

COVENANT

GENESIS 15:1-12, 17-18; 17:1-7, 15-16; 18:1-5; 21:1-7

Open leaflets and pass out chalk.

Tear off leaflet square.

1. We're included in God's family! Draw an arrow to a few of the stars and label them with the names of your immediate family.
2. By including everyone—even those outside of Abram's direct descendants—God has made us all part of the same family! Label a few more stars with the names of friends who aren't in your immediate family.
3. This last step might be the hardest for kids to get their heads around; don't let it turn into a discussion about people they don't like! The goal is personal reflection about what it means for God's love to be truly offered to *everyone*.
4. Finally, it's important to remember that God has really included *everybody* in this family—even people we don't get along with or who believe different things than we do. Don't label with names this time, but circle two stars that represent people you don't consider your friends. What does it mean that God accepts people who are hard for us to accept?

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

How has your understanding of the "family of God" changed today? Take time to hear kids' responses. **The stars are a great image of how we're included in God's covenant—alongside so many others that we can't count them all! Every day is a fresh opportunity to meet and show God's love to someone new.**

Return to the leaflet panels and pass out pens.

Stories like this one help us remember we are connected to God in covenant, like these two puzzle pieces. What promise could you make to someone? Write it across both pieces to help you remember.

Send kids out.

God gives us the gift of covenant! Repeat after me: God, may our hearts always agree with yours.

Pray together: **God, thank you for including us in your big family. Amen.**

Thank kids for thinking big thoughts about God's love today! Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.

What's happening in this story?

Abram and Sarai (later called Abraham and Sarah) have been through a pretty incredible journey already, and the saga continues with this story of God's covenant with them. Abram has been faithful to God through so much, and in this passage he must again step out in faith in God's promise. Despite the couple's old age, God promises Abram an heir, and further promises that his descendants will be as numerous as the stars.

What does this story mean for kids?

Kids have trouble waiting for things, especially celebrations like birthdays and Christmas. Thinking of these experiences can help kids empathize with Abram. Abram trusted God, but that didn't make waiting easier. Kids can also explore the concept of covenant by thinking of things that seem impossible. Many of kids' impossible goals are within their vision but just out of reach. Thinking with kids about these "impossible" tasks helps them get an idea of how Abram must have felt about God's covenantal promise of an heir.

Why this story?

The story of Abram and Sarai (later renamed Abraham and Sarah) begins to tell us the story of God's chosen people. Abraham and Sarah are our ancestors of faith and play a huge role in the unfolding story of God's people.

AGE LEVEL TIP

Kids this age may need help to get their heads around the idea of "no, really—*everybody!*" when it comes to whom God loves and wants to include! Invite them to consider their relationships with people *outside* our faith as opportunities to include others in God's love—not exclude them.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Clear tape
- Paper
- Pens
- Chalk

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Star stickers

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

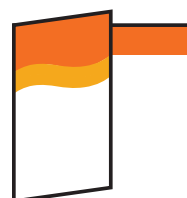
Provide paper and star stickers. Invite kids to create constellations with the star stickers.

Circle up with kids for an opening conversation.

Today we are going to be reading and thinking about promises. God makes a lot of promises, and those promises are always kept! Have you ever heard someone make a promise and then say, “Cross my heart”? Well let’s cross our hearts as we say, “God, may your promises stay with me in my heart.”

Pass out leaflets and pens.

When have you heard someone make a promise that you had a hard time believing they would keep? Write that promise, but not the person who made it, in the speech bubble on the front flap. Preview the promises they write and choose a couple to read aloud. What makes a promise believable?



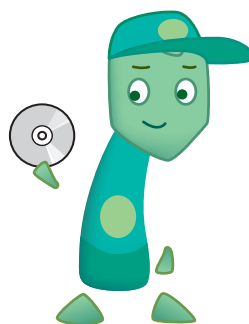
Gather kids around the screen where you’ll watch the video.

I’m sure we’ve all felt like we were completely alone at some time. Today Gabe is going to experience that a little.

View the episode titled “Swab Problems” on the Whirl Classroom DVD Sampler.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- Why did Gabe want to be related to Abraham?
- When have you felt like you didn’t fit in?
- How does God include us in the covenant we read about in Genesis?
- How does your faith connect you to God? To others?
- How does Gabe’s real-life adoption relate to our connection to this covenant?



Pass out Whirl Kids Study Bible Samplers and help kids find today’s story in Genesis. The story spans many chapters.

Today we’re going to read about God’s covenant with Abraham. At first in this story, he is called Abram. Later, God changes both Abram and his wife Sarai’s names.

Read Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18; 17:1-7, 15-16; 18:1-5 ; 21:1-7 by engaging kids’ imaginations during this reading! I’ll be the reader today. While I read, your job is to listen carefully while you look up into the sky—straight through our roof! Stare far, far away—all the way past the blue and into the darkness of space. Let your imagination adjust to the darkness and picture the uncountable number of stars! Give kids a few moments to relax. Closing their eyes or turning down the lights may help them listen and imagine. Then read the content in the margins to see what Leo, Ruby, and Gabe have to say.



Ask these questions after you read the story:

- Why was Abram so concerned about having children?
- Reread Chapter 15:5-6. What did God promise Abram? How did Abram believe God?
- What does the promise of such a huge family mean to Abraham and Sarah?
- What things in your life assure you that God cares for you?
- What does it mean to you to be in covenant with God?

Make your mark on the Wall Chart.

Look at the chart and find the theme for today. Give kids time to find the word *Covenant*. Then ask them to write “God” on a small slip of paper and “us” on another slip. Join the two pieces with tape and then attach them to the Wall Chart. **Promises connect us to God.**

The Whirl Classroom curriculum includes a Wall Chart that is not included in this Sampler. Shaded content shows how this Wall Chart is referenced.



BIBLE BIT

An *heir* is the person who receives either a position or property that belonged to someone else, usually at the time of their death.

WATCH IT AGAIN

Where did Gabe find assurance of God’s acceptance?

OUR CHURCH

Find out what promises are made when someone in your congregation is baptized. Who makes the promise? Who keeps the promise?