

September 20 Activities

Genesis 15

Main Point: God's promises can be trusted, even when everything seems hopeless

GATHERING

PROMISES

"What is a promise? (pause for responses) Has anyone ever made a promise to you? Maybe to have your favorite meal on your birthday or to be able to go somewhere fun? What are some promises someone has made to you? (pause for responses) Have you yourself ever made a promise to someone before? What's a promise that you've made? (pause for responses) For the next one, you don't have to tell us an example, but has anyone ever broken a promise to you or have you broken a promise to someone else? (pause for responses) Broken promises are a part of life, but it's really sad when they happen, right? When promises are broken it can make us feel like we can't always trust promises. But did you know that when God makes a promise, God never, ever, ever, ever breaks it? It's true! Today we are going to hear about a time when God made a big promise to a man named Abraham."

Take some time to let kids have a conversation about this. Gathering time is a great way to get everyone comfortable with each other and form a sense of belonging. Creating an environment where kids know they belong is a way you are enacting the gospel for them!

HIGHS & LOWS

"Before we jump into our activities for today, let's go around and share a high and low from last week."

In addition to this being a great way to create a sense of belonging, it's also a great way to check in with kids and get an idea of what's going on in their lives. From this, you can check in with them on a more personal level if you see them outside of class. The more kids know that children's ministry is a place where people really care about them and ask how they are doing, the more they can trust you if there's ever something really wrong that they need to tell a safe adult about.

TELLING THE STORY

SPARK STORY BIBLE

Our story today is on pages 30-33 in the Spark Story Bible.

REINFORCE

DIY STORY BIBLE

What you'll need:

Coloring page for this week

Three-prong folder (that they already have)

Make their own story Bible this year! Each week have kids color a page that matches the story. When you print copies of the coloring page, make sure they are three-hole punched along the side. When they are finished coloring their page, put it into their three-prong folder (tip: Just have them put the pages in order into the pocket until the end of the year when you can help them put the pages into the prongs. That way the prongs don't get worn out before the end). When you have extra time over the next few weeks, have kids work on coloring the covers of their story Bible folders.

Alternatively, you can just let them color it as a coloring page to take home with them each week.

CLASSROOM PROMISES

What you'll need:

Paper

Pen/Pencil

Use the pen and paper to write down their ideas.

"We are just beginning our time together as a group this year and whenever a new group begins to work together, it's sometimes a good idea to make some promises to each other. As God and Abraham - and the whole Jewish nation - began their relationship together, they also made promises to each other. It's a nice thing to do so we can get along well. God's promise to Abraham that we learned about today was that God would give Abraham a child and through that child would have a whole nation of grandkids and great-grandkids way into the future. Abraham's promise to God was that he would follow and trust in God.

As we start our relationship together, what are some promises we could make to each other? Promises about how we will treat each other, for example?"

Help the kids think of ideas of how they will behave in class, how they will treat each other, how they will listen to you, etc. Work with them a bit to try to get the ideas to come from them, even if you have to really help them get there. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- We will be kind to each other
- We will help someone if they need it
- We will listen quietly to someone when they are speaking - whether it's a teacher or a classmate
- We will participate in class activities
- Teacher will treat all the kids well and listen to them well
- We will encourage each other

When you are done, read the list back to everyone and hang it on a wall. Refer back to it as you begin each day, or as needed throughout the year as a reminder.

MOVE!

Midway through your time together, I'd recommend giving your kids a chance to get up and move around. Here are some suggestions for you to choose from, depending on your class and how they're feeling this week:

- Dance to Christian music! (Get a CD or download a Christian Dance music playlist onto your device. If you have a wifi signal, you can also play music videos off of your computer. Just do a google search on 'Christian kids dance music' and you'll get some options. You can also mix

this one up by stopping the music here and there and when you do they have to freeze otherwise they have to sit down.)

- Yoga! (Cosmic Kids Yoga is a great place to start with younger kids, though there's a lot of choices out there on YouTube. CosmicKids is not affiliated with any religion, but learning yoga and calming our bodies helps us to live from a place of action and not reaction, allowing us to love our neighbors better.)
- GoNoodle! (Search YouTube for GoNoodle videos. Just a fun way to get them moving!)
- Freeze Dance Game by the Kiboomers! (Also just a fun way to get them moving. They have holiday themed ones as well)

CRAFT: STARRY NIGHT

What you'll need:

Black construction paper

Glue sticks

Yellow glitter

Star stickers

Drop cloth

"What did God promise to give to Abraham? (pause for responses) Lots of grandchildren going on for thousands of years! So many it would be as impossible to count them as it would be to count the stars in the sky! For our craft today we are going to make a night sky with lots of stars! So many, it would be almost impossible to count them all."

Have kids use their glue stick to get a layer of glue all over their black paper. Then have them sprinkle yellow glitter all over it, then turn it on it's side and shake any extra off (or bring a garbage bin around to have them dump it into there). Finally, they can add any additional star stickers onto it to complete.

MIRRORING GAME

"When God chose Abraham and Sarah to be the ones to start the Jewish nation, God's idea was to have a special group of people who would follow God's laws of love so well that the rest of the world would see how good life is following God's laws and then do what they did. This was a way that God tried to make the world a better place.

As we think about God's plan for the rest of the world to do what the Jewish nation would do, we are going to play a game."

To play the game, have everyone find a partner and stand next to each other with plenty of space around each pair. Have one person in each pair start out being the one who does the different moves, and the second person has to do whatever they did. If there is a group of three, just have two kids mimic the one. Switch partway through. You can make suggestions for actions to mimic like making different funny faces, different dance moves, hopping/jumping a certain way, striking different poses.

SERVE WITH LOVE

BABY CARE KITS

What you'll need:

Various baby items, depending on your approach

Paper

Markers/Crayons

"What were all those stars in the sky supposed to be like for Abraham? (pause for responses) Babies! So today for our service project we are going to put together baby care kits that will help new moms and dads take care of their own new baby."

There are a few ways to do this, depending on your context. You could contact your area hospital/birthing center to find out if they would like to receive baby care kits (with things like onesies, hats, and socks wrapped in a receiving blanket) that they could give away to new parents. They could let you know the kinds of things that would be helpful to include in the kit. You could also check with your area women's shelter, too.

If these don't work for you, you could make baby care kits for Lutheran World Relief's Baby Care Kit program. Follow the link to get the details: <https://lwr.org/make-baby-care-kits>

Have your kids help assemble the kits in class. You could have them draw a cheerful picture to include, as well.

To assemble all the items ahead of time, you could have an item drive advertised in your bulletin in the weeks leading up to this, or put a call out for gift cards so that your leaders can buy the needed supplies.

DISCIPLESHIP

FAITH STORY PROMPTS

At some point, you can tell them a faith story of yours related to God's promise to Abraham. Hearing about your faith each week is a way for you to witness to the gospel, giving them examples of what faith looks like as it is enacted in and affected by life. Here are some ideas:

- When you look at the vastness of the night sky with all the innumerable stars, how do you feel?
- Have you ever witnessed something miraculous? What happened?

- Have you ever had to wait a long time to move from a place of devastation to a place of healing and new life? How did the whole experience shape your faith?

DISCIPLESHIP TAKEAWAY

"As we learn about God and what following God means for our lives, one of the big things we can learn from this story is that God can be trusted, even when it sometimes takes a long time for the new life that God brings to happen. There is a part of the Bible called the Psalms, which is what that whole nation of people that came from Abraham used in worship like we sing hymns and praise songs. We don't know what the music sounded like, but we still have the words. Today, we are going to memorize some words from one of those psalms.

Repeat after me: With all my heart (repeat) I am waiting LORD, (repeat) for you! (repeat) I trust your promises. (repeat)

(Do this a couple of times.)

Good job! Let's try a bit more. Repeat after me again: With all my heart (repeat) I am waiting Lord, for you! (repeat) I trust your promises. (repeat) (Do this a couple of times)

A bit more, ready? With all my heart I am waiting Lord, for you! (repeat) I trust your promises. (repeat) (Do this a couple of times - then see if they can do the whole thing! This will be easier if you put a little rhythm into it. It is also okay if they don't totally get it down - just help them repeat the words at this point and see how they do.)"

QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION

- What do you think about the story for today? What jumped out at you either because it was nice or strange or confusing? (Let kids think about it on their own and spark conversations based on their thoughts first)
- How do you think Abraham and Sarah felt when they have always wanted to have kids but never could, and then were told they would have a baby after they were past the age of being able to, and that through that child they would have many thousands of great-grandkids? How would you feel if it was you?
- What does it say about God that:
 - God would choose to start a relationship with people? (Humanity is really important to God!)
 - God would give a baby to an old barren couple? (Gives us hope, is very powerful, wants us to know the baby is special and only here through God's doing)

SENDING

PRAYER

"Let's close our eyes and close our hands and pray,

Dear God,

you made a promise to Abraham that brought new life out of a place of sadness, though he had to wait many years. Help us to trust you, even as we wait for new life to spring forth. Amen.

BLESSING

Make the sign of the cross in the air in front of each of them as you look them in the eye and say, "May your heart always trust in God."

TAKE IT HOME

Adapt the following take home sheet based on what you did today: ([Link on website](#))