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# ABRAHAM: UNDER THE BLESSING OF GOD

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Grade Level:5-6 /10-12y



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## **Catholic Religious Education: Abraham Becomes A Blessing**

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### **Key Words**

Abraham, blessing, presence of God, helpful support

### **Competences/Learning Outcomes**

- Pupils can recount what blessing meant to Abraham.
- Pupils can express what blessing means to them.
- Pupils can reflect on blessing as a promise of God's presence.
- Pupils can identify blessings as a helpful support from God's presence.

### **Grade level**

5-6 /10-12y



## Descriptions



Catholic Religious Education: Abraham Becomes A Blessing

**Relation to life:** Blessing and benediction hardly play a role in the secular environment of the students, even though many Catholic students are probably familiar with the sign of the cross as an outward sign of blessing and benediction. With the Abraham narrative, the actual meaning of blessing as a promise and assurance of God is to be deepened.

**Textual reference:** Two passages are central here: "I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore." (Gen 22:17) and: Now the Lord said to Abram: 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you [...], and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'" (Gen 12:1-3)

**Theological reference:** Similar to the corresponding Hebrew and Greek expressions, the Latin word *benedictio*, "I bless you", originally also meant the solemn praise of God (cf. Eph 1:3-14), as well as the God-centredness of creation and creatures. In this sense, blessing refers to God's action on human beings and thus also includes the request that God's presence may prevail in creation, which is in need of salvation - also concretely biological, e.g. Gen 1:28 or in relation to Abraham Gen 22:17. Therefore, things can also be blessed or consecrated. Moreover, Abraham himself becomes a blessing for his fellow human beings and the generations that follow him (Gen 12:1-3). Not least because of this, both of Jesus' genealogies refer to Abraham (Mt 1:2; Lk 3:34) and even today's designation of the "Abrahamic religions" makes this connection clear.

**Ritual reference:** The closeness of God expressed by his blessing can be requested for oneself and promised to others by every baptized and confirmed person. Certain liturgical forms of blessing require a special commission depending on the ordained ministry, especially when a sacrament is administered through them, for example the Anointing of the sick by the priest and Confirmation by the bishop. Furthermore, in Catholic Christianity the bodily dimension of the blessing is explicitly emphasized and finds expression in gestures, e.g. crucifying oneself, in bodily postures, e.g. kneeling, and also in (field) walks. The Aaronic blessing (Num 6:22-27) was made possible again by the Second Vatican Council.



## First Phase: Development of the Topic in Own Subject Lessons

Teaching Steps	Catholic Religious Education
<b>Overall Lesson Objectives / Competences for the Forum</b>	Students can explain and present what blessing means for Abraham and what blessing means for them personally.  <i>Presentation Material:</i> <a href="#">M3/E</a>
<b>Entry</b>	Teacher shows Abraham picture M5/E; The image becomes accessible through the following system of questions (Lange, Bilder des Glaubens): 1. What can be seen? 2. How is the image constructed? 3. What does the image trigger in you? 4. What needs explanation? 5. What is the artist's intention? 6. Where do you find yourselves in the picture?
<b>Elaboration I</b>	PA: Students connect picture and statements from Gen 12:1-3 and Gen 22:7 with arrows (M5/E)
<b>Fuse I</b>	Students mark results on the Overhead projector.
<b>Elaboration II</b>	Students consider what blessing for Abraham means, where and how Abraham experienced God's blessing and write one example each on a star (M3/E).
<b>Fuse II</b>	Students pin stars to the sky.
<b>Elaboration III</b>	Teacher puts word card M1a in the middle. Students comment on what blessing can mean today.  Each student fills in the folding card M2a.
<b>Fuse III</b>	Presentation of the results.
<b>Consolidation / Completion</b>	Students sing the song M4: "Viel Glück und viel Segen" (if necessary, teacher repeats the meaning of blessing based on the song text). Each students can design a whole page with the cover of the folding cards.

## Second and Third Phase: Presentation and Exchange in Mixed Small Groups at Stations

- Find these phases in the "Guidance for Teachers" on:

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## Fourth Phase: Reflection in Own Subject

- Find these phases in the "Guidance for Teachers" on:

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## Material



[M1] Word Cards

M 1a /b Word Cards

**BLESSING**

**PROMISE**

M 1c Text Card

**God says to Abraham:  
I will make of you a great nation,  
and I will bless you and make your name great,  
so that you will be a blessing.**

(Genesis 12:2)





[M2] Folding Cards

**M 2a Folding Card for Blessing (inside)**

<p><i>Blessing</i> means to me ...</p>	Here I've been <i>blessed</i> ...
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**M 2b Folding Card for Genesis 18:1-15: Three men visit Abraham and Sarah ... (inside)**

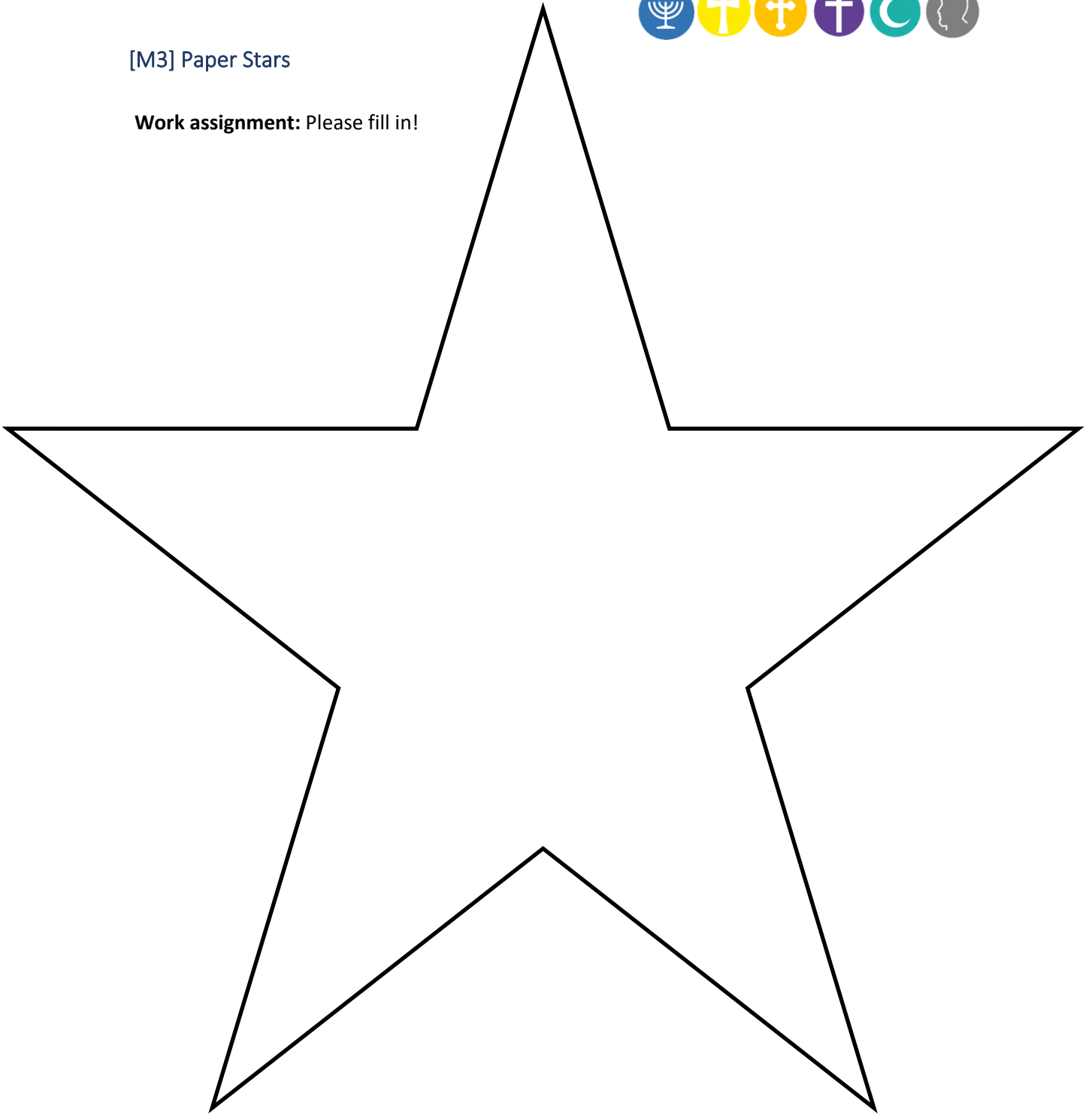
Draw what you hear!	
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[M3] Paper Stars

**Work assignment:** Please fill in!





[M4] "Viel Glück und viel Segen" – A German Birthday Song

Viel Glück und viel Segen, auf all deinen Wegen, Gesundheit und Frohsinn, sei auch mit dabei.

The song can be played on Youtube:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bx\\_UUKfWWOw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bx_UUKfWWOw)

Translation:

Much happiness and blessing / on a-ll your wa-ys, may health and prosperity (sometimes also: cheerfulness) / be there as well.

**Work assignments and impulse questions (especially for ethics lessons):**

1. Who knows this song/has sung/heard it before?
2. On what occasion is it sung?
3. What should be expressed by singing the song?
4. Why are birthday wishes considered special?

**Possible impulse questions for classroom dialogue:**

- "in all your ways": How is this different from short-term wishes?
- "Happiness": Happiness in life means ...
- "Health", "cheerfulness": Why are these important life wishes? What else could be part of it? What would you wish for?
- "Blessing": What could be meant by wishing someone a blessing?
- From whom/through what could we receive something like blessings?
- What might we mean by a "blessed life"?
- By what right/meaning can someone wish me happiness for the whole of my life? What does it depend on? Who guarantees it? ...
- Why then do we sing happiness and blessings to each other with this song?







## [M5] Abraham's Promise



Now the Lord said to Abram: 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you [...], and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'" (Gen 12:1-3)

The Lord said to Abraham: "I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore." (Gen 22:17)

### Work assignments:

- Underline all the statements in the two passages of the Bible that appear in the 6th century picture.
- Match the statements that you have underlined to the sections of the picture with arrows.

Write down in your own words what blessing means to Abraham.



## Expectation horizons for the materials

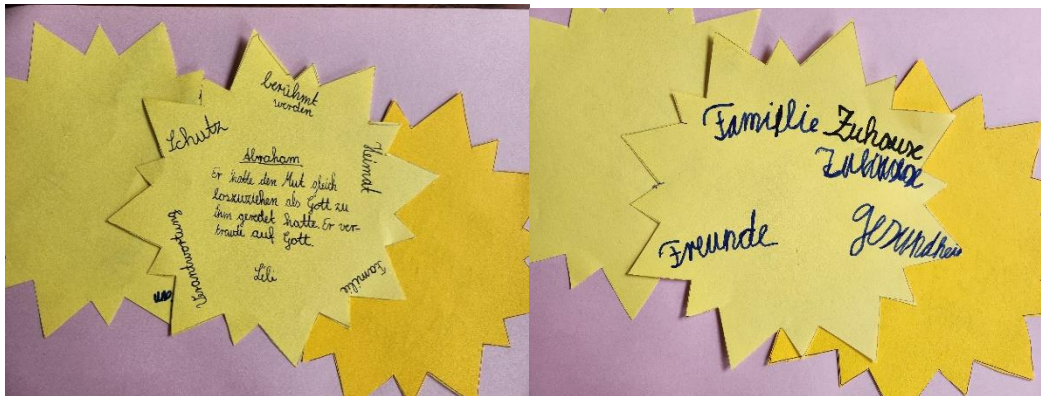


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### M3/E:

What blessing means to Abraham: "God's protection and companionship on the way from Ur to Canaan (Gen 12:1-9); that God wants a great nation to arise from him (Gen 12:2); that God wants to make him famous (Gen 12:2); that God wants to bless people through Abraham (Gen 12:3); that he can pass on God's blessing (Gen 12:3)"

Examples for securing results M3/E:



Blessing for Abraham  
and Sarah

There I have  
experienced  
blessings





Designing a booklet page with the tops of the folding cards

**M5/E:**

Now the Lord said to Abram: 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you [...], and in you all the families of the earth



The Lord said to Abraham: "I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore." (Gen 22:17)



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[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bx\\_UUKfWWOw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bx_UUKfWWOw).

## Picture Credits

M4 Lyrics and melody from Werner Gneist

M5 Wiener Genesis, manuscript from the 6th century, National Library of Austria

M3/E Photos: Eva Jenny Korneck

