

LESSON



Abram's Altars

COMMUNITY

Community means loving one another.

References

Genesis 12:7–9; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 127–131.

Memory Verse

“Worship the LORD with gladness” (Psalm 100:2, NIV).

Objectives

The children will:

Know that wherever he traveled, Abram built an altar where he and his family and servants worshiped God.

Feel that they want to be part of a loving family that worships God.

Respond by choosing to worship God with their loving family.

The Message



Christian families worship God together.

Getting Ready to Teach

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Each time God makes a promise to him, Abram and his family worship God. Everywhere they travel, Abram builds an altar so his family and household can worship God together. Everywhere he goes, Abram calls on the name of the Lord on behalf of himself, his family, and all his household.

This is a lesson about community.

Christian families and communities worship God together, build places of worship, and teach one another to love and talk with God.

Teacher Enrichment

“The place where they first tarried was Shechem. . . . It was a fair and goodly country that the patriarch had entered—‘a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of olive oil, and honey’ (Deuteronomy 8:7, 8). But to the worshiper of Jehovah, a heavy shadow rested upon wooded hill and fruitful plain. ‘The Canaanite was then in the land.’ Abraham had reached the goal of his hopes to find a country oc-

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Program Outline			
LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	
1 Readiness Activities	up to 10	A. <i>Build an Altar</i> B. <i>Trail Mix</i> C. <i>Shakers</i>	materials for building an altar, such as boxes, bricks, paper bags stuffed with paper, books, etc.; masking tape ingredients (see Readiness B for recipes), large bowl, mixing spoon, small paper cups empty toilet paper rolls, waxed paper, rubber bands or small plastic containers with lids; dry rice or beans; crayons, sequins, glitter, scraps of ribbon, fabric, etc., glue (optional); lively praise song
* Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	See page 106. *Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.	
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story	Bible-times costumes, adult male, materials to build an altar, tape recorder (optional)
		Bible Study	Bible
		Memory Verse	Bible, six stones, marker or paper and tape
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Family Worship</i>	paper, art supplies
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Sing Praises</i>	none

cupied by an alien race and overspread with idolatry. In the groves were set up the altars of false gods, and human sacrifices were offered upon the neighboring heights. While he clung to the divine promise, it was not without distressful forebodings that he pitched his tent. Then 'the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land.' His faith was strengthened by this assurance that the divine

presence was with him, that he was not left to the mercy of the wicked. 'And there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him.' Still a wayfarer, he soon removed to a spot near Bethel, and again erected an altar, and called upon the name of the Lord" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 127, 128).

Room Decorations

See lesson 9.

Teaching the Lesson

Welcome

Welcome students 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 or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.

A. Build an Altar

You Need:

- materials for building an altar (boxes, bricks, brown paper sacks stuffed with paper, cushions, etc.)
- masking tape

If using boxes, cover and/or paint them to resemble stones. Mark off (with tape) an area on the floor for the altar base. Help the children build an altar two to three feet (three quarters of a meter to one meter) tall.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you say: **An altar was a place people could meet with God. On his travels Abram and his family often built altars where they worshiped God. To what special place do we come to worship God?** (Church) **Is that the only place we can worship God?** (No. We can worship God anytime and anywhere.) **Today's message is:**



Christian families worship God together.

Say that with me.

B. Trail Mix

You Need:

- ingredients for trail mix recipe (see recipes)
- a large bowl
- large spoon for mixing
- small paper cups or small sealable plastic bags

Try one of the following trail mix recipes.* For all recipes, simply measure and mix the ingredients together in a large bowl.

Recipe A

- 1 16-oz. pkg. fish-shaped crackers
- 1 6-oz. pkg. dried cranberries
- 1 7-oz. pkg. dried apricots, cut into small pieces

Makes about 6 cups.

Recipe B

- 2 cups raisins
- 2 cups dried banana chips
- 1 6-oz. pkg. mixed dried fruit bits

Makes about 7 cups.

*Be aware of possible allergies and adjust the recipe accordingly.

Recipe C

- 1 cup raisins
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup diced dried fruit

Makes $2\frac{1}{4}$ cups.

Say: **We are going to make a special snack mix that is nice to have when we go for a walk. Abram and his family traveled hundreds of miles and walked most of the way.** Allow the children to help you measure, pour, and mix the ingredients. Serve in small paper cups or provide small sealable plastic bags if you prefer to have children take the mix home.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Do you think Abram ate something like this when he was traveling? Was it easy to make trail mix? Did you know what it would be like when finished? When Abram left his home, he didn't know where he was going. He just followed God's directions. All through his journey he and his family worshiped God and asked Him for directions. God wants us to do that too. When we follow God's directions, we are worshiping Him.**



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C. Shakers

Help the children create shaker instruments by filling small plastic containers about half full with dry rice or beans. If using empty toilet paper rolls, cover one end with waxed paper and secure with a rubber band. Fill with two to three tablespoons of dry rice or beans. Cover the other end with waxed paper and secure with a rubber band. If time permits, allow the children to decorate their shakers.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Can I hear your shakers? Can you shake them like this?** (Shake out a simple rhythm.) **Let's praise God together with our shakers.** Use the shakers as you sing a lively praise song together. **Do you think Abram and his family worshiped God together by singing? Abram lived a long time ago, but families still worship God together by singing. We worship God when we sing songs of praise together. It's one way**



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You Need:

- small plastic containers with lids or empty toilet paper rolls, waxed paper, and rubber bands
- dry rice or beans
- crayons
- other art supplies
- praise song



NOTE: Prayer and Praise appears on page 106.

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Bible Lesson

Experiencing the Story

You Need:

- materials for building an altar (boxes, brown paper sacks stuffed with paper, cushions, etc.)
- costume for "Abram"
- recording device (optional)
- adult male

Characters

- An adult male to play Abram
 - A hidden adult male or a prerecorded "voice of God"
 - A narrator
- The children will all play a role in this story

Costume

- Robe or light coat with a sash and headdress for Abram
- For each child, a Bible-times costume such as: an oversized T-shirt and sash, bath towel draped over one shoulder and tied with yarn or rope, a hand towel tied around the head or secured with yarn or an elastic headband

Setting the Stage

Arrange the furniture so the children will have to walk around it. You may want to consider taking the children for a walk through other areas of the church or outside.

Divide the children into two groups. Group One will be part of Abram's caravan and follow him on his journey. Subdivide Group Two into two smaller groups, Group A and Group B. These groups will stop Abram and ask, "Where are you going?" and join Abram's caravan. Position these two smaller groups so Abram's caravan will be stopped twice as it first walks past Group A and then Group B on its journey.

Narrator: Abram and Sarai and Lot traveled for many days. There were a lot of people in Abram's caravan. They looked like a big parade as they traveled. *(Have Abram lead Group One around the room and toward Group A.)*

Sometimes other people would watch as Abram and his family and his servants and all his animals passed by. Sometimes they would ask Abram, "Who are you? Where are you going?" *(Prompt Group A to stop Abram and ask, "Who are you? Where are you going?")*

Abram *(Abram answers Group A):* I am Abram. I worship the only true God. He told me to move from my city to a new country. I am obeying His words.

Narrator: The people were surprised. They had never heard about Abram's God. *(Prompt Group A to make surprised faces.)* Sometimes they would say, "Tell us more about your God." *(Prompt Group A to say, "Tell us more about your God.")* Some of the people who listened even decided to worship Abram's God and go with Abram and his family to the new country! *(Prompt Group A to join Abram's caravan. Abram continues on his journey around the room toward Group B.)*

It was a long journey. Abram and his wife, Sarai, and Lot and all the servants and the animals walked and walked and walked some more. They passed more people on their journey. These people would ask Abram, "Who are you? Where are you going?" *(Prompt Group B to ask.)* Abram would answer:

Abram: I am Abram. I worship the only true God. He told me to move from my home city to a new country. I am obeying His words.

Narrator: And then some of these people would join Abram and his

family and the other people. (*Prompt Group B to join the caravan.*) They would become part of Abram's household too. Abram taught them to worship the true God, the God in heaven. They, too, trusted God to lead them to Canaan. Each time they needed to know where to go, Abram trusted God to point the direction. Then finally they reached the land of Canaan and camped at a place called Shechem. There God spoke to Abram again.

Recorded voice or hidden adult: Abram, I am going to give this land to your children and your children's children and their children.

Narrator: Now, the people of Canaan worshiped their idols at the very place where Abram was camped. But Abram didn't worship idols. Instead, Abram built an altar to God at Shechem. (*If you made an altar for a Readiness Activity, have Abram lead the children to it now.*) Abram and his family and his servants and all the people in his household worshiped God together. (*Have Abram and the children kneel around the altar. Have Abram say a short prayer thanking God for His promises and for His leading.*)

After Shechem God led Abram to a place called Bethel. (*Have Abram lead his caravan a little farther.*) And when they got there, what do you think Abram did? Yes, he built an altar and worshiped God. (*Abram leads the children to the altar again.*) Every time Abram and his family stopped and camped somewhere, Abram made an altar. Abram always made a place for his family to worship God. Today Christian families worship God at home and at church.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **How do you think Abram felt when he arrived in the land God told him would be his home? What was the first thing Abram did when he came to a new place? Who worshiped at the altar with Abram? Why did Abram build altars? Why do we go to church today? Yes, so we can worship God together.**



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Say that with me.

Bible Study

Open your Bible to Genesis 12 and point to verses 7–9. Say: **This is where today's story is found in God's Word, the Bible.** Point to each verse as you read the verses aloud. Ask: **What did Abram build at Shechem and Bethel?** (An altar) **Why?** (To worship God) **Where do we worship today?** (Church, home)

You Need:

- Bible

Memory Verse

In advance, write each word of the memory verse on a stone or a paper taped to a stone. Number the stones in order and scatter them around the room. Have the children find the stones and put them in numerical order. Read the verse aloud and have the children repeat it several times. Mix up the stones and repeat the activity until the children know the verse.

The memory verse is: **"Worship the LORD with gladness" (Psalm 100:2, NIV).**

You Need:

- Bible
- six stones
- marker
- paper and tape (optional)

PRAYER AND PRAISE



Fellowship

Report the children's joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Give a special warm greeting to visitors and introduce each by name. Acknowledge birthdays or special events.

Suggested Songs

"I'm So Small" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 96)

"God's Ways" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 260)

"The Friendship Clap" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 255)

"My Best Friend Is Jesus" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 218)

"Sharing Song" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 279)

"Jesus Loves Me" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 102)

"Little Feet, Be Careful" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 307)

Mission

Say: **People worship God in all sorts of places. Some have big churches, some meet in houses, some meet in borrowed churches, and some meet outside. It doesn't matter where we meet, because God is there. Today we are going to hear a story about** (Introduce your main character) **who met God** (Introduce the location of the story). Use the story from *Children's Mission*.

Offering

Say: **Our offering goes to help other boys and girls learn about God so they can worship Him too.**

Prayer

Say: **Abram and his family gathered around an altar to thank God for leading them.** If you built an altar for a Readiness Activity, invite the children to gather around it for prayer. **We don't build altars anymore, but we still thank God when we get together to worship.** Throw the community cube (see prayer activity in lesson 9). Thank God for the people or place at the top. Ask the children if they want to thank God for anything else.

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

3

Applying the Lesson**Family Worship**

Say: **Abram and his family worshiped around an altar. We don't do that today. How do we worship?** (Sing, pray, listen to Bible stories, etc.) **Where do we worship?** (At home, at church, etc.) **What part of worship do you like best?** Allow response time. **Draw a picture of yourself or you and your family doing your favorite part of worship in your favorite place.** Give the children paper and art supplies. Hang the finished pictures outside your Sabbath School room where parents will see them when they come for their children.

Debriefing

Allow time for children to show and tell about their pictures. Then ask: **What do you like most when you worship God with your family?** Allow response time. **When we worship together, we show God that we love Him and that we are a happy, loving family. Yes:**

You Need:

- drawing paper
- art supplies



Christian families worship God together.

Say that with me.

4

Sharing the Lesson**Sing Praises**

Say: **Part of worshipping God is singing praises to Him. Today we are going to share our worship by going to** (another division/big Sabbath School) **to sing for them. We will sing** [name and practice a favorite praise song]. If appropriate, have the children use the "shakers" made during Readiness C. Debrief when you return to your room.

What was it like to sing for _____? How do you think they felt while listening to your song? How do you think God felt as He listened to your song of praise? Remember,



Christian families worship God together.

Say that with me one more time.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask:

Closing

Remind the children that Abram was never too busy to worship God. Pray that the children and their families will never be too busy to worship God, and that they will be open to His leading in their lives.

STUDENT LESSON

Abram's Altars

References

Genesis 12:7–9;
Patriarchs and
Prophets, pp.
127–131

Memory Verse

“Worship the
LORD with glad-
ness” (Psalm
100:2, NIV).

The Message

Christian
families
worship God
together.

Where does your family worship God? Do you have a special place for family worship? Where do you worship on Sabbath? Abram didn't have a church to go to. He didn't even have a room in a house, but he worshiped God everywhere he went. And he led others to worship God too.

Abram, Sarai, and Lot traveled for many days. Sometimes they may have walked. Sometimes Sarai may have ridden on top of a big camel. Servants ran back and forth, keeping the herds of sheep and goats from wandering away. Pack animals carried the tents and their other belongings.

Sometimes people came to watch the large, strange caravan as it passed by. “Who are you?” they may have asked Abram. “Where are you going?”

“I am Abram,” Abram would answer. “I worship the only true God. He told me to travel to a new country. I am obeying His words.”

The people listening had never heard of Abram's God. They may have said, “Tell us more about your God.” Some of the people who listened even decided to worship Abram's God, and they joined Abram's big caravan.

Finally, after a long journey, Abram and all that were with him crossed into the land of Canaan. They camped beside a great oak tree at a place called Shechem.

That day the Lord appeared to Abram. He pointed in every direction. “Abram,”

said God, “I am going to give this land to your children and your children's children and their children.”

Abram saw that the people who lived in Canaan worshiped idols. They

even worshiped their idols by the very tree where the Lord appeared to Abram. But Abram didn't worship their idols. Instead, he built an altar to the true God by that tree. He and his family worshiped God there. They thanked God for leading them throughout their long journey. They thanked Him for keeping everyone safe. And they thanked God for

keeping their flocks and herds safe too.

Abram, Sarai, Lot, and their servants, and all the people who joined them traveled farther and farther into the land of Canaan. God led them. He was showing Abram all the land that would belong to his children. And every time Abram stopped to camp, he built an altar and led his people in worshipping the true God.

Like Abram, God's people today build special places to worship Him. Our church is one of them. We go there every week to worship Him.



Do and Say

Sabbath

Find or draw six stones and number them. Write one word of the memory verse on each stone. Mix up the stones. Help your child use the numbers to put the stones in the right order while saying the memory verse. Repeat as necessary, then take away a stone and have your child supply the missing word. (See page 62 in the student Bible study guide.) Practice the memory verse every day this week.



Tuesday

Act out the story of Abram and build an altar. Books or cushions can be good building blocks. Use the stones from Sabbath's activity to say the memory verse together. Thank God for the place where your family worships.

Wednesday

Go for a long walk together. Talk about the long walk Abram and his family took to reach Canaan. If appropriate, invite friends and neighbors to join you as you walk. When you get home, thank God for taking care of you today.

Sunday

Together, read the lesson story from Genesis 12:7-9. Ask: How do you feel after a long journey? How do you think Abram and his family felt when they arrived in Canaan? How do you think the Canaanites felt when they saw Abram's altar to God? Thank God that you can worship Him wherever you are.

Thursday

Tell your child about a special worship service you have attended or participated in (baptism, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter programs, etc.).

Plan tomorrow night's worship with your child. Decide what songs you will sing and what you will do.

Monday

Review the story, then ask: What did Abram put on his altar? (A lamb) Do we give God lambs today? Tell your child that the lamb represented Jesus, and that *our* offerings today say thank You to Him for being our Savior. What offerings do we give today? (Money, time, obedience) Help your child think of one thing to give to God today. Plan to do it together.



Friday

Worship God with your family tonight, just as you planned yesterday. Thank God for your family and for His leading you day by day. Say the memory verse together.