



SESSION

1

God chooses Abram



MEETING AIM

To explore what it means to follow God's calling.



BIBLE PASSAGE

Genesis 11:26-12:9; 13:14-18



BACKGROUND

It can be easy to think of key figures in the Old Testament just as characters in a story, but these were real people with real hopes, dreams and fears. For Abram, God's calling would have offered incredible blessings, but also demanded real sacrifices. Through this session, we aim to help young people reflect on what blessings and sacrifices might be involved if they choose to follow God's calling, and how to overcome any fear they might have about the future.

+ GATHERING TIME



You will need: refreshments; a comfortable place to sit and chat

Share drinks and snacks with your young people. Spend time catching up with them, chatting and asking how their week has been. Ask everyone how they feel about the future. Does it seem exciting? Frightening? Discouraging? Something else? Try to draw out these feelings in an unthreatening way. If anyone clearly doesn't want to talk, don't make them. Be prepared to share your own feelings.

+ TARGET PING-PONG



You will need: table tennis balls; a large saucepan; chocolate or another other treat; a hard floor or table

If you have a large group, divide into teams for this game. Otherwise, the young people can play as individuals. Give each player (or team) a table tennis ball. Place a large saucepan two metres away from them on a table or hard floor. Let the players take it in turns to bounce their balls into the saucepan. (The ball must bounce once, then land in the pan.) Give a square of chocolate (or another small treat) to anyone who succeeds. They can either eat their chocolate or

give it up for the possibility of a prize twice as big.

If anyone chooses to gamble, take back their chocolate and let them play again. If they succeed, they win two squares of chocolate. Let this process continue, doubling the prize every time, until the player misses, quits the game to keep their prize, or wins all the chocolate you have!

Explain that it's sometimes worth giving up something good to go after something better. The difference is, when God asks us to give up something good, it's not a gamble. He keeps his promises!

+ BIBLE EXPLORATION



You will need: A3 paper; pens; Bibles

Divide the young people into groups of two or three. Give each group a sheet of A3 paper, a few pens and a Bible.

Invite each group to draw a simple outline of a person. This will represent Abram. Let the groups read Genesis 11:26-12:9 and 13:14-18, and write or draw what they find out about Abram around the outside of their Abram picture. What kind of person is he? Is there anything that makes him special? What does God promise him and ask him to do?

Next, ask the young people to reflect on what Abram might have been thinking and feeling about what God had asked him to do. They can write their ideas on the inside of their Abram figure. Take feedback from each group.

+ CHATTING TOGETHER



Discuss the following questions together:

- If you were in Abram's position, what would you have done?
- What does this passage tell us about God?
- Can you think of something God might ask us to do that's exciting but a bit scary?
- Has that ever happened to you? If so, can you tell us about it?
- When we know we need to do something big, how can we get past our fear?

+ CREATIVE RESPONSE



You will need: large sheet of paper; marker pen; slices of lemon; sugar cubes

Ask the group for ten tips on overcoming fear. These might be lessons they've learned from Abram or tricks they've tried themselves. Record their ideas on the flipchart and throw in one or two of your own if they get stuck.

Give each of the young people a slice of lemon and a sugar cube. (Spoons with sugar on work OK, but sugar cubes are easier to distribute.) Invite everyone to find some space, get comfortable and close their eyes. Let them suck on their lemon and think about any decision or situation they're facing that is bitter; something that's difficult or scary. They can quietly ask God to help them with this situation. Next, let them suck on their sugar cubes and reflect on the sweet possibilities for the future; fun and exciting things God might lead them to do. They can thank God for these possibilities and ask him to lead them into the future he has planned for them.

+ PRAYER



Have the young people stand in a circle (or two circles if you have a large group). Ask them to take it in turns to mention one upcoming event they're excited about. When everyone has done that, ask each group member to pray out loud for the person on their right. Everyone will pray at the same time, and just for a few seconds, so there's no need to feel self-conscious.

Next, ask everyone to mention one thing they're worried or upset about. (If anyone doesn't want to say anything, they don't have to.) Again, ask everyone to pray out loud at the same time, this time for the person on their left.

You can round off with a short prayer of your own, thanking God that he has good plans for our future and asking him to help us overcome any fear we might have about it.

SIMEON WHITING

is a freelance writer and volunteer youth leader.