

date: 10/1/17**Bible Passage: Genesis 12; 15; 17**
(Abram)

God Is a Covenant Keeper, Part 2

REMEMBER VERSE

You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory
and honor and power, for you created all things.

Revelation 4:11a

Inspire

Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives

I grew up in the church and went to a Christian school, so by the time I was working in ministry I was sure I had it all figured out. I knew all the stories from the Bible and had memorized a bunch of verses. In my own ignorance and pride, I assumed I didn't have much to learn. (I was just setting myself up for a wake-up call!)

One Sunday, I was serving in our elementary ministry when our families pastor got onstage to share what she called "The Big God Story." In 15 minutes or so, she went through the entire Bible from creation to the resurrection and the beginnings of the church. Now, the pieces of this story were nothing I hadn't heard before. But even with all my education, I never understood that they flowed together as one big story! I was blown away at my previous state of ignorance. But that wasn't all. She wrapped up this epic story by explaining that this story never ended, but continues today. Suddenly, I realized ... I'm a part of the same story that began in the garden and continued with Abraham, Moses, David, Esther, Paul, and so many others.

This was the wake-up call that forever changed my understanding of God ... of His Word ... of myself. I began to see the truth of who God is in a whole new light! God is weaving a master story throughout all of history, so we may know who He is and be in relationship with Him.

Matt Barnes

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Equip

Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage

In the very first verse of Genesis 12, God tells Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.” Today, it could be easy for us to skim over this passage without fully comprehending the magnitude of what God required in this verse. In Abram’s culture, a man’s identity was fully encompassed by three crucial categories: geographical heritage, family lineage, and his father’s identity.

To begin, God commanded Abram to leave his country. Genesis 11 identifies that Abram’s family was located in Ur of the Chaldeans, which was a city in southern Babylonia—modern-day Kuwait. Archaeologists discovered that this had been a highly advanced and urban city in ancient days, booming with trade by both land and sea. For Abram to depart from such a well-developed society in order to head to an unknown location would have been extremely challenging and uncomfortable. It would have taken a lot of faith in God!

In addition, Abram didn’t come from a family line that worshiped Yahweh alone. Abram lived in a culture and society that worshipped false gods—some even created images to represent their various gods. Actual relationship or communication between man and God would have been quite unexpected.

God called Abram to abandon everything: his family, his idols, his inheritance, and his country. Essentially, he was commanded to relinquish his identity. God was going to use Abram to bless the entire world. But first, it required great faith and sacrifice ... a foreshadowing of the sacrifices that were to come.

Support

Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God’s Word

As you prepare for this lesson, spend time reading these passages from Genesis. As God keeps His promises to the people in His Word and in your life today, how have you come to know Him more fully? What have you learned about this God who keeps His promises?

May God use you to bring the children into a time of experiencing Him in the church setting, and may your leading be infused with the passion and conviction that come from an overflow of your soul. May the conversations you share together encourage the children to have further discussions with their families during the week. May the families in your ministry be transformed by their encounter with God—that they’ll know Him better and respond to Him with faith and obedience. God is a covenant keeper, and we can trust Him.

EXPLORE::: 10 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity about the day’s portion of The Big God Story.

Star Light, Star Bright

God made a very special promise to Abram. He would have so many descendants that counting them would be like trying to count the stars in the sky. To get the children thinking about stars and their numbers, create constellations for your room.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- Butcher paper (3', black)
- Painter's tape (or masking tape)
- Chalk (1 piece per child, glow-in-the-dark or white)
- Pictures of simple constellations (search online)

PREPARE AHEAD

Tape black butcher paper to a wall or table. (If you're taping the paper to a wall, consider using painter's tape. This will prevent the tape from pulling paint off the wall's surface.) With chalk, create dot-to-dot patterns of stars on the butcher paper by drawing and numbering each dot. Or draw a simple night scene with the chalk (house, tree, moon) and invite children to fill in the stars in the sky. Tape pictures of constellations above the black butcher paper for children to see. Place chalk in a location near the butcher paper.

RELATE

Invite children to the constellation wall or table. Explain that a constellation is a group of stars that form a pattern or shape in the sky. Encourage them to connect the dots or fill in the starry sky on the mural. **Who has ever been out at night to see stars in the sky? Can you see them better in the city or the country? How many stars can you count? Can you ever count them all?** Children may even want to create their own star patterns for one another to complete. If you used glow-in-the-dark chalk, be sure to take a moment to turn off the lights so kids can admire their work. Have fun!

DISCOVER:: 25 min.**Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller**

Children participate in discovering God's Word through Bible verse memorization, interactive storytelling techniques, and worship as response.

Ponder Point**God Is a Covenant Keeper****Chloe's Rules****Host/Worship Leader****SUPPLIES**

- [Chloe's Rules videos](#)
- Worship music (suggestions: "I May Be Small" and "Everybody, Everywhere," TruWorship *Sincerely Yours*)

RELATE

Welcome children as they're entering the large group meeting area. *Tech: Cue Chloe's Rules video.* The theme song will play as the Worship Leader/Host enters and makes his way up front, welcoming and greeting children along the way. This should be a high-energy entrance. Choose and play two upbeat worship songs of your choice from a worship album that complements the theme and focus of the lesson.

Mail Time

Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse image (see Resources)
- Remember Verse cards (see Resources)
- Bibles (your personal and large children's)
- Mailbox

RELATE

Tech: Cue the Mail Time intro clip and image. Choose one volunteer to hide the mail and another to find the mail. Have the "Seeker" close her eyes while the "Hider" finds a good place to hide the Remember Verse. Once the mail has been hidden, the Seeker will begin to look for the mail while the children give clues to its whereabouts by calling out "hot" and "cold."

Once the Seeker finds the mail, the Host invites her to pull out the enclosed Remember Verse. Next, the Host should find the Remember Verse in his Bible and read the words aloud. Talk about the meaning of the verse while interacting with the children.

Lead the children in reciting the Remember Verse several times together using a variety of engaging methods. Hand motions, different voices, various speeds, and character integration are all great ways to help commit the Scripture to memory. For longer verses, approach the verse one section at a time, increasing what the children repeat back each week.

REMEMBER VERSE

**You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory
and honor and power, for you created all things.**

Revelation 4:11a

REMEMBER VERSE DEFINITIONS

Worthy: Deserving; only God is worthy of worship

Glory: Brilliant, radiant beauty that brings praise to God

Honor: Worship, exalt

REMEMBER VERSE MOTIONS

You are worthy: Point to sky then place hands on heart.

our Lord and God: Make letter "L" with right index finger and thumb at left shoulder. Move "L" diagonally down to right hip.

to receive glory: Hold out open, bent arms, palms up.

and honor: Keep arms out and tilt head back to face up to sky.

and power: Make strong arms.

for you created all things: Cross arms over each other in front of body and then open arms up and out.

Wardrobe of Wonder

Storyteller/Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- [What'sIt: Suitcase](#) (see optional image in Resources)
- Suitcase and props: [Rainbow and Starry Night Sky images](#) (see Resources), toy suitcase, toy camel or donkey, dollhouse family, heart, baby doll

What'sIt: Suitcase

Although a suitcase isn't in our story of Abram, it's an item children will easily recognize as something they might use when traveling or moving. Use it as a discussion starter about traveling and the excitement mixed with anxiety one might feel. When we're traveling or moving, we can trust God to be with us.

PREPARE AHEAD

Gather the props and put them in the suitcase before placing it in the Wardrobe of Wonder. Pictures will work just as well if you can't locate actual items.

RELATE

Tech: Cue the *Wardrobe of Wonder* intro clip and image. Invite a child volunteer to "spy" on the What'sIt by peeking into the wardrobe. Each time the wardrobe door opens, cue the *Wardrobe of Wonder* sound effect. Have him whisper the identity of the What'sIt in your ear to ensure he knows what it is.

Invite your assistant to sit on the stools with you. Then lead the group in asking the assistant yes-or-no questions about the What'sIt. Once the children have guessed correctly, ask your assistant to retrieve the What'sIt from the wardrobe and bring it to you. Thank your volunteer and encourage him to sit with his small group.

ASK

What do you think a suitcase is doing in the Wardrobe of Wonder? Allow volunteer to give you some suggestions. If she's having difficulty, invite all the kids to give suggestions. **When do you use a suitcase? What would you put inside one if you were traveling or moving? I wonder how the What'sIt connects with what we're going to hear today from The Big God Story! Friends, what do you think? Let's find out because it's time for ...**

Note: Don't open the What'sIt suitcase at this time. Return it to the wardrobe to be removed by the Storyteller during The Big God Story.

The Big God Story

Genesis 12; 15; 17

God Is a Covenant Keeper

Storytelling Technique: Props

SUPPLIES

- [The Big God Story intro clip and image](#) (see Resources)
- Optional: [Storytelling video](#) (see Resources), star projector

SET UP

Cue the Storytelling video if you choose to use it.

RELATE

Tech: Cue The Big God Story intro clip and image. Pull out the suitcase from the Wardrobe of Wonder. Tech: Cue Wardrobe of Wonder sound effect. Hi, friends. I'm so happy you found a suitcase in the Wardrobe of Wonder because you see, I'm going on a big trip and I really need to start packing! Open suitcase and look inside. **Wait ... there's already a lot of stuff in this suitcase. I think these are things to help us with The Big God Story today. These things remind me about someone else who took a big trip. Do you want to hear about it?** Wait for children to respond. **Okay, but before we jump into The Big God Story, let's stop and ask God to teach us.** Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

Last week we learned about the covenant God made with Noah. Remove Rainbow image from suitcase. **This rainbow reminds me about that covenant God made with Noah.** Set image in front of suitcase so visible. **Do you remember what a covenant is?** Wait for children to answer. **A covenant is a very special promise. When God makes a promise, He keeps His promise no matter what! Why? Because God is a covenant keeper. A long time after Noah, God spoke to a man named Abram and told him to pack up all of his things** (pull out toy suitcase and set it in front), **because he was going on a big trip.**

God told Abram to leave his home, his family, and even his country! Even though Abram would leave everything behind, he wouldn't be alone. God was going to be with Abram. He wanted Abram to know Him and to trust Him! God asked Abram to go on this trip without knowing exactly where he was headed. Can you imagine that? The most important thing was for Abram to trust God and follow Him.

So, Abram and his wife, Sarai, packed up everything and left their home just as God told them. They had to walk or ride on the backs of their animals. Remove toy camel or donkey and set in front with other items. **Abram and Sarai had a very long journey ahead of them. They had to trust God to show them the way and to remember that God always keeps His promises, no matter what! God also told Abram He was going to make him "a great nation." Abram was amazed! God promised Abram that his children would be a part of God blessing all the people of the earth for all time—even us!**

One night God visited with Abram. He told Abram to look up and count the stars. Pull out and hold up Starry Night Sky image. If using a star projector, turn it on. **Can any of us count all the stars? No! That would be impossible! But God told Abram that he would have so many descendants, or children, that counting them would be like trying to count the stars in the sky! Wow, that's more than we could ever count. Abram was so excited. The Bible says he believed God and knew God would keep His promise.**

Many years later, God visited Abram. God wanted Abram to understand the covenant He had made with him. What is a covenant? Wait for answers and affirm children's participation. **A covenant is a very special promise. When God makes a promise, He will always keep it, no matter what! Why? Because God is a covenant keeper. God's promise to Abram was that he would be the father of a huge family** (remove dollhouse family from suitcase); **God would watch over them and be their God forever. Not only that, God was going to use Abram's family to bless the whole world! You see, God wants everyone to know about Him and His great love for each person.** Remove heart, hold up, and then set down with other items. **So God decided to use Abram's family to tell people all the things that are true about God! To remind Abram of this covenant, God gave Abram and his wife, Sarai, new names. God changed Sarai's name to Sarah, and He changed Abram's name to Abraham, which means "father of many nations."**

A few years later, Abraham's wife had a baby! Remove baby doll from suitcase. Because of this covenant God made, Abraham's family grew and went on to tell the whole world about God. God showed His great love to Abraham. He knows and loves each one of us just like He did Abraham and Sarah. Friends, when we think about everything God did for Abraham, we can know and remember that God is a covenant keeper, and we can trust Him no matter what!

Wonder Questions

Small Group Enhancements, coloring pages, and discussion questions help your group go deeper into today's portion of The Big God Story.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [Wonder Questions coloring pages \(see Resources\)](#)
- [TruWonder Small Group Enhancements timeline and images \(see Resources\)](#)
- Crayons

RELATE

God made covenants with Noah and Abram. A covenant is a very special promise. When God makes a promise, He will always keep it, no matter what! We heard how God made the covenant with Abram. God promised Abram a huge family and that God would bless the whole world by sending the Savior through his family. God keeps His promises!

I wonder ... What did Abram see when he was traveling to his new home?

I wonder ... How did Abram show that he trusted God?

I wonder ... What are some of the ways I can show God that I trust Him?

BLESS::: 5 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing may be a prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [Remember Verse cards \(see Resources\)](#)

RELATE

This week as a part of the time of blessing, have children divide into two to three small groups and hold hands while facing their leader. Give each group a couple words of the following Scripture blessing from 1 John 2:25 and invite them to say the words in the correct order. This will include all of the kids and allow them to work together to bless each other. **And this is what he promised us—eternal life.** Repeat.

May God guide your steps. May you know His love, His blessing, and that His words are always true.