



Unit 3 | Session 1

GOD MADE A COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

Genesis 12-20

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, "Sarah 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 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.



1 WELCOME TIME

Greet each preteen as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

- **Have you ever moved to a new city? What did you leave behind? What surprised you about the new place?**
- **If you haven't moved, what would you miss most about leaving your current home?**

2 SESSION STARTER

OPTION 1: MAKE A HANDSHAKE



Instruct kids to form pairs. Each set of partners should come up with their own handshake. Encourage kids to choose a series of movements for their handshake (give a high five, lock pinkies, give a thumbs-up, and so forth). Allow a few minutes for kids to develop and practice their handshakes. Then call on pairs to demonstrate the handshakes for the group.

For an added challenge, play additional rounds with new partners. Challenge kids to remember their unique handshake for each partner.

- **When was the last time you've used a handshake as a greeting? Have you ever used a handshake to confirm an agreement?**
- **How do you think God confirmed an agreement He made with a man named Abraham?**

OPTION 2: STAR SEARCH

» **supplies: construction paper hearts in various sizes and colors**

Before the session, cut stars of various sizes and colors from construction paper. Alternatively, you could draw various stars on sticky notes. Prepare a few dozen. Put the stars around the room, hidden in plain sight.

Instruct kids to sit in the center of the room facing outward. Call out a color, size, or color and size of star (a red star, a large star, or a tiny blue star). The first kid to retrieve a star matching the description earns a point. Call out descriptions and let kids search.

- **How many stars do we have in our room all together?**
- **Could you ever count all the stars in the sky?**



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

The Bible tells us what is true about God and about ourselves. All of the stories in the Bible fit together to tell us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Today we are going to hear about a time God made a covenant, or agreement, with Abraham. Whether this is your first time or your tenth time hearing this story, there is always something new to learn in God's Word.

Read from Genesis 12–20.

•What does this story teach us about God?

God promised to give Abraham a new land, to make him into a great nation, and to bless him. **God was in control.** He had made a covenant with Abraham. **God would keep His promise no matter what.**

•What is faith? How did Abraham show his faith in God?

God asked Abraham to leave his land, his relatives, and his father's house. Abraham didn't even know where he was going, but he had faith in God. **Faith is trusting that God is who He says He is and that He will do what He says He will do. Abraham believed God and obeyed Him.**

Form groups of two or three and practice retelling the Bible story in your own words. Think of someone you could share the story with this week.

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 from their sins.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 MISSIONS MOMENT

Explain that 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 kids find Ecuador on a world map. 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.

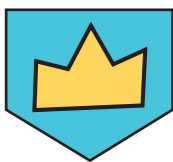
3 PRAY

Lord God, thank You for Your Word. You are faithful and You always keep Your promises. You kept Your promise to bless the world by giving us Your Son, Jesus. We love You. Amen.

THE GOSPEL

GOD'S PLAN FOR ME

The gospel is the good news, the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use Scripture and the guide provided below to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.



GOD RULES.

Ask: "Who is in charge at home?" Explain that because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Read Revelation 4:11.



WE SINNED.

Ask: "Have you ever done something wrong?" Tell kids that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Read Romans 3:23.



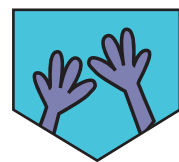
GOD PROVIDED.

Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16.



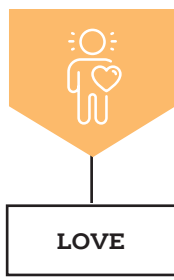
JESUS GIVES.

Ask: "What is the best gift you've ever received?" Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best gift ever! Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.



WE RESPOND.

Explain that everyone has a choice to make. Ask: "Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus." Read Romans 10:9-10.



THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

1 THINK ABOUT THE STORY

- What are God's promises to you?
- Do you believe God will keep His promises? Why or why not?

2 GROUP DISCUSSION

Distribute Bibles. Guide preteens to open their Bibles to Genesis 17. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Genesis 17:19. Remind preteens that God said Sarah—even though she was old—would have a baby. God would keep His promise through Abraham and Sarah's son Isaac. God would repeat His promise for Isaac and his future descendants. The rest of Genesis focuses on four generations of this one family.

Choose another volunteer to read aloud Genesis 17:19 again. Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

1. What are some things God might call us to leave behind in order to follow Him?

Remind kids that God called Abram to physically leave his home and go to a new land. God might call us to live in a different place; He always calls us to leave behind our old way of living in sin. Emphasize to kids that though we may give up lesser things to follow Jesus, He has so many better things for us. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 6:4.)

2. How does God's blessing to Abraham extend to us?

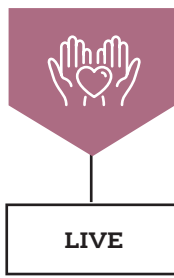
Guide kids to recall that God promised to bless the world through Abraham's family. Jesus was one of the numerous offspring God promised Abraham. It is because of Jesus that all people would be blessed through Abraham. All people who trust in Christ are blessed because Jesus provided salvation from sin. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read James 1:12.)

3. Are you quick to obey your parents when they give you a command? Why? Are you quick to obey God? Why?

Invite kids to be honest about their attitude toward their parents' commands. Kids might be tempted to ask questions, drag their feet, make excuses, or flat out refuse to obey. Help them consider why. We might hesitate in obedience to God if we believe our own plans are better than His. Point out that when Abraham chose to believe God, he surrendered his life to God's plan. When we trust Jesus, we surrender our lives to follow God's good plan for us. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Prov. 7:2.)

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.



THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

1 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

Instruct kids to open their Bibles to Psalm 135:5-6. Lead them in reading the key passage aloud together. Then lead them to make up motions for some of the key words in the passage. Allow kids to suggest motions, or use the following with the CSB® translation: point to head (*know*), point upward (*Lord*), thumbs up (*great*), thumbs up above head (*greater*), nod head (*does*), shrug shoulders (*whatever*), sweep arms outward (*pleases*). Let kids practice saying the key passage using the motions as they say the words.

2 PRAY

Invite volunteers to share prayer requests. Then pray, thanking God for His promises and blessings. Ask Him for boldness and opportunities to be a blessing to the world by sharing the good news of Jesus with others.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

FAMILY TREE DRAWING

Supplies: paper, pencils or markers

Provide paper and writing utensils. Guide kids to draw their family trees. Instruct each kid to list her name and the names of her siblings, parents, grandparents, and any other family members. Consider preparing your own family tree as an example. Encourage kids to draw a tree around the names of the people in their families.

Point out that today, we heard about Abraham. God promised to give Abraham and Sarah a big family. They didn't have any children and they were old, but God said Abraham would be the father of many nations. Abraham's family became so large, and it even included Jesus. Through Jesus, all the nations of the earth are blessed because Jesus saves people from their sins.