

AT HOME FAITH TIME FOR PRETEENS

PRETEEN SECTION

Make sure your parents read the Bible story too! You may read together, or separately.

BIBLE STORY: ABRAHAM AND SARAH (GENESIS 12-16)

Many generations after Noah, one of his descendants was born. His name was Abram.

The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.

"I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you."

Notice: *Why does God bless Abram?*

So Abram went, as the Lord had told him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all the possessions they had accumulated, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.

Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. The Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the Lord, who had appeared to him.

Notice: *What is the first thing Abram does when he gets to the land God promised him?*

From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord.

Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe. As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife

Notice: *Why did Abram leave the Promised Land?*

Sarai, “I know what a beautiful woman you are. When the Egyptians see you, they will say, ‘This is his wife.’ Then they will kill me but will let you live. Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you.”

When Abram came to Egypt, the Egyptians saw that Sarai was a very beautiful woman. And when Pharaoh’s officials saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh, and she was taken into his palace. He treated Abram well for her sake, and Abram acquired sheep and cattle, male and female donkeys, male and female servants, and camels.

But the Lord inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household because of Abram’s wife Sarai. So Pharaoh summoned Abram. “What have you done to me?” he said. “Why didn’t you tell me she was your wife? Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ so that I took her to be my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and go!” Then Pharaoh gave orders about Abram to his men, and they sent him on his way, with his wife and everything he had.

So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, with his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him. Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold.

From the Negev he went from place to place until he came to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had been earlier and where he had first built an altar. There Abram called on the name of the Lord.

The Lord said to Abram, “Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you.”

Notice: *God repeats his promises. Why does God make the same promises again?*

So Abram went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he pitched his tents. There he built an altar to the Lord.

By this point, Abram’s nephew Lot had moved to a town called Sodom. In the area where Lot was living, there was a great battle between many towns, and Lot was captured during the battle.

A man who had escaped came and reported this to Abram the Hebrew. Now Abram was living near the great trees of Mamre the Amorite, a brother of Eshkol and Aner, all of whom were allied with Abram. When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he called out the 318 trained men born in his household and went in pursuit as far as Dan. During the night Abram divided his men to attack them and he routed them, pursuing them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. He recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions, together with the women and the other people.

Pro Tip! Some of the names in the Bible are hard to pronounce. Just do your best and don't worry if you're right or wrong.

After Abram returned from saving Lot and all those who had been captured, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).

Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying,

“Blessed be Abram by God Most High,
Creator of heaven and earth.
And praise be to God Most High,
who delivered your enemies into your hand.”

Pro Tip! There are two kings in this story, the king of Sodom and the king of Salem.

Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

The king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the people and keep the goods for yourself.”

Notice: Why is Abram so generous?

But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “With raised hand I have sworn an oath to the Lord, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the strap of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, ‘I made Abram rich.’ I will accept nothing but what my men have eaten and the share that belongs to the men who went with me—to Aner, Eshkol and Mamre. Let them have their share.”

After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision:

“Do not be afraid, Abram.
I am your shield,
your very great reward.”

But Abram said, “Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.”

Then the word of the Lord came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.” He took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”

Notice: *God repeats the promise again! Why does God make the same promise again?*

Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar; so she said to Abram, “The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her.”

Pro Tip! *This was somewhat normal back then, even if it’s wrong now. We’ll see this again in later lessons.*

Abram agreed to what Sarai said. So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian slave Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. He slept with Hagar, and she conceived.

Notice: *How old is Abram? Do you think Abram trusts God’s promises at this point?*

When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress. Then Sarai said to Abram, “You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my slave in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the Lord judge between you and me.”

“Your slave is in your hands,” Abram said. “Do with her whatever you think best.” Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her.

The angel of the Lord found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur. And he said, “Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?”

Notice: *Why did Hagar run away? How did God respond?*

“I’m running away from my mistress Sarai,” she answered.

Then the angel of the Lord told her, “Go back to your mistress and submit to her.” The angel added, “I will increase your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count.”

The angel of the Lord also said to her:

“You are now pregnant
and you will give birth to a son.
You shall name him Ishmael,
for the Lord has heard of your misery.
He will be a wild donkey of a man;
his hand will be against everyone
and everyone’s hand against him,
and he will live in hostility
toward all his brothers.”

She gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her: “You are the God who sees me,” for she said, “I have now seen the One who sees me.” That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi; it is still there, between Kadesh and Bered.

So Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave the name Ishmael to the son she had borne. Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael.

Notice: *Hagar is the first person in the Bible to give God a nickname. Why did she give God this nickname?*

LET’S SUMMARIZE!

Answer each question yourself.

What is God doing in this story?

What does this story tell me about God?

What does this story tell me about me?

What does this story tell me about my relationship with God?

MEMORY WORK: THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Bible is a collection of many smaller books. Because these books were written in a different language, they have names that may sound very strange to us. To help us navigate the Bible, it's very useful to memorize their order.

This week, try to **memorize the first column**, the **Pentateuch**.

If it helps you memorize, try any of these songs. Pick the version you like best!

- youtube.com/watch?v=g4KEWLNnmCQ
- youtube.com/watch?v=i7ZtWRSCH7E
- youtube.com/watch?v=V__n3oXTBcc
- youtube.com/watch?v=powlzb2Rfdw
- youtube.com/watch?v=v3aRB1xMs5g
- youtube.com/watch?v=5PGW70OrOdk
- youtube.com/watch?v=K9DodTRI3vU
- youtube.com/watch?v=OwDywQ5qaqM
- youtube.com/watch?v=4gMcKtleVko
- youtube.com/watch?v=eTbSZfc7s1Q

THE 39 BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

<u>The Pentateuch</u>	<u>Historical Books</u>	<u>Wisdom and Poetry</u>	<u>Prophets</u>
Genesis	Joshua	Job	Isaiah
Exodus	Judges	Psalms	Jeremiah
Leviticus	Ruth	Proverbs	Lamentations
Numbers	1 Samuel	Ecclesiastes	Ezekiel
Deuteronomy	2 Samuel	Song of Solomon	Daniel
	1 Kings		Hosea
	2 Kings		Joel
	1 Chronicles		Amos
	2 Chronicles		Obadiah
	Ezra		Jonah
	Nehemiah		Micah
	Esther		Nahum
			Habakkuk
			Zephaniah
			Haggai
			Zechariah
			Malachi

THINGS TO NOTICE

Pentateuch means “5 Books”. The first 5 books of the Bible are also “The Torah” (which means teachings or rules), or “The Law” because they contain the 10 Commandments and other rules.

The Pentateuch is sometimes called “The Books of Moses” (tradition is Moses wrote these books), and it tells the story of the Hebrews from Creation through the death of Moses.

AT HOME FAITH TIME FOR PRETEENS

PARENT SECTION

As you discuss questions with your preteens, these thoughts might help you go deeper.

CONVERSATIONS – BIBLE

Why is Abraham called Abram and Sarah called Sarai?

They will receive the names we know them by in the next edition. These are their original names. Wait until then to find out why they receive new names.

Why does God bless Abram?

A blessing is like a gift or present; something that changes your life for the better.

We don't know why specifically Abram, but the blessing is so that "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." This verse is the origin of the phrase, "Blessed to be a blessing." What have you been blessed with? Do any of your blessings also make other peoples lives better?

What is the first thing Abram does when he gets to the land God promised him?

Abram builds an altar. Like Noah, he wants to say, "Thank you, God." Noah thanked God for getting him through something bad. Abram thanks God for giving him something good. When do you thank God?

The place God sent Abram is sometimes called the Promised Land because God promised it to Abram. Today this land is called Israel and Palestine.

Why did Abram leave the Promised Land?

There was a famine. But I wonder if God wanted Abram to leave the Promised Land. Why would God send Abram somewhere just to have him leave it? Do you think it was a good move leaving the Promised Land? How did things turn out in Egypt?

Have you ever felt God ask you to do something? Did everything you did go perfectly smoothly?

God repeats his promises. Why does God make the same promises again?

Abram finally returned to the Promised Land after leaving. God wants to reaffirm Abram. In church, if someone is gone for a long time, we might do a Renewal of Baptism to reaffirm the promises God made when they were baptized.

Have you ever needed to be reminded of a promise? Why did you need reminders?

Why is Abram so generous?

Abram gave away a tenth of what he earned! Maybe Abram did this because he felt very rich and blessed. Could you imagine giving away a tenth of your possessions?

Maybe Abram did this as a way of saying, “Thank you, God.” At restaurants, people give waiters tips as a way to say thank you. Often people tip not just a tenth, but a twentieth of their bills. Do you think sharing is a good way to tell God thank you? Could you imagine giving away a twentieth (one out of every five) of your possessions?

God repeats the promise again! Why does God make the same promise again?

Abram seems to be uncertain. The promise looks impossible. He needs reassurance. Would you believe God?

How old is Abram? Do you think Abram trusts God’s promises at this point?

Abram is 85 now. He was 75 when the story began, and it’s been 10 years. At the end of the story, he’s 86 when Ishmael was born.

Though God has not specifically said Abram will have a child with his wife Sarai, Abram and Sarai both seem to doubt that God is going to give them a child. If someone made a promise to you, how long would you wait until you start doubting them? Could you imagine waiting years for a promise to be fulfilled?

Why did Hagar run away? How did God respond?

Sarai was being cruel. But God sends an angel to rescue Hagar. God also makes promises to Hagar. She too will have many descendants! Have you ever felt left out? How do you think God responds when he sees people who are left out?

Hagar gave God a nickname. Why did she give God this nickname?

Hagar calls God “the God who sees” (it’s one word in Hebrew) because God saw her and rescued her. What has God done for you? Based on what God’s done for you, what nickname might you give God?

LET’S SUMMARIZE!

Answer each question yourself. I’ve put in some of my answers but remember: Our answers don’t have to be the same. You may have heard and seen things I didn’t even notice!

What is God doing in this story?

Blessing. Making promises. Inflicting disease? Protecting.

What does this story tell me about God?

God is very generous. God's promises can be trusted. God gets upset when people do bad things. God protects those who are hurt.

What does this story tell me about me?

My blessings aren't just for my benefit; they are to bless others too.

What does this story tell me about my relationship with God?

I can trust the promises God has made to me. Sometimes it's hard to trust God, but even when I go against God's promises, God still keeps God's word. When I'm in trouble, God will see me and help. It's OK to give God a nickname!

CONVERSATIONS – THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Today when we write rules, we simply make a list of things people must obey. We write them down as laws and constitutions.

In the Bible, the first 5 books are sometimes called "The Torah" or "The Law" because they contain the 10 Commandments and many other rules (613 in total!). But these rules are surrounded by many stories. Why not just make a list of rules? Why would God surround all these rules with stories? How does it change the rules when we know the stories around the rules?

What do these names mean?

- Genesis means "The Beginning".
- Exodus means "The Way Out" and refers to the Hebrew slaves leaving Egypt.
- Leviticus refers to a special group of Hebrews called Levites. Their job is to serve God.
- Numbers is called that because the book counts lots of things.
- Deuteronomy means "Second Law" and repeats many rules given in previous books.