Use Week of:

God's Covenant with Abraham

1

BIBLE PASSAGE: Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-21; 17:1-9

MAIN POINT: God promised to bless all the world through Abraham.

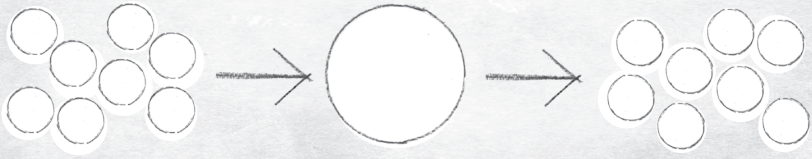
KEY PASSAGE: Romans 4:3

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What did God promise? God made a covenant to bless His people.

SMALL GROUP OPENING
(10–15 MINUTES)
PAGE 108

LARGE BIBLE STUDY
(25–30 MINUTES)
PAGE 110

SMALL GROUP LEADER
(25–30 MINUTES)
PAGE 116



Leader BIBLE STUDY

God is a covenant-making God. After the great flood, God made a covenant with Noah and his family and all the living creatures. God promised to never again flood the entire earth. He put a rainbow in the sky to confirm His covenant. (See Gen. 9:8-17.) God's covenant with Noah was unconditional; it did not depend on Noah in any way.

Years passed, and Noah's family grew. His son Shem had a family. Shem's seventh-great grandson was named Abram. (See Gen. 11:10-26.) Abram traveled toward the land of Canaan with his wife, Sarai; his father, Terah; and his nephew, Lot. But they stopped in Haran and settled there.

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When Abram was 75 years old, God spoke to him. God called Abram to leave behind his family and his lands to go to a place God would show him. God made a covenant with Abram, promising to bless all the world through one of his descendants. (Gen 12:1-3) By faith, Abram obeyed.

God's covenant with Abram was unconditional. In Abram's time, when a covenant was made between two people, the animals would be split and both parties would walk through them as to say, "If I do not hold up my end of the covenant, may I be like these dead animals." (See Gen. 15.) This time, only the smoking fire pot and flaming torch passed through the animals, symbolizing that God alone would be responsible for upholding the covenant.

When Abram was 99 years old, he was still childless. How would God keep His promise to make Abram's offspring as numerous as the stars if Abram didn't have any children? But God was serious about the covenant; He always keeps His promises. God even changed Abram's name to Abraham, which means "Father of a Multitude."

God promised to bless all the earth through Abraham. At just the right time, Jesus was born into Abraham's family. (Gal. 4:4-5) Jesus fulfilled God's promise to Abraham. (See Gal. 3:8.) Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Through Him, all the nations of the earth are blessed.

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God's Covenant with Abraham

Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-21; 17:1-9

Abram lived with his wife, Sarai (SEHR igh). **God chose Abram and told him to move to a place he had never been. God promised Abram three things: a large family, land for his family, and blessing.** God visited Abram in a vision and said, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield; your reward will be very great."

This was a good promise, but Abram was sad. He didn't have any children to inherit his blessing. "One of my slaves will be my heir," Abram said. But **God** had a better plan. He **took Abram outside to remind him of His promise. "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 also promised that Abram's family would keep the land they were living in. Abram asked, "How can I be sure?" So God confirmed His covenant with Abram.

God told Abram to bring five animals: a cow, a goat, a ram, a turtledove, and a pigeon. Abram did as God said, and he divided the animals. Then, when the sun was setting, a deep sleep came over him.

While Abram slept, God told him what would happen in the future. He said that Abram's family would be slaves in another country for 400 years. Then God would judge the nation and bless Abram's family. Even though these things would happen, Abram would live a long, peaceful life.

When it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch representing God passed between the divided

animals. This showed that God would be responsible for keeping His promise.

Many years passed and Abram still didn't have the promised son. God hadn't forgotten, though. He appeared to Abram again and reminded him, "I am God Almighty. I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you greatly."

God was so serious about His promise that He changed Abram's name to Abraham, which means "Father of a Great Multitude." God told Abraham that he would be the father of nations—even kings!

"I will keep My promise to you, God said, "and it will last forever. I will be your God, and I will be the God of your family—of everyone who comes after you."

God also promised to give Abraham and his offspring all of the land of Canaan where they were living. "You will own this land forever," He said.

Christ Connection: God called Abraham to leave his country and family to go to another land. 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.



WANT TO DISCOVER GOD'S WORD? GET *ADVENTURE!*

Invite kids to check out this week's devotionals to discover that God promised to make Abraham's name great and make him a blessing. Jesus came to earth as a man through Abraham's family. Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Small Group OPENING

SESSION TITLE: God's Covenant with Abraham
BIBLE PASSAGE: Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-21; 17:1-9
MAIN POINT: God promised to bless all the world through Abraham.
KEY PASSAGE: Romans 4:3
BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What did God promise? God made a covenant to bless His people.

Welcome time

ARRIVING ACTIVITY: Promises

Guide kids to share a promise that someone made to them or a promise they have made to another person. Ask them if the promise was kept.

SAY • Today we will learn about a promise that God made to a man named Abraham. The great thing about promises from God is that God never breaks His promises. He is always faithful and always does what He says He is going to do.

Activity page (5 minutes)

- "Outumber the Stars" activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Guide kids to complete the activity page by finding the 10 stars that match the star in the key.

SAY • Have you ever been outside on a dark night when you could see the stars? How many stars were in the sky? Do you think you could count them all? God told Abraham to look up at the sky and count the stars. Of course, Abraham couldn't do that. God made a promise to Abraham in today's story. We'll learn today what God promised Abraham and what that had to do with how many stars are in the sky.

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Starry sky



- black construction paper
- toothpicks
- flashlight

Give each child a toothpick and a sheet of black construction paper. Guide them to move to a carpeted area of the room or a soft surface. This surface will make it easier to poke holes into the black paper with the toothpick. After kids finish poking holes in the construction paper, turn out the lights and choose a few kids to hold their paper while you shine a flashlight behind their designs.

SAY • God told Abraham that something would be as numerous as the stars! God made Abraham a great promise, and we'll find out more about His promise today. Does anyone have any guesses? Did God tell Abraham that he would have as many cars as the stars in the sky? Maybe He said Abraham would have as many bowls of soup as the stars in the sky? The promise God made to Abraham would bless all the world. We'll find out what it was today!

OPTION 2: 75-year-old race

- cane or walker, 2

SAY • Abraham and Sarah were quite old when God made a very important promise to them. Today, we'll learn about God's promise to bless all the world.

Form two groups, and guide each group to line up in a straight line. Explain that teams will race relay style by walking to the opposite side of the room and back. While walking, kids must use a cane or walker and pretend to be very old. The first team to have all players complete their walks wins.

Transition to large group

Large Group LEADER

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- room decorations
- Theme Background Slide (optional)

Suggested Theme Decorating Ideas: String bright colored tulle or fabric and Christmas lights along the wall. Place a small table on stage and add a strangely-shaped cake made of foam. You may also show the themed background slide.

Countdown

- countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as large group time begins.

Introduce the session (2 minutes)

- Leader attire: semi-formal attire

[Large Group Leader enters wearing clothes that might be worn to a wedding.]

LEADER • Are you guys here for the big wedding? I can't believe it's finally here. I'm so happy for the bride and groom! Soon, they'll make a covenant before God to last for the rest of their lives. A *covenant* is an agreement made between two parties. It is a promise made before God and is meant to last forever. We'll learn about a very important covenant that God made with a man named Abraham today.

Giant timeline (2 minutes)

- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

LEADER • Over the last six weeks we have learned about

many things that God has done. He created the world and people for His glory alone. Then, people sinned and that sin separated them from God. The Bible says that the punishment for sin is death, but God planned from the very beginning to make a way for people to be forgiven through Jesus!

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Today, we are learning about a great promise that God made to Abraham, and it actually includes Jesus, too! ***What did God promise?*** We'll learn the answer to that big picture question. today!

Sing (4 minutes)

- "Always Faithful" song

LEADER • Before we learn about what God promised, I think we need to learn about how God treats the promises that He makes to people. God never breaks a promise because God is always faithful to the covenants that He makes! Let's sing together and worship God for always being faithful to us.

Sing together "Always Faithful."

Key passage (4 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- "Abraham" song

LEADER • Great job! God is always faithful to us. Our key passage says that Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness. Abraham knew that God would be faithful to do what God said He would do. Abraham obeyed God and loved Him. When God promised to do something amazing through Abraham, Abraham trusted God. This trust was credited to Abraham as righteousness. In the same way, we are credited with Jesus' righteousness

when we love and trust Him.

Sing together "Abraham."

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

- Bibles
- "God's Covenant with Abraham" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Main Point Poster

LEADER • Our story today comes from Genesis 12–17. Abraham is a major person in Genesis, so we get to learn a lot about him in the Bible. Abraham was a real man who followed God. God also made a covenant, or promise, with Abraham. Listen closely for the answer to the big picture question, ***What did God promise?***

Open your Bible to Genesis 12. Show the video or tell the Bible story in your own words using the script provided. For a shorter version of the story, read the bolded text.

LEADER • ***What did God promise? God made a covenant to bless His people.*** God promised that Abraham would be the father of many generations, and that his children and his children's children would bless others. **God promised to bless all the world through Abraham.**

Abraham was old and had no children. He didn't know how God would keep His promise, but he believed God. Abraham even waited many, many more years for the son God promised. God didn't just promise Abraham that he would have a child though. **God promised to bless all the world through Abraham** and his children.

One day, Jesus would come to earth as a member of Abraham's family. Jesus is the ultimate blessing to the world. God's promise is fulfilled in Jesus' death and resurrection that would be credited as righteousness to any who trust Him.

God always keeps His promises. Even though people sometimes break their promises to each other, God's promises never fail. God is perfect and holy. God keeps every covenant that He makes.

Ask the following review questions:

1. What animals did God tell Abram to bring? (*a cow, a goat, a ram, a turtledove, and a pigeon; Genesis 15:9*)
2. What did God change Abram's name to? (*Abraham, Genesis 17:5*)
3. How long did God tell Abraham that this promise would last? (*forever—throughout all generations; Genesis 17:7*)
4. ***What did God promise? God made a covenant to bless His people.***

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

- "Unit 2, Session 1" discussion starter video

LEADER • God keeps every promise perfectly. He even told Abraham what would happen in the future through Abraham's family. Let's watch our discussion starter video and talk more about that.

Show the "Unit 2, Session 1" video.

LEADER • Do people always keep their promises? Have you ever broken a promise about something you would do in the future? In our video, did the scientist really know what would happen in the future?

God is all-knowing. He knows everything that will happen in the future, and He is completely in control. He knew exactly what He would do through Abraham's family one day. He'd send Jesus! ***What did God promise? God made a covenant to bless His people.*** **God promised to bless all the**

world through Abraham, and He did just that when He sent Jesus to pay for sin by dying on the cross and raising Jesus from the dead three days later. Jesus came so that all who trust Him would be forgiven of their sins.

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me (optional)

Use Scripture and the guide provided with this session to explain to boys and girls how to become a Christian. Assign individuals to meet with kids who have more questions. If this is not possible, encourage boys and girls to ask their parents, small group leaders, or other Christian adults any questions they may have about becoming a Christian.

Big picture question and prayer (3 minutes)

- Big Picture Question Poster

Show the big picture question poster.

LEADER • What is the answer to the big picture question?

What did God promise? God made a covenant to bless His people.

Guide kids to repeat the big picture question and answer, using different voices each time.

Before transitioning to small groups, make any necessary announcements. Lead kids in prayer. Praise God for the promise He gave to Abraham to one day bless all the world through Abraham's family. Thank God for planning to send Jesus so that all who trust Him could be made right with God. Ask God to help kids trust Him and believe that all that He promises in the Bible is true.

Dismiss to small groups

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means "good news." It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

 **God rules.** Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

 **We sinned.** Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)

 **God provided.** Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

 **Jesus gives.** Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:19.

 **We respond.** Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus.

Small Group LEADER

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MAIN POINT: God promised to bless all the world through Abraham.
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Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- "Abraham" song

Guide kids to make up a motion for each word of the key passage. Repeat the key passage with motions multiple times until kids can say it from memory. You may also sing the key passage song.

SAY • Abraham believed God would do what He said He would do, and God credited his belief to him as righteousness. How does our belief in Jesus do the same thing? When we trust that Jesus paid for our sins when He died on the cross and rose again, God also credits Jesus' righteousness to us. It's as if Jesus swaps places with us. We get Jesus' righteousness because He took our punishment. Abraham's promise was one that would last throughout all generations. **God promised to bless all the world through Abraham.**

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster
- Small Group Timeline
- paper plates
- markers

Encourage the kids to find Genesis 15 in their Bibles. Use the small group timeline to show kids today's Bible story. Review the stories that kids have learned over the last six weeks. Show kids where today's story falls on the small group timeline.

Read today's story using the bolded text, or summarize the story in your own words.

Give each child a paper plate and guide her to write *TRUE* on one side and *FALSE* on the other. Explain that you will ask a question. Kids will show you whether they think the question is true or false by holding up the answer.

Ask the following review questions:

1. Abraham's name was first Abram, and Sarah's name was Sarai. (*true; Genesis 17:5,15*)
2. God promised Abraham a large family, a big house for his family, and blessing. (*false—a large family, land for his family, and blessing; Genesis 12:1-3*)
3. God said Abraham's family would be as numerous as the blades of grass on a baseball field. (*false—stars in the sky, Genesis 15:5*)
4. A covenant is a promise. God never breaks a promise and told Abraham that this covenant would be good throughout all generations. (*true, Genesis 17:9*)
5. A ribbon and a kazoo passed between the animals Abraham brought to God. (*false—a smoking fire pot and flaming torch, Genesis 15:17*)
6. ***God made a covenant to bless His people.*** (*true*)

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Trusting what you hear



Guide kids to sit in a circle. Explain that you will whisper a sentence to one kid in the circle. That kid will then whisper the same sentence to the person to his left. He may only say the sentence once. Continue until the sentence has made it all the way around the circle. Guide the last child to say aloud what she heard. Discuss if the sentence is the same one you whispered to the first child.

Suggested sentences:

- **God promised to bless all the world through Abraham.**
- Jesus is the biggest blessing the world could ever receive.
- God made a covenant with Abraham.
- A covenant is a promise that is not meant to be broken.
- God never breaks His promises; He is always faithful.

SAY • Sometimes, you don't know if you can trust what you hear. You might not know if it is right or not. **God promised to bless all the world through Abraham.** Abraham and his wife were very old and didn't have any children yet. Only God could do something so impossible as to make his family as numerous as the the stars! Abraham trusted God and believed His promise. God always keeps His promises! We can always trust God's promises and His Word, the Bible.

OPTION 2: Tissue paper torch

- red, orange, and yellow tissue paper
- child-sized scissors
- construction paper
- tape
- glue

Place yellow, orange, and red tissue paper and child-sized scissors in the center of the table. Guide kids to take one piece of each, fold them, and twist the corners together. Then, guide them to cut the top of the tissue paper to look like a flame. Roll a sheet of construction paper into a cone and tape. Glue the twisted corner of the tissue paper inside the cone to form a torch.

SAY • The smoking pot and flaming torch were a sign that God would keep His promise to Abraham and all the world. **God promised to bless all the world through Abraham.** God always keeps His promises,

and He did bless the world through Abraham. Jesus came from Abraham's family and came to pay for sin on the cross and rise again three days later! Jesus brings people back to a right relationship with God and that is the greatest blessing we could receive.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

- Journal Page
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons or markers
- *Big Picture Cards for Families: Kids*

Distribute each child's journal and instruct the kids to draw a picture of one thing that God has blessed them with. Writers may list the blessings that they have received from God. If they need a little help, guide kids to think about their families, the things they have that they need, and so forth.

SAY • **God promised to bless all the world through Abraham.** God has blessed us in so many ways, but Jesus is the greatest blessing that God has given us!

Make sure each child secures this week's sheet in the journal, and then collect them. Keep the journals in the classroom so they will be available every week or as often as you wish to use them.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the coloring page provided with this session. Pray, thanking God for giving people so many great gifts. Thank God for keeping His promise to Abraham and blessing all the world through his family, including the greatest gift—Jesus!

Journal Page

God the Covenant-Maker

Key Passage: Romans 4:3

Big Picture Question: What did God promise?
God made a covenant to bless His people.

Session 1: God's Covenant with Abraham
Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-21; 17:1-9
God promised to bless all the world through Abraham.

Session 2: God Tested Abraham
Genesis 22:1-19
Abraham trusted God even when he didn't understand God's plan.

Session 3: The Promise Reaffirmed
Genesis 25:19-26; 26:1-6; 28:10-22
God reminded Abraham's family that He always keeps His promises.



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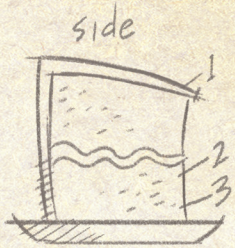
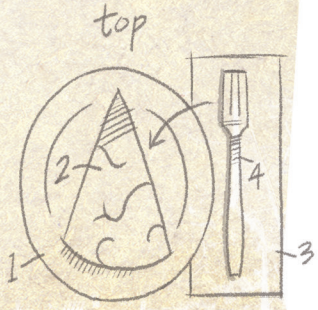
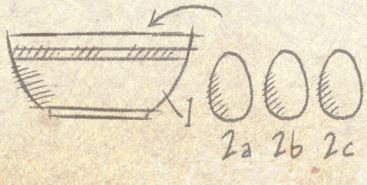
Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness.

Romans 4:3









Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

Romans 4:3



"Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness."

Romans 4:3

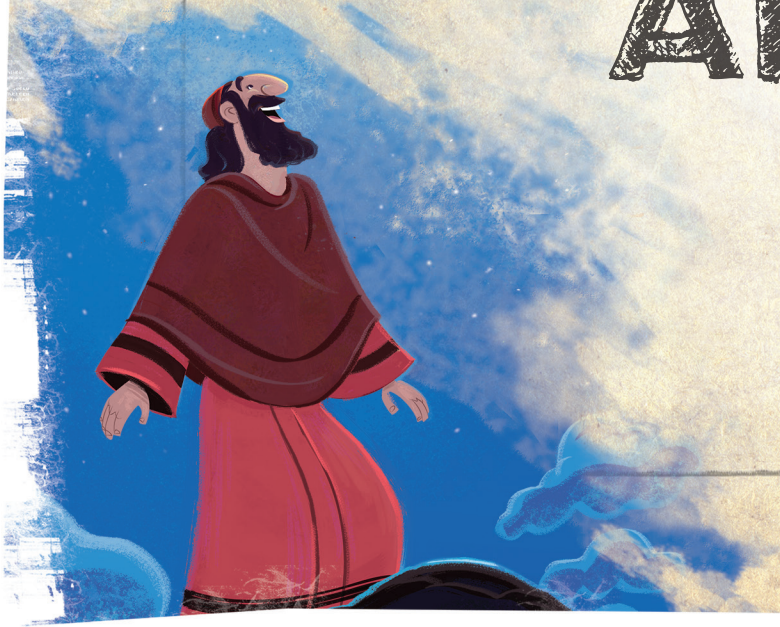


"Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

Romans 4:3



God promised to bless all the world through Abraham.





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Outnumber the Stars

INSTRUCTIONS: Find and circle the 8 stars like this one hidden in the scene below.



DOWNLOAD THE TGP FAMILY APP

KEY PASSAGE: Romans 4:3

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- What did God promise? God made a covenant to bless His people.

BIBLE STORY:
GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

- God made a covenant, or promise, with Abraham.
- God promised Abraham would have a big family. Abraham was old, but he trusted God.
- God's showed Abraham that God would be responsible for keeping the promise.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- What promises have you made? Did you keep them? Why or why not?
- Abraham had faith in God's promise. What is faith? (See Hebrews 11:1.)
- How has God blessed your family?

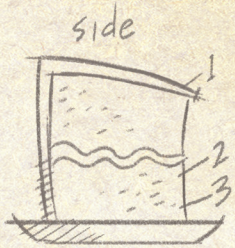
FAMILY ACTIVITY:

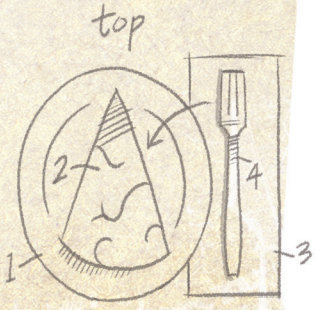
- Try to count the stars on a clear night. Remind kids that God always keeps His promises.
- Go further: Write a prayer to thank God for being faithful.

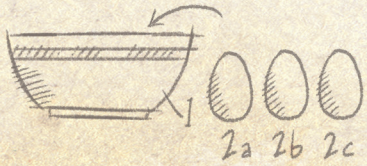


What did God promise?









What did God promise?

God made a covenant to bless His people.



