

Bible Lesson: Genesis 12:1-5, 15:1-6

Memory Verse: Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your path straight. Proverbs 3:5,6

Catechism: The First Commandment: Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.
Meaning: We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

I. TEACHER PREPARATION

A. Prayer Preparation

1. Pray that God will lead you to be an example of one who trusts God only.
2. Pray that you will wait upon the Lord as He guides you through this year of teaching Sunday School.

B. Bible Study

It is one thing to say we fear and love God. Trust is quite another matter. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. . ." (Proverbs 3:5). It is not the commands of the Lord that bother us, but that we want to understand them and can't. His ways and thoughts are far beyond ours (Isaiah 55:8-11). We always want to know "why" and "when" and "how." We may believe a promise of God, but not understand how it can be done, so we rely on our own understanding to do it our way. Abraham did this, but he also stands as an example of a man of trust and faith.

The Call of Abraham (Genesis 12:1-5)

The history of redemption, like that of creation, begins with God speaking. "The Lord said. . . ." The Lord comes to Abraham and speaks. The covenant with Abraham is initiated by the Word of God. That word is both a command and a promise. God calls Abraham to forsake all the idols and the heathen religion of his father and family, to forsake the way of sin and commit himself to the Lordship of Yahweh, the covenant God. This call to forsake everything and follow the Lord finds its nearest parallel in the Gospel call of Christ.

The Lord promises to make Abraham a great nation (12:2). That "nation" includes territory as well as people. How could Abraham understand this? He couldn't, but Abraham's faith "saw" the result (Hebrews 11:8ff). By faith he went out, not knowing where he was going. He saw in the promise the city of God, a better, heavenly country (Hebrews 11:10-16). That promise certainly contained the heavenly Jerusalem, the common destiny of

all who receive the blessing through Abraham's seed, Jesus Christ. Abraham trusted God, and God directed his paths.

"And so you shall be a blessing" (12:2). These words are both a benediction and a command. The blessing would come through Abraham's obedience, and would be realized through the process of redemption. All families of the earth would receive the blessing through Abraham's seed, Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:16).

So Abraham went (12:4) in obedience to the call. He trusted God. It is this act of trust and obedience that gave Abraham the title, "friend of God" (II Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23), that is, one who demonstrates loyalty to God.

The Faith of Abraham (Genesis 15:1-6)

Now the promise becomes more specific and Abraham's faith is refined and tested even more. Abraham's faith has already been tested to some degree. After the call (12:1-5), he was a homeless man, traveling to a new country, and running into various problems (Genesis 12-14). But these tests are nothing compared to the one he faces now. God confirms His Word and promise to Abraham in a vision, but more information is needed.

The pressure builds around the promise of a son. To fulfill the kingdom promise of a nation, Abraham obviously needs a son and heir. The problem is that Abraham and Sarah are very old and still have no children. So Abraham asks, "O Lord God (Yahweh), what wilt Thou give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" (15:2). There was the possibility of an adopted son (15:2-3), but God had other plans. Abraham had to trust Him.

God promises that the son shall come from Abraham's own body (15:4), a hope that would be deferred through six more chapters and some 25 years. Here Abraham does lean on his own understanding, and tries to work things out, with tragic results (Genesis 16:1,2). The birth of Ishmael creates a special series of problems, not only for Abraham, but for all the world even to this day. (The Arabs, descendants of Ishmael, or Edom, remain enemies of Israel even today.)

But the main point here is that Abraham believes (15:6). He trusts the word and promise of God, against all odds. As he stood there looking up into the stars of heaven, did it make much sense to him? Not likely, but he believed. Genesis 15:6 is an immortal expression of that trust. From Abraham's time on, that faith is the example and definition of saving faith for countless generations of believers and is essential in understanding the covenant of the New Testament. In the first place, when God made the declaration that "it was counted to him for righteousness," He meant that Abraham, being yet sinful, was through faith looked upon by God as being perfectly righteous. That phrase is at the heart of Paul's gospel in Romans 4:3 and Galatians 3:6. Secondly, the New Testament covenant is one of grace, not law (Gal. 3:17-22). This covenant of grace was made with Abraham before the Law was given at Mt Sinai. It was in honor of this covenant of grace that God would one day bring His people out of Egypt (Exodus 2:24) and His Son into the world (Luke 1:72,73; Galatians 4:4).

But Abraham believed, not relying on his own understanding. The statement of Genesis 15:6 expresses trust in God and therefore confident assent to His revelation of supernatural saving grace. The statement is much like an "Amen" spoken by Abraham. Amen means "Yes, it shall be so." It is that kind of faith that pleases God, and because of it, God counted Abraham righteous.

Gospel Parallels

Abraham's trust and obedience to the call and word of God resulted in his salvation, a standing of righteousness before God. This righteousness was imputed to Abraham,

credited to him, from the merits of Jesus, Abraham's promised seed. At the center of this story, and at the center of history, stands the cross. When we trust Jesus, God sees us as perfect, for Christ is the object of our faith. Since Jesus is perfect righteousness, God sees us in Him as though we had never sinned (justification). God reckons it to us as righteousness.

Is it easy to believe? No. Luther says in the third article of the creed, "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him, but the Holy Spirit calls me through the gospel. . . ." Abraham was hearing the gospel too. Though far ahead of him in time, it was already complete in the mind of God in eternity. It was a call to forsake sin and trust God.

Jesus calls us to forsake sin and follow Him; to forsake mother and father if necessary and follow Him. But it is God's work. As God the Father gives us to Jesus, He gives us eternal life. The Christian is on a journey to a better, heavenly country, an abiding city, walking by faith not by sight. It is all in Jesus, and He is already there, preparing a place for His own people. As we walk in trust and obedience, we also walk in repentance.

Whatever Abraham did or did not know about the promise according to the revelation given him, his knowledge alone did not save him. The blessing came when he trusted. This is true for us also.

"Is it enough that you know all these things about Christ and hold them to be true? No; the Holy Spirit must teach me to know Christ in a true and living faith" (Catechism question No. 198).

"What is true and living faith in Jesus Christ? This is faith, that a repentant sinner lays hold of Christ as his only Savior from sin, and death, and the power of Satan; that he takes refuge with Christ and His righteousness, and builds thereon with the confidence of his whole heart" (Catechism question No. 212).

C. Materials

9" x 12" colored construction paper, several small pieces luggage, penny or other coin, road map, materials for Class Mural (explained in "Craft Suggestions" in the introductory section).

D. Memorization: Proverbs 3:5-6 and the First Commandment and its Meaning.

II. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

A. Review

1. Each child will recite from memory Ecclesiastes 12:13.
2. Review main ideas from previous lessons.

B. Today's Lesson

1. At the completion of this lesson, the child will have learned that God keeps His promises to us just as He did for Abraham. Abraham trusted God to keep His promises as follows:

- a. to keep him safe until he got to the Promised Land;
 - b. to give him a son even though he was old;
 - c. that long, long, afterward, another baby boy would be born to Abraham's family. That baby would be the Savior.
2. The child will also trust God's love and care as Abraham did. Because Abraham trusted God to send a Savior, God took away Abraham's sins and said to him, "I think of you as perfect." What happened to Abraham is called salvation.
 3. The child will trust Jesus, the Savior, who died for him. What happened to Abraham happens to us when we trust Jesus the Savior, because He died for us too.
- C. Memory Work - Each child will be able to recite Proverbs 3:5,6 as a class and will also complete memorization of the First Commandment and its Meaning.

III. LESSON PLAN FOR CLASS SESSION

A. Welcome and Opening Prayer

1. Welcome each child warmly. Be sure that visitors feel a part of the class.
2. Thank God that He keeps His promises and thank Him for His Word which tells us His promises.
3. Praise God for His love and care for Jesus, the Savior.
4. Pray that, as you learn about Abraham and how he trusted God, your students may learn to trust God only.

B. Hymns and Songs

1. Theme hymn: "O That the Lord Would Guide My Ways", C 320.
Review stanzas 1,2. **SAY:** Point to the word 'dominion' in stanza 2. We do not want sin to rule in any part of us. We want God to rule. **READ** stanza 2 together with hands folded. It is a prayer. **SING** stanzas 1 and 2 together.
2. Enrichment hymns and songs:
"We Are Little Christian Children," SGL 33.
"I Am Jesus' Little Lamb," SGL 48
"Jesus Loves Me, This I Know," SGL 51.

C. Review

1. Review main ideas from previous lesson. Refer to Aims and Objectives from Lesson 5. Check on the following points:
 - a. When we love God and do not want to make Him sad, we fear God.
 - b. Peter and John were preaching about Jesus and feared God.
2. Recite the First Commandment and its meaning from memory.
3. Review the Memory Verse from Lesson 5, Ecclesiastes 12:13. Ask children if they can show you where Ecclesiastes is in the Bible. Read the verse from the Bible.

D. Introduction to the Lesson

Use the pieces of luggage and the road map as an interest center before children open their books to the lesson. Ask children what else they would need when they go on a trip. Keep this discussion short. Tell them they will learn about a special man of God who made a trip.

Have the children open their books to Lesson 6. Read the title and show where the Bible Lesson is found in Genesis. Read 12:1 and 15:1.

SAY: God promised to give Abraham a great land and a great reward. What do you think God will give to him? (Response) Do you think Abraham believed God's promises? (Response) Our lesson will tell us.

- E. Introduction of New Words - Because this new word list has several words that children may already know, give concrete examples of words like promise, reward, trusted, special, bless, and protected to check for understanding. Ask children to also give examples. If the children use the word in correct context the teacher will know if they have grasped the meanings of the words.

promise - A promise is something you say that you will do. Children will have prior knowledge of what this word means, although they may not all be able to read the word.

nephew - If you are a boy, you probably have an uncle and aunt and your uncle and aunt have a nephew--YOU!

vision - A vision is something like a dream, but the person who has a vision is awake. The Bible tells us that sometimes, long ago, God talked to people in this way. Today, God speaks to us through the Bible, His Holy Word.

reward - A reward is a prize that is given for doing something; sometimes it is money, but not always. NOTE: Teachers should be careful to stress to the children that in today's lesson, God's reward to Abraham was a special gift from God. It was not money. More detail is given in the lesson. (The word reward is not printed in the story.) God blessed Abraham by giving him special things. These blessings were a reward from the Lord because Abraham trusted God.

trusted - Someone who is trusted is depended on; believed. We trust our parents to take care of us. This is another word that children will most likely understand, but may not be able to read. We must trust in God above all other people or things. Show a coin that has the inscription "In God We Trust."

special - You are special because there is only one you. (Children will have prior knowledge of this word, but may not be able to read it.)

bless - A blessing brings happiness. Many times God blesses us with things we can see, but God also blesses us in ways that can't be seen. Ask children to name some of these. Answers may include Jesus, heaven, the Holy Spirit, love, faith, health.

protected - To be protected is to be kept from harm or danger.

Abraham - Abraham is a special man of God in the Old Testament. He lived long, long ago. SPECIAL NOTE: In chapters 12 and 15 of Genesis, Abraham's name is Abram. In Genesis 17:5, it tells us that God changed Abram's name to Abraham when he was 99 years old. This

took place after the story in the lesson. The name Abraham was used in the lesson because it would be less confusing for children at this age than to explain the name change.

Sarah - Abraham's wife.

Lot - Abraham's nephew. Abraham was Lot's uncle.

F. Teaching the Lesson

1. Aim 1, 2: God calls Abraham and promises His blessing.

READ and discuss the first paragraph with the children. Let them respond to the question about their favorite places to visit. **SAY:** Even when we are away from home, God is with us. **READ** paragraph two. Make clear the following:

- a. God picked out a special place for Abraham to go to.
- b. Abraham trusted God.
- c. Abraham knew that God would not send him to a place that was bad for him and his family. He knew that God would take care of him.
- d. Abraham and his family did not travel by car. Most likely they walked or rode animals.
- e. Abraham trusted God, not man.
- f. God wants us to trust Him as Abraham did. He wants to take care of every part of our life in Jesus.
- g. God took care of Abraham as He promised. God always keeps His promises.

2. God promises a wonderful gift.

READ paragraph three. As you discuss this part of the lesson, it may be hard for the children to understand how old Abraham was when the promise of a son was made and when Isaac was born. Consider the following points with the children:

- a. Review the word vision. **SAY:** Remember that Abraham was awake when God spoke to him.

TRUST GOD ONLY



Bible Lesson:
Genesis 12: 1-5
Genesis 15: 1-6

NEW WORDS

Abraham	
Sarah	promise
Lot	trusted
nephew	special
vision	bless
reward	protected

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT:

Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.

What does this mean? We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

Isn't it fun to go on a trip? We often visit special places with our families. What is your favorite place to visit? Today our lesson from the Bible tells us about a man who made a special trip. He went because God told him to go.

God did not tell Abraham that he would go on an exciting trip. God said, "Abraham, leave your country, your people and your father's house. Go to the land I will show you. I will bless you and make your name great." Abraham believed what God said to him. Abraham trusted God. He left his land. He took his wife, Sarah, his nephew, Lot, and all their things. They left for the land God would show Abraham. God was with them all the way. He protected them, gave them food, and led them to the promised land. Abraham trusted God to keep His promise. And God did!

21

God also made another promise to Abraham. One day God spoke to Abraham in a vision. God said, "Do not fear, Abraham, I will protect you. I will give you a wonderful gift." Abraham wondered what God would give him. Do you think it was money or treasures? No, God had something very special in mind for Abraham. Even though Abraham was very old, God promised to give him a son. Abraham would be important to many people, because Jesus the Savior

would come from his family. Because Abraham trusted God's promise of a Savior, God said, "I think of you as perfect." God said this because the Savior would be perfect and would die for Abraham. When Abraham trusted in the Savior, God gave him salvation.

Jesus the Savior died for us too. When we trust Him we receive salvation, and God thinks of us as perfect. He is the Friend we can always trust.

MEMORY VERSE:

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.

Proverbs 3: 5, 6



22

b. God promised to bless Abraham with gifts that Abraham could not see. He promised to give Abraham a son. He also promised to give him a Savior.

c. Compare Abraham's age with a grandmother or grandfather. **SAY:** Do you know someone who is eighty or ninety years old? (Response) Abraham was 100 when Isaac was born. That's older than your grandfather, isn't it?

d. Review the message of salvation from Lesson 5. **SAY:** God sent Jesus to die on the cross to take away our sins. When we trust Jesus, we are sorry for disobeying God, and we ask Him to take away our sins, and we ask Jesus to come into our hearts and be our Savior. Then Jesus is our Savior, and we are God's children. Then we can say we have salvation. ** Salvation is the most wonderful gift anyone can have.

e. **SAY:** Abraham was very special because Jesus would come from Abraham's family. Read the last paragraph to the children. **SAY:** We can always trust Jesus. Jesus died for us and He will always take care of us.

G. Memory Work - **Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.** Proverbs 3:5,6. (Use the "Fun With Footprints" memorization technique described in Notes to the Teacher. The footprints can be those left by Abraham as he traveled to the Promised Land.) Be sure that each child can recite Proverbs 3:5,6 or the abbreviated form with the group before class ends.

The teacher should copy the memory verse for the children to take home, perhaps on a heart shape, six to eight inches in height. (Make copies on the copy machine.) NOTE: The teacher should determine how much of the memory verse the children will be able to memorize. An abbreviated form could be the first sentence. Challenge those students who are able to memorize the whole passage.

H. Catechism:

The First Commandment: Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.
Meaning: We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

Memorization of the First Commandment and its meaning should be completed during this lesson. Be sure each child can say it with the group before class ends. If the children do not have a copy of the catechism at home, send one home with the children so they can continue to practice.

I. Discussion Questions - Discussion and applications have been built into the lesson development.

J. Activities

1. Abraham and Sarah: **SAY:** See that even though Abraham and Sarah are old, they have a little baby. Allow students to follow directions to complete the picture. This page may be sent home to be completed.
2. What Do You Remember?: Read the directions with the children and be sure they understand what to do. Some words may apply to both God and Abraham. Accept answers that children can correctly explain according to the lesson.
3. Class Mural - see "Craft Suggestions" in the introductory section.

K. Closing Prayer

Lead the children in a prayer that thanks God for His promises. Pray that each child will receive Jesus and the salvation He wants to give them. Ask the children to think of something they will trust Jesus for. Encourage them to pray aloud.

L. Assignment

1. Send home Activity Sheets.
2. Children should review Proverbs 3:5,6 or the shortened form. (Be sure the children have a copy of the memory verse to take home.)
3. Review the First Commandment and its meaning.



Abraham is looking at the sky.
Draw stars. Color the picture.

23

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER?

Use the words below. Write the words that tell about God under the column God. Write the words that tell about Abraham under the column Abraham.

Savior

promise

bless

protected

nephew

trip

Sarah

Friend

vision

trusted

God

Abraham

---bless---

---nephew---

---Friend---

---trusted---

---promise---

---Sarah---

---protected---

---trip---

---Savior---

---vision---

24