The Promise

Bible Verse: All the families of earth will be blessed because of you. (Genesis 12:3b)

Bible Story: Genesis 11:27-12:9

Faith Point

God calls us to bless others.

For Leaders

What You Need to Know

The story of Abraham is really the account of the beginning of Israel—God’s chosen people. It reflects a recurring theme in the Bible: Follow me, I will be your God; you will be my people.

Terah and his three sons, Abram, Nahor, and Haran, and their wives and families, moved from the thriving seaport city of Ur in Chaldea to Haran, a city in upper Mesopotamia (what is now southeastern Turkey). Abram was a direct descendant of Noah’s son, Shem. He was a wealthy man, the head of a seminomadic clan that lived by herding large flocks and by seasonal farming.

Abram and Sarai enjoyed a relatively prosperous life, but there were no children. Sarai was barren. It was here in Haran where God called Abraham.

How hard it must have been for a seventy-five-year-old man and his wife to break ties and leave their homeland for a new land that God had promised to them!

But God promised Abraham great blessings: descendants who would one day become a great nation. And so Abraham began his faith journey, following God’s lead without question.

God promised to make Abraham’s name great so that he could be a blessing to others. How are you a blessing to others? to the children you teach each Sunday? Do you accept God’s calls? Will you allow God to bless others through you?

Many children today understand what it is like to be told, “Our family is moving.” Like Abram and Sarai, they know how it feels to be uprooted from the familiarity of home. All children need to know that some things in their lives are sure: God loves them; God will be with them anywhere; and God wants to bless them. Help them understand that they too are called to be a blessing to others.
# LESSON Overview

## Learning Experiences

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<td><strong>Great Greetings</strong></td>
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## 2. **Open Your BIBLE** (10 to 15 minutes)

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## 3. **LIVE God’s Word** (20 to 30 minutes)

### For Everyone

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### For Nonreaders

| **Color the Picture** | Reproducible Kids’ Book—Activity 2, crayons and/or markers |

### For Nonreaders and Beginning Readers

| **God-Is-With-Me Suitcase** | Reproducible Kids’ Book—Activity 3, crayons and/or markers, scissors |

### For Beginning Readers

| **To the Promised Land** | Reproducible Kids’ Book—Activity 4, crayons or colored pencils |

### For All Readers

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<th><strong>Camel Caravan</strong></th>
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### For Skilled Readers

| **Secret Square** | Reproducible Kids’ Book—Activity 7, pens or pencils |

## 4. **RESPOND to the Bible Message** (5 to 10 minutes)

| **Worship** | CD, CD player, Bible Verse Mural, Cards, & Figures (Resource Pak—pp. 20, 5 & 28), signs, markers, masking tape |

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Are you a last-minute substitute? See p. 15.
1. **START Here**

Leader Tip: If you find that you have more activities than your session time allows for, select activities by considering how much time you have, your group size, and the supplies you have available.

**Great Greetings**

**RESOURCES ● SUPPLIES**

- **CD, CD player, Resource Pak—p. 2, crayons or markers, scissors, construction paper, small tent or bedsheet and chairs, various baskets**

- Have “Friend of God” playing as the children arrive.

- Welcome the children warmly. Let them know how excited you are about beginning a new year, learning about God with each of them.

- Invite the children to mark their attendance.

- Ask the children how they are feeling today.

- Invite them to make faces with you to show various emotions: happy, afraid, sad, and worried. Have each child select a piece of construction paper. Show the children how to fold the paper in half, and in half again. Let them cut out these four squares. On each square, invite the children to draw a face with a different emotion (feeling).

- **Say:** Today we will learn about a very special man named Abraham, his wife Sarah, and their family. God asked Abraham and Sarah to move away from their home and most of their family to a new place. God promised to always be with them. Abraham became one of the fathers of our faith.

- After they are finished with their faces, have the children take turns explaining why someone who is in a new place might have that look on his or her face.

- Set up a small tent in your room for imaginary play (or create a tent by draping a bedsheet over chairs). Scatter a few baskets around the tent.

- **Say:** During the time of Abraham, people lived in tents. Imagine you are living in this tent. Then move it across the room to your new home.

- Invite the children to a time of worship. Learn “Friend of God.” Read the words to the children, and have them repeat each line after you. When everyone is familiar with the song, sing it together.

- **Say:** Abraham was a friend of God. We can be friends of God too.
2. **Open Your BIBLE**

*Guide and Seek*

**RESOURCES  ●  SUPPLIES**

- chairs, blindfold

- Clear an area, making room for a circle.

- Position four chairs equidistant around the outside of the circle. Distinguish each chair in some way.

- Divide the group into pairs—one will be the Seeker, and the other will be the Guide. Blindfold one Seeker, and have that child stand in the center of the circle.

- Have the Guide stand outside the circle.

- Say: Let’s play “Guide and Seek.” I will tell the Guide which chair is the target. Then, one at a time, each Guide will direct the Seeker to that chair, using only words. Don’t peek!

- Ask: How did it feel to be a Seeker? (You didn’t know where you were going. You had to trust the Guide.) How did it feel to be the Guide? (You felt responsible for giving good directions. You hoped that the Seeker paid attention.)

- Say: In today’s Bible story, God invites a person to be a special friend. All this person has to do is go where God tells him. God makes a promise to this special friend.

*Genesis 11:27–12:9*

**RESOURCES  ●  SUPPLIES**

- Bibles; Bible Verse Mural, Cards, & Figures (Resource Pak—pp. 20, 5 & 28); God’s People Map and Figures (Resource Pak—pp. 16 & 17, 8); tape; optional: mounting putty

- Before the session, assemble the Bible Verse Mural according to the instructions on p. 20 of the Resource Pak.

- Say: Today’s Bible story comes from the Book of Genesis. This book tells us about the beginning of everything—including the beginning of God’s people. Today’s story is about Abraham. It will be through this man and his family and their travels that we will all become God’s people.

• Ask: What did God ask Abraham to do? (move to a land that God would show him) What did God promise to Abraham in return? (to bless him and make his name great; all the families of the earth would be blessed through him) What did Abraham do? (He did as God said.)

● Display the God’s-People Map (Resource Pak—pp. 16 & 17). Ask a child to find Ur and place Figure 1 (Resource Pak—p. 8) at Ur to show the beginning of Abraham’s family’s journey.

● Have the children place Figure 2 at Haran, Figure 3 at Canaan, Figure 4 at Shechem, Figure 5 at Bethel, and Figure 6 at Negeb to show where the family went next.

Experience the Story

RESOURCES ● SUPPLIES

Bible, Storytelling Figures (Resource Pak—p. 24, Reproducible Kids’ Book—Activity 1)

● Read Genesis 13:16 and Genesis 15:5.

● Ask: What is God telling Abraham in each of these verses? (Good things are coming if you will just be faithful and follow me.) Is this a good promise? (Yes.) God makes the same promise to us today.

● Ask: What did you discover about God from today’s Bible story? (God loves us; God wants to give us good things; God wants to bless us; God wants us to put our faith and trust in God)

● Say: Abraham and Sarah had just finished moving with their family from Ur to Haran. Now Abraham was asking Sarah to move again.

● Use the figures of Abraham, Sarah, and Lot (Resource Pak—p. 24) to act out the story “Time to Move” (Activity 1).

3. LIVE God’s Word

Move-to-Canaan Game

RESOURCES ● SUPPLIES

two suitcases, two bath towels, two clothespins, two pairs of sandals, two brown paper sacks (labeled “camel food”), two small blankets, masking tape, marker

● Fill each of two suitcases with a bath towel, a clothespin, a pair of sandals, a brown paper sack (labeled “camel food”), and a small blanket. Divide your group into two teams.
Leader Tip: For a smaller group, just have each person take a turn and let the teacher use his or her watch to see who goes the fastest.

- Use masking tape to make two starting lines on one side of the room, and two X’s on the other side of the room. Place the suitcases at the starting lines. Explain how to play the game.

- Say: A member from each team will open a suitcase. Then take the bath towel and place it on your head, using the clothespin to pin it under your neck. Put on the sandals, close the suitcase, and run to the X. When you arrive you must open the suitcase, pretend to feed the camels, lay the blanket on the floor, and pretend to go to sleep. The player who is “asleep” first is the winner.

Family Blessings

RESOURCES  ●  SUPPLIES

- small ball or beanbag

- Invite the children to sit in a circle with you. Hold a small ball or beanbag in your hand.

- Say: God asked Abraham and Sarah to move to a new place. God promised to bless Abraham and his family. What did God promise? (to give Abraham and Sarah many children) God blesses our families too. What are some blessings God has given your family? (Be ready to encourage the children to think of a home, warm clothes, good food to eat, people who love us, children, and so forth.)

- Say: I will toss the ball to someone. He or she will say one way God has blessed his or her family. Then that person will toss the ball to someone else, who will name a family blessing. Let’s continue tossing the ball until everyone has had a turn to name a blessing.

Christian Backpack Patches

RESOURCES  ●  SUPPLIES

- sticky-sided foam sheets or felt sheets, scissors, puff or gel paints or black waterproof/smudgeproof ink pens

- Before the session, cut out oval shapes from sticky-sided foam or felt sheets, leaving the backing on the sticky side in place. Invite the children to draw the shape of a Christian fish or the cross on the oval and take it home to put on their backpack.

- Say: God promised to bless Abraham and his family. This patch can be a reminder that God is with you and your family wherever you go.
**Color the Picture**

**RESOURCES**
- Reproducible Kids’ Book—Activity 2, crayons and/or markers

- Invite the children to color the picture.

**God-Is-With-Me Suitcase**

**RESOURCES**
- Reproducible Kids’ Book—Activity 3, scissors, crayons and/or markers

- Invite the children to pretend they are going on a trip. Have them color the suitcase, cut it out, fold, and tape the edges together.

- Say: What will you put in your suitcase? Cut out the things that are most important, and put them in your suitcase.

**To the Promised Land**

**RESOURCES**
- Reproducible Kids’ Book—Activity 4, crayons or colored pencils

- Invite the children to help Abraham, Sarah, and Lot work the maze and find their way to the promised land.

**Camel Caravan**

**RESOURCES**
- Reproducible Kids’ Book—Activity 5, pens or pencils

- Say: Lead your caravan through the maze. If you follow the right path, you will discover some great advice.

**Blessing Bird**

**RESOURCES**
- Reproducible Kids’ Book—Activity 6, scissors, white cardstock, metallic gel pen or marker

- Have each of the children identify someone who is a blessing to them. Let them make a blessing bird for those people.
Secret Square

RESOURCES ● SUPPLIES
Reproducible Kids’ Book—Activity 7, pens or pencils

● Invite the children to answer the questions.

4. RESPOND to the Bible Message

Worship

RESOURCES ● SUPPLIES
Bibles; Bible Verse Mural, Cards, & Figures (Resource Pak—pp. 20, 5 & 28); signs (I am blessed; I am a blessing to others); markers; masking tape

● Before the session: On one wall post a sign that says, “I am blessed.” On the opposite wall post a sign that says, “I am a blessing to others.”

● Punch out today’s Bible-verse pumpkin. Read the verse, and have the children repeat it after you. If appropriate, repeat several times by using different cadence or volume.

● Say: Sometimes we take God’s blessings for granted. We don’t know just how blessed we really are. And sometimes we wonder, “What can I do for God? How can I be a blessing to others?” This game will help us see.

● Have the children stand in the middle of the room. Say: I will read some statements. If the statement I read is a way in which God has blessed you, go and stand on the “I am blessed” side of the room. If the statement I read describes something you have done to help other people, stand on the “I am a blessing to others” side of the room. If the statement I read does not apply to you, stay in the middle of the room.

● Read these blessing statements, add additional ones of your own, or let the children suggest some: I have plenty of food to eat. I have donated food to a food pantry. I have a bed to sleep in. I have carried out the trash without being asked to. I am loved. I have given toys to children who need them. I live in a home where we love God. I pray for others. I have smiled at someone. I have invited a friend to Sunday school. I have more than one pair of shoes. I have written a thank-you note. I am healthy. I have a pet. I tell my family that I love them. I have been adopted. I have had a birthday party. I have shared my favorite book with a friend. I have seen a beautiful rainbow. I have let someone else have the first turn.

● Close with a prayer of thankfulness.