

GOD BUILDS A NATION

Bible Basis: Genesis 12:1–15:21

Key Verse: [God said,] “I will give you all of the land that you see. I will give it to you and your children after you forever. I will make your children like the dust of the earth.” —Genesis 13:15–16, NIV

Bible Point: Abraham trusted God and obeyed. I can trust God, too.

Resource: *The Story for Children*, Chapter 2: “God Builds a Nation”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Stuff You Need: generous supply of a common classroom item such as paper clips, toothpicks, cotton swabs, sheets of paper, markers. Optional: spoonful of sand

You can display your items in a jar, a clear glass, or simply on a plate, but be sure all the children will be able to see. As the class gathers, ask them to speculate on how many of the featured item you have. If you have a large group, you might want to have children file past to look and make a mental guess. They are not allowed to touch. Then ask the whole group to call out their guesses. Children this age may have wild ideas about numbers. You may or may not know the correct answer to the question; it doesn't really matter. Then ask:

- Tell me about the biggest pile of something you've ever seen.
- Why do we usually like to have more of something good?

Optional: Draw a square inch shape on paper. Dribble in enough sand to fill the square, but only one layer deep. Ask how many grains of sand they think can fit in the square. The answer is about 10,000! Wow!

Say, **In our Bible story today, God promises Abraham he's going to have a lot of something that he doesn't have any of! Let's find out about that.**

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

Stuff You Need: copies of *The Story for Children*, Bibles, *The Story Elementary Trading Card 2*

Optional: brown paper grocery sack

Tell the story from *The Story for Children*, Chapter 2. You can also have children find Genesis 12 and mark it in their Bibles. Either you or a child in your class can read the Scripture passages listed throughout the story.

If you'd like, you can cut a large brown paper grocery sack to look like an old map and glue the Bible story page to it.

ABRAHAM OBEYS GOD

In today's Bible story, children will wander with you to retrace Abraham's journey. If your group is small enough, you can lead the whole group around the room. For a large group, have them march in small circles in place while you move to a different spot in the room. Start the story by standing in front of the room. If you're using the optional brown grocery bag map, pretend to consult it for directions.

Abram was an old man who believed in God. He trusted God for everything. One day, God told Abram, "Leave your country and go to the land I will show you. I will make you a great nation." Abram trusted God, so he packed up all his tents and everything he owned and left Haran, even though he didn't know where he was going.

Move to another wall of the room. Have the children follow you or turn in circles to face you again. Continue the story.

Abram moved to Canaan. God said to Abram, "Look north and south and east and west." (Pause and point in all four directions and have kids turn and look.) God said, "I will give you all the land that you see. I will give you so many children you won't be able to count them. Walk through the whole land and see what I am giving you." Abram trusted God, so he packed his tents again and kept moving.

Move to another wall of the room. Have the children follow or turn to face you.

In Hebron, Abram built an altar to the Lord. Read Genesis 15:5. Abram trusted God, so he worshiped God. He went wherever God told him to go.

Move to another location or back to the front wall. Have the group follow or turn to face you.

When Abram was 99 years old, God came to him and said, Read Genesis 17:5–7. Abraham was very old and didn't have any children, but he trusted God to keep his promise. And one day it all came true! Abraham had a son, who had two sons, and they had sons, and those sons formed new nations. Abraham trusted God and obeyed. We can trust God to keep his promises, too!

After you have told the Bible story, give each child a copy of *The Story Elementary Trading Card 2*. Ask children to look at the picture and try to count the stars. As a class, read the key verse from the back of the card or from the Bible. Ask:

- **What did God promise to give to Abraham?** (*children, land, a nation*)
- **How did Abraham show that he trusted God's promise?** (*He obeyed God.*)

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help your class explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: KIDS AND KIDS AND KIDS

Stuff You Need: paper, scissors, markers, tape, tacks. Optional: Kids and Kids and Kids template for children to trace to make folding doll people

You may use the template provided. Or, if you'd like, prepare a template for children to trace. Fold a piece of paper ahead of time according to the instructions below and sketch a shape of a person; make sure the arms fill the sections from edge to edge.

Say, **God promised Abraham that he would have kids and kids and kids—a whole nation would come from Abraham. Let's make a pile of people of our own.**

Show how to fold a piece of paper in half, lengthwise. Then fold it in half along the width. Now fold back the open ends toward the fold. You should have four equal sections with two layers. Have children trace a template or draw their own figures on the top of the stack. Show how to cut around the shape, but be careful not to cut through the folds at the sides. However, do not cut through the fold at the top of the head. Unfold the sections, and each child will have two rows of four people. Allow time to decorate as they wish. Then have the children add their strips to a common wall or bulletin board to build a "nation" together.

- **What did Abraham think of God's promise to make a nation out of his family?**
- **What would you like to trust God to do for you?**

Close by saying, **Abraham trusted God and obeyed him. You can trust God's promises, too.**

OPTION 2: STARRY NIGHT CARDS

Stuff You Need: black or dark blue construction paper, star stickers or white paint and paintbrushes, newspaper, water jars to rinse brushes, art smocks

Say, **God shows his promise to Abraham in a starry night. Let's make a reminder that we can trust God's promises, too.**

Have children fold a sheet of construction paper in half two times to make a card. On the front of the card, let them decorate with as many star stickers as they would like. Or if you paint, spread out the newspapers and place water jars on the table. Then let the kids dot on stars with paint and brushes. Help them write on the inside, "I can trust God." When everyone is finished, discuss these questions:

- **What promise did God make to Abraham?**
- **Tell me a promise God makes to you.**

Close by saying, **God always keeps his promises, so we can trust him.**

OPTION 3: ABRAHAM BELIEVES

Stuff You Need: Abraham Believes Activity Sheet, variety of green crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child. Talk about how God always keeps promises and how Abraham knew that. Talk about how we can know that, too. Have the children color the picture of Abraham admiring the gift of land from God.

OPTION 4: GOD'S PROMISE TO ABRAHAM

Family tree: God told Abraham he would be the father of many nations. You can build your own family tree.

Stuff you need: God's Promise to Abraham Activity Sheet, tree template, leaf template, construction paper, safety scissors, markers, glue

1. Give an activity sheet to each child.
2. Have children cut out the tree template and trace it to make their own tree.
3. Have children cut out the leaf template. Using the leaf template, cut out many leaves from construction paper.
4. Students can use the markers to decorate the tree and leaves.
5. When students are done coloring, instruct them to write the names of their family members on the leaves.
6. Glue leaves to the tree.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

At the end of the lesson, pray together, listing specific ways children want to trust and obey God this week. Make sure each child takes home a copy of *The Story Elementary Trading Card 2*, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.