

GOD GIVES ABRAM A NEW NAME

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: GENESIS 17:1-10 AND 17:15-21

*God affirms His promise, Abraham bows to His authority.***The STORY**

Pray with children to start class.

A note to the teachers: Chapter 17 includes the introduction of circumcision which is described as an operation to the foreskins of the males in the house of Abraham. The most explicit verses have been passed over so as to avoid the need to explain what a foreskin is. Should a child inquire as to the nature of circumcision, simply refer them to their parents for a more detailed explanation. It is not that we are afraid of these topics, but rather, we do not want to infringe on the intimacy between a parent and child which can be fostered by discussing these topics.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

God affirmed His promise – Abraham was 75 when God first called him out of Haran. Now he is 99 and still has no child with Sarah. It is interesting to see that God has not forgotten His promise even though what might seem to us a very long time has passed. Abram does not charge God, but worships Him.

Abram falls on his face before God – God's awesome holiness is contrasted with Abram's sinful life. God told Abram to "walk before me and be blameless." Abram could not possibly stand at the call to be blameless and falls on his face.

God renames Abram – God gave Abram a new name with a humorous twist. Abram means "father of many." People must have laughed at Abram. He who was called "father of many" couldn't have even one child by his wife and took his wife's maid servant in order to produce offspring. Now God changed his name to Abraham, which means "father of the multitude." Imagine the response of the people as Abraham announced that he had changed his name from "father of many" to "father of the multitude." Yet there is no indication that Abraham was embarrassed; instead he took the name in faith.

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WHERE IS JESUS?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

When God touched Abraham, his whole life changed! God gave him a name that reflected his new job description. Abraham means "father of the multitude." One day, this multitude will all bow their knees to Jesus, who received the name above all names. Philippians tells us about the name God gave Jesus.

God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

(Philippians 2:9-11)

ON THE ROAD TO EMMANUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

Bible Passage: Psalm 7:9-11

Connecting the passage to Christ:

David makes his plea to God, "Let the evil of the wicked come to an end, establish the righteous, save the upright in heart and be a righteous judge." Clearly David was asking that the people of the Lord be established and that God would stop the evildoers. He was not thinking of God's greater plan of salvation and since each person's salvation is based in Jesus Christ, David's was a tall request. How could God possibly be both a righteous judge and also one who allows any individual to be called righteous or upright. The answer can only be found in Jesus since Jesus was the only who was upright in heart. God poured out His wrath upon Christ for our sin and we are then given Christ's righteousness when we trust in Christ for salvation. In this great grace-filled transaction we have the answer to David's prayer. God remains the righteous judge and we who are given the righteousness of Christ and a changed heart can be preserved while those who reject Christ are brought to an end.

Questions for reflection:

- Given that all men are sinful, how could God answer David's prayer to establish and save the righteous and upright in heart? (Jesus was the only who was upright in heart. God poured out His wrath upon Christ for our sin. We then are given His righteousness.)

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SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

NAMES

Supplies:

baby name book (or search the internet under baby names and several sites will come up which you can also access)

Prior to class, look up the names of the students in your class and write them down on a piece of paper. Pick ten of them to use in class for the game. Place the meaning of the names on a list. Then have the children try and guess which of the children in their class have those names. Help out children in the younger grades by listing the names on the board in random order and have them connect the dots.

The purpose of this exercise is simply to teach the children that names have meaning.

This will help them to see how God's promise is built into Abraham's new name. Tell them that Abraham means Father of the Multitude and ask them how this connects to God's promise.



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WAITING FOR THE PROMISE

Supplies:

large pretzel rods
white grape juice
cups enough for the class

At the start of class, tell the children that you brought in pretzels and juice for them today. Ask them if they would like some, and then tell them that you will give it to them. Then without warning, start going over another part of the lesson.

After each segment you teach, remind them of the juice and then abruptly move on to the next part. Finally, toward the end of class, pull out the juice and pretzels. As the children are eating, talk about Abram's promise and how he was patient and believed.

Draw the children out as to how they felt while waiting for the promised snack. Help them to see that just as you were faithful, God was faithful to Abraham. Then connect the lesson to Christ. For Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of the prophecy given to Abram.

HOW LONG DO THINGS LAST?

Supplies

flashlight with working
batteries

Place the flashlight on a table and point it toward the class. Ask the children how long the light will last. They may guess a day or an hour. Ask the children how this light is like the rest of the things we have in this world. The answer is that, like the light, the things of this world are passing away. Ask the children to guess how long the following things might last.

A gallon of milk if left out of the refrigerator

A gallon of milk if kept in the refrigerator

A bicycle tire

A car windshield wiper blade

A pair of jeans

An ice cream cone on a hot day

A pencil eraser

A brand new baseball cap

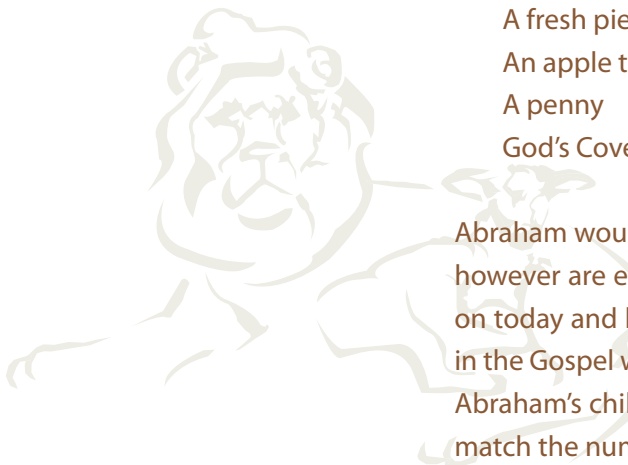
A fresh piece of gum

An apple tree

A penny

God's Covenant with Abraham – "Everlasting" verse 17:7

Abraham would not have known anything to be everlasting. The promises of God however are everlasting. Ask the children if the promise to Abraham is still going on today and how? The answer is that it is still going on today and is represented in the Gospel which transforms lives. All those who believe in the Gospel are called Abraham's children. So, literally, the stars of the sky which have yet to be counted match the number of Abraham's children which have yet to be named.



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PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

IN CLASS PROJECT

Supplies

- paper
- colored pencils

The first and second grade children can use the preschool coloring sheet and questions. Have the older children write the word Covenant in the center of their paper and then write words with colored pencils which relate to Covenant. Words like promise, everlasting, faithful, many generations can be used as well as others. They can fill their paper with a field of stars, coloring the words and stars different colors.

FOR OLDER GRADES

Supplies:

- paper and pencils

Use the following activity for practical application and discovery of this lesson.

Divide the children into groups. Have each of the groups develop a short skit of when Abraham tells his family of the name change.

Abram explains that he is going to change his name from Father of Many to Father of the Multitude even though his wife is barren and is very old in age. The people jeer but Abraham remains in faith.

Ask the children if they think faith is sometimes difficult to live out of in front of our family and friends. Ask them how they experience the fear of man in walking out their faith. Some areas to explore – sharing the gospel with friends, worshipping with their hands raised in public, praying publicly, etc.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Everlasting – God can issue an everlasting covenant because He is an everlasting being. Psalm 90:2 tells us from everlasting to everlasting He is God! God's covenant with Abraham will last forever. We are also the beneficiaries of this covenant and will be celebrating this covenant in heaven with Abraham!

