

Sunday school lesson – Upper Primary

BIG IDEA	God is committed to his people
Bible Reading	Genesis 15
Preparation	<p>Read Genesis 15 Much has happened since Abram and his family arrived in Canaan. Abram and Lot have parted company. Lot ended up in Sodom and was subsequently rescued by Abram after he was taken away captive by rival kings. Following this incident, Abram was faced with a choice: Align with the king of Sodom and come under his rule or align with the king of Salem (Melchizedek) and submit to the rule he represents. Abram chooses to remain committed to God and his promises. But time is passing, and God has apparently still not made good on the promises he gave to Abram back in Ur. So, when God again speaks to Abram in Genesis 15:1, Abram’s reply reflects his pain. It is reminiscent of the Psalmist’s cry “How long, O Lord?” His cry does not reflect doubt (see verse 6) but rather a plea for assurance of the promise. God is very gracious in answering this request. First, he shows Abram the stars in the sky, as a visible illustration to reinforce his promise. And then there follows an extraordinary act. God enters into a binding agreement with Abram, committing himself to Abram through his promise, even to the extent that he is willing to take on the curse of the covenant, should he prove unfaithful. Even further, he was willing to take on the curse of the covenant when WE proved unfaithful (Galatians 3:6-14). What an amazing God we have, that he would go to such lengths for us!</p> <p>Take home message: God is absolutely committed to his people. Trust his promises, even when they take time to be fulfilled.</p> <p>Prepare for “Getting Started”: Get a picture of a scene such as a mountain or valley – to use during the lesson. Write out a list of objects that range from things very easily broken (e.g. glass, a twig), through to things that cannot be broken (e.g. a steel rod). Cut up into individual words.</p>
Getting Started	Get the children to arrange the words in order, from most easily broken, to least easily broken. Today we are going to talk about something which is not just difficult to break, even more than that, it is impossible to break.
Finding Out 1. The promise and the test of time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review lesson from last week. God had unexpectedly spoken to Abram. Remind them that God had given Abram a command – to leave his home, and to go where God would show him. But he had also given him promises. • <i>Q: What promises had God given to Abram?</i> ➤ God promised to give Abram a new home, children, to protect him, and to show kindness to the world through him <p>Read Genesis 12:4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Q: How old was Abram when he left his home? (75 years old)</i> ➤ God had led them to their new home and they had now been there many years. ➤ But Abram did not yet own any land. And he did not yet have any children. <p>Read Genesis 15:1-3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ God spoke to Abram to assure him that his promises would still be kept

<p>2. The covenant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Q: What was Abram’s response to this?</i> ➤ Abram believed God would keep his promise but couldn’t see how God would do this since he was now an old man. Talk about the fact that it is ok to bring our questions and concerns to God. He is gracious and kind in dealing with us. <p>Read Genesis 15:4-5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Q: What did God do in response to Abram’s question?</i> ➤ God took him outside and showed him the stars. Talk about how a picture or illustration can be so much more powerful than just words. (<i>Describe a scene to them, then show them a picture – which method is more effective in showing what the scene is like?</i>) Explain that the promise hadn’t changed, God was just helping Abram to keep trusting the promise by showing him a picture of lots of children. <p>Read Genesis 15:6-8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Abram clearly believed God’s promises but wanted God to help him to understand. ➤ Describe the scene that follows in verses 9-17. ➤ Explain that this was the usual ceremony at that time when two people wanted to form a covenant agreement (<i>explain that this is like a promise</i>). The point of the ceremony was that each person, as they walked through the dead animals, was saying “If I don’t keep my promise, may I end up just as these animals are”. Emphasise that normally both people entering into the agreement would walk through the animals. ● <i>Q: Who walked through the animals on this occasion? (God - represented by the smoke and torch). What was Abram doing? (He was asleep!)</i> ● <i>Q: What does that tell you about this special covenant?</i> ➤ God was committing himself to his promise. He committed himself by binding himself to a covenant. He was so serious about his commitment, that he was effectively saying he would rather die than not keep his covenant with Abram. ➤ Refer to the “Getting Started” activity. Make the point that God’s promises are not just difficult to break, it is impossible for God to break them. <p>Read Genesis 15:18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Q: Is the promise God gives to Abram here any different than before?</i> ● <i>Q: Knowing what God has just done, how do you think Abram now feels about the promise?</i> ➤ God willingly committed himself to Abram, and to his descendants. His commitment is so sure, that it is more likely that God will die than that he will break his promise to his people.
<p>So What?</p>	<p>The God who made that unbreakable promise to Abram, is the same God today. God offers the same relationship to you. He offers to be your God and commit himself to you. If He is already your God, then trust him to keep his promises. (Talk through some promises God has made). If not, then don’t you want to get to know a God like this!</p>
<p>Memory Verse</p>	<p>PSALM 145:2 <i>Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever.</i></p>

Sunday school lesson – Lower Primary

BIG IDEA	God is committed to his people
Bible Reading	Genesis 15
Preparation	<p>Read Genesis 15 Much has happened since Abram and his family arrived in Canaan. Abram and Lot have parted company. Lot ended up in Sodom and was subsequently rescued by Abram after he was taken away captive by rival kings. Following this incident, Abram was faced with a choice: Align with the king of Sodom and come under his rule or align with the king of Salem (Melchizedek) and submit to the rule he represents. Abram chooses to remain committed to God and his promises. But time is passing, and God has apparently still not made good on the promises he gave to Abram back in Ur. So, when God again speaks to Abram in Genesis 15:1, Abram’s reply reflects his pain. It is reminiscent of the Psalmist’s cry “How long, O Lord?” His cry does not reflect doubt (see verse 6) but rather a plea for assurance of the promise. God is very gracious in answering this request. First, he shows Abram the stars in the sky, as a visible illustration to reinforce his promise. And then there follows an extraordinary act. God enters into a binding agreement with Abram, committing himself to Abram through his promise, even to the extent that he is willing to take on the curse of the covenant, should he prove unfaithful. Even further, he was willing to take on the curse of the covenant when WE proved unfaithful (Galatians 3:6-14). What an amazing God we have, that he would go to such lengths for us!</p> <p>Take home message: God is absolutely committed to his people. Trust his promises, even when they take time to be fulfilled.</p> <p>Prepare for “Getting Started”: Get a picture of a scene such as a mountain or valley – to use during the lesson. Write out a list of objects (or find pictures of objects) that range from things very easily broken (e.g. glass, a twig), through to things that cannot be broken (e.g. a steel rod). Cut up into individual words.</p>
Getting Started	Get the children to arrange the prepared words/pictures into three categories: “Easily broken”, “Can be broken with effort”, “Very difficult to break”. Today we are going to talk about something which is not just difficult to break, even more than that, it is impossible to break.
Finding Out 1. The promise and the test of time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review lesson from last week. Ask what God had said to Abram. Remind them he had given him a command – to leave his home, to go where God would show him. But he had also given him promises. • <i>Q: What promises had God given to Abram?</i> ➤ God had promised to give Abram a new home, to give him children, to look after him, and to show kindness to many others through him. ➤ God had led them to their new home and they had now been there many years. • <i>Q: How much land did Abram own? (nothing!)</i> • <i>Q: How many children did Abram have? (none!)</i> ➤ What had happened to God’s promise? Maybe God had forgotten about him? ➤ Many years later, God spoke to Abram to tell him that he would keep his promise

<p>2. The covenant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Abram believed God would keep his promise but couldn't see how God would do this. He was now an old man, so how could he have children? ➤ Talk about the fact that it is ok to bring our questions and concerns to God. He wants us to talk to him when we don't understand what is going on. <p>Read Genesis 15:5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Q: What did God do to help Abram understand what he was doing?</i> ➤ God took him outside and showed him the stars. Talk about how a picture or illustration can be make things easier to understand than just words. (<i>Describe a scene to them, then show them a picture – which method is more helpful in showing what the scene is like?</i>) Explain that God was helping Abram understand what he was promising Abram, by using the stars as a picture. <p>Read Genesis 15:6-8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Abram asked God to help him to understand and believe God's promise. ➤ Describe the scene that follows in verses 9-17. ➤ Explain that this was the normal way at that time that two people would show that they were serious about keeping a promise they made to each other. The point of the ceremony was that each person, as they walked through the dead animals, was saying "I would rather be dead (like these animals) than not keep my promise". ➤ God was showing how serious he was about keeping his promise to Abram. He was so serious about his promise, that he was saying he would rather die than not keep his promise to Abram. ➤ Refer back to the "Getting Started" activity. God's promises are not just difficult to break, it is impossible for God to break them. • <i>Q: How do you think Abram now feels about the promise God has made? Do you think he felt like he could trust God to keep his promise – even though it was hard?</i> ➤ God showed Abram that he could be trusted. He was never going to break his promise.
<p>So What?</p>	<p>God is the same today. You can trust him to keep his promises (ask for some examples of promises God has made). He has also promised that everyone who says sorry to him and asks for forgiveness, he will always forgive. You could ask him today and he will say yes because he never breaks his promises.</p>
<p>Memory Verse</p>	<p>PSALM 145:2 <i>Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever.</i></p>

Sunday school lesson –Pre-School

BIG IDEA	God is committed to his people
Bible Reading	Genesis 15
Preparation	<p>Read Genesis 15 Much has happened since Abram and his family arrived in Canaan. Abram and Lot have parted company. Lot ended up in Sodom and was subsequently rescued by Abram after he was taken away captive by rival kings. Following this incident, Abram was faced with a choice: Align with the king of Sodom and come under his rule or align with the king of Salem (Melchizedek) and submit to the rule he represents. Abram chooses to remain committed to God and his promises. But time is passing, and God has apparently still not made good on the promises he gave to Abram back in Ur. So, when God again speaks to Abram in Genesis 15:1, Abram’s reply reflects his pain. It is reminiscent of the Psalmist’s cry “How long, O Lord?” His cry does not reflect doubt (see verse 6) but rather a plea for assurance of the promise. God is very gracious in answering this request. First, he shows Abram the stars in the sky, as a visible illustration to reinforce his promise. And then there follows an extraordinary act. God enters into a binding agreement with Abram, committing himself to Abram through his promise, even to the extent that he is willing to take on the curse of the covenant, should he prove unfaithful. Even further, he was willing to take on the curse of the covenant when WE proved unfaithful (Galatians 3:6-14). What an amazing God we have, that he would go to such lengths for us!</p> <p>Take home message: God is committed to his people. Trust his promises.</p> <p>Prepare for “Getting Started”: Print out pictures of things that are easily broken (e.g. glass, a twig) and some other pictures of things that are very difficult to break (e.g. steel beams, a tree trunk).</p>
Getting Started	Get the children to arrange the prepared pictures into two piles – things that are easily broken, and things that are difficult to break. Today we are going to talk about something which is not just difficult to break, it is impossible to break.
Finding Out 1. The promise and the test of time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review lesson from last week. • Q: <i>What did God ask Abram to do?</i> • Q: <i>What did God promise to give Abram?</i> ➤ God promised to give Abram a new home, to give him children, and to be kind to him and look after him. ➤ Abram was now living in his new home. But after many years, Abram still did not have any children. Maybe God had forgotten about him and wasn’t going to keep his promise after all! ➤ One day, God spoke to Abram again to tell him that he would keep his promise. ➤ Abram was glad to hear from God. He believed God would keep his promise but was sad because he had been waiting a long time. He still had no children! ➤ Talk about the fact that it is ok to talk to God about things that are worrying us. God likes to hear from us.

2. The covenant	<p>Read Genesis 15:5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Q: What did God do with Abram?</i> ➤ God took him outside and showed him the stars. • <i>Q: How many stars are in the sky? Could you count them all?</i> ➤ God was helping Abram understand that God hadn't forgotten his promise – he would still give him children. So many that they would be like stars in the sky! <p>Read Genesis 15:6a</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Q: Did Abram believe God would keep his promise?</i> ➤ God then did something else to help show Abram that he could trust God to keep his promise. ➤ Describe the scene that follows in verses 9-17. (Animals cut in half and making a pathway, then God appearing as smoke and fire and passing down the middle) ➤ This seems very strange! In those days, people would do this to show that they were making a promise to each other. It showed that they were very serious about their promise, and would never break their word. ➤ By doing this for Abram, God was showing him that he was serious about his promises, and that he would definitely do what he said he would do. ➤ Refer back to the "Getting Started" activity. Make the point that God's promises are not just difficult to break, it is impossible for God to break them. • <i>Q: How do you think Abram felt about God's promises now?</i> ➤ Abram could trust God to keep his promises.
So What?	God is exactly the same now as he was then. He still always keeps his promises to his people. You can always trust what God promises.
Memory Verse	<p>PSALM 145:2</p> <p><i>Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever.</i></p>
Alternative to worksheet	Make stars out of card. Colour them in/ decorate them. The memory verse could also be put on the stars.