Preschool–Grade 6

God's Promise to Abraham

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: Faith takes God at His word and obeys, even before we can see how He will keep it.
Bible passage: Genesis 12–15. Students read Genesis 12:1–9, 13:5–18 and 15:1–6 out loud themselves.
Memory verse: "And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness." *Genesis 15:6 (KJV)* and "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." *Hebrews 11:8 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read Genesis 12–15 and Hebrews 11:8. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses.
The names: Genesis 12–15 calls them **Abram** and **Sarai**. God renamed them Abraham, "a father of many nations," and Sarah later (Genesis 17:5, 17:15). Hebrews uses his later name.

1. Opening game: One Bag (5–10 minutes)

Say: "You're moving tomorrow. You don't know where, and you can take only one bag. What five things go in it?" Give students two minutes to write their list, then share a few. Ask: *What would be the hardest thing to leave behind? What would make you willing to go?* Say: "Abram was told to leave his country, his relatives and his father's house, and God didn't even tell him where he was going."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Read out loud: Genesis 12:1–9. Students take turns, a few verses each. Old words in this passage:

- **kindred** (12:1): relatives; **shew** (12:1): show
- **thou shalt be a blessing** (12:2): God would do good to others through Abram; "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (12:3)
- **departed** (12:4): left; **substance** (12:5): everything they owned
- **seed** (12:7): children and the family after them; **builded an altar** (12:7): built a stone table for worship
- **called upon the name of the LORD** (12:8): prayed to and worshiped God

Tell this part in your own words: a famine sent Abram to Egypt. Afraid the Egyptians would kill him because Sarai was beautiful, Abram told her to say she was his sister (12:10–13). Pharaoh took Sarai into his house, but the LORD plagued Pharaoh's house, and Pharaoh sent them away (12:15–20). The Bible tells the truth about its heroes: even Abram made a fearful choice, and God protected Sarai.

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Read out loud: Genesis 13:5–18. Old words in this passage:

- **strife** (13:7–8): fighting; **brethren** (13:8): family
- **separate thyself** (13:9): let's go different ways
- **well watered** (13:10): with plenty of water everywhere
- **thy seed as the dust of the earth** (13:16): more family than anyone could count

Tell this part in your own words: enemy kings captured Lot, and Abram took 318 trained servants and brought him back (14:12–16). Melchizedek, king of Salem and "the priest of the most high God," blessed Abram, and Abram gave him tithes, a tenth of everything (14:18–20). Abram refused the king of Sodom's reward, "lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich" (14:23).

Read out loud: Genesis 15:1–6. Old words in this passage:

- **in a vision** (15:1): God showed and spoke to him
- **exceeding great reward** (15:1): God Himself was Abram's greatest prize
- **I go childless** (15:2): I have no children; **heir** (15:3–4): the one who gets the family's things
- **tell the stars** (15:5): count the stars
- **counted it to him for righteousness** (15:6): God took Abram's faith as being right with Him

Then God made a covenant with Abram that day (15:7–18). **Covenant** means a promise God makes and keeps; Abram prepared animals the way God told him, and God promised the land to his seed.

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. Hebrews 11:8 says Abram went out "not knowing whither he went." What is God asking you to trust Him with where you can't see the end?
2. In Egypt, Abram let fear make his choice (12:11–13). What does it tell you that the Bible includes this? What do you do when fear pushes you to bend the truth?
3. Abram let Lot choose first (13:8–9), and then God showed Abram the whole land (13:14–17). Why do you think God spoke to Abram right after he gave up first choice?
4. Abram refused a king's reward so that only God would get the credit (14:22–23). Where might you be tempted to take credit that belongs to God?
5. God said, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (15:1). What would change if God Himself were the prize you wanted most?
6. Abram was old and had no children, yet he believed (15:5–6). Paul says he "staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief" (Romans 4:20). What helps you keep believing while you wait?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words in Hebrews 11:8: **called** means God told him to go; **should after receive for an inheritance** means God would give it to his family later; **whither** means where. Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Genesis 15:6 this week; keep working on Hebrews 11:8 next week too.

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5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "Abram's faith was not just words. He believed God, and it moved his feet: 'By faith Abraham... obeyed; and he went out' (Hebrews 11:8, KJV). Faith in Jesus obeys too. God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: '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) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-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 utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
Pray with the students, 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.

6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. Where is God asking me to go or obey, even though I can't see how it will turn out?
2. Which of God's promises do I find hardest to believe right now?
3. Write a short prayer telling God you believe Him, and asking Him for courage to obey.
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: look at the stars one night and read Genesis 15:5–6. Then do one thing God asks of you before you can see how it will work out.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You always keep Your word. Help us believe You when we can't see the way, obey You when You say go, and give You the credit for every good thing. Thank You for loving us and making a way to save us through Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

Part left out on purpose: the lesson only sums up the covenant animals (Genesis 15:9–17). Read them yourself before class, and if a student asks, tell what the verses say simply: God told Abram what to bring and made His covenant with Abram that day (15:18). **If a student asks whether the promise came true:** yes. God gave Abraham and Sarah a son, Isaac (Genesis 21:2). That is next week's story.

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