

date: **9/17/17****Bible Passage: Genesis 12; 15—16**
(Abram)

God Is a Covenant Keeper (Part 2)

REMEMBER VERSE

**Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.
Psalm 90:2**

Inspire

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

I stood in a white lace dress and heels that made my feet ache so badly that I had to lean on my soon-to-be husband, whose hands and voice shook with emotion. Our friends and family watched as we promised to love and care for each other, come what may.

My husband and I had already made these vows to each other many times before our marriage, though not in the same words. Even so, something different happened while we stood in a church in front of our community that day. That day, the covenant was sealed, and something in my heart knew the difference.

Since then, our new marriage has been sweet and beautiful. But I can honestly say that our love does not compare to the love I have found in Christ. Through Christ's death on the cross, God has given me a love found nowhere else. He has given me peace that fills me from the inside out. He has given my life meaning by allowing me to play a part in the most important story ever told—His story.

Because of the love I have found in Christ, "my cup overflows" (Psalm 23:5). I am in awe of the fact that He entered into a covenant of love with me and will keep it forever.

Tori Funkhouser
ROCKHARBOR Church

Equip

Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage

Before God entered into a covenant with Abram, He told Abram to leave his home and all of his surroundings and go to a new place where God would lead him. So Abram left, not knowing where God would take him. But God's call came with the promise to bless Abram immensely—to make him a great nation and to bless all of the people of the earth through him (Genesis 12:2–3).

Abram waited 25 long years for God to fulfill His promise. Still, Abram—whose name God would later change to Abraham—chose to believe that God would keep His promises, even when the promises seemed impossible. Paul writes that “against all hope, Abraham in hope believed” (Romans 4:18). Paul goes on to say that Abram “did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised” (verses 20–21).

Abram believed God would keep His covenant. We have Abram's testimony and the testimonies of many others to confirm this fact: God keeps His promises.

Support

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

As you prepare for this lesson, spend time reading the passage on your own. Invite the Holy Spirit to transform you with the same verses you'll bring to the children. Let what you share with the kids be infused with the passion and conviction that comes from the overflow of your own life. Listen for the specific “aha” moment God reveals to you as you prepare for the lesson, and integrate that truth into what you share.

This lesson is merely a tool. Use it as a guide, but make it personal. Think about times in your own life when you've seen God keep His promises, and share your stories with the children. Allow the kids, in turn, to share their own stories with you and their peers.

Pray that God will use you to bring children into a time of experiencing Him in the church setting. Also pray that parents and kids experience His realness at home. Pray that your kids will be transformed by their encounter with God—that they will know Him better and respond to Him with faith and obedience. If possible, find a time to pray with the parents for their role as spiritual leaders of their home.

SMALL GROUP
SECTION

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.

Starry Sky

In Genesis 22:17, God promised Abraham, formerly Abram, that He would give him so many descendants that counting them would be like counting the stars in the sky. Today lead your kids in a fun and starry activity that challenges them to remember the huge number of stars in the sky!

SUPPLIES

- Aluminum foil (approx. 5" x 5")
- Cup (large)
- Pushpin
- Flashlight (large)

RELATE

Welcome children as they arrive and ask them to take a seat at the table. **In today's portion of The Big God Story we'll hear about a man to whom God made a big promise. God promised Abram that he would have so many descendants—children, and grandchildren, and great grandchildren, and great great grandchildren, and so on—that counting them would be like trying to count the stars in the sky. Let's make our own starry sky as we remember this huge promise!**

Wrap the foil over the mouth of the cup. Take turns passing the cup and the pushpin around the table. Invite children to gently poke one or two holes in the foil before passing the cup to the next person. Once tiny holes cover the foil, remove it from the cup and hold it over the flashlight so the children can see light coming through the holes. Discuss: **How many stars do you think are in the universe? Do you think it would be possible to count all the stars in the sky?**

LARGE GROUP

SECTION

DISCOVER// 30 min.

Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller

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

Traditions and Remember Verse

SUPPLIES

- Mementos for your church Traditions (rocks, marbles, gum balls, etc.)
- [Remember Verse image](#) (see Resources)

RELATE

Give the children mementos (such as rocks, marbles, or blocks) for accomplishments such as memorizing the Remember Verse or bringing their Bibles. Have them put the objects into a clear container or add them to a structure, and celebrate when it's complete.

This week's Remember Verse focuses on a character trait of God that's highlighted in today's portion of The

Big God Story.

Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. Psalm 90:2

Connect

Encourage the members of your community to get to know one another through engaging questions, energizing games, and creative activities.

Question

What do you call your parents' parents?

The Big God Story

Bible Passage: Genesis 12; 15—16

Storytelling Technique: Volunteers Showing Objects

God Is a Covenant Keeper

SUPPLIES

- [Timeline image](#) (see Resources)
- Bibles
- Suitcase (small)
- Star stickers (10–20)
- Baby item (pacifier, bottle, blanket, etc.)
- Jar or clear container (medium-sized, with leak-proof lid)
- Sand (enough to fill jar or container half full)
- Table
- Butcher paper or poster board (black, approx. 3')
- Tape
- Bowl (clear, large enough to hold sand)

SET UP

Pour the sand into the jar or container and seal the lid. Put the jar in the suitcase along with the stickers and baby item. Tape the black butcher paper or poster board to the wall near the front of the storytelling area. Also set up the table near the front and place the bowl on one side of the table.

RELATE

Enter the storytelling area carrying the suitcase and walking quickly as though you're in a hurry. Look up at the children and act surprised to see them. **Oh, hello there! I was in such a hurry to get where I was going that I forgot you all were here! Have any of you ever taken a trip before? Where did you go?** Allow responses. **Today we're going to hear about a man who took a journey to a faraway place. But first, let's pray.** Lead children in Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

We've heard how God made Adam and Eve with His own hands, in His own image, and breathed life into them. He lived in perfect relationship with them in the garden ... until they disobeyed Him. Their

in God, he received salvation, and we can also receive salvation through faith by believing that Jesus died for our sins. Share a story about how you came to know that God desired a relationship with you through salvation.

RESPOND// 15 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children reflect on what the Holy Spirit is teaching them and respond through creative activities and games.

Reflect: God Is a Covenant Keeper

Encourage the kids to open their Bibles and read the suggested passages.

Questions for Younger Kids

- **What is a *covenant*?**
- **Who did God say would be some of Abram's descendants?** Genesis 17:6
- **What does God's promise to Abram mean to us?** Galatians 3:26–29; Romans 8:14–16
- **What interested you the most about this part of The Big God Story?**
- **What does this part of The Big God Story show you about God?**

Questions for Older Kids

- **What is a *covenant*?**
- **Have you ever had to wait a long time for a promise to be fulfilled? Are you still waiting?**
- **Who did God say would be some of Abram's descendants?** Genesis 17:6
- **What does God's promise to Abram mean to us?** Galatians 3:26–29; Romans 8:14–16
- **What did you hear today that made you want to know more?**
- **What does today's part of The Big God Story tell you about God?**

BLESS// 5 min.

Small Group Leaders

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

SUPPLIES

- **Remember Verse cards** (see Resources)
- Bible

RELATE

Encourage the children to hold their hands in front of them, palms up. This posture symbolizes a willingness of heart to respond to God's Holy Spirit and receive what God has for them. Invite them to remain in this posture as you bless them.

First, give the kids an opportunity to bless one another with words of truth. Have kids remain with their partners from the Create activity. Encourage them to take turns blessing each other with a simple truth about how God feels about them. For example, a child might say, "(Partner's name), may you know God loves you very much" or "(Partner's name), may you remember that God always keeps His promises."

End with the following blessing over the entire group:

May you know that God loves you and always keeps His promises. May you remember that God always watches over you.