

Aim of lesson

To see that nothing is impossible with God, and to understand that God counts real faith in him as righteousness.

Bible background

Genesis 15:1-6; 17; 18:1-15; 21:1-7; Romans 4.

Outline of lesson

Like the stars

Ask the class how many stars they think there are. After they have made suggestions, tell them that there are about one hundred thousand million (100,000,000,000) stars in our galaxy, the Milky Way; and that it in turn is only one of the vast number of galaxies that make up our universe. Or say that the number of stars we can see with the naked eye is about 8,000, about the number of grains in a spoonful of sand. The number we cannot see would be like the number of grains of sand on all the beaches in the whole world.

A promised son

Read with the class Genesis 15:1-6. You may like to read this as a play with one person reading the part of narrator, one the words of God and one the words of Abram. Ask how they think Abram felt and what he thought. Turn to the workbooks and work through the first section, encouraging the class to look up the details in Genesis 17 themselves.

The acrostic should read:

God promised Abram that he would become the **F**ATHER of many nations, and so
He changed his name to **A**BRAM.
Even though it seemed **I**MPOSSIBLE,
Abram had complete **T**RUST that God would do what he
promised and give him an **H**EIR

By the oaks of Mamre

Read together Genesis 18:1-15, assigning the parts of narrator, Abraham, Sarah, angels.

Continue with the workbook, drawing out the fact that God did not punish Sarah but with great kindness taught her and built up her faith, because God values faith.

Counted as righteousness

Bring in the basic teaching of Romans 4 as simply as possible: that God counted Abraham's faith as righteousness and that he will count our faith in the same way. The answer to the code is 'AS RIGHTEOUSNESS'

Digging deeper

Ishmael

This is concerned with Ishmael, and introduces the Arabs, who claim to be descended from him. The account of Ishmael's life is not otherwise covered in these lessons, and you may like to discuss the impact on our world of the Moslem belief that Ishmael, not Isaac, was Abraham's heir.

Relevance to our lives

Ask if the class really believes what God says to them:

- that if they have faith God will consider them righteous.
- that God is willing and eager to forgive their sins so that they can be perfect in his sight at the coming of Christ.

Do the class think they see God as Abraham and Sarah came to see him? You may like to lead the class to write their own prayer about this.

Prayer

Dear Lord who made the stars, we know that you can do anything. Help us to believe your promises to us, and to trust you all our lives.

Other suggestions for activities

- The class may like to write a play in their own words based on Genesis 18:1-15.
- An older, more mature group may like to read together Romans 4, discussing what it means and putting Paul's argument into their own words.