

Lesson 7

Cross

Formed

Kids

How did God help Abraham trust God's promises?

God changed Abraham's name to mean "father of nations."

Read aloud: Genesis 17:1-8

Recommended Illustration

Start by looking up a few crazy names and reading their meanings together.

Ask how many of them know what their names mean. Ask for two volunteers to come up and say what their names are, and then look them up. After reading the meaning to them, ask them whether the meaning of their name describes them at all.

All of us have names. Not only that, but all of us were named on purpose by our families. Some of us were given our names because some relative long ago had that name. Others were chosen simply because our parents thought they sounded nice. Others of us have a story to go with our name. We have nicknames sometimes too. Does anyone here have a nickname? What does it mean? (Let the kids shout out their nicknames and listen for funny ones.)

As you transition out of this illustration, emphasize the important role that names play in our lives. We sign it on our papers, it is on our report cards, our parents use it when they are proud of us or when we are in trouble. Names follow us everywhere we go. That is why God gave Abraham such a special name.

Helpful Insights

Names were even more important in Abraham's day. A name was a message to everyone: "This is who I am." The person we know best as Abraham was first named Abram by his parents. This name meant "exalted father". This name was probably a sore spot for Abram most of his life. How silly to be named "father", yet have no children. It would be like being named "quarterback" and never learning to throw a football.

So when God renamed him, Abram probably expected anything other than a name that meant "father". Not only did God give Abram another name meaning "father," but he multiplied that by millions, and named him, "father of nations". It is as though God was saying, "Abraham, yes you will be a father, but the 'exalted' part has to go because this child is not about you. This child is for the benefit of every nation on the earth. I will use your offspring to carry out my plan to bless all the nations. You are no longer 'exalted father', but 'father of nations'."

The Point

God's promise to Abraham is not just about Abraham. Abraham's fatherhood is a worldwide blessing, not just a household blessing. It is part of God's loving rescue plan for the world.

