



UNIT 3 | SESSION 1

# GOD MADE A COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

GENESIS 12–20

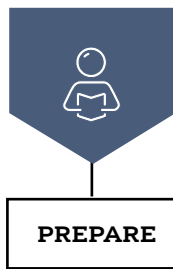
## CHRIST CONNECTION:

God promised to bless all the people in the world through Abraham. God sent Jesus to earth as part of Abraham's family. God blesses all the people on earth through Jesus because Jesus saves people from their sins.

## BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Psalm 135:6



## YOUR HEART TO TEACH



## 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 surprise, 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

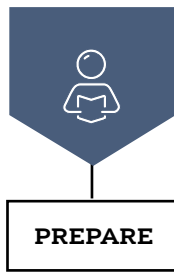
God clearly worked in them to bring forth children. This is what Sarai understood when she said, "Who would have told Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne a son for him in his old age" (Gen. 21:7). That the son of promise, Isaac, married a wife, Rebekah—who was also barren—is not 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.



YOUR HEART TO TEACH

## GATHER Supplies

Keep these items on hand for each session: Allergy Alert, Bibles, construction paper, copy paper, washable markers, crayons, scissors (adult use), blunt-tipped scissors, glue sticks, glue, blocks, baby dolls, play dough, world map or globe, snack food, paper cups, and napkins.



### WELCOME

#### Welcome

- ☐ "Psalm 135:6" song

#### Activity Page

- ☐ "Draw Stars" activity page, 1 per child

#### Make a play dough family

- ☐ people-shaped cookie cutters
- ☐ dough rolling pins

#### Transition

- ☐ countdown video (optional)



### LEARN

#### Introduce the Bible story

- ☐ box of tissues

#### Learn about the Bible

- ☐ bookmark
- ☐ Giant Timeline or Small Group Timeline

#### Tell the Bible story

- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster
- ☐ "God Made a Covenant with Abraham" video (optional)

#### Practice the key passage

- ☐ Key Passage Marker
- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ "Psalm 135:6" song

#### Learn the Big Picture

##### Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

#### Missions moment

- ☐ "Family on Mission" missions video



### LOVE

#### Snack and talk

- ☐ hand sanitizer (optional)
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster
- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

#### Remember God's promises

- ☐ opaque bag



### LIVE

#### Race with tissues

- ☐ box of tissues

#### Look at books about stars

- ☐ books about stars

#### Paint with star sponges

- ☐ new scrub sponges
- ☐ smocks
- ☐ large sheet of paper
- ☐ foam plates
- ☐ washable paint



## WELCOME Preschoolers

Post an allergy alert, if needed. Set out supplies to engage preschoolers as they arrive. Play music as you welcome preschoolers. Greet children by name at eye-level. Follow your church's security procedures.

### 1 ACTIVITY PAGE

Lead preschoolers to complete "Draw Stars" on the activity page.

**SAY** “ How many stars did you draw on your page? In today's Bible story, God told a man named Abram to try and count the stars in the night sky. Do you think that was easy or hard? Listen to the story to hear why God told Abram to do that. ”

### 2 SESSION STARTER

Use one or both of the following options to engage curiosity about today's Bible story.

#### FIND THE STAR



Cut out a star from construction paper. Choose one child to close his eyes while another child hides the star somewhere in the room. Guide the group to softly sing “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” while the child searches for the star. The singing should get louder and louder the closer he gets to the star. Choose two more preschoolers and play again as time allows.

**SAY** “ Was hiding the star or finding the star more fun? In today's Bible story, God told a man named Abram to try to count the stars in the sky. That's a lot of stars! God promised Abram that He would give him as many people in his family as stars in the sky. That's a big family! Listen to the story to find out what else God promised Abram. ”

#### MAKE A PLAY DOUGH FAMILY

Give each preschooler a ball of play dough. Guide children to roll out the dough and use people-shaped cookie cutters to make a play dough family. Encourage them to make the family as large as they can.

**SAY** “ You all made a big play dough family! In today's Bible story, God promised to give a couple a big family, but they were old and did not have any children. Listen to the story to find out what else God promised to give them. ”

### 3 TRANSITION TO LEARN

Gain preschoolers attention by showing the countdown video, turning the lights off and on, or clapping a simple rhythm for children to copy. Invite preschoolers to sing “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” as they transition to Learn.

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





## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

# LEARN the Bible Story

### 1 INTRODUCE THE BIBLE STORY

Hold up a box of tissues. Take one out and pretend to sneeze into it.

**SAY** “Have you ever heard someone say, “God bless you” after someone sneezes? That is just something we say often without thinking about it, but in the Bible a blessing is very important. A blessing is honoring a person with good words for his happiness. In today’s Bible story, God promised to bless the whole world through a man named Abram. Listen to the story to find out all the ways God planned to bless Abram.”

### 2 LEARN ABOUT THE BIBLE

Place a bookmark at Genesis 12 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

**SAY** “This is a very special book because it is made up of God’s words. Everything in the Bible is true and happened in real life. We are going to learn about a man named Abram and his wife Sarai from the very first book in the Bible called Genesis.”

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline or small group timeline. Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

### 3 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Tell the following Bible story using the provided storytelling tips or show the video. Use the bold version of the Bible story for younger preschoolers.

#### GOD MADE A COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

“Abram and his wife Sarai (SEHR igh) were part of Noah’s family. God made a special promise, or covenant, with Abram. First, God told Abram to move far away from his home. He promised to give Abram a big family and land to live on. “All the peoples on earth will be blessed through you,” God said.

God’s promise was good, but Abram was sad. He and Sarai did not have any children. Still, Abram obeyed God. He and Sarai, and his nephew Lot, moved to the land of Canaan.

One night, God led Abram outside. “Look at the sky and count the stars, if you can,” God said. “That is how many people you will have in your family someday.” Abram and his wife were getting old. How would they have a baby? But Abram believed it would happen because God said so.

God made a special ceremony to show Abram that He would keep His promise. First, God told Abram to bring some animals: a cow, a goat, a ram, a turtledove, and a pigeon. Abram





## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

did what God said. Then, when the sun was setting, Abram fell fast asleep. While Abram slept, God told him what would happen in the future.

When it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch appeared and passed between the animals. **God showed that keeping the covenant was His job, not Abram's job.**

**When Abram was 99 years old, God talked to him again. "I am changing your name to Abraham," God said.** "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."

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.** ”

### STORYTELLING TIPS

**Look at stars:** Before the session, attach glow in the dark stars to the ceiling of your room. You may wish to cover some windows to help dim the room. At the appropriate moment in the Bible story, dim the lights and point to the stars. Consider leaving up the stars throughout the unit and point to them whenever God's covenant with Abraham is mentioned in a Bible story.

**Invite guest storytellers:** Invite a senior adult couple from your church to dress in Bible times clothing and tell the Bible story from the perspective of Abraham and Sarah.

### 4 CHRIST CONNECTION

**SAY** ” God promised to bless all the people in the world through Abraham. God sent Jesus to earth as part of Abraham's family. God blesses all the people on earth through Jesus because Jesus saves people from their sins. ”

### 5 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

**SAY** ” God made a special promise to Abraham. God promised to bless the whole world through Abraham's family. There was just one problem. Abraham didn't have any children. He and his wife Sarah were very old and could not have children. But Abram believed God's promise. God always keeps His promises. In the next few weeks, we will hear how God gave Abraham a son. Many years later, Jesus was born from Abraham's large family. God blessed all people through Jesus because Jesus came to save us from our sin. I am so glad God keeps His promises! ”

### 6 PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE

Place the key passage marker at Psalm 135:6. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Create motions for preschoolers to use as they say the key passage. Use the key passage song video for inspiration.

**SAY** ” Our key passage tells us that God is all-powerful. He can do whatever He pleases. Aren't you glad that God is also completely good? God always does what is good—never anything evil. That makes me want to sing a song of praise to Him. ”

Sing the key passage song, "Psalm 135:6." You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.



## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### 7 LEARN THE BIG PICTURE QUESTION AND ANSWER

**SAY** “Our big picture question asks, **Who is in control of everything?** You may already know the answer. **Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.** God had a good plan for Abraham. God has good plans for the whole world, including you and me. Like Abraham, we can trust God’s plan because God is good.”

### 8 MISSIONS MOMENT

Note that the missions emphasis for this unit centers around an orphan care ministry in Ecuador. Be sensitive to preschoolers in your group who may be adopted or in foster care. Some will be anxious to share their own experiences, while others will not. Keep discussion or questions about adoption and fostering positive.

**SAY** “God planned to bless the entire world through Abraham’s family. Families are a blessing and can bless others. The next few weeks, we will learn about the Caldwell family and a trip they took all the way to a country called Ecuador. Let’s watch a video about their trip. Watch and listen for the way the Caldwells served others in Jesus’ name.”

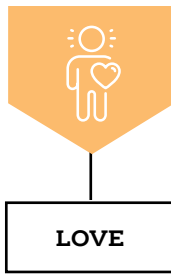
Show the “Family on Mission” missions video. When the video ends, tell preschoolers to raise their hands if they saw the Caldwells do the following actions: feeding babies, playing games, singing songs, cleaning and repairing playground equipment, helping workers, telling Bible stories, cooking a meal.

**SAY** “When God told them to go, the Caldwells said “yes!” Everyone and every family can be on mission. Being on mission means doing what God wants us to do so more people can hear about Him. What are ways your family can serve others in Jesus’ name?”

Allow volunteers to respond. Be prepared to offer suggestions.

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





## THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

### **LOVE** God because of what we learned

#### 1 PRAY

Invite preschoolers to close their eyes and think about God as they talk with Him.

**SAY** “God, You are the best! You blessed Abraham with a large family, and from that family, You blessed us with Jesus. We are so glad You are in control of everything. Help us trust You like Abraham trusted You. Amen.”

#### 2 SNACK AND TALK



Post an allergy alert. Wash hands or use hand sanitizer. Serve a snack. Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

**SAY** “What was your favorite part of today’s Bible story?”

**SAY** “What did you learn about God in today’s Bible story?”

**SAY** “Why did God make His covenant with a couple that was too old to have children?”

**SAY** “Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.”

#### 3 REMEMBER GOD’S PROMISES

Write the following promises on different color construction paper strips and place them at the reference in a Bible.

God is with you. Isaiah 41:10

God loves you. Romans 5:8

God makes everything work for your good and His glory. Romans 8:28

God will help you. 1 Corinthians 10:13

God is strong when you are weak. 2 Corinthians 12:9

God will give you everything you need. Philippians 4:19

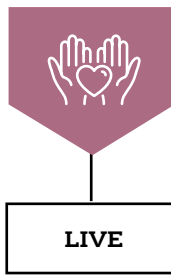
Place a square of construction paper in a bag that matches each strip. Invite a preschooler to draw a square from the bag and open the Bible to the matching strip. Read the promise on the strip and the verse the promise comes from. Continue with additional preschoolers until all the strips are matched.

**SAY** “God has given us even more wonderful promises than He gave Abraham. What a good and loving God we have! When God kept His promise to Abraham, He was also keeping the promise He made to Adam and Eve to send a Rescuer. That Rescuer is Jesus! The Bible says that all God’s promises are ‘yes’ in Jesus.”

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







## THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

### **LIVE** for God out of love

- 1 Choose the activities that best fit your group, space, available resources, and time constraints. Set up activities in one of these ways: as a group, all at the same time; in small groups that rotate through each activity; or set up as centers, allowing preschoolers to browse and choose.

#### **RACE WITH TISSUES**



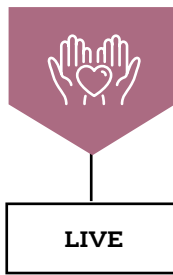
Form a line on one side of the room. Give each preschooler a clean tissue. When you say go, instruct preschoolers to toss their tissues toward the opposite wall as far as they can, then pick them up, and toss them again. Direct children to continue tossing and picking up their tissues until they reach the wall on the opposite side of the room.

**SAY** “ We normally don’t toss tissues across the room. We usually use them to sneeze or blow our noses. When we sneeze, many people say, “God bless you”. In today’s Bible story we learned that God blessed everyone, but not with a tissue. God blessed the whole world by sending Jesus to save us from sin. Do you remember whose family Jesus was born into? Abraham’s family! God promised that he was going to bless the whole world through Abraham’s family. ”

#### **LOOK AT BOOKS ABOUT STARS**

Set out a variety of books about stars for preschoolers to browse. Consider checking out books from your local library. Read a book as a child shows interest. Be sure the contents support a biblical worldview of creation.

**SAY** “ There are more stars in the sky than people can count, and God told Abraham he would have as many people in his family as there were stars in the sky! God promised to bless all the people in the world through Abraham. God sent Jesus to earth as part of Abraham’s family. God blesses all the people on earth through Jesus because Jesus saves people from their sins. ”



## THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

### PAINT WITH STAR SPONGES

Cut various sized stars out of new scrub sponges. Cover a table with a large sheet of paper. Roll up sleeves and cover clothing with smocks. Pour different colors of paint onto individual foam plates. Invite preschoolers to dip the star-shaped sponges into the paint and stamp stars all over the paper-covered table.

**SAY** “ Abraham saw a lot of stars in today’s Bible story. Do you remember why God asked Abraham to try and count them? God promised that Abraham’s family would have as many people as there were stars in the sky. God also promised to send Jesus from Abraham’s family. Jesus is the greatest blessing because He saves us from our sin. ”

### BUY AIRPLANE TICKETS

Cut strips of construction paper to resemble airplane tickets. Prepare enough tickets so preschoolers will be able to select one for each of their family members. Designate a child to be the ticketing agent. Direct the ticketing agent to stand behind a table with the tickets. Invite preschoolers to form a line in front of the table and pretend to buy airplane tickets for each member of their families. Help the ticketing agent count out the right number of tickets. After a few minutes choose another ticketing agent and continue to play as time allows. As preschoolers play, tell about a time you flew on an airplane. Ask preschoolers if any of them have flown on an airplane.

**SAY** “ We learned about the Caldwell family who took a mission trip all the way to a country called Ecuador. They had to fly on an airplane to get to Ecuador. What if your family went on a mission trip? If you were going to travel to another country, you might have to buy airplane tickets and fly there. These tickets are only pretend, but one day God may ask you or your whole family to take a mission trip. I hope you will say yes to God and go where He tells you to go. ”

### 2 TRANSITION

Invite preschoolers to complete the coloring page. Consider leading preschoolers to sing the key passage song or involving them in a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question. If parents are picking up children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Give parents the completed activity page. Distribute the big picture cards for families. Encourage parents to engage with the family discussion starters and family activities during the week.