God Calls Abram



Scripture Reference: Genesis 12:1-9

Suggested Theme: God has good plans and is trustworthy. We can have a living faith in God that involves both trust and action.

Memory Verse: “It is the same with faith. If faith does nothing, then that faith is dead, because it is alone.” James 2:17, ICB

Story Overview:

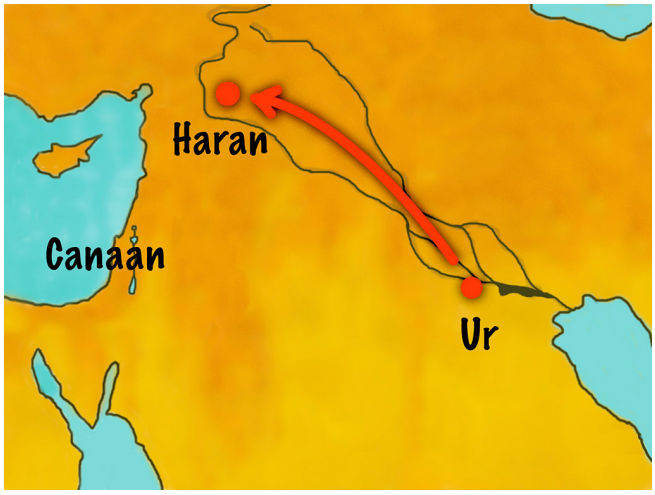
God chose one man, Abram, to be the beginning of a new nation called God’s People. He told Abram to leave his home and relatives to begin travelling. Abram took his wife, Sarai, and nephew, Lot, and left home. He began to travel and live in tents. The Lord also told Abram that his name would be great and that the whole world would be blessed through this new nation. Abram believed in God and had living faith—the kind of faith that proves it is real by doing actions.

Background Study:

God wanted to bless all the families and nations of the earth, and He chose to accomplish His purposes through one man, Abram. Abram was far from perfect, but he was a man with great faith who was willing to act on that faith and blindly go when God told him to “go.” Years earlier, men had infamously tried to make a “*name for themselves*” (Genesis 11:4) by attempting to build the Tower of Babel. But this was different. Now it was God who promised to make a great nation from this man with a barren wife, saying, “*I will make your name great*.” (Genesis 12:2)

To better understand Abram and his family, read Genesis 11:27-32. Abram was born in the large and advanced city of Ur of the Chaldees in the area of modern-day Iraq. In that city, Abram would have experienced the modern conveniences of the day, including culture, marketplaces, and libraries, along with the general wealth of that ancient city.

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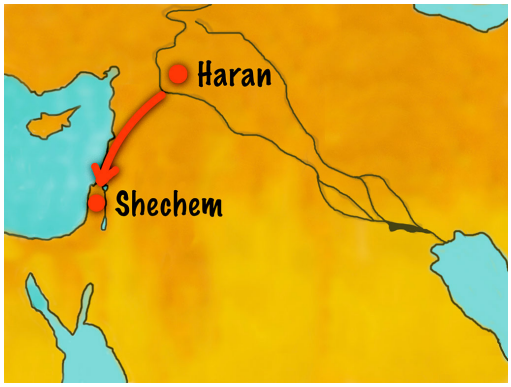
This was left behind when Abram's father, Terah, decided to move the family to Canaan. For whatever reason, they stopped and settled in Haran, which is located in what is now southeastern Turkey. Years later, it was in Haran that God told the now 75-year-old Abram to leave everything he knew and go. Abram's faith is revealed in the fact that he was not even told where he would be going before leaving. Read more about Abram's faith in Hebrews 11:8.

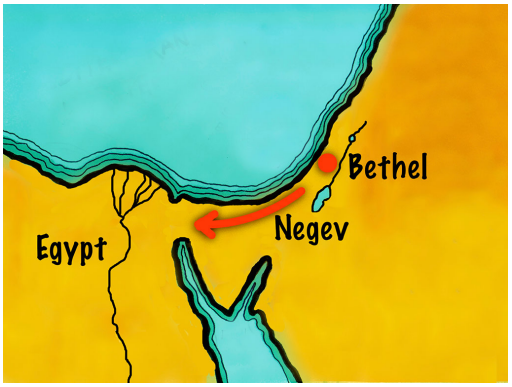
"Faith means being sure of the things we hope for. And faith means knowing that something is real even if we do not see it." Hebrews 11:1, ICB

God promised Abram that he would be a blessing. All the families on the earth would be blessed because God would:

- Make a Great Nation of him.
- Bless him.
- And make his name great.
- Bless those who blessed him.
- Curse those who dishonoured him.

When he left, Abram took his barren wife, Sarai, his nephew, Lot, as well as the possessions and people he had acquired during his time in Haran.





The land of Canaan was already inhabited, but God promised that this land would someday belong to Abram's offspring. While travelling through Canaan, Abram stopped and worshipped at Shechem and Bethel. These would later become well-known in the story of God's people. Because of a famine, Abram and Sarai will make their way down to Egypt before returning to Canaan. Their time in Egypt reveals flaws in Abram's character, yet God continues to use Abram's faith to accomplish His bigger purposes. Later in Abram's life,

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God will say the following to him:

> “I will surely bless you and give you many descendants. They will be as many as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. And they will capture the cities of their enemies. Through your descendants all the nations on the earth will be blessed. This is because you obeyed me.” Genesis 22:17-18, ICB

Way to Introduce the Story:

Bring some sand to the session today. Use a magnifying glass to see the individual grains of sand. Have the children count out ten grains of sand. Then, have them count out twenty or any other number. Have fun estimating the number of grains of sand in a teaspoon, cup, bucket, etc. “Did you know that God once told a man that he would have so many children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and so on that their number would be greater than the grains of sand on the entire seashore? That man’s name was Abram and we are going to be learning about him today and in the weeks to come.”

The Story:

A long time ago, a man named Abram loved God very much and had faith in Him. Abram and his wife, Sarai, lived in the city of Haran, where many of Abram’s relatives also lived. Sadly, Abram and Sarai could not have children. It must have been sad for them to think about how they would never have grandchildren and great-grandchildren, but this did not stop Abram from having faith in God.

God loved Abram and Sarai, but God also loved all of the other families in the world. So, God made a plan to bless everyone. His plan was that He would use Abram and Sarai to begin a family that would become very, very big. Their family would be so big that it would be a nation. This nation would then help the world. Everyone in the world would someday be blessed through Abram’s family.

So, one day, God told Abram to leave his country and his relatives and go to a new land. God did not say where the new land was. He just told Abram to go and that He would show him later.

Faith means believing something to be true even if you can’t see it. Abram had faith in God even though he could not see Him. In the Bible book of James, we read, “If faith does nothing, then that faith is dead.” James 2:17. Some people might say they have faith in God but are too afraid or disobedient to obey Him. That kind of faith is like a dead faith.

But Abram had a living faith. He trusted in God and was willing to do what God said. Abram’s nephew, Lot, and all of Abram’s servants and helpers also joined them. Everyone would have been very busy for many days. They would have packed up all their things and loaded the big, heavy objects onto their camels. Their servants and helpers would have gathered all of Abram’s sheep, cows, and donkeys for the trip. Finally, everything would have been ready! Abram and his relatives left their home country forever. Now, they would live in tents and travel around wherever God told them to go.

In the land of Canaan, God told Abram to have a good look around. Other people lived there, but someday, Abram’s children and grandchildren would own this land. They stopped in a place called Shechem so that Abram could build an altar of stones and worship God. Later, they stopped at a place called Bethel and did the same thing.

Later, they would go to other places, like Egypt. Abram was not a perfect man who did the right thing every single time, but he continued to have a living faith in God. And God kept His promises to Abram and protected him. God had a special plan for Abram.

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And remember how Abram and Sarai had no children? God promised that that would change someday. God wanted Abram to have a family that would bring blessings to everyone. God would start a great nation from Abram.

In the future, God would say to Abram, *"I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."*

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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using various methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection or other group participation.

Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing, so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Click here for visual aids and more storytelling methods.

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Review and Reflection Questions:

Review questions help children remember and know the facts of a story. Reflection questions encourage them to internalise the meaning and implications for their lives. Asking at least one of each type of question can help strengthen a child's spiritual development and help them connect to God. Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.

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Review:

- Who was Abram's wife? (Sarai)
- Where did Abram live before he went to the new land? (Haran)
- How many descendants did God say that Abram would have? (As numerous as the stars in the sky and grains of sand on the seashore)
- Did Abram know where he was going when God told him to leave his home country? (No)
- If we believe in God but don't do what we say we believe and don't change the way we live to honour God, what kind of faith is it? (Dead)
- What do you learn about God or people from this story?

Reflection:

- How do you think Abram felt when God asked him to go to the land God would show him? How do you think Sarai felt?
- If God came to you and asked you to go to a new place, would you go with Him? Why or why not?
- Why do you think Abram chose to follow God to the new land?
- Why do you think God chose Abram to bless and work with?
- What is something you wonder about in this story?

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Prayer:

It is important to guide children in learning how to pray. In prayer, children can connect with God and learn that He hears and answers them. God can become a life-long friend who is with them every moment of their lives. Try using a variety of prayer methods from time to time so that the children can learn to connect with God in different ways. Note that you can pray at any time throughout your lesson. A variety of prayer methods are found here.

Song Suggestions:

- Three Wandering Jews Song
- My God is So Big Song
- Goodbye World Song
- Father Abraham Song
- Refer to the Song Page on this website for more song options.

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Activities and Crafts:

- How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation.
- Visit the activities and songs pages for additional activities and crafts.

Activities:

- Use the "Post-it In Your Heart" method to guide the children in memorising James 2:17.
- List all of the things a person has to do before moving. Discuss how much work Abram and Sarai had to do to obey God.
- Ask the children to act out the story if you have extra time. Chairs placed in three areas of the room may represent the city of Haran and the new land. Children may pack imaginary tents and belongings, load them on imaginary camels, and travel to each place. Ask them why they are moving. (They are obeying God's call)
- Write situations on cards. Let the children take turns acting out the situations. They can choose "dead faith" or "living faith" as they act out the situation. The other children can guess which kind of faith the child has. [Example: Read out this situation: "Tim says that he has faith in God. God says to help people. Tim's neighbour is sick and cannot collect the mail." The child chooses to act out the situation, showing either living faith (collecting the mail) or dead faith (doing nothing for the neighbour).
- Pack bags for a trip. Younger children can talk about what they would take on a vacation.
- Puppet Skit for Pre-schoolers: Try using simple finger puppets or dolls to act out this very simple and straightforward Puppet Skit about God's Promise to Abram, which Jenny Ancell, Australia, submitted.
- Memorise today's memory verse. Click here for ideas to help children memorise scripture.
- Tell the children to pretend that their parents told the family to pack their bags because they were going to go on a fun vacation. The parents would not say where they were going to go. How would you know what to prepare for? Beach, mountains, skiing, camping, scuba diving? Abraham did not know where he was going.

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Invite the children to respond to this story using the adaptable “God’s Story” printable reflection page. Free printables for this story.

Crafts:

- Abram’s Footprints: Provide each child with a blank paper and have them write “Abram’s Journey” along the bottom edge of the paper. Pour a small amount of paint onto a plate or shallow container. Have each child make a fist and dip the outside edge of the fist into the paint. Press it onto the paper to form the main part of a footprint. Then dip a fingertip into the paint and add five small prints for the toes. Repeat with both hands to create a trail of footprints.



- Word Art: Write the word “FAITH” in the centre of a large piece of paper. Apply liquid glue (like PVA) along the lines of the letters and then glue on coloured yarn. Older children might like the challenge of more letters such as “The Faith of Abram”. Word Art instructions
- Creative painting: Provide paper, paints, markers or crayons and ask the children to paint or draw Abraham’s family and all of the items they would need to pack for the journey. Children can write “Genesis 12:1-3” along the top or bottom of the paper.

Print and use these free bookmarks, trading cards or timelines. Free printables for this story.

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Other Online Resources:

- Colouring page of Abraham (Church House Collection)
- Colouring page of descendants like stars (Church House Collection)
- Colouring page with text (Ministry Spark)
- Craft: 3D paper star craft (DLTK)
- Crafts and activities Abraham (Church House Collection)
- Printable camel craft (Learn Create Love)
- Other: A number of illustrations showing Abram’s Family Tree
- Other: Maps depicting Abram’s Journeys (Bible History)
- Other: puzzles and activities specifically about Sarah (Garden of Praise)
- Other: Lesson with activities, visual aids to print, and craft ideas (Bible Fun for Kids)

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