

General Church Education



The Promise to Abram

Genesis 12:1-10

Lesson 5

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 2: The Lord Is Our Shepherd

For ages 7-8 years

The Promise to Abram

Genesis 12:1-10

Ideas for Parents & Teachers

We have come to the end of the stories that were taken by Moses from the Ancient Word. Actual history begins with the story of Abram. Abram and his family actually did the things that are recorded in the Word. The Lord chose them and then directed their stories to be told in the Word so that they would hold deep spiritual lessons for all people of all times.

Our life is a journey. Abram and his family were called by the Lord to leave their native land and go to Canaan. Everyone who tries to obey the Lord is called to make a journey traveling to the spiritual land of Canaan—that is, to heaven. Young children like to think about going on a journey, and they can be led to see the general spiritual significance of these stories about Abram. The Lord makes a promise to us as well, that if we let Him show us the way, if we obey and trust Him, He will lead us to heaven.

Ideas for Children

- The Lord was the Shepherd who led Abram, the first of the patriarchs.
- Obedience is the first step in following the Lord.
- Abram showed courage in trusting the Lord and leaving his homeland.
- The Lord told Abram that He would make a great nation from him; he would be the “patriarch” of a new church called the Hebrew church.

From the Writings

The historical events in Genesis 12 are representative. Every word carries a spiritual meaning. This is so in all of the books of the Word which contain historical narratives. In the internal sense there are secrets of heaven lying hidden there. The historical narratives of the Word are vessels that contain spiritual and celestial things that come into sight through the internal sense.

This may become clear from the fact that many matters in the Word have been stated according to appearances, for example that the Lord is angry, punishes, curses, slays, and many other such statements, when in fact the internal sense contains the reverse, namely that the Lord is never angry or punishes, still less curses or slays. All the same, no harm at all is done to people who in simplicity of heart believe the Word as they find it in the letter so long as they are leading charitable lives. The reason is that the Word teaches nothing other than this—that everyone ought to live in charity with his neighbor and in love to the Lord above all things. People who do this are in possession of the internal things, and thus with them the illusions acquired from the sense of the letter are easily dispersed. See *Arcana Coelestia* 1408

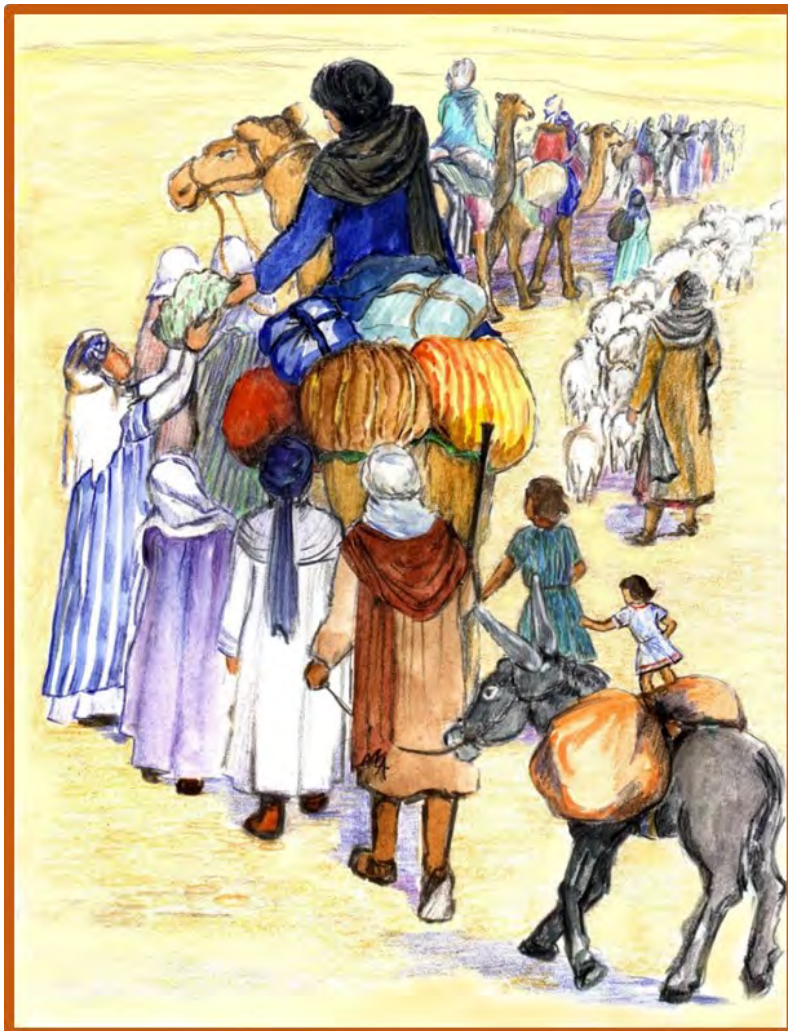
The Promise to Abram

Have you ever made a promise to someone? This is a story about a promise that the Lord made to a man named Abram. It was a wonderful promise and it meant everything to Abram.

A Long Journey Begins

We are going to follow the journey of a family, one of the tribes of people who lived in a place called Ur which was in the land of Chaldea. Terah was the old father of the family, and he had three grown sons. There was a son named Nahor. Another son, Haran, had died before our story starts, but Haran's son Lot was with them. Abram, the uncle of Lot, was the third son of Terah. He had a wife named Sarai but they had no children.

One day the Lord spoke to Abram and told him that He wanted Abram to leave Ur and take the family on a long journey to Canaan, a land that they had never seen. Abram was a good man so he obeyed the Lord.



These ancient people were nomads. They lived in tents and traveled from place to place to find water and grass to feed their animals. Now they set out on a long journey to a completely new land. They folded up their tents and traveled with their camels and flocks and herds of cattle, sheep and goats.

It was a slow trip because the animals had to stop and graze each day. At night, the people would set up camp and some of them would watch over the flocks and herds to make sure they were safe.

Although the land of Canaan was west of them, they had to follow the Euphrates River north for a long time in order to go around the Arabian Desert. This desert was so hot

and dry that they could not cross it. Instead they kept close to the rivers in order to have water to drink. When they had gone about half way to Canaan, they stopped and settled for a while. They called this place Haran after Lot's father. Terah was very old, and he died here. Nahor settled here with his family and made Haran his home. But Abram, Sarai and Abram's nephew Lot traveled on again at the Lord's command toward Canaan with all of their flocks and herds. Let's read now the special promise that the Lord made to Abram.

Read Genesis 12:1-3. What did the Lord promise Abram? (To make him a great nation.) This special kind of promise is called a covenant. A covenant is a two-way agreement. If Abram obeyed the Lord, the Lord would make a great nation from Abram's children. He would be called "Father Abram," the patriarch or great leader of his future family.

The Lord promised to bless him and also everyone who blessed him, and to curse everyone who cursed him. The Lord told Abram that in him all the families of the earth would be blessed. This came true many years later when the Lord Himself was born on earth, because He too was a descendant of Abram. Descendants are people who come later in a family. Do you think Abram will obey the Lord and keep going? Let's see how old Abram was and who came along.

Read Genesis 12:4-5. How old was Abram? (75 years old.) Who went with Abram? (Sarai, his wife, and Lot, his nephew.) What else did they take along? (All their possessions, their servants and herds.)

This was another long journey. They walked most of the way. Sometimes they would ride on camels or donkeys, but they would get very tired by nightfall. They had to find food and water for themselves and their animals along the way. Let's read on to find out where Abram first stopped in the new land and if there were any other people living there.

Read Genesis 12:6-7. What was the name of the first place in Canaan Abram stopped? (Shechem.) Who was already living in this land? (The Canaanites.) It was here at Shechem that the Lord again appeared to Abram and promised to give all this land to Abram's descendants.



Then Abram moved on to a place high in the hills looking out over the land. They camped between two cities, Bethel and Ai. In both of these places Abram built an altar and worshiped the Lord. The Lord had promised Abram a large family and all this new land, things that were very important to people at this time, and Abram wanted to obey the Lord.

Read Genesis 12:8-10. Where did Abram go next? (Egypt.) It was yet another long journey to Egypt. But there was a famine in the land of Canaan. There was not enough food to live on. Many people went to Egypt where food grew abundantly. Now Abram traveled to Egypt with Sarai and Lot and all their flocks and herds. The Lord protected Abram and Sarai there. When the famine was over, they returned to Canaan with even more camels, oxen, sheep, donkeys, servants and other possessions. Abram was wise and obedient. This is why the Lord chose him to do something very important. He needed to be wise so that he would understand what to do. He needed to be obedient to the Lord or the Lord would not have been able to bless him.

The Lord Is Our Shepherd

The Lord is like a shepherd who watches over his sheep—and we are the sheep in the Lord’s pasture. He looks after us all the time. He is always trying to lead us to heaven. Sometimes He does this by things that make us happy, and sometimes He has to make use of things that make us sad.

Abram left his homeland where the people worshiped idols and learned to know and worship the Lord. He showed courage to make this long journey. He was obedient to the Lord’s calling, and the Lord protected him, just as a good shepherd protects his sheep.

The Lord calls each of us. He asks us not to be selfish, thinking of only what we want and not being helpful to others. He asks us to be kind and helpful to others and to follow His commandments. It takes courage, obedience and patience, but it is the only way to make our lives a blessing to ourselves and to others. It is the way to make our journey to heaven where there is lasting peace and happiness.

Discussion Questions

- What do you know about nomads? (They travel from place to place to find water and grass for their animals, they live in tents.)
- What do you think it would be like to make such a long journey traveling with animals and sleeping in tents like Abram?
- What is a covenant? (A two-way agreement.)
- What happens when you obey your parents? What happens when you disobey your parents?

Activity Overview | The Promise to Abram

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

I will make you a great nation;
I will bless you
And make your name great;
And you shall be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you,
And I will curse him who curses you;
And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Genesis 12:2, 3

Songs

Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-guide-me-o-thou-great-jehovah-2/>

Holy, Holy, Holy

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-holy-holy-holy/>

Activities

Choose one or two.

- Activity 1 | Abram's Descendants project
- Activity 2 | The Lord's Promise to Abram Word Search
- Picture to color

Additional Activity Ideas

- Abram and his family were nomads. They lived in tents and often followed rivers or looked for wells to find the water they needed for survival. Since they traveled, they did not grow crops but ate foods from the animals they kept or traded with other people they met for grains. Sample foods that nomads might have eaten, such as goat's milk, feta cheese, flat bread, olives, dates, figs, almonds and lentils. Some may be familiar and some may not. What do the foods taste like? Which foods would you want to eat again?
- Discover more about sheep. Visit a place where sheep live, or borrow a sheepskin. Feel the soft wool and think of all the useful things that could be made from it.
- Try your hand at spinning or do a felted wool project.
- Purchase wool yarn in a craft store and try weaving

Activity 1 | Abram's Descendants Project

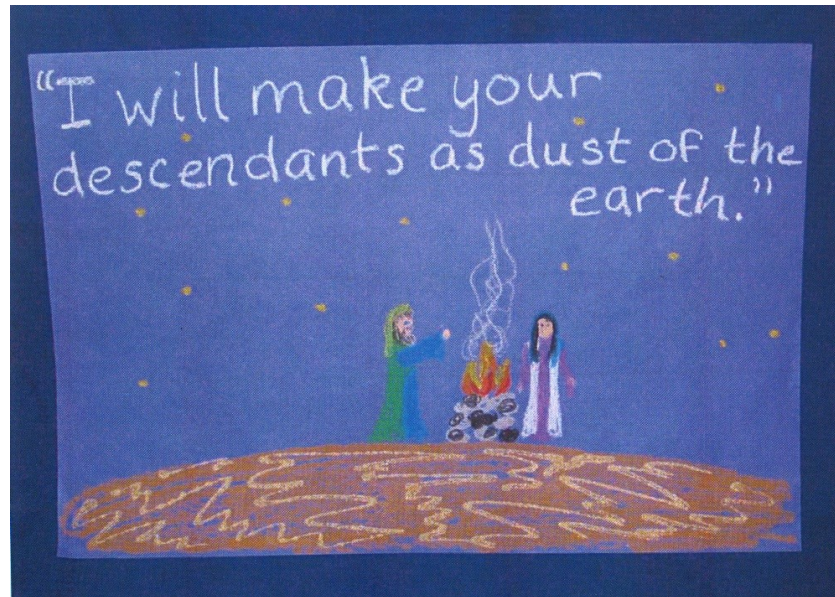
Make a picture showing the Lord's promise to Abram and Sarai (Genesis 12:7).

Supplies needed

- heavier weight dark blue paper approx. 12"x 18" (30cm x 45cm)
- oil pastels (Craypas)
- pencil
- yellow cornmeal
- baking sheet or tray to catch extra cornmeal
- glue

Directions

1. Write the following across the paper in pencil and then trace in white oil pastel, "I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth." (See next page for text strip to copy.) Write the letters fairly large so they will not smudge when traced with oil pastel.
2. Use oil pastels to draw the ground, Abram, Sarai, and an altar.
3. Put glue on the ground. Position picture over a baking sheet or tray to catch extra cornmeal, and sprinkle corn meal over it as you would glitter. Shake extra cornmeal off into the tray. The cornmeal represents the "dust of the earth".



Activity 1 | Abram's Descendants Text Strips to Copy

Multiple strips are provided for groups. Cut strips apart and place where they can be easily seen.

I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth.

I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth.

I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth.

I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth.

Activity 2 | The Lord's Promise to Abram Word Search

Find the following words in the word search. Some words are vertical and some are horizontal.

CANAAN
PROMISE

PATRIARCH
ABRAM

OBEY
ALTAR

HEBREW
NOMAD

A L A A R B A H L E A P A T R I A R C H O
L I I A D O B E I A E T C H E M E B R T R
T T A P I E P P A M R A O I N A R E E W R
A I E A R T R N B A R E M O B E Y N M E Y
R Y P B A A O O B A L O B M R A T E N M P
A N R R A R M M M H B Y P R A S P E E M A
I B I A A P I A P E P H M E B R B T E D R
E O B M N R S D A H A E E A R I D C P A H
L W R R T T E B S H B B W I I I N I R O R
S M E E A N H C A A E R R T A C S H L M B
L D W N H O M A H S O E H A A Y R N R T I
A Y E C A H M N I A R W I B E O B R A C E
E L O A L M D A R E R I E M A O P L A R H
A A R A R I R A A E A O B A A A P A O L A
P A S O E O A N A M M A B C E O W M P P A
A A M S I R C R N C W A N T W E I R E A B

Activity 2 | Word Search Answer Key

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