

Week 15: God's Covenant with Abraham

Genesis 15:1–18; 16:1–16; 18:1–15; Proverbs 3:5–6

Objectives

Students will . . .

- Describe the covenant God made with Abraham.
- Explain what made Abraham right with God.

Week at a Glance

To the Teacher: Pray for your students daily and prayerfully study the verses given above.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Lesson	Count the Stars	Covenant and Calvary	Abraham and Hagar	Promise to Sarah	Show What You Know
Big Idea	Review what lead up to God's promise to Abraham.	God's promises to Abraham	Abraham and Sarah try to make the promises come true.	God promises Sarah that she will have a son.	Review for and administer this week's quiz.
Videos	<u>The Stars</u> (1:38 min.) <u>Abraham</u> (2:54 min.) <u>Book of Genesis Overview: Genesis 1–11</u> (Watch until 5:27 min.)	<u>Book of Genesis Overview: Genesis 12-50</u> (Watch until 4:20 min.)			
Materials	<u>Galaxy Painting:</u> star stickers, paper, salt, watercolor paint, brushes, water		soft ball, wastebasket, three long strings (yarn), several pieces of copier paper	Several pieces of colored construction paper for each student, crayons/markers/pencils, glue stick and scissors for each student	
Copies	Daily Bible Connection				Show What You Know Quiz

MONDAY: Count the Stars

Hook: Connect to Prior Experience

Have you ever tried to count the stars? In a city or town, it's hard to see the stars because of all the lights on streets and buildings. Have you ever been out of town at night and looked up to see all the stars? There are more stars than we can count.



We are going to learn about a time when God told Abraham to count the stars. God wasn't asking him to do a scientific experiment. Instead, God was making a promise to Abraham. The star became the symbol of God's promise for the Jewish nation. When you look up at the stars at night, remember—God always keeps His promises!

Video

[*Note to Teacher:* When students watch the videos, have them look for two things that stand out as most interesting. When the video is over, have each student share what two things he or she found most interesting. As they share, be listening to find out if they are understanding.]

View [The Stars](#) video (1:38 min.).

View the [Abraham](#) video (2:54 min.) as a review for younger students.

View the [Book of Genesis Overview: Genesis 1–11](#) video as a review for older students. (Watch until 5:27 min.)

Discovery Words

1. God made a **covenant** with Abraham.
covenant—an agreement (or contract) that connects God and His people. God makes promises to his people and, usually, requires certain conduct from them.
2. Jesus died on **Calvary**.
Calvary—the place where Jesus died on the cross to make a way for us to be forever connected to God.
3. All Jewish people are **descendants** of Abraham and Sarah.
descendant—someone who is related to a person in the past
4. We could see in the cave thanks to the light from the **torch**.
torch—a stick with material at one end that burns brightly

Hands-On Activity

Materials: star stickers, paper, salt, water color paint, brushes, water

Example and Instructions: [Galaxy Painting](#)

Memory Verse

Proverbs 3:5–6

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TUESDAY: Covenant and Calvary

Genesis 15:1–18

Discussion

Connect with Prior Learning: In our discussion yesterday, what did God tell Abraham to count?

Answer: The stars

Today we are going to look closer at the conversation between Abraham and God. Open your Bible to Genesis 15.

Reading Focus: How does Abraham feel?

Read Aloud: Genesis 15:1

Question for Comprehension: Why should Abraham not be afraid?

Answer: God is his shield of protection, and God is his very great reward. Even though God was going to give him children, Abraham's hope needed to be in God, not in having children.

Reading Focus: How did Abraham respond?

Read Aloud: Genesis 15:2–6

Question for Comprehension:

- How would you describe Abraham's response?

Answer: Abraham responded with worry and disbelief. He didn't understand how God could meet his needs.

Let's discuss this before we go on. Abraham is old. Sarah is old. They are too old to have children. So, naturally, Abraham thinks the situation is impossible.

- What made Abraham right with the Lord?

Answer: his faith

We know Abraham had faith because of his actions, but it is always belief (faith) that makes us right with God. We can't earn God's favor. God's favor is a gift God wants us to accept by believing what He says He will do.

- Why did Abraham think all of his things would go to his servant (Eliezer) when he died?

Answer: Abraham didn't have any children. And he thought he would not have any children.

- Why did God tell Abraham to count the stars?
Answer: He wanted to show Abraham that he would end up with more descendants than he could count.

Reading Focus: How did God help Abraham know that this promise was going to happen?

Read Aloud: Genesis 15:7–10

Before we go on, let's think through how promises work. Have you ever made a pinky promise? Maybe you tell someone you will be their best friend forever, pinky promise, and you lock pinky fingers as a way to show you mean it. This type of promise is easily broken.

Question for Comprehension: What animals did God ask Abraham to get? What did Abraham do with the animals?

Answer: God asked Abraham to get a young cow, a goat, a ram, a dove, and a young pigeon. Abraham divided the young cow, goat, and ram, but he did not divide the birds.

When people in business make a promise, they write up a contract and both parties sign it. If someone does not keep their part of the promise, the other person can take them to a court of law to try to get them to fulfill what they promised in the contract.

When people in Abraham's day made a covenant, it was a much bigger deal. They took animals, cut them in half, put one half of the animal on one side of a path and the other half of the animal on the other side. The blood of the animals ran down into that path.

Then, usually, both people making the covenant would walk down the path between the animals. That walk down the path of blood would be their way to tell each other that if they did not fulfill the covenant, they were to be treated the same way the animals had been treated. Wow! A covenant wasn't to be made lightly. Breaking a vow meant the death penalty.

Reading Focus: What happened to the animals that Abraham had killed?

Read Aloud: Genesis 15:11

Question for Comprehension: Why would Abraham need to chase large birds away?

Answer: Birds like ravens and vultures eat dead meat. They smelled the dead meat and wanted to come eat.

Reading Focus: What happened to Abraham when he fell into a deep sleep?

Read Aloud: Genesis 15:12–16

Question for Comprehension:

- What happened to Abraham when the darkness covered him?
Answer: He had a vision about what would happen to him and his descendants in the future.
- What did Abraham's vision reveal to him about his descendants?
Answer: God showed Abraham that he would have children, and that they would go down into Egypt for four hundred years to be slaves.

You can read the history of exactly how this happened in the next book of the Bible—Exodus.

Reading Focus: What happened next during Abraham's deep sleep?

Read Aloud: Genesis 15:17–18

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Question for Comprehension: What appeared to Abraham during his deep sleep?

Answer: A burning torch and a pot filled with smoking coals appeared to Abraham.

The burning torch and pot filled with smoking coals were how God showed Himself walking down the path of blood. Instead of God and Abraham walking together, this covenant was a one-way promise. God promised to give Abraham (1) children as many as the stars, and (2) the land for the nation to live in. God was saying that if the covenant was broken—*He* would take the death penalty.

God didn't break the covenant, but He later did take the death penalty for all who sin when Jesus came to earth and died on the cross.

God promised to Abraham that He would give him children and a promised land.

God promises to us that He will forgive our sins and give us eternal life if we turn from sin to Christ—believing His death and resurrection was for us personally.

God keeps His promises!

Video

View the [Book of Genesis Overview: Genesis 12-50](#) video. (Watch until 4.20 min.)

Memory Verse

Proverbs 3:5–6

WEDNESDAY: Abraham and Hagar

Genesis 16

Activity: Can you? Can God? Game

Materials: soft ball, wastebasket, three long strings (yarn), several pieces of copier paper

Instructions: Choose various students to attempt the following classroom challenges:

Can you...

Say the alphabet without pausing while jumping up and down by your desk?

Make a basket from across the room?

Complete a braid with these three strings in 15 seconds?

Create a paper airplane that will fly to the person sitting two seats from yours?

Walk across the room in a straight line after being spun around 10 times?

Draw your favorite animal on the board and get the class to guess it in 10 seconds?

Sometimes we can do what needs to be done in life. Even if they are silly challenges like this. But sometimes we are not skilled enough. Sometimes things are too hard or complicated for us. But God is not that way. He is teaching Abraham and Sarah in today's lesson that he can do even what is impossible if they trust him. He can give them a son which was impossible for them to have on their own. But Abraham and Sarah chose to keep trying to make that happen their own way instead of trusting that God can.

Discussion

Have you ever wanted something so badly that you tried to get it the wrong way? Let's say you *really* want a toy from the store.

Choice 1: You can work to earn money and buy it.

Choice 2: You steal it from the store.

If you were to take Choice 2, what could some of the consequences be?

Answer: Answers will vary. Discuss how even if one would appear to get away with stealing, there would still be consequences.

Wrong choices always have consequences—even if you think you are getting away with something.

Abraham and his wife Sarah wanted a child. God promised them a child. A child is a great thing to want. But today we are going to find out what happens when people try to get things their own way, *not* God's way.

What we learn about Abraham and Sarah today is sad. Remember that they are not heroes to follow. Jesus is the hero to follow. All humans are sinful. Sin hurts not only us but also others.

Reading Focus: What wrong choice did Abraham and Sarah make?

Read Aloud: Genesis 16:1–2

Notice what is going on:

1. Hagar is Sarah's slave. Slavery was common in the culture Abraham and Sarah lived in—but that doesn't not make it right.
2. Sarah tells Abraham that the Lord has kept her from having children. That's true in that the Lord controls everything, so He controls who has the ability to have a baby and who does not. However, she uses the truth that God has not given her the ability to have children as a reason to do the wrong thing.

Question for Comprehension: What does Sarah decide to do since she's unable to have children of her own?

Answer: She decides to try to have a family through her slave Hagar.

Sarah's acting as if there are only two options:

Option 1: She has a baby of her own.

Option 2: She gives her slave Hagar to Abraham like a second wife, so Hagar has a baby for Sarah.

Sarah thinks option 1 is out of the question because it would take a miracle of God. She goes for option 2 because she doesn't believe God could do that miracle.

Reading Focus: How does Abraham respond to Sarah's crazy idea?

Read Aloud: Genesis 16:3–4

Question for Comprehension:

- What did Abraham do?

Answer: He went along with Sarah.

- Who does that remind you of?

Answer: Abraham's willingness to go along with Sarah is similar to Adam's decision to go along with Eve's disobedience to God.

Having slaves was common in Abraham and Sarah's time, and so was having more than one wife. Although it was common, it was *not* God's way. Do you remember Genesis 2:24?

Abraham and Sarah are using Hagar to get what they wanted. God never intends for us to use other people. We should be serving others and thinking more highly of them than we think of ourselves. (Philippians 2:3–4)

Reading Focus: What happens once Hagar was pregnant?

Read Aloud: Genesis 16:5

Questions for Comprehension:

- Sarah doesn't like Hagar looking down on her. Who does Sarah blame for the problem?

Answer: Abraham

- Who does that remind you of?

Answer: Adam blaming Eve. Eve blaming the serpent.

Blaming others does not change the fact that we are responsible for our own sin.

Reading Focus: How does Abraham respond?

Read Aloud: Genesis 16:6

Question for Comprehension:

- What does Abraham tell Sarah to do with Hagar?
Answer: Abraham tells Sarah to do whatever she wants to with Hagar.
- What does Sarah do?
Answer: She treats Hagar so badly that Hagar runs away.

Think About It: This story gets more and more tragic. Hagar becomes like a second wife to Abraham, but instead of protecting Hagar, Abraham lets Sarah abuse her even more. The abuse is so bad that Hagar runs away with no way to protect herself or provide for herself.

Put yourself in Hagar's shoes: she is a slave that Abraham and Sarah got from Egypt, she is not in her own country, she has no money and no one to protect her or provide for her, and she is expecting a baby.

But no matter how tragic a story is and how abandoned someone feels—God *always* sees and *always* cares.

Reading Focus: Who sees Hagar as she is fleeing?

Read Aloud: Genesis 16:7–8

Question for Comprehension: Who found Hagar?

Answer: The angel of the Lord (God)

God showed care for Hagar by seeking her out. He knew just where to find her. He asks her questions. She responds.

Reading Focus: What guidance does God give her?

Read Aloud: Genesis 16:9–10

Question for Comprehension: Where does God tell Hagar to go?

Answer: He tells her to go back to Sarah.

Even though God knows it will be a challenging situation, He sends her back to Sarah. But notice that He also makes her a promise.

Question for Comprehension:

- What did God promise to her?
Answer: God promised her that she would have a family of many children and that eventually she would have more children than anyone could count.
- What does that promise sound like?
Answer: The same promise God gave to Abraham.

God gives the same promise to an abused slave as He gave to Abraham. Both were people made in God's image. Both are equally valuable to God. Both were going to have descendants that would become nations.

The angel of the Lord also named her son Ishmael.

Read Aloud: Genesis 16:11-12

Reading Focus: How does Hagar respond?

Read Aloud: Genesis 16:13–16

Questions for Comprehension:

- What did Hagar call God?
Answer: The God who sees me
- Does God also see us when people hurt us?
Answer: Yes

God doesn't just see—He cares. Sometimes we want God to stop others from doing wrong like Abraham and Sarah did, but remember—God doesn't force us. He gives us the free choice to follow Him or not. When we chose to please ourselves, we become the one hurting others. Our choices always affect other people.

Memory Verse

Proverbs 3:5–6

THURSDAY: Promise to Sarah

Genesis 18:1–15; Proverbs 3:5–6

Discussion

Have you ever disappointed someone and had that person stop being your friend? When someone hurts us, we find it easier to give the person the silent treatment or walk away from the friendship forever. We do not naturally want to show kindness to those who hurt us.

Abraham and Sarah chose to do what they thought was wise, but it was foolish. They sinned against God and took advantage of Hagar. But God did not stop being a friend to them. God was also a friend to Hagar.

Connect to Prior Learning:

- What did Hagar say about God after she ran away, and He found her?
Answer: She said, “You are the God who sees me?”

Knowing God was watching out for her, Hagar went back to live as Sarah’s servant while she was pregnant.

In some ways it makes sense to us that God would come to take care of Hagar. She hadn’t made the bad choice. Abraham and Sarah were the ones who sinned against God and against Hagar.

- Did God write off Adam and Eve when they made a wrong choice and sinned against Him?
Answer: No, He did not.
- What did God do instead?
Answer: He came looking for them, provided clothes, and protected them from living forever in sin. He promised a Savior who would eventually undo all the wrong they had done.
- Based on how God handled Adam and Eve, how do you think He is going to handle Abraham and Sarah?
Answer: Answers may vary, but hopefully they will realize that God is going to reach out to Abraham and Sarah.

Reading Focus: What does God do next?

Read Aloud: Genesis 18:1–2

Question for Comprehension: Who does God send to meet Abraham?

Answer: Three men

Here’s Abraham sitting at the entrance to his tent (the way someone would sit on a front porch). He sees three men standing nearby. The last time he had visitors they were from God and ended up rescuing Lot.

Reading Focus: How does Abraham respond?

Read Aloud: Genesis 18:3–5

Question for Comprehension: What does Abraham want to do for the three men?

Answer: He wants to get them some water to wash their feet and something to eat to give them strength.

We don't often wash each other's feet, but this was a kind thing to do when someone had been walking in sandals in the desert. Abraham was quick to serve them.

Reading Focus: What words reveal to us that Abraham was very excited to serve these guests?

Read Aloud: Genesis 18:6–8

Question for Comprehension: Did you notice the words that tell us Abraham is excited?

Answer: *Hurried, quick, and ran*

Abraham rushes and gets Sarah busy so they can serve a fine dinner to the honored guests.

The men eat the meal, and Abraham just stands there. He had to be wondering why they had come to him.

Reading Focus: What question do the three men ask?

Read Aloud: Genesis 18:9

Question for Comprehension: What question did the three men ask?

Answer: The three men asked, "Where is your wife Sarah?"

What a question! Imagine being Sarah inside the tent hearing them ask where she was. In the culture they lived in people didn't usually care about women. But messengers from God sure did because God cares for women just as He does for men.

Reading Focus: How much time would pass before the promise would be a reality?

Read Aloud: Genesis 18:10

Question for Comprehension: When would Sarah give birth to a son?

Answer: A year later

Wow! God was now giving an actual time when the promise He made would be answered.

Reading Focus: How does Sarah respond?

Read Aloud: Genesis 18:11–12

Question for Comprehension:

- What did Sarah do?
Answer: She laughed.
- What did Sarah think?
Answer: She thought, "I'm worn out, and my husband is old. Can I really know the joy of having a baby?"
- Does her response show that she believed the Lord and His promise?
Answer: Not really
- Do you think God knew what Sarah was thinking?
Answer: Answers may vary.

Reading Focus: What exactly did God know about Sarah’s thoughts?

Read Aloud: Genesis 18:13–15

Question for Comprehension: What did Sarah say she had not done that God said she really had done?

Answer: Sarah said she had not laughed at God’s promise, but God knew that she had laughed. She lied to God.

Abraham lied when he told people that Sarah was his sister. Now Sarah is lying directly to the Lord. God points out her lie—but her lie (and her doubt) doesn’t keep God from doing what He had promised.

Question for Comprehension: What do you think is going to happen within a year after this story? Why do you think this is going to happen?

Answer: Sarah and Abraham will have their own baby. God promised that they would.

Read Aloud: Proverbs 3:5–6

Question for Comprehension:

- How did Abraham and Sarah depend on their own understanding when asking God for a child?

Answer: Instead of waiting for God to keep His promise, they used Hagar to have a baby.

- Did Abraham and Sarah’s actions actually help accomplish God’s promise?

Answer: No, Hagar gave birth to Ishmael, but he was not the son God had promised Abraham and Sarah.

We don’t understand God’s plans for our lives any more than Abraham and Sarah understood God’s plan for their lives. But we can trust God with *all* our heart. That means we obey what we know to obey from His Word, and we wait for His timing—we don’t take matters into our own hands.

- Did God write off Abraham and Sarah for their bad, abusive plan?

Answer: No.

Activity

Materials: Several pieces of colored construction paper for each student.

Crayons/markers/pencils. Glue stick and scissors for each student.

Instructions: Have students write on one piece of paper the different ways they have sinned.

Point out that Abraham and Sarah had also sinned even though it was different than the way we sin. Then have them circle each sin word and cut it out. Using a new piece of construction paper, guide the students to draw the outline of a cross and glue the sin words to the cross. If time, have them look up and write out Romans 5:8 at the top. God loves us even when we sin.

Cross Craft Example

Wrap Up

Remember, there is nothing you can do that will make God love you more than He already does. There is nothing you can do that will make God love you any less than He already does. God's love is not conditional on your obedience.

But sin does have consequences. It costs the life of Jesus, and it creates all kinds of pain. We will see more about how consequences play out in the lessons ahead.

Memory Verse

Proverbs 3:5–6

FRIDAY: Show What You Know (Key)

Multiple Choice: Choose the letter that best answers the question and write it in the blank.

- B 1. God told Abraham to look up into the sky and count the _____.
A. clouds B. stars C. planets
- C 2. Abraham's _____ made him right with God.
A. perfect obedience B. parents C. faith
- B 3. When God appeared as a torch and flaming coals, walking through the path of blood between the divided animals, He was making a _____ with Abraham.
A. gift B. covenant C. curse
- A 4. When Abraham and Sarah tried to figure out their own plan to make God's promise come true, they used _____ to make a baby.
A. Hagar B. Hanna C. Helen
- B 5. Who took care of Sarah's slave when she ran away from Sarah?
A. Abraham B. God C. no one
- B 6. When Sarah overheard the men telling Abraham she would have a baby herself within one year, what did she do?
A. Cry B. Laugh C. Get Angry
- C 7. When Abraham and Sarah did wrong actions, God loved them _____.
A. More than before
B. Less than before
C. The same as He always had.

Verse Review: Fill in the blanks with the correct words from Proverbs 3:5-6.

8) Trust _____ in the 9) LORD _____ with all your 10) heart _____.

Do not 11) depend _____ on your own 12) understanding _____.

In 13) all _____ your ways 14) obey _____ him.

Then he will make your 15) paths _____ smooth and 16) straight _____.