



SPRING 2019  
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**LEADER GUIDE INCLUDED**



**THE FAITH JOURNEY**

A faith that's never been tested can't be trusted.

**ONE OR ONE ANOTHER**

Love is more than enough.

**MOMENTS OF TRUTH**

Are you a fighter for truth and justice?

# BORN AGAIN

Have you ever wondered what the phrase “born again” means? The Bible records that Jesus used the phrase in a conversation with a man named Nicodemus. Nicodemus approached Jesus at night. He was curious about Jesus and the kingdom of God.

Jesus replied, “Truly I tell you, unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). Nicodemus responded, “How can anyone be born when he is old?” (John 3:4).

Nicodemus was a highly moral man who obeyed God’s law. He was a respected leader of the Jewish community. No doubt he was a fine man. Yet something was lacking. Like Nicodemus, many people today confuse religion with new birth in Christ. Phrases like “I pray regularly” or “I believe there is a God” often are confused with a real new-birth experience.

New birth begins with the Holy Spirit convicting a person that the person is a sinner. Because of sin, we are spiritually dead. For this reason, spiritual birth, as Jesus described it, is necessary. God loves us and gives us spiritual birth when we ask Him for it.

The Bible says all persons are sinners (Romans 3:23). Jesus died on a cross and was raised from the dead to save sinners. To be born again means that a person admits to God that he or she is a sinner, repents of sin, believes in or trusts Christ, and confesses faith in Christ as Savior and Lord. Jesus told Nicodemus that everyone who believes in (places faith in) Christ would not perish (John 3:16). Jesus is the only One who can save us (John 14:6).

To believe in Jesus is to be born again. Confess your sins and ask Jesus right now to save you. “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Acts 2:21). After you have received Jesus Christ into your life, share your decision with another person, and following Christ’s example, ask for baptism by immersion in your local church as a public expression of your faith (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:6).



# YOU

Connect. Grow. Serve. Go!

## Staying Fit ... Spiritually

We talk a lot about the importance of staying physically fit, but what about the health of your spirit? **Connect, Grow, Serve, Go** is a call to evaluate your present spiritual condition and discover ways to improve your spiritual health. Packed into each biblical concept—**Connect, Grow, Serve, Go**—is a simple way you can move forward, not remain stagnant. Best of all, these tools will stand the test of time—no “fad” diets here. They will help you become spiritually healthy, and stay that way.



WITH AN OPEN HEART  
*MARK 12:29-31*



IN BODY, MIND, & SPIRIT  
*ROMANS 12:2*



WITH WILLING HANDS  
*1 PETER 4:10-11*



WITH READY FEET  
*MATTHEW 28:19-20*

**Connect** urges you to worship, pray, fellowship, and relate to others in positive relationships at work, at home, and in other settings. Spiritual fitness results when you connect with God, with others, and with your church family.

**Grow** refers to learning and understanding more about God and His expectations of His people, which comes through Bible study. You grow by applying that knowledge to your everyday living.

**Serve** describes the work you do inside your church. Your church is full of ministry and service opportunities. You serve by using your spiritual gifts, skills, and passions to glorify God. All of us must work together for the church to function as God intended.

**Go** moves you outside the church and into the community and the world. Evangelism and missions are ways to go into your community and the world in the name of Jesus Christ. It might be uncomfortable at first, but you will experience first-hand the difference Christ can make through you.

Connect, Grow, Serve, Go must impact YOU, the individual, before it can permeate your circle of friends, your Bible study group, and then the church as a whole. But balance is the key! We must be actively participating in all four areas if we want to be spiritually healthy. All Go and no Connect with God or other believers results in powerless activity and wears you out. A steady diet of Grow without the action of Serve or Go leads to unhealthy spiritual obesity and laziness. We need a balanced spiritual diet to remain fit and able to serve God in the ways He has gifted us.

The **YOU** lessons will help you Connect , Grow , Serve , and Go . Look for these icons throughout this issue. They will help you check and maintain your spiritual health.

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# A WORD FROM THE GENERAL EDITOR **MARK CROSTON**

The late Robin Williams said, “Spring is nature’s way of saying, ‘Let’s party!’” The days get longer, the breezes warmer, and the flowers brighter. No wonder spring is my favorite time of the year!



Some people think spring is all about sunshine. Remember, it takes April showers to bring May flowers. In life joy and pain are like sunshine and rain. Every day is not good, every moment not sunny, every experience not wonderful, every challenge not earned, but after every winter comes spring. After the rain come the flowers.

How are you approaching life with all its twists and turns? I am so thankful that God included an encouraging life view in Psalm 118:24: “This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

This spring we will be looking at three things that can help give us strength in our times of struggle—guided by faith, standing on truth, and growing in our responsibility to one another.

Please plan to join me at our Black Church Leadership and Family Conference, July 22–29, 2019, in Ridgecrest, North Carolina. Each year we plan something new for every member of the family to keep it fresh and to make it better every time. This is the place to bring your church leaders and their families to be retooled, refocused, and refreshed. Get all the details at [LifeWay.com/BlackChurchLife](http://LifeWay.com/BlackChurchLife).

Now grab your Bible and allow God to speak through YOU!

Be blessed!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark". The signature is stylized with a large loop at the end.

Dr. Mark A. Croston Sr.  
YOU General Editor  
National Director of Black Church Partnerships  
[www.lifeway.com/BlackChurchLife](http://www.lifeway.com/BlackChurchLife)



# A WORD FROM THE EDITOR...



As our team put the finishing touches on this Spring 2019 quarterly, my long-overdue mini-family reunion wrapped up here in Atlanta, Georgia. Surprisingly, the weather was actually “fall-like” for October. We gathered from near and far to commemorate the earthly birthday of Virginia Lane Frazier, loving wife, mother of eight, grandma, US Army veteran, accountant, Cub Scout den mother, church musician, and most importantly, a child of God. The weekend was filled with a host of events, entertainment, fabulous food, fun, and fellowship. The trips down memory lane were too numerous to count. The sharing of old photos (did I really look like that at age ten?) and family stories elicited both heartfelt laughter and an overflow of tears.

All the while, we were reminded of valuable life lessons instilled in each of us by the matriarch of our family. That’s all the more reason why this quarter’s lessons on faith, responsible living for one another, and standing for truth continue to resonate within me.

You see, growing up our mom not only taught us about the importance of faith, she also modeled it, day in and day out—no matter how often her faith was tested. She just kept it moving. She also taught us that everything we say and do not only reflects our character, but also impacts and reflects on those we hold dear. I think it went something like, “No daughter of mine...” and “Did you really...?”

The ability to speak and stand for truth was most important to my mom over the years. I hope it remains important to all of my family members today.

It is my heartfelt prayer that this quarter’s lessons will encourage and equip you to move forward by faith, to love one another without “sweatin’ the small stuff,” and to always stand for truth.

Peace and blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beverly". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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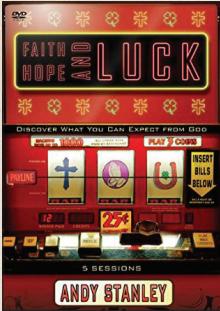
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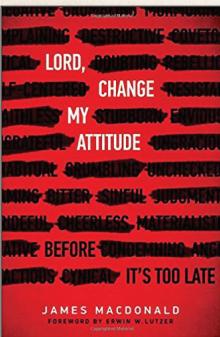
# SUGGESTED DISCIPLE-MAKING RESOURCES

Here's a list of resources you can use to deepen your understanding of the units of study this quarter. These resources complement the lessons for this quarter and can be used for small group study, midweek study, or personal Bible study.



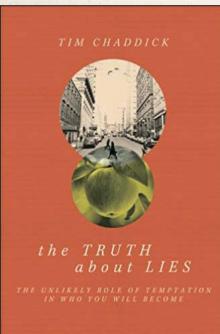
## HOPE, FAITH AND LUCK (FOR UNIT 1)

*Hope, Faith and Luck* by Andy Stanley is a five-session Bible study that unpacks the power of faith and the need for maintaining your confidence in Jesus Christ amid the ups and downs of daily life. Faith soars when God answers our prayers. But when He doesn't come through, our confidence often wanes. This study will transform your thinking about faith. As you listen or watch, you will discover the difference between faith and hope. You will be presented with a definition of faith that will shed new light on both the Old and New Testaments.



## LORD, CHANGE MY ATTITUDE (FOR UNIT 2)

What does God think about attitudes? *Lord, Change My Attitude* by James MacDonald is an eleven-session Bible study that uses examples from the Israelites' journey out of Egypt to show that attitudes can affect whether someone stays in the wilderness or enjoys the blessings of the promised land. Learn how you can put off attitudes God hates and put on those He honors: from complaining to thankfulness, from coveting to contentment, from criticizing to love, from doubting to faith, and from rebellion to submission.



## TRUTH AND LIES (FOR UNIT 3)

*Truth and Lies* by Tim Chaddick is a six-session Bible study that reveals how the enemy works, how to identify the accuser's schemes, and what Jesus teaches us through His temptations. It teaches group members how to combat temptation with truth, helps group members see how God works through temptation, and helps them understand the significance of choosing truth when confronted with temptation. Group members will learn how to navigate the specific temptations of religiosity, lies of success, and false identity while seeing how Jesus responded to specific temptations and what it teaches us.

Visit [www.lifeway.com](http://www.lifeway.com) or call 1-800-458-2772 for more information or to purchase any of these products.

# REGIONAL

## OUTLINE DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE



The Exciting Central Tampa Baptist Church  
Tampa, Florida

We were honored to have the Exciting Central Tampa Baptist Church (ECTBC) host the three-day YOU Spring 2019 lesson development conference, June 19–21, 2018. Pastor Lennox Zamore and Sister Anita Dixon (executive assistant) coordinated the conference. Central Tampa is a vibrant, multicultural, multiethnic ministry whose vision is to evangelize the community and beyond with the gospel of Jesus Christ. The membership believes God convicts hearts and changes lives while using the entire body of Christ to accomplish His work.

The dynamic team of pastors, ministers of Christian education, student ministry leaders, and others including Dr. Mark Croston (YOU general editor); Brenda Croston (women's ministry, Mt. Gilead Baptist Church, Nashville, Tennessee); Lennox Zamore (senior pastor, ECTBC); Michelle Zamore (first lady and women's ministry, ECTBC); Ralph Alderman (family life minister, ECTBC); Elaine Alderman (preschool coordinator, ECTBC); Andrea Alderman (young adult ministry, ECTBC); Sabrina Larry (children's Bible fellowship teacher, ECTBC); Henry McGriff (adult Bible fellowship teacher, ECTBC); Dareck DeShields (adult Bible fellowship coordinator, ECTBC); Joseph Germain, (senior pastor, Tampa); Clarence M. Nathan (senior pastor, New Victory Baptist Church, Tampa); Jeffrey Singletary (regional catalyst, Florida Baptist Convention); and Bobby Patton (catalyst, Tampa Bay Baptist Association). Beverly Sonnier (YOU content editor) served as the conference facilitator. It is our continued prayer that the team's collective input reflected throughout this quarterly will assist and impact churches in their mission of making disciples.



# Unit 1

## The Faith Journey



## A Bible Study on Faith

I've always been directionally challenged. My instinct to go one way definitely means to turn the opposite. Recognizing my limitations, I bought a GPS system to help me out. I even gave the system a name ("Rosy"). I realized I would be talking to her frequently as we traveled. But I soon noted a major flaw. My initial programming would only reveal part of the route. That was helpful, but I wanted to know all the turns to get to my destination. I eventually learned to program Rosy to show me the entire journey, to provide a mile-by-mile list of directions to my destination. However, I'll never forget those early journeys where I moved forward based on one direction at a time. Those experiences taught

me that when we move forward by faith, we trust God to lead us, one step at a time.

For the next five weeks, we will focus on our faith journey. We will ponder these questions:

- Where will faith lead me?
- In my doubt, will God be faithful?
- Whose voice are you listening to?
- Why would God test my faith?
- Can God use an imperfect person with imperfect faith?

Are you ready to begin this journey of learning about faith? I'm glad we're traveling together!

# Move Forward by Faith

**Background Passage:** Genesis 11:27–12:9

**Lesson Passage:** Genesis 12:1-9

**The Question:** Where will faith lead me?

**The Point:** Faith is a journey, not a destination.

## LESSON PASSAGE

### GENESIS 12:1-9

<sup>1</sup> \*The LORD said to **a** Abram:

Go out from **b** your land,  
your relatives,  
and your father's house  
to the land that \*I will show you.

<sup>2</sup> I will make you into a great nation,  
I will **c** bless you,  
I will make your name great,  
and you will be a blessing.

<sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you,  
I will curse anyone who treats you with contempt,  
and all the peoples on earth  
will be blessed through you.

<sup>4</sup> So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and **d** Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. <sup>5</sup> He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated, and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, <sup>6</sup> Abram passed through the land to the site of Shechem, at the **e** oak of Moreh. (At that time the Canaanites were in the land.) <sup>7</sup> The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the Lord who had appeared to him. <sup>8</sup> From there he moved on to the hill country east of \*Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. He built an altar to the LORD there, and he called on the name of the LORD. <sup>9</sup> Then Abram journeyed by stages to the Negev.

## KEY WORDS

- a** **Abram:** Name means "father is exalted"; later changed to Abraham, meaning "father of a multitude." Prime example of faith.
- b** **Your land:** Abram's home and where his family lived and worshiped a number of gods.
- c** **Bless:** Provide a person with power for success, prosperity, and productiveness.
- d** **Lot:** Abram's nephew who traveled with him, the son of Abram's deceased brother.
- e** **Oak of Moreh:** A sacred spot in Canaan, perhaps where the Canaanites worshiped; where God promised Abram He would give this land to his descendants.

For more information about key words (\*), visit the glossary on pages 160–161.

## MEMORY VERSE

### Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen.

# Move Forward by Faith

Genesis 12:1-9



Where will faith lead me?



## UNIT 1 LESSON 1

My parents had entirely different approaches to taking trips. Mom developed detailed plans that included rest stop locations. Dad was a different story. We'd ask him before leaving, "Where are we going?" and waited for his response: "You'll know when we get there." Because we trusted Dad completely, it didn't matter that we didn't know where we were going. We knew he knew. Abram and his family set out on a journey not knowing where they were going, but their heavenly Father knew. They moved forward by faith.

## Focal Passage Outline

### A DIVINE INVITATION

(Gen. 12:1-3)

### AN OBEDIENT RESPONSE

(Gen. 12:4-6)

### A GENERATIONAL BLESSING

(Gen. 12:7-9)

## A DIVINE INVITATION GENESIS 12:1-3

Think about the last invitation you received. Maybe you were asked to dinner or to a party. Or perhaps you were invited to take a trip with a friend.

**What was the invitation?** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Who extended it?** \_\_\_\_\_

Your relationship with the person extending the invitation no doubt influenced your perspective about the trip, especially if it involved a lot of unknowns. Today's Scripture records Abram's invitation from the Lord. That carries power! God spoke directly to **a Abram** (see Key Words, p. 11), calling him on the trip of a lifetime. According to Acts 7:2-4, Abram's initial call to this journey came when he was in Ur (Mesopotamia). This implies that the move of Abram's father (Terah) to Haran was initiated or at least confirmed by Abram. Abram's call was repeated while he was in Haran, as we read in Genesis 12:1-3.

God's call to Abram shows that a call *to* is a call *from*. Being called into the unknown often means leaving something familiar and comfortable so we may be obedient to God. Such a move becomes a journey of faith. (See Diggin' Deeper on p. 13 for more

insight into faith.) The spheres of influence Abram was commanded to leave behind ranged from the broad to the specific—his land, his relatives, and his father’s house (Gen. 12:1). Abram obeyed the Lord’s call and began the journey to Canaan, believing the Lord’s promises to him.

**Locate Genesis 12:1-3. Circle each appearance of “I will” to locate God’s promises to Abram.**

God promised repeatedly that He would **☉** bless (see Key Words, p. 11) Abram and that Abram, in turn, would bless others. This pattern continues today. God blesses us, and we bless others. When we consider blessings, it’s important to realize that material blessing doesn’t always come to those who obey God. Regardless of how God chooses to bless our obedience, He expects us to share His blessings—what He has given us—with others.

**In what ways has God blessed you? How are you blessing others? What new ways of blessing others can you start this week?**

## AN OBEDIENT RESPONSE GENESIS 12:4-6

“So Abram went” (Gen. 12:4)—only three words, but they could be followed by a big question mark. Went where? Abram had no idea where he was going. What’s more, he was seventy-five years old when he packed a lifetime of possessions and gathered his family and animals to follow God’s call. (See Did You Know? on p. 14 to learn more about Abram’s journey, as well as the *Biblical Illustrator* article “Abram’s Travels.” Log on to [www.lifeway.com/YOU](http://www.lifeway.com/YOU). Click on the DOWNLOADABLES tab for additional study helps for Unit 1, Lesson 1.)

**When you prepare to move, what do you need to know to increase your comfort level? How would you feel about moving if you didn’t know the details ahead of time?**

While Abram made a physical journey, it was much more than that. It was a journey of faith. Faith moves us to do great things! Abram’s example shows us that age doesn’t matter and you don’t have to be perfect. What does matter? An active, faith-based response.



## Diggin’ Deeper



## Faith

Abram’s experience shows that God makes faith possible by providing for humans verbal information about Himself and His plans. Just as we know others by their words and actions, so God has chosen to become knowable through His words and actions. Throughout the Bible, faith is the trustful human response to God’s revelation of Himself. God initiates the relationship between Himself and human beings. In the New Testament the word translated “faith” conveys the idea of trust, a firm internal conviction regarding the truthfulness of someone or some claim.

**How do these verses help you understand faith?**

- Habakkuk 2:4
- 2 Corinthians 5:7
- Colossians 2:6-7

# Move Forward by Faith

Genesis 12:1-9



## Did you know?

At age seventy-five, Abram was called to leave what he saw and knew and journey toward the unknown. Let's take a look at some of his travel logistics:

- Abram and his family moved from one location to another, often to provide adequate food for the flocks and herds.
- They lived in tents they had to take down and move from one place to another.
- When Abram and those with him moved into an area, they often displaced others. This could create conflict.
- They faced dangers along the way. Wild animals could attack the livestock as well as the people.

Faith receives what we cannot see, such as the where and how for Abram's journey.

God provided instructions, and Abram obeyed as described in Genesis 12:4-9. At each stop along the way, Abram took action to focus on God. He responded to the Lord's speaking to Him by building altars to worship God. While on a journey of great uncertainty, Abram had the greatest certainty: his faith in God would lead, guide, and protect him. Abram's obedience brought a blessing, as we will see in the following verses.

You and I are on a faith journey. We might not be moving our family and livestock (for me, that would be my Chihuahua, Riley) to an unknown destination. But we are moving forward by faith, trusting God to lead us just as He did Abram. And like Abram, we can focus on and worship the Lord in every stage of our own faith journeys.

**Here are some ideas for focusing on God while you're on the road. Check those you will consider. Add any ideas of your own.**

\_\_\_ Having a regular quiet time

\_\_\_ Listening to Christian music while driving or exercising

\_\_\_ Playing or singing a praise song or hymn

\_\_\_ Sharing with a fellow traveler how God has and is directing you

\_\_\_ Making a deliberate effort to pause and focus on God

Other? \_\_\_\_\_

## A GENERATIONAL BLESSING

### GENESIS 12:7-9

When Abram came to Canaan, the Canaanites were there (v. 6). The Canaanites assumed people migrating from one area to another would take over the gods and religion of the new area in which they settled. At least they would incorporate the new religion into their own old religious structure. When it came to Abram, they assumed wrong!

**In what ways do people today mix God's standards with the world's culture? How can believers guard against this?**

Note what happened when Abram reached Canaan: God appeared (v. 7). Abram responded to the Lord's appearance by building an

## Live It!

Suppose you came to an unfamiliar road and asked a bystander, “Where will this road lead me?” You’d probably expect a somewhat concrete answer about a specific location. In today’s study we’ve considered a similar question, “Where will faith lead me?” From Abram’s example, we’ve seen that faith is a journey, not a destination.

This week, memorize Hebrews 11:1 (see the Memory Card on p. 99). Also, read about Abram’s and Sarah’s faith journey in Hebrews 11:8-12. Pray for your traveling partners—those also on a faith journey. Pray for the generations that will come after you.

altar to worship Him. He later built another altar for worship near \* Bethel (see Key Words Glossary, pp. 160–161) and Ai (12:8). Such was the impact of Abram’s encounter with God that he continued to build altars wherever he camped. Abram’s experience shows that God becomes more real as we walk by faith. Why is that? When we walk by faith, we trust God to guide us. When we walk by sight or on our own power, we tend to go on our own. Walking by faith means trusting God when we encounter challenges like modern-day Canaanites.

**What “Canaanites” have you encountered? How did you respond? What people groups or forces oppose today’s believers?**

When God appeared to Abram, He gave Abram a generational blessing. God promises a generational blessing to you as well, or a legacy for your offspring. Everything God does for and through you may not be about you. God is looking far, far ahead toward those who will come after you.

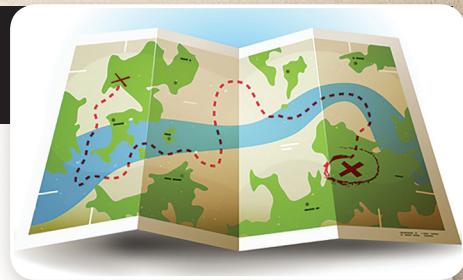
**Does every step of faith bring a generational blessing? Why or why not? Pause and thank God for His generational blessing—that His work can continue through future generations.**

## SO WHAT? How does this apply to me?

Abram’s faith journey reminds us that God works on His timetable and does not always reveal details. When Abram started, he didn’t have all the answers on the front end. Like Abram, we can be assured that God knows where we’re going and will be with us every step of the way. Whether we’re beginning our faith journey or we’ve been traveling a long time, Abram’s example encourages us to keep following God.

- **Which best describes your faith journey: starting out, waiting for direction, encountering opposition, stopping to worship and praise God? How does this lesson help you understand all of those as parts of your journey?**

- ***If you could ask Abram a question about his faith journey, what would it be? What traveling advice do you suppose he would give?***
- ***At what point in your faith journey have you most relied on God? What did you learn from that experience? Whom do you know who needs to hear your testimony?***



## 1. Disrupting Your Comfort Zone

*Genesis 12:1-2*

It's amazing how God can use the two-letter word "go" to change the course of our lives. He commanded Abram to "go," and he did. But we can allow this word to cause so much fear that we become paralyzed and stagnate. The most precious people around us may not always understand God's instructions for our life, but our obedience could bless both them and us in the future. Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone for something even better.

***Dear God, help me be obedient regardless of my fears so that I can move forward in Your plan for me.***

## 2. Ageless Obedience

*Genesis 12:4*

Abram was seventy-five years old when he stepped out on faith in obedience to God. Obedience is ageless; it's for the young, old, and in between. Abram didn't use his age as a cop-out to be disobedient to God. Purpose in your heart and mind to do as Abram did, not looking at your current circumstances for a reason to disobey God.

***Sovereign Lord, You know my circumstances. Give me strength to trust and obey You in spite of them.***

# DAILY READINGS

## 3. Step by Step

*Genesis 12:9*

Abram journeyed in stages to Negev. We often desire instant success. But in reality, our success comes in the form of the daily steps of obedience we take that move us toward what God has in store for us. Don't allow discouragement or impatience to get the best of you. Take one forward step at a time.

***Dear Lord, thank You for keeping me consistently faithful in my daily obedience to You.***

## 4. My Shield

*Genesis 15:1*

There's no shortage of opposition when walking out God's purpose for our life. That's why He'd rather be our Shield against such opposition. The most advanced technologies on earth do not compare to the everlasting protection God gives our soul when we trust in Him. Allowing Him to fight our battles comes with the reward of victory.

***Heavenly Father, my Shield, I praise You for Your protection and presence in my life!***

# HOW TO TEACH



## Step 1: Read the Lesson and study the Leader Commentary.

### Move Forward by Faith Genesis 12:1-3



Where will faith lead me?



My parents had entirely different approaches to taking trips. Mom developed detailed plans that included rest stops, locations. Dad was a different story. We'd ask him before leaving, "Where are we going?" and waited for his response. "You'll know when we get there. Because we trusted Dad completely, it didn't matter that we didn't know where we were going. He knew he knew Abram and his family got out on a journey not knowing where they were going, but their heavenly Father knew. They moved forward by faith.

#### Focal Passage Outline

##### A DIVINE INVITATION GENESIS 12:1-3

##### AN OBDIENT RESPONSE GENESIS 12:4-6

##### A GENERATIONAL BLESSING GENESIS 12:7-9

#### A DIVINE INVITATION GENESIS 12:1-3

Think about the last invitation you received. Maybe you were asked to dinner or to a party. Or perhaps you were invited to take a trip with a friend.

**What was the invitation? Who extended it?**

Your relationship with the person extending the invitation no doubt influenced your perspective about the trip, especially if it involved a lot of unknowns. Today's Scripture records Abram's invitation from the Lord. That carries power! God spoke directly to Abram (see Key Words, p. 11), calling him on the trip of a lifetime. According to Acts 7:2-4, Abram's initial call to this journey came when he was in Ur (Mesopotamia). This implies that the move of Abram's father (Terah) to Haran was initiated at or after confirmed by Abram. Abram's call was repeated while he was in Haran, as we read in Genesis 12:1-3.

God's call to Abram shows that a call is a call. Being called into the unknown often means leaving something familiar and comfortable so we may be obedient to God. Such a move becomes a journey of faith. (See Digger' Deeper on p. 13 for more

insight into faith). The spheres of influence Abram was commanded to leave behind ranged from the broad to the specific—his land, his relatives, and his father's house (Gen. 12:1). Abram obeyed the Lord's call and began the journey to Canaan, believing the Lord's promises to him.

Locate Genesis 12:1-3. Circle each appearance of "I will" to locate God's promises to Abram.

God promised repeatedly that He would bless (see Key Words, p. 11) Abram and that Abram, in turn, would bless others. This pattern continues today. God blesses us, and we bless others. When we consider blessings, it's important to realize that material blessing doesn't always come to those who obey God. Regardless of how God chooses to bless our obedience, He expects us to share His blessings—what He has given us—with others.

**In what ways has God blessed you? How are you blessing others? What new ways of blessing others can you start this week?**

#### AN OBDIENT RESPONSE GENESIS 12:4-6

"So Abram went" (Gen. 12:4)—only three words, but they could be followed by a big question mark. Went where? Abram had no idea where he was going. What's more, he was seventy-five years old when he packed a lifetime of possessions and gathered his family and animals to follow God's call. (See Did You Know? on p. 14 to learn more about Abram's journey, as well as the Biblical Illustrator article "Abram's Travels." Log on to [www.lifeway.com/YOU](http://www.lifeway.com/YOU) click on the DOWNLOADABLES tab for additional study helps for Unit 1, Lesson 1.)

**When you prepare to move, what do you need to know? To increase your comfort level? How would you feel about moving if you didn't know the details ahead of time?**

While Abram made a physical journey, it was much more than that. It was a journey of faith. Faith moves us to do great things. Abram's example shows us that age doesn't matter and you don't have to be perfect. What does matter? An active, faith-based response.

### Move Forward by Faith Genesis 12:1-3



#### Faith

Abram's experience shows that God makes faith possible by providing for humans verbal information about Himself and His plans. Just as we know others by their words and actions, so God has chosen to become knowable through His words and actions. Throughout the Bible, faith is the trustful human response to God's revelation of Himself. God initiates the relationship between Himself and human beings. In the New Testament the word translated "faith" conveys the idea of trust, a firm internal conviction regarding the truthfulness of someone or some claim.

**How do these verses help you understand faith?**

- Habakkuk 2:4
- 2 Corinthians 5:7
- Colossians 2:6-7

### BEFORE YOU TEACH FOR UNIT 1, LESSON 1 (pp. 11-15)

#### STEP 1 CONTACT YOUR TRAVEL COMPANIONS.

Send an electronic message or postcard to your group, inviting them to join you on a faith journey. Include in the message: Faith is a journey, not a destination. If possible, share a map of the areas mentioned in today's study (Ur, Haran, Canaan, Bethel, and the Negev) in an electronic message. Otherwise, prepare to show it during the session.

#### STEP 2 PREVIEW THE STUDY.

Read the unit introduction (p. 10). Scan all five lessons, focusing on the title, the Question, and the Point for each session. Familiarize yourself with Abram and Sarai (Abram and Sarah). For the lesson, review the Biblical Illustrator article "Abram's Travels" at [www.lifeway.com/YOU](http://www.lifeway.com/YOU). Click on the DOWNLOADABLES tab for additional study helps for Unit 1, Lesson 1.

#### STEP 3 FOCUS ON PROSPECTS.

Have new individuals or families moved to your neighborhood? Visited worship lately? Remind learners to regularly invite friends and neighbors to attend church with them. Be aware of opportunities to invite people you contact through work, civic, and school events. Encourage them to get on on the ground floor of this new study.

#### STEP 4 DEVELOP LEADERSHIP.

The chairs in your classroom are filled with emerging leaders. Pray for each of them and encourage them to serve as God's direct. From time to time, consider asking an adult to give a testimony or a mini-lecture about a certain concept during a lesson. Be continually alert for ways to involve others as you teach.

### LOOK BACK

Before you begin this new unit about faith, briefly review *YOU Winter 2018-19*, Unit 3, Lesson 4 (pp. 95-97) about the Holy Spirit. Include the Question and the Point ("I can do God's work with confidence because the Holy Spirit equips me.") Refer to the Live It! challenge (p. 97). Write invitations to share what they learned about their spiritual gifts, from talking with God and people they trust. Introduce the new unit (p. 10) and transition into today's lesson.

### YOU OBJECT LESSON

#### SUITCASE OR BACKPACK

Enter the room carrying the suitcase or backpack. Announce that you are going on a journey and need help packing for it. Lead the group to ask questions about the trip to help you pack. (Examples: Where are you going? How long will you be gone? What will you do while you are there? You need to know more questions will be "I don't know." Introduce Abram's faith journey. Emphasize that Abram moved forward by faith, focusing on the journey, not his destination. He didn't know the details, he trusted God to lead and guide. Emphasize that in faith journeys, God doesn't always reveal details. That's how we walk by faith. Close by praying. The next time you use a suitcase (or backpack), remember that faith is a journey, not a destination.

LEADER PAGES

### MOVE FORWARD BY FAITH (TEACHING PLAN) FOR UNIT 1, LESSON 1 (pp. 11-15)

#### INTRODUCTION

To introduce the lesson, group learners in teams of three or four. Give each team a sheet of paper with the name of a different city or country. Direct them to work together to plan to take a journey to that destination. Allow two to three minutes for the exercise. Write groups as working, walking around and listen to any questions that arise during their discussion.

After the time is up, invite a volunteer from each group to share travel plans. Discuss any questions that arise during their discussion.

Transition into the lesson by asking how their travel plans would have differed if they didn't know the destination—or if they were just told to pack for a trip. Read aloud Genesis 12:1. Say: In today's lesson, we will be tracing companions of Abram, as he moves forward by faith. Faith is a journey, not a destination.

#### DIG INTO THE TEXT

##### A DIVINE INVITATION GENESIS 12:1-3

- Read the first paragraph under the heading "A Divine Invitation" (p. 12) and invite volunteers to respond to the discussion questions following. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 12:1-3 aloud. Use the Key Word Log (pp. 160-161) to highlight the significance of God's extending the invitation.
- Summarize information in the Leader Commentary (p. 10) about Abram's family and Ur. Emphasize that the spheres of influence Abram was commanded to leave ranged from the broad to the specific: his birthplace, relatives, and father's house. Say: Faith advances what we see and know and takes us to the unknown. Direct attention to Digger' Deeper (p. 13) for more insight into faith.
- Explain that in response to Abram's obedience, God made promises to him in verses 2-3. Introduce each promise. Use information in the Leader Commentary (p. 10) to highlight the significance of each blessing. Be careful not to suggest that material blessing always comes to those who obey God.

##### AN OBDIENT RESPONSE GENESIS 12:4-6

- Say: The 14 that company rents trucks and trailers to people who want to move themselves. Explain that the company launched an advertising campaign in 1980 called "America's Moving Alternatives." Ask: What adventures have you had while moving? Say: Abram had a moving adventure when he responded obediently to God. Read Genesis 12:4-6 aloud. Share additional information related to Abram's move from the Biblical Illustrator article "Abram's Travels" (see page 10).

during the apparel program. Trucks were decorated with signs from across the United States. Lead the group to describe scenes that might have appeared on Abram's caravan based on the points in Did You Know? (p. 14).

Share additional information related to Abram's move from the Biblical Illustrator article "Abram's

LEADER PAGES | YOU 103

## Step 2: Prepare to teach an exciting lesson using the Before You Teach page for each lesson.

## Step 3: Use the Teaching Plan for each lesson to prepare and facilitate an in-depth discussion of the personal passage. Don't forget that you can cut out the Teaching Plan if you want to be on the same page as members of your group.

### LEADER COMMENTARY FOR UNIT 1, LESSON 1 (pp. 11-15)

#### Move Forward by Faith Lesson Passage Genesis 12:1-3

**The Question:** Where will faith lead me?  
**The Point:** Faith is a journey, not a destination.

This commentary is designed to help you think about the question, "Where will faith lead me?" and drive home the one truth: Faith is a journey, not a destination.

#### FOCUS ON THESE POINTS

##### A Divine Invitation (Gen. 12:1-3)

In chapter 12, the narrative of Genesis leaves the potential history of all humanity and focuses on the history of one specific nation—Israel. The nation's history began with a single individual: Abraham. As the account opens, he was called Abram. The name given to him by his father, Terah. Terah and Abram lived in Ur.

Like other families living in the cosmopolitan city of Ur, Abram's family seems to have worshipped a variety of deities. However, the Lord revealed Himself to Abram and called him to follow the Lord alone. Consequently, Abram, Terah and other family members moved north to the city of Haran (Acts 7:2). The original intent had been to move to Canaan, but for some reason they stopped in Haran.

Genesis 12 begins with a simple statement: "The Lord said to Abram." Despite its simplicity, the statement conveys profound truth. God was directing the event. The fact that God spoke indicates that the personal relationship between God and Abram was being dynamic. The time had come for Abram to move on to Canaan. His separation from family demonstrated the clear demands that God makes on His people. On this occasion the Lord did not create a destination or explain why Abram was to go. God simply said, "Go." In response to Abram's obedience, God made promises to him:

1. Abram would become a great nation (v. 2).
2. He would have a great nation (v. 2).
3. He would be given a land (v. 3).
4. He would be involved in a blessing (v. 2).

##### An Obedient Response (Gen. 12:4-6)

Abram obeyed the Lord's call and began the journey to Canaan. This obedience was not mere next-step obedience to God.

by his age. He already was seventy-five years old. He told his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, and the possessions they had accumulated, and the people he had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan. Abram passed through the land to the site of Shechem (SHEK-uh-m), at the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. The oak of Moreh probably was a Canaanite worship site. Abram showed a better way. Unfortunately, they did not accept his way.

A General Blessing (Gen. 12:7-9)

In Canaan, Abram responded to the Lord by building an altar to worship Him. The phrase "responded to Abram" (v. 7) indicates that Abram's worship was in response to a relational experience initiated by the Lord.

Abram later built another altar for worship near Bethel and on (12:8). Such was the impact of his encounter with God that he continued to build altars wherever he camped. From there he moved on to the hill country east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and on the east. There he built an altar to the Lord and worshipped Him. Abram worshipped the Lord exclusively. He refused to call on other gods.

Then Abram (renamed by stages to the Hebrew, Negev [NEH-geh]) was the first region of southern Canaan. At that time the Amalekites lived there. Abram's experience reinforces that worshipping God does for and through you may not be for you. His promises include a legacy for your offspring, as they did Abram's. The Lord's promise to give the land of Canaan to Abram's offspring is the single most repeated affirmation in the Torah. At least thirty-seven references are made to it in the books of Moses. God gave land not just to Abram but to his offspring. The Scripture does not say, "to offspring," meaning many people, but "to your offspring," meaning one person, with a child.

The link between Abram and Christ forms the foundation of the Jewish nation and its relationship to God.

Need more commentary? Visit [www.lifeway.com/YOU](http://www.lifeway.com/YOU).

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## Step 4: Visit [www.lifeway.com](http://www.lifeway.com) for more leader commentary, articles to enhance your understanding of the lesson passage, and a midweek plan that can be adapted for midweek or worship services.

# BEFORE YOU TEACH

FOR UNIT 1, LESSON 1 (pp. 11–15)

## STEP 1 CONTACT YOUR TRAVEL COMPANIONS.

Send an electronic message or postcard to your group, inviting them to join you on a faith journey. Include in the message: Faith is a journey, not a destination. If possible, share a map of the areas mentioned in today's study (Ur, Haran, Canaan, Bethel, and the Negev) in an electronic message. Otherwise, prepare to show it during the session.

## STEP 2 PREVIEW THE STUDY.

Read the unit introduction (p. 10). Scan all five lessons, focusing on the title, The Question, and The Point for each session. Familiarize yourself with Abram and Sarai (Abraham and Sarah). For this lesson, review the *Biblical Illustrator* article “Abram’s Travels” at [www.lifeway.com/YOU](http://www.lifeway.com/YOU). Click on the DOWNLOADABLES tab for additional study helps for Unit 1, Lesson 1.

## STEP 3 FOCUS ON PROSPECTS.

Have new individuals or families moved to your neighborhood? Visited worship lately? Remind learners to regularly invite friends and neighbors to attend church with them. Be aware of opportunities to invite people you contact through work, civic, and school events. Encourage them to get in on the ground floor of this new study.

## STEP 4 DEVELOP LEADERSHIP.

The chairs in your classroom are filled with emerging leaders. Pray for each of them and encourage them to serve as God directs. From time to time, consider asking an adult to give a testimony or a mini-lecture about a certain concept during a lesson. Be continually alert for ways to involve others as you teach.



## LOOK BACK

Before you begin this new unit about faith, briefly review *YOU* Winter 2018–19, Unit 3, Lesson 4 (pp. 93–97) about the Holy Spirit. Include The Question (“How does the Holy Spirit equip me for God’s work?”) and The Point (“I can do God’s work with confidence because the Holy Spirit equips me.”). Refer to the Live It! challenge (p. 97). Invite volunteers to share what they learned about their spiritual gifts from talking with God and people they trust. Introduce the new unit (p. 10) and transition into today’s lesson.

# YOU OBJECT LESSON



## SUITCASE OR BACKPACK

Enter the room carrying the suitcase or backpack. Announce that you are going on a journey and need help packing for it. Lead the group to ask questions about the trip to help you pack. (Examples: Where are you going? How long will you be gone? What will you do while you are there?) Your response to most questions will be “I don’t know.” Introduce Abram’s faith journey. Emphasize that Abram moved forward by faith, focusing on the journey, not his destination. He didn’t know the details; he trusted God to lead and guide. Emphasize that in faith journeys, God doesn’t always reveal details. That’s how we walk by faith. **Close by saying,** *The next time you see a suitcase (or backpack), remember that faith is a journey, not a destination.*

## INTRODUCTION

To introduce the lesson, group learners in teams of three or four. Give each team a sheet of paper with the name of a different city or country. Direct them to work together to plan to take a journey to that destination. Allow two to three minutes for the exercise. While groups are working, walk around and listen to any questions that arise during their discussion.

After the time is up, invite a volunteer from each group to share travel plans. Discuss any questions that arose as they planned (such as how long they would be gone, who would go with them).

Transition into the lesson by asking how their travel plans would have differed if they didn't know the destination—if they were just told to pack for a trip. **Read aloud Genesis 12:1.** **Say:** *In today's lesson, we will be travel companions of Abram, as he moves forward by faith. Faith is a journey, not a destination.*

## DIG INTO THE TEXT

### A DIVINE INVITATION GENESIS 12:1-3

- Read the first paragraph under the heading “A Divine Invitation” (p. 12) and invite volunteers to respond to the discussion questions following. **Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 12:1-3 aloud.** Use the Key Word **Lord** (pp. 160–161) to highlight the significance of God's extending the invitation.
- Summarize information in the Leader Commentary (p. 105) about Abram's family and Ur. Emphasize that the spheres of influence Abram was commanded to leave ranged from the broad to the specific (his land, relatives, and father's house). **Say:** *Faith abandons what we see and know and takes us to the unknown.* Direct attention to Diggin' Deeper (p. 13) for more insight into faith.
- Explain that in response to Abram's obedience, God made promises to him in verses 2-3. Introduce each promise. Use information in the Leader Commentary (p. 105) to highlight the significance of each blessing. Be careful not to suggest that material blessing always comes to those who obey God.

### AN OBEDIENT RESPONSE GENESIS 12:4-6

- **Say:** *The U-Haul company rents trucks and trailers to people who want to move themselves.* Explain that the company launched an advertising campaign in 1988 called “America's Moving Adventure.” **Ask:** *What adventures have you had while moving?* **Say:** *Abram had a moving adventure when he responded obediently to God.* **Read Genesis 12:4-6 aloud.** Then refer again to the U-Haul campaign. Note that during the popular program, trucks were decorated with scenes from across the United States. Lead the group to describe scenes that might have appeared on Abram's caravan based on the points in Did You Know? (p. 14).
- Share additional information related to Abram's move from the *Biblical Illustrator* article “Abram's

# MOVE FORWARD BY FAITH (TEACHING PLAN)

FOR UNIT 1, LESSON 1 (pp. 11–15)

Travels.” Log on to [www.lifeway.com/YOU](http://www.lifeway.com/YOU). Click on the DOWNLOADABLES tab for additional study helps for Unit 1, Lesson 1. Explain that while Abram made a physical journey, it was much more than that. It

was a journey of faith. **Discuss:** *How can we focus on God while on our faith journeys?* Lead the group to complete the activity under the heading “An Obedient Response” (p. 14) that begins “Here are.”

## GENERATIONAL BLESSING GENESIS 12:7-9

- Direct attention to the Canaanites (v. 6). Explain that the Canaanites assumed people migrating from one area to another would take over the gods and religion of the new area in which they settled. At least they would incorporate the new religion into their own old religious structure. **Discuss:** *In what ways do people today mix God’s standards with the world’s culture? How can believers guard against this?*
- **Read Genesis 12:7-9 aloud. Say:** *God gave land not just to Abraham but to his offspring.* Note that this is a generational blessing. **Discuss:** *Does every step of faith bring a generational blessing? Why or why not?* Lead the group to consider what is meant by a generational blessing (a legacy for your offspring).

## SO WHAT? HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO ME?

If Abram had posted a sign outside his tent, it might have read: “Moving Forward by Faith.” God called Abram to begin the journey, and God appeared to Abram along the way. Abram unquestionably knew he was following God’s leadership. His experience assures us that God is with us as we move forward by faith. Use these questions to apply truths from this lesson to your life:

- *If you erected a sign describing your faith journey outside your home, what would it say? Why?*
- *What “Canaanites” have you encountered? What people groups or forces oppose today’s believers? How should you respond?*
- *How can we incorporate principles from Abram’s faith journey into our journey?*
- *If you could ask Abram a question about his faith journey, what would it be? What traveling advice do you suppose he would give?*

## CLOSE THE SESSION

**Share these statistics:** *On average, people move eleven times in their lifetime. Three-quarters of those moves are done without professional moving companies. This lesson challenges believers to learn what it means to live out their faith as a journey rather than a destination. Say:* Today’s Scripture records Abram’s move of a lifetime. It was more than a move; it was a journey of faith. **Challenge learners to complete the “Live It!” assignment on page 15 during the week. Lead learners in memorizing the Memory Verse for this lesson, Hebrews 11:1. (A memory card can be cut out on page 99.) Close in prayer.**

## Move Forward by Faith

**Lesson Passage:** Genesis 12:1-9

**The Question:** Where will faith lead me?

**The Point:** Faith is a journey, not a destination.

*This commentary is designed to help you think about the question, “Where will faith lead me?” and drive home this one truth: Faith is a journey, not a destination.*

### FOCUS ON THESE POINTS

#### ***A Divine Invitation (Gen. 12:1-3)***

In chapter 12, the narrative of Genesis leaves the primeval history of all humanity and focuses on the history of one specific nation—Israel. The nation’s history began with a single individual, Abraham. As the account opens, he was called Abram, the name given to him by his father, Terah. Terah and Abram lived in Ur.

Like other families living in the cosmopolitan city, Terah’s family seems to have worshiped a variety of deities. However, the Lord revealed Himself to Abram and called him to follow the Lord alone. Consequently, Abram, Terah, and other family members moved north to the city of Haran (Acts 7:2). The original intent had been to move to Canaan, but for some reason they stopped in Haran.

Genesis 12 begins with a simple statement: “The LORD said to Abram.” Despite its simplicity, the statement conveys profound truth. God was directing the event. The fact that God spoke indicates that the personal relationship between God and Abram was living and dynamic. The time had come for Abram to move on to Canaan. His separation from family demonstrated the clear demands that God makes on His people. On this occasion the Lord did not reveal a destination or explain why Abram was to go. God simply said, “Go.” In response to Abram’s obedience, God made four promises to him:

1. Abram would become a great nation (v. 2).
2. He would have a great name (v. 2).
3. He would be given a land (v. 1).
4. He would be involved in a blessing (v. 2).

#### ***An Obedient Response (Gen. 12:4-6)***

Abram obeyed the Lord’s call and began the journey to Canaan. This obedience was made even more difficult

by his age. He already was seventy-five years old. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated, and the people he had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan.

Abram passed through the land to the site of Shechem [SHEK uhm], at the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. The oak of Moreh probably was a Canaanite worship site. Abram showed a better way. Unfortunately, they did not accept his God.

#### ***A Generational Blessing (Gen. 12:7-9)***

In Canaan, Abram responded to the Lord by building an altar to worship Him. The phrase “appeared to Abram” (v. 7) indicates that Abram’s worship was in response to a revelatory experience initiated by the Lord.

Abram later built another altar for worship near Bethel and Ai (12:8). Such was the impact of his encounter with God that he continued to build altars wherever he camped. From there he moved on to the hill country east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the Lord and worshiped Him. Abram worshiped the Lord exclusively. He refused to call on other gods.

Then Abram journeyed by stages to the Negev. The Negev [NEH gehv] was the arid region of southern Canaan. At that time the Amalekites lived there.

Abram’s experience reinforces that everything God does for and through you may not be about you. His promises include a legacy for your offspring, as they did Abram’s. The Lord’s promise to give the land of Canaan to Abram’s offspring is the single most repeated affirmation in the Torah. At least thirty-seven references are made to it in the books of Moses. God gave land not just to Abraham but to his offspring. The Scripture does not say, “to offspring,” meaning many people, but “to your offspring,” meaning one person, who is Christ.

The link between Abram and Christ forms the foundation of the Jewish nation and its relationship to God.



Need more commentary/articles to increase your understanding?

Visit [www.LifeWay.com/YOU](http://www.LifeWay.com/YOU).

# BEFORE YOU TEACH

FOR UNIT 1, LESSON 2 (pp. 17–21)

## STEP 1 PREVIEW THE TEACHING PLAN.

In preparation to teach, spend time this week developing a mini-lecture about the concept of covenant. (See the *Biblical Illustrator* article “God’s Covenant with Abraham.” Log on to [www.lifeway.com/YOU](http://www.lifeway.com/YOU). Click on the DOWNLOADABLES tab for additional study helps for Unit 1, Lesson 2.) Use your creative skills to make the tree limb visual described in Close the Session (p. 108).

## STEP 2 CHANGE THE PACE.

By now you probably know how you’re comfortable teaching. Comfort is good, but it can stifle creativity. Are you using the same techniques week after week? Adults learn in a variety of ways. Sometimes a change of pace can heighten interest in learning. Consider activities you might not have used before. Check out the YOU Object Lesson (p. 106) for a change of pace.

## STEP 3 TESTIFY.

Some lessons hit home more than others. Ask yourself The Question for this week’s study. Reflect on a particular situation in which you doubted God’s faithfulness. Consider sharing with the class your experience and how you were assured of God’s faithfulness, even when you doubted. Adults appreciate honesty and knowing their leader is a fellow learner, facing the same struggles they face.

## STEP 4 PRAY FOR CLASS MEMBERS.

During the week, prayerfully consider tough situations learners in your class may be experiencing—times they might be doubting or waiting for promises to be fulfilled. Write learners a note of encouragement, letting learners know you are praying for them in their tough situations. Assure them that God remains faithful even when we doubt.



## LOOK BACK

Welcome members and guests. Briefly review Unit 1, Lesson 1 (pp. 11–15). Remind learners of The Question (“Where will faith lead me?”) and The Point (“Faith is a journey, not a destination”). Invite volunteers to describe the difference between a journey and a destination. **Discuss:** *How does this influence your understanding of faith?* Refer to the Live It! challenge (p. 21). Lead the group in reciting Hebrews 11:1 aloud. Transition into Lesson 2 by directing attention to The Question and The Point on page 17.

## YOU OBJECT LESSON



### BLOOMING FLOWER, BULB, OR PICTURE OF FLOWER OR BULB

Display the flower or bulb. Explain that flower bulbs usually are planted in the fall and remain in the ground during winter. The dead-looking bulbs show no indication of the beautiful flowers that will emerge in the spring. State that sometimes it’s hard to wait for something to happen when we don’t see proof or action. Lead with the study of Abram, who doubted God’s promise to give him a son by Sarai. Emphasize that God’s promises are sure, even when He doesn’t fulfill them according to our timetable. **Lead the group to consider silently:** *In what situation do you need to trust God to be faithful?* As an option, provide each person with a flower or bulb as a reminder of God’s faithfulness.