



LESSON 8

3rd and 4th Grade

Principle: Abram is selfless. God blesses Abram.

Bible Character(s): Abram

Scripture Reference: Genesis 13:1-18



PERSONAL PREPARATION: Before this weekend, read Genesis 13:1-18 and 1 John

2:15-17. Abram, Sarai, and Abram's nephew Lot were sent away from Egypt. They returned to the land where Abram had first made an altar, but there was not enough room for both Abram and Lot's households. Conflict arose, and Abram provides a picture of selflessness in offering to allow Lot to choose first the land he wanted. Lot selfishly chose the more fertile Jordan Valley, which is within the vicinity of Sodom. Verse 13 tells us, "the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the Lord." Abram settled in the land of Canaan, and God reaffirmed His promise to make Abram the father of many nations. Abram's selfless and gracious nature brings glory to God, reflecting the One who would come and provide the ultimate example of selflessness and grace.

Spend some time examining whether your life shows love for God or love for the world. Think specifically about some of the choices you have made this week. Have your choices been based on what looks "pleasing to the eyes" and what makes you feel valued? Do you recognize that decisions motivated by self-gratification lead only to temporary rewards? Are you aware when you are making choices based on self-gratification? Think about how your decisions reflect your trust in God. Someone who trusts in the Lord lives in a way to bring God glory, and to receive His eternal blessings instead of the treasures the world has to offer. Your campers are faced with many pressures and decisions each day, so spend some time praying that they would live each day with a desire to honor God with their choices, and reflect Jesus to the world.

PLUG IN TIME - 5-10 minutes as the kids begin to arrive

Arrive early to check the supplies in the bin and review the lesson. Write today's principle on the whiteboard. Remember to greet all campers upon arrival; meet their parents; welcome and introduce all visitors. Create a welcoming cabin for all campers!

Remind the campers of last week's lesson in which we learned that we are called to live by faith. We also talked about how our sins affect others.



BIG GROUP TIME - 35-40 minutes

As you line up, remind campers we are going to have fun as an entire Camp Grace group! We are going to live out GRACE by **Glorifying God** through worship, **Respecting All Leaders**, and **Accepting Responsibility** to listen with attentive ears, minds, and hearts – fully **Celebrating Christ** with passion! We should **Encourage Others** to do the same, by not distracting them from their worship of God.

The Bridge to Small Group

Today, we will discuss how we can make choices based on what is pleasing and a blessing to ourselves or what is pleasing to God and a blessing to others.

Small Group Time - 25-30 minutes

Getting Started

If your cabin did well in Big Group, acknowledge it. If not, take a couple of minutes to talk about how they can do better next time.

What did you learn in Big Group today? Which contestant was trying to get the best for himself and acting greedy during the game? (Contestant #2.) Was he playing the game fairly? Who ended up with the best prizes? (The other Contestant.)

Let's review what we have learned about Abram so far. What did God ask Abram to do? He asked Abram to leave his home and family, and go to Canaan. How did Abram respond? Abram trusted God through faith, and obeyed what God asked. What happened after Abram got to Canaan? Abram built an altar to God and worshiped Him there. Then there was a famine in the land. What did Abram and Sarai do? They went to Egypt. Was Abram faithful in Egypt? No, he lied about who Sarai was because he was afraid of Pharaoh. What was the result of Abram's sin? It impacted a lot of people around him. God sent great plagues to Pharaoh's household. Pharaoh sent Abram's wife back to him and sent them all away.

Last week, we learned that God calls us to live by faith. When we live by trusting in His ways, He will watch over us and bless us. But, when we live by trusting in our own desires and abilities, He will bring about hard times not only for ourselves, but also for others.

This week, we'll see an example of how Abram lived out his faith in God. Let's begin by reading from Genesis 13 [NLT].

Genesis 13:1-4

1 So Abram left Egypt and traveled north into the Negev, along with his wife and Lot and all that they owned. 2 (Abram was very rich in livestock, silver, and gold.) 3 From the Negev, they continued traveling by stages toward Bethel, and they pitched their tents between Bethel and Ai, where they had camped before. 4 This was the same place where Abram had built the altar, and there he worshiped the Lord again.

Who can remember from last week why Abram had to leave Egypt? (Pharaoh was mad because Abram lied about Sarai not being his wife.) How do you think Abram felt as he left Egypt? (Upset that he sinned, glad to be back in the promised land, tired from moving all the time.) Have you ever had to move before? How did it make you feel? (Allow responses.) Moving to a new place can be sad or exciting, but the process of moving everything you own is usually a lot of work. Notice that verse 2 says Abram was very rich in livestock, silver, and gold. This means he had a lot of stuff to take with him. So not only was he forced to move, but he had a lot of stuff that he needed to bring with him. He was probably very tired by the time they pitched their tents, but what did Abram do right after they pitched their tents? (Allow responses.) He worshiped God. No matter how tired he was after a long journey, he still chose to worship God first.

Let's continue reading.

Genesis 13:6-7

6 But the land could not support both Abram and Lot with all their flocks and herds living so close together. 7 So disputes broke out between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot.

Abram and Lot each had a lot of stuff, but they did not have much room to share with all of their families and animals. Do any of you share a room with a brother or sister? Is it hard to share one room with someone else? What makes it hard? (Allow responses.) Sharing can often lead to conflict, or fighting with others over stuff or space.

Conflict Over Stuff



The purpose of this activity is to illustrate how we can fight over earthly treasures.

Supplies:

Bag of 20-25 pieces of candy (1 per session)

Put the bag of candy in the middle of the table and tell the campers that all of it is for them. Lead the children in a discussion on different ways to distribute the candy fairly:

- a) Throw it on a table
- b) Give 2 per camper
- c) Earn it by being smart
- d) Earn it by good behavior
- e) Other

Give them a few minutes to figure out how to divide it all up among themselves. (Some children might want to split it evenly, while some children may try to grab as much as possible.)

Tie It Together



What was the first thing you thought of when you saw all the candy? Did you think of yourself first or others? How did you want to split up the candy? (Allow responses.) As with Abram and Lot, even close friends and family can sometimes argue when there is only a limited amount of stuff to share. Sharing is a difficult thing to do because we like to keep things for ourselves, because

we want to do whatever is best for ourselves. That is one way we see sin in our life, because we want to put ourselves first. God tells us to always put Him and others above ourselves. This is how we can show His love in our life.

Let's see if Abram puts himself first or Lot first.

Genesis 13:8-13

8 Finally Abram said to Lot, "Let's not allow this conflict to come between us or our herdsmen. After all, we are close relatives!" 9 The whole countryside is open to you. Take your choice of any section of the land you want, and we will separate. If you want the land to the left, then I'll take the land on the right. If you prefer the land on the right, then I'll go to the left."

10 Lot took a long look at the fertile plains of the Jordan Valley in the direction of Zoar. The whole area was well watered everywhere, like the garden of the Lord or the beautiful land of Egypt. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) 11 Lot chose for himself the whole Jordan Valley to the east of them. He went there with his flocks and servants and parted company with his uncle Abram. 12 So Abram settled in the land of Canaan, and Lot moved his tents to a place near Sodom and settled among the cities of the plain. 13 But the people of this area were extremely wicked and constantly sinned against the Lord.

Was Abram looking out only for himself? (Allow responses.) No, he let Lot choose first because he wanted to make sure this conflict did not come between him and Lot. Even though Abram was older and could have chosen first, he allowed Lot to choose whatever part of the land he wanted. In doing this, he loved Lot more than himself. So we see that Abram was selfless in his choice to let Lot choose first.

Let's look at Lot's choice. Why did Lot choose the Jordan Valley? (Lots of water, very fertile, beautiful like the garden of the Lord.) Lot made a choice based on his own personal desires. He made a choice based on what he wanted, so he put himself first.

Even though God promised Abram the land (Genesis 12:7), Abram chose to love Lot, and ultimately love God, more than what was promised to him. From our Big Group skit today, which character was more like Abram (selfless and humble) and which character was more like Lot (selfish)? (Allow responses.) In our last activity, were you more like Abram (putting others first) or like Lot (putting self first)?

Bookmarking Our Steps



The purpose is to focus on how we can treat others in a selfless manner.

Supplies:

"How To Deal With A Conflict" bookmark (1 per camper)

Markers/crayons

Give campers a bookmark, and help them through the steps of dealing with a conflict.

Tie It Together



What steps did Abram take to be selfless and put Lot first? (Allow responses.) The first thing he did was offer a solution. He told Lot that he did not want this conflict to come between them, so he said they could divide the land. He then allowed Lot to have the first choice, even though it meant he probably would not get the land he wanted. Abram chose to love Lot more than he loved himself, and by doing this he brought glory to God.

Conflict will happen in your life. Having conflict is not a sin, but how we respond to it will show if we love God or love ourselves more. Philippians 2:4 says, "Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too."

Jesus was the ultimate example of what it means to put others above ourselves. What did He do to show love and put us first? (Died for our sins.) We can learn from Jesus about how to love others more than we love ourselves. We can trust that God will take care of us when we are obedient to Him. On your bookmark put "Be the first to offer a solution" as step #1, and "Let others have the first choice even if it means we do not get what we want" as step #2. Keep this bookmark with you to remember what it means to treat others selflessly.

Let's keep reading.

Genesis 13:14-18

14 After Lot had gone, the Lord said to Abram, "Look as far as you can see in every direction – north and south, east and west. 15 I am giving all this land, as far as you can see, to you and your descendants as a permanent possession. 16 And I will give you so many descendants that, like the dust of the earth, they cannot be counted! 17 Go and walk through the land in every direction, for I am giving it to you." 18 So Abram moved his camp to Hebron and settled near the oak grove belonging to Mamre. There he built another altar to the Lord.

What did Lot get for making a selfish choice? (The Jordan Valley, an earthly reward.) Did God speak to Lot and bless him in any way for this? (Allow responses.) No. In fact, the area that Lot chose that looked so beautiful was actually right next to Sodom, a city where the men were wicked and were sinning greatly against God. It will cause some hardship for Lot later on, which we will study next week. So we can see that there was no eternal blessing for Lot's selfish choice. All he received was the earthly reward of the beautiful land to live in.

Let's look at Abram now. What did God originally promise Abram? (A great nation –land and descendants.) So even though Abram knew this promise, he still chose to be humble and selfless by putting Lot first and allowing him to choose the land first. What did God do? (Allow responses.) He blessed Abram for it. He gave him abundant land and uncountable descendants. Do you try to get your own rewards, or do you trust that God has better things for you? Do you live to bring glory to God, or live to bring glory for yourself? (Allow responses.) God loves you so much. He wants to give you more than you can imagine. You have a choice to be like Lot (who tried to get his own blessings) or to be like Abram (who had faith that God would take care of and bless him).

Countless Blessings



The purpose of this activity is to show how God blessed Abram with many descendants.

Supplies:

Bag or bowl of sand (1 per bin)

Paper (1 per camper)

Give campers a small piece of paper with some sand on it. Challenge them to quietly count the number of pieces of sand.

Tie It Together



Were you able to count every piece of sand given to you? (Allow responses.) Probably not. God told Abram that He would give him, “so many descendants that, like the dust of the earth, they cannot be counted.” Just like it was difficult to count every piece of sand, it is impossible to count the blessings that God gives us. When we follow God and seek Him with all of our heart, He blesses us in ways that we can see, and ways that we cannot see. Think about the blessings in your life that God has given you, and know that there are many more that you cannot even see right now.

Prayer Time

Spend some time in prayer to close small group time. Thank God for providing us with the ultimate example of selflessness and humility in Jesus, and for the numerous blessings He provides. Ask God to help us live in a way that brings Him glory.



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