



Bible Point ▶

God loves us and calls us by name.

Bible Verse

We trust God (adapted from Psalm 52:8b).

Growing Closer to Jesus

- Children will
- get to know each other by name,
 - hear how God gave Abram a new name,
 - learn that God calls all of us by our own names, and
 - thank God for loving us and knowing our names.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

- God changes Abram's name to Abraham.

Genesis
15:5; 17:1-7,
15-16



Abram had been blessed by God and was a wealthy man in today's passage. But Abram was already an old man, and he had no heir. He was 75 when he came to the Promised Land (Genesis 12:4), and in Genesis 16 we find him to be 86 years old. So he had to be somewhere around 80 years old when God promised him in Genesis 15:5 that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars. Remember that in a culture without lights at night, one can see a lot of stars! That was quite a promise to a man in his eighties with no children!

The next thing we know, Abram is 99 years old (Genesis 17:1), and still has no heir! At this point, God does something dramatic to confirm his promise to Abram that he will still have many descendants: He changes Abram's name. The name Abram means "exalted father"; God changed that name to Abraham, which means "father of many." God also changed Abraham's wife's name from Sarai to Sarah. Both names seem to mean "princess," but from Genesis 17:16, we see that the new name must carry the idea of being "the mother of many nations."

Names are important to God. The Creator of the universe loves us, and he knows your name and mine.

Prayer

- Read John 10:3.
- What does it mean to you that God, who created the earth, knows your name?
- Pray: Dear Lord, help me to teach the children in my care how special it is that you know them by name.

Before the Lesson

- Collect the necessary items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed in the chart on the next page.
- Make photocopies of the "Today I Learned..." handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your children.
- Pray for the children in your class and for God's direction as you teach the lesson.

This Lesson at a Glance

	What Children Will Do	Classroom Supplies	Learning Lab Supplies
Welcome Time	Welcome! —Receive name tags, and be greeted by the teacher.	“Desert Tent Name Tags” (p. 135), scissors, marker, safety pins or tape	
Let’s Get Started Direct children to one or more of the optional activities until everyone arrives.	Option 1: Stars, Stars, Stars —Fill a sheet of paper with star stamps.	Construction paper	
	Option 2: Bean Counters —Count lots of beans, and realize that Abram would have lots of people in his family.	Dry beans, scooping and pouring utensils, shallow tub	
	Option 3: I’m Calling You —Make paper megaphones, and take turns calling each other’s names.	Construction paper, crayons, stickers, glitter glue, tape	
	Pick-Up Time —Sing a song as they pick up toys and gather for Bible Story Time.	CD player	
Bible Story Time	Setting the Stage —Play a clapping name game.		
	Changing Faces, Changing Names —Use disappearing ink to show how children’s baby faces have changed.	Large sheet of paper	
	Bible Song and Prayer Time —Sing a song, bring out the Bible, and pray together.	Bible, CD player	
	Hear and Tell the Bible Story —Sing a song, and then lie on the floor and look at a night sky while they hear the story of God’s promise to Abram.	Bible, sharpened pencil, shoe box, flashlight, CD player	
	Do the Bible Story —Play a special game of Hide-and-Seek, coming out when their names are called.		
Closing 	Can You Count the Stars? —Listen to Whiskers’ camping adventure, and then tell him about God’s promise to Abram.	Two cardboard tubes, hole punch, yarn, glue	
	Shooting Stars —Sing a song, and thank God for calling them by name.	CD player	

Welcome Time

SUPPLIES: “Desert Tent Name Tags” (p. 135), scissors, marker, safety pins or tape

- Kneel down and make eye contact with children as they arrive.
- Greet each child with an enthusiastic smile.
- Thank each child for coming to class today.
- As children arrive, ask them how they put last week’s lesson into practice. Use questions such as “What did you tell your family about Abram and Lot?” or “Tell me about a time you shared this week.”
- Say: **Today we’re going to learn that ► God loves us and calls us by name.**
- Hand out the desert tent name tags children made during Lesson 9, and help them attach the name tags to their clothing. Have extra name tags on hand for children who were not in class that week and to replace damaged name tags.
- Direct children to the Let’s Get Started activities you’ve set up.



◀ BIBLE POINT



It’s important to say the Bible Point just as it’s written in each activity. Repeating the Bible Point over and over throughout the lesson will help kids remember it and apply it to their lives.

Let’s Get Started

Set up one or more of the following activities for children to do as they arrive. After you greet each child, invite him or her to choose an activity.

Circulate among the activities to offer help as needed and direct children’s conversation toward the point of today’s lesson. Ask questions such as “Do you think that God knows what your name is?” or “How many stars do you think there are in the sky?”

■ Option 1: Stars, Stars, Stars

SUPPLIES: construction paper



Set out the *star stamp* and *ink pad* and a sheet of light-colored construction paper. Let children take turns stamping the *star stamp* on the construction paper. Encourage them to fill up the paper and make as many stars as they can. Tell them that today they’ll hear how God changed Abram’s name to Abraham, which means “father of many,” and promised him that he’d have more people in his family than the stars in the sky.

■ Option 2: Bean Counters

SUPPLIES: small dry beans, scooping and pouring utensils, shallow tub

Set out a shallow tub of dry beans. Provide scooping and pouring utensils, and let children play with the beans for a few minutes. (Remind children not to place the beans in their mouths, ears, or noses!) Help children try to count the beans. Since many preschoolers can’t count higher than 10 or 20, have them count out piles of 10 and then help them add up the piles. They’ll soon realize they can’t count all the beans in the tub. Tell children God promised Abram that his family would grow so big that he wouldn’t be able to count all the people in it, just as they can’t count all the beans in the tub.

■ Option 3: I'm Calling You

SUPPLIES: construction paper, crayons, stickers, glitter glue, tape

Have children decorate sheets of colored construction paper with crayons, stickers, or glitter glue. Then show children how to roll up the paper to form megaphones. Write each child's name on his or her megaphone, and tape the edges together. Have children take turns using their megaphones to call out each other's names. Tell children that today they'll learn how God gave Abram a new name. Remind them that ► God loves us and calls us by name.



When everyone has arrived and you're ready to move on to Bible Story Time, encourage the children to finish what they're doing and get ready to clean up.

■ Pick-Up Time

SUPPLIES: CD player



Lead children in singing "Come Along With Me" (track 2) with the CD to the tune of "Come and Go With Me." Encourage children to sing along as they help clean up the room.



SING

**Come along with me and pick up all our things,
Pick up all our things,
Pick up all our things.
Come along with me and pick up all our things
So our room will be clean.**

(Repeat 2x.)

Bible Story Time

■ Setting the Stage

SUPPLIES: none

Tell the children that you'll turn the lights off and then on again to get their attention. Explain that when you flash the lights, children are to stop what they're doing and raise their hands. Practice this signal a few times. Encourage the children to respond quickly so that you have time to do all the fun things that are planned.

Ask: • **What did you make or do when you came to class today?** (Decorated a paper with stars; counted beans; made a thing to call out names with.)

Say: **If you made a megaphone, stand up and then sit down.** Pause. **If you counted beans, stand up and then sit down.** Pause. **If you decorated a piece of paper with lots of stars, stand up and then sit down.** Pause. **Now I want everyone who has a name to stand up and then sit down!** Pause.

Ask: • **Have you ever known anyone who didn't have a name?** (No.)

• **Have you ever met anyone who knows everyone's name?** (No.)

Say: **Well, I know someone who knows the name of every person on the whole earth! God knows every one of our names and we never even have to remind him. God doesn't even need to see name tags. Let's play a game with our names.**

Gather the children in a circle. Say: **Names, names, we all have names. Let's all play a naming game.** Then clap the syllables of each child's name. For example, the name "Amy" would get two claps, while "Christopher" would get three. Let each child have a turn clapping out his or her name.



Say: **I know a very special name. Let's clap for Jesus' name!** Lead the children in two claps. Then say: **The Bible tells us that Jesus was also called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. That's a lot of names! Now let's clap for Jesus to let him know how much we love him.** Lead the children in applause.

Say: **We all have a name, and ► *God loves us and calls us by name.* Let's walk over to the table for a fun project. Each time you take a step, whisper your name.**



■ Changing Faces, Changing Names

SUPPLIES: large sheet of paper



Set out a large sheet of paper, and have children gather around it.

Say: **You all are such great kids...I'll bet you started out as wonderful babies! Let's draw our baby smiles on this paper.**

Give a *disappearing-ink pen* to two children, and let them draw a simple smiley face before passing the pens to two more children. Let children take turns drawing their baby faces.

Let children watch as the faces disappear! Then ask:

- **What happened to your baby faces?** (They disappeared; they went away; they're gone.)

- **How did that happen?** (These are special pens; the ink ran out; I don't know.)

Say: **We used special pens with disappearing ink to draw our faces. Your real baby faces slowly disappeared as you grew into the big, wonderful preschoolers that you are today. You're not little babies anymore! In our Bible story, you'll hear how God gave Abram and Sarai new names—it's as if he erased their old names to show that they had grown and changed. Let's get ready to hear our Bible story and learn what happened.**



Be sure children don't put the ink pens in their mouths. If you have very young children in class, you may want to draw the faces yourself.

You'll need to scratch the protective layer of plastic off the white tip of the *disappearing-ink pen* and also remove the tab underneath the white tip. You can use a tissue to help pick up any blots of ink left by the pens.

■ Bible Song and Prayer Time

SUPPLIES: Bible, CD player



tracks 3, 4

Go over to the story area, and have the children sit down. Say: **Now it's time to choose a helper to bring me the Bible marked with today's Bible story. As we sing our Bible song, we'll pass around our special Bible. The person who's holding the Bible when the music stops will be our Bible helper today.**

Lead the children in singing "I'm So Glad for the Bible" (track 3) with the CD to the tune of "Give Me Oil in My Lamp." As you sing, pass around the special Bible.



SING

**I'm so glad for the Bible.
Keep me learnin', learnin', learnin'.
I'm so glad for God's book today.
I'm so glad for the Bible.
Keep me learnin', learnin', learnin'—
Keep me learnin' all about his way.**

**Let me hear 'bout God's love—
Keep me learnin', learnin', learnin'.
Let me hear 'bout God's love for me.
Let me hear 'bout God's love—
Keep me learnin', learnin', learnin'.
Let's shine the light for all to see.**

(Repeat first verse.)

When the music stops, invite the child who's holding the Bible to bring it to you. Stamp the child's hand with the *star stamp*, and thank him or her for bringing you the Bible. Then stamp the other children's hands. Return the *star stamp* and *ink pad* to the Learning Lab.

Say: **I'm thankful for [name of child who brought the Bible], and I'm thankful for everyone in our class today. Let's thank God together for all our friends in this class.**

Lead children in singing "I'm So Glad We're Together" (track 4) with the CD to the tune of "Give Me Oil in My Lamp."



SING

**I'm so glad we're together.
Keep us prayin', prayin', prayin'.
I'm so glad we're all here today.
I'm so glad we're together.
Keep us prayin', prayin', prayin'—
Prayin' for each other every day.**

Lead children in folding their hands and bowing their heads as you continue to sing.

**Thank you, Lord, for each one.
Keep me thankful, thankful, thankful.
Thank you for everyone who's here.
Thank you, Lord, for each one.
Keep me thankful, thankful, thankful—
Thankful for our friends both far and near.**

This Bible story is featured in *My First Hands-On Bible*®. Order several now for your ministry at group.com.



Hear and Tell the Bible Story

SUPPLIES: Bible, sharpened pencil, shoe box, flashlight, CD player



tracks 13, 16, 17

Before this activity, use a sharpened pencil to poke about 20 holes in the bottom of a shoe box. You'll also need to bring a flashlight.

Open the Bible to **Genesis 15–17**. Say: **Our story comes from the book of Genesis in the Bible, God's special book. Our Bible Big Book shows us pictures of the Bible story. Today we're going to hear more about Abram.**

Ask: • **Who can tell me what we've learned about Abram so far?** (That he moved; that he shared his land; that he trusted God; that God took care of him.)

Open your Bible to **Psalm 52:8b**, and show the verse to the children. Say: **Abram trusted God and God took care of him. Our Bible verse today says: ►We trust God.** Have children repeat the verse. **Let's sing a song about trusting God!**

Lead children in singing "We Trust God" (adapted from Psalm 52:8b) with the CD (track 13) to the tune of "Jesus Loves Me."



SING

God, we'll trust and follow you (*point up*)

In all we say and all we do. (*Touch mouth with both hands; then extend arms.*)

We will trust you every day (*cross arms over chest*)

At home, at church, at school, at play. (*Turn in a circle with arms outstretched.*)

Yes, God, we trust you. (*Cross arms over chest; then extend arms upward.*)

Yes, God, we trust you. (*Cross arms over chest; then extend arms upward.*)

Yes, God, we trust you. (*Cross arms over chest; then extend arms upward.*)

We trust you every day. (*Cross arms over chest.*)

(Repeat.)

After the song, lead children in a round of applause for everyone's participation.

Say: **Abram trusted God, and we can trust God, too! Today's Bible story tells us about a time God talked to Abram while he was outside. Let's pretend it's nighttime and we're outside. Lie down on your back, so you're looking up at the ceiling.**

Dim or turn out the lights, and shine the flashlight through the holes in the shoe box so the light shines on the ceiling. Say: **Now that we have our starry night sky, let's listen to our story. First, we'll hear about Abram's journey and how he shared the land. Then we'll hear what happened to Abram on a starry night.**

Play the "God's Promise to Abram" (track 16) from the CD. When the segment is over, turn the lights back on and form a circle.

Bring out the *Bible Big Book: Abraham*, and show children the pictures on pages 1 to 6. When you get to page 6, fold back page 7 so you don't reveal next week's story about Abraham and Sarah's surprise. Use the text printed on the illustrated pages to help children review the story. When you're finished, put the *Bible Big Book* away and out of sight.

Ask: • **What did God promise Abram?** (To take care of him; a big family.)

Say: **God loved Abram very much and promised to take care of him. Abram believed God's promise and was faithful to God. He lived the kind of life that God wanted him to.**



For extra fun, lead children in singing the bonus song "Abram's in the Hills" (track 22). Lyrics are on page 161.

◀ BIBLE VERSE

Ask: • **How did God help Abram remember God's promise?** (Changed his name; talked to him.)

• **What was Abram's new name? What did his new name mean?** (Abraham; father of many.)



Say: **Just like Abraham, ► God loves us and calls us by name. He knows every one of us. Let's sing a song that reminds us that God loves us and knows our names.**

Lead the children in singing "God Knows Our Names" (track 17) with the CD to the tune of "London Bridge." As you sing, insert the names of children in your class.



God loves [name] **and** [name] **and** [name].

God loves [name].

God loves [name].

God loves [name] **and** [name] **and** [name].

He knows our names.

(Repeat 3x.)

■ Do the Bible Story

SUPPLIES: none

Tell the children you are going to play a special game of Hide-and-Seek. Say: **In this game, listen very carefully for your name. When you hear your name, come out of your hiding place and gather around me. Keep waiting until you hear your name. I promise to call each person, one at a time.**

Allow time for children to find hiding places in the classroom. If your classroom is mostly open space with few hiding places, have children crouch down and cover their eyes. Call out children's names one by one. When children hear their names, they can come out or uncover their eyes and gather around you.

When you're finished playing the game and everyone has come out of hiding, ask:

• **What was it like waiting for your name to be called?** (Fun; exciting; I kept waiting for you to call me.)

• **How did you know your name would be called?** (Because you promised; because you already called everyone else; you just called it.)

Say: **In our game, I promised to call everyone's name. Well, ► God loves us and calls us by name, too. God knows the name of each person here—even our friend Whiskers. Let's walk over to our story area and call out Whiskers' name now.**

Closing

■ Can You Count the Stars?

SUPPLIES: two cardboard tubes, hole punch, yarn, glue

Before class, make a simple pair of binoculars by gluing two cardboard tubes together. Punch a hole on each side, and tie a piece of yarn or string through the holes



Some children may want to be "It" and call out the names. That's OK. But keep in mind that they'll probably need help remembering all of their classmates' names.



to form a neck strap. Put the binoculars around Whiskers' neck for today's lesson.

After you get to your story area, say: **Let's see if Whiskers is listening for his name. But today when we call his name, let's say it with a clap like we did in our game earlier.**

Lead the children in calling for Whiskers with a clap on each syllable. Bring him out with the binoculars around his neck, and go through the following puppet script. When you finish the script, put Whiskers away and out of sight.



Whiskers: Hi, boys and girls, I thought I heard you calling my name. It sounded like you were clapping, too.

Teacher: We were, Whiskers. We got to clap our names in a game today. Your name sounds like this (*clap Whiskers' name while saying it*).

Whiskers: Hey, that's a pretty neat game. I'll have to remember that.

Teacher: What's that hanging around your neck, Whiskers?

Whiskers: These? Oh, they're my binoculars. My dad, my brother, and I just got back from a camping trip. I just love going camping. We get to sleep outside!

Teacher: It sounds like you had a lot of fun. What did you do with your binoculars?

Whiskers: We took them on a hike and looked at some birds and squirrels, and we even saw an eagle. But the thing I liked to do best was at night.

Teacher: At night? What could you do with your binoculars at night?

Whiskers: Well, I couldn't get to sleep. So my dad told me to get my binoculars and look at the stars. Then he told me to try to count the stars! There were so many stars that I couldn't even count them—and I'm a pretty good counter, you know!

Teacher: Yes, Whiskers, I've heard you count. So you saw a lot of stars. We had a story today about a man who saw a lot of stars. Children, let's tell Whiskers about all the stars Abram saw.

(Lead children in telling Whiskers how God promised to give Abram as many descendants as there are stars in the sky.)

Whiskers: Wow! There are gazillions of stars up there! I know because I tried to count them all. That would be a lot of people.

Teacher: Well, that's not the only amazing thing, Whiskers. God knows every one of those people's names. God even knows your name.

Whiskers: My name? You're kidding. God really knows my name?

Teacher: Yes. And God also knows the name of each person in our class today. Let's let the children tell you their names so you can know them, too. *(Let children tell Whiskers their names.)*

Whiskers: I think that's really great that God knows everyone's names. God must really love us to take the time to remember them all.

Teacher: He sure does. So the next time you're camping and you look up and see all those stars, you can remember that ► God loves us and calls us by name.

Whiskers: I will. Well, I better be going. I still have to unpack from my camping trip. I'll see you next week. Goodbye!

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■ Shooting Stars

SUPPLIES: CD player



Say: Talking about all those stars makes me remember that ► God loves us and calls us by name. Let's sing our name song again, to the tune of "London Bridge." This time, when I call your name, jump up and give yourself a hug. At the end of the song, we'll get together for a group hug.

Lead children in singing "God Knows Our Names" (track 17) with the CD to the tune of "London Bridge."



SING

God loves [name] and [name] and [name].

God loves [name].

God loves [name].

God loves [name] and [name] and [name].

He knows our names.

(Repeat 3x.)



Gather children in a circle, and share a group hug. Say: ► God loves us and calls us by name. He already knows what all of our names are. Let's say a prayer and thank God for loving us and calling us by name. Pray: Dear God, thank you for loving us so much and for calling us by name. We love you. In Jesus' name, amen.



Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the "Today I Learned..." handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with the children. Encourage parents to use the handout to plan meaningful family activities to reinforce this week's topic.



For Extra Time

If you have a long class time or want to add additional elements to your lesson, try one of the following activities.

■ Lively Learning: Friend Name Game

Form a circle, and choose one child to be “It.” Have “It” walk around the outside of the circle and tap each child on the head. As he or she does this, have everyone else recite this rhyme with you:

I have friends.

We play this game.

I'll touch their heads

And say their names.

On the last line of the rhyme, have “It” say the name of the child whose head he or she just tapped. Then instruct that child to get up and chase “It” around the circle. “It” must return to the spot where the friend was sitting, and then the friend becomes “It.” Continue until everyone has had a chance to be “It.”

■ Make to Take: Star-Sighting Binoculars



Before class, cut sheets of colored construction paper in half horizontally. You'll need two half-sheets of construction paper for each child.

Set out various art supplies, and let each child decorate two half sheets of paper. Help children roll their papers into tubes, secure with tape, and glue the tubes together to make binoculars. Punch holes in the binoculars. Then attach yarn or string so the children can wear the binoculars around their necks.

Turn off the lights, and shine the flashlight through the shoe box from the “Hear and Tell the Bible Story” activity. Let children look at the “stars” through their new binoculars.

■ Treat to Eat: Starry Names

Write each child's name carefully on a paper plate, and then place a handful of star-shaped cereal on each plate. Ask children to arrange the stars on their plates like the stars in the night sky that Abram saw.

As children are eating their snack, point out their names on the plates. Talk about the way God changed Abram's name to Abraham. Tell children that God knew Abraham's name and loved him just as God knows their names and loves them.



■ Story Picture: Outnumbering the Stars



Give each child a copy of the “Today I Learned...” handout. Set out crayons or markers, and have children color the picture of Abraham. Then let them take turns using the *star stamp* and *ink pad* from the Learning Lab to fill their skies with stars. Talk about the countless number of stars in the sky and God's promise that Abraham's family would outnumber the stars.

Today i learned...

God loves us and calls us by name.

Help me learn this:

We trust God (adapted from Psalm 52:8b).

Ask me:

- What was Abram's new name?
- How does it feel to know that God knows your name?
- How can our family trust God like Abraham did?

Family Fun

- Make a family tree together. See how many ancestors you can name. Talk about how one person can have many relatives. If possible, find pictures of the people in your family tree so your child can match names with faces. Thank God for knowing the names of everyone in your family.

Lesson 12
Today your child learned that **GOD LOVES US AND CALLS US BY NAME**. Children heard about God's promise to make Abraham's family members outnumber the stars in the sky. They played a game to learn each other's names and thanked God for loving them and knowing their names.

Abraham's Descendants Outnumber the Stars
(Genesis 15:5; 17:1-7, 15-16)

