

God Has a Plan

Genesis 12:1-8; 15:1-6

God Calls Abram

Bible Point

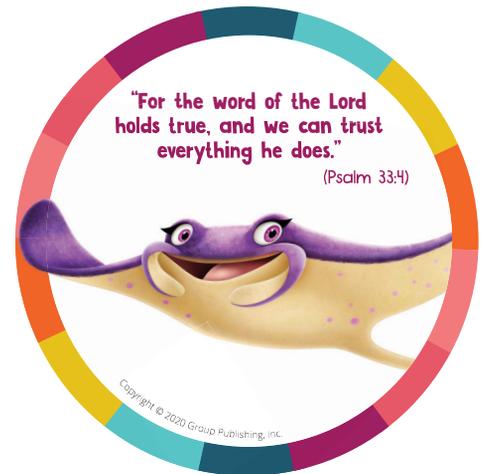
We can trust God...even when we don't understand.

Purpose

Remember learning algebra? Or trigonometry? Maybe it came naturally for you. But there may also have been frustrating moments when you just didn't understand. You believed there was a solution but had no idea how to get there.

Perhaps that's how Abram felt. God gave him the answer: "You'll get land plus a big, blessed family." But Abram wondered how to get there. Despite wondering and some wandering, too, Abram believed. He trusted God. And we can, too.

Elementary kids are developing critical thinking skills. They ask questions so they can understand, and they become frustrated when they just don't get it. As you lead, look for opportunities to help kids know we may never fully understand God and his ways. But there *are* things we do know: God's trustworthy. He loves us. And he has a plan for our lives.



Prayer

God, you are beyond my comprehension. And yet, I trust you. Thanks for guiding me through your plans for my life and your plans for my time with your kids. In Jesus' name, amen.

Prep

| Opening Options | Sing & Play | Bible Discovery & Friendship Finale | Apply-It Options |
|--|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Option Cards* <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Painted Road</i>: gallon-size resealable bags, washable paint in various colors, masking tape, small toy cars <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Craft Stick Stars</i>: craft sticks, Glue Dots, rubber bands, markers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> countdown video* <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Buddy Video</i> DVD* <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Music Video</i> DVD* <input type="checkbox"/> Rae Bible Memory Buddy poster* <input type="checkbox"/> media player <input type="checkbox"/> Bible (bookmark Psalm 33:4) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> "God Calls Abram" Bible Story poster* <input type="checkbox"/> Rae Bible Memory Buddy stickers* (1 per child) <input type="checkbox"/> Take-It-Home Flyers* (Unit 2, Week 1) (1 per child) <input type="checkbox"/> Bible (bookmark Genesis 12:1-3, 6, 7; 15:1-3) <input type="checkbox"/> star drawn on a large piece of paper <input type="checkbox"/> snowman drawn on a large piece of paper <input type="checkbox"/> paper <input type="checkbox"/> pencils | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Explore More</i>: Bibles, paper, pens or pencils <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Game</i>: no supplies |

* in your **Simply Loved Kit**

Opening Options

Set up one—or both—of these intro activities to start your time together. Each activity connects kids to the Bible Point and to each other. Cut apart these Option Cards, and place one by each activity you choose. Crew Guides will follow the directions and build friendships with kids as they make discoveries together!



Painted Road

Supplies

- gallon-size resealable bags, washable paint in various colors, masking tape, small toy cars

Squeeze a blob of paint into the bottom corners of the bag. Seal the bag, then tape sides to a table.

Use your hand to distribute the paint throughout the sealed bag. Then drive toy cars over the bag to make roads.

? Tell about a road trip you took. Where did you go? Who went with you?

In our Bible story, we'll hear about Abram's journey to a new home. He went because God told him to. Abram trusted God, and **we can trust God, too**. He'll be with us wherever we go.

Craft Stick Stars

Supplies

- craft sticks, Glue Dots, rubber bands, markers

Use Glue Dots or rubber bands to shape craft sticks into a star. Use markers to decorate your star.

? If you could name a star, what would you call it? Why?

Today we'll hear about God's promise to a man named Abram. God said Abram would have as many family members as there are stars in the sky. That's a big family! **We can trust God** to keep his promises.

Opening

Now's a great time for Opening Options! Choose one—or both—to introduce today's Bible discoveries.



countdown video (1 minute)

Help kids transition, clean up the activities, and sit with Connect Crews. A Connect Crew is a small group of kids with one Crew Guide.

Sing & Play

Hey, friends! Trust me, we're going to have a blast today. Let's start with a song!



"To God Be the Glory" music video

Bible Point

Today we're discovering **we can trust God**. That's our Bible Point today, so every time you hear the words **"We can trust God!"** point up and say, "Trust God!" Let's try that together.

- Point up and say, "Trust God!"
- Repeat several times.

Repetition cements learning, so be sure to say today's Bible Point A LOT. Have fun with it! Kids will love listening for it and responding with "Trust God!"

God is always at work. He has a plan for our lives—and it's a good one! Let's sing and celebrate that **we can trust God**. (*Trust God!*)

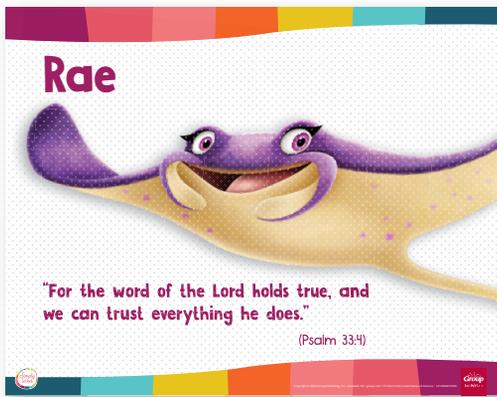


"We Can Trust Him" (Psalm 33:4) music video

Supplies

- Bible
- media player
- *Buddy Video* DVD
 - Rae Bible Memory Buddy video (Week 1)
- *Music Video* DVD
 - "To God Be the Glory" music video
 - "We Can Trust Him" (Psalm 33:4) music video
 - "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands" music video
- Rae Bible Memory Buddy poster





Bible Memory Buddy & Verse

Let's meet our Bible Memory Buddy, Rae the giant manta ray. Show the Bible Memory Buddy poster. **How much do you know about manta rays? Let's find out with a This-or-That Challenge!** You'll hear two fun facts about giant manta rays. It's up to you to decide which is true—this fact or that!

- ❓ **Why must manta rays keep moving all the time? Is it so they don't fall asleep or so they can keep breathing?**
- Have everyone pretend to fall asleep to vote for *this* (so they don't fall asleep) or take a deep breath to vote for *that* (so they can keep breathing).
- Make a drumroll sound by patting your thighs or the floor.
- Dramatically give the answer: **It's so they can keep breathing!**
- Watch the Rae Bible Memory Buddy video.



Rae Bible Memory Buddy video (Week 1)



Show the Bible. **The Bible is God's true story of love! The Bible was written by people who wrote just what God wanted them to say. Our Bible Memory Verse is Psalm 33:4. Let's say the verse together. I'll say a line, and then you repeat after me.**

"For the word of the Lord (*cup hands around mouth*) **holds true,** (*give thumbs-up*) **and we can trust** (*pretend to grab on to something with both hands*) **everything he does."** (*spread hands in front of you*)
(Psalm 33:4)

We can trust God. (*Trust God!*) **What he says is true, and he has the whole world in his hands. Let's sing and celebrate that together!**



"He's Got the Whole World in His Hands" music video

Bible Discovery

Circle Up & Connect

Let's circle up and spend a little time simply getting to know each other in smaller groups called **Connect Crews**.

- Arrange kids into Connect Crews with one helper—or Crew Guide—per group.
 - Invite kids to sit in knee-to-knee circles with their Connect Crews.
 - Have kids give their Crew Guides and each other high-fives.
 - Have kids take turns saying their names and answering this question. Crew Guides go first.
- ❓ **What's something you'd want to take with you on a long journey? Why?**

The Heart of the Matter

Let's start with a big picture challenge!

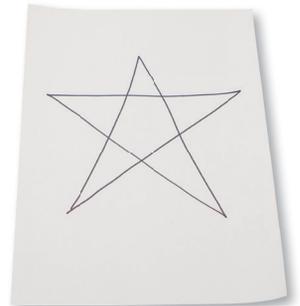
- Form pairs.
 - Designate one person in each pair to be the "Director" and the other the "Artist."
 - Give each "Artist" a piece of paper and a pencil, and have pairs sit back to back with the Artist facing away from you.
 - Hold up the picture of a star for only the Directors to see.
 - **Directors, it's your job to describe how to draw this shape without saying what it is. In other words, tell your partner what to draw without giving the big picture. Artists, no talking and no peeking!**
 - Give kids about two minutes to draw. Then compare the Artists' pictures to yours. If time allows, have kids switch roles and repeat the activity, using your snowman drawing as a guide.
- ❓ **What was it like to follow directions when you couldn't see the big picture?** Invite a few responses from the whole group.

We can trust God. (*Trust God!*) **But it's hard to trust when we don't see the big picture. In today's Bible story, we'll hear about a man who trusted God even when he didn't fully understand.**

Supplies

- Bible
- star drawn on a large piece of paper
- snowman drawn on a large piece of paper
- paper
- pencils
- "God Calls Abram" Bible Story poster

We call helpers **Crew Guides**. If you lead a small class, you can be the **Crew Guide**. Simply circle up with the kids. If you have helpers, form smaller groups so each child can be known—and so kids can befriend your helpers, too!



Experience the Bible Story

During Opening Options, ask one expressive child to play the part of Abram, and have that child join you in the front of the room now. “Abram” will lead kids in the actions you describe. Explain that everyone will follow Abram’s actions and do everything he does.

Let’s meet a man who trusted God even when he didn’t understand exactly what God was doing. His name is Abram, and here he is now! Let’s wave! Pause. **As you hear this story, do everything Abram does.**

Abram was getting up there in years. See how he’s sort of hunched over? Pause. **And see how he squints when he’s looking around?** Pause.

We know he’s rich because Abram has lots and lots of sheep. Everyone, let’s hear your best sheep sounds. Pause. **Perfect!**

One day, God told Abram to pack up and go to a land God would show him. Listen to this.



Read aloud Genesis 12:1-3.

That sounded great! God would bless Abram. That means he liked Abram and he had special plans for him. Motion to everyone. **And by the way, God likes you all and has good plans for you all, too. Go ahead and give your neighbor a pat on the back.** Pause.

Back to Abram. Abram trusted God, so he pulled out a suitcase. Pause. **And threw in his underwear.** Pause. **And his sandals.** Pause. **And all his robes.** Pause. **Wait—hadn’t you better fold those? They’ll get wrinkled.** Pause.

He also tossed in his tents. Pause briefly, and then quickly move through the following list. **And his tools and his toothbrush and his cooking pots and his bowling trophies and even his family. He thought about tossing in his sheep, but that would be silly. They could just walk.**

And, boy, did they walk! See Abram trudging to the left? Pause. **God is leading, but Abram doesn’t understand where they’re going. The sheep are following along, so baa to your left.** Pause. **Now Abram’s trudging to the right.** Pause. **Baa to your right, sheep.** Pause.

Abram looks so tired he can hardly move. Pause. **And the sheep are so tired that when they baa, it sounds like they’ll fall over. Everyone, let’s hear some tired “baas”!** Pause.

At last Abram stops and sets up camp, then sits down. Pause. **Let’s find out where he stopped.**



Read aloud Genesis 12:6.

There in the land of Canaan, Abram, his wife, his nephew, and all his sheep stretched and yawned and settled in for the night. Pause. **Almost at once there’s soft snoring in the air.** Pause.

Then God appeared to Abram—enough snoring!
Here's what God said!



Read aloud Genesis 12:7.

Abram's trust in God paid off. God promised that he'd give Abram and his family that land someday. That sounded great to Abram, so he built an altar to thank God. Then the journey continued. He and his sheep continued traveling for a loooong time. Abram, keep marching in place for a while, and I'll jump ahead to the next part.

God had promised to make a great nation out of Abram, but that was years ago—and Abram still didn't have any kids. Sometime later, God spoke to Abram again. Let's see what he said.



Read aloud Genesis 15:1-3.

Abraham didn't quite understand God's plan, did he? Let's look at some stars. Let's see you all shine by raising your "jazz hands." Pause and demonstrate by raising your hands, palms out and fingers splayed, and shaking your hands.

Show the Bible Story poster. God told Abram to go outside and look at the stars. Pause. "That's how many descendants you'll have," God said.

As Abram looked at all the glittering stars, his heart was so happy. Abram believed God. Abram trusted God! And **we can trust God, too!** (*Trust God!*)

Give yourselves a hand!

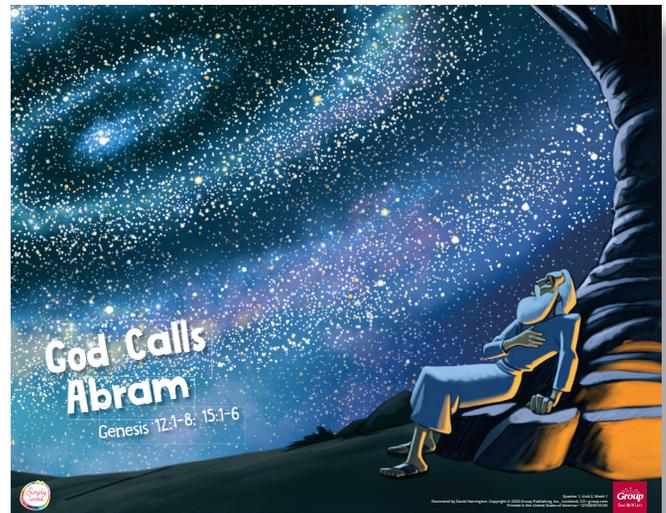
Lead kids in applauding their efforts, and point "Abram" back to a seat.

We can trust that God is who he says he is and that he'll do what he says he'll do. Let's talk about this in our Connect Crews.

- ❓ **What's something you're trusting God for in your life right now?**
- Invite Crew Guides to share first.
- Crew Guides give thumbs-up when everyone has shared.

Remember the drawing activity we did earlier? The big picture was clear right away. That's how it was with Abram. God didn't promise to give Abram everything he'd ever wanted exactly when he wanted it. But God *did* promise to give him land and a special family. God promises us things, too. God promises to love us and always be with us. And through Jesus, God's promised to give us forever life with Jesus. Those things are amazing! **We can trust God** (*Trust God!*) and his promises.

Now's a great time for Apply-It Options! Choose one—or both—of the following reinforcement activities to support today's Bible discoveries before the Friendship Finale.



Apply-It Options

Choose one—or both—of these activities to support kids' learning after Bible Discovery.

Explore More

Supplies

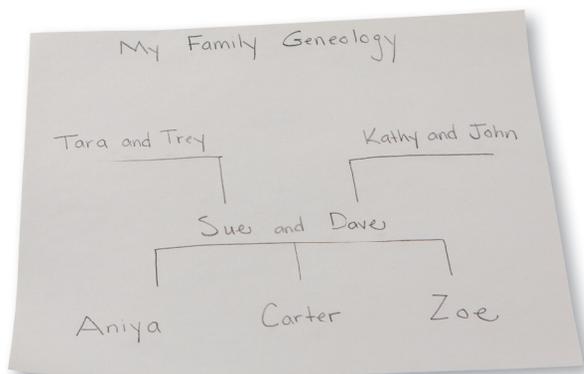
- Bibles, paper, pens or pencils

 Distribute Bibles, and help kids find and read Genesis 12:3 and Matthew 1:1.

God promised to bless the world through Abram's family. And he did!

- Explain that a genealogy lists all the generations in a family.
- Look at Jesus' genealogy in Matthew, noting Abraham at the top of the list and Jesus at the bottom.
- **Abram didn't understand it at the time, but all along, God planned to bless the world through Jesus.**
- Have everyone list their genealogies. They don't need to be long. Near the bottom of the paper, have kids write their names, siblings' (or stepsiblings') names, then their parents' (or stepparents') names above that, then their grandparents' names above that.
- ❓ **How has Jesus blessed your family?**

God had a plan for Abram's family, and he has a plan for our families, too. **We can trust God.** (Trust God!)



Game

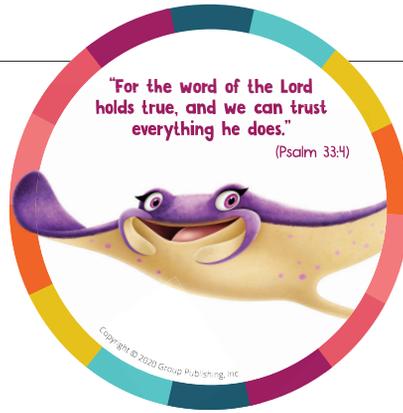
Play a game like Simon Says, but add a "Savanna" and "Rae," too!

- Explain that if you say "Simon Says," everyone does that action. If you say "Savanna Says," kids do the opposite of that action. If you say "Rae Says," kids must stretch arms out like a giant manta ray *and* do the spoken command. As usual, everyone should *not* do the action if a command is given without a name.
- Play several rounds. If you'd like, you can choose two additional kids to stand beside you and represent "Savanna" and "Rae."
- Fun ideas include:
 - Lift your left foot as high as you can.
 - Play air guitar.
 - Start singing.
 - Pretend to climb a ladder.
 - Go for a walk around the room.
- ❓ **What was it like to keep track of who said to do what?**
- ❓ **How is that like trusting God when other people may tell you to do other things?**

Life can be confusing. One person tells us one thing, and someone else gives the opposite advice. But one voice is always true: God's. We can believe and trust what God says. **We can trust God.** (Trust God!)



Friendship Finale



Have kids sit in knee-to-knee circles with their Connect Crews.

Our Bible Memory Buddy friend Rae reminds us that we can trust God. (Trust God!) You'll each receive a Rae sticker to help you remember to trust God throughout your week. You can wear it now or collect your stickers at home. Crew Guides will give each child a sticker like this.

- Ask a willing child to help you demonstrate the following actions.
- All kids stand and stretch out their arms and legs so their bodies resemble a star. Crew Guides will give each of their “star” friends a sticker.
- As they give each child a Bible Memory Buddy sticker, Crew Guides say, “[Child’s name], **we can trust God.**”
- Crew Guides give thumbs-up when everyone has received a sticker.

Saying each child’s name in a loving way helps kids simply experience God’s love through you!

Did you know that Jesus eventually came from Abram’s family? In Genesis 12:3, God told Abram all the families on earth would be blessed through him. Jesus’ birth made that promise come true.

I’d like to read you something about our friend Jesus. As you listen, please put your chin on your hand—like you’re really thinking about something. Show the kids what you mean. Now close your eyes and listen as I read about Jesus.

- Read the first section of the Unit 2, Week 1 Take-It-Home Flyer.
- **Now I’ll give you one of these flyers to help you talk about Jesus’ love in your Connect Crews and at home, too.**
- Distribute Take-It-Home Flyers to Crew Guides, and have them share about their own friendship with Jesus as they answer the “Talk Starter” question and then invite kids to share.
- Kids share prayer requests—things they’d like to tell Jesus—in their Connect Crews.
- Connect Crews pray together.
- Crew Guides distribute Take-It-Home Flyers and follow the directions to help kids fold the paper to “fly” home.

Supplies

- Rae Bible Memory Buddy stickers (1 per child)
- Take-It-Home Flyers (Unit 2, Week 1) (1 per child)

