

Lesson #3-2

God's Promise to Abram

Genesis 15:1-6

PK-2nd

Key Verse:

He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

Genesis 15:5

The Point:

Our God cares for us as communities, families, and individuals, not merely as humanity in general.

Making Connections:

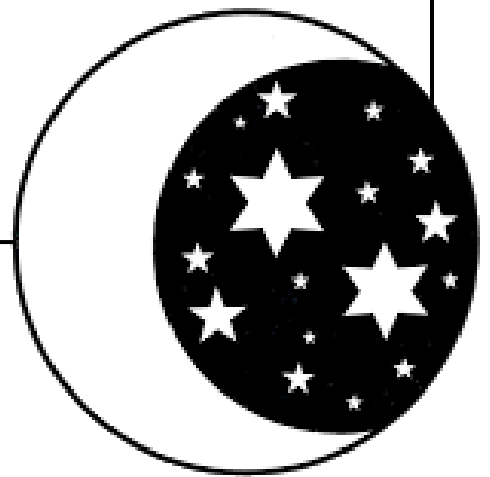
Promises Made, Promises Broken

Bible Nuts & Bolts:

Origin Stories

Spiritual Practice:

Fellowship



Activities a la Carte

Activities

Supplies

Story Centers (PK-K)

15 min.

Play House

Play house.

- † Dolls
- † Props to play house

How High Can You Count?

Count items.

- † Various objects in similar categories

Stars in the Sky

Fill the sky with stars.

- † Star stickers
- † Blue paper

Into the Story (PK-2nd)

How Many Stars?

Attempt to count the stars.

10 min.

- † Poster board or large sheet of paper

Bible Nuts and Bolts (1st-2nd)

Origin Stories

Identify what happened in the beginning.

10 min.

- † Bibles

Learning the Story (PK-2nd)

God's Promise to Abram

Find five star points.

20 min.

- † Activity Sheet #3-2.A
- † Paper or card stock
- † Scissors

Activities a la Carte

Living the Story (PK-2nd)

The Hand of Fellowship

Extend the hand of fellowship to classmates.

10 min. † None

Singing the Story (PK-2nd)

Father Abraham

Sing a motion song about Abram, who was later known as Abraham.

15 min. † None

Additional Activities

Shining Stars (PK-2nd)

Paint a sky and see the stars begin to shine.

15 min. † White card stock
† White (wax) crayons
† Tempera paint
† Paint brushes
† Smocks or old t-shirts
† Old newspapers

Family Stars (PK-2nd)

Stars are added to the sky as family members are counted.

15 min. † Blue paper
† Star stickers

Fruit Cups (PK-2nd)

Count the star fruit slices.

10 min. † Star fruit
† Sharp knife
† Cutting board
† Napkins

Sending the Story (PK-2nd)

5 min. † Large cutout of a five-point star

Background for Teachers

Story Connections

Following the first sin and its consequences, Adam and Eve's son Cain murdered his brother, Abel. Humanity's downward spiral continued until enough was enough. God sent a flood, but first God made a way for Noah and his family to survive and for animal life to continue. Even after that fresh start, people struggled with pride and temptation. Despite the negative actions of humankind, God reached out with yet another promise: to make Abram a father to nations.

Story Summary:

God's Promise to Abram

Abram believed in God and lived for God. God told Abram that God is Abram's shield, and Abram's reward would be great. Abram asked how he would be rewarded because he had no children or heirs. God told Abram to look at the stars in the sky. God promised Abram that he would have that many descendants.

Abram believed God's promise. God cared about Abram, about Abram's family, and about the community that would come from Abram's descendants. (Note: Abram is "Father Abraham". God changed Abram's name to Abraham.)

The Point

Our God cares for us as communities, families, and individuals, not merely as humanity in general. In today's text, God's blessings for Abram and Sarah demonstrated God's love and care for Sarah and her desire to give birth, for Abram and his desire to have a son, and for Abram and Sarah's marriage and family. The text also shows God's love for those who would live in the community that would grow as a result of their son's birth, for all generations to follow. Each person is important to God and plays a unique part in God's plans for humanity.

Bible Nuts and Bolts:

Origin Stories

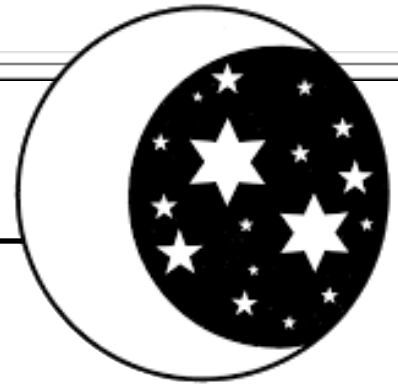
The book of Genesis is a history book of beginnings, which falls into the category of "origin stories". It is the first book in the Bible and tells of the beginnings of the universe, the beginnings of sin, and the beginnings of God's blessings for the whole world through Abram, Isaac, and Jacob. In reading the origin stories, we can see that the sin we struggle with today is not all that different from what people have experienced since the very beginning, even though the setting and circumstances are different. As we learn from the mistakes of those in the beginning of the world, we can be encouraged: that despite their doublemindedness, God remained committed to humankind. We also see God's promises in the book of beginnings that are later fulfilled and documented throughout the Bible.

Spiritual Practice: Fellowship

As individual members of the body of Christ, bound together in the love of God, we are each a part of the family that began a long, long time ago. Do you experience joy when in the fellowship of believers? Why or why not? How can you extend the hand of fellowship to the families of the children that you minister to each week? Perhaps a card or an email would be a nice touch. How can you help the families who are only as involved as dropping their children off each week to see the joy of the fellowship of believers?



Lesson Plan



Story Centers (PK-K; 15 minutes)

Story Centers are mini-activities designed specifically for preschool and kindergarten students. Depending on the size of your class, you can set these up as centers for in-class rotations or do them as a whole class one after another. In most preschool and kindergarten classes, these centers along with a snack, the “Learning the Story” activity, and the “Living the Story” activity will fill the education time, but feel free to choose any activity you think would be fun and appropriate for your class.

Play House

Provide dolls and props to play house as a family. This connects to the idea of God providing a family for Abram.

Counting

Provide various objects in similar categories. Examples are several chairs, several blocks, several socks, etc. In some categories include enough items to make counting them a challenge for children this age. Children will count the various objects. (How many chairs? How many blocks?) This connects to Abram looking up to count the stars.

Stars

Provide blue paper and star stickers. Children will fill the sky (blue paper) with star stickers.



Into the Story (PK-2nd; 10 minutes)

How Many Stars?

Attempt to count the stars.

You will need:

- † Poster board or large sheet of paper
- † Various colors of star stickers or colored markers

Before class:

1. Stick lots of star stickers on the poster board or paper, or draw stars on the poster board or paper using various colored markers. Keep a list of how many stars there are in each color.

During class:

1. Challenge the children to count the stars of various colors.
2. At end of the activity, tell them that **there are** ____ (number) **stars on the paper,** ____ (number) **are** ____ (color name) **and** (number) **are** ____ (color name) (etc.). **I know the numbers because I put the stars on the paper.**
3. **How many stars do you think there are in the sky?** [*Answers will vary.*]
4. **There are more stars in the sky than we can ever count. Only God knows how many there are because God put them there. Only God can see them all, and God can count higher than anyone.**

Bible Nuts and Bolts (1st-2nd; 10 minutes)

Origin Stories

Identify what happened in the beginning.

You will need:

† Bible

During class:

1. Explain to the children that **“in the beginning” means before anything else, or the first time or the first thing in a series of events.** Ask them to repeat the words, “in the beginning.” Give the instruction that when you point to the children, they should say “in the beginning” and you will finish the sentence with something that God did in the very beginning of our time.
2. **This is how it all began.**
3. (Point to the children.) In the beginning, **before there was anything, there was God.**
4. (Point to the children.) In the beginning, **God created the heavens and the earth.**
5. (Point to the children.) In the beginning, **God created the light.**
6. (Point to the children.) In the beginning, **God made the sky and the seas, the earth and the waters.**
7. (Point to the children.) In the beginning, **God put all of the stars in the sky.**
8. (Point to the children.) In the beginning, **God made the animals, and birds, and fish.**
9. (Point to the children.) In the beginning, **God made Adam and God made Eve.**
10. **The book of Genesis is a book of** (point to the children) **in the beginning.**
11. Open a Bible to Genesis 1, the first page of Genesis with the title on it. Hold this up for the children to see. Ask the children to **repeat the word “Genesis”.**
12. **Genesis is a book of beginnings. It is the first book in the Bible. Genesis tells us about the first of everything. We like to know how things started. Stories about how things started are called origin stories. Genesis is a book of origin stories.**
Have the children **repeat, “origin stories.”**
13. If there is time, repeat numbers 3 through 10 above.

Learning the Story (PK-2nd; 20 minutes)

God's Promise to Abram

Find five start points.

You will need:

- † Activity Sheet #3-2.A
- † Paper or card stock
- † Scissors

Before class:

1. Print one copy of Activity Sheet #3-2.A per child.

During class:

1. As you tell the story in Genesis 15:1-6, the children will cut out a point on the star with each point that God made to Abram.
2. **A long time ago, not long after the beginning of the world, there lived a man named Abram. His wife's name was Sarah. People back then counted on their sons to take care of the family's property and belongings when the parents got too old to do it themselves. People back then wanted their family's name to go on and on with children and grandchildren and great grandchildren and great great grandchildren. They wanted to have sons to take care of things and to keep the family's name and reputation.**
3. **Abram knew that God loved him, and Abram loved God back. He tried to do what was pleasing to God.**
4. **Abram was concerned. Sarah was disappointed. Both Abram and Sarah were very old, old enough to be grandparents, but they never had a son. They might have wondered what they did wrong. People often saw many sons as an honor, so they may have felt embarrassed or ashamed. They may have felt afraid that there was no one to keep their family going or to protect the family's name.**
5. **The Bible tells us in the book of Genesis chapter 15 (open your Bible, so the children can see that you are using Scripture) that one day God spoke to Abram in a vision.**
6. **God said, "Do not be afraid, Abram." (vs. 1). Cut out one point of the star (demonstrate and help as needed). God made the point that Abram should not be what? [Afraid]. How do we stop from being afraid? [Answers will vary.] Touch the point of the star that was just cut and ask the children to repeat with you, Do not be afraid.**

7. **God said, “I am your shield.”** (vs. 1). **What is a shield? What does it do?** *[Something put in front of people to protect them]* **Cut out another point of the star** (demonstrate and help as needed). **God made the point that God will protect Abram. Knowing that could help him not be afraid.** Touch the point of the star that was just cut and ask the children to repeat with you, **God is your shield.**
8. **God said, “Your reward shall be great.”** (vs. 1). **What is a reward?** *[A prize, something good that a person gets, an honor, something good that can happen, in this case maybe a big family].* **Cut out another point of the star** (demonstrate and help as needed). **God made the point that Abram would have a great reward.** Touch the point of the star that was just cut and ask the children to repeat with you, **Great is your reward.**
9. **Abram did not understand. How could he have a great reward when he had not had a son? Who would be his heir, the person to take care of the family belongings and land?**
10. **God said to Abram that Abram will have his own heir** (vs. 4). **Cut out another point of the star** (demonstrate and help as needed). **God made the point that Abram was going to have a son even though Abram thought he and Sarah were too old to have children. Can you think of a time when you did not think something would happen and then were surprised that it did?** *[Answers will vary.]* Touch the point of the star that was just cut and ask the children to repeat with you, **You will have a son.**
11. **God took Abram outside to look up at the sky. God told Abram to count the stars if he could. That was how many children, and grandchildren, and great grandchildren that God promised Abram would have.** **Cut out another point of the star** (demonstrate and help as needed). **God made the point that God was promising Abram that his family would grow and grow and keep on growing.** Touch the point of the star that was just cut and ask the children to repeat with you, **You are promised as many family members as stars in the sky.**
12. Hold up your star with one hand and use the other to touch a different corner as you list each of the points. **Do not be afraid. God is your shield. Great is your reward. You will have a son. You are promised as many family members as stars in the sky.**
13. Ask the children to repeat the star points with you. Hold up your star with one hand and use the other to touch a different corner as you list each of the points. **Do not be afraid. God is your shield. Great is your reward. You will have a son. You are promised as many family members as stars in the sky.**
14. Challenge the children to take turns touching the points on the stars and listing the points. Help them as needed.
15. **Which of the points that God made for Abram in today’s story is your favorite one? Why?** *[Answers will vary.]*
16. Collect the stars. The stars will be used again in the Sending the Story activity.



Living the Story (PK-2nd; 10 minutes)

Together

More and more hands join in fellowship.

You will need:

† Nothing

During class:

1. Ask each child to find a friend and hold hands. If there is an odd number of students, reach out and join hands with one of the children.
2. Ask each of those pairs of friends to find another pair of friends and join hands with them.
3. Keep doing this until the entire class is connected by joined hands.
4. **We are all a part of the fellowship of God's family. Each one of us matters to God, and each matters to every one of us.**
5. Go one by one through the line or circle of joined hands and ask the children to say their names. After each child's name, the rest of the children should say, "We are glad you are here."

Singing the Story (PK-2nd; 5 minutes)

Father Abraham

Sing a motion song about Abram, who was later known as Abraham.

For a point of reference if you are not familiar with this song, access <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ou1MWnjhfBk> to hear the words and see the motions.

Sing the motion song, "Father Abraham". After you go through the song and all of the motions once, sing again going faster. Continue, going faster each time.

Additional Activities

Shining Stars (PK-2nd; 15 minutes)

Paint a sky and see the stars begin to shine.

You will need:

- † White card stock
- † White (wax) crayons
- † Tempera paint
- † Paint brushes
- † Smocks or old t-shirts
- † Old newspapers

Before class:

1. Optional: access <http://www.dltk-kids.com/crafts/space/mmagic-stars.htm>
2. Using white crayons, draw stars on the white card stock.
3. Mix tempera paint with water at a ratio of $\frac{3}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$.
4. Put newspapers on the tables and possibly on some of the carpet around the tables.

During class:

1. Help the children cover their clothes with smocks or old t-shirts.
2. Give each child a piece of card stock with white stars on it (but do not say anything about the stars yet).
3. Instruct the children to paint the paper with the blue paint to make a sky.
4. As the children paint over the stars, the white stars will shine through the blue paint. The children will likely be surprised and tickled that this happened.
5. **How do you think Abram felt when he saw the stars shining in the sky and God promised that his family would grow to a number of people like the number of the stars in the sky?** *[Surprised, happy, thankful.]*
6. **God kept his promise to Abram. Hang your painting at home to remind you that God keeps the promises that God makes.**



Family Stars (PK-2nd; 15 minutes)

Stars are added to the sky as family members are counted.

You will need:

- † Blue paper
- † Star stickers

During class:

1. The children will take turns saying the names of various family members. Each time a child says a different family member's name, that child will put a sticker on the paper sky.
2. Begin by asking the children to **say the name of one person who lives in their house.** Go around and around until all names in the households have been spoken and the stars are added to their skies.
3. Continue this activity, going around one child at a time and adding stars for the following. Please do not pressure children who do not know the names of some of their relatives.
 - Ask about grandparents. Do the children have grandparents? What are their names? *[This does not need to be first names. Accept Nana, Meman, Grand, Grammy, etc.]*
 - Next ask for the names of cousins.
 - As the children are able, ask for the names of aunts, again one at a time.
 - Continue the activity with uncles.
4. After the skies are full of stars, say that **God kept God's promise to Abram. Abram's family grew and grew year after year. Eventually, Abram's family included the birth of Jesus. We are in that big, big family that started a long, long time ago, too. We are part of the family with as many people as the number of stars, and God cares about each person in the family.**

Star Fruit Snack (PK-2nd; 10 minutes)

Count the star fruit slices.

You will need:

- † Star fruit
- † Sharp knife
- † Cutting board
- † Napkins

Before class:

1. Before serving any food, always check with participants or caregivers for students who have food allergies. Provide an alternative if necessary.
2. Wash the star fruit.

During class:

1. Cut the star fruit in ½ inch slices, where the children can watch the slices land on the cutting board in the shape of stars. Ask the children to count as each star lands on the board. **We can count all of these slices, and there will be one for each of you. There were too many stars for Abram to count, one star for each of his family members or descendants.**
2. Give each child a star for a snack.
3. **While we enjoy this new fruit, we can think about how God's promise to Abram meant the beginning of new life and new generations.**

Note: Star fruit is usually readily available this time of year. It may be a new treat for some of the children. Do not make anyone eat it if they do not want to. If it is not available, you can cut an apple horizontally. The seeds make a star shape.

Sending the Story (PK-2nd; 5 minutes)

1. **What did God promise Abram?** *[A son; a family with as many members as there are stars.]*
2. **How did God keep that promise?** *[Abram's family kept growing and growing.]*

Prayer

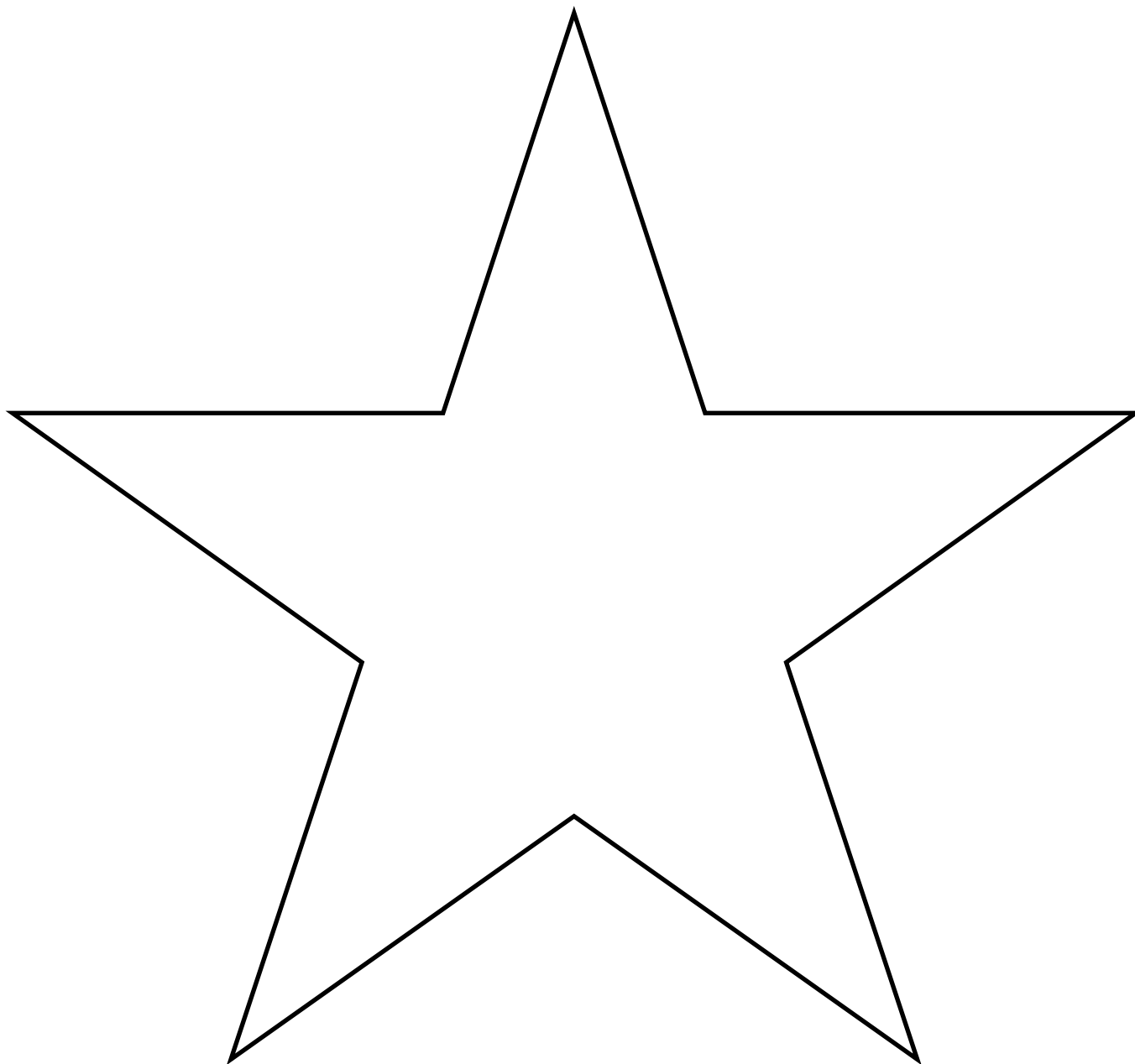
Before ending class, make a point to come together to pray. Use the following or say your own prayer.

Star prayers: using the large cut outs of five-point stars from Learning the Story, pray something different while touching each point of the star (see prayer below). Distribute stars so that each child has one. Hold up your star, so the children can follow along from point to point on their stars as you pray.

1. **Thank you God for keeping the promises you make to us.**
 2. **Thank you God for putting the stars in the sky.**
 3. **Please help us keep our promises to you, God.**
 4. **God, please forgive us when we do not do as we promise you.**
 5. **Thank you God for caring about each person in our fellowship.**
- Amen.**

God's Promise to Abram

Find five star points.





PK-2nd

The Story @ Home

Living the Word: Teaching Kids God's Story
Narrative Lectionary, Year 3 (2016-2017)

Lesson #3-2
Genesis 15:1-6

The Point

Our God cares for us as communities, families, and individuals, not merely as humanity in general. Today's story is important because when God promised Abram descendants to match the number of stars, God included each one of us in that number. God had loving plans for Abram and his descendants, and that includes us.

Story Summary:

God's Promise to Abram

Abram believed in God and lived for God. God told Abram that God is Abram's shield, and Abram's reward will be great. Abram asked how he would be

rewarded because he had no children or heirs. God told Abram to look at the stars in the sky. God promised Abram that he would have that many descendants. Abram believed God's promise. God cared about Abram, about Abram's family, and about the community that would come from Abram's descendants.

Spiritual Practice: Fellowship

As members of the body of Christ, bound by the love of God, we are each a part of the family that began a long, long time ago.

How can your immediate family extend the hand of fellowship to others in the family of God? Contact another family at church, perhaps one that you haven't spent much time with, and invite them to a night of games and dessert (or other fun activity). Enjoy a time of fellowship.

Last Week/Next Week

Last week, we left off with Eve yielding to temptation and breaking the promise to God not to eat from one specific tree. Despite Adam and Eve's sin, God continues to be a promise keeper.

Next week we meet Jacob's sons, the results of God's promise to Abram. We also see how God works to preserve Abram's descendants and ensure the continuation of the promise.

Bible Nuts and Bolts: Origin Stories

The book of Genesis is a history book of beginnings which falls in the category of "origin stories". It is the first book in the Bible and tells of the beginnings of the universe, the beginnings of sin, and the beginnings of God's blessings for the whole world through Abram, Isaac, and Jacob.

In reading the origin stories, we can see that the sin we struggle with today is not all that different from what people have experienced since the very beginning even though the setting and circumstances are different. We also see God's promises in the book of beginnings, promises that are later fulfilled and documented throughout the Bible.

Family Discussions

As you hear and study these stories each week, consider what God has to say to you and your family. Help your children to imagine what it would have been like to be the people contained in the stories. What is God's message to them—and to us?

- ✚ What do you learn about God in this story?
- ✚ What do you learn about people in this story?
- ✚ What can we thank God for after hearing this story?

Family Devotions

Pick a time each day to gather together and read the following excerpts that share stories from a variety of geographical locations. It would be a great opportunity to find a map in the back of a Bible to further explore the world during biblical times. Engage in a few activities that help you better understand God's message of love to people living in those places as well as where you live today.

Sunday—Read Genesis 15:1-6 —God's Promise to Abram

God promised Abram to be a father of nations. Look through a family photo album and remember good times with family members.

Monday—Read Genesis 17:1-18—God Changes Abram's Name

God changed Abram's name to Abraham. Adults, share with the children what their names mean and why they were given their names.

Tuesday—Read Genesis 18:1-15—A Son Promised to Abraham and Sarah

God promised a son to Abraham and Sarah. This seemed unbelievable. Share stories about the most unbelievable thing that ever happened to you.

Wednesday—Read Genesis 21:1-7 —The Birth of Isaac

Isaac was born to Abraham and Sarah. The name Isaac means "laughter." Laugh and laugh and laugh.

Thursday—Read Genesis 22:1-14 —The Command to Sacrifice Isaac

God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son. Have the children jump off a step, porch or chair and into the arms of an adult who promises to catch them.

Friday—Read Genesis 27:1-17, 30-38 —Isaac Blesses Jacob

Isaac blessed his son Jacob with Esau's blessing after Esau exchanged his birthright for a bowl of stew. Serve lentil soup or lentil stew for dinner.

Saturday—Read Genesis 35:9-15 —God's Promise Passed to Jacob

God appeared to Jacob and blessed him. Lay hands on each family member, one at a time, and pray for God to bless them.