

THE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY CHILDREN'S MEETING LESSON

LESSON #1

SUBJECT: THE FOREFATHERS OF THE CHOSEN PEOPLE OF ISRAEL—The Calling of Abraham

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 12:1-8; Joshua 24:2; Galatians 3:8-9, 14; Acts 7:2-8

AIM: To show the children the origin of the people (children) of Israel with the calling out of their forefather Abraham from idolatry to follow the one true God.

SUGGESTED MEMORY VERSES: Genesis 12:1-2a, 7a (1 Now Jehovah said to Abram, Go from your land and from your relatives and from your father's house to the land that I will show you; 2 And I will make of you a great nation, ...); Hebrews 11:8 (By faith Abraham, being called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.); 1 Peter 2:9-10 (9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people acquired for a possession, so that you may tell out the virtues of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 Who once were not a people but now are the people of God; who had not previously been shown mercy but have now been shown mercy.)

SUGGESTED SONGS: 44 (Father Abraham), 190 (I Am Called), 1006 (Abraham Believed In God), 1007 (Abraham), 2820 (God Will Call You), 5505 (Pray, Pray, Pray); 7 (I Am a Very Special Child); 36 (Following Jesus); 5205 (Obey); 68 (The Word of God); 153 (Obey His Call); 32 (Trust in the Lord); 37 (I Have Decided to Follow Jesus); 2500 (Faith Is Just Believing); 64 (Ev'ry Promise in the Bible Is Mine); 9410 (I Believe the Promises); 9572 (God Said to Abram)

CRAFT IDEAS: Stars of heaven craft: on a piece of construction paper or cardstock, add stickers of stars. Or on blue or black construction paper, draw stars with white or yellow chalk.

BACKGROUND: We are starting a series of lessons called *The Travels of the Chosen People of Israel*. Today we think of Israel as a country, but in the book of Genesis, Israel was a person. Israel's name used to be Jacob, but God changed it to Israel. (Gen. 32:28) The people (or the children) of Israel were actually the children, or descendants, of this person Israel. God once told Moses, one of the descendants of Israel, that He was the God of his fathers, "the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob." These three men—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (whose name God later changed to Israel) are the forefathers or patriarchs of the children of Israel. In this first lesson, we will see God's calling of the forefather Abraham. (*Note:* It may be helpful to illustrate this information in the form of a family tree.)

Thousands of years ago, there was a great flood that destroyed all the living things on the earth. God sent the flood because He had seen that the wickedness of man was great in the earth (Gen. 6:5-7). Noah and his family were saved from that flood because Noah found favor in the sight of Jehovah (vs. 8). After the flood, Noah's sons and daughters-in-law began to have children and they filled the land. But after many years and generations passed, mankind again became very sinful and rebellious in the eyes of God. The people were filled with pride and began to build a great city and a tower that would reach up into heaven (Gen. 11:4). Man had again turned away from God. But instead of destroying the entire wicked human race again, God called out one man, **Abram**.

CONTENT: Abram lived in Ur of the Chaldees where people worshipped idols. (Serving ones may need to define "idols" for the children.) There, the God of glory appeared to him and called him to "come out from your land and from your relatives, and come into the land which I will show you." Acts 7:2-3.

Abram did not immediately accept God's calling, but remained in Ur for some time. Eventually, God caused Abram's father, Terah, to move the family from Ur to Haran (Gen. 11:31). After the death of Abram's father (vs. 32), God appeared to Abram a second time and called him again, "Go from your land and from your relatives and from your father's house to the land that I will show you..." Then God gave him a promise, "And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. And I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed." (Gen. 12:1-3).

Abram was seventy-five years old when he answered God's call. He, his wife Sarai, and his nephew Lot left their country and all their family and obeyed God to go to a land they had never seen before. God had said that He would bring them into a land that He would show them, and Abram believed God. He did not have a map or GPS nor did he know the way to go. He only had the real and living "God of glory" to lead him. When Abram reached Shechem in the land of Canaan, Jehovah appeared to him again and promised him, "To your seed I will give this land." This showed Abram that he was in the right place; there he built an altar to Jehovah and called upon the name of Jehovah.

Abram had now arrived at the land which God wanted to give to him and to his seed (children). However, at this time Abram had no child! One night when the Lord was speaking to Abram, Abram said, "O Lord Jehovah, what will You give me, for I go childless..." (Gen. 15:2) The Lord assured him that night that his seed would be as the stars of the heavens in number (vs. 5). Later, when Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord came to assure him that He would multiply him exceedingly (Gen. 17:1-2). God made a covenant with him and changed his name to Abraham because he would be the father of a multitude of nations (vs. 3-4). Then God told Abraham to call his wife Sarah and that she would bring forth a son for Abraham (vs. 15-16).

SUGGESTED APPLICATIONS TO CHOOSE FROM: *Please pray and fellowship over which applications to cover. Please do not try to cover all the applications. It is sufficient to cover just **one or two applications** which are appropriate for the age group of the children you are serving.*

- Just as the Lord called Abraham out of the land of idols, He is calling us today. He is calling us to love and serve Him alone. Do we put the television, sports and games ahead of the Lord? Are these becoming our idols? Some of us may say that we do not have time to read the Bible or memorize verses, but seem to have time for cartoons and video games. The Lord is calling us today to leave our idols behind.
- Abraham is the father of all those who believe in God. (Gal.3:6-7). Abraham believed what God said. God's people should believe and obey His word.
- With Abram, God had a new beginning. The start of the school year is also a new beginning for all of us. Just like Abraham, we should "build an altar" to the Lord. This means that we should give ourselves and this new school year to the Lord.

Extended Reading for serving ones: for additional applications and Scripture references, please see the lesson series, God's Calling in the Old Testament - Abraham (Part 1 of 4) Nov. 2016

Sept. 8, 2019; Adapted from the New York City's Children's Meeting lesson 9/7/03; 09/13/09; 09/07/14