



Abram and Sarai Went

Goal: To trust and obey God.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Genesis 12:1-8

In the first eleven chapters of Genesis, God is involved with the whole world through its creation, its destruction in the flood, and the scattering of humanity throughout the world. Every attempt God makes at relating with people, God's own creation, is thwarted by humanity turning its back on God. Thus far, we see God's relationship with humanity from the 30,000-foot view.

Genesis 12 is a shift from that perspective. The focus zooms in, and one family is in the picture. The story is now about God, Abram and Sarai, and their promised descendants. God chooses this couple, through no merit of their own. They are not special. They did nothing to earn God's attention. In fact, as the story plays out in subsequent chapters of Genesis, they are flawed and fallible. God's call is one of grace.

God has a command for Abram and Sarai, to get up and go. God will lead them to a land, give them children and descendants, and bless them to be a blessing to the world. Abram and Sarai's response is not one of incredulity or even laughter, at this point, but trust and obedience. Without any evidence, they believe and act.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

As a child, whether they recognize it or not, one's whole life thus far is an experience much like Abram's and Sarai's. They are often told to get up and go, and probably with no promises of future benefits given. Parents will say, "Let's go!" and children go. They may fuss or question, but in the end, they will trust and obey, unless they have learned not to trust the individual making the command. Children have the benefit of learning to trust the individual. As far as we know, this was Abram's and Sarai's first encounter with God. They learned of God's faithfulness by doing. Future generations look back to their experiences to demonstrate God's faithfulness.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Children's first sense of understanding who God is comes through their relationships with others, particularly adults, and primarily their parents. As a teacher or leader, you are a caring adult in their lives who models basic concepts of relationships. Trust is a key element in any relationship, particularly with children because they are developing that sense of who in their world is trustworthy and who is not. Showing up, being a caring adult, listening, and following through on what you say is important in building that trust.

Gracious God, may I be a trustworthy and caring presence in the lives of the children I encounter. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies
(MM) 2023–2024

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) i–iv, 3, 3a, 15, 24

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

story audio (see p. vii)

candle

green cloth

moving boxes

Responding

Claiming

copies of **Grace Notes**
(GN) 1

Offering

copies of **GN 2**

Extra

copies of **GN 3**

GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Post **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule,” to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii–iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

Welcoming and Preparing

LG A MS C L T

Welcome the children and parents/caregivers as they arrive by saying, “Grace and peace to you.” Prompt the response, “And also with you.”

Invite children to set up a worship space with a green cloth, a candle, and a Bible. Provide several moving boxes and invite children to stack and place them around the worship table. Have the children make two posters: one that reads “Go!” and another that reads “I will bless you.” Encourage them to be creative when making the posters. Place them with the moving boxes surrounding the worship table. As children are preparing the worship space, engage in discussion about their experience with moving to a new place. Talk about what that is like, the preparations required, the pros and cons, and so forth. Discuss the feelings involved in moving to a new place or taking a long trip. Be sure to share your own experiences as well.

Ask a few children to help prepare any “Responding in Gratitude” activities you may be doing today. Have a volunteer practice reading today’s Scripture passage.

Singing

L

Listen to “God’s Love for Us Is Truly Amazing (El amor de Dios es maravilloso)” —**MM 29; SCM 24**. Comment that the song was originally written in Spanish. Show **SCM 24** and invite the children to try saying the words in Spanish. Play the song again and sing along.

Praying

Turn on the candle. Wonder aloud what the moving boxes and the two phrases on the posters could have to do with what we will hear about God today. Encourage all responses. Invite children to sit quietly for a few moments and to take several deep breaths. Ask them to still their bodies and clear their minds to leave space for God; then pray:

God of grace, shape us into the people you created us to be, people who trust and obey you in all things. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

T *Transition times provide a challenge to children. Clear expectations, follow-through, and routine help with those times, but they may not be enough for some children. For children who struggle with transitions, consider quick physical activities—such as doing chair push-ups, squeezing their hands together, and stretching—before or after the transition.*



Preparing to Hear the Story

A B L T

Play the “Excuses Game.” Tell the children that you will give them instructions and that, after each command, you will pause. The children are to come up with as many excuses as they possibly can—reasons they cannot obey. For example: “Clean your room” could be followed by “I’m too tired.” or “It will just get dirty again.” or “I’m playing a video game.” Encourage them to come up with some crazy and funny excuses too.

- ▼ Do your homework.
- ▼ Come eat dinner.
- ▼ Get ready for bed.
- ▼ Pack your suitcase.
- ▼ Let’s go!

Wonder together why it is a good idea to make excuses or why not.

Tell the children that today’s story is about God giving instructions to Abram (A-brum) and Sarai (SAY-rai). Encourage the children as they listen to identify the instructions God gives and to listen for whether or not Abram and Sarai made excuses.



Today’s story can be found in *Growing in God’s Love: A Story Bible*, edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim (Louisville, KY: Flyaway Books, 2018), www.pcusastore.com.

Hearing the Story

L

Invite a child to find Genesis 12 in the Bible. Have a volunteer read Genesis 12:1–8. Conclude the reading by saying, “Word of wisdom, Word of grace,” and prompt the children to say, “Thanks be to God.” Place the open Bible in the worship area.

Read the story again using **SCM 3** or listen to the story audio. When you read the list of the three things God promised, pause and repeat them several times for children to count off. For example, “One! Land; Two! Children; Three! Blessings.” Repeat that list several times until children can count it on their own. Resume the story.

Reflecting on God’s Grace

C

Look together at **SCM 3a**. Invite the children to comment on different things they see in the map. Wonder together how long the journey took (by foot!) and what may have been difficult about it.

Identify God’s instructions. Ask for a reminder about what God promised. Ask the children if they heard any excuses from Abram and Sarai. Marvel at what it must have been like to just trust and not to try to make excuses to keep from doing what God had asked.

Use the following questions to guide discussion:

- ▼ What might Abram and Sarai have thought on the day they began their journey?
- ▼ What might their family have thought as they prepared to go too?



- ▼ What might have made Abram and Sarai trust and obey God so easily?
- ▼ What does this story teach us about God?
- ▼ What does it teach us about being faithful people?

Singing

MS

Play, listen to, clap, and dance to “Wherever I May Wander”—**MM 2; SCM 15.**

Turn off the candle.

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RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and for the time available.

Claiming God’s Grace

Refer back to **SCM 3a**. Look at the journey Abram and Sarai made. Recall God’s instructions to “Go!” and God’s promise, “I will bless you!”

Form groups of three or four children, or work together as one group. Provide copies of **GN 1** to each group. Tell the children they will create an affirmation of faith, in a chant or cheer style, with motions or movement. Explain that an affirmation of faith is a statement about what they believe. Using Abram and Sarai as an example, tell the children that God told them to go and God would bless them. Abram and Sarai obeyed. In the children’s chants or cheers, they need to do three things:

1. Say what God is calling us to do.
2. Say what God’s promises to us are.
3. Say what our response to God is.

Provide time for children to create their affirmations and then to share them with everyone. Identify ways that their chants point to trusting and obeying God’s invitations. Encourage them to share, at home, their chants and the story of Abram and Sarai’s faith, which led them to trust and obey God’s invitation to “Go!” Display the affirmations in your space.

Celebrating God's Grace



Play “If God told me to ‘Go,’ I would take . . .” Have children sit in a circle and introduce the phrase that they will repeat: “If God told me to ‘Go,’ I would take . . .” Tell them that, on their turn, they should take with them something that begins with the same letter as their name. Alex may say, “If God told me to ‘Go,’ I would take allergy medicine”; Libby may say, “If God told me to ‘Go,’ I would take lamps.”

Invite the child to your right to go first; the child to their right would go next, speaking not only what they will take but also what Child 1 will take. Continue on until the play reaches you and you attempt to recall the whole list.

If you have a small group or want an extra challenge, go around the circle again, adding a second item that begins with the first letter of last names. Add to the items mentioned the first time around the circle.

Talk about what kinds of things Abram and Sarai might have taken with them.

Offering God's Grace



Wonder together what it must have been like for Abram and Sarai to go to a new place where they knew no one but each other and the family that moved with them.

Hand out copies of **GN 2** and invite children to write or draw pictures responding to the prompts. For the top two prompts, have them think about your church. For the bottom two prompts, have them think about your community. Tell the children that you will place these in a folder or binder and make them available to new people in your church. Acknowledge that offering care to people who are new to our communities is one way we can obey God's call to be faithful people.

Be sure to follow up with the pastor, new member group, and church office to have the children's recommendations available for visitors and newcomers.

Extra Activity

Hand out copies of **GN 3**. Have the children draw a line along the path that will safely take Abram and Sarai to the land that God has promised. Tell the children to avoid the snakes. Have the children count the number of stars they collect along the way (7). For a challenge, ask the children to count the number of stones along the correct path (35). Turn the page over and “build” (draw) an altar like Abram and Sarai did, using the same number of stones.



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so you can send the Grace Sightings link, or invite them to visit www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads. Remind the parents and caregivers about the story audio (see p. vii).

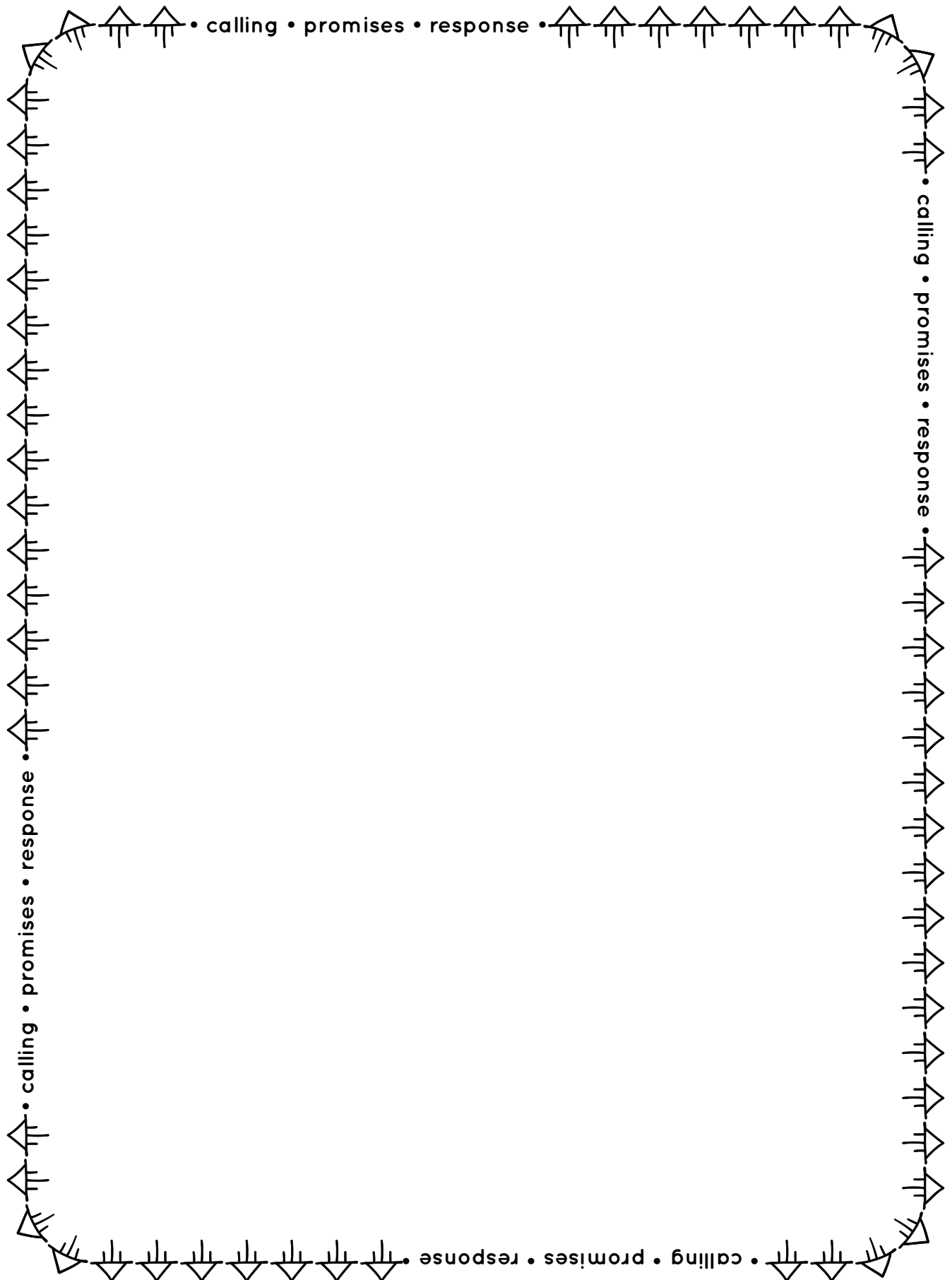
LOVING AND SERVING GOD

Lead children in cleaning up the worship space.

Sing “Wherever I May Wander”—**MM 2; SCM 15**—giving thanks to God wherever we go.

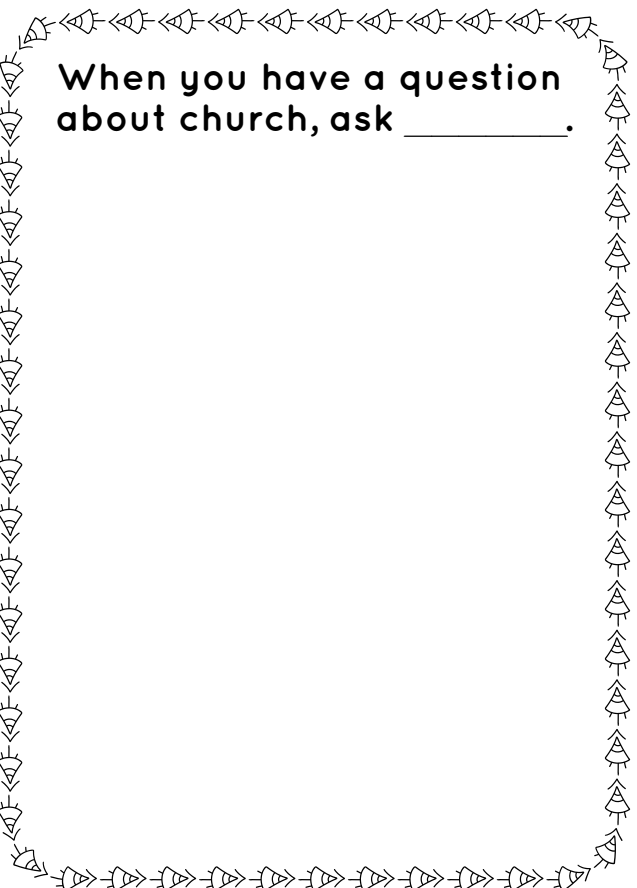
If the children created an affirmation chant or cheer during “Claiming God’s Grace,” invite the children to share them again. Encourage them to lead their families in the chants at home and share the story of Abram and Sarai’s faithfulness.

As the children leave, bless each child, saying, “(Name), God will be with you wherever you may wander. Trust and obey and you will be blessed.”





**My favorite thing
about my church.**



**When you have a question
about church, ask _____.**



My favorite place to eat.



**My favorite place
to have fun.**

