** BIBLE 101**

Unit 2: Building Our Lives on God

*Abraham – God Knows the Way*

**A Note to the Teacher:** The story of Abraham is impossible to tell in a single Sunday school lesson. This lesson does not attempt to cover the complex story of the “father” of our faith. By focusing only on Abraham’s obedience to God in leaving his home and traveling to a new country to establish a home for the Israelite people, this lesson illuminates the importance of allowing God to lead us through the twists and turns of our lives, and the comfort and peace that awaits us when we do.

You may want to use time at the closing of the lesson to tell a bit more about what comes next for Abraham. Children’s bibles and storybooks in the classroom library can be helpful for this.

**Gathering**

As students enter the space, gather them in a seated circle. Give each student a copy of a local road map and a pencil or marker. Work as a group to locate the church on the map and mark it. Choose another location nearby. **Ask, “If you needed to get from the church to this other location, how would you do it?”** Help students to trace a path along the roads on the map. Repeat this with a few additional points.

Take the maps away.

**Ask, “Now, without looking, if I asked you how to get from here to 400 Forest Street what would you tell me?”**

**Say, “It's a little harder to tell directions if you don't have the map, isn't it?**

**But when you're riding in a car, you don't need to know how to get somewhere, do you? When you're riding in a car, who knows how to get where you're going?”** Give some time for responses. **Say, “Your parents or grandparents or whomever is driving knows where to go. Sometimes, a GPS helps them know where to go. That's kind of how it was for Abraham in our story today.”**

In September, we looked at the story of Noah. God asked Noah to build an enormous boat and to save four of every animal on the earth as it flooded. Noah was obedient, but that had to be a very difficult task. **Ask, “Can you think of something difficult that God might ask you to do? Use you imagination!”** Allow time for answers and discussion.

**Say, “What if God told you to leave your family and all of your friends and everything you have ever known and go live in another country? Would you do it? How would you feel about it?”** Give time for responses, **Say, “That is exactly what God told the main character in today’s story.”**

For grades 2-5, have students turn to the Genesis 12 in their Bibles. For prek-grade 1, open the teacher’s Bible to Genesis 12. You may choose to read directly from the Bible or from the Bible Storybook.

**Ask, “How many of you have heard of Abraham? What do you know about Abraham?”** Give time for answers. Students may know about the story of Abraham and Isaac, or that God promised Abraham as many descendants as there are stars in the sky.

**Say, “Abraham is regarded as the “father” of our faith. God made a covenant with Abraham, a promise to love and care for and protect him, that we still hold on to today.”**

Read, or invite volunteers to read, the story of Abraham in Genesis 12:1-9.

God said to Abram, who had not yet been given the new name Abraham by God, “Leave your country and your people and your father’s family and go to the land that I will show you.” **Ask, “Do you think Abram was scared to go to a new place? Do you think he was sad to leave his family? Do you think he was perhaps a bit excited, too, to see where God was taking him?”**

Abram had no idea where he was going. God simply told him to leave his country and go somewhere God would show him. Abram didn’t have a map of where he was going. But he did have a guide. God knew where he was taking Abram and God made sure that Abram and his family arrived there safely. Abram and his family were the passengers in the car, and God was the driver. They did not know how to get where they were going, but God did.

**Say, “It's the same way for us in life. We don't know everything that's going to happen to us or all the places we'll go, but God does. And as long as we keep trusting in God like Abraham and his family did, God will be right beside us, taking us where we need to go in life. God is our driver, we just have to trust God.”**

So Abram left, as God had told him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left his own country and he took his wife, Sarai, his nephew, Lot, and everything that they had and moved to the country of Canaan.

When they arrived in Canaan, God promised Abram, "I will give this whole country to your children and their children forever." So Abram built an altar there and made sacrifices to God on it to thank God for everything God had done for him.

**Blind Trust**

**Say, “In order to pack up his things and leave his home, not knowing where he was going, Abram had to put all his trust in God. It is easy to say that we trust someone, but what does it mean to *really* trust someone?”** Give students time to answer. Explain that we are going to play a game to help us understand a little better what it would have felt like for Abram to follow God, not knowing where he was going.

Invite two volunteers to come to the front of the room. Use a blindfold to cover the eyes of one of the volunteers. This person will be playing the role of Abram. The other volunteer will play the role of God.

**Say, “We are going to go for a walk. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is going to give the directions. S/he cannot touch \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, only use words to tell them where to go. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will have to trust that their friend is giving them good directions and leading them safely on this walk. The rest of us can watch, but we cannot help.”** Whisper a destination (preferably another room) to the volunteer giving directions, being sure that the blindfolded student does not know where they are going.

After the first Abram reaches his/her destination, pause to discuss the experience. Was it easy to trust that you were being led in the right direction? Were you nervous or scared? Was it hard not to take the blindfold off or peak?

Repeat the game until everyone has had a turn playing at least one role.

**Say, “Abram had no idea where he was going. He did not know if there would be a safe place for him to live or food for his family. He wasn’t sure if he would ever see his friends and family and the home he had grown up in again. But when God asked Abram to go, Abram listened. Abram trusted God and, even though it probably wasn’t easy, Abram allowed God to be the driver in his life. God called Abram, and Abram listened.”**

**Ask, “How many of you know exactly what will happen in the future? Tomorrow? Or in 15 years? Or in the year 2100?”** Give time for answers. **Say, “We cannot predict the future. We do not know what comes next in our lives. We have goals and hopes and dreams, and we work hard for those, but only God knows what will happen tomorrow. We have to trust God to guide us through our lives.”**

**Life’s Roadmap**

Return the group to the classroom and have them select a workspace.

Have students draw a map of their daily lives. They can include their home, school, church, stores, playgrounds or sports fields, and any other places they frequent. Older classes may want to make the map semi-accurate, while for younger children simply getting the correct places on paper is enough.

Then, have students draw a car on the road, with themselves in the passenger’s seat. Leave the driver’s seat empty. **Ask, “Who do you think is driving this car?”**

**Say, “When we build our lives on God, we know that God is in the driver’s seat. That doesn’t mean we don’t have to work hard and make good choices, but it does mean that we can trust that God has put us here for a reason and that, just like Abraham, God is leading us safely where God wants us to go.”**

**Closing/Cleanup**

When everyone is finished, work as a group to clean up the classroom. Return to a seated circle and share the roadmaps that students have created.

If extra time allows, students can read more about the life of Abraham after his arrival in Canaan.