



Abraham's Visitors/ Sodom and Gomorrah Genesis 18:1–19:29

Disbelief in miracles begins to filter through this age group. The Bible's accounts of God's miracles may be seen only as "Sunday school stories"—good for the younger kids, but too hard to believe for a preteen's newfound sophistication. They may want explanations for the amazing things God does, unable to accept these on simple faith. Treat their questions with respect. Use this lesson to help them explore God's character and their own daily lives for evidence of the amazing things God does.



► **Bible Point**
God does amazing things.

LESSON	WHAT KIDS DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	Miraculous Paper Clips <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Pretend they've been poisoned, and then bargain for the right number of paper clips to cure their sickness.	paper, pen, paper clips (at least 5 per child)	
2 Bible Exploration	City Stomp <i>(about 20 min.)</i> Build a cup city, and then destroy it as they act out the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.	Bibles, CD player, foam cups, crayons, tape, index cards, pencils, cup with 50 coins in it Teacher Pack: CD	Set out cups and tape.
	Penny for Your Thoughts <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Document amazing things about each other, and write them on their Bible Buzz page.	Bible Buzz, pens	Tear out the Lesson 11 pages from each Bible Buzz student book.

Key Verse
"For nothing is impossible with God" (Luke 1:37).

Weaving Faith Into Life
Kids will look for God's power at work in their lives.

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.



LESSON	WHAT KIDS DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
<p>3</p> <p>Weaving Faith Into Life</p>	<p>Amazing Worship <i>(about 20 min.)</i> Make an altar of foam cups, and praise God for the amazing things he does.</p>	<p>Bible Buzz, CD player, markers, foam cups from the “City Stomp” activity Teacher Pack: CD</p>	
<p>4</p> <p>Lasting Impressions</p>	<p>Daily Challenges <i>(about 5 min.)</i> Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God’s Word.</p>	<p>Bible Buzz</p>	
	<p>Weaving Faith at Home <i>(about 2 min.)</i> Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.</p>		

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.



Abraham’s Visitors/Sodom and Gomorrah

Genesis 18:1–19:29

BIBLE BACKGROUND
FOR LEADERS

Abraham: Father of Many

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God changed Abram’s name, which means “exalted father,” to Abraham, “father of many.” Abraham and all the males of his household then went through the covenant of circumcision. God also renamed Sarai. Her new name, Sarah, likely stressed that she was to be the mother of nations and kings.

Abraham Shows Hospitality

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In Abraham’s desert-dwelling culture, visitors were rare. A warm welcome and hospitality were requirements in the culture of that day, and Abraham knew what it was like to travel in the desert. Thus, he was ready to warmly welcome the travelers.

Many scholars believe that these travelers were angels (see Genesis 19:1). The fact that they knew Sarah’s name may support this idea, and in Genesis 18:10, it becomes clear that at least one of them was speaking for God.

For many years, God had been promising Abraham a son. Now God predicted the time of the birth to 99-year-old Abraham and 89-year-old Sarah: Within one year, their son would be born. Sarah’s laughter is understandable. Who would have thought that a 90-year-old woman could have a baby! God does truly amazing things!

Abraham Pleads With God to Spare Sodom and Gomorrah

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When God made it clear that his intent was to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham was horrified. He’d likely done business with people there, and his nephew, Lot, lived there with his family. So Abraham pleaded with God to spare the few who were still faithful. God said the whole city would be saved if only 50 righteous people lived there. It’s helpful to

remember here God’s definition of *righteous*. Abraham was declared righteous because of his faith, not because of a righteous lifestyle. As Abraham voiced his pleas ever more carefully, God promised to spare the city if just 10 righteous people were living there. But not even so small a number of faithful people could be found.

God did an amazing thing in sparing the lives of Lot and his family. Lot didn’t appear to deserve it, just as we don’t deserve the grace God gives to us. But we can be thankful that God is wonderfully merciful and still does amazing things for us.

The Jesus Connection

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Jesus is God’s most amazing miracle. He gave us eternal life when we were dead in sin. You can thank God for his precious Son and his greatest miracle.

Look for miracles all around you, not just in big, dramatic situations but also in “smaller” things: the beauty of the sunrise, the happy gleam in a baby’s eyes, couples addressing their problems with forgiveness and love. Ask God to help individuals in your ministry to do the same. You can write your prayer here.





Miraculous Paper Clips Supplies

paper
pen
paper clips (at least 5 per child)

1 GETTING STARTED

Miraculous Paper Clips

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Welcome kids warmly as they arrive, and ask them how their week went. Then gather everyone in a circle.

Say: **Let's play a game to get us started.**

Give each person a random number of paper clips (at least 1 but no more than 10). On a sheet of paper, write the number 7, and then fold the paper in half. Don't let the kids see the number you wrote.

Say: **Let's pretend for a moment that the air in this room has been filled with an odorless poisonous gas. You've all been poisoned, and without a cure you'll certainly die. Luckily, all you need to counteract the poison is a specific number of paper clips. I hold in my hand the official document that tells us how many paper clips you'll need. All I can tell you is that you'll need more than 1 and less than 10. To get your number of paper clips just right, you can bargain with the people around you to get the number you think you'll need. You have two minutes. Ready? Go! Allow time.**

Ask:

- How many paper clips did you end up with?

Say: **Now let's see which of you bargained for the correct number of paper clips to save your life.**

Hold up the paper, and reveal the number 7 written on it.

Say: **Although we're just pretending, people in the real world do get sick or poisoned, and they need amazing healing. Sometimes people are healed, just as some of you got just enough paper clips to cure the poison. But sometimes people don't get the amazing things they ask for, just as some of you didn't get the right number of paper clips to survive.**

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- Why do you think amazing things happen for some people and not for others? Explain.
- Do you think people get amazing things when they try to bargain with God the way you did with each other in this game? Why or why not?



- If incredible things happened whenever we asked for them—almost like getting a snack from a vending machine—why would those amazing things lose their “amazing” factor?
- Tell about amazing things you’ve seen in your life.

Say: **Amazing things—God’s miracles—do happen, even in the modern world. Today we’ll explore how ► GOD DOES AMAZING THINGS not only in the Bible, but in each of our lives. Let’s find out what happened in the Bible when a godly man tried to bargain with God for a miracle—an amazing thing.**



2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

City Stomp

What You’ll Do ■■■■■■

Say: **To re-enact the Bible passage, we have to first build a model city to represent the cities we’ll read about. To do that, we’ll use cups.**

You can use the cups to build houses, schools, or skyscrapers—whatever city buildings you’d like to build. Pick a spot near the center of the room to build, and work together to make the buildings as sturdy as you can. You’ll have five minutes to build. You can also draw windows on your cups, or tape them together to make taller structures. Ready? Go! Allow time. Have kids gather around the “city.” Then hold up the cup with 50 coins in it.

Say: **Each of these 50 coins represents one righteous person. Sodom and Gomorrah were big towns, so I hope there were at least 50 people in those cities who followed God.** Add the cup with coins to the rest of the cup city. Distribute an index card and a pencil to each person.

Have kids each draw 50 tally marks on their index card, and then say: **The 50 marks on your card represent the 50 righteous people we hope live in the city. I’ll summarize the first part of our Bible passage so you’ll know what brought Abraham and his wife Sarah near the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.**

Abraham had followed and obeyed God’s lead for many years as he moved his family, all his possessions, and his livestock to a new land. Abraham and Sarah had wanted a family for a very long time and along their journey, God promised Abraham he’d have more offspring than he could begin to count.

When Abraham finally settled, God visited Abraham and Sarah in the form of three men. That’s amazing! Abraham told Sarah to make them a nice meal. As the guests ate, they told Abraham they’d visit again in a year and at that time Sarah would have a son. Sarah was 90 years old and Abraham was even older!

City Stomp Supplies

- Bibles
- CD player
- foam cups
- crayons
- tape
- index cards
- pencils
- cup with 50 coins in it
- Teacher Pack**
- CD: “A Fallen City”
(track 20)

City Stomp Easy Prep

Set out cups and tape.





Ask:

- **What's amazing about Abraham and Sarah having a child at their very old age?**

Sarah overheard the news and laughed because she and Abraham were beyond normal child-bearing years. She could hardly believe what the guests had said. God asked Abraham, "Is anything too hard for God?" And God guaranteed again that Abraham and Sarah would soon have a son.

Ask:

- **What's unusual—and even shocking—about the way God visited Abraham and Sarah?**
- **Sarah had a hard time believing God's amazing promise. What makes it difficult for you to believe that impossible things are possible with God?**

Say: Sometimes God does amazing things just because God loves us and not because we ask God or try to bargain with God. God had promised Abraham and Sarah a son. God showed his love by fulfilling his promise no matter the impossible circumstances. That's truly amazing!

Now form trios and let's read on to see what happens when Abraham sees his guests on their way and they look down on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Give each trio a Bible, and have kids find Genesis 18. **Say: In your groups, read Genesis 18:20-28. After you read Abraham's pleas, erase five marks on your cards. Remove five coins from the cup city, too. Next, read verse 29 and then erase five more marks on your cards. Remove another five coins from the cup city. Read verses 30, 31, 32, pausing after each verse to erase 10 marks on your cards each time. Remove coins from the cup city as kids read so that you have 10 coins left.**

Ask:

- **What's it like to watch the number of marks on your card go down as the number of righteous people gets smaller in the Bible passage?**
- **What seems fair or unfair to you about God's response that he'd only save the cities if there were enough righteous people living there?**

Say: Sometimes amazing things happen because God's people ask God to do them. But even when we ask, God can always say no. God knows everything and sees everything, so we can trust God's judgment. Have kids erase all but one of the tally marks on their cards. **Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, but not before God sent angels to save the one righteous man who lived there—and his family. His name was Lot, and he was Abraham's nephew. God told Lot and his family to flee the city and not look back.** Have kids move their index cards far away from the cup city. **Lot obeyed, but his wife didn't. She looked back at the city, and because she disobeyed God she was turned into a pillar of salt!**

God sent burning sulfur down from the sky and completely demolished the cities and the land surrounding them. Invite kids to demolish the model city with their feet. While kids destroy their model city, you can add to the experience by playing in the background "A Fallen City" (track 20 on the CD).



Say: **Wow! A lot of amazing things happened in this Bible passage. We've already learned that God sometimes does amazing things simply because he chooses to out of his love for us. We also know that sometimes ► GOD DOES AMAZING THINGS because his people ask for them. Abraham, Sarah, and Lot all saw evidence of this in their lives.**

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- Of all we've learned of the amazing things God did for Abraham, Sarah, and Lot, which amazes you most? Explain.
- Some of the amazing things God did in this passage were helpful and wonderful, and some were meant as punishment for disobedience. What do all these amazing things tell us about God's power?
- Do you think amazing things such as what happened in Bible times still happen today? Why or why not?
- What are things you've seen or heard of that show you God still does amazing things around the world today?

Say: **God's miracles often show his care for us. And God is pleased when we respond to his care by caring about others, the way Abraham cared to ask God to save any righteous people. Let's show care for others now by naming amazing things God's given to everyone here—the things that make us righteous.**

Penny for Your Thoughts

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Have kids quickly form trios and find the "Penny for Your Thoughts" activity on their Bible Buzz page. Make sure everyone has a pen, and then have kids write their names at the top of the page.

Say: **Swap pages with the people in your groups, and write on another person's page positive qualities you see in that person. Think of qualities that show why God would care for them the same way God cared for Lot and for Abraham. For example, you might write "You're kind to others" or "You listen when friends are feeling down."**

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- Tell about the qualities you wrote about each other.
- What makes those qualities amazing?
- How do you think God could use the qualities people wrote about you to do amazing things through you?



Penny for Your Thoughts Supplies

Bible Buzz
pens

Penny for Your Thoughts Easy Prep

Tear out the Lesson 11 pages from each Bible Buzz student book.





Amazing Worship Supplies

Bible Buzz
CD player
markers
foam cups from the
“City Stomp” activity

Teacher Pack

CD: “God Is Our Help”
(Psalm 33:20) (track 6)

Say: **We’ve read about a lot of amazing things today. But the truth is that each of you provides proof that ► GOD DOES AMAZING THINGS.** God made Abraham, Sarah, and Lot with a special purpose, and God did the same with each of you. You can be part of the amazing things he does! Sometimes we only need to shift our perspective and watch for the amazing things God does. Let’s dig into that some more.

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Amazing Worship

What You’ll Do ■■■■■■

Have kids find the “Amazing Things” section on their Bible Buzz page.

Say: **Read through the list, and add any additional “everyday miracles” you can think of.** Allow five minutes.

God does a lot of amazing, miraculous things every day. In fact, God does so many amazing things that it can be easy to overlook them or take them for granted. Let’s take a few minutes to praise God for the amazing things he does in our lives all the time.

Give each person a cup; it’s okay if it’s crushed. Say: **Find the Key Verse, Luke 1:37, on your Bible Buzz page: “For nothing is impossible with God.” Now write the Key Verse on your cup.** Allow time.

Next, just below the Key Verse on your cup, write two amazing things that God has done in your life. You can write one of the things you listed on your Bible Buzz page or any other amazing thing you’ve experienced.

As kids work, play “God Is Our Help” (Psalm 33:20) (track 6 on the CD).

When kids finish writing, say: **To show thanks to God for his miracles, Abraham often built altars in places where God did something amazing. Work together to build an altar with the cups to thank God for the amazing things you wrote on them.**

Once the altar is completed, have kids join hands in a circle around it. Invite willing kids to each offer a one-sentence prayer of thanks to God for the amazing things he does every day.



Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- What makes God’s amazing things worth our praise and thanks?
- What everyday amazing things are you most thankful for? Why?
- What can you do to avoid taking the amazing things God does every day for granted?

Say: ► **GOD DOES AMAZING THINGS** all the time. When we give God thanks, as Abraham often did in building altars such as the one we built, we show God we still notice the amazing things he does. And when we give thanks it allows us to truly experience the joy God’s amazing things can bring to our lives. Let’s decide on ways to celebrate the amazing things God does for us and around us this week.

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4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

What You’ll Do

Say: Let’s think about how we can show we’re thankful that ► **GOD DOES AMAZING THINGS** and record miracles we witness this week.

Have kids find this week’s Daily Challenges on their Bible Buzz page and choose one to do this week. They can choose one or more of these three options:

- Write an amazing thing you see each day on the “Altar of Praise” on your Bible Buzz page.
- Write a poem about the way God does amazing things.
- Thank God for the amazing people and things he’s given you.

Make sure you choose a Daily Challenge as well, and tell kids what you chose. Kids will be more inclined to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same.

Talk With Kids

Ask:

- What’s a practical way you’re going to do your Daily Challenge? Share a time, a place, or other ideas. Allow time.

Say: Abraham experienced God’s amazing miracles firsthand. It’ll be exciting for all of us to watch for the way ► **GOD DOES AMAZING THINGS** as we follow through on our Daily Challenges this week.

Daily Challenges
Supplies

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Bible Buzz





Weaving Faith at Home

Encourage kids to talk with their parents about the Daily Challenges they chose and what they learned about the amazing things God's done in the past and in their daily lives. Kids can also do the activities in the "HomeConnect" section of their Bible Buzz pages with their families.

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families. Available at group.com/digital.

Say: As you're leaving today, take the cup you put in the altar and keep it somewhere you'll see it throughout the week. It'll remind you to keep watch for the amazing things God does.

Pray: God, thank you for the amazing things you've done and continue to do. Help us keep watch for the amazing things you do in our lives. In Jesus' name, amen.