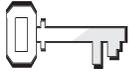


A Long, Long Walk



References

Genesis 12:1-7;
*Patriarchs and
Prophets*, pp. 125-131



Memory Verse

"Then I heard the voice
of the Lord saying,
'Whom shall I send?
And who will go for us?'
And I said, 'Here am I.
Send me!'" (Isaiah 6:8).



Objectives

The children will:
Know that God
needs them to listen
when He calls them to serve.

Feel willing to serve
where God calls them.

Respond by participating
in a simple service activity.



The Message

I will listen when God
calls me to serve Him.

Monthly Theme

God calls us to serve others.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

God speaks to Abram and tells him to leave his home in Ur and move to a place where He will lead him. God promises to give Abram many children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Abram listens to God. He has his servants pack all their belongings, gather all the animals, and begin the long journey. God leads them to Canaan, the Promised Land. Abram builds an altar of stones and worships God.

This is a lesson about service.

Abram was willing to go where God wanted him to go even though it meant leaving home and traveling a long way. Sometimes we think it is not convenient to serve God. But when we listen to God's voice and do as He asks, He will bless us. Children can hear God's voice as they learn to listen to Him through the Bible, through nature, and through the adults who care for them and lead them.

Teacher Enrichment

Ur was the capital city of Mesopotamia during Abram's time. It was the greatest trading city at that time (according to archaeologists). The distance from Ur to Egypt is about 900 miles (1,269 kilometers). Abram could not travel across the desert, but had to follow the watered route. He traveled in a northwesterly direction along either the Euphrates or the Tigris rivers to Haran, then in a southwesterly direction to Shechem along the Orontes and the Jordan rivers. This meant that Abram traveled about 1,300 miles (1,820 kilometers) from Ur to Shechem.

The great tree of Moreh at Shechem was a famous landmark. Many trees were considered to be sacred in Palestine at the time, and this great oak was one of them. It was an object and a place of worship among the ancient Semites.

The traveling party was quite large. Abram had at least 318 male servants (see Genesis 14:14).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 1.

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	A. <i>I Can't Hear You</i> B. <i>Blind Walk</i>	none blindfolds
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	none <i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> offering container none
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	adult Bible-times costume, adult male, something to make a tent eight paper footprints Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Listen and Serve</i>	paper, pen or pencil
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Neighborhood Cleanup</i>	pieces of paper; trash bags

*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

Welcome children at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.



Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

A. I Can't Hear You

Form pairs. Say: **When I give the signal, I want you to put your fingers in your ears and imagine that you are deaf. Then say something to your partner and see if they can understand you.** Allow each child several turns.

Debriefing

Ask: **Was it easy to understand the other person? Why? Has your mom or dad ever called you, and you didn't hear them? Why?** (too busy doing something, too far away, didn't want to hear) **Sometimes, when God speaks to us, we are too busy doing other things, so we don't hear. Today we are going to learn about someone who listened when God called. God still calls people to serve Him. We want to serve Him too. Today's message is:**



I WILL LISTEN WHEN GOD CALLS ME TO SERVE HIM.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- blindfolds

B. Blind Walk

Form pairs. Blindfold one child in each pair. Then scatter the chairs around the room. Say: **If you aren't blindfolded, you are to guide your partner across the room. If you are wearing a blindfold, your partner will guide you. The chairs have been moved around, so listen carefully to your guide. Guides may not touch the "blind" person; just tell them where to go.** Have several pairs cross the room at the same time. Repeat until everyone has had an opportunity to be "blind."

Debriefing

Ask: **What was it like to have to rely on someone to guide you?** (OK, unsure, afraid) **How hard was it to hear directions?** (It was confusing because several people talked at the same time; it was easy, difficult, etc.) **In today's lesson we will learn about someone who was listening when God called him. God still calls people to serve Him. We want to serve God too. Our message says:**



I WILL LISTEN WHEN GOD CALLS ME TO SERVE HIM.

Say that with me.

Prayer and Praise

Any
Time



Fellowship

Report the children's joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Review last week's memory verse and hear comments about last week's lesson. Greet and introduce visitors. Mention birthdays or special events.



Suggested Songs

"God Calls Us" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 130)

"This Little Light of Mine" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 134)

"I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 119)

"I Want to Be" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 124)



Mission

Say: **People in other parts of the world help others too. Today we will hear about people living in a faraway place.** Use a story from *Children's Mission*.



Offering

Use the same container you used last week. Say: **When we give our offering, we help those who serve God and go to teach others about God's love.**

You Need:

- offering container



Prayer

Encourage them to think of people who serve God as missionaries in other countries as they build. Pray for those people.

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- adult male
- adult Bible-times costume
- hidden adult
- something to make a tent

Experiencing the Story

Setting the scene:

Have “Abram” dressed in a Bible-times costume ready to tell the story. Have a hidden adult ready to read aloud God’s words. Tell the children to pretend they are traveling with Abram as he talks about his journey. (He will lead them around the room, finally stopping at his tent.) Explain the following:

When you say: listen, listened	They do: Put hand behind an ear, palm facing outward.
prayer, pray	Fold hands in prayer.
God, friend	Point upward.

Have Abram read or tell the story.

My name is Abram. And **God** [point upward] is my best **friend** [point upward]. I live in that tent over there, beneath the great trees of Moreh. Every day I **pray** [fold hands in prayer]. I tell **God** [point upward] everything that makes me happy and things that make me sad. I **listen** [put hand behind an ear] carefully, and **God** [point upward] tells me what to do. I hope you **pray** [fold hands in prayer] every day too. **God** [point upward] wants to be your best **friend** [point upward] too.

I haven’t always lived here. I used to live on the other side of the desert in a place called Ur. One day **God** [point upward] spoke to me:

[Hidden voice]: “Abram, it is time for you to leave Ur. I have a better place for you. I will bless you with children, and grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, too. You will be blessed, and your family

will be a great nation.”

I didn’t know why **God** [point upward] told me to leave my homeland and go to a place that He would show me. Ur is hundreds of miles across the desert from where I live now. But that didn’t matter; I trusted **God** [point upward]. As I **listened** [put hand behind an ear], I became more and more excited, so I went and told my wife, Sarai, and our servants to start packing.

It was hard, for us to believe that our children would be a great nation. At that time Sarai and I did not have any children. We were too old to raise a family. We just had to trust **God’s** [point upward] word.

My nephew, Lot, decided to come with us. All of our servants had to get ready. We had big flocks of sheep and goats to think about, too. When we were finally ready, we started on our way.

The shortest way was through the desert, but there was no food and water there. We might have tried to go straight across, but **God** [point upward] knew we would need water. So He led us from one watering place to another until we reached this land.

When we got here, to Shechem, in this land where the Canaanites live, we set up camp there by that forest of trees. One of the first things I did was to build an altar to **God** [point upward]. I **pray** [fold hands in prayer] there regularly for myself, my family and servants, and the Canaanite people. And it was here that **God** [point upward] spoke to me again.

[Hidden voice:] “Look around you, Abram. This is the land that I am going to give you and all your family.”

Well, we looked. And it is a nice place, isn’t it? But farther back in the forest there are Canaanite idols. Idols

make me sad. They can't hear, they can't help the people who live here. **God** [point upward] is the only one who can hear us when we **pray** [fold hands in prayer]. He is the only one I will **listen** [put hand behind an ear] to. He brought us safely here, and I know I can always trust Him.

And when you **pray** [fold hands in prayer], **God** [point upward] will show you what to do. You have to **listen** [put hand behind an ear] to what **God** [point upward] is saying to your mind as you kneel before Him. He is always ready to lead you.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask:
How do you think Abram felt when God told him to leave Ur? (excited, fearful, eager, ready to go) **How would you have felt? Why was Abram able to hear God speaking to him?** (He prayed every day; he asked God to guide him; he listened to God when he prayed.)
Raise your hand if you want to listen to God. How can we listen for God to speak to us? (Pray often; keep our minds open to thoughts He gives us; study His Word, the Bible; listen to our pastor, etc.)
If you really mean it, say today's message with me:



I WILL LISTEN WHEN GOD CALLS ME TO SERVE HIM.

Memory Verse

In advance, write the memory verse phrases that follow, one to a footprint. Mix up the footprints and have the children place them in the right order and read the verse. Mix the phrases again and repeat until the children know the verse.

You Need:

- eight large paper footprints

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"
Isaiah 6:8.

Bible Study

Help the children find Genesis 12:1-7 in their Bibles. Ask a child who reads well to read the texts to the group. Have another person find and read Hebrews 11:8-12.

Debriefing

Ask the following questions:

1. **Name the city where Abram started the journey.** (Ur)
2. **What do we call the country that God promised Abram?** (Canaan, [Israel today], the Promised Land)
3. **Who went with Abram?** (Sarai, his wife; his servants and their families; all Abram's flocks; his father, Terah; his nephew Lot; all his animals)
4. **Did God keep His promise to Abram? Read the text that tells.** (Yes; Hebrews 11:12)
5. **What did Abram do that God wants us to do?** (Listen and obey Him.)
6. **What will you do when God asks you to serve Him?**

Let's say our message together:



I WILL LISTEN WHEN GOD CALLS ME TO SERVE HIM.

You Need:

- Bibles

3

Applying the Lesson

You Need:

- slips of paper
- pen or pencil

Listen and Serve

In advance, write the sounds below on slips of paper, one to each paper. Possible responses are given to help you teach this activity.

Say: **When Abram prayed, he listened and waited for God to answer his prayers. Let's listen to some sounds together and see how God might talk to us through these sounds.**

Distribute the papers to volunteers. Have them make the sounds, or listen to these sound effects on a listening device one at a time. After each, ask: **How does this remind us to serve God?**

Sounds:	Possible Message From God:
a bird call	I love you; I care for you like I care for the birds. You can help care for things I have created.
raindrops, running water	I care for your needs. Crops will grow; you will have food. We can serve others by sharing food with people in need.
cat or dog	I give you pets because I love you. I want you to enjoy animals. We serve God when we care for animals He created.
siren, ambulance	I am sending someone to help you.

or police We serve God when we help someone who is hurt.

baby or child crying Someone needs help or comfort. Call an adult to help this baby or child. We serve God when we comfort/help little ones.

parent saying: "Time to brush your teeth." Brush them now. God wants me to listen to my parents. We serve God when we care for our bodies.

Debriefing

Say: **Sounds around us and sounds in nature can help us hear God's messages. How can you know that a message is from God?** (It won't go against the Bible.) **How else can we hear God's voice with his messages?** (When we read the Bible; when we listen to parents, teachers, and pastors who are following Jesus.) **When you pray, tell God that you want to hear His voice more and more. He will help you know His voice, and He will help you obey what He tells you to do.** Help the children say the memory verse:

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'"

Ask: **What will you do when God calls you? Let's say our message together again:**



I WILL LISTEN WHEN GOD CALLS ME TO SERVE HIM.

4

Sharing the Lesson

Neighborhood Cleanup

Ask for a few volunteers to stand one behind the other, an arm's length from each other. Have them follow you around the room. As you walk, drop papers you are carrying (one at a time) without saying anything. Those who "listen" to the message will pick up the papers.

Stop and ask: **Why did (child's name) pick up the paper I dropped? What happens when we drop paper or other things and don't pick them up?** (It spoils the environment; makes a mess; doesn't look nice.) **Let's do something about that right now. Let's take a trash bag and go outside and pick up any litter we find in the next five minutes.**

Lead the children around the church yard, parking lot, etc., for a short walk to pick up any litter. Return to the room for debriefing.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Did we find a lot of litter? How did we serve God when we were outside? Why should we keep things clean around our church? Where are you likely to notice things that people have dropped?** (along the highway, on the playground, around the house, etc.) **What will you do when God shows you something that needs to be done this week? Let's say our message together:**



I WILL LISTEN WHEN GOD CALLS ME TO SERVE HIM.

Closing

Close with prayer, asking God to help the children as they listen for His voice to tell them how they can serve Him and others. Pray that they will always be open to listen for God's "voice" in Scripture and that they will be ready to obey His call to serve others.

You Need:

- pieces of paper
- trash bags

A Long, Long Walk

References

Genesis 12:1-7;
Patriarchs and
Prophets,
pp. 125-131

Memory Verse

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'"
(Isaiah 6:8).

The Message

I will listen when God calls me to serve Him.

"I don't want to move," Mika groaned.
"Neither do I," Anya replied. "Dad said he felt the Lord wanted him to take the new job. I wonder how he knows what God wants?"

"Let's ask him," Mika suggested.

"We need to ask you something, Dad," Anya whispered, tugging at his dad's shirt. "How can you be sure God wants us to move?"

"That's probably the same question someone asked Abram when God told him to move," Dad said. "Let me tell you a story."

Abram loved God. He talked with God many times each day. He wanted to do whatever God said.

One day God spoke to Abram. "It's time for you to leave Ur, Abram. You must leave all your friends and go to a place that I will show you."

Abram must have been speechless. Why would God want him to leave his home and go someplace else to live?

God continued, "I will bless you, Abram. I will give you children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Your family will grow into a mighty nation. You will be greatly blessed."

Now, that must have really made Abram wonder, for he and his wife, Sarai, did not have even one child.

Nevertheless, Abram and Sarai chose to obey God. They packed up all their belongings. Abram's servants folded and packed all the tents. The time had come to leave.

Abram called together all those who would go with them. Lot, Abram's nephew, joined the group. All the people who worked in Abram's house and the people whom Abram had taught to worship God also got ready to go. They loaded their donkeys and their camels and began their long journey.

Abram, Sarai, their family members and their servants walked the dusty road day after day. The sun was hot. But through it all, God provided for them.

Finally, the caravan reached the land of Canaan. But still Abram and Sarai, their people, their donkeys, and their camels traveled on. When would they stop? Where was God leading them?

In Shechem, a place where many Canaanites lived, there was a forest of trees called the Great Trees of Moreh. When Abram reached the forest of Moreh, he called to his servants, "Halt! Set up camp here."

As the servants prepared the camp, God appeared and spoke to Abram. "Look around you, Abram," God said. "This is the land that I am going to give you and your family."

Abram looked around. He saw



a wide, grassy valley with softly rolling hills. He saw olive trees, fig trees, and springs of cool water everywhere. But Abram also saw something that made him very sad. Among the trees he saw altars that were used to worship idols.

Abram immediately gathered stones to build an altar. He wanted to worship God and thank Him for being with them during their journey. He wanted to tell God that he was willing to go anywhere God wanted. He was willing to do whatever God asked him to do.

“And so,” Dad told Anya and Mika, “we need to be willing to listen to God—just as Abram was. God spoke words directly to Abram. Today He may speak to us directly; through His Word, the Bible; or through the counsel of people who are following Him. Your mother and I are glad to serve where God sends us. And when we are willing, God lets us know what He wants. He gives us understanding and helps us know in our hearts what He wants us to do.”

Daily Activities

Sabbath

- With your family, find a quiet place and listen for sounds. What do you hear? Make a list.
- Read the lesson story together. Talk about it. What does it mean to your family? Then read the memory verse together and talk about it. Pray that God will help you always to listen to His voice.

Sunday

- Sit quietly in a room by yourself for five minutes. What do you hear? Thank God for the gift of hearing.
- Make a poster or a bookmark with the message: “I will listen when God calls me to serve Him.” Show it to your family during worship today. Then put it where you will see it every morning.
- Review the memory verse together.

Monday

- For worship today, find Genesis 12:1-7 and read about Abram and Sarai.
- Ask your family to tell about a time they had to move. Ask them to tell about a time they believed God asked them to do something.
- Draw around your foot and cut out enough footprints to write one word of the memory verse on each. Practice putting the words in order. Ask God to help you use your feet to take you to places where you can serve Him.

Tuesday

- Make a picture story of Abram’s call and his journey. Show the pictures and tell the story for family worship today. Ask: What promises did God give Abram? How did God keep His

promises? What promises has God made to our family?

- Make a booklet and write some of your family’s favorite promises on each page. Thank God for keeping His promises.
- Put your memory verse footprints in order and say the verse for your family.

Wednesday

- During family worship, ask: How do you know when God is speaking to you? How do you listen for His voice? Say “hello” and try to sound surprised, happy, sad, and angry. Ask: What kind of voice does God use when He speaks to us?
- Say the memory verse together. Thank God for speaking to you every day.

Thursday

- Next time your family eats together, see how long you can go without speaking. How do you ask your family for things? How do you sound when you speak to them?
- Say the memory verse for your family. Tell them what you think this verse says about God. Thank God for the gift of speech.

Friday

- During family worship, read Genesis 12:1-7 again. Ask: Why did Abram build an altar? Do we need a family altar today? Why?
- Create a memory book of God’s goodness: ask an older member of your family to take notes while everyone tells about a time God took care of them. After all the notes are written in the book, offer a prayer of thanksgiving and praise for God’s care.