

## FAMILIES FORMING DISCIPLES

### GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

#### TOPIC: GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM AND HIS DESCENDANTS

#### REFERENCES:

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH  
NO. 59-60

#### Sacred Scripture

GEN 12:1-3, 15:1-6 & 17:1-8;  
PS 105:42; JN 8:53-59;  
ROM 4:1-25

CREED	LITURGY	LIFE	PRAYER
nos.	nos.	nos.	nos.
144-47, 176,	1253, 1265-66	2087, 2158, 2233	2564, 2570-73, 2592, 2635, 2725-45

#### GOAL(S):

- Families will reflect on God's promises to Abraham.
- Families will reflect on how God answers prayers.
- Families will reflect on how they belong to God's family as adopted sons and daughters of Abraham.

#### MATERIALS

- Chair for each person (for Ice Breaker)
- Blessed chalk & Holy Water (supplied by parish to be used during Week 2)
- [Look Up at the Stars coloring sheet](#) (1 per family)
- Markers, crayons or colored pencils

#### OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus,  
May Your light shine on our way, as once it guided the steps of the Magi: that we too may be led into Your presence and worship You, the Child of Mary, the Word of the Father, the King of nations, the Savior of mankind; to whom be glory forever.  
Amen.

*Adapted from a prayer by Frank Colquhoun*

#### ICE BREAKER

##### A Great Wind Blows

1. **What You Will Need:** A chair for each person
2. **Set Up:** (This activity can be done with a large family or by grouping 2 or 3 small families together.) Put the chairs in a circle so that they are facing the inside. Each participant should sit down before the game begins. One person should be selected as the caller and remain standing.
3. **How to Play:** The caller should call out "A great wind blows for everyone who \_\_\_\_\_." The blank should be filled in with such things as has red hair, has a bow in their hair, who ate cereal for breakfast, who has a younger sibling, etc. The people to whom the saying applies should stand up and change seats. After each description is called out, remove one chair, so the game is played similarly to Musical Chairs where one chair is removed each time and those left standing are out. The final person who has a seat wins the game.  
**Or (Option 2):** Families can share one thing they did together during the Christmas holidays.

Adapted from [Kidsactivities.net](http://Kidsactivities.net)



# TEACH

## 1. Hook/Question

**Option 1:** For families with young children:

[Father Abraham Had Many Sons Song](#) (2:26)

Catechists should lead song and hand motions and encourage families to participate! After song has ended, ask:

**Guess who we are going to be talking about today?**

**Answer:** Abraham

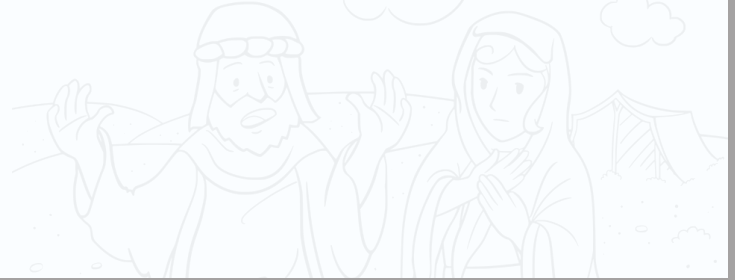


**Option 2:** Ask: If God asked you to leave everything, trust in Him and go to a foreign land, what would you do?

## 2. Introduce Topic

### God's Covenant with Abraham and his descendants

Today we will reflect on God's covenant with Abraham, what it means for us, and how God answers our prayers and invites us to be part of His family.



# CONTENT

\*Ask families to open their bibles to Genesis chapter 12 so they can read along.

It was many generations after Noah had made his covenant with God that another great leader was born. His name was Abram. In the Bible we read that God called Abram and told him to leave the place where he was living and go to a land that God would show him. In Genesis 12 we see that God made Abram three very important promises. The first promise was that God would give him land. We call this land, the Promised Land.

**Read:** Gen 12:1 **The Lord said to Abram: "Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and from your father's house to a land that I will show you."**

The second promise that God made to Abram was that God would make of him a great nation and make his name great. This meant that Abram's descendants would be kings! To make your name great means to establish a dynasty. Abram's children would become a royal dynasty! At this time Abram was called Abram which means Exalted Father. But very soon, God will change Abram's name to Abraham, which means the Father of Many Nations.

**Read:** Gen 12:2 **"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."**

**Tip: Consider having someone with a theatrical voice read the bible verses (red) and a different person read the explanations (black)**

The third promise that God made to Abram was that someday all the families of the earth would find blessings in him. Jesus, the Savior of the world, would come through Abraham's family line. As we will see, it is through Jesus that the whole world will be blessed.

**Read:** Gen 12:3 "I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. All the families of the earth shall find blessing in you."

So God promised Abram and his family (those who were with him then, and those yet to be born) three things: (1) to inherit the Promised Land, (2) to become a Royal Nation, and (3) to bless the whole world. However, the people of God, who would come to be called the Israelites, did not inherit the land until the time when Joshua led them into the Promised Land. Israel did not become a royal nation until the time of King David, and most importantly, it will not be until Jesus comes that all the families of the earth could find blessing in Christ.

It would take a very long time for these promises to be fulfilled. It is the same in our own lives. Sometimes it takes a long time for us to see how God keeps His promises and answers our prayers. Like Abraham experienced, we can know and see clear answers to some prayers in our lifetime, but some promises might be fulfilled after we have died and gone with God. That means that everything we do for God now, every prayer we pray for someone, is still very important, because it is laying a path for what God will do at the perfect time. Even if we can't see it now, God is working, and He answers our prayers in different ways: sometimes it can be a clear "yes," sometimes "wait," and sometimes "no." No matter what His answer, God loves us and always does what is best for us. We must trust and follow Abraham's example, stay strong in our faith that God will always bring good to those who are faithful to Him. All things are possible for God! There is nothing He can't do!

**Read:** Gen12:4-5 "Abram went as the Lord directed him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. Abram took his wife Sarai, his brother's son Lot, all the possessions that they had accumulated, and the persons they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan."



## FAMILY CONVERSATION

It took a lot of courage and faith for Abram, Sarai and their family to leave their home and go to the land to which God sent them. Has God ever asked you to do something difficult? What was it? How did you feel about it? How did it turn out? Is there something special for which you are praying?

- a) First, model by answering the questions and sharing from your life experiences
- b) Small Group family sharing
- c) Allow for Large Group sharing (as time allows)

## TEACH

Time went by and Abram and his wife still had not yet had a baby. They were getting pretty old, and even though God had promised them they would be the parents of many, they began to worry that they would never have a child.

**Read:** Gen 15:1-7 “Then Abram asked for proof that God would keep his promises. To prove it God made a covenant with Abram because that was the way people in that day made special agreements and promises. God knew that Abram had made agreements this way in the past and would understand that God’s promises would be fulfilled if God made a covenant with him.”

**Read:** Gen 15:8-12 (end with vs 12 “As the sun was about to set, a trance fell upon Abram.”)

So after that, the sun set and it became night, but if we look at the Scripture when God had told Abram to look up at the sky to see the stars, we see it was still day time.

**Ask:** Can you see the stars during the day?

**Answer:** No.

**Explain:** No, you can’t, and neither could Abram. He couldn’t see the stars but Abram believed because he began to understand that God loved him and always keeps His promises. The story tells us that, “Abram put his faith in the Lord” even though he couldn’t see any of the stars. Because of his act of faith of believing without seeing, it was credited to Abram “as an act of righteousness”. God sees everything. He is omnipresent, which means that He is present everywhere at all times. Every moment is present to Him at the same “time” (in God’s “now,” which is outside of created time). So when the Lord God told Abram to look up at the sky, he couldn’t see any of the stars, but God could see them all, throughout all eternity. There was a star in the sky that represented each person that would come from Abraham’s family. He saw you and He saw me. Even though we hadn’t even yet been born, God saw us at that moment. We are the adopted sons and daughters of Abraham!

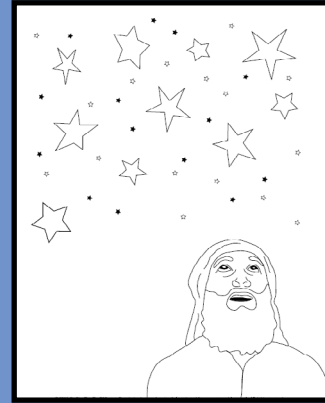
**Watch:** “Isaac: Child of Promise”  
(Bible Stories for Kids, 4:08 min.)  
“As many descendants as the stars in the sky...”



# FAMILY ACTIVITY

Look Up at the Stars coloring sheet

1. Give each family a copy of the coloring sheet.
2. Follow directions on sheet.
3. Families can color the sheet together.



## MISSION

### First, Introduce Mission Activity

Mission Activities are to be done at home during Week 2 and to be shared at the gathering of families on Week 3.

### Second, Explain Activity

- Read the story of the Visit of the Magi Matthew 2:1-12.
- Or watch a short video about the Visit of the Magi to the Christ Child. Since we are gathering after the Solemnity of the Epiphany, we will be revisiting what was celebrated!
- As a family, you will mark the mantle of your front door (with blessed chalk if possible) and pray the Family Epiphany Blessing. It is very simple to do, and the explanation and the prayer can be found on your Week 2 Handout. (Use the Week 2 Handout to review the Epiphany Blessing. For families who may have already charked their doors, encourage them to take pictures to share.)
- Lastly, families will be encouraged to bless themselves with holy water in their homes, as a reminder of their baptisms and of Jesus' baptism in the Jordan, which began His public ministry.

### Last, Model for Families

- Show families how you marked your own front door mantle with chalk. (Use a picture or video as necessary)

# REVIEW AND PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ,

We entrust our family to You and ask for Your blessing and protection. We love You Lord Jesus with all our hearts and we ask that You help our family become more like the Holy Family. Help us to be kind, loving, and patient with one another. Give us all the grace we need to become saints and Your faithful disciples.

Amen.

## SUPPORTING QUOTES FROM CHURCH DOCUMENTS

**Pope Francis, Encyclical *Lumen Fidei* (2013), nos 8-10:**

### **Abraham, our father in faith**

Faith opens the way before us and accompanies our steps through time. Hence, if we want to understand what faith is, we need to follow the route it has taken, the path trodden by believers, as witnessed first in the Old Testament. Here a unique place belongs to Abraham, our father in faith. Something disturbing takes place in his life: God speaks to him; he reveals himself as a God who speaks and calls his name. [...]

The word spoken to Abraham contains both a call and a promise. First, it is a call to leave his own land, a summons to a new life, the beginning of an exodus which points him towards an unforeseen future. The sight which faith would give to Abraham would always be linked to the need to take this step forward: faith “sees” to the extent that it journeys, to the extent that it chooses to enter into the horizons opened up by God’s word. This word also contains a promise: Your descendants will be great in number, you will be the father of a great nation (cf. Gen 13:16; 15:5; 22:17). [...]

Abraham is asked to entrust himself to this word. Faith understands that something so apparently ephemeral and fleeting as a word, when spoken by the God who is fidelity, becomes absolutely certain and unshakable, guaranteeing the continuity of our journey through history. Faith accepts this word as a solid rock upon which we can build, a straight highway on which we can travel. [...]

**Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience (January 23, 2013):**

[Abraham] is the first great figure and reference for speaking of faith in God: Abraham the great patriarch, an exemplary model, father of all believers (cf. Rom 4:11-12). The Letter to the Hebrews presents it in this way: “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was to go. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents like Isaac and Jacob had, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city which has sound foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (11:8-10).

... How would we have responded to such an invitation? In fact it meant setting out with no directions, no knowledge of where God would lead him; it was a journey that demanded radical obedience and trust, to which faith alone gives access. Yet the dark unknown — to which Abraham had to go — was lit by the light of a promise; God added to his order a reassuring word that unfolded to Abraham a future, life in fullness: “I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great... and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves” (Gen 12:2, 3).

