Preschool–Grade 6

God's Promise to Abraham

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: Abram believed God's promise even when he couldn't see how it would happen, and he obeyed. Faith means trusting God and doing what He says.
Bible passage: Genesis 12–15. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness." *Genesis 15:6 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), a paper star, tape, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board. Tape the paper star under a chair or table where no one will see it.
The names: in Genesis 12–15 the Bible calls them **Abram** and **Sarai**. God changed their names to Abraham and Sarah later (Genesis 17:5, 17:15).

1. Opening game: Mystery Trip (5–10 minutes)

Choose one child to be the traveler. Don't tell anyone where the star is. Give the traveler one direction at a time: "Take five steps toward the door. Turn left. Take three giant steps. Look down." Keep going until the traveler finds the hidden star. Play again with a new traveler and a new hiding place. Ask: *What was it like to follow one step at a time without knowing where you'd end up?* Say: "Abram had to do that with his whole life."

2. Bible story: Abram Believes God (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Genesis 12. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

God calls Abram. Abram's family had moved from Ur of the Chaldees to Haran (Genesis 11:31, 15:7). **Look up Genesis 12:1.** God told Abram to leave his country, his **kindred** (his relatives) and his father's house, and go to a land God would **shew** (show) him. God promised to make him a great nation, bless him and make his name great, and said, "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (12:2–3). **Look up Genesis 12:4.** Abram **departed** (left), as the LORD had spoken. He was seventy-five years old. He took Sarai, his nephew Lot and everything they had to the land of Canaan (12:5). **Look up Genesis 12:7.** God promised the land to Abram's **seed**, which means his children and the family after them, and Abram built an altar to the LORD. He pitched his tent between Bethel and Hai and called on the name of the LORD (12:8).

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Abram and Lot. Abram became very rich in cattle, silver and gold, and Lot had flocks, herds and tents too (13:2, 13:5). The land couldn't hold them both, and their herdmen began to fight (13:6–7). **Look up Genesis 13:8. Strife** means fighting, and **brethren** means family. Abram let his nephew Lot choose first (13:9). Lot chose the well-watered plain of Jordan (13:10–11). Then God told Abram to look north, south, east and west: all that land would be his, and his seed would be as many as the dust of the earth (13:14–16).

Abram rescues Lot. Enemy kings took Lot and his goods (14:12). **Look up Genesis 14:14.** Abram took 318 trained servants, went after them, and brought back Lot, his goods and the people (14:14–16). Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of the most high God, brought bread and wine and blessed Abram, and Abram gave him a tenth of everything, called **tithes** (14:18–20). The king of Sodom offered Abram the goods, but Abram would not take even a thread, so no one could say a king had made him rich (14:21–23).

The stars. God spoke to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (15:1). Abram said he was still **childless** (had no children), and a servant born in his house would be his heir (15:2–3). God said Abram's own son would be his **heir**, the one who gets the family's things (15:4). **Look up Genesis 15:5.** God brought Abram outside and told him to look toward heaven and **tell** (count) the stars, if he could. "So shall thy seed be." **Look up Genesis 15:6.** Abram believed in the LORD, and God counted it to him for **righteousness** (being right with God). That same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram (15:18).

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. God told Abram to go but didn't tell him where (12:1). Why would that be hard? Why do you think Abram went anyway?
2. Abram let Lot, his nephew, choose first (13:8–9). What does that show about Abram? When could you let someone else go first?
3. Abram wouldn't take the king of Sodom's goods (14:22–23). Why did it matter to him that people knew God made him rich, not a king?
4. Abram was old and had no children, but he believed God's promise (15:5–6). What makes it hard to believe God when you can't see how He will do it?
5. Where do you see God keeping His promises today?

Recall questions

1. How old was Abram when he left Haran? *(Seventy-five, Genesis 12:4)*
2. How many trained servants did Abram take to rescue Lot? *(318, 14:14)*
3. What did God tell Abram to count? *(The stars, 15:5)*

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4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the words: **believed in the LORD** means he trusted God to do what He said, and **counted it to him for righteousness** means God took Abram's believing as being right with Him. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Abram believed God, and his faith obeyed: when God said go, he went. God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."

Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

This week: when you have to wait for something, or you can't see how it will work out, pray and tell God, "I believe You."

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6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Genesis 11:31: What was the name of Abram's wife? *(Sarai)*
2. Genesis 12:5: Which land did Abram go to? *(The land of Canaan)*
3. Genesis 12:8: What did Abram pitch on a mountain east of Bethel? *(His tent)*
4. Genesis 13:2: What was Abram very rich in? *(Cattle, silver and gold)*
5. Genesis 13:11: Which land did Lot choose? *(All the plain of Jordan)*
6. Genesis 13:16: What did God say Abram's seed would be like? *(The dust of the earth)*
7. Genesis 14:18: What did Melchizedek bring out? *(Bread and wine)*
8. Genesis 15:1: What did God say He was to Abram? *(His shield, and his exceeding great reward)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You always keep Your promises. Help us believe You and obey You, even when we can't see how things will work out. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

Parts left out on purpose: this lesson leaves out Abram's time in Egypt (Genesis 12:10–20), the details of the battle (14:1–11, 14:15) and the animals Abram prepared for the covenant (15:9–17). Read them yourself before class, and if a child asks, tell what the verses say simply. **If a child asks whether the promise came true:** yes. God gave Abram and Sarai a son, Isaac (Genesis 21:2). That is next week's story.

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