

# INTRODUCTION

There are 32 assemblies for children aged 7-11 in this book, all with Christian themes. Each assembly begins with an introduction and then a main presentation, usually given by the teacher. There are both interactive and non-interactive follow up ideas and every assembly concludes with an optional reflection or prayer. The assemblies use a wide range of stimulus material:

- Bible stories
- Original stories
- Poems and excerpts from children's books
- 'True life' stories: factual accounts of people's lives
- Factual accounts of events
- Information, e.g. about Christian charities
- Mini drama sketches for children to perform, with play scripts

There is a link to the most relevant RE Unit from the QCA Scheme of Work in each assembly.

## Follow up

Each assembly presentation is followed by suggestions for interaction to involve the audience in the assembly, and to reinforce learning. Interactive follow up activities include:

- Closed and open questions
- Active response, e.g. vote, hands up, thumbs up or down, giving scores
- Quizzes
- Use of volunteers to assist at the front
- Discussion

Non-interactive follow up suggestions include: a summary of the story; points to think about; reflection and prayer.

## Using the material

The assemblies in the book are designed to be used flexibly: it is intended that teachers select the most appropriate follow up activities and questions from the range provided in order to meet the needs of the children present. The basic core presentation of each assembly may also be adapted to suit the school, of course, and may be used, for example, in circle time as the basis for role play or other drama or for classroom discussion. Questions to stimulate response from the children might include:

- What might it feel like to be in this situation?
- Have you experienced a situation like this in real life?
- Why did the characters do what they did?
- Were they right/wrong?

## **What makes a successful assembly?**

Good preparation is essential, particularly if drama is involved. Other key pointers:

- Use of props or a visual focus (suggestions are included in the book; don't forget an OHP or data projector can be used if you can't find the object suggested).
- Relate the contents of the assembly to activities going on in the school or community.
- Interactivity: music, songs, drama or any kind of audience participation generates interest.
- Use the story or presentation to make a single clear learning point, which can be reinforced in the reflection or prayer at the end of the assembly.

# CONTENTS

<b>Bible Stories</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. God calls Abraham	5
2. Jacob and Esau	8
3. Joseph in Egypt Part 1	12
4. Joseph in Egypt Part 2	16
5. The Battle of Jericho	20
6. David in Hiding	23
7. Elijah and the Prophets of Baal	27
8. The Daughter Who Came Back	31
9. Using Our Talents	35
10. The Unforgiving Man	38
11. The Day of Pentecost	42
12. Paul Gets a Shock	46
<b>Book Excerpts</b>	
13. The First Christmas (Rachel Billington)	50
14. Innocent's Song (poem by Charles Causley)	53
15. The Ballad of the Breadman (poem by Charles Causley)	56
<b>Real Life Stories</b>	
16. The Hiding Place (Corrie Ten Boom)	60
17. The Man on the Trucks (Eddie Stobart)	64
18. The Message (Andy Hawthorne)	68
19. The Boy from Berlin (Tom Walters)	72
20. Martin Luther King	77
21. Nicky Cruz	81
22. Jackie Pullinger	84
<b>Original Stories</b>	
23. A Murder Mystery	87
24. The Three Servants	91
<b>Information</b>	
25. Amazing Bible Facts	94
26. TEAR Fund – a Christian Charity	97
27. The Psalms	100
28. Proverbs	103
<b>Events</b>	
29. Witness to the World (Brazil winning the World Cup 2002)	106
30. The Passion Play (Oberammergau)	109
<b>Drama/Play scripts</b>	
31. Easter Voices	112
32. The Princes in the Fire	116

# I GOD CALLS ABRAHAM

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## Objective

To help children understand the importance of Abraham as an Old Testament figure.

## RE links

QCA RE Scheme of Work Unit 5C: Where did the Christian Bible come from?

## Resources

A gift-wrapped present (not essential).

## Introduction

Today's story is all about a wonderful present.

## BIBLE STORY: GOD CALLS ABRAHAM (Bible ref: Genesis 12-21)

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We all like receiving presents, don't we? Small presents are good, big presents are very good and surprise presents are always exciting to get. Maybe you've been given a small surprise gift a few times and, if you're really lucky, you may have been given a big surprise once. Rich people give each other big presents when they're grown up – a new car perhaps, or a fantastic holiday or even a house. But today's story is about a much bigger present than those – it's about what's probably the biggest present ever given: a whole country...

Abraham lived with his wife Sarah and his father and his nephew in a land called Ur. It's far from here, in a hot, dry part of the world, which is now part of the country of Iraq. Abraham was content in his life, except for one thing. He had been married to Sarah for many years: she was a beautiful, loving wife and they had been happy together always, except that they had no children. Abraham had always wanted a family of his own but it seemed as if it would never happen, especially now that he was getting old.

But something happened. Something extraordinary. Imagine that one day you were told by your family that you were leaving your home right away – that you had to go, just like that, with no explanation and no idea where you were going to. You pack a few belongings and you set off, away from your house, never to come back. Well that is exactly what happened to Abraham.

Abraham had always been obedient to God, just as his ancestor Noah had been at the time of the Flood. He knew that as long as he obeyed God, things would go well for him. Then one day, out of the blue, God spoke to Abraham, clear as a bell: "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

Wow. Abraham was 75 years old when he heard this. (That's older than many of your grandparents are now.) His head was swimming. Leave my country? But where do I go? I

will make you a great nation? But I don't even have a single child. All people on earth will be blessed by me? But how? There were so many questions, but Abraham was an obedient man. He told Sarah what had happened and made preparations to set off right away.

“Oh Abraham, where are we going to go?”

“Don't worry Sarah, the Lord will guide us.”

God told Abraham to travel to the land of Canaan, many hundreds of miles away – the place we now call Israel. For many weeks they walked, pitching their tent near water, checking their possessions and wondering about the future. When they arrived in Canaan God spoke to Abraham again. “I will give you this land,” He said. Abraham looked around at the hills and the plains and the dusty valleys and wondered how it would be possible – there were many people living there for a start. Abraham knew that he would have to be patient and wait.

The years passed. The little group travelled around with their animals, pitching their tent and waiting to hear from God. When a famine hit the land they travelled to Egypt where Abraham was given many gifts and servants by the Pharaoh. They returned to Canaan and the years continued to pass. Still Abraham had no son.

Then one day God spoke to Abraham while he was in his tent. “Go outside and look up at the heavens and count the stars.” Abraham did as he was told. It was a clear night and the black sky was dotted with sparkling points of light. Abraham tried to count them but it was hopeless – there were hundreds, no thousands, of them. “Abraham – this is how many descendants you will have.” Abraham was dumbfounded and yet he believed it, and God was pleased.

When Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was past the age of childbearing, God sent an angel to the couple. The angel told them that they would have a son and he was to be called Isaac. They both laughed – they were far too old for children now. But within a year, a son was born. They called him Isaac. When Isaac grew up, he had a son called Jacob, and Jacob grew up and had twelve sons and many, many years later there were thousands of descendants of Abraham living in the land of Canaan, now called Israel. The promise was fulfilled – the biggest present ever had been given.

And today, over three thousand years later, the Jews, the descendants of Abraham, the Father of Israel, are still living in that part of the world.

## INTERACTIVE FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES

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### Questions

- 1) Why did Abraham leave his home? (Because God told him to, and made him a promise.)
- 2) Where did Abraham and Sarah go to? (*The land of Canaan, now called Israel.*)
- 3) Who were Abraham's descendants? (*Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, all of the Israelites or Hebrews and subsequently the Jews; most importantly, also Jesus.*)

## Getting the message

- 1) Why do you think God chose Abraham to be the father of a great nation? *(He was obedient and he believed what God told him, even though it seemed very unlikely.)*
- 2) Let's see what you know about Abraham. For each statement put your thumb up if you think it's true and down if you think it's false:
  - The story of Abraham is in the Bible. *(T)*
  - Abraham was the son of Noah. *(F)*
  - Abraham lived at the time of Jesus. *(F)*
  - Abraham had thousands of children. *(F)*
  - Abraham became a father when he was very old. *(T)*
  - Abraham's descendants are called Jewish people. *(T)*

## Learning more

Was Isaac Abraham's only son? *(No, he also had a son called Ishmael.)*

# NON-INTERACTIVE FOLLOW UP

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## Summary of the story

- Abraham lived in the land of Ur over three thousand years ago.
- God spoke to him and told him to leave his home.
- Abraham and his wife Sarah went to the land of Canaan.
- God promised Abraham to give the land to his descendants.
- God also told Abraham that he would have as many descendants as the stars in the sky.
- Sarah gave birth to a son called Isaac when Abraham was 100 years old.
- Abraham's descendants eventually lived in the land of Canaan, later called Israel.

## Reflection

Abraham left his home and travelled far because he believed God's promise that He was going to bless him. Many thousands of people are forced to leave their homes every year all over the world in our time because of fighting and hatred. These people are called refugees. Remember the refugees of the world and the suffering that they have to endure.

## Prayer

Lord God, thank You for the story of Abraham, a man of great faith and trust. He became the father of a great nation because he believed in the promises made to him. Help us to trust in You and to follow Your ways. Amen.