

COVENANT

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

Open leaflets and pass out pens.

Tear off leaflet square.

- We are part of Abraham and Sarah's family too. God's covenant with Abraham and Sarah that they would have a child is also a promise to us. Let's go on a mission to discover how many "stars" are in the "sky" just from our group.**
- Ask kids to figure out how many people are in their extended families. Include biological, adopted, or stepparents, along with brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, and great-grandparents.
- Once the math is done, invite each kid to say their last name and how many people are in their extended family. Kids will write the last name(s) of each family and the number of people who are part of it on the larger star on the leaflet.
- Add the numbers from everyone to calculate a class total for the people in God's family. Have kids write this number on the smaller star on the leaflet. **God's promise to Abraham and Sarah was kept. There are many "stars in the sky," and more added each day!**
- Families celebrate birthdays. For fun, let's figure out our birthdays by lining up in order of birth order without talking!** When the kids are lined up, verify that they are in birthday order and offer a prayer of thanks to God, who keeps promises.
- Take a photo of your group and post it, with permission, on your church's website with the caption "We are part of God's promise to Abraham and Sarah!"

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

God keeps promises, and we are part of them. Invite kids to share what they remember about biblical covenants. **God's promise to Abraham was different from those because Abraham didn't have to do anything. God did all the work, and Abraham received the promise.**

Return to the leaflets and pass out pens.

Being part of God's family impacts our daily lives through prayer, Christian celebrations, worship, serving others, etc. What is your favorite part about being a descendant of Abraham and Sarah? Describe it on your leaflet.

Send kids out.

Ask kids to share what they liked best about their time together today. Encourage everyone to share with their families how God's promise to Abram impacts their daily lives.

Pray together: **God, you kept your promise to Abraham and Sarah, even when they wondered if it would ever come true. Thank you. Our lives are different because of your promise. Amen.**

Thank kids for coming today! Encourage them to notice how their faith impacts their life at home and school. 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

Fifth and sixth grade students know about belonging. Some of their peer groups are strengthening, while kids with few friends will feel like they don't belong. Be sensitive to those surrounded by friends and those more isolated. Work to provide an environment where everyone feels they belong.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Pencils
- Paper
- Pens
- Tape
- Markers
- Scissors

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Cardstock (variety of colors)

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Ask kids to cut a star out of cardstock, write their name on it, and decorate it. Hang the stars on the wall, tape them to a door, or attach them to a doorframe. **We are all part of God's promise to Abraham and Sarah.**

Circle up with kids for an opening conversation.

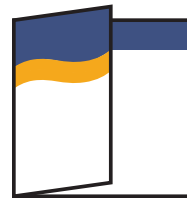
Today's story is about Abraham and Sarah. They had to wait a long time for something they really wanted. Tell a one-sentence story about something you have waited for. Be sure to share your own story. When everyone who wants to share has done so, list the things that kids in your group have waited for.

Invite everyone to wait silently for one minute and think about the last time someone promised them something. After one minute, ask everyone to throw their arms in the air and say, "Thank you for keeping your promises, God! Amen."

Pass out leaflets and pens.

God promised Abraham and Sarah two things. Solve the puzzle on the first page of the leaflet to discover what they were. Match the number under the blank

with the letter in the alphabet key and write the letter in the blank. (Answer: God promised Abraham and Sarah descendants and land.)



Next, invite the kids to solve the second puzzle to discover the word *covenant*. **Covenant is a word that means "promise."** Explain that in certain promises of God, God expects nothing of us but to be faithful. God does all the work.

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

In today's video, Gabe has just received results of a genetic test to get answers about his ancestors. He doesn't get what he hopes for, but he does learn more about what it means to be part of God's family.

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

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- When do you feel like you really belong?
- When do you feel like Gabe—that you don't really belong?
- God promised Abraham descendants as bountiful as the stars in the sky. Why do you think God uses this image?
- Leo really listened to Gabe and understood what he was saying. How can you really listen to your friends?
- We are all adopted into God's family. What does that mean for you?



Pass out Whirl Kids Study Bible Samplers and help kids find today's story in Genesis.

Look at the Wall Chart and find the book of Genesis. Let kids know that this is the first of five books called the Pentateuch.



Today's story is from a few chapters in Genesis. Let's divide up, read the verses in groups, and report back. Divide kids into four groups and assign them these verses:

Group 1 reads Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18.

Group 2 reads Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16.

Group 3 reads Genesis 18:1-5.

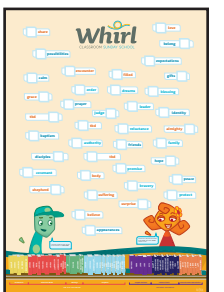
Group 4 reads Genesis 21:1-7.

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- What types of animals were sacrificed?
- What was the name change that happened in this story?
- What promise did God make to Abraham and Sarah?
- What does laughter have to do with this story?
- What is the most interesting part of this story to you? What is the hardest to understand?

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*. One way to remember this story and God's promise is to think of Sarah's laughter when she heard of God's promise that she and Abraham would have a baby. Invite kids to fill the box by the word *Covenant* with the word *Ha* to help them recall this story.



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

Abraham is known as the patriarch of Christianity and other faith traditions. Christianity, Judaism, and Islam share the same heritage in Abraham.

WATCH IT AGAIN

Watch the video from Leo's perspective. Describe what kind of friend Leo is.

OUR CHURCH

Celebrate the babies who are part of your church community. Make a card or small gift as a class and present it to your church's newest member.