



UNIT 3 | SESSION 1

# GOD MADE A COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

GENESIS 12-20

**KEY PASSAGE:**

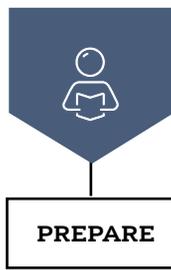
Psalm 135:5-6

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:**

Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth. Nothing is outside of God's good plan.

**CHRIST CONNECTION:**

God promised to bless all the world through Abraham. God sent Jesus from His home in heaven to be born on earth into Abraham's family. Through Jesus, all the nations of the earth are blessed because Jesus saves people



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



## LEADER Bible Study

Think about all of the choices that we have each day. Just in the morning, we have dozens of different cereals to eat, perhaps that many varieties of milk to pour on top of the cereal, and nearly as many ways to make coffee to go with it. All of these are choices that we often take for granted.

Now think about all of the choices God had as He took a significant step in redemptive history and chose a couple to start a new people from whom the promised Rescuer would come. (Gen. 3:15) We see some of those choices at the tail end of Genesis 11, but we need to remember that God is not confined to choices like we are. He is all-powerful and sovereign; God had an infinite number of choices for this critical couple.

So whom did God choose? A man named Abram and his barren wife Sarai. Now that’s a curious choice, isn’t it? This is the couple whom God would give descendants as numerous as the stars? (Gen. 15:5) From the world’s perspective, this was a curious choice at best—and a laughable choice at worst.

But from God’s perspective, Abram and Sarai were a brilliant choice. First, God made it clear from the inception of this new people that He was the One bringing everything to pass. This family was special because God clearly worked in them to bring forth

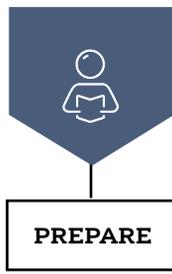
children. This is what Sarai understood when she said, “Who would have told Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne a son for him in his old age” (Gen. 21:7). That the son of promise, Isaac, married a wife, Rebekah—who was also barren—is not a coincidence. (Gen. 25:21) Nor is it a coincidence that Jesus would be born to a virgin. (Luke 1:34) God is the God who makes possible that which is impossible, including rescuing people from sin.

Second, it took a while, but in the end, Abram’s faith in God came to fruition because of his wife’s barrenness. This was his barrier to faith in God. This is what he struggled with for so many years. But in the end, Abram’s greatest struggle became the greatest kindling of his faith. God didn’t just begin a people through barrenness; He began a faithful people through it.

God’s covenant with Abram was certainly amazing. But perhaps His choice of Abram in the first place is even more amazing.

### TERMS TO KNOW

**Covenant:** Promise between two people or between a person and God. Sometimes keeping the promise depends on one person’s meeting conditions set by the other person. Many of God’s covenants are unconditional, and He alone is responsible for keeping them.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

## GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



### WELCOME

#### Activity Page

- “Count the Stars” activity page

#### Session Starter (Option 1)

- bowls, 1 per kid
- rice

#### Session Starter (Option 2)

- pieces of colorful paper



### LEARN

#### Introduce the Session

- countdown video

#### Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

#### Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

#### Tell the Bible Story

- “God Made a Covenant with Abraham” video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

#### Questions from Kids

- “Unit 3, Session 1” Questions from Kids video

#### Missions Moment

- “Family on Mission” missions video

#### Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- “For I Know (Psalm 135:5-6)” song
- other worship songs (optional)



### LOVE

#### Discussion & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



### LIVE

#### Activity Choice (Option 1)

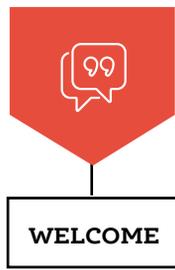
- poster board
- sticky notes

#### Activity Choice (Option 2)

- paper bag
- slips of paper

#### Reflection and Prayer

- Bible Story Coloring Pages, 1 per kid (optional)



## WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, ask kids about their week, and help new kids connect to your group.

**SAY** “ Have you ever moved to a new place? Sometimes it’s hard to leave behind everything that is familiar to start over somewhere new. If you have ever had to move, how did you feel about leaving your old home and moving into your new one? ”

### 1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the “Count the Stars” activity page.

**SAY** “ Can you imagine trying to count the stars? That would be impossible! In our story we’ll hear that God told Abraham to count the stars. We’ll find out in just a minute why God told him to do such an impossible thing! ”

### 2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

#### OPTION 1: AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK

Give each kid a bowl of rice. Explain that you will give the kids 2 minutes to count all the grains of rice in their bowls.

**SAY** “ Was it frustrating to be unable to count all the grains of rice? It was an impossible task wasn’t it? In our story we will hear that God gave Abram an impossible task too. God told Abram to count all the stars in the sky! Can you imagine trying to count each star in the night sky? We can’t even count that high! God didn’t give Abram this task to frustrate him. Instead, God wanted Abram to know something about the special promise God would make. We’ll find out more in just a minute. ”

#### OPTION 2: MOVING BLOCKS



Spread out colorful pieces of paper throughout the room (close enough for the kids to be able to get from one to the next). Instruct the kids to line up on one side of the room. Invite them to step from paper to paper until they reach the other side of the room. For an added challenge, call out colors that the kids must try to step on in order.

**SAY** “ Great job everyone! You had to work hard to move from one block to the other. Was it easy to get from one side of the room to the other? Moving isn’t always easy. In our story we’ll learn that God called Abram to move to a new place that he had never been before. Abram trusted that God had a plan for his life, so Abram obeyed God. We’ll learn more during our Bible story. ”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

# INTRODUCE the Bible Story

### 1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

**SAY** “ Welcome everyone! It’s great to be with you all today. We’ve gathered together to hear another amazing story from God’s Word. Did anyone bring their Bibles today? **[Allow responses.]** The Bible is the most important book for Christians. In it we read about what God is like and what it means to live for Him. Today our story comes from the Book of Genesis. In this book we read about God’s relationship with His creation, including people.

We have already learned a lot about what happened at the very beginning of creation. God created everything out of nothing! And God created man and woman to be a special part of His creation. In the early chapters of Genesis we see that the man and woman sinned against God. Their sin separated them from God, but He had a plan to rescue His people and bring them back to Him. ”

### 2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

**SAY** “ We also learn that God is the One in charge of His creation. This is an important question to answer. **Who is in control of everything?**

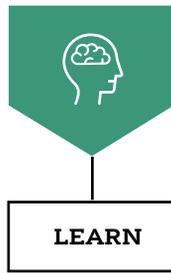
Over the coming weeks we will learn that the answer to that question is God. **God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth. Nothing is outside of God’s good plan.** Did you know that God has a plan for everyone? Everything that happens is within God’s plan for us, and we can obey Him knowing that He knows what is best for us. ”

### 3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

**SAY** “ We read about God’s good plan in the Bible. There are many stories in the Bible, but they all fit together to tell one larger story of God’s love for the world and His plan to rescue people from their sin. Last time we learned about the reasons sin is rebellion against God. We discussed how God scattered people by confusing their languages.

Do you ever feel confused by God’s plans? **[Allow for responses]**. God’s plans don’t always make sense to us, but they are always good. Today we will learn more about God’s rescue plan, and one of the ways He showed His control over all things. Our story is called ‘God Made a Covenant with Abraham.’ ”



## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### LEARN the Bible Story

#### 1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Genesis 12–20. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “God Made a Covenant with Abraham.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

#### GOD MADE A COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

“**Abram and his wife Sarai (SEHR igh) were part of Noah’s family who had spread out on the earth after the great flood. God chose Abram for a special plan. He told Abram to move to a place he had never been. God promised to give Abram a large family and land for his family. “All the peoples on earth will be blessed through you,” God said.**

This was a good promise, but Abram was sad because he didn’t have any children to inherit his blessing. Still, **Abram obeyed God. He went to the land of Canaan with his wife and nephew. One night, God led Abram outside. “Look at the sky and count the stars, if you can,” God said.** Abram couldn’t count the stars. There were too many! **“Your family will be that numerous,” God promised. Abram believed God, and God was pleased.**

God said, “I will give this land to your descendants.”

“How can I be sure?” Abram asked. So **God did something to show Abram that He would keep His covenant, or promise. First, God told Abram to bring five animals: a cow, a goat, a ram, a turtledove, and a pigeon. Abram obeyed God. He brought the animals, cut them in half, and laid the pieces across from each other. Then, when the sun was setting, Abram fell fast asleep.**

**While Abram slept, God told him what would happen in the future.** He said Abram’s family would be slaves in another country for 400 years. Then God would judge that nation and bless Abram’s family. But first, Abram would live a long, peaceful life. **When it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between the animals.** These items represented God. **This showed that God would be responsible for keeping His promise.**

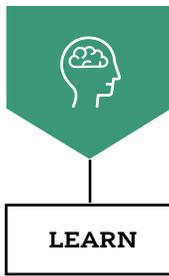
**When Abram was 99 years old, God talked to him again. “You will be the father of many children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. They will become many nations, and some of them will be kings. I will give them the land where you are living, and I will be their God. My promises will last forever.” God was so serious about His promise that He changed Abram’s name to Abraham, which means “Father of Many.”** He changed Sarai’s name to Sarah. God said, “I will bless Sarah. She will have a son, and you will name him Isaac.” God promised to keep His covenant through Isaac and his future family.

Christ Connection: God promised to bless all the world through Abraham. God

#### STORYTELLING TIPS

**Display figures:** Choose people figures to represent Abraham and Sarah. Hold them up as you tell about them.

**Use lighting effects:** Dim the lights when telling about God’s ceremony showing He would keep His covenant. Carry a flashlight as a flaming torch.



## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

sent Jesus from His home in heaven to be born on earth into Abraham's family. Through Jesus, all the nations of the earth are blessed because Jesus saves people from their sins. ”

### 2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

**SAY** ” The Bible is full of promises that God made to His people. The promise God made to Abraham is not the first one we find in scripture. In fact, the first promise of God goes all the way back to Adam and Eve. After they were deceived by the serpent and disobeyed God, sin entered the world. Of course, this didn't surprise God. Remember, **who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth. Nothing is outside of God's good plan.** God knew that sin would rule in the hearts of His people, but from the very beginning God had a plan to rescue His people from sin and death. God made a promise to Adam and Eve, right there in the Garden of Eden, that one day He would send a Rescuer to save them.

God's promise to Abraham was an extension of the promise He made to Adam and Eve. He had already promised a Rescuer, and now we know that the Rescuer would come from Abraham's family. God chose to bless all the nations of the world through Abraham. God also promised that He would give good land to Abraham's descendants. Abraham moved to and traveled through the land of Canaan. The people there didn't worship the one true God. Instead they worshiped many false gods. God would use Abraham's family to redeem this land and eventually point these people to God.

Even though years passed since God had made this promise to Abraham, Abraham continued to trust God. Do you think it might have been hard for Abraham to trust that God would keep His promises? Why or why not? **[Allow responses.]** What does the name Abraham mean? **[Allow responses.]** Abraham's name means "Father of Nations." God changed Abram's name to Abraham so he would remember God's promise always. ”

### 3 CHRIST CONNECTION

**SAY** ” God promised to bless all the world through Abraham. God sent Jesus from His home in heaven to be born on earth into Abraham's family. Through Jesus, all the nations of the earth are blessed because Jesus saves people from their sins. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.)

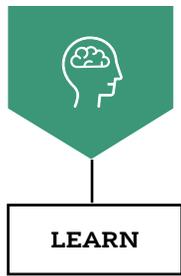
### 4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the "Unit 3, Session 1" questions from kids video. Prompt the kids to discuss:

1. What has God promised to you?
2. Do you trust God to keep those promises?

### 5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

**SAY** ” God wants everyone to be on mission for Him, no matter where they go. He led the Caldwell family to take a mission trip all the way to Ecuador. Let's find out more about their trip to work with



## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

a ministry called For His Children. As the video plays, watch and listen for the ways they served others in Jesus' name. ”

Play the missions video. Then ask about the different ways the Caldwells were on mission (fed babies, played games and sang songs with children, helped clean and repair playground equipment, served the workers, told Bible stories).

Remind kids that God kept His promise to Abraham by sending Jesus. Through Jesus, all the nations of the earth are blessed because Jesus saves people from their sins. Missionaries tell others about Jesus so they can receive the blessing of life with God forever. Choose a volunteer to pray for missionaries in Ecuador and for any missionaries your church supports.

### 6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (10 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Read through the verse once or twice with the kids. Assign hand motions or movements to each word or phrase of the key passage. (Suggested motions: point to head for “I know;” make muscles for “The Lord is great;” point up and down for “heaven and earth;” and so forth) Let the kids find a partner and practice the verse with the motions.

**SAY** “ God is greater than everything in all His creation. He cares for everything that He has made, especially His people. In fact, God cares so much for us that even though we sin and turn our backs on Him, He does not abandon us. Instead He has sent a rescuer, Jesus, to save us from our sin. ”

Lead the kids to sing “For I Know (Psalm 135:5-6).” You may also choose other worship songs to sing.

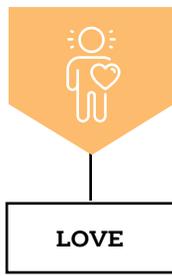
### 7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to apply the story.

**SAY** “ Father, we praise You because You always keep Your promises. We are thankful that we have Your Word so we can know You better and love You more. We know that through Jesus You have blessed the whole world. Help us be part of sharing the gospel with others this week. Amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





## THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

# LOVE God by Applying the Story

### 1 BIBLE SKILLS & REVIEW (10 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and encourage kids to use the table of contents to find the book of Genesis. Guide the kids to find chapter 12 by looking at page headers and the large print numbers on each page. Consider teaching a song that places the books of the Bible to a familiar tune to help the kids memorize the order of the books.

**SAY** “ The word Genesis means “beginnings,” and Genesis tells the start of God’s story: creation, how sin entered the world, and the steps God began to take to rescue us. Today we heard the story of God’s promise to Abraham. In the coming weeks we will hear more about how God kept that promise. ”

### 2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the kids to discuss their answers.

| **SAY** “ Why do you think we are able to trust God? ”

Guide the kids to understand that God keeps His promises. What we read in scripture about God is true. He is perfect and holy and cannot go against His own character. God is the Creator of all things and has power over His creation. Therefore we can know that when God speaks something, it is true. When He makes a promise, He keeps it. When He tells us that he cares for us and will always be with us, we can trust His words.

| **SAY** “ Why did it take great faith for Abraham to believe God’s promise? ”

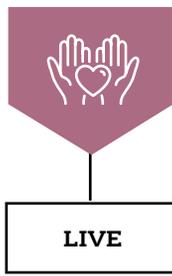
Remind the kids that Abraham was old and his wife was unable to have children. God promised to make Abraham’s descendants as numerous as the stars. A promise like that to a man like Abraham makes little sense if you only see things from a human perspective. Only God, who is all-powerful and in control of all things, could make and keep such an incredible promise. With God, nothing is impossible, so we can have faith that God will do as He says.

| **SAY** “ How do you respond when you learn something about God? ”

Explain that after God spoke to him, Abraham built an altar and worshiped God. How we respond to God matters. He is our Creator and is the One who sustains our lives. Everything we have and everything we are comes from Him. When we recognize what He has done for us, we should be moved to worship Him. Help the kids understand that Abraham built the altar as a means of worshiping but also as a reminder to himself of the great promises that God had made to him.

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





## THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

### LIVE the Mission

#### 1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

##### OPTION 1: FAMILY ON MISSION



**SAY** “ We saw a video about a family who went on a mission trip. Let’s think about how your family could serve on a mission trip. ”

Use a marker to divide a poster board into four squares. Write these tasks in different squares on the poster board: Prepare meals, Lead children in games, Clean or fix things, Preach the gospel. Distribute sticky notes and pencils. Ask kids to write the names of family members on sticky notes and put the notes in the squares where they think those people could best serve on a mission trip.

Be sensitive to kids who come from difficult family situations. You may alter the activity to use members of your church family instead.

**SAY** “ Many different people can serve on a missions trip! One day, God might call you or even your whole family to serve Him on a missions trip. God can use you to help people around the world hear about Jesus. ”

##### OPTION 2: BAG O’ COMMANDS



Write several easy tasks (e.g. do five jumping jacks; curl up in a ball on the floor; crawl like a bear) on separate strips of paper. Place the strips inside a paper bag. Invite one kid to guess what his task will be, then allow him to pull it out of the bag. When he reads the slip of paper all kids must follow the instruction. Give each child an opportunity to predict a task and draw one from the bag. You may choose to replace strips each time, or ensure you have at least one strip per kid.

**SAY** “ Great job following all the instructions! But you weren’t able to tell us what would be on the slip of paper. ”

No one knows exactly what the future will bring. We can make our best guesses about what will happen, but we can’t know for sure. Only God knows the future. He told Abraham what would happen to his descendants. **Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth. Nothing is outside of God’s good plan.** ”

#### 2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.