

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

Blessed To Bless
Genesis 11:27–12:9

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a Unit of sessions needs to have access to the "Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study". That information is often provided at the beginning of that Unit of sessions. The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

The children's song *Father Abraham* would be a good way to include children in today's lesson. If possible, introduce the music to the children at an earlier session. However, it is perfectly appropriate to use the Gathering Time to learn the song. Both children and adults may participate although it is important that the children view this as a special song for them.

Bible Study Leader:

Worship Time Leader:

Ahead of time, ask someone to read the old hymn, Make Me a Blessing, *The Worship Hymnal*, 2008, #380.

The **Sharing Time** today comes from the teaching found in Psalms 34:11-14. Find the scripture printed out on the final page of this session. Make a copy of it for each participant in the **Worship Time**. Ask a preschooler to hand out those copies as the people re-gather to worship. Make sure that the older preschoolers each have their own copy even though they may not be able to read the words. Your goal will be to reinforce the message of the **Sharing Time** that all the members of the lay family serve in ministry together—not just the parents.

Music Sources:

Sing **Here I Am to Worship**, , *WOW Worship*, 2003; *The Worship Hymnal*. 2008, #130; CCLI # 3266032

Father Abraham, www.childbiblesongs.com

Make Me a Blessing, *The Worship Hymnal*, 2008, #380; CCLI #11603.

Step by Step, *WOW Worship*, 2003; *The Worship Hymnal*, 2008, #480; CCLI # 696994

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Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

Blessed To Bless

Focal Text

Genesis 11:27 – 12:9

Main Idea

Through Abraham and through us, God seeks to extend blessing to all the families of the earth.

Question to Explore

What does God want to do through you and your family?

Gathering together:

Sing **Here I Am to Worship**, The Worship Hymnal, #130
Father Abraham, www.childbiblesongs.com

First thoughts:

The main idea for our study and worship time today is stated, “Through Abraham and through us, God seeks to extend blessing to all the families of the earth.”

This amazing statement should make us stop and consider Abraham’s call by God and our individual and family call to service? Had Abraham failed to be faithful, the entire history of the world would have been different. Do we really understand that we, too, have a place in history which may determine how the future is written. We may be more willing today to go overseas, prayer walk, hand out gospel tracts or New Testaments than we are to become actively involved in our next door neighbour’s needs, heartaches and ongoing pain. As we study Abraham’s going to a far away land, let us ask God if we should go or stay and whether going or staying how we should serve him today.

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

Blessed To Bless

Focal Text

Genesis 11:27 – 12:9

Background Text

Genesis 11:27 – 12:9

Main Idea

Through Abraham and through us, God seeks to extend blessing to all the families of the earth.

Question to Explore

What does God want to do through you and your family?

Teaching Aim

To lead participants to trace God's purpose for Abraham and testify of what they understand to be God's purpose for their lives.

Introduction to your personal study:

We often hear people say, “I have no idea what I should do with my life, where I should go and what I should do.” In fact just this morning I read an email from a bright young lady who has lots of education and many skills and abilities but she does not know where she should go to use these skills. Her answer and others should be as that of Dr. Donald Carr of Persia, a missionary, when asked how he ended up in Persia. His reply was, “I had no call to stay home, but I had a command to go.”

Even in our churches and business we have a group of people dedicated to go and get involved. I know one person when asked why she was always the one asked to go to far away places to do different things and minister in unique ways, she simply replied, “I have learned to say, Yes, I will do that.”

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study**”, found at the beginning of this Unit. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you as well.

The book of Genesis seems to be divided into two major sections. The first section deals with creation. The second section covers God’s family and their make up and mission. In this later section today’s lesson will discuss the origin of the family and it’s placement in the world and God’s plan.

As mentioned before this passage is a dividing line not only in the book of Genesis, but also in the general plan of life that God has for us.

In the first 11 chapters we cover about 2000 years of history with God working with the nations through four major events- creation, man’s fall, the flood, and finally, the tower of Babel.

In the rest of Genesis and in fact the Bible, God works with individuals. In Genesis we see Abraham, a man of faith, and in the following chapters we are introduced to Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. These patriarchs will set the groundwork for understanding the word of God.

Focusing on the Meaning:

11:27–32 These verses confirm that there is about to be a major turn in the events that are happening in the book of Genesis. Instead of following the course of an event, we will now follow the individual Abraham. These passages give some background to the family make up.

The family of Terah lived in Ur, a city in Mesopotamia, west of the Euphrates River, when Abram was born along two others sons Nahor and Haran. Haran has a son named Lot who lives with Grandparents after his father’s death. Years later Terah took part of his family (Abram and Sarai and his grandson Lot) and moved north-westward about five hundred miles to Haran where Terah settled and eventually died.

Now the writer of Genesis has not only narrowed history to an individual but he has linked Abram back to Noah, who in an earlier chapter of Genesis (5) was linked to Adam. God’s plan brought us to Abram, the first patriarch and to the beginning story in God’s plan.

12:1-3 This passage is explosive because God asked Abram to do two things: 1. Leave your extended family / country / people. 2. Go where I will show you. For missionaries this is not an unfamiliar call. A dear young lady from my church family was called to go as a missionary to a distant land where there was a different culture,

different language, and a different climate. As she enrolled as a missionary, she was open to going wherever God opened a door.

God gave Abram three promises to look to for encouragement. He promised Abram that he would be made into a great nation, that he would be blessed, and that his name would be great.

God did not send Abram out without protection. This third verse also reveals that God's love is universal. God loves all mankind and is no respecter of persons.

Has God been true to His promises? Yes! We as Christians have formed a great nation and we are blessed because of Jesus Christ. As well, Abram (Abraham) is probably the best known character from the Old Testament.

12:4-5 The Bible does not tell us how Abram heard God. He did hear and he responded. You and I can hear God's word through our Bible reading, prayer, meditation or singing. While we must be open and prepared to hear the voice of our Father, the main thrust here seems to indicate that once we have heard God's voice, we must take action. I believe Abram responded to the voice of God. I imagine this was not the first indication Abram had that God was talking with him. As he did here, he must have responded in a positive fashion in the other instances. Abram had learned from past experience that once God speaks to you, you must follow his instructions, and do it NOW.

12: 6-7 Abram travelled to Shechem, which is approximately the centre of Canaan. This location is south of the Sea of Galilee by about 50 kilometres and about 25 kilometres west of the Jordan River. The word Moreh means 'teaching' and it was thought that the Canaanites might have come to this location for teaching about their many pagan gods.

This location is important for us because, firstly, it fixes the location from which God would make the 'great nation' that was promised. Secondly, it firmly puts God's teaching up against those of the pagans.

Here we see the second stand Abram made for God. First there was obedience to move and now he builds an altar in this pagan land. He worships and give thanks to God for the land which was given to them.

12: 8-9 These verses find Abram on the move in a southward direction. It is not clear why he was moving around since he was in the land that God had promised to his offspring but it could have been because of their lifestyle. They were neither desert nomads nor farmers. Abram's people were following the lifestyle that had been passed down to them before their time in Egypt. They were semi-nomad herders of cattle, sheep, goats, and camels who lived on the fringe of the settlements and therefore were not accepted by the Canaanite communities. Abram moved on until he arrived in

Negev. In Negev he found a location that allowed him to have his herds wander in search of food and water without disturbing the Canaanite agricultural community.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

This passage carries with it a two-prong lesson theme. First we see that Terah moved away from his family allowing for Abram years later to follow God's plan for him. At times we Christians believe we must see the complete picture, but God only shows us the part that we are involved in because we cannot understand the vast complicated plan.

Along with the obedience that Abram shows we must also show thankfulness to God as Abram arrived in the land had been promised even though he did not control the land yet.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

Blessed To Bless

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the **Focal Text** in their Bibles. Also, share with them the **Main Idea** to be learned from the Scriptures, and the **Questions to be Explored** by the group.

Focal Text

Genesis 11:27 – 12:9

Background Text

Genesis 11:27 – 12:9

Main Idea

Through Abraham and through us, God seeks to extend blessing to all the families of the earth.

Question to Explore

What does God want to do through you and your family?

Teaching Aim

To lead participants to trace God's purpose for Abraham and testify of what they understand to be God's purpose for their lives.

Connect with Life:

In the first verses we see Abram's family tree. Invite the group to recall how far into the past they can trace their family tree.

Ask some in the group to share: Who were some individuals who stand out in your family's history?

Guide the Study:

Begin by reading the whole passage, Genesis 11:27 – 12:9, in an easy to listen to version of the Bible such as the ***New International Version***.

Now have a member read the same passage from ***The Message*** or another paraphrase of the Bible.

Reread Genesis 12:1.

Seek an answer: What was Abram asked to do?

Encourage comments: Have you or someone you know been asked to do a similar type of thing?

Have a member read Genesis 12:2-3.

Question the group: What was Abram promised? Using the teacher preparation material, comment on the impact Abram's call and obedience had on the history of the world.

Request another person to read Galatians 3:6-9.

See if some of the group will volunteer an answer to this question: What have you been promised by God?

Ask: Has God kept His promises to Abram through the years? Has he kept His promises to you until now?

Encourage a brief discussion with this: How do you personally hear God's voice?

Ask: Can you think of other ways that God speaks to persons in our time?

Provoke a brief group discussion with this question: When people hear God, how might they respond?

Ask: Who do you bless? The obedient? The disobedient?

Urge some participants to share an answer to this: Whose lives are impacted by your actions?

Request the group to look at the scripture passage (Genesis 11:27 – 12:9) and answer the following question: What indication do you find that while Abram believed and trusted God he also waited on God?

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Share: I can think of two young men who heard God's call on their life, each one was called to a different area of God's work. One heard the call and then came up with thousand different reasons why he could not follow. Since then he has slowly had less and less connection with the church and more and more involvement with worldly things. The other responded and did what ever was needed to follow God's call on his life. Everything has not been easy for him, but he is happy and has felt God's blessing on his life.

Search the group for answers to the following:

Where do you and I stand?

Are we following or are we finding excuses?

What has God called you specifically to do?

Ask a member to pray that each one would understand how his life can be a blessing to those with whom he has contact.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

Blessed To Bless **Genesis 11:27 – 12:9**

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

Abram and Us

It may be hard for youth to relate to the story of Abram which happened so long ago. Does it help to realize that the civilizations of Abram's day have continued in some form since he was alive. Most people in the world today are aware of the difficult circumstances which exist in the land of Iraq today. The land of Ur which was the homeland of Abraham's family is now modern day Iraq.

Three of the world's great religions consider Abraham to be uniquely important in their development. If you have a computer available, go on the Internet and discover how Judaism, Christianity and Islam consider Abraham to be of major importance in their development. What might have happened if Abraham had refused the call of God in his life? Do you believe there are eternal consequences for you and for others if you fail to obey God's call in your life?

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Blessed To Bless***
Genesis 11:27 – 12:9**Beginning the Service:**

Ahead of time, ask someone to read the old hymn, **Make Me a Blessing Today**, *The Worship Hymnal*, #380.

Sing **Step by Step**, *The Worship Hymnal*, #480.

Offering:**Praying for the World:**

Ciudad Juarez is a large northern border city of Mexico. It lies directly across the U.S. border city of El Paso. Ciudad Juarez grew quickly because many Mexicans came from the interior of Mexico seeking work in the huge factories. Mile after mile of small new homes, all alike, stretch into the desert to the south of Juarez. Most are less than 70 square metres in size (700 square feet). Sand and dirt clouds are relentlessly blown across the whole area by the wind. Garbage from the thousands of inhabitants fill vacant lots. In addition to these homes, there are many areas of homes (called barrios) made of cardboard, tar paper or other materials. They are in contrast to the elegant stores, restaurants, and hotels which line the main roads of the city. There is a mixture of hope and desperation. Christian leaders say that many people are open to the gospel. Yet struggling to make a living consumes families. Sometimes, several families occupy one of the small homes. Ciudad Juarez has been drastically affected in recent years by the "Drug War" as various drug cartels fight law enforcement officials. People live in fear for their lives. Pray that the gospel will sweep through Ciudad Juarez bringing people the peace that does not fail and the hope that endures.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to

give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

Make Me a Blessing Today **Psalm 34:11-14**

The Psalmist speaks often of the blessings of life given to one who serves the Lord faithfully and consistently. Psalm 34:11-14 speaks to us as families who want to be a blessing to others.

***Come, my children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.
Whoever of you loves life
And desires to see many good days,
Keep your tongue from evil
And your lips from speaking lies.
Turn from evil and do good;
Seek peace and pursue it.***

People who are a part of a home church must realize that teaching children spiritual truths is accomplished only in a small part by the minutes that the home church spends together. Parents must assume the role of spiritual teachers and leaders of their children. They are aided by others in the home church who must model integrity of life and deep concern and prayer for the children in the group. The advantage of the home church is that groups are small and it is possible to know each child in the group and to commit to their spiritual well being.

The Psalm we are considering today begins with the words, ***“Come my children, listen to me.”*** The word picture we have here is a loving parent who gathers a child or children around himself or herself with the purpose of teaching the fear of the Lord. Fear here refers to a sense of holy awe. We are to remember God’s power and authority in our lives. We are to recognize that walking outside of His will brings destructive consequences. Holy awe also recognizes God’s provision. A Christian family honours God by giving him thanksgiving for provision of food, shelter, health, love, fun times, answers to prayer and a multitude of other blessings. Surely one of the best gifts a parent can give a child is a thankful heart. The thankful heart is glad for the provision of each day; it does not long for more material goods.

The Psalmist speaks of those who love life and desire to see many good days. Again we see the idea of contentment with life. Part of that contentment comes with a family sensing that they have opportunities to bless others. A multitude of opportunities exist. If a family has children at home, those children should be involved in the ministries of the family as much as is possible and practical. Families may befriend a child’s schoolmate whose parents have divorced; they may spend a holiday season serving meals at a homeless center; they may sacrifice holiday time to travel to another country

to serve in a refugee center; they may open their home to an exchange student or a new immigrant. Homes can be the safe place for teens to gather after school with adults present; the fun place for young people to come when funds are scarce and entertainment needed.

Families who are a blessing to others keep themselves from gossip and speaking lies. Family conversation should stimulate children to think, allow them to explore new ideas and options, but avoid a critical and judgmental spirit.

Finally, families who are a blessing to others must turn from evil and do good. They must seek peace and pursue it.

Turning from evil may encompass families working together to decide what are appropriate books to read, movies to watch, video games to play. Turning from evil will involve parents modeling language which encourages and uplifts. Many cultures today have become used to young people and children using foul language in ordinary conversation. Few things reflect so obviously on the home as a child who speaks in a crude and demeaning way when with his/her friends.

Seeking peace and pursuing it also reflects what it means for a family to be a blessing to others. Neighbours may annoy us with loud music, dogs that bark, cats that destroy a flower bed. Seeking peace and pursuing it may mean that we let some things go without comment or when comment is needed that we use words that are inoffensive and reconciling.

Seeking peace and pursuing it may involve a reorganization of the family schedule. Many families are so busy with work, school and sports or other activities that their times together are few and often not peaceful. To be a blessing to others may require families to find time for the family to reenergize with a simple family picnic; a shared family cleaning day followed by a special meal; or with quiet times together reading, doing a family puzzle or game.

Call to Commitment:

A young family decided to set family goals which would help them to live harmoniously as a family and be a blessing to others. These goals are very specific. They include things like "Have a non-Christian family in our home once a month"; "Use part of our holiday time for a mission trip this year"; "Save money for a new computer"; "Have family devotions regularly."

The two girls in the family have grown from preschoolers to older children helping decide what the family goals will be each year. They are quick to remind their parents when a goal such as "Have a non-Christian family in our home once a month" has not occurred because of other activities. They take initiative to plan and organize family devotions. They do not harass their parents to buy an item like a new computer

because they know that they, as a family, are saving for such a big item. They may decide not to go to a movie because they would rather that money go into the savings account.

Of course, this family is not perfect and not every situation fits into one of the family goals. But they have been intentional in helping their children discover ways that the family can grow spiritually by blessing others. They allow God to bless their own family because of their right hearts, minds, and lifestyle.

This day, we have brought blessing upon ourselves by seeking God's instruction regarding our own family life. As we go from this place out into a week of possible stress, hard work, and difficulties, we need to begin each day with a new commitment to give our lives and our families to new and better ways of serving our Lord. As we practice blessing others, we, too, will be blessed by the God whom we serve.

Concluding the Service:

Say: As we go from our time of worshipping together, it will serve us well to remember the scripture that we have considered. Please take the sheet of paper that has been given to each of you and let's read together the words of the Psalmist:

***Come, my children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.
Whoever of you loves life
And desires to see many good days,
Keep your tongue from evil
And your lips from speaking lies.
Turn from evil and do good;
Seek peace and pursue it.
Amen.***

Close with this comment: Let us go out to bless—and in blessing others find ourselves and our families blessed by God.

Copy a section for each participant in today's **Worship Time**. Include the preschoolers.

***Come, my children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.
Whoever of you loves life
And desires to see many good days,
Keep your tongue from evil
And your lips from speaking lies.
Turn from evil and do good;
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Psalm 34:11-14

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