bread) in your Sketch Journal.

Encourage participants to draw their own version of the story symbol, regardless of their artistic ability. The goal is not to create an exact replica but to capture your own interpretation.

You may be wondering why we are redrawing this symbol when it's printed on the next page. When we each create our *own* version of this story's symbol it helps embed this image in our minds and helps get our **creativity flowing** for the rest of the activities we'll do later.

The goal isn't to copy the symbol—*be creative and make it your own!*

- ▶ CUE: Don't spend a lot of time on this activity—*two minutes or less.*



THE BIBLE IS LIKE . . .

Leader Says:

Each session of Echo will invite us to experience a story from the Bible. But before we dive into each story, we'll slow down and take time to *prepare ourselves*. To help us do this, we'll compare the Bible to a different image or object.

The image for this session is **a house**.

Let's hear more about this from **page 74** of your Sketch Journal.

- ▶ CUE: Ask for a volunteer from your group to read page 74 of their Sketch Journal.

ABOUT THIS STORY [read silently]

Leader Says:

Take a moment **in silence** to look at the **ABOUT THIS STORY** section on **page 75** in your Sketch Journal.

- ▶ **CUE:** After twenty seconds of silent reading, move to the next section. (You don't need to discuss the "Think About" question.)

IMAGINATIVE LISTENING

Leader Says:

Your imagination is like a palace of vast memories. The words you hear don't go in one ear and out the other. You are able to capture them and store them away, creating endless possibilities as you explore and engage stories. Allow the events of the next story to connect with your memories as you listen carefully with your imagination.

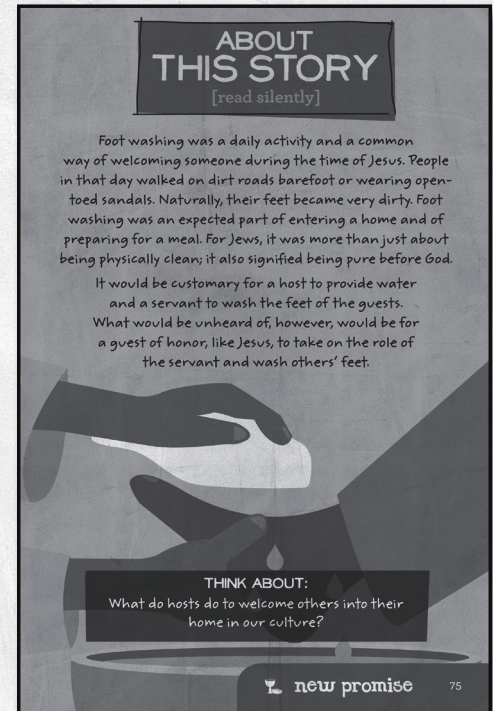
Let's slow down and prepare ourselves for the next story. Push out any distractions and use your imagination to enter the story, seeing it come to life in your mind.

You might want to close your eyes or focus on the image on **pages 76-77**. After we hear the story read once, you'll have a chance to capture what you noticed in your Sketch Journal.

Are you ready?

Take a moment of silence. Sit up straight in your chair. Take a deep breath, slow down, and clear your mind. Whisper a prayer asking God to show you something meaningful from this story.

- ▶ **CUE:** After about fifteen seconds of quiet, begin narrating the story.



imagine THE STORY

Don't just read this story;
bring it to life with
your voice!

Leader Narrates:

SCENE ONE: A NEW COMMANDMENT

While Jesus and his disciples were in Jerusalem, they gathered for a meal before the Passover celebration. Jesus knew that his time on earth was coming to an end, and that his disciple, Judas, would soon betray him.

Jesus felt a deep love for his disciples. Before the meal began, Jesus got up from the table, tied a towel around his waist, and poured some water into a bowl. Then he went to each of his disciples and washed their feet, wiping them with the towel.

This shocked the disciples—only hired servants were supposed to wash guests' feet! They wondered why he was doing this.

As Jesus approached, the disciple named Peter said, *"Teacher, you must not wash my feet!"*

Jesus replied, *"Unless I wash your feet, you won't belong to me."*

So Peter said, *"Then wash my feet and my hands . . . and head, too!"*

After washing his disciples' feet, Jesus sat down and asked, *"Do you understand why I did this? Since I've washed your feet, you should wash each other's feet. I've given you an example to follow."*

"Now I am giving you a new commandment: Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for each other will prove to the world that you are my disciples."

SCENE TWO: CONNECTED TO THE VINE

As Jesus and his disciples sat around the table, Jesus continued to share from his heart. He said, *“If you love me, live out my teachings each day. Soon I will be leaving. But don’t worry or be afraid. You’ll never be alone—God’s Spirit is with you and will live inside of you, guiding you into all truth and reminding you how to live.”*

Jesus continued, *“I will remain in you. Remain connected to me! Like branches that grow from a tree, I will be your source of life and strength. Remain in my love and follow my ways, and your life will produce lasting fruit. This will bring great joy to you and to God!”*

Jesus finished with these words: *“There is no greater love than to lay down your life for your friends. You are my friends. I choose you. I have called you to go and produce lasting fruit.”*

➤ Story continued on the next page . . .



imagine THE STORY

SCENE THREE: A NEW COVENANT

During the Passover, Jesus and his disciples celebrated a meal together. Jesus' disciples prepared the dinner in a large guest room in Jerusalem.

As Jesus and his disciples were eating the Passover meal, Jesus said to them, *"I've been so eager to eat this Passover meal with you before my suffering begins. I won't eat this meal with you again until its meaning is fulfilled in God's kingdom."*

During the dinner, Jesus picked up some bread, thanked God for it, and broke it into pieces. Giving it to his disciples, he said, *"Take this and eat it; this is my body given for you. From now on, do this in remembrance of me."*

After dinner, Jesus picked up a cup of wine and said, *"This cup is a new promise—a new covenant between God and God's people—an agreement guaranteed by my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you."*
[pause]

As they continued to gather around the table, the disciples began to argue about who was the greatest among them. Jesus interrupted them and said, *"Kings and rulers strive for power and control over people. You should be different. The greatest among you will be the one who serves the others. The first will be last. In God's kingdom the one who serves is the leader. Follow my example."*

Later than night, when it was dark, Jesus and his disciples went to an olive grove to pray. Jesus felt troubled in his heart . . . he knew that soon he would be betrayed and arrested.

MOMENT OF REFLECTION

Leader Says:

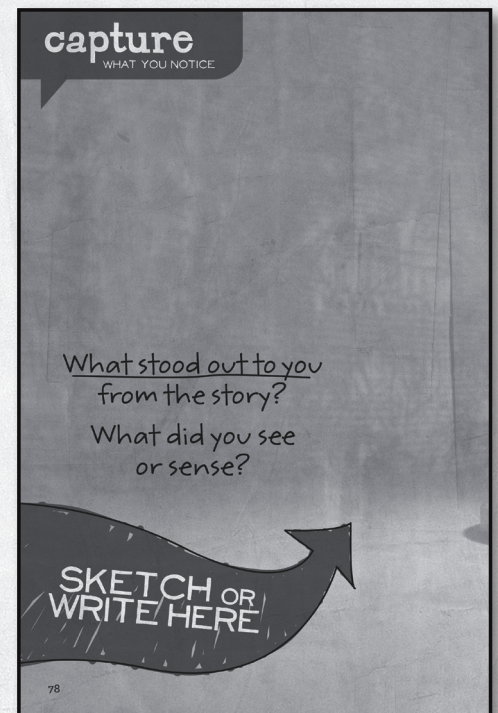
Take a moment to close your eyes and let the story replay in your mind. Pay attention to what stands out to you from the story.

- ▶ CUE: After fifteen to twenty seconds, transition to the second reading.

SECOND TELLING & CAPTURING

We're going to listen to the story one more time, but this time with **a different voice telling it**. During this telling of the story turn to **pages 78-79** and write or draw the words or images that come to mind. Use these pages to capture anything that you notice—even if it seems like a small detail. You will be surprised—even small things that you notice will spark thoughts and insights from our group.

- ▶ CUE: For this second telling, use a storyteller of a **different gender** from the person who read the first time. *Different voices help people to listen with fresh ears.*



REMIX ACTIVITIES

Leader Says:

Now that we've heard the story twice and begun to capture what we noticed, let's REMIX the story. There are two REMIX activities, designed to help you retell part of the story in your own unique way.

There is a **drawing activity** on pages 80-81

and a **creative writing activity** on pages 82-83.

These are not fill-in-the-blank activities! These activities are designed to help you express yourself and share what you see in the story.

Or if you'd prefer, you may instead **continue to develop** your thoughts and drawings from the CAPTURE pages you just worked on.

Whatever you choose, take the next ten minutes to **use your imagination** to create your REMIX and then we will share them with each other. Invest yourself honestly in this and you will be surprised at your insight and creativity.

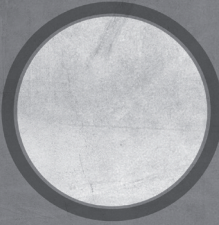
► **CUE:** After ten minutes (or less if your group finishes sooner), go to the next section.

remix THE STORY

From the next few pages, choose a REMIX activity—either DRAWING or creative WRITING—and start REMIXing!

DRAWING: THREE SYMBOLS

- 1 Create your own symbol that captures each of the three scenes in this story.
- 2 Use your creativity to capture each scene in the simplest possible way. Make it your own and express your unique style!



Foot Washing
JOHN 13:5

Then [Jesus] poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.

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remix THE STORY

CREATIVE WRITING: PRAYERFUL READING

- 1 Slowly and prayerfully read John 15, some of Jesus' last words to his disciples before he was arrested and killed.
- 2 Read SLOWLY, circling or underlining specific words, phrases, or sentences that stand out to you. If you have time, read it a second time. Be ready to share what stood out to you and why.

JOHN 15

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

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TURN & SHARE

Leader Says:

Turn to someone near you and share your CAPTURE or REMIX with them. Remember to respect each other's ideas and encourage each other.

- ▶ CUE: After two minutes, begin the dialogue.

GROUP DIALOGUE

Leader Says:

Now we'll share as a group. This time is about sharing observations and **seeing the story through one another's eyes.**

Remember, when someone else shares something that connects with you, write it down on **page 84** of your Sketch Journal.

- + So what stood out to you from this story?
- + What did this story make you wonder about?
- + Who'd like to share something you've written or drawn from the CAPTURE or REMIX sections?
- + Take a moment and close your eyes. (Pause, then continue slowly.) Imagine you have a camera and you are watching this story take place right in front of you. Pick a moment in the story to take a picture of. (Pause for ten seconds.) Do you have your picture? Who would like to share what you snapped a picture of?

Leader Says:

I have a few more questions to ask you about the story. Remember, I am not looking for "correct" answers—this time is about you sharing your observations. I want us to see this story through each other's eyes.

DIALOGUE PREP

1. There are probably more questions here than you'll have time to ask. Pick a few questions ahead of time that you want to make sure to ask.
2. Questions in gray and marked with a dash are for follow-up. Ask them as time allows and as they are needed.



connect TO YOUR STORY

Find key moments to encourage quiet people to share. Say something like, "I'd love to hear from some of you who haven't shared yet."

Take a moment and think back to the first scene of this story. It described Jesus washing his disciples' feet. (After a moment ask:)

- + If you were one of the disciples, how would you have reacted when Jesus washed your feet?
 - Why do you think Jesus chose to do this?
- + Why do you think Peter refused to let Jesus wash his feet at first?
 - Why do you think Peter then asked Jesus to wash his head and his hands along with his feet?
- + What do you think is the most challenging part of Jesus' commandment: "Just as I have loved you, you should love each other"?
- + How would you describe Jesus in this scene? Say the first thing that comes to mind.
- + What do you think this scene shows us about God?

Now, let's think about the second scene where Jesus shared his desire to remain connected to his disciples, like a vine giving life to its branches. Take a moment to just replay that scene in your mind. (After a moment ask:)

- + How might we remain connected to Jesus, like a branch connected to a vine?
 - What do you think it means for your life to "bear fruit" (as Jesus described)?
- + How does it make you feel to hear Jesus say, "You are my friends. I choose you"?


The last scene describes Jesus' final meal with his disciples.

- + Why do you think Jesus said the bread and the wine represent his body and blood?
- + How would you describe Jesus in this scene? Say the first thing that comes to mind.
- + What do you think this scene shows us about God?

FINAL QUESTION

Take a quiet moment to think about this final question:


- + What does this story say about us? About you?

Write a quick response on **page 85** in your Sketch Journal. 

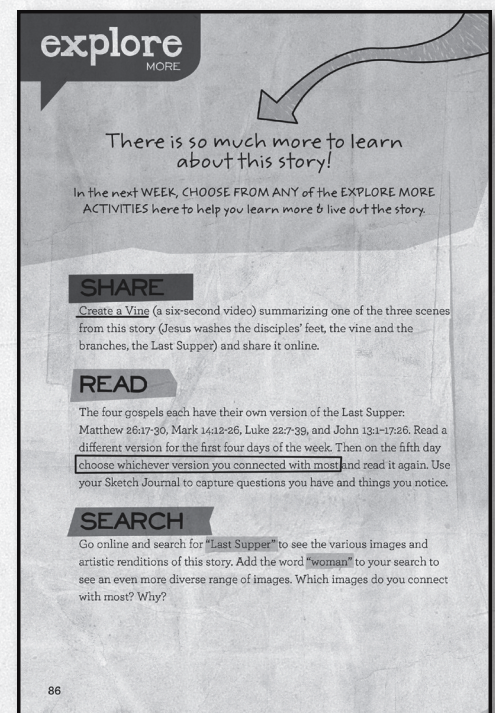
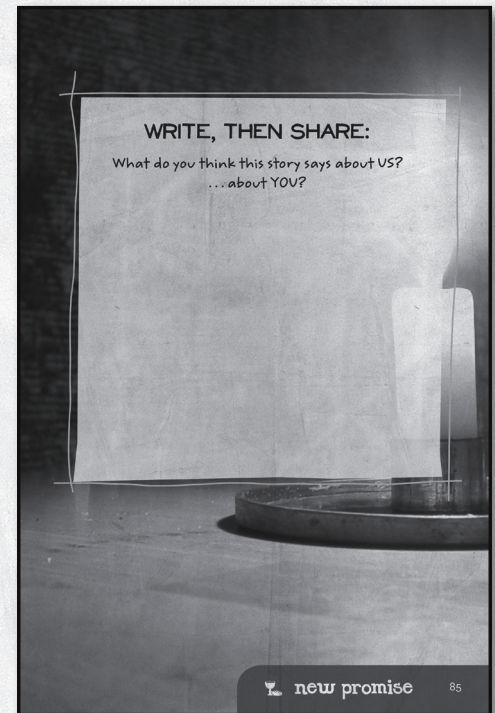
- ▶ **CUE:** After twenty to thirty seconds of quiet, ask a few participants to share.

Leader Says:

This was a really meaningful time. *Thank you!* You did a great job. I'm looking forward to gathering together again so we can experience the next story.

If you'd like to learn more about this story, there's a section called EXPLORE MORE on **pages 86-87** of your Sketch Journal. You are welcome to take your Sketch Journal with you and try some of these activities, but be sure to bring it back for the next story. If you're worried about forgetting it, you can leave your Sketch Journal with me 

- ▶ **CUE:** To close this session, ask someone to lead the group in prayer.



OPTIONAL QUESTIONS TO GO DEEPER:

- + What do you think Jesus meant when he said, “Unless I wash your feet, you won’t belong to me”?
- + Jesus encouraged his disciples by telling them that God’s Spirit would be with them and in them. How might God’s Spirit be with us and in us?
 - How might God’s Spirit guide us toward truth?
- + Jesus’ “new commandment” was for his followers to love one another just as he loves us. What do you think this “new commandment” means for us in our world today?
- + The meal Jesus shared with his disciples is the origin of the celebration of communion in Christian churches today. What similarities and differences do you notice between Jesus’ last supper and communion celebrations you have experienced?