

ABRAM AND GOD'S PROMISE

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: GENESIS 12-13

*God works His purposes through the men tat He calls.*

The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

God called Abram – God takes initiative toward Abram. Abram did not have knowledge of God apart from God revealing Himself to Abram – it was God who took the initiative. Abram lived in a pagan country so if it were not for God's initiative, Abram would have ended up serving the idols of his homeland.

God made a promise to Abram – Beyond taking initiative to call Abram, God also gave him the promise of the land (12:7). This was not because Abram was worthy of the promise. God simply loved Abram and reached out to him with an undeserved blessing. So God's promise to Abram was by grace alone.

Abram responded to the Lord with faith and followed God's call – God's initiative toward Abram so affected Abram that he believed. Both the Lord's words and the Lord's appearing birthed faith in Abram. And that faith, which we can trace right back to God, is then credited to Abram as righteousness (Romans 4:3). So, God basically is behind it all. Everything is of grace.

Even in the midst of Abram's sinfulness in lying, God continues to protect him and even bless him through the hand of Pharaoh. God's plan is bigger than our mistakes. If we look to follow God in our lives, His grace will overcome our mistakes as well. It is through the work of Jesus on the cross that our sins can be overlooked and not judged. Christ took the penalty for us so that we who deserve to be punished might receive grace!

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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.

God made a promise to Abram that through him all nations would be blessed. Abram himself was not the one to bless all nations. The one who fulfills that promise is a descendant of Abraham, Jesus Christ.

Paul tells us in Galatians 3:28-29:

There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

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 4:4-5

Connecting the passage to Christ:

Psalm 4:4 calls us to search our hearts. If we were to search our hearts we would find them full of sin. Verse 5 gives us the remedy for our sinful condition, "Offer right sacrifices and put your trust in the Lord." There is one right sacrifice that will once and for all time cover our sin. The only sacrifice that we can count on is the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross. In this alone can we place our hope and trust.

Questions for reflection:

- Is it possible for a person to be angry but not sin? (Yes, we can be angry and not sin, but our sinful nature so affects every part of our lives that we usually are sinning when we are angry. A good question to ask is "Am I angry at the sin I see or angry with the person who committed the sin." It would be wise to assume when that we are angry with a person, we need to search our hearts for sinful motives behind our anger.)
- What does it mean to search your heart? (Searching your heart means looking inside of you for the motive or reason behind what you are doing. Often our motives for good things are even sinful because we do them for our own pleasure rather than for God's glory.)
- What sacrifice would be "right" in order to cover our sin? (Only Jesus' death on the cross is a sacrifice sufficient to cover our sin.)

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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?

THE CALL OF GOD TO GO

Invite a person who has experienced the call of God firsthand to share their testimony with your class. This could be a pastor who heard God's call into ministry and left a lucrative career, a person who left career advancement to remain at your local church, or perhaps a family that left their home to be a part of your church's initial church planting team.

Encourage the person sharing to read the account of Abram who went in faith obeying God's call. Have the person share both the exciting and challenging aspects of obeying God's call to go.



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ABRAM'S CHALLENGES

Supplies:

pencil and paper

Break the class down into groups of three or four. Have the children read through Genesis 12 and make a list of challenges that Abram faced as a result of obeying God's call to go. Give the groups 5-10 minutes then gather them back again to make a comprehensive list.

- Abram left his immediate family, his home, and his country.
- Abram had to pack up all his things and move.
- Abram faced a famine.
- Abram was subject to the Egyptians' authority.
- Pharaoh took Sarah.

After listing the challenges, ask the children:

- How did God work all these things together for Abram's good? (The famine led Abram to Egypt where, because of his lie about his wife, the Egyptians treated Abram well and gave him a wealth of livestock. When Pharaoh commanded Abram to leave Egypt, Abram had increased in wealth.)

MAP IT

Supplies

Bible atlas with map of the land of the Patriarchs copied for each person in the class

Distribute a copy to each child a copy of a map of the Old Testament Patriarchal Land. (This should be a map without Abram's journey delineated on the map.)

Have the children locate the different places specified in the Genesis narrative. Then have them draw a line of Abram's journey down to the Negeb from Haran, then further down to Egypt and back to the Negeb and Bethel. You can also provide blank maps and then have the children fill them out as you demonstrate on the white board where the various cities are located. Locate Bethlehem and Jerusalem on the map as well and ask the children what the significance is of those two cities.

Connect Abram's journey to the ultimate purpose of the journey, for God to establish a people in Canaan out of which the Messiah would come. Jesus would be born in Bethlehem and he would die in Jerusalem.



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ABRAM VS. JONAH

Read the first part of the story of Jonah (Jonah 1:1-17). Work through the following questions with the class.

- How are Jonah and Abram similar? (God called both of them to a particular task.)
- How are Jonah and Abram different? (Abram obeyed God but Jonah did not.)
- Does God call us today? (Yes, we are all called to follow God's Word. Just as Jonah and Abram were called to obey the Lord, so we are called to obey the Lord through His revealed will in the Bible.)



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"CAN" YOU GUESS?

Supplies

- six cans of fruit or vegetables (Get the kind of cans that both the top and bottom can be opened with a can opener.)
- three varieties of candy, can opener
- hot glue and gun
- a stack of plastic bowls
- spoons

This object lesson is designed to help the children appreciate Abraham's faith in going without knowing.

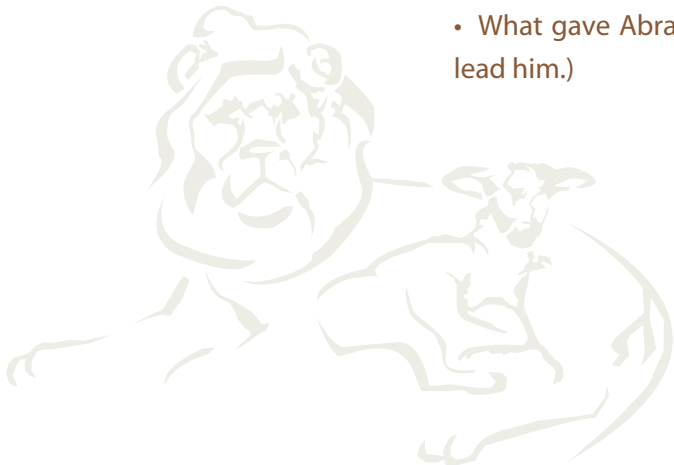
Empty three of the cans and wash them out. Save the lids. Fill the cans with a different type of candy in each then replace the lids and hot glue them back in place. Take the labels off of all the cans and mark the true contents on the bottom for your reference.

Ask the class for volunteers who are not afraid to eat anything. Explain that you want them to choose a can and if they eat what is inside you will give them a prize, (some of the left over candy). They, of course will not know what is in the cans. Talk it up a bit by asking the class what kinds of things can be found in cans. Throw out a couple of good examples like lima beans, chick peas, or creamed corn to get them thinking. Tell the children that all of the items in the cans are edible i.e. no dog food.

The children will have fun picking cans and will be surprised when you use a can opener to open the cans with the candy.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- How did it feel to have to pick a can not knowing what was inside?
- How do you think Abraham felt concerning going to a land he did not know?
- What gave you the faith to not be concerned that something in the cans would not be good for you? (I trusted the teachers word that it would be edible.)
- What gave Abram the faith to go without knowing? (He trusted God's word to lead him.)



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PRAYER

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

IN CLASS PROJECT

The first and second grade children can use the preschool coloring sheet and questions. Have the older children draw a picture of Abram's caravan with camels traveling from Haran to Canaan.

FOR OLDER GRADES

Supplies:

- paper and pencils

Have the children compare 11:8-12 with Genesis 12 and list the facts we learn in Hebrews that we don't find in Genesis 12.

They should then answer the following question:

- How does the New Testament help us to interpret the Old Testament? (Since the New Testament was written after the Old Testament, we have the benefit of the inspired writers' interpretation of the Old Testament. We learn from the writer of Hebrews for instance that Abram's motive was a righteous one. Abram obeyed God out of faith not greed or fear.)

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Call – God called Abram to go. God's call is both one of grace and one of power. As Abram was called to go, so was he given the grace to go. The call of God along with the grace of God to obey the call results in God's call being effective. God's call to follow Him is going forth to individuals today to follow Christ. Abraham and the other Old Testament saints greeted the promises of God "from afar" (Hebrews 11:13). We, knowing the Gospel, are called to share in the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14).

