



LESSON PLAN

Scripture Texts:

Genesis 18:1-15

Galatians 3:7-9,16-22

Session Theme:

Promise

a. Welcome to Class

Teachers should arrive in the classroom well in advance of class. Welcome students as they enter, and inquire about their week. Pass out name tags and record attendance on a classroom chart.

b. Icebreaker: Make a Wish!

Bring a battery operated candle to class. Turn it on, and ask kids what they normally do when they see candles on their birthday cake. (*Make a wish and blow them out!*) Tell kids to think about their greatest wish, no matter how unrealistic it may seem. Turn off the candle. Then, ask kids to imagine how they would feel if three visitors came to the classroom and told them their wish would be granted at some point in the future. How might they react to that news?

In today's story, an old couple had a wish for a very long time. It seemed like it would never come true. But then, heavenly visitors appeared with a shocking message. What was this wish, and this message? Let's begin our lesson and find out!

c. Opening Prayer

Lord God, you always keep your promises to us. Help us to place our trust in you, not in our own understanding. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

d. SEED Video or Song (Optional)

The teacher may introduce the lesson by playing the video clip from the SEED website. This time may also include an opening song or two, using a commercial Sunday School music CD.

Song suggestions for this lesson:

- "Father Abraham" (children's song)
- "Lord of All Hopefulness" (hymn)

e. Brief Bible Background

Read together the introduction to the lessons for the day, and briefly summarize the context and setting:

- Today's Lesson is from the Old Testament
- Scripture Section: Ancestors

God gave his promise to a family of wandering herdsmen, which included Abraham and Sarah; Isaac and Rebekah; Jacob, Rachel and Leah; and Joseph and his brothers.

f. Communicate the Bible Story

Always keep in mind that the main purpose of Sunday School is to put people in contact with Bible stories. Use a version that is appropriate to the age level.

Upper Elementary: Read the Bible Story and Rhyme

Youth/Adults: Read the Scripture text from the Bible

For Upper and Lower Elementary, use the Storyteller questions to help the students think about the events of the story.

g. Complete the Worksheet(s)

Continue with the handout sheets appropriate to the age level of the students in class:

Upper Elementary: Worksheet and Drama

Youth: Bible Study (Maps, Timelines, Questions)

Adult: Bible Study Sheet (Introduction and Discussion)

h. Craft and Activity Time

If there is time after covering the Bible story, the class may move to craft and activity time, described on the following page. (Do not let the activity time supersede the actual time spent on the Scripture lesson.)

i. Summarize and Review

Before ending class, briefly summarize the day's lesson one last time. If you have not already done so, introduce the Theme Word for the week, providing the definition, and asking how the lesson connects to that theme.

Youth/Adult: Discuss "Reflection for the Week Ahead"

j. Closing Prayer

Close the session in prayer before dismissal:

Upper Elementary: Practice a prayer from memory (e.g., the Lord's Prayer, Luther's Morning Prayer, etc.)

Youth/Adult: Use the ADTRC Prayer format



Bible Study Leader's Guide

The following is a discussion and answer guide for the Youth and Adult Bible Study sheets. For all leaders, it can serve to provide some background on the Bible lesson.

Discuss: Genesis 18:1-15

1. Who were the three strangers who stopped to visit Abraham and Sarah? How do you think Abraham and Sarah knew that these were more than ordinary men?

The Bible says that the Lord appeared to Abraham, but simply refers to what Abraham saw as “three men.” We often picture Abraham and Sarah as an old couple living all by themselves, but keep in mind that Abraham was a wealthy nomad with many servants, slaves, and animals. For an important man like him to react with such deference shows there was some aura or presence in these men that he could sense.

2. How did Abraham respond to their visit? How would you describe his attitude or emotional state? Read Hebrews 13:2. How is Abraham's response an example to all of us?

Abraham seems very anxious and excited, running around and getting things prepared. He was personally responding to the needs of these guests — rather than simply having his servants take care of things. Abraham is an example of a person who did show hospitality to angels!

3. What did the men say would happen to Abraham's wife, Sarah? Why was this so amazing? Do you think you would have believed this promise?

The Lord said he would return in about a year, and by then, Sarah would have a natural-born son. This seemed crazy because she was past child-bearing years. For her to have a baby would require a literal miracle!

4. How did Sarah react when she heard the news? What did the Lord say in reply?

Sarah seems unable to believe her good fortune. She says, “Shall I have pleasure?” The news that she would have a baby after so many years of being childless struck her as very good news, but she was incredulous. But God responded by saying, “Is anything too hard for the Lord?” with the unspoken answer being “No; God can do anything!”

5. When we have gone through difficulties, as Sarah did, it can be hard to believe that God has a blessing in store for

us. But God's plans for his people are good. How do we know this?

Sometimes, people can fall into a negative pattern of thinking, convinced that “nothing good ever happens to me.” And yet, Sarah had already experienced God's watchful care and protection through years of travel. As Christians, we can learn from stories like Sarah's that God always remains faithful to his people and know that he will be faithful to us as well.

6. When a child was later born to Sarah and Abraham, they named him Isaac. How is the name Isaac a callback to this story (Genesis 21:6)?

It may be noted in the footnotes of your Bible that the name Isaac (*Itzhak*) comes from the Hebrew word for laughter. Not only does the name “laughter” represent the joy that the old couple had in the birth of Isaac, but it is a callback to when Sarah laughed (in doubt) at the very thought of giving birth at her age.

7. Read Galatians 3:7-9, 16-22. In these verses, why does Paul hold up Abraham as an example to us as Christians? Was Abraham justified (made right with God) because he did good works and obeyed the law, or because he trusted God's promise?

Paul makes the point that Abraham lived long before the law was given to Moses, so Abraham could not claim to be righteous by obeying the law. Paul insists that Abraham's trust in God's promise of a child foreshadows our trust in God's only begotten Son Jesus. (Keep in mind that Abraham was not a perfect man; he was not a paragon of virtue. What set him apart was that God gave him a promise, and because of that promise Abraham trusted in God. It is the Word of God that creates faith!)

8. Who is the one “Offspring” of Abraham who fulfilled God's promise? How has this person made us a part of Abraham's family?

This text is translated to English as “offspring,” a word that can be used to refer to singular or plural descendants. Abraham was the father of many descendants through Isaac. But here Paul is using the singular form of the word to point directly to Christ as *the* “Offspring” through whom God brings us into the Abraham's family — through faith in Jesus, our Lord and Brother.

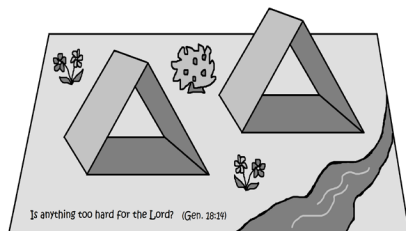
Classroom Craft and Activity Page

Listed below are in-class activities and craft projects related to the theme for the day. Choose one of the following based on the age and capabilities of the students. (Never let the activity or craft time take precedence over the biblical story.)

Activity 1: Abraham and Sarah's Home, 3-D

Materials Needed:

- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Tape or stapler
- Markers
- Green tissue paper
- Glue



Instructions:

Give each person a piece of construction paper and a pair of scissors. Invite kids to fold the construction paper in half the long way. Open the paper up again, and cut along the fold line. Kids now have two long, thin strips of paper.

Have kids fold the first strip of paper in half, like a card. Press down along the fold line. Open the paper back up again. Next, fold each end into the center fold line and press down on the folds. Open the paper back up again. Kids will now have a strip of paper with three fold lines in it.

Take each end of the paper and bring them together, tucking one end under the other. Kids will now have a three dimensional triangle, shaped like a tent. Tape or staple the paper in place at the bottom so the tent shape holds.

Repeat with the second strip of paper, making a second tent. Invite kids to decorate their two tents with markers in any way they wish.

As kids finish making their tents, give each a second piece of construction paper (*ideally a tan, brown, or green piece to represent the ground, but in any case not the same color as their tents*). Have kids set their tents, side by side, on this second piece of construction paper as a base. Tape or staple the tents in place. Invite kids to decorate the "ground" around their tents with markers, creating a river or other water source, and perhaps some plates with bread and meat on them. Kids may also wish to draw flowers or other things on the ground, or glue on scrunched pieces of green tissue paper as bushes.

Along the edge of the paper, kids can write: **Abraham and Sarah's Home:** "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" (Genesis 18:14)

Activity 2: "Get to Know You" Game

Materials Needed:

- M&M's
- Snack sized plastic bags or other small containers
- White board
- Dry erase marker



Instructions:

Before class: Put about 1/4 cup of M&M's into each of the snack bags. Make one bag for each student in your class (with a few extras for possible visitors).

When ready to play: Invite kids to sit in a circle. Ask them what they do to get to know a new person at school or in the neighborhood. (Ideas might include sit beside them at lunch, invite them home to play, or do an activity together.) Explain that in Bible times, if a visitor stopped by a family's tent, it was common to invite that person to rest and have some sort of food and drink. As people ate and relaxed, they could also talk and learn more about one another. This is what Abraham did with the three men in today's story.

Hand out the bags of M&M's and tell kids not to eat any yet. Explain that the class is going to play a "Get to Know You" game. Just like the people in today's story, we will eat something as we get to know each other better! Explain that each color represents a different fact to share:

Blue: Something you did yesterday

Green: A food you really like

Red: Something you do well

Orange: A favorite place

Yellow: An animal you would like for a pet

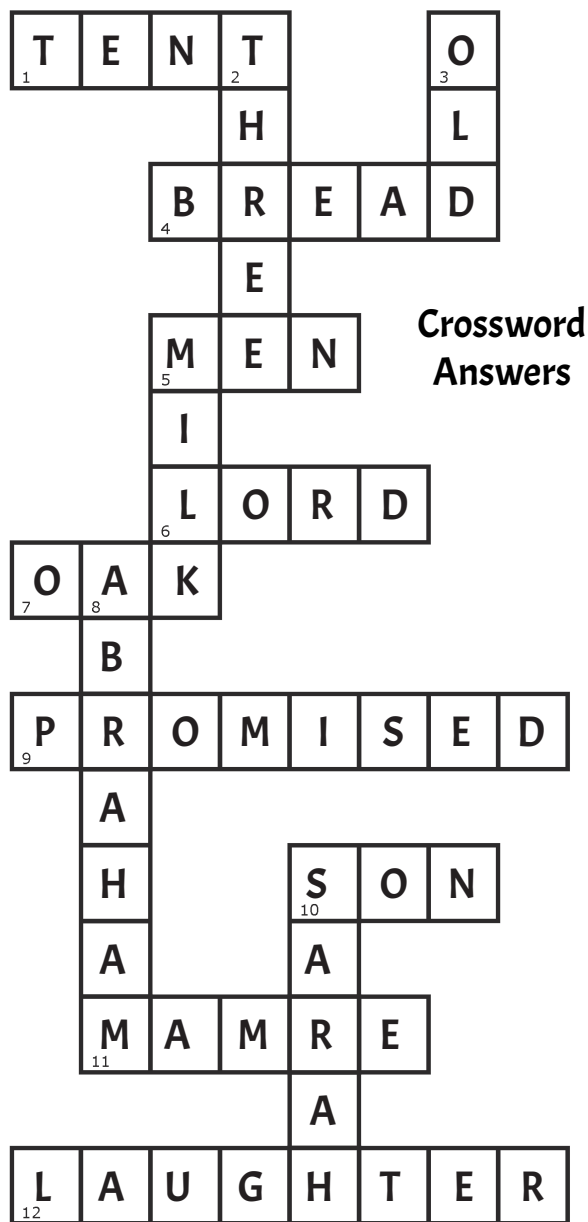
Brown: A skill you would like to learn

Go around the class, with each person choosing one candy and answering based on the color they picked. Play as long as you wish. And yes, kids can eat the candy as they go!

What do you think Abraham and Sarah talked about with their visitors? What questions might they have had for them? Do you remember some of the foods they ate?

Worksheet Answer Key

Shown below are the solution and answers to the children's worksheet for this week's lesson:



Vocabulary Word for the Week

Teachers may want to introduce the theme word for the week to help expand students' biblical vocabulary.

Promise

a statement or agreement that a certain thing will happen

When God makes a promise to his people, he always keeps it.

Reflection for the Week Ahead

Every baby that is born is a miracle of God. It takes so many things to go right for a baby to come to full term (37 to 40 weeks) and to be born healthy. There are many things for moms and dads to take care of and prepare for.

All babies born are a miracle — a gift given by God. We cannot take this for granted! You are a miracle of God as well!

Abraham and Sarah could not have a child of their own. They had given up on having a baby because they had reached old age. But then God promised them a child! The miracle of a baby's birth would be even greater if a couple who were in their nineties had a naturally born infant. Imagine how happy they were when they received the news and then when baby Isaac was born!

Talk together about what your birth was like. Who was there? What did people say? How did you get your name? For parents, what were your first thoughts when your child was born? What do you think of now when you look at your child growing up?



Map Answer Key

To trace the path of Abram and his family along the fertile crescent, start in Ur, go northwest to Haran, then southwest to Mamre. Taking this curved path, the journey was about **1100 miles**.

The Practice of Prayer

On the lines below, write a prayer giving thanks for all newborn babies and their parents. Ask God to protect families as parents raise their children in the faith. Thank God for his promises that bless his people.

Practice using the ADTRC Prayer Form: Address, Description, Thanks, Request, Conclusion.