

SABBATH SCHOOL

Preteen Sabbath Instruction Program — Teacher's Outline

Level 5 • Unit 4 • Week 2

ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

OBJECTIVE:

To demonstrate how obedience to God leads to blessings.

ATTENTION GETTER:

Say: Imagine how you would feel if your parents said that you and your family had to move. Then, they said that they didn't know exactly where you were going, but they needed for you to trust them and understand that eventually everything would be better for you and your family. Imagine how hard it would be to leave your friends, your relatives, your house and accept the move without questioning why.

How would you feel if God spoke to you directly and told you that He wanted you to move to a strange country and leave everything that was familiar to you behind? What would you think and do? This is what God asked a man named Abram thousands of years ago. Abram was to later be called Abraham, "the father of the faithful."

Do: At this point, take student response and encourage give and take.

Say: If God promised you that many good things would happen to you if you trusted Him and went to this strange country, what would you do? It's difficult to leave behind people we love and a place with which we are familiar. It is only with a tremendous amount of trust and faith in the person making the request that one could make such a decision to move. Abram was a man who had this degree of trust and faith in God. Abram and his family were richly rewarded for his faith and trust in God.

Let's read and learn more about Abram. Let's also discover what we can learn from the story of Abraham and apply to our own lives.

BIBLE LESSON:

There once lived a man in the land of Ur, whom God loved very much. His name was Abram. God wanted Abram to leave his homeland and move to another country. If Abram did as God asked, God promised to bless him greatly.

Do: Using a map, show the students where Abram's journey began. Read Genesis 12:2-3. What did God promise Abram? Explain what these blessings were.

Say: Abram takes his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot and a host of other people; and they journey to a land called Canaan. During this journey Abram and his followers encounter many trials and difficulties. At one point in their journey, they encounter famine and are forced to go into Egypt for food. Even though Abram was a man of faith and called by God, "the father of the faithful," Abram experiences a time of personal weakness because of his human nature.

In Genesis 12:10-20, we see Abram and Sarai entering Egypt due to the famine in the land. When they encounter the Egyptian rulers, Abram becomes afraid that he will be killed because Sarai is a very beautiful woman and one of the rulers of the land might desire her for his own. So Abram decides to lie to Pharaoh and tells him that he is Sarai's brother. Pharaoh therefore takes Sarai into his household in order to prepare her to be one of his wives. Abram is treated very well by Pharaoh and given many gifts.

However, God is not pleased with this arrangement and begins to bring plagues upon Egypt. Pharaoh finally discovers that Sarai is actually Abram's wife. Pharaoh confronts Abram and then releases Sarai so the plagues will stop. He allows Abram and Sarai to leave and they continue on their journey.

Abram had momentarily not trusted that God would protect him and fulfill His promise to deliver him to a land that would be a blessing to him and his people. Abram learned a valuable lesson from this experience and went on to be known as the "father of the faithful."

Ask: What lesson do you think Abraham learned from this experience? What lessons can you learn from Abraham's example?

Say: At some point in their journey, Abram's and Lot's herdsmen (those who cared for the cattle and other animals) begin to argue. Abram and Lot decide that it would be best to split up and Abram gives Lot his choice of the land. Lot chooses the land that appears to be the best (Genesis 13:5-11).

Read: Genesis 13:14-18.

Say: God blessed Abram because he did what pleased God. One of the things Abram did to show his appreciation to God was to build an altar to Him. This was a place to honor and worship God.

Abram also demonstrated his love and appreciation to God by tithing, which is giving 10 percent of your earning to God. Tithing is a way of giving back to God some of the blessings He has given to you.

Read: Genesis 14:20b.

Say: Abram meets many challenges on his journey, as we meet many challenges in our journey through life. Abram has to deal with hostile people in his journey. At one point, he has to rescue Lot from the area Lot had settled (Sodom and Gomorrah).

One of the challenges that Abram and Sarai had faced all their lives was being childless. When Abram is 99 and Sarai is 90, (way beyond normal child bearing age), God comes to Abram and tells him he is going to allow them to have a child. Sarai gives birth to a son and his name is Isaac. This is one of the many blessings that God gives to Abram for his loyalty to Him.

God tells Abram that if he obeys Him and follows His ways, He will make a covenant with him. God promises to bless Abram and his descendants for many years. These promises are still in effect to this day.

Read: Genesis 17:1-7. Discuss with the class the meaning of a covenant and specifically as it pertains to God and mankind. It is still in effect today. God's covenant with mankind is a promise to us based on grace. It is not something we have earned, but something God gives to us out of His love for us. Mankind's part in this agreement is one of acceptance and obedience to it. It is still in effect today because God offers to us the same blessings He did to Abram if we will strive to obey Him and follow His directions. This requires trust and faith on our part.

Say: At this point in our story of Abram, God changes Abram's name to Abraham and Sarai's name to Sarah. The name "Abraham" signified that Abraham would be the father of many nations. Today, we see the descendants of Abraham and Sarah represented by many countries. The blessings that were given to Abraham were passed on to Isaac, then to Jacob and to his sons and their descendants. The blessings we enjoy today are a direct result of those blessings given by God to Abraham.

God wanted to further test Abraham's love and obedience to Him. He therefore asks Abraham to do a very difficult thing. God directs Abraham to take his son into the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering—sacrifice. Abraham did not argue or refuse to do as he was asked, because he trusted God above all else (Genesis 22:1-10).

Read: Genesis 22:11-13 and explain the significance of a sacrifice.

Read: Genesis 22:15-18 and explain why Abraham was promised these blessings.

LESSON APPLICATION:

Divide the class into two groups and discuss Romans 4:20-22. Ask one group to explain what is faith. Give two more examples of faith either from the Bible or a contemporary or personal example.

The other group can discuss Gal. 3:29 and 1 John 2:3-7. Ask them to explain what seeds are and who Abraham's seeds are. Tell what they will be doing today. Hint: We are Abraham's seed today, if we are Christ's.

For teacher: We are Abraham's seed today if we are Christ's. We are Christ's or Christians if we keep God's commandments. This includes the Ten Commandments and observance of the Holy Days of God, just as Jesus Christ observed these while He walked the earth. He did this as an example to us, so that we might know how we are to live our lives in service to God. Jesus Christ also demonstrated a great deal of faith throughout His time on earth. Even as He was dying on the cross, He professed His faith in God the Father. He believed that He would deliver him from the death of the cross and resurrect Him back to life just as He did.

Say: Faith is an important part of being a Christian, and the story of Abraham is one of faith and trust in God. If we are to please God, we must have faith.

Remember to have faith in God, keep His commandments, including observance of the Holy Days, which picture the plan of God for all mankind. In so doing, you will receive the blessings of God and be a part of His Kingdom forever. This is the promise of God and the covenant He will keep with you.

Music:

Sing the following to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."

God's eyes have seen the Ten Commandments as the way to live.
The first four are how we love our God, the last six to our neighbor give.
One is no other gods, and two is no graven images. Three is don't take God's name in vain.

Four is keep the Sabbath holy.
Five is honor your parents.
Six is never kill another; and seven, no adultery.

Number eight is never steal another's property.
Number nine is never bear false witness (that means never lie).
Number ten is don't want what belongs to anyone but you. God's law keeps marching on.

Keep the Ten Commandments holy.
Keep the Ten Commandments holy.
If you keep the Ten Commandments, God will bless your life each day.

MEMORY VERSE:

Hebrews 11:6 "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

family activity

THE POINT:

Obedience to God leads to blessings.

ASK ME...

About the Abrahamic covenant.

About definition of faith.

About God's promises to me.

FAMILY TOGETHER TIME:

Each member of the family write down and/or discuss five blessings they have received from God. Also discuss blessings the family has received as a result of obeying God.

MEMORY VERSE:

Hebrews 11:6 "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."