

LENT 2023

**Genesis 12:1-4, 17:3-8****A Note to the Parents/Teachers**

In this part of the story, we read that God chooses a man, Abram, to create a people that would display to the rest of the world what God was like. He gives Abram a new name, Abraham, which means "Father of Many." He also calls Abraham into a partnership for mission. God gives Abraham an identity, which shapes his community and belonging, and out of those things, tells Abraham to live in such a way that the rest of the world wants to be a part of God's Kingdom.

- **Big Idea:** God gives us a new identity and calls us into a purpose

Starter**Evidence of Grace**

Ask kids to share ways they've seen God at work lately. Anything, big or small, which is good is from God. Take time to thank God together.

Discussion:

- Have you ever promised someone something and then, after you made that promise, realized that you couldn't keep that promise?
- Or have you ever made a promise or agreement with someone, and then they didn't keep their end of the agreement?

Sing Together

Story

What is a promise? According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, a promise is, “a legally binding declaration that gives the person to whom it is made a right to expect or to claim the performance or forbearance of a specified act.” Basically, what that means is that if you make a promise to someone, then the other person has a right to expect that you are going to do what you promised to do.

In Genesis 12, we read about a promise that God gave to a man named Abram (later Abraham). He told Abram to leave the place where he was, and God would direct him to a new place. God asked Abram to leave everything familiar to him and told him to go to a land that God would eventually show him. So Abram didn't know where he was going. God wanted Abram to fully trust Him.

God made a binding promise, or a covenant, with Abraham. God told Abram that He was going to greatly increase Abram's family, but first, he changed Abram's name to Abraham, which means, “Father of Many.” So Abraham's new name, his identity, would be a reminder of God's promise to him. Every time someone called out to Abraham, he would be reminded of God's promise, his new identity, to whom Abraham belonged, and his purpose.

God promised to bless Abraham, and all of the nations of the earth would be blessed through him. In other words, he would be blessed to be a blessing. God didn't promise to bless Abraham because he earned it or deserved it. God promised to bless Abraham for a purpose. Abraham would be blessed so that his family, which would later become the nation of Israel, would show all of the other nations of the earth that there was only one true God.

So God's promise to bless Israel was so that Israel would know that He was the only true God, and in response to His blessing, Israel would live their lives in total allegiance to Him for all of the world to see. A relationship with all of the people of the earth was always a part of God's plan. In the beginning, before sin, God wanted to partner with all of humanity, not just a select few. But, because of sin, God needed to reveal himself to a group of people so that everyone would know who He was and what he was like.

[Dialogue Questions - you may use some or all]

- ▶ What was Abraham's and Israel's purpose?
- ▶ What communities or friend groups that you belong to? How do you know that you belong with that group?
- ▶ What is a purpose you have in life?
- ▶ What is your identity? How would you define yourself? How would others define you or how would they describe you?
- ▶ If our allegiance is to Jesus, what does Jesus say about you? Whom does Jesus say you are? (Gal. 3:26; Rom. 8:14-15)

- If our allegiance is to Jesus, whom does Jesus say you belong to now? (Phil 3:20)
- If our allegiance is to Jesus, what purpose does He call us into now? (Mat. 28:16-20)

Breakout Time

Pray:

God, I know that you are the one true living God who created all things. You created the earth and everything on the earth. You created me. Thank you for sending your Son Jesus so that I can be forgiven of worshiping other things. Forgive me for sometimes worshiping other things than you. I repent. Holy Spirit, please work in my heart to love God and love others in a way that points them to Jesus and your Kingdom. May our hearts be filled with love for you and for others in response to what you have done in and through your Son Jesus and the story you have invited us to now participate in. Help me to think of my community this week and how I can love them well so that they might know you more.

Craft:

The kids can color the picture below.

BLESS Activity

This week, ask your family how you can practice the Speak rhythm. Maybe as you go to school, go to the store with your parent, go to your sports game or after-school activity, or even in your own home and think about who you might be able to speak the good news that the kingdom of God has come to earth in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.



Abraham was the first patriarch. "No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations" - **Genesis 17:5**