

The Patriarchs: God's Plan Unfolds Optional Pre-Club Activities (5-10 minutes)



The purpose of a pre-club activity is to allow the children entering the room for GNC to be led immediately into an interactive experience that will engage their thinking with the teaching that is soon to come during the club. It may connect to the memory verse, "Word-up" or Bible lesson in a tangible way. This benefits classroom management, student involvement, cooperation and a positive learning experience.

Lesson One: The Tower of Babel

The historical record of the Tower of Babel is the outcome of people focusing on themselves rather than God. On page 18 of the text, there is a *Wonder Time* segment that is well suited for a pre-club activity. Read it over carefully, allowing the students to find the hidden pictures from the Resource Pack materials. Talk with them about the meaning of "focus." A main factor in focusing is the ability to ignore distractions. Choosing to focus typically means making choices to remove distractions or move away from them. This is a key to having a quality time with God where God is our focus. Bring a magnifying glass or other plastic magnifiers, some binoculars or even a microscope if possible to let them experience focusing on things close and far away. Learning to focus on God and His Word will help us live our lives to bring glory to God. Word up: "Give glory to God!"

Lesson Two: Abram's Saving Faith

The Small Group Time on page 21 of the textbook is an excellent way to review the previous lesson and prepare for the next challenge Abram faces with a life-changing choice. Will he think only of himself and his family, or will He bring glory to God by obeying God's command? The signs for the students are provided with this handout. Ask the students, how can they bring glory to God? What life-changing choices does God want them to make? Examples: choice of friends, choice of what to do with free time, choice to do homework, choice to be respectful to others, choice to forgive. Word up: "Trust in Jesus Alone" (to make good choices).

Lesson Three: God is Faithful to Keep His Promises

Abram needed to depend on someone much greater than himself. To allow the students to experience "trusting and depending," lead them in the following activity:

Have two chairs in front of the group a few feet apart. Ask a student if there is another student or teacher in the room that they trust. Then ask, why they trust that person? There are good reasons a person earns another's trust. Then ask if they would like to do a small skit to demonstrate trust? The two children (or child and teacher) face one another, holding hands. One child has his/her back to the chairs. The other is facing the chairs. The child with his/her back to the chairs looks up to the ceiling while their partner directs them to a position in front of one of the chairs, then asks them to sit down, still holding hands. The teacher supervises the activity for safety. Have the child stand back up and repeat the procedure. Except the second time, the teacher says that the she/he will move the chairs, so that the child being directed who knows the previous arrangement will have to trust their partner to direct them to the chair.

What must it have been like for Abram to trust God whom he could not see? But what could he see when he looked up at the night sky? Who made all those stars? How is God worthy of our trust? Word up: "God is faithful!"

Lesson Four: God gives a picture of the promised Savior

In lesson four Abraham is instructed by God to do something that does not make sense to him at all. Yet, He knew that God always does what is right and speaks only the truth. So, he obeyed God, trusting that God will take care of the outcome.

A good picture of this kind of experience is to use a hand-string game. The strings are moved back and forth, over, under and through the fingers until they become what looks like an impossible tangle of lines.

String loops of 30-32" inch strings can be given to each child to play with along with the teacher's demonstration. The students can see how tangled they can get their string loop. It is impossible for us to understand how to untangle the string easily or make sense of it. Then have the students turn their hands down, allowing the string to drop from their fingers. Pick it up in a way that the loop returns to the normal position.

The analogy: Sometimes the things that happen to us and God's instructions do not make sense to us and we do not see a solution. If we let go of our control over the situation (like letting go of the string) and fully trust in God, following His path, His instructions in His way, then we will eventually see His provision. In the story with Abraham, God demonstrated to this father and son that God "will see to it." That's what "Jehovah Jireh" means. Word-up: "God provided the Savior!"

Also, if you know a simple string game that creates a picture, by leading the students step by step, it is a picture of following God's instructions even though it is not clear what the outcome will be while in the process of following the steps.

(NOTE: There are many demonstrations that can be done with the hand-string games that lend themselves to analogies to augment the teaching. Google "hand-string games" for demonstrations.)

Lesson Five: God changes Jacob

Can we trust God with anything? It seems like it took Jacob a lifetime to answer this question. He was always trying to figure things out on his own and negotiate with people and with God, when he said in Gen. 28:20-21, "If God will ...then the LORD shall be my God." Do we need to wait a lifetime before learning to trust God? Can a child learn to trust God and let Jesus change them? Word-up: "Jesus can change me!" How can we help a child to see that God has the **power to change us and can be trusted?**

Song: God's Power *(not included on the current CD except in Spanish)*

God's Power demonstration online:

<https://online.cefcmi.com/mod/page/view.php?id=35304>

Digital download, music only:

<https://cefpress.com/god-s-power-mp3.html>

Lyrics for “God’s Power” (CEF Press)

(Verse 1) **My God is bigger than I am, strongest of all.
He is able to make the summer turn into fall.
He controls all that happens, His power is plain to see.
And I know I can trust Him, for with this power He cares for me.**

(Verse 2) **God speaks to me in the Bible, shows me His love.
He tells how the Lord Jesus came to earth from above.
He tells how I can please Him, and teaches me His ways.
Yes, the Bible will guide me and give me strength for all my days.**

If God can do all these things (Word-up), then He can change me. He can create in me a new heart. He can calm the storm in my heart. He can give me inner strength to walk in His ways. He can change the way I listen to the Bible lesson right now. Let’s discover together how God brought a change into Jacob’s life. (The hand string activity called “Jacob’s Ladder” is a little challenging. If you would like to use it to challenge the students who seem to be begging for something harder:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXV1rX-PvR0>)

Lesson Six: Jacob and Esau are Reunited

The hand-string demonstration called “Open the Gate” is a good one for older children to try and younger children to watch.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11omMUvluwQ>

As this is completed use the following wording:

There were two brothers, Esau and Jacob: *pick up string with each pointer finger.*

The brothers each had their interest, one for the outdoors and the other for the indoors, but they were connected to one family, the family of Isaac and Rebecca: *take the thumbs and pick up the correct strings.*

Esau was close to Isaac and Jacob was close to Rebecca: *take each pinkie to pick up the correct string for these two relationships.*

One day when Esau was feeling down (*place one pointer down into the correct hole under the strings*) he gave away his inheritance to his younger brother for some stew (a meal).

Then, with Rebecca’s encouragement, Jacob went undercover (*place the other pointer down into the correct hold under the strings*) and dressed up like his brother, tricking Isaac into giving him the inheritance or the blessing.

When Esau and Isaac found out about the trick, everything turned upside down. *Let all the strings come off the fingers with the pointers still holding their position.*

The family was divided. (*place the fingers from each hand into the separate hole with their pointer and hold all the strings loosely with palms facing up.*

Jacob moved far away. For the next 20 years Jacob wondered if his brother would ever forgive him.

When it was time to go back home, Jacob had God’s promise, but he was afraid to face his brother again. He came closer and closer to Esau and his 400 men. What would Esau do? *Start pulling the strings slowly.* Jacob sent Esau gifts. He bowed low to the ground to show respect and a humble heart.

At this point you can stop and say, “Let’s find out in today’s Bible lesson.” Then at the end of the lesson, finish the string demonstration.

God kept His promise and Esau ran to his brother with open arms and welcomed him: *Pull the strings fully open as a gate opening.* This is how God receives us when we come to Him with a humble heart for forgiveness because of what Jesus did on the cross for us and coming back to life. We are accepted in the Redeemer. God removes the old and makes us new. (Word-up: "God can make me new.")

The Patriarchs: God's Plan Unfolds **Rhyming Review**

Lesson One

1. Fill the earth with families, was the first command to the first woman and the first man.
2. The people wanted to build a great city and tower to show God all their power.
3. The truth is that God is all powerful, so how did he show it? He changed their language so when they spoke, who could know it?
4. Whoever spoke the same language moved to be with one another, like sister and brother.
5. There are all kinds of ways to Heaven, some people say, but Jesus says He is the only way and we know this is true.

Lesson Two

1. To obey God, Abram had to exercise faith. Yes, obeying God was the only way he could be safe.
2. God's promises to Abram were three: a great name, land and children like the stars he could see (but could not count them because there are so many.)
3. Blessed to be a blessing, Abraham would be, because God would make it happen for all the world to see.
4. Even though Abram and Sarai were very old, they believed God's promise of which they were told.
5. Whom can you depend on to help you live God's way? The Holy Spirit, by walking in Him day by day.

Lesson Three

1. God told Abram that his family would be like the stars in the sky. When he looked up to see they were more than could be counted, he understood why, God's promise is so amazing.
2. God said Abram was righteous because he believed in God. We also become righteous by believing in God the Son, Jesus according to II Cor. 5:21. If you agree, give a nod.
3. When Abram heard God's promise he held onto his staff. When Sarai heard while sitting in the tent, she gave a little laugh.
4. God changed Abram and Sarai's names because they would be the parents of many nations. The Savior would come through their family, to save all God's creation.
5. The fact that God is faithful, means that He can be counted on to do what He says He will do every time. The truth of His Word will always shine.

Lesson Four

1. Abraham could trust God because he knew what God is like, faithful to keep His promise to bless the world through his household. In obeying, he could be brave and he could be bold because he knew what he had been told.
2. Jehovah-Jireh means "God's provides." He provided for Isaac and Abraham, by sending a ram.

3. The sacrifice for Isaac and Abraham was a ram. Jesus came as our sacrifice, from God as a lamb, for the sin of every woman and man.
4. The Bible teaches that the punishment for sin is separation between God and men.
5. A sacrifice is a picture God gives to show us the result of sin and the need of the Savior for all people, children, women and men.

Lesson Five

1. God told Rebekah before her twins were to come, that the older one would serve the younger son.
2. Cooking and being near home would be the habit of Jacob. Being outdoors and hunting would be the practice Esau would take up.
3. Trying to make someone believe something that isn't true, is what "deceive" means. The trick is usually making the true meaning different than what it seems.
4. No matter what happens through this world of strife, can we trust in God's sovereign control over our life? Yes!
5. God promised to protect Jacob and bring him back to his land. God would give him as many children as the seashore's sand.

Lesson Six

1. Jacob worked for Laban seven years to take Rachel as his bride. After the wedding, he knew Laban had tricked him. It was Leah who was by his side. But Jacob was faithful to all his family.
2. It was finally time for Jacob to take his family home after 20 years. But facing Esau was the same as facing all his fears.
3. Esau was coming with 400 men. Jacob kept thinking of how he took Esau's birthright and deceived their father, a terrible sin.
4. But God kept his promise to bless Jacob and his family in Abraham's land and Esau ran to hug his brother with open hands.
5. When we humbly come to Jesus for forgiveness of sin, He welcomes us with open arms, our hearts to win.