



SESSION **3**

Abraham



MEETING AIM

To discover that God makes and keeps promises with his people.



BIBLE PASSAGE

Genesis 12:1-7; 15:1-6



BACKGROUND

The story of Abraham can seem far from the experience of younger children. However, there are elements that they can identify with: most children have been on some kind of journey and many will have been made promises by adults (some of which are kept, some not). As you journey with Abraham, help the children understand that God can be trusted to keep *all* the promises he makes. We have used Abraham and Sarah here, rather than Abram and Sarai, to avoid confusion in children's minds about who it is we're discussing.

+ CIRCLE TIME



As the children arrive, sit everyone down in a circle. If you have parents, encourage them to sit with their children (but not to speak for them). Ask the children if they have done anything this week and encourage them to tell the group about it. Younger children may struggle to remember much, but listen to anything they would like to tell you. Share something that you have done this week too. Thank everyone for their stories and say a simple prayer thanking God for what you have discussed.

+ GOING ON A BEAR HUNT



You will need: *We're going on a bear hunt* (Michael Rosen, Walker Books)

Read the classic book *We're going on a bear hunt* together and do all the actions. You might also watch the recent TV version, which is available on DVD. Enjoy going on a journey together, point out that you don't know where you're going to end up!

+ BIBLE STORY



You will need: a large tray (shallow enough for the children to reach in); four or five smaller containers that fit inside the tray; different landscape materials (sand, plus others eg pebbles, green playdough, blue fabric, compost, gravel, shredded paper or rice); plastic play people; play farm animals (optional)

Choose a starting landscape in the tray. Gather your plastic people and animals (if you have them) there and tell this story:

A long, long time ago lived a man called Abraham (hold up a plastic figure) and his wife Sarah (hold up another). They were both quite old and didn't have any children. Abraham loved God very much and wanted to serve him. One day God spoke to Abraham and told him to pack up everything. He had to take Sarah and all the people who lived with them to a new land. God promised that Abraham would have a big family. They would do great things and be a blessing to others. Abraham did as God asked.

Give each child a plastic person. Ask them how that person might be feeling leaving everything they know and going to a strange place. Roleplay Abraham if the children need encouragement. Why did Abraham agree to leave? What would you say to Abraham if he asked you to go? Ask the children to walk their figures through the landscapes, to explore the different textures and materials you have set out. Talk about how long and difficult the journey would have been, how everyone must have been feeling and what Abraham might have said to encourage them. Encourage the children to roleplay these conversations with you, as Abraham, and each other.

At last they arrived at the place God wanted them to be. He said: "I give you this land for you and your family for ever." They were happy and built an altar to worship God. The altar reminded them that God keeps his promises. *Help the children to make an altar from pebbles. Talk about how their characters are feeling now: what do they think about God?*

God also promised Abraham that he would have lots of children of his own, even though he and Sarah were old. And soon Abraham and Sarah did have a baby boy! *Fill all the landscapes with plastic people.*

In fact, God gave him so many children and grandchildren and great grandchildren that his family was like grains of sand. *Lift a handful of sand and let it trickle through your fingers showing the children how many grains there are. Ask them to guess how many, let them hold some sand and see for themselves.*

God kept his promises to Abraham and his family.

+ CHATTING TOGETHER



Ask the children these questions, making sure everyone has the chance to contribute:

- What's your favourite part of this story?
- How do you think Abraham felt when God kept his promise?
- Have you ever made a promise to someone? Did you keep it?
- Do you want to say anything to God?

+ CREATIVE RESPONSE



You will need: a large sheet of paper; felt-tip pens; crayons

Before the session, write: "God promises..." in bubble writing on the large sheet of paper. Show the children the large sheet of paper and encourage them to fill in the letters and decorate the rest of the paper. They might want to draw pictures of Abraham and Sarah walking through the desert, or of Abraham listening to God. As you work, ask the children to think about promises and when they have been kept (or not). Tell the group an appropriate story of how God made and kept a promise to you, or of biblical promises you have read and that God has kept for you. Let the children ask you any questions that they would like to. As part of your story, finish the sentence: "God promises..." How would the children finish this sentence?

+ PRAYER



You will need: *My big prayer book* (Scripture Union)

Use the prayers from pages 27, 28 and 30 of *My big prayer book* to help the children thank God for being with them and keeping them safe. Ask the children if they want to talk to God about anything. Help them to do so and then finish with a prayer thanking God for keeping his promises.

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