



SESSION **2**

God's promise



MEETING AIM

To learn about God's promise to Abraham, and Abraham's faith in God.



BIBLE PASSAGE

Genesis 15:1-6



BACKGROUND

In this story, God confirms his promise to Abraham. Abraham responds with complete faith in God, even though the prospect of becoming the father of a large family at 76 seems unlikely. After this story, God solemnises the promise with a ritual that marks the beginning of his covenant with Abraham's family. Although the details of this story (nomadic desert life, old age, the desire for children) may be remote from the children's own experience, the focus here is on Abraham's belief in God, which connects all Christians to him.

CIRCLE TIME



Talk together about who is in our families. How many brothers and sisters do the children have? Are there any new babies on the way? Chat about how families come in many different shapes and sizes. Celebrate the differences, being particularly sensitive to issues of broken families or adoption you may be aware of in your group.

STARS IN A JAR



You will need: empty jars (labels removed) with lids; water coloured blue or black with ink or food colouring; baby oil; silver or gold glitter (make sure it's environmentally friendly); sticky tape; silver or gold sequins (optional)

Invite the children to fill half their jar with inky water, then add some pinches of glitter and sequins. Top up each jar with baby oil and secure the lid. Give the jar a good shake and watch the glitter swirl like stars in the darkness. You could enhance the effect by holding the jars in direct sunlight or shining a torch through the side of the jars. Wonder together about how many 'stars' there might be in each jar.

BIBLE STORY



You will need: a walking stick; a stool or chair; glitter jars from 'Stars in a jar'

Show the children Abraham's props: a walking stick and a seat to sit on (because he's an old man). Remind them that he's very old and has an elderly wife, Sarah, but no children. Ask for a volunteer to take a turn as Abraham by holding the stick and sitting in the seat. Then tell the following story.

Remember Abraham? Here he is in his tent in the desert having a rest, but not for long. God is about to speak to him!

God said: "Don't be scared, Abraham! I am looking after you. I will give you a wonderful reward!"

Invite the group to think about what questions Abraham might want to ask. Encourage them to take turns being Abraham (in the chair, with the stick) and asking God a question about this reward. Demonstrate an example: "When will I get this reward?"

Abraham asked God: "What will you give me?"

Invite the children to think about what kind of reward Abraham might want. Again, they take turns being Abraham and telling God what they would like as a reward. Demonstrate an example: "I want to live in a palace instead of this draughty old tent!"

Abraham said: "I haven't got a family of my own, and I'm old now."

God took Abraham outside and showed him all the stars in the sky.

Encourage everyone to shake their stars-in-a-jar and watch the glitter swirl.

God said: "Look at all those stars! Can you count them? Your descendants will be like them. You'll have more children, grandchildren and great-great-great grandchildren than you can ever count!"

What do you think Abraham thought about that promise?

Invite the children to take turns responding as Abraham (in the chair with the stick). If you were him, what would you think about God's promise of all those children? Demonstrate an example: "Will my children be born soon?"

Abraham believed God. And God saw that he was very good.

CHATTING TOGETHER



Chat about the story and the children's response using these questions:

- How did it feel to play the part of Abraham today?

- What does this story make you think about God?
- Why did God promise Abraham such an enormous family?
- Do you know anyone with a strong faith like Abraham?
- What promises do you think God makes to us?

CREATIVE RESPONSE



You will need: two mirrors (the bigger the better), facing each other

Invite the children to stand, in twos or threes or as a whole group, between the two mirrors. What reflections can they see? What do they notice? Chat about the strangeness of this infinitely vanishing perspective, and about what their reflection-of-a-reflection-of-a-reflection (and so on) looks like or makes them think about. Invite them to think and chat about how Abraham felt when God promised him a family that would extend further into the future than he could see or imagine. They can also try the same thing with two mobile phones facing each other on 'selfie' mode. Can they take a photo of this infinite image?

PRAYER



You will need: felt-tip pens and a packet of gummed paper-chain strips (or strips of paper and sticky tape)

Explain that Abraham's enormous family was special to God, and everyone in it traced their family trees back to Abraham. The Bible says that we are also part of this family if we believe in God as Abraham did. The Bible says: "Those who believe are blessed with Abraham who believed" (Galatians 3:9). We're all connected by faith.

Write 'ABRAHAM' on a paper chain strip and make it into a loop. Invite the children to write their own names on strips and join them to each other, then join the whole string to Abraham's loop. Make the paper chain as long as you can by writing the names of other people in your church.

Stand in a circle and thank God for the faith that connects us all together. Acknowledge that believing in God isn't always easy and, in a moment of quiet, invite everyone to ask for God's help when it comes to believing in him.

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