

# Covenant

St Mary's Homegroup studies  
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St. Mary's Church  
Haddenham

## Covenant with Abraham

Have you ever explored your family tree? You might like to share any knowledge that you have of your ancestors. Are they rooted in one place or have they come from many places? How much are we influenced by our ancestors and formed by our families? What would be your hopes for the next generations?

In this covenant God is again giving humanity a fresh start. This time God chooses one person, Abraham.

### *The call of Abram*

*Read Genesis 12:1-9*

1. When God called Abraham, there was a cost to the call and also blessings. Had Abraham focussed on the cost of trusting God, he might never have started; had he focussed only on the blessings, he might have given up when things got difficult. You may like to discuss trusting God, both for Abraham and in your own lives.
2. What does God mean by "all peoples on the earth will be blessed through you" (V.3)? Could it mean Christians today? Jewish people today? Both? Neither?
3. When God gave Abraham a gift, he responded with worship. How do we respond to God working in our lives?

The covenant with Abraham is more specific than the universal covenant with Noah. This covenant is for Abraham and his descendants. God is again giving humanity another fresh start. This time it is with a specific person who will be father of nations. He is given a specific land and also the promise that, "all peoples of the earth will be blessed" through him (Genesis 12:3). The call to a specific land, gives a rootedness to Abraham and his descendants. They need to work out their covenant with God, by working out relationships with a

specific land and the people that are within it. Abraham is promised that his descendants will be a blessing to all nations. The sign of the covenant is the sign of circumcision. Finally the covenant is everlasting – this means that it continued even when other covenants were initiated by God.

### *Read Genesis 17:1-27*

This reading describes an encounter between Abraham and God, 25 years after the call of Abraham recorded in Genesis 12.

4. How did Abraham react this time to God's promise?
5. How much did he trust in the blessing promised and how much did he enter into the cost?
6. You may like to discuss how we respond when God's promise seems not to happen. How easy is it to have patience when following God? What helps?

### **Extension study**

We have picked two passages from the story of Abraham that emphasise his call and covenant. These show many of his good characteristics. There are also some more complex stories about Abraham:

Genesis 12:10-20      Abraham seeks to hide that he is marriage to Sarai

Genesis 16              Hagar and Ishmael

Genesis 22              The sacrifice of Isaac

You may like to pick one or more of these to explore.

7. Sacred text and histories from the nations around Israel tend to portray their kings and patriarchs as perfect heroes. This is not the case with the Bible, where we find descriptions of both strengths and weaknesses of people. You may like to pick one of the stories above and discuss the benefit of having a fuller picture of Abraham. What sort of personality was he?
8. What does this say about Covenant and Grace?