

Abraham: Faith

Session ONE

TEACHING NOTES

The story begins – Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9)

God calls Abraham

In New Testament, man of faith

Married Sarah who was barren

The promise (Genesis 12:1-3)

Who is Abraham and whom would he believe?

Blessed to be a blessing (the story of redemption pointing to Jesus)

The cross is centerpiece of history

We are the sons and daughters of Abraham (Galatians 3:7-9)

KEY VERSE(S)

Genesis 12:1-20

KEY THEME(S)

Faith and trust
 God has a plan of redemption
 through sacrifice
 God does what He says

INTRODUCTION INNOCECE CONSCIENCE HUMAN GOVERNMENT PROMISE

NOTES

By faith Abraham goes (Genesis 12:4-8)

God speaks and Abraham builds an altar

The plan – sacrifice

Sacrifice - why an altar?

2 Corinthians 5:21

Abraham's failure (Genesis 12:10-20)

The greatest work of faith is trust

Abraham doubted God's promise and didn't trust God to protect, so he lied and gave up his wife

God's promises kept (Matthew 1:1, 16-17)

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PERSONAL STUDY

To give you more flexibility we have now broken the Personal Study into two 20-minute sessions. We highly encourage you to make room in your weekly schedule for this time with God and His Word.

Session 1 (approximately 20 minutes)

Prepare your heart and mind

Begin your time with God by asking the Holy Spirit to quiet your mind and focus on Him.

Read Genesis 12:1-6

Picture yourself in this story. You have a good life with your family. Things are going well and you have no plans to change anything. God comes to you and tells you to leave relatives and friends and head to a place He will show you. How might you have reacted?

What gave Abram the ability to leave? What does this tell you about his relationship with God?

Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see. Hebrews 11:1

What was Abram hoping for as he followed God's directive?

Abram was his name when God came to him. Later God changes his name to Abraham which means father of many. This was to represent what God was going to do through him.

NOTES**Application**

Reflect on your relationship with God. When have you exercised your faith in Him?

Is there anything at present that God is leading you towards that requires faith in what God will do? Write it down and ask God to help grow your faith and trust in Him?

Key verse

Take some time this week to memorize Hebrews 11:1 using the card provided. Put it where you can see it throughout the day.

Prayer time

God wants to grow our faith and trust in Him. One of the ways is for us to be honest about what we doubt or fear. Spend some time talking to God about area(s) of your life where you are hesitant to trust Him. Ask for His guidance, wisdom and peace. Finish your time with God by sitting quietly for a few moments.

Session 2 (approximately 20 minutes)**Prepare your heart and mind**

When we spend time with God, we want as much of our focus to be on Him as possible. Sit quietly for a couple minutes asking God to help you be fully present with Him.

Read Genesis 12:2

God communicates His plan to use Abram to bless those who come after him. It's through Abram's descendants that we eventually have Jesus – the ultimate blessing as our redeemer.

What might have been the outcome if Abram had seen this blessing and promise for his own gain and not to bless others?

What things has God given you that He might want to use for His purposes?

How might God want to use the things He has already given you?

Read Genesis 12:7

God makes a promise to Abram. Why would Abram's response be to offer a sacrifice to the Lord and worship Him?

How do you think Abram felt when God appeared to him again after he had already moved his family? What might have been going through his mind?

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Application

List a few of the promises God has made to you through His Word or personally.

Are you living like you believe these promises? How does your life reflect these promises?

It can be so easy to get consumed with life and take for granted the incredible things God has done for you and promised to do for you. Read 1 Corinthians 2:7-9. God's plan to provide a solution for people's sin was played out through the life and family tree of Abram. We look back and see Jesus being that final solution for our sin

Key verse

Continue to work on memorizing Hebrews 11:1. See if you can write it from memory below.

Prayer time

Sometimes our prayer time needs to take the form of gratitude and praise. Spend some time remembering what God has done for you. Write out a prayer of thanks to God, capturing your love for Him.

PARENT GUIDE

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For Elementary-Age

There's a child's song called "Father Abraham" that involves dancing around moving all our parts at one time. It is appropriate that Abraham has his own song because his story in the Bible is a big deal. There are lots of things happening in this story. Here is a suggestion for talking with your children about this passage. Plan a simple trip to McDonalds or somewhere you can sit down and share a treat together.

The key is to not tell your kids where you are going - just tell them to get in the car and that you will be taking them somewhere. They are bound to ask, "Where are we going?" Their wondering is a perfect setup for your time of sharing the story of Abram with them. Before you leave, read the story of Abram found in Genesis 12:1-6. Prepare yourself to tell the story to your kids after you arrive and are eating your treats together.

You can get the story going by saying something like, "Do you remember back at the house when I told you to get in the car, but I didn't say where we were going? Something like this happened to a man named Abram." Now go ahead and share how God asked Abram to leave and go to a place God would show him later.

Ask your kids why they were willing to get in the car and go somewhere? Even if they don't say, "Because we trust you." You can ask them if they trusted you to take them somewhere that would be good for them. Go on to explain how, just like Abram trusted God, we can always trust God even when we don't know what will happen next.

For Teens

In case you haven't noticed, kids are anxious, stressed, and full of fear... most of the time. They worry constantly about what school they'll go to, what they'll major in, getting all their homework done for their 4+ honors classes so they continue to get good grades so they get enough scholarships/aid to afford to go to college, etc. etc. etc... Teens are so afraid of failing now and messing up their future. They are motivated by this fear and anxiety. Schoolwork, athletics, and extracurricular activities take center stage - often pushing God to the back burner.

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They have so much pressure put on them to succeed. Teens feel they have to have their whole future planned out by the end of their sophomore year. It's exhausting just to think of all their stress, imagine living it.

Spend some time with your teen reading the passage below and working through the discussion questions that follow:

The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you." So Abram departed as the Lord had instructed... (Genesis 12:1-4)

As you ask some of these questions try to share from your life as well, where you struggle to trust God.

- Are you worried about the future? Do you think God wants you to worry? Why do you worry?
- God basically said to Abraham, "leave everything you've ever known and go... to somewhere I'll show you at some point." How did Abraham respond? What would you do if God did something like that to you?
- God spoke and Abraham obeyed. Does God speak to you? If/when He does, do you obey? If so, how? If not, why?
- What scares you about obeying God?

Spend some time in prayer with your teen. Pray that the Lord would help them to not be anxious, stressed, or fearful. Ask God to direct both of your lives. Ask Him to speak to your family and give you all the boldness and courage to get up and go when He tells you to.

Below is a scripture to share with your teen. If they are often worried, stressed, or afraid, encourage them to memorize this verse, and the next time they are freaking out they can recite it and spend some time in prayer.

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

OPTIONAL STUDY

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Read Leviticus 4

What was the common requirement for the sacrifice?

Read Leviticus 4:4

What was the sinner to do?

Why do you think God would require the person making the offering to lay hands on the animal?

Laying hands on the sacrifice represented the transference of guilt from the person to the animal.

Read Leviticus 5:7-12

What did God do for people who could not afford livestock?

What was the purpose of killing the animal?

Read Hebrews 9:22

John the Baptist recognized Christ as the ultimate sacrifice when he declared in John 1:29 *“Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”*

Read Leviticus 17:11

In your own words, write the significance of the shedding of blood.

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Perhaps the thought of so much blood shed is unpleasant to think about. The sacrifice of animals was a temporary arrangement. Sin was removed permanently through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Because of Christ's death we can have a right relationship with God.

Read Isaiah 53 from *The Message* provided below

Personalize what the prophet Isaiah wrote over 700 years before the birth of Christ by writing in the margins what is described that happened to the body of Christ as He took on your sin.

Who believes what we've heard and seen?

Who would have thought God's saving power would look like this?

*The servant grew up before God—a scrawny seedling,
a scrubby plant in a parched field.*

*There was nothing attractive about him,
nothing to cause us to take a second look.*

*He was looked down on and passed over,
a man who suffered, who knew pain firsthand.*

One look at him and people turned away.

We looked down on him, thought he was scum.

*But the fact is, it was our pains he carried—
our disfigurements, all the things wrong with us.*

*We thought he brought it on himself,
that God was punishing him for his own failures.*

*But it was our sins that did that to him,
that ripped and tore and crushed him—our sins!*

He took the punishment, and that made us whole.

Through his bruises we get healed.

We're all like sheep who've wandered off and gotten lost.

We've all done our own thing, gone our own way.

*And God has piled all our sins, everything we've done wrong,
on him, on him.*

*He was beaten, he was tortured,
but he didn't say a word.*

*Like a lamb taken to be slaughtered
and like a sheep being sheared,
he took it all in silence.*

*Justice miscarried, and he was led off—
and did anyone really know what was happening?*

*He died without a thought for his own welfare,
beaten bloody for the sins of my people.*

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*They buried him with the wicked,
 threw him in a grave with a rich man,
 Even though he'd never hurt a soul
 or said one word that wasn't true.
 Still, it's what God had in mind all along,
 to crush him with pain.
 The plan was that he give himself as an offering for sin
 so that he'd see life come from it—life, life, and more life.
 And God's plan will deeply prosper through him.
 Out of that terrible travail of soul,
 he'll see that it's worth it and be glad he did it.
 Through what he experienced, my righteous one, my servant,
 will make many "righteous ones,"
 as he himself carries the burden of their sins.
 Therefore I'll reward him extravagantly—
 the best of everything, the highest honors—
 Because he looked death in the face and didn't flinch,
 because he embraced the company of the lowest.
 He took on his own shoulders the sin of the many,
 he took up the cause of all the black sheep.*

Spend 10 uninterrupted minutes thanking Him for the righteousness you have received through His shedding of blood on the cross.

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SUPPLEMENTAL LESSON ON NOAH

Throughout this study we have seen God's plan for the world and mankind – through the act of creation, the events in the garden, and the promise of a Savior. We have seen God's constant, unconditional love for man. These elements of His character are not sporadic or rare occurrences, for God consistently speaks throughout the Bible. Some passages certainly seem difficult to reconcile with such truth, but our own limitations and lack of understanding do not change the truth of the word of God.

With that in mind, trace the continuation of God's plan and love in the life of Noah found in Genesis 6:9-9:29.

God's grace

The human race had become corrupt in all of its ways, and as a result the earth was filled with violence. Evil was so great that God regretted creating mankind.

God would have been entirely within His rights to completely wipe out the human race. However, He had not only made a promise of salvation to Adam and Eve and their children, but He was also a gracious, loving God. He chose to create a way for the world to be saved. Noah, though deserving of punishment (he was born in sin, just as we all are) became the vessel and recipient of God's grace, mercy, and escape of His judgment.

Noah's faith

Noah believed and obeyed God when He told him His plan. Noah believed God when He said that a flood would destroy the earth and Noah obeyed God when He told him exactly how to build the ark. For 120 years Noah prepared for this major event and warned the world of what was coming, but the people of Noah's time rejected God's provision.

The plan for redemption

Noah's family entered the ark and stayed there for nearly a year. What did they do to stay afloat? Nothing! They were saved from the flood once they made the decision of faith and relied entirely on God's work and provision. God remembered His promise to those in the boat and they were saved. God had shown His enduring love for mankind and His desire for relationship with them.

So What?

- Faith is key in receiving God’s salvation and pleasing Him.
- God remembers His promises.
- God has always been and will always be loving, merciful, holy and just.
- God is constantly working out His plan of redemption and salvation for those who love Him.
- Once we enter by faith into what Christ has done, we can enter into God’s rest. Our salvation is not reliant upon any action on our part, but is made possible by God’s grace alone.

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