

Lesson 4.5 - Abraham: Covenant Making

Topic: Peace with God
Subtopic: Covenant Making
Key Concept 2D: Sin
Key Concept 3C: Reconciliation

Class: IV (4th grade)
Objectives: **Knowledge:** When asked students will be able to explain what a covenant is and tell three things that people did when they made covenants. **Attitude:** Students will recognize that covenant making is a serious commitment.

Materials Needed:
Blackboard and Chalk; Exercise book
Optional: Bible Map to show Abraham's travels and materials for covenant: Cut-outs of sheep (2) made from construction paper and 2 tinsel leis or necklaces
Optional Art activity- Brown paper bags, construction paper, scissors and markers for the
References: Genesis 15
Memory Verse: Romans 6:23 and Review Romans 3:23

Teacher Activities

Introduction: Ask, "What is a covenant? Can you give an example?"

Bible Story: Introduce Abraham and explain how God made covenant with Abraham.

Application: 1. Have a student look up II Chronicles 20:7 and read what it says. What does this verse call Abraham? Why was Abraham's God's Friend?

3. After he got to the new land, God told him why he had wanted him to go there. What did God tell him?

We don't always know why God is telling us to do something, but if we obey Him, He will bless us. We can trust God to be a good friend.

Evaluation: Did students understand the concept of covenant? If not, tell more stories about covenant or look up examples of covenant in the Bible. God made covenants with Adam, Noah, and David. Jacob made covenant with Laban.

Student Activities

Introduction: Some families may have a tradition or history of covenant making they can share. If not, share the examples in the Teacher's Notes.

Bible Story: Listen to the story and participate in discussion about Abraham and covenant making.

Application: 1. Read II Chronicles 20:7; God's friend. He trusted God enough to leave his home and family and go to new land.
2. He was going to give all this land to Abraham's descendants.

Evaluation: Can students explain what a covenant is and tell at least 3 of the 4 things that people often did when they made covenant in the Bible? Do students understand that covenant making is a life time commitment and should be taken seriously?

Extension Activities:

Role-play covenant making the way they did in the Old Testament: Take construction paper and cut out a sheep. Two students stand facing each other. The animal (construction paper sheep) is between them. They make a promise to be friends forever and to help each other if they need anything. Tear the animal in two across the middle. Lay the head part on the left and the tail part on the right. The two students take turns walking between two parts of the animal so they end up at the opposite side (exchanging places). They exchange gifts. This was often a robe or something they wore so that other people could see it and know these two were covenant friends. You might have two necklaces or two tinsel leis that they could take off and exchange with each other. Then they pretend to roast the animal over the fire and they sit down and pretend to eat together.

Romans Road Verses. Have students study Romans 3:23 for a few minutes and then practice saying it to a partner while the partner checks the verse in the Bible. Switch around. After doing this for several times they can go on to Romans 6:23. OR have students study the verses for a few minutes and then try writing them in their journal from memory.

Concept Map for Covenant. A concept map can be used to review any key concept. A completed concept map is show in the Notes below. Draw a blank one on the board and have the students help you fill it in. Use their definition, examples and non-examples or give every other student a copy of it and have them fill it out with their partner.

Notes for Teacher

This lesson introduces the concept of covenant which will be used in the next lesson to explain how Jesus is the New Covenant and the basis for our friendship with God. That lesson will conclude our lessons on Peace with God and we will move into the lessons on Peace in the Family. This lesson also introduces Abraham. We will use examples from Abraham's family to learn about peacemaking in the family.

Main Idea: A Covenant is a solemn promise that is binding for a lifetime. God made a covenant with Abraham.

Introduction: Find out what students already know about covenants. If some families have a tradition or history of covenant making let students share about it. If not, share these examples.

(1) *Tribal covenants.* Before there were cities and towns people were often nomadic and warlike. Then some tribes began to settle down and grow plants to eat. These tribes might not be very good fighters but they were good at growing food. Another tribe might be very good at fighting but not so good at growing food. So the two tribes might make a covenant together. The heads or chiefs of the tribes would meet together and they would agree that the food-growing tribe would share their food with the warrior tribe and the warrior tribe would protect the food growers from anyone who tried to harm them. To show that they had made covenant together, they would say vows or promises. In Bible covenants they sacrificed an animal. Often they would exchange gifts that would help them remember their covenant. A covenant was not just between the chiefs. Everyone in the tribe was expected to follow the covenant too. A person could be killed if found guilty of breaking a covenant.

(2.) *Marriage Covenant.* Marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman. They promise to love and care for each other for the rest of their lives. They often exchange rings as a reminder that they are in a covenant with each other.

Bible Story: After Adam and Eve sinned God made them leave the Garden of Eden. The Bible tells about several men and women who lived after that. Many people became sinful and did not follow what God wanted them to do. God kept looking for a family of people who would be His friends. The Bible tells us that He found a man named Abraham who was willing to obey him and be his friend.

Review the Peace Circles by having a student explain the chart. We have been talking about how we make peace with God. Now we are going to start talking about making peace in the family. The Bible tells us a lot about Abraham's family so we will be studying Abraham's family as we talk about peacemaking in the family.

Abraham was the father of all the people who are Jews but our story starts when he had no children of his own. Just his wife, Sarai, who was later called Sarah, and his nephew Lot. At that time he was not called Abraham but just Abram. Later God changed his name to Abraham. Have students read Genesis 12:1-5. If you have a Bible map, show the children where Haran is and then where Canaan is. Haran was in what is now Syria. It was in the northern part of the Mesopotamia valley on the east side of the Euphrates River. Canaan is the land that is now Israel. Shechem, the first city where Abram stopped, was straight north of Jerusalem about half way between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee.

Talk about the scripture. Why did Abram leave his home and family? (To obey God and go to the land God told him to go to.) What did we learn is the sign of a friend of God? (John 15:14 : You are My friends if you do what I command you.) Was Abram God's friend? (Yes, He trusted God enough to leave his home and family.) Did Abraham know why God wanted him to go to this new place? (No. He just trusted God and did what He said.)

A Conversation with God. Several years after Abram left Ur and moved to Canaan, God spoke to him. Turn in your Bible to Genesis 15. Have students read Genesis 15:1-2.

What is a vision? (It is like a dream that you see when you are awake. Sometimes it is just in your head—like a dream—and sometimes you can actually see pictures like a movie. Some people still have visions from God today.) What is God promising Abram and why is Abram concerned? (God promised Abram a reward, that is, an inheritance or wealth that he could leave to his children but Abram did not have any children.) Have students read Genesis 15:4-6. What did God say to reassure Abram? (He promised more descendants than he could count). What are descendants? (Your children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and all their children) What did Abram do that pleased God? (He believed God.)

The Bible gives us many promises of things God will do for us. It pleases God when we believe what He says. God is faithful to do what He says if we will believe and trust Him like Abram did.

Covenant Making. Because the next part is long I suggest you read it to them as they follow along or (tell it in your own words. Read Genesis 15:7-20. God is making COVENANT with Abram (Write the word "covenant" on the board.) Covenant making usually involved these three things: (Write them on the board.)

1. Promises or vows that the two people or two tribes made to each other. What did God promise Abram? (land and many descendants) What was Abram's part of the promise? (He believed and obeyed God.) Write VOW on the board

2. Shedding blood. God taught His people that they could kill an animal and use the animal's blood as a sign of the covenant. Sometimes people would cut the animals apart from head to tail and lay the two pieces on the ground. Then both people would walk between the animals. In Abram's covenant with God, God went between the animals in the

form of a smoking fire pot and flaming torch. Abram was asleep and he saw this in a dream. Write BLOOD on the board.

3. Exchanging gifts or signs of the covenant – Did Abram and God exchange a sign or gift? (Not now, but later God told Abram that he and all of his sons should be circumcised as a sign of the covenant.) Write “Gifts or Sign” on the board.

4. Sometimes the people making a covenant would also sit down and eat a meal together. This was a sign of peace since you would not eat a meal with your enemies. Write EAT TOGETHER on the board.

We do many of these things at weddings. (Compare wedding traditions to covenant making in Bible times.)

[Optional: You may want to do the role-playing activity now to demonstrate how they made covenant together.]

Extension: Example of Frayer Concept Map

