



SESSION **3**

Abraham



MEETING AIM

To discover that God makes and keeps promises with his people.



BIBLE PASSAGE

Genesis 12:1-7; 15:1-6



BACKGROUND

The story of Abraham is, full of customs and cultural references that are difficult for children to grasp. God makes promises to Abraham and keeps them, however unlikely they appear. This speaks of God's faithfulness, power and love for Abraham, his descendants and, ultimately, us. Abraham is a key figure in the story of God and his people, so helping children wrestle with his story will deepen their understanding of God, helping them to explore their own faith. We have used Abraham, rather than Abram, to avoid confusion.

+ CIRCLE TIME



As the children arrive, sit everyone in a circle. Ask the children if they have done anything this week and encourage them to tell the group about it. Share something you have done this week too.

+ PROMISE SONGS



You will need: pop songs with lyrics about promises

Find some pop songs that have promises in them and print out the words (make sure the words are appropriate). Play the song and let the children read the lyrics or sing along. Decide together which songs are about keeping promises and which aren't. What does it feel like when someone breaks or keeps a promise?

+ BIBLE STORY



You will need: bags, other luggage; cloaks / coats; cardboard boxes (shoebox-sized and larger); a large plant, inflatable tree or similar

Before the session, choose a route that you can safely go on with the children in your group. This could be round the corridors of your church, or around the grounds of your building. At the end of your route, set up the plant / inflatable tree (if you're

outside, use a real tree!) and put all your boxes next to the tree. Arrange the luggage, cloaks and coats at your start point. Make sure you have enough luggage for each child to carry or wear something. Gather the children at the start point, and tell this story:

Thousands of years ago, there lived a man called Abraham. Abraham was a friend of God and lived in a city called Haran. He was 75 years old, but he had no children. One day, God spoke to Abraham. He said: "Abraham! Leave your country, your family, and your relatives and go to the land that I will show you. I will bless you and make your descendants into a great nation. You will become famous and be a blessing to others!" *Ask what the children think of what God told Abraham to do. If they were Abraham, what would they have said to God? What do they think Abraham did?*

Abraham did what God told him to do. He, his wife Sarah, his nephew Lot and his whole household packed their belongings and set off. *Encourage the children to put on a coat, pick up a bag and get ready to leave. As you walk, remind them that God said he would show Abraham where to go. Ask what they think was going through Abraham's mind as he walked. When you get to the end of your route, put down your bags.*

Finally, Abraham and his family got to a place called Shechem, where there was a precious tree. There, God said to Abraham: "I'm going to give this land to you and your family for ever!" And there, Abraham built an altar to God to remember what God had said. Altars are places where people used to worship God. They were important memorials of what God had done. Whenever anyone saw this, they would remember God's promise. *Build an altar together from the boxes. As you work, chat about what Abraham has done so far: he had obeyed God, left his home and followed God. Stand by the altar and tell the next part of the story.*

God made another promise. Abraham was sad that he had no family. But God promised Abraham that he would have a large family. *Ask the children to close their eyes and imagine the night sky. How many stars can they see? If they know any facts about space, chat about those, then continue with the story.*

God promised Abraham that he would have a son. He took Abraham outside to look at the night sky. "Look at the sky," said God. "Can you count all the stars? That's how many descendants you will have!" And Abraham believed God. He believed that God would keep this promise. And God did. Abraham had a son, called Isaac. Isaac had sons called Esau and Jacob. And Jacob had twelve sons - the start of the people of Israel.

+ CHATTING TOGETHER



Ask the children these questions, making sure everyone has the chance to contribute:

- What is your favourite part of this story?
- Which part do you find surprising?
- What does this story tell us about God? What is he like?
- Has anyone ever made a promise to you and not kept it? How did you feel?
- What do you want to say to God after hearing this story?

+ CREATIVE RESPONSE



You will need: small boxes (eg matchboxes); glue and sticky tape; building blocks; construction bricks

Give children the blocks, bricks and boxes and explain that you're going to think about promises and memorials. Remind them that God made Abraham a promise and Abraham made an altar as a memorial of that promise. Play together at creating memorials and, as you work, ask if the group have kept any promises or if they know any other promises that God made his people. You might think about Jesus' promise to be with his followers until the end of the age (Matthew 28:18-20). Share when God has made and kept a promise to you. Give them permission to ask you questions about it - Abraham saw the fulfilment of the first part of the promise (a son) but not the second (about the thousands of descendants). Sometimes we have to wait, but God always comes through in the end.

If you have children on the autistic spectrum, explain before you start that if they use the construction toys, they won't be able to take their memorial home.

+ PRAYER



You will need: post-it notes; pens

You will need to decide what to pray about depending on how the session goes. If the children are happy with the idea that God keeps his promises, then have a time of 'thank you' prayers, where they can write things they are thankful for, and promises God has kept.

If the children feel like God hasn't kept his promises, give them the space to express that by writing on a post-it what they want to say to God about it. Gather the post-its and ask God to answer our questions. Return to these next time you meet so that you can explore how God has answered your prayers so far.

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