The Jesus Family Tree

EARLY CHILDHOOD

LESSON 1
ABRAHAM

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Keeps His Promises
SCRIPTURE: Genesis 15; 17
GOD'S BIG STORY: God chooses to begin a special family through Abraham and his wife, Sarah, and promises to bless the whole world through their descendants. However, they're too old to have children, and the promise feels impossible. But God is faithful and keeps His promises in His time!
WORD OF WONDER: And he will be called Immanuel. —Isaiah 7:14b

- Play Stations:
  - Stars in the Sky
  - It's All in a Name
  - Abraham Coloring Sheet
- Curiosity Activity: Disappearing Color Candy Cane
- Curiosity Questions
- Word of Wonder: Isaiah 7:14b
- God's Big Story Video
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship: This Little Light of Mine, Joy to the World
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Prayer and Blessing
- Circle Time: Drop It, Catch It
- Craft: Star Mural
- Game: Family Tree Relay



SCAN FOR THIS WEEK'S VIDEO!

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Keeps His Promises
SCRIPTURE: Genesis 15; 17
WORD OF WONDER: Isaiah 7:14b

Do you ever feel like your desires are too small for God? Like your prayers should be "God, save the nations!" or "God, heal the world!"? Do you feel like your requests reveal to God that you're too bogged down in the little things of life?

I'm curious whether that's how Abram and Sarai felt when asking God for a child. Maybe they felt that they should have been asking for God to move in grander and greater ways in the world instead of "just" blessing their individual family.

But God has never been a God of scarcity. Read Genesis 17:1–8. Not only does God reaffirm His promise to give Abram a child, but He shows that the reach of this promise extends far beyond "just" one man and his wife. From this promise—this child—the entire world will be blessed! God promised to give Abram as many descendants as there are stars in the sky. And from those descendants would come the One who would forever save the world: Jesus Christ.

No plea is too small for God. Give your requests to Him and trust that He will work to bring about His will. After all, He is the God who keeps His promises!

—Callie Bogle
Children's Ministry Associate
Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?
The book of Genesis gets its title from the Greek word for *beginning*. Genesis tells the beginning of God's big story. While its author is anonymous, Genesis and the four subsequent books (Exodus through Deuteronomy) are together, often called the Law of Moses.

WHAT?
Genesis 15 and 17 record two stories about God's promise to Abraham that He would give him descendants. God guarantees His promise in these passages by making binding, relational promises called covenants, in which God takes an oath to do what He said.

WHERE?
Both of these stories are set near the oaks of Mamre, which was an ancient holy site near Hebron (20 miles south of Jerusalem). While Abraham and his family lived there, Abraham built an altar and encountered God in that place multiple times.

WHEN?
Abraham settled with his family for a time by the oaks of Mamre (Genesis 13:18), while his nephew Lot lived near Sodom. Abraham had to rescue Lot when Sodom was attacked by five kings. The covenants of Genesis 15 and 17 followed this rescue.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY:
God chose Abraham and eventually blessed the whole world through him. The rest of the Old Testament follows this family as they often fail in their blessing mission—until we get to Jesus. He's the descendant of Abraham that God's people had been waiting for—God kept His promise!

Spark curiosity and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Keeps His Promises
SCRIPTURE: Genesis 15; 17
WORD OF WONDER: Isaiah 7:14b

Play Stations

SUPPLIES: star stickers (various sizes), dark blue or black construction paper (1 sheet per kid), Christmas gift tags, coloring utensils, Christmas wrapping paper, scissors (prep only), tape (optional)
Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Abraham Coloring Sheet (1 per kid)

Greet the kids warmly and briefly explain the play stations to them. Invite them to play at any of the stations.

Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help you get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas about what we'll be learning today?

Play Station: Stars in the Sky

Set up: Set out various sizes of star stickers and dark blue or black construction paper.

Play: Let kids put as many star stickers on the papers as they want. Encourage them to fill their night sky with stars.

Play Station: It's All in a Name

Set up: Lay out Christmas gift tags and coloring and writing utensils. Cut a few pieces of Christmas wrapping paper and set them out. You can also set out tape if the kids will be taping the wrapping paper.

Play: Invite the kids to draw on or write their names on the gift tags. They can decorate the tags and stick them onto the pieces of wrapping paper.

Leader Tip: Some Christmas gift tags work best with only ink pens and some with markers. Test them ahead of time to see which writing utensils work on the tags.

Play Station: Abraham Coloring Sheet

Set up: Ahead of time, print one copy per kid of the coloring sheets and set out coloring utensils.

Play: Let the kids color. The kids can also turn the sheet over and draw a picture of something good they've had to wait for, such as a gift.

Curiosity Activity: Disappearing Color Candy Cane

SUPPLIES: table, hot or warm water (1 cup), red and white candy cane, pint-sized glass jar, electric teakettle (optional), insulated mug or coffee cup (optional)

Ahead of time, set up a table in the front of the room where kids can see. Fill the jar with hot or warm water. Unwrap a red and white candy cane.

> **Leader Tip:** If hot water is not easily accessible, room temperature water is fine. It will take longer for the color to change, and the color may not end up completely gone, but it should lighten. Also, if you have an electric teakettle, you can turn it on and pour the hot water into a jar while the kids are watching. You can also use an insulated mug or coffee cup to keep water warm.

This time of year, you may be seeing a lot of candy canes around, and maybe you're even eating a lot of candy canes! I'm going to do a cool trick right before your eyes—I can change the color of both the candy cane and the water! Who thinks I can make the water change color in just a few minutes? Jump up if you think I can do it. Pause to give kids time to respond, then have them sit back down. **Who thinks I won't be able to do it? Now jump if you think I won't be able to.** Pause to kids gives time to respond. **Let's find out! You can all sit down.**

Put the candy cane in the water.

Today we're going to hear about a man whose name started as Abram. We're also going to hear about his wife, Sarai. Can you say, "Abram"? Allow the kids to respond. **Good! God made a promise to Abram that took a long time to happen. He had to be patient and wait. Have any of you ever had to be patient while you waited for something you were excited about? Maybe your birthday or maybe you're excited to celebrate Christmas, but you have to wait patiently for it. Does anyone want to share what you've had to patiently wait for?** Allow the kids to discuss their answers for a few minutes while you give the candy cane time for the colors to fade in the water. Then direct their attention back to the candy cane in the water.

Remember how I said I could make both the candy cane and the water change color? Did it work? Pause to give kids time to respond. **It did! Now the candy cane is white. The water is colored, not clear. You all waited patiently to see the results, like how Abram waited patiently for God's promise. Also, the candy cane is still there but it changed color, which reminds us of how God changed Abram's name. We'll hear about it in our story today. Are you wondering what his new name was that God gave him and why God changed it? Today we're going to learn that God keeps His promises!**



Word of Wonder

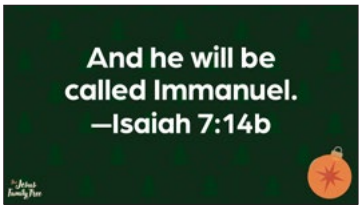
SUPPLIES: Bible, scissors (prep only), wrapped candy canes (1 per kid plus 1 extra per 5–7 kids), tape
Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Word of Wonder Cards (1 set per 5–7 kids)

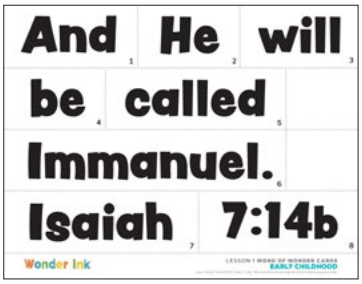
WORD OF WONDER

And he will be called Immanuel.

—Isaiah 7:14b

Before kids arrive, print one set of Word of Wonder Cards for every 5–7 kids. Cut the cards apart and keep the sets together.





Our Word of Wonder for the Jesus Family Tree series is Isaiah 7:14b. Let's practice saying the Word of Wonder together. Open a Bible to Isaiah 7:14b and practice the verse with the kids.

Put the kids in small groups and give each group a set of cards and one candy cane. Invite the kids to put a small piece of rolled-up piece of tape on the straight end of the candy cane (with the wrapper still on).

Set the cards and one candy cane on the floor for each small group of kids. Have the kids spread out the cards on the floor so they're not in order. Have one kid from each group hold the taped candy cane.

These cards each have a word from our Word of Wonder verse. Each of you will take a turn holding this candy cane and using the sticky tape on the end to pick up the cards one at a time, then put the verse in order. You can pick up one card and put it down in front of your group, then pass the candy cane to someone else in the group. Leaders can help you read the words, and you can also look at the numbers in the bottom corner. Many kids this age cannot read words, so help them put the verse cards in order. Be ready to offer help as needed and point out the numbers on the cards.

Make sure you all work together as a group to put the verse in order using only the candy canes—try not to use your hands! Invite the kids to take turns getting one card before passing the candy cane with the tape on the end to the next kid. The kids can put the cards down on the floor and work together with their group to put the cards in order, then say the verse together.

Make it Inclusive: For kids with developmental delays or physical challenges that make it hard to do this activity, have them reach with their candy cane and touch or point to a card.

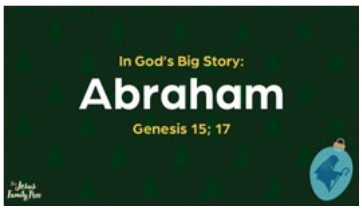
Encourage the kids to say the verse and do the motions with you.

- **AND HE WILL BE**—*Point up three times (once on each word).*
- **CALLED**—*Cup your hands around your mouth.*
- **IMMANUEL.**—*Make prayer hands.*
- **ISAIAH 7:14bb**—*Hold your hands open in front of you, as if opening a book.*

Gather the kids to discuss these questions:

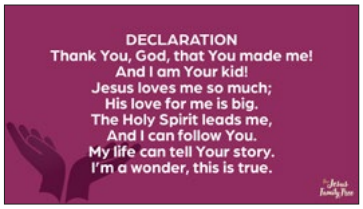
- ***Immanuel* means "God with us." How does Jesus show the meaning of this name?** *(Possible answers: Jesus came to earth to be with us; Jesus makes it possible for us to be forgiven and be close with God; through Jesus, we can spend eternity with God.)*
- **Do you think God is still with us today? If so, how do you know He's with us?**

VIEW THE GOD'S BIG STORY VIDEO
Watch the God's Big Story Video as kids eat their snacks!



Declaring God's Wonder

Encourage the kids to say the statements and do the motions with you.



Thank You, God, that You made me! *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*
Make prayer hands, then point up and then to yourself.

And I am Your kid! *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*
Put your hands on your hips.

Jesus loves me so much; *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*
Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

His love for me is big. *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*
Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.

The Holy Spirit leads me, *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*
Bring your arms down from above, making a path in front of you.

And I can follow You. *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*
March in place like you're following the leader.

My life can tell Your story. *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*
Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

I'm a wonder; this is true. *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*
Put your hands up, shake your fingers, and celebrate ("praise hands").

Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **God, thank You for Your word, where we can learn Your promises and know You. Help us hear from You. Open our hearts and our ears to hear from Your Spirit. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

Today we'll learn about how God keeps His promises. We can sing and thank God for His faithfulness.

Play This Little Light of Mine and Joy to the World and encourage the kids to sing and dance as they praise God.

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bible, Bible Story Picture (1/SG)

Bible Time Rhyme

Say the Bible time rhyme (with motions) each week before the Bible story to remind kids that what they're about to hear is part of God's big story.

I open my Bible, and what do I see? *(Hold your hands together, then open your palms, as if opening a book.)*

God's big story, waiting for me! *(Point to yourself.)*

Let's hear part of God's big story, which comes from the book of Genesis, the first book in the Bible.

Read the God's Big Story Script provided.

GOD'S BIG STORY SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: cardstock (1 sheet per small group), scissors (prep only)
Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Abraham and Sarah Puzzle Pieces (1/SG)

Ahead of time, print the Abraham and Sarah Puzzles Pieces on cardstock so there are enough for every small group of kids to have one full puzzle. Cut the puzzle pieces apart and group the pieces by numbers (e.g., so you have a pile of pieces numbered "1," and a pile of pieces numbered "2," and so on).



Put the kids into small groups of 5–8 kids. Set out the puzzle pieces so they're ready to pass them out at the right time.

Today we'll hear about a couple named Abraham and Sarah and the promise God made to them. At the end of the story, you'll have everything you need to create a picture of Abraham and Sarah, and you'll be able to see what God promised them. You won't get every puzzle piece at once, and you may not see the full picture at the beginning, but at the end, I promise you'll have everything you need to make this picture.

A long, long time ago, God made the whole world. He made the sky, the trees, the animals, and people. Everything He made was good!

But humans disobeyed God. That is *sin*. Sin hurt people's relationship with God. Sin made things sad and broken in the world. But still, God had a plan to fix what was broken.

The book of Genesis tells about how God planned to bless the whole world through a special family. It tells about how this family would start with a man named Abram. Abram was married to Sarai. They were very old, and they didn't have children. One day, God talked to Abram. God promised to give Abram a new home and children. Abram would have so many children and grandchildren that would become a new nation. God promised that the whole world would be blessed through this family.

It was hard to believe this promise because Abram and Sarai were too old to have kids.

But Abram trusted God. He packed up his things and went where God told him to go. Pass out a puzzle piece to each of the groups. It could be any puzzle piece—they don't have to be given in any particular order.

Many years passed. Abram and Sarai still didn't have a child. One night, Abram was outside and God talked to him again. God said, "Look up at the sky. Can you count the stars?"

There were so many stars!

God said, "That's how many people will be in your family one day."

Abram believed God. He trusted that God would keep His promise. Pass out another puzzle piece to all the groups.

After a long, long time, God gave Abram and Sarai new names. Abram became Abraham. Sarai became Sarah. God promised that Sarah would have a baby boy—even though she was almost 90 years old!

Pass out another puzzle piece to the groups.

And guess what? The next year, Sarah had a baby! Abraham named him Isaac. Abraham and Sarah were so happy. God did exactly what He said He would do.

Isaac grew up and had children. And Isaac's children had children. Their children had children. And that kept happening until, many years later, Jesus was born. God's own Son was part of Abraham's promised family. Through Jesus, God would bless the whole world. Pass out the last two puzzle pieces to the groups.

Now we have all the pieces of the picture. We can see it all come together and see how God kept His promise. God kept His promise to Abraham and blessed the whole world through his family. Even when it seems impossible, God keeps His promises. Let the kids put the puzzle pieces together to create a picture of Abraham and Sarah with a baby. Offer help, if needed.

Connecting the Wonder Truth

Ask the following question to help kids connect the Wonder Truth to God's big story:

Our Wonder Truth today is GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES. Where did you see our Wonder Truth happen in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.

God chose Abraham and later blessed the whole world through him. The rest of the Old Testament follows Abraham's family, God's people. They messed up and didn't always bless the world—until we get to Jesus. Jesus was born a long time later from Abraham's family. He's the part of Abraham's family that the people had been waiting for—God kept His promise by sending Jesus!

Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish their activity, pray with them and thank God for keeping His promises.

God, thank You that we're all part of Your great, big family and part of Your promise to Abraham. Thank You for always keeping Your promises. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands are open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: May you go with confidence and know that every promise from God will be fulfilled. You are a part of God's family, and God keeps every promise He makes because He is faithful.

Circle Time: Drop It, Catch It

SUPPLIES: playground ball

Gather the kids into a circle. Start by holding a playground ball. **I'm going to toss a ball and give instructions. I'll either say, "Drop it" or "Catch it." Listen carefully and do the opposite of what I say. If I say, "Drop it," you catch it. If I say, "Catch it," you drop it! Every time I say to "Drop it" and someone catches the ball, that person will answer a question about our story. Listen carefully.** Demonstrate dropping and catching the ball with a kid.

> **Leader Tip:** To make it easier (or for a younger group of kids), kids don't have to do the opposite of what you say. They can just do what you say, either "Drop it" or "Catch it."

Toss the ball to each kid in the circle, calling out, "Drop it" or "Catch it" before tossing the ball. When a kid catches the ball, ask a question from the list.

You did a great job listening! In our story today, Abraham listened to God, and God had a big plan for Abraham. Abraham listened when God told him to leave his home and travel to a new land. Abraham listened when God made a special promise. Abraham listened when God changed his name. God kept His promise to Abraham, and God keeps His promises to us!

Make It Inclusive: Some kids may not have the gross motor skills to catch balls. For younger kids, or kids who may struggle to catch the ball, roll the ball to them.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **What promise did God make to Abraham?** *(that He would give them a child and make the number of members of his family as many as there are stars in the sky)*
- **Why do you think it may have been difficult for Abraham and Sarah to believe God would actually keep His promise?** *(because they were too old to have kids)*
- **What did God use to show Abraham how many family members he would have?** *(the stars)*
- **Did God's promise happen right away or years later?** *(years later)*
- **How do you feel when you have to wait a long time for a promise to come true?**
- **What are some promises God has made to us?**
- **What can we do if we have to wait a long time for something God has promised us?**

One big promise God made to us was that He had a plan for us to be saved. Jesus is the answer to that plan, and Jesus is also the reason we celebrate Christmas! Some people had to wait a long time for Jesus, but we don't have to wait. We can trust Jesus any time! God promises that we can all be forgiven for the wrong things we say and do, and God always keeps His promises. Let's pray and thank God for giving us Jesus and for keeping His promises.

Encourage kids to talk to God with faith by sharing they trust that He's here and that He cares. Invite kids to share prayer requests or things they're thankful for. Ask for one or two kids to volunteer to pray out loud and thank God for keeping His promises.

Craft: Star Mural

SUPPLIES: dark blue or black disposable tablecloth (or dark butcher paper), painter's tape, various sizes of star-shaped stencils or star cookie cutters, coloring utensils, Christmas-themed stickers, pom-poms (optional), glue (optional), dark construction paper (1 sheet per kid, optional)

Leader Tip: Older kids could use kid-safe scissors to cut out their own stars to make the activity more engaging.

Tape the tablecloth or butcher paper on the wall where kids can reach it. This will be the pretend night sky.

Give each kid a star stencil or cookie cutter to trace around, along with coloring utensils and decorating supplies.

God told Abraham to look up at the stars to see how many family members he would have through the child God promised him. When we trust in Jesus, we also become part of God's family! Jesus was born from Abraham's family too!

To remember the promise God made to Abraham, we're going to write our names on stars and decorate them, then we'll hang them up in the pretend night sky to make a mural of stars. If you need help writing your name, you can ask a leader to help. You can decorate your star however you want!

For kids who can't write their names, leaders can write their names on the stars. Encourage kids to color and decorate their stars and then you can roll tape to put on the back of each star. Let kids tape their stars on the tablecloth or butcher paper night sky. You can also cut out stars ahead of time and let kids decorate their own papers to take home by taping or gluing the stars to dark construction paper.

Game: Family Tree Relay

SUPPLIES: tape or sticky putty, butcher paper or posterboard, marker (prep only)
Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Abraham's Family Tree Sheets (2 copies)



Ahead of time, print two copies and cut out the ornaments from the Abraham's Family Tree Sheets. You'll have pictures of Abraham, Isaac, Ruth, Boaz, Jesse, David, Joseph, Mary, and baby Jesus. Put a small roll of tape (or a small amount of sticky putty) to the back of each ornament. Hang butcher paper vertically on the wall (or hang a blank posterboard). Using a marker, draw a simple Christmas tree design on the paper. If you have a large group of kids, use two sheets and print two sets of ornaments, and split the group into two teams.

Have the kids stand in a line on the other side of the room from the paper Christmas tree. Invite the kids to go one at a time to the paper tree and stick the ornament anywhere on the tree.

You get to help decorate this tree with ornaments that show people in Jesus' family tree! Once you get to the tree, hang your ornament wherever you'd like and then run back to tag the next person to go. To make it more of a game, you can have the kids tape their ornaments on the tree with their eyes closed (like Pin the Tail on the Donkey) and then race back to tag the next person in line.

Leader Tip: Make this game more challenging by having older kids put the ornament on their heads while they walk to the tree. They'll speed walk to the tree without letting the ornament fall off their heads.

The tree looks great! You all did a fantastic job decorating. You may have heard the term "family tree." A family tree shows who is in your family. This is a different kind of family tree—a Christmas family tree! The people on these ornaments are all people you may have heard of from the Bible—they're people from Jesus' family, starting with Abraham and Sarah. We're also part of this family. We're going to learn more about the people in this family tree during this series.