

GLENVIEW NEW CHURCH SUNDAY MORNING PROGRAM
Primary Lessons: Phase 3 – Lesson 1
Introduction; The Call of Abram

I. Underlying Ideas for the Teacher

- A. Nothing told us in the Word is accidental or unimportant.
- B. Every place mentioned in the Word has a special meaning. Bethel literally means "house of God," and it signifies knowledge of celestial things.
- C. The happiness, which the Lord can give us is necessarily measured by the degree to which we are willing to apply ourselves to learning the truths from the Word and the effort we make to live according to them.
- D. Basic correspondences:
 - 1. Ur of the Chaldeans = our natural selfish state
 - 2. Haran = a good natural state
 - 3. The land of Canaan = a heavenly state

II. Story Circle

A. Introduction

- 1. All during this coming year we'll be learning stories from the part of the Word called the Old Testament.
- 2. Does anyone know the name of the first book of the Old Testament? (Genesis)
- 3. The story of creation is the first story in Genesis; it's the first story in the Old Testament; it's the first story in the whole Word!
- 4. After creation come the stories of:

Adam and Eve

The Garden of Eden

Cain and Abel

Noah and the Flood

The Tower of Babel

Most— maybe all— of you know those stories pretty well.

- 5. Then comes the story of Abram, and that's what we'll learn about today. The story of Abram is a long story, and I'm going to read just the beginning of it. When I'm finished reading, I'll ask you some questions about the story. Listen carefully and see how many questions you know the answers to.

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B. Tell/Read the Story

1. Read: Genesis 11:27-32; 12:1-9; 15:1,5,7,18-21
2. Be sure to explain as you read any words, relationships, or concepts you feel may be obscure or unknown to the children so the sense of the letter isn't lost.

C. Ideas to Discuss

1. Our lesson today starts with a man named Terah. Where did he live? (Ur of the Chaldeans)
2. How many sons did he have, and what were their names? (3 - Abram, Haran, and Nahor)
3. Which one of Terah's three sons died in Ur? (Haran) What was the name of Haran's son? (Lot)
4. Where did Terah stop? (Haran) After Terah died in Haran, why did Abram travel further? (The Lord told him to go to a land that He would show him - Canaan)
5. What did the Lord promise to Abram? (That He would make Abram a great nation, and that He would bless him.)
6. Who went with him? (Lot, and all their possessions and servants [and Sarai, of course])
7. Into what land did they come? (Canaan) In the Word, the land of Canaan is also called the Holy Land.
8. Where did Abram first stop in Canaan? (Shechem) Where did he stop next? (Bethel, which means "house of God")
9. What did Abram do both times he stopped? (Built an altar to the Lord)

D. Further Ideas

1. The Journey
 - a. It was a long, slow journey from Ur to Canaan. Terah and Abram and their families had to travel on foot or on donkeys. They had all their cattle and sheep with them. Cattle and sheep need to eat grass and drink water every day, several times a day, so there would have been lots of stopping and starting and stopping again in order to keep the flocks healthy. Each night the people had to put up tents for themselves to sleep in, and the next morning they had to take down the tents, roll up their beds, pack everything they had used, and load it all back onto the donkeys again before they could continue their journey that day. Traveling was a lot of work, and people didn't go very far in one day. It took a long time to get from Ur to the Holy Land (Canaan).

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- b. Did you know the Lord has called you to go on a long journey? Life is a journey, and everyone who wants to obey the Lord is called to make that journey, like Abram. Abram was called to leave his native place, the place where he was born, to go to the Holy Land. And each one of us is called by the Lord to leave behind the selfishness we're born with and go on a long, slow journey to the Holy Land, which is heaven. It's a lot of work to stop being selfish and to learn to think about other people, but with the Lord's help, we can do it. And we'll be so happy when our journey is over, and we're finally in heaven!

2. Altars

- a. Wherever Abram stopped on his journey, he built an altar to the Lord. Do you know why?
- b. It was a sign that Abram knew the Lord was taking care of him and guiding him on his journey. Building an altar was Abram's way of thanking the Lord for helping him to get to that place in his journey.
- c. We don't usually build altars to thank the Lord for His help. What way do we have of showing that we know the Lord is helping us and taking care of us? We can pray to Him each day and thank Him for helping us on our journey through this life to heaven.

III. Enrichment Activities

A. Music (choose one)

1. #154 "Savior, like a shepherd lead us"
2. #169 "I pray Thee, Lord to guide my ways"

B. Activities

1. Show children on a map: Ur, Haran, Canaan, Bethel, and Shechem

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C. Project: An Altar to the Lord

1. Have children write on a small piece of paper, about 2" x 3" (or dictate to the teacher) a brief prayer of thanks to the Lord for His help in guiding them on their life's journey. (Example: "Thank you, Lord, for helping me every day to do what's right.")
2. Provide gray construction paper to be torn into stones for an altar; glue stones to a background page (yellow would set off the gray stones nicely) in the form of an altar.
3. With crayons or oil pastels, add some smoke spiraling upward from the altar to the Lord in heaven.
4. Glue the child's prayer to the top of the altar so it can rise with the smoke and be heard by the Lord in heaven.

IV. Teaching Aids

- A. Map of the Holy Land
- B. Illustrations of caravan traveling through Holy Land, flocks, altar

V. Further Reading for the Teacher (optional)

- A. Dole's Bible Study Notes, Vol. I, "The Call of Abram," pp. 196-210.