

Aim of lesson

To see that God requires and rewards the sort of faith that is prepared to act.

Bible background

Genesis 11:27-32; 12:1-8; Hebrews 11:8-10.

Outline of lesson

Leaving home

Ask the class how they would feel if told they must go home, pack their clothes and be ready to leave home for good in the morning. What would they say? 'Why?'; 'Where am I going?'; 'Will it be a long journey?'; 'Will I be able to get food on the way?'. Would they be reluctant to go if they did not have all the answers and a detailed map?

Read together Genesis 11:31 and 12:1-5 to find a man who was asked by God to do just that, without all the answers or a map! Ask the class to think about how Abram might have felt.

Turn to the workbooks, and discuss the questions.

The following references and notes may be helpful for the section about God's promises to Abram – but encourage the class to suggest their ideas first.

- Genesis 24:35. God gave Abraham greatness and wealth.
- 1 Kings 4:40. In the days of Solomon Israel were 'as many as the sand by the sea'.
- John 8:33,39. Two thousand years later they used his name to say who they were.
- Abram was a blessing to Lot by rescuing him (Genesis 14) and praying for him (Genesis 18).
- Exodus 23:22; Deuteronomy 30:7; Psalm 105:13-14; Exodus 18:8; Egypt, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. Empires which oppressed Israel and in turn were destroyed.
- Acts 3:25-26; Galatians 3:8-9,16,29. The gospel was taught first to the Jews and God sent the Lord Jesus first to them.
- Luke 1:31-33; Hebrews 1:2, the Son, heir of all things.

Profit and loss

Ask the class to compare what Abram lost and gained in terms of:

- Family
- Security
- Fame
- Friends
- Material prosperity (money and possessions)
- His aims and hopes

Digging deeper

Abraham's family tree

Completing Abraham's family tree will help to fill in some of the background of his family, and can be used to remind the class of some of the details of their lives.

Relevance to our lives

Ask if at school they have a circle of friends they like to do things with. Would they be prepared to leave that group to go and befriend someone left out and on his own? Do they think God asks us to do that? Would they find it hard to lose the company of their own group? Would they feel afraid of losing those friends permanently? Lead the discussion towards specific suggestions about what each might try to do during the week along these lines in risking what they value in order to do what they believe God would want. Next week ask how they got on.

Prayer

Lord God of Abraham, help us to have the sort of faith that he had, and to do what you ask us to, even when we are afraid that we will lose things we value.

Other suggestions for activities

- The class could produce a short drama based on Abram explaining to his family what God had asked him to do, and their reactions.
- Ask each member of the class to make a small poster for one of the promises illustrating its fulfilment.
- You may wish to use the following story to introduce or conclude the lesson:

A tightrope walker wanted to do a very special stunt. He wanted to walk across a rope stretched above Niagara Falls pushing a wheelbarrow with a man in it. He practised every day: first on a low rope, then getting higher; without the wheelbarrow, then with it; and then with a weight of bricks in it. He practised until he could do it perfectly. The day arrived. 'Do you think I can do it?'; he asked his neighbour. 'Yes, of course you can,' he replied, 'I've watched you every day. You never make a mistake. I know you can do it.' 'Good' said the tightrope walker, 'You are the man I want. Get in the wheelbarrow.'

The story of Abram is that of a man who was prepared to 'get in the wheelbarrow' for God. He really believed.