

Lessons for the Leader

When you hear family members or friends are expecting a child, how do you respond? What if the mother is past the "normal" childbearing years? Do you have concern for the mother and the baby? How would you feel if you heard your 90-year-old relative was to have a baby?

- Read Genesis 17:1-8. In what ways do you think Abraham thought God would keep His promise? Do you think Abraham thought God's promise would be fulfilled through Ishmael (Abraham and Hagar's son)? Imagine Abraham's reactions as the events played out.
- Read verses 15-22 and 18:1-15. Place yourself in Abraham's situation. Would you have laughed? It appears Abraham did not immediately tell Sarah what was to happen. In fact, when Sarah heard the news from the strangers, she laughed. Why do you think she denied laughing?
- Read 21:1-7. Imagine the scene of Isaac's birth. A 100-year-old father and 90-year-old mother welcome their son into the world.
- Consider the plans God had for Isaac. Reflect back through the times God told Abraham he would be the father of a great nation. How do you see God's plan carried out in the faithfulness of Abraham and Sarah? Would you be willing to allow God to use you in this way?
- Reflect on your own family. What plans does God have for your family? How committed are you to following God's plan? What keeps you from being 100 percent sold out to trusting God's plan for your family?
- Spend time praying for your family members. Ask God to use them to accomplish His plan in the world.

What do these symbols mean?

Application Activities Format:

- 1→** Follow the numbers with arrows for a 30-minute large group plus 20-minute Application Activities format.

Large Group Format:

- 1** Follow all the numbers for a 45- to 60-minute large group only format.



The Family Plan

Focus Passage: Genesis 17:1-8,15-22;
18:1-15; 21:1-7

Key Bible Verse: Jeremiah 29:11

Life Application

I can trust God's plans for my family.

Session at a Glance

Introduction to Worship (6-8 minutes)

Greet the Children
Play "Pass the Box"

Worship (30 minutes/45 minutes)

Sing "We Are"
Call to Worship
Sing "God So Loved"
Introduce the Bible Story
Tell the Bible Story
Review the Bible Story
Sing "This Is Amazing Grace"
Sing "Written"/Receive Offering/Pray
Show "The Lads" Video
Learn the Key Bible Verse
Apply the Bible Story
Play "Pass the Bottle"
Pray

Application Activities (20 minutes)

Wrap-Up (10 minutes)

Introduction to Worship

- Invite actors to begin the drama.

1→Greet the Children

2→Play "Pass the Box"

Pull It Together

Small gift box with lid, paper, CD, CD player, scissors

- Print "Directions" (CD) and cut apart.
- Place the directions in the box. Replace the lid.
- Lead the children to sit in a circle on the floor.
- Say: "While the music plays, pass the box to the person sitting to your right. When the music stops, the person holding the box will remove the lid and select a card. She will read what is written on the card to the person on her left. This person will respond."
- Play as time allows.
- Conclude: "Each of us has family members. Did you know God has a plan for each of our family members? Let's discover God's plan for a 100-year-old man and a 90-year-old woman."

Worship

3 Sing "We Are" (DVD, 3 minutes)

4→Call to Worship (1 minute)

- Select a child to read aloud Psalm 90:1-2.

5→Sing "God So Loved" (DVD, 3 minutes)

6→Introduce the Bible Story (3 minutes)

Pull It Together

Worship Guides, pencils

- Distribute Worship Guides and pencils.
- Lead the children to complete "It's All Part of the Plan."
- Invite the children to share their answers with friends sitting near them.

7→Tell the Bible Story (8 minutes)

Pull It Together

Bible time costumes

- Enlist 2 senior adults to play Abraham and Sarah.
- Say: "Last week we learned about Abram and his relationship with his nephew Lot. Today we will learn more about God's plan for Abram and Sarai."

Abraham and Sarah

Based on Genesis 17:1-8, 15-22; 18:1-15; 21:1-7

Abraham: When I was 99 years old, God appeared to me with an important message. He told me that my name would no longer be Abram, but Abraham. God also told me I would be the father of many nations. That meant I would have many descendants. I was shocked! I actually fell to the ground before God. I wondered how I could be a father when I was almost 100 years old.

Sarah: And I was almost 90 years old!

Abraham: I asked God about His plan. God insisted that in about a year, Sarah and I would have a baby boy. God said we were to name him Isaac. God said this was part of a covenant He was making with me.

Sarah: Some time later as Abraham sat at the entrance to our tent, he saw three men standing nearby.

Abraham: Assuming the men were travelers, I ran to meet them. It was the custom of our day to treat guests very well. I bowed to the ground to show respect, then I invited them to sit down and rest. I brought the visitors water to wash their feet. I also had food prepared for the men.

Sarah: I listened quietly from inside the entrance of the tent. Then, I heard that I would have a baby in a year. I couldn't help myself. I laughed at the thought of having a baby. How could such an old woman like myself have a baby? Abraham was asked why I laughed. Abraham was told nothing is impossible for God, and I would have a baby.

Abraham: Everything happened just as the men said it would. The same time next year our son was born. We named him Isaac.

Sarah: "God has made me laugh and everyone who hears will laugh with me," I told Abraham.

Abraham: God had a plan for our family. And God has a plan for your family.

8→Review the Bible Story (5 minutes)

Pull It Together

Print "Abraham and Sarah" (CD) Teaching Picture.
Display.

- Invite the children to discuss how they would feel if they were Abraham or Sarah.
- Read aloud "What's in a Name?" on the Worship Guides. Discuss the significance of Isaac's name.
- Guide the children to complete "Who Am I?"

9 Sing "This Is Amazing Grace" (DVD, 3 minutes)

10→Sing "Written" (DVD, 3 minutes)/Receive the Offering/Pray

- Invite a child to pray.

11→Show "The Lads," Video (DVD, 7 minutes)

- State: "Let's rewatch this video and consider the plans God had for the Lads band."
- Revisit the video.
- Ask: "How would you have felt if your big chance fell through? Would you see that a part of God's plan or would you only focus on yourself?"
- State: "Even though their big gig was just cancelled, Steve took that opportunity to share with Elliot how God's plans are bigger than ours."
- Ask: "In the middle of disappointments, do you take the time to pray and thank God?"
- State: "God wants us to turn to Him in the good times as well as in the bad times. Even though the Lads' 'gig of a lifetime' was cancelled, God gave them an even bigger opportunity. An opportunity especially designed for them."
- Pray, asking God to reveal His plan to each child and for the children to stay open to His plan instead of focusing on themselves.

12→Learn the Key Bible Verse (3 minutes)

Pull It Together

Empty baby bottle, poster board, marker

- Create a poster of Jeremiah 29:11.
- Guide the girls and boys to locate Jeremiah 29:11 in their Bibles.
- Select a volunteer to read aloud the verse.
- Discuss the meaning of the verse. Be prepared to define difficult words.
- Lead the kids to form a circle.

- Say: "Let's make the verse more personal. Let's pass the baby bottle around the circle as we say the words. Each time a word is said, pass the bottle to the person on your right. When we come to the word you the person holding the bottle will insert his name. He will then continue passing the bottle."
- Repeat the process several times.
- Ask: "For whom does God have a plan? God has a plan for each of us as well as our family members."

13→Apply the Bible Story (3 minutes)

- Ask: "How can we discover God's plan for our families?"
- Lead the children to complete "Follow the Plan" on their Worship Guides.
- Discuss how these methods can help families discover God's plan.
- Read aloud and discuss the life application statement.

14 Play "Pass the Bottle" Game (6 minutes)

Pull It Together

Empty baby bottle, scissors

- Print "Words" (CD). Cut apart and place in bottle.
- Guide the children to form a circle.
- Explain: "I will select one person to stand in the center of the circle. She will close her eyes while the rest of us pass the baby bottle around the circle. At some point the person in the center will begin to cry like a baby. When she says, 'I want my bottle,' the person with the bottle will remove a word from the bottle and tell us how the word relates to what we learned today."
- Continue: "The person will then replace the bottle lid, and change places with the person in the middle."
- Select a child to stand in the middle.
- Play as time allows.

15→Pray (2 minutes)

- Guide the children to silently pray for each of their family members by name.
- Close the prayer by praying for direction as the children learn to trust God's plans for their lives.

16→Transition to Application Activities or Wrap-Up

- Sing "Whoa!" during the transition. (DVD)

Wrap-Up

(Large Group Only Format)

17 Lead a Responsive Reading/ Pray (5 minutes)

Pull It Together

Key Bible verse poster from Step 12

- Explain: "A responsive reading is when one person or group reads a statement and another person or group responds. Let's continue our worship with a responsive reading. I'll read a statement, then you respond by reading the key Bible verse."
- Read aloud the statements listed below. Encourage the children to read aloud the key Bible verse at the end of each line.

The Family Plan

- God, You planned for family members to love and care for one another.
 - God, You planned for family members to encourage and respect one another.
 - God, help me trust You and follow Your plans.
 - God, forgive me when I disobey my parents.
 - God, help me know my parents want the best for me.
 - God, thank You for the family You gave me.
- Say: "God loves us so much He made a plan for our families. We can trust God's plan because He wants the best for us."
 - Lead the kids to pray for their families.

18 Sing "Ready or Not" (DVD, 3 minutes)

19 Dismiss the Children

Wrap-Up

(Application Activities Format)

17→Review Application Activities (5 minutes)

- Invite the children to share their Application Activity experiences.
 - Arts and Crafts—Family Photo Holders
 - Dramatic Play—Feet Puppets
 - Games—Family Ball
 - Exploration and Discovery—Family Coat of Arms

18→Review the Key Bible Verse/Pray (2 minutes)

Pull It Together

Key Bible verse poster from Step 12

- Say: "Jeremiah 29:11 tells us God has a plan for us. Let's read the verse together."
- Read aloud the verse.
- Say: "God loves us so much He made a plan for our families. We can trust God's plan because He wants the best for us."
- Lead the kids to pray for their families.

19→Sing "Ready or Not" (DVD, 3 minutes)

20→Dismiss the Children

Application Activities

Select from the following choices. Each choice is designed for 20 minutes of small group time.

Pull It Together

Model Magic®, cookie cutters, rolling pins, paperclips

- Separate the Model Magic into 3-inch balls (1 per child).
- Create a sample photo holder.

Teacher Tips

- Guide the children to insert the paperclips with the open end up to hold the pictures.
- Remain sensitive to the family lives of the children.
- Use quick drying, non-cracking modeling clay instead of Model Magic.

Worship Through Arts and Crafts

Family Photo Holders

- Ask: "Does anyone remember the words of Jeremiah 29:11? Why do you think God has plans for us and our families? How can we know and follow God's plans? What were God's plans for Abraham and his family? What happened because Abraham and Sarah followed God's plans?"
- Say: "Family is part of God's plan. God wants our parents to love and care for us. Let's create photo holders to display family pictures."
- Distribute 3-inch balls of clay and paperclips.
- Guide the children to form the clay into square shapes.
- Say: "Now, insert the paperclips into the top or sides of the squares. You can use these to display pictures of your family."
- Place additional clay, cookie cutters, and rolling pins on the table.
- Explain: "Let's use clay to add decorative features to our photo holders."
- Talk about God's plans for your family and how you follow God's plans.
- Invite the children to talk about their families.
- Conclude: "Place your photo holder in your room and allow it to dry. When it dries, you can insert pictures of your family in the paperclips as reminders to pray for each family member."
- Guide the children to pray for their family members.

Pull It Together

Washable markers, baby wipes, towel, scissors

- Print "Situations" (CD) and cut apart.

Teacher Tips

- Allow the children to use the "Foot Pattern" (CD) instead of their own feet. Cut out and attach the feet to craft sticks.
- Take pictures of the children decorating their feet and of the puppet show.
- Encourage the children to clean their feet after the skits.

Worship Through Dramatic Play

Feet Puppets

- Ask: "Does anyone remember the words of Jeremiah 29:11? Why do you think God has plans for us and our families? How can we know and follow God's plans? What were God's plans for Abraham and his family? What happened because Abraham and Sarah followed God's plans?"
- Say: "Family is part of God's plan. God wants us to love and care for our families. Let's create puppet shows to show how we can do this."
- Guide the children to remove their shoes and socks.
- Direct the children to form groups of three to four people. Provide each group with a situation card.
- Say: "We will use the bottoms of our feet as our puppets. You can use the markers to create faces and outfits for your feet puppets to dramatize your situation."
- Provide assistance as needed.
- Invite the groups to hold a towel just behind their feet as a curtain while they perform their dramas.
- Challenge the children to always be thankful to God for the ways He shows love and concern for their families.
- Lead the children to pray. Thank God for His plans for families.

Pull It Together

6 foam balls, 2 laundry baskets (or buckets), masking tape

- Clear a playing area.
- Use masking tape to designate the playing area.
- Place the baskets at opposite ends of the playing area.

Teacher Tips

- Ensure each child has an opportunity to play.
- Assign family roles to the children. Create specific tasks for each family member to perform.
- Add baskets and balls for any additional family units.

Worship Through Games

Family Ball

- Ask: "Does anyone remember the words of Jeremiah 29:11? Why do you think God has plans for us and our families? How can we know and follow God's plans? What were God's plans for Abraham and his family? What happened because Abraham and Sarah followed God's plans?"
- Say: "God wants us to love and care for our families. Let's play a game where we must work together with 'family members.'"
- Guide the children to form two groups.
- Say: "Your group is a family and the playing area is your neighborhood. You must work together to toss three balls into the other family's basket. At the same time, you must try to stop balls from being tossed into your basket."
- Assign each "family unit" a basket.
- Place the foam balls in the center of the playing area.
- Say: "You may travel anywhere in the 'neighborhood,' but each family member must work together. Once a ball is in a basket, the ball must remain in the basket until I tell you to remove it. The first team to get three balls in the other family's basket is the winner."
- Play the game.
- Ask: "How did your family make plans to score a basket? How did you plan to protect your basket? Why do you think God has plans for our families? How can we discover and follow God's plans?"
- Guide the children to form a circle and state aloud each of their immediate family members' names as you pray aloud.

Pull It Together

11-by-17-inch paper, scissors, pencils, markers

- Print "Shield" (CD).
Cut shield shapes from the paper (1 per child).
- Print "Coat of Arms" (CD).

Teacher Tip

Search the Internet for sample coat of arms to display.

Worship Through Exploration and Discovery

Create Family Coat of Arms

- Ask: "Does anyone remember the words of Jeremiah 29:11? Why do you think God has plans for us and our families? How can we know and follow God's plans? What were God's plans for Abraham and his family? What happened because Abraham and Sarah followed God's plans?"
- Explain: "A coat of arms is a design that belongs to a specific person, family, or group of people. (Display "Coat of Arms.") The designs are usually in the shape of a shield. There are drawings on the shield that tell about the person, family, or group. Let's each create a coat of arms for our family."
- Distribute the shield shapes and markers.
- Guide the children to draw items which depict their families.
- Invite the children to show and describe their coat of arms.
- Conclude: "God has a plan for each of our families. He loves us and wants the best for us. Let's ask God to help us be willing to always follow His plans."
- Guide the children to form a circle and state aloud each of their immediate family members' names as you pray aloud.



Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 17:1-8, 15-22; 18:1-15; 21:1-7)
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Bonus Session
Gregg Thorkelson
OK to copy

The Family Plan

Genesis 17:1-8, 15-22;
18:1-15; 21:1-7

who Am I?

Read each statement and decide who is speaking. Draw a line to the person speaking.



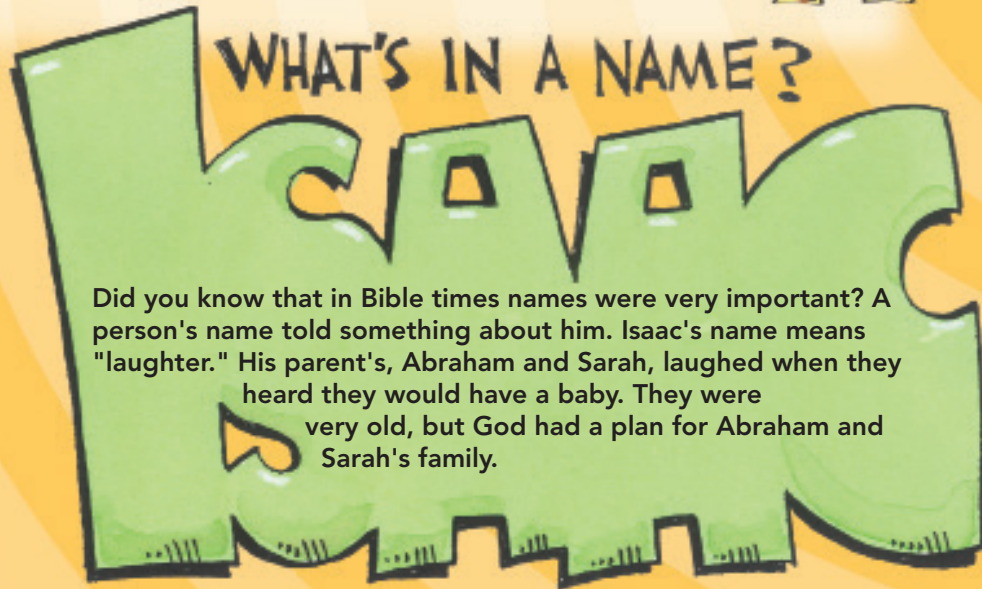
I invited some travelers to sit and rest at my tent while I prepared them food.

I named the baby Isaac because that is what God told me to do.

God promised me I would be the father of a great nation, but I didn't know how that would happen since I didn't have any children.

I was 90 when my baby was born.

I laughed when I heard one of our visitors say that I would have a baby.



Did you know that in Bible times names were very important? A person's name told something about him. Isaac's name means "laughter." His parent's, Abraham and Sarah, laughed when they heard they would have a baby. They were very old, but God had a plan for Abraham and Sarah's family.

Jeremiah 29:11

It's All Part of the Plan

Fill in the information. Draw a picture of yourself.

Name: _____

Name of Parent(s) or Guardian: _____

Where I live: _____

Number of people in my family: _____

Things I like doing with my family: _____



So, how can you find out if your family is following God's plan? Here are some things you can do.
Cross out every other letter on the lines.

~~t~~gso ltxo fcbhjuprycah

~~m~~rseqaod ktdhae wbsigbhlue

~~z~~persaoy

~~w~~lkidsvtyeqn utso
lcvhbraifsrmtlacn
olwesardjeurls

I can trust God's plans for my family.

The Family Plan

Genesis 17:1-8,15-22; 18:1-15; 21:1-7

Who Am I?

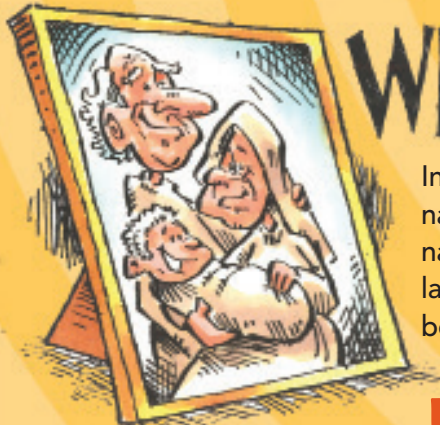
Match each statement to the person it describes.



I laughed when I was told I would have a baby.

God told me I would be the father of a great nation.

God told me to name the baby Isaac and I obeyed.



What's in a Name?

In Bible times names were very important. A name told something about a person. Isaac's name means "laughter." His mother, Sarah, laughed when she heard she would have a baby because she and Abraham were very old.

Jeremiah 29:11

It's All Part of the Plan

Fill in the information. Draw a picture of yourself.



Name: _____

Name of Parent(s) or Guardian: _____

Where I live: _____

Number of people in my family: _____

Things I like doing with my family: _____

Did you know God has a plan for your family?

Follow the Plan!

There are several things you can do to discover God's plan for your family. Here are three. To discover the answers, cross out every other letter on each line.

~~x~~g s o l t x o f c b h j u p r y c a h

~~x~~r s e q a o d k t d h a e w b s i g b h l u e

~~x~~p e r s a o y

I can trust God's plans for my family.

Tell about
something fun
your family likes
to do together.

Name something
you love about
your family.

If you could
change something
about your family,
what would it be?

What is your family's
favorite food?

Tell about your
favorite family
vacation.

Name three of your
family members.

100 years old

90 years old

Abraham

Sarah

Isaac

Three travelers

Laughed

I can trust
God's plans
for my family.

Jeremiah 29:11

God

Situation 1: The Beach Trip

Daniel is excited about his summer vacation. For the first time in his life, Daniel is going to the ocean. He has heard about the ocean, seen pictures of the ocean, and heard many of his friends talk about the ocean. Daniel cannot wait for the trip.

Three weeks before the trip, Daniel's dad is told his company has a major project to complete and he cannot take the days off work for the vacation. Daniel's dad comes home to tell Daniel and his family.

Complete the story showing how Daniel and his family can trust God's plans for their family.

Situation 2: The Hospital

Adelina began taking gymnastics when she was only 3 years old. She has competed in many gymnastics competitions and has won many meets. Recently, Adelina has had pain in her shoulder. Her doctor told her that she has a fracture in her shoulder bone. The good news is the fracture will heal, the bad news is that Adelina will not be able to take gymnastics for at least six months.

Complete the story showing how Adelina and her family can trust God's plans for their family.

Situation 3: The Unexpected Gift

Ching Li and his sister, Lia, had just completed their homework when the telephone rang. Ching Li answered the phone to discover it was his grandmother who lived in Hong Kong. Ching Li and Lia told their grandmother all about their school, their church, and their friends. Their grandmother told them she was sending them a special surprise.

The next week, a letter arrived addressed to Ching Li and his family. Ching Li's mother opened the letter and discovered there was a check with the letter. The letter said the check was to be used however the family felt the money was needed. Ching Li and Lia wanted to use the money to purchase a new television, videos, and electronic games; but their parents knew they needed the money for other things.

Complete the story showing how Ching Li and Lia's family can trust God's plans for their family.

Situation 4: The Unexpected Wedding

May's parents divorced when she was 4 years old. For four years she had lived with her mother, but visited her father every weekend. During her last visit to her father's, he introduced her to Valarie, a lady he said he had been dating for some time. May's father told her that he and Valarie were planning to get married.

Complete the story showing how May and her family can trust God's plans for their family.

