

ACTS 1:8

Session 2: “God’s Plan”

Getting Started

Learning Goal: Children will understand that God’s plan from the beginning of time was that we would be with Him and that all people, including boys and girls, need to become Christians.

What You Need to Know: God presented this plan throughout the Old Testament both in the covenant passed down through Abraham and his descendants and in the lives of His people.

Key/Memory Verses: Psalm 8:3-5

Supporting Verses: Genesis 12:2-3

INTERNET RESOURCES

Acts 1:8 Challenge – www.ActsOne8.com

International Mission Board – www.imb.org

North American Mission Board – www.namb.net

Southern Baptist Convention – www.sbc.net

Supply List

- Lightweight ball
- Bibles (one per child)
- Enough paper for each child
- Pens (one per child)
- Dark blue or purple construction paper
- White chalk
- Electric lamp
- For alternate challenge activity: Several small journal notebooks for any children who left theirs at home or for children who missed the previous lesson



Prepare Ahead

- ▶ **Contact** the leader of the group your pastor suggested for you to partner with in a mission project. **Set** a time to meet and discuss opportunities for your groups to partner in a project immediately after the sessions of this study.

Leader Background Study



From the beginning of time God planned for us to be close to Him. The writer of Psalm 8:3-5 tells us: “When I observe Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You set in place, what is man that You remember him, the son of man that You look after him? You made him little less than God and crowned him with glory and honor.”

Some people think God wanted people to be witnesses of Him to others in the world only after Jesus was born. These people believe witnessing is a New Testament concept. However, God’s plan has always been to start with a group of people who believe in Him and then have other people drawn to Him through those people—not alone, but with His help. God explained this plan in His covenant to Abraham and repeated it many times, explaining to Abraham that “I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you ... and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Genesis 12:2-3). Abraham’s descendants or Israel were not the only people who would be blessed; *all* people would be blessed through Abraham. Abraham was not to keep all of the blessings of God to himself. Notice that Abraham received the blessings first. We need to know God, to be Christians first, before God can use us to bring all people on earth to Him.

The same covenant was passed down to Abraham’s descendants. “The Lord appeared to him (Isaac) and said, ‘Do not go down to Egypt. Live in the land that I tell you about; stay in this land as a foreigner, and I will be with you and bless you. For I will give all these lands to you and your offspring, and I will confirm the oath that I swore to your father Abraham. I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars in the sky, I will give your offspring all these lands, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed by your offspring, because Abraham listened to My voice and kept My mandate, My commands, My statutes, and My instructions,’” (Genesis 26:2-5).

God’s rules, like His plan, have never changed. He summarized those rules in the Ten Commandments given to Moses. Almost half of the Ten Commandments deal with our relationship with God (Exodus 20:1-11). The first two commandments teach us why we should tell others about God. “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery. Do not have other gods besides Me” (Exodus 20:2-3).

However, even God’s own people continually drifted off and worshiped other gods. They built altars to other gods and sacrificed animals (and sometimes people) in burnt offerings to those gods. Throughout the Old Testament, whenever worship of other gods happened, God had at least one person who led the people to know that He was the only true God. For example, King Ahab and Queen Jezebel had hundreds of prophets who led worship of Baal. Elijah was sent to tell the people to change their ways. He presented a challenge to the prophets that demonstrated the power of the one and only God (1 Kings 18:16-39).

In this session children will be reminded that God’s plan has always been for people to be brought to Him, yet we cannot bring others to a God we do not know. The plan of salvation will be presented—that Jesus died for our sins and that we must believe in Jesus as Savior, Lord, and God in order to be His children forever. Be prepared to invite children who have not yet accepted Jesus as their Savior to speak with you privately after the session. Challenge children who already are Christians never to stray from their belief as the people in the Old Testament did.

Explaining the Plan of Salvation to Children

Ask: Have you trusted Jesus as your Savior? If not, let's read through the ABCs of Salvation.

ABCs of Salvation

Admit that you are a sinner. Repent, turning away from your sin. (Read Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; 1 John 1:10; Acts 3:19; and 1 John 1:9.)

What Does It Mean?—*Admit* means being willing to say something is true. Sin is doing something wrong that makes God unhappy, that breaks one of God's rules. Every person is a sinner, except for Jesus who never sinned. *Repent* means turning completely around, away from sin and toward God.

Believe that Jesus is God's Son and accept God's gift of forgiveness from sin. (Read John 3:16; Acts 4:12; Romans 5:8; Ephesians 2:8-9; and John 1:11-13.)

What Does It Mean?—We cannot earn salvation by being good. God gives us the gift of salvation because He loves us. He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for our sins. Jesus then rose from the dead so we might have eternal life through Him. This gift provides forgiveness from sins for anyone who accepts (willingly receives) this gift.

Confess your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. (Read Romans 10:9-10,13.)

What Does It Mean?—*Confess* means to say with your mouth; in other words, to tell somebody! What do you tell them? You tell them about your faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. *Faith* means trusting, even when you don't completely understand. Trusting Jesus as your Savior means you believe that He saved you from your sins. Trusting Jesus as your Lord means He is the boss of your life—He's the one in charge!

If you want to accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior, pray this prayer. "Jesus, I know I am a sinner. I have chosen to do things my way. I want to turn from my sins and follow You. I believe You died for my sins and rose again. Forgive me of my sins. I accept Your gift of salvation and trust in You as my Lord and Savior. Amen."

Welcome to God's family.

onnect: "Changing the Rules" (10 minutes)

As children arrive, **invite** them to join in a game of catch. **Direct** the children to form a circle and randomly throw the ball to others in the circle. As the game progresses, **add** rules to the game such as "after you catch the ball, you must turn around one time before you throw it," or "you cannot throw the ball to someone wearing the same color as the last person who caught the ball." Continue adding rules and changing rules as the children play. If they try to add rules, tell the boys and girls that only you can make the rules or change them.



Coach: “Blessed Through Abraham” (35 minutes)

Explain to the children that some people think God wanted people to be witnesses of Him to others in the world only *after* Jesus was born. These people believe witnessing began in the New Testament. This idea is not true. God’s plan has always been to start with a group of people who believe in Him and then have other nations drawn to Him through those people—not alone, but with His help. God never changed His plan; God is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Ask: How do you think the game we played is different from what we just learned about God?

The rules kept changing, but God never does.

Say: God gave His plan to Abraham long ago in the Old Testament.

Direct the children to turn to Genesis 12:2-3 and **ask** for a volunteer to read. **Follow along** as the child reads.

Ask: What do you think God meant when He said He would make Abraham into a great nation? How can one man be a nation?

Abraham would be the founder of a great nation.

Ask: What do you think “great nation” means?
(Answers vary but may include: a big nation; lots of people; people who are powerful, strong, and wealthy; people who are happy.)

Say: A great nation can mean all of those things. God was making a wonderful promise not only to Abraham but also to the people who would be a part of that nation.

Ask: What do you think God meant when He said, “I will bless you”?

Make your name great, you will be a blessing, bless those who bless you, curse those who curse you.

Ask: Does this promise mean that God’s blessing affected only Abraham?

No, it affected anyone who knew Abraham.

Ask: What do you think God meant by “all peoples on earth will be blessed through you”?

(“Those who blessed Abraham would be blessed” may be an answer children will give.)

If so, **ask:** “Does this mean that Abraham would have to meet every person on earth for them to be blessed through him? (No. Other answers may be that all people on earth would be blessed through Abraham’s descendants or through people who knew Abraham and then they talked to other people.)

Say: God meant several things in this verse. First, those people who knew Abraham would be blessed because they were nice to Abraham. God said, “I will bless those who bless you.” Also, people who knew Abraham and realized how much he was blessed would tell others. Those people would come to know Abraham and Abraham’s God. Then they would be blessed. One other way all people on earth were to be blessed by Abraham is that Jesus would come through Abraham’s descendants and bring salvation to all the people on earth. The main thing to remember is that almost 2,000 years before Jesus was born, God told Abraham that He planned for all people on earth to be blessed, not just a few people. God’s plan never changes. God’s plan has always been that He wants every person to know Him, love Him, and be blessed by Him.



Key/Memory Verse Activity: “The Heavens, Moon, and Stars”

Give each child a piece of dark blue or purple paper and white chalk. **Read** Psalm 8:3-5: “When I observe Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You set in place, what is man that You remember him, the son of man that You look after him? You made him little less than God and crowned him with glory and honor.”

Say: This verse written long ago tells us how much God has always wanted us to be special, to be with Him. These verses are our key/memory verses for this session.

Instruct the children to illustrate the verse to help them remember it. As you **read** the verse one section at a time, **tell** children to draw something to represent each portion.

Read: “When I observe Your heavens ...”
(**Direct** the students to draw heaven and earth on the paper.)

Read: “... the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You set in place ...”

(**Direct** the students to draw God’s hands placing the moon and the stars in place.)

Read: “... what is man that You remember him, the son of man that You look after him? You made him little less than God ...”

(**Direct** students to draw a person on earth and somehow show God looking after the person. Boys and girls might draw rays from God’s hands coming to the person or an eye of God looking at him. Anything that will help children remember this part of the verse is acceptable.)

Read: “...and crowned him with glory and honor.”
(**Direct** the children to draw a crown on the person.)

Lead the children in repeating the verse as they look at their drawings.



Challenge: “The Power of Salvation” (15 minutes)

Invite children to sit in a circle with the lamp in the middle of the circle.

Ask: Why do we have the lamp in the middle of this circle?
To remind us that we need to plug into God’s power, as Acts 1:8 tells us.

Direct children to repeat Acts 1:8 together.

Goal Check—Ask: What did you learn today?
God’s plan from the beginning of time was that we would be with Him and that we need to become Christians.

Challenge Activity: “Imagine”

Direct children to close their eyes. Read Psalm 8:3-5 again. **Direct** children to imagine they are sitting on a hill with a sky full of stars above them. **Guide** boys and girls to think about how little they are compared to the huge universe, yet God wants each of us to have a relationship with Him. **Invite** children who have not yet accepted Jesus as their Savior to speak with you privately after the session. (See “Leader Background Study” for help on walking children through the plan of salvation.) **Challenge** children who already are Christians never to stray from their belief as the people in the Old Testament did.

Journaling Option



Direct children to get out their journals. **Direct** boys and girls to write this session’s key/memory verse in the journals as you dictate it to them. **Read** Psalm 8:3-5 as they write it in the journals.

Ask: How do you feel when you think about God loving you this much?
(Answers vary)

Ask: Would anyone like to tell us about the time you first believed in Jesus?
(If someone volunteers, affirm any testimony he or she gives. Do not prompt children for more than they are willing to share.)

Ask: Has anyone here been baptized? If so, would you like to tell us about your baptism?

Challenge students to find a quiet time and write about their experience with Jesus. If they are now Christians, **direct** them to write about how they came to know Him. If they are not yet Christians, **invite** them to stay after the session if they have questions. If they do not want to stay after the session, tell them they can write prayers in their journals telling God exactly how they feel about being a Christian. He will answer their prayers.

Distribute the *Parent Letters* and tell children to be sure to give them to parents immediately after class.

Dear Parents,

From the beginning of time God planned for us to be close to Him. The writer of Psalm 8:3-5 tells us: “When I observe Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You set in place, what is man that You remember him, the son of man that You look after him? You made him little less than God and crowned him with glory and honor.”

Some people think God wanted people to be witnesses of Him to others in the world only after Jesus was born. These people believe witnessing is only a New Testament concept. However, God’s plan has always been to start with a group of people who believe in Him and then have other people drawn to Him through those people—not alone, but with His help. God explained this plan in His covenant to Abraham and repeated it many times, explaining to Abraham that “I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you ... and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Genesis 12:2-3). Abraham’s descendants or Israel were not the only people to be blessed. All people on earth were to be blessed through Abraham. He was not to keep all the blessings of God to himself. Notice that Abraham received the blessings first. We need to know God, to be Christians first, before God can use us to bring all people on earth to Him.

The journey to tell others about Christ begins with the first step of accepting Christ ourselves. Is your child a believer in Christ? Are you? If not, please stop now and think about what you just read. God wants each of us to know Him as the sovereign God. He knows all of us have sinned, so He sent Jesus, His Son, to be the final sacrifice for our sins. Jesus our Lord is our salvation. If you haven’t already prayed for God to save you, pray to God now. Accept Jesus as your personal Savior, telling God that you believe He is the Lord of your life. If your child has not yet become a Christian, help him or her to take these same steps.

Your child prepared a special drawing based on Psalm 8:3-5. Ask your child to share this drawing with you and explain what each part of the drawing means. Your child was assigned these verses to memorize; please take time to practice the verses with her or him.

In Christ,
Acts 1:8 Leaders