

Abraham (a.k.a. Abram), ‘backpacking’ through

the Middle East

GRADE 6, LESSON 1

THEME:

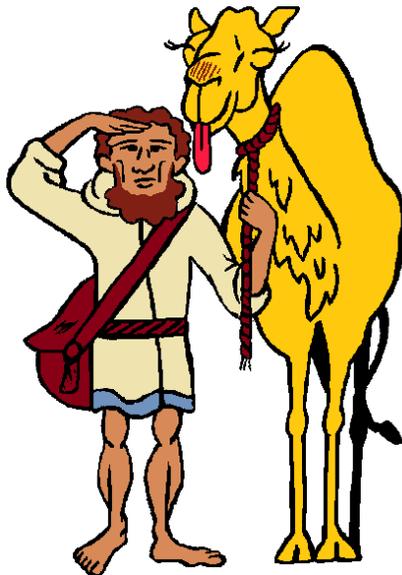
Our God has a great set of directions for those willing to take the challenge. The best part of the trip is- those who follow God will never get lost along the way, and will always have some exciting surprises awaiting them as they journey!

Genesis 12:1-8

¹ Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.

² I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

⁴ So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was



seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. ⁵ Abram took his wife Sarai and

his brother’s son Lot, and all the possessions that they had gathered, and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan. When they had come to the land of Canaan, ⁶ Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷ Then the Lord ap-

peared to Abram, and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. ⁸ From there he moved on to the hill country on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the Lord and invoked the name of the Lord.

MEMORY VERSE:

Genesis 12:2 (NRSV)

I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.

Student Introduction

Welcome, 6th graders, to the new and improved curriculum!

By now, most of you have probably already learned many of the 'big stories' of the Bible, especially the major Genesis individuals, like Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah, etc. What about Abraham? Who was he, and what made him so special?

Discuss: How would you react if God told you to pack your bags and leave your comfortable life to go somewhere you've never been before?

Discuss: How do you feel when you are the only person who believes in a different God than everybody else?

Bible Exploration

The story begins in Genesis 11:31 with a journey taken by a man named Abram. Abram, his wife Sarai, and his extended family left their homeland of Ur under the direction of Abram's father, Terah, with the intention of relocating in the land of Caanan. But, along the way, they stopped in the land of Haran, and settled there until Terah died. (That was quite a long rest stop!)

What do you think happened next? It would be safe to think that Abram, Sarai, and his family would continue living in Haran (which was his 'father's land'), or go back to their birthland, Ur. But, it was at this point that God told Abram to leave his father's land and family, and follow God's desire for him. And, along the way, he was also promised to be a father of a great nation—despite having no children!

Abram trusted God with his life, even if he did not understand all that God had in mind, so he took his family and went.

When Abram arrived in the city of Shechem, in the land of Canaan, he was surrounded by the Canaanites. The Canaanites were people who worshipped different gods and did not share the same beliefs as Abram.

It could have been easy for Abram to feel alone and afraid, but God promised Abram that one day his descendants would inherit the land. (Spoiler Alert! You will see in another lesson that this in fact comes true hundreds of years later, when a man named Joshua led the children of God into Canaan

to make it their home [Joshua 1].)

Abram, having been led successfully to the land of Canaan, responded to God’s promise by building an altar to the Lord. An altar was one of the earliest means of worshipping God, done as far back as the time of Noah. (Genesis 8:20) The earliest forms of altars were built using stones on which an animal was placed on top and burned as a sacrifice. Altars were commonly used in worship for many of the ancient religions prevalent at the time. Altars were also built in places where they could be easily identified and so often served as landmarks or milestones which marked a certain location as sacred.

Worship for Abram was a faith building exercise. Each time he worshipped God, he was saying that, "God I realize what you have done for me. And I thank you for who you are." Worship was Abram's response to God's promise and faithfulness during his long and difficult journey.

And so God’s plan to make Abram a great nation through whom all the people of the earth would be blessed started becoming a reality. Following the covenant God made with Abram, Abram’s name was changed to Abraham, which meant the “Father of Many.” (Genesis 17:5) God also blessed him with a son- Isaac, which marked the beginning of the Jewish nation.

Vocabulary

Patriarch: Someone who is considered as the father of a large family or society.

Covenant: A special bond made between God and man

Altar:
An elevated place or structure, as a mound or platform upon which animals or grain or other such things were placed on and set fire to, as a sacrifice towards God

Historical	Where is it today?
Shechem	In the West Bank
Ur	In Iraq
Haran	In Turkey
Bethel	10 Miles from Jerusalem
Canaan	Parts of Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Jordan and Syria



Fun Fact: The distance between Canaan and Haran was about 500 miles. That’s about 8 hours in a car for most of us. But Abraham didn’t have a car. At 10-20 miles per day (not hour), he was looking at anywhere between a month to 50 days of walking through the desert. Imagine walking for 50 days in the hot sun. That takes a whole lot of commitment, if you ask me.

Activity

Building an altar

Values for My Life

Following the plan that God has for us takes a lot of courage and faith, especially when it takes us out of our comfort zones. Similarly, worshipping God also requires faith to make it truly meaningful. Let's try to be more like Abraham and follow God trustingly as He leads us through different stages in our lives.

Faith in Action

I will choose to follow and worship God as often as I can, offering myself up to Him just as Abraham did.

Let's Review!

Fill Ins

1. God asked Abram to leave his father's land, which was called _____, and travel to the land that God would show him, which was called _____.
2. God changed Abram's name to _____ which means, "_____ of many."
3. Abram landed in the city of Shechem, which was located by the oak of _____, and was inhabited by the _____. (Hint: Read Genesis 12:6)

Short Answers

1. Today, people of the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim faith call Abraham the "Father of Nations". But he did not start that way. In a few sentences, explain what happened in his life that started it all. What did God promise to do for Abram and how did Abram respond?
2. What is an altar and what were they used for in Abraham's time? What are they used for, now?

Closing Prayer:

Lord God, teach us to trust you in all of our actions, especially when you ask us to do things outside of our comfort zones. Let us always remember to thank you for the many blessings we have. Amen.

Teacher Guide for Lesson 1

Abraham (a.k.a. Abram), 'backpacking' through the Middle East

Aim:

Students will understand the physical and faith-based journey Abram took to become the Father of Nations, and how Abram demonstrated his thanks for his many blessings.

Bible Passage: Genesis 12:1-8 (NSRV)

Teacher Preparation: As this is the first lesson you are probably teaching, please be cognizant of the learning styles used to teach this material to the students. Some students may prefer visual and audio aids as opposed to a lecture from the Bible or textbook. Other may prefer anecdotes and personal experiences, and so forth. This lesson can be complemented with several visual aids, such as maps and pictures of ancient Mesopotamia and different kinds of pictures of altars used at that time. Also, helping students to understand the challenges Abraham faced in obeying God can help students put things into perspective. Lastly, helping students understand the spiritual significance of altars and, (if time allows,) the sacrifice of Jesus Christ will greatly aid them in developing a deeper appreciation for worship.

Main Ideas: See student book

In-Class Activity: "What will you put on your altar?"

Goal:

Students will construct a miniature altar, and will reflect on what suitable gifts they can offer to God.

Teacher Preparation:

Create a 'miscellaneous' tool bag for each student. The items in each bag should be the same. Inside each bag, put in an assortment of small items that can be found in a home/church, such as: paper clips, 2 inches yarn, 3 inches of masking tape (wrapped around a pencil), paper cups, napkins, plastic forks, post-it notes, etc.

Activity:

Prior to beginning, review what an "altar" is to the students, and what its' purpose is.

Hand the bags out to students, and give them a set time (2-5 minutes) to construct an altar. They are only allowed to use the tools presented in the bag. (The bag, itself, may be a tool, as well!)

After the time is up, hand out post-it notes or tiny sheets of paper. Give students time to reflect and write down any gifts/talents that they possess in their lives that they could actively give to God as an offering. These notes are placed on each student's altar.

Extension:

Take pictures of each student's altar and offering, and review them at a later time in the school year- have students been successful at their offerings? Why or why not?

Map of Middle East at Time of Abraham from BiblicalHeritage.org

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Note to 6th Grade Teachers:

As you teach the 5 trial lessons, please be aware that they have been designed with the intention of seeing which curriculum style works best for your Sunday School classroom.

<i>Lesson 1 (Abraham)</i>	<i><u>Teacher Centered</u></i>	<i>The teacher leads, the students follow</i>	<i>Activity is separate from content</i>
<i>Lesson 3 (Micah)</i>	<i><u>Teacher Centered</u></i>	<i>The teacher leads, the students follow</i>	<i>Activity supplements content</i>
<i>Lesson 5 (Elijah)</i>	<i><u>Teacher Centered</u></i>	<i>The teacher leads, the students follow</i>	<i>Activity supplements content</i>
<i>Lesson 6 (Boaz)</i>	<i><u>Teacher and Student Centered</u></i>	<i>The teacher leads, but there are built in elements of student independence</i>	<i>Activity is built into the content</i>
<i>Lesson 7 (Joseph)</i>	<i><u>Student Centered</u></i>	<i>The students lead, the teacher facilitates</i>	<i>Activities are built into the content</i>

At any point during the trial 5 lessons, please e-mail AnissaKurian@gmail.com with your feedback, including:

How is the length of the Bible portion?

How appropriate are the Bible lessons and Memory Verse?

What lessons worked best for your class? What lessons were easiest to teach? (And vice versa)

Based off of question 4- do you prefer a Teacher centered or a Student Centered curriculum?

Do you prefer a paper-based activity, or an 'out of the box' activity (like Lesson 1)?

STUDENT FEEDBACK- what did your students like or dislike about the new lesson format?

Ultimately, it is your talent and your willingness to donate your time, energy, and love that will impact the 6th grade students the most. This curriculum is simply a tool to aid you in your vital ministry. Any and all feedback (good and bad) will help us to make the curriculum as beneficial as possible to our Mar Thoma children.

Thank you, and God Bless!

Anissa Kurian and George P. Babu

6th Grade Curriculum Editors

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