
ABRAHAM: UNDER THE BLESSING OF GOD

Grade Level:5-6 /10-12y



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Orthodox Religious Education: Abraham's Call

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Key Words

Abraham, relationship, trust, blessing, greeting

Competences/Learning Outcomes

- Student will learn what a blessing is to Abraham and express what is a blessing to them.
- Students understand Abraham's belief as an example for trust.
- Students know words for blessings from other religions.

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Descriptions



Orthodox Religious Education:

Abraham's Call

Relation to life: The students can recognise the appearance of God in people's lives as His apocalypse, His promises (*epaggelies*) for the salvation of all people and His call to everyone, personally, and understand that everyone is free to respond to His call and live according to His will. It shows the personal and direct (one-to-one) relationship between God and human beings. Abraham is called "God's friend" because of his faith and obedience in God. Faith is to be understood as trust: Believe in God - trust God. The students do not perceive faith in God as a formality to obey laws and ordinances, but as a relationship of trust in God that is expressed with the life attitude. They experience God as a friend whom they can trust and who stands by them in their difficulties. This relationship enables humans to change their life and become a true partner with God and a creator. One of the changes in life is the change of name, combined with the change into a new person with new attitudes, following the will of God. God gives to all people His gifts: Love and Hope; here lies the deeper meaning of the word "blessing". In the generous hospitality that Abraham offered (the so-called "Abrahamic hospitality"), the students can see that faith is hospitality of God.

Textual reference: The main passages here are God's call to Abraham and His promises to him (Gen 12:1-3, 7; 13:14-17; 15:1,4-5,7, 18-21; 17:1-8;15; 18:15-16, 19-22). Abraham's obedience and immediate response to God's call (Gen 12:4-6, 8-9; 13:18; 15:6;). The change of Abram's and Sara's names (Gen 17:5,15). The three angels (Gen. 18:1-18). Abraham as an example of faith (Rom 4:1-25). Christ as a descendant of Abraham (Gal. 3:16).

Theological reference: Throughout the Old Testament, the promises (*epaggelies*) of God are the key to salvation, and Israel is the people of the promises. After Abraham accepted God's call, all his descendants encounter the fulfilment of God's promises (Gen 12:1-3,7; 13:14-17; 15:1,4-5,7,18-21; 17:1-8;15; 18:15-16,19-22). The story of Abraham in the Genesis narrative is based on the pattern: "God calls - the people answer". Abraham obeys God because he trusts Him and not out of fear; because his obedience and trust in God are inseparable. The journey of Abraham to the Promised Land by God reminds us of our journey during our human life on earth towards the Kingdom of God.



God's promises are connected with His providence for all humanity (universality of the covenant). God promises Abraham land (Gen 12), descendants (Gen 13), heirs (Gen 15), a son by Sara (Gen 18), but, mainly relationship with Him (Gen 17) and in return asks for Abraham's faith. Among the consequences that the relationship with God brings in life is the change of Abram's name as he becomes a new man (17:5). Abraham was the first to see the Holy Trinity (Gen 18:1) in the three strangers, whom he recognised as bearers of God's will. In the tradition of the Orthodox Church, the visit of the three angels is the first appearance (revelation) of the Triune God. This is evident in Gen 18 where they are referred as one person (Gen 18:10; 18:13; 18:15; 18:20; 18:26). St Paul in Hebr. 13,2 calls them "angels" because they announced important news to Abraham and Sara. He also refers to Abraham as "father of faith" (Rom. 4:11) and that the offspring God promised to Abraham is ultimately Christ (Gal 3:16).

Ritual reference: Abraham accepted the covenant with God wholeheartedly. So God changed his name from Abram (=the wonderful father), to Abraham (=the father of many). According to the beliefs of the people of that time, whoever gave someone a name had absolute power over them. When someone changed another person's name, it meant that the purpose and role of their life also changed. Today, when a person changes their role in life and dedicates themselves to God, for example becoming a monk or a nun, they change their name. In the Divine Liturgy is said that Christians "place their whole life in the hands of Christ", just as Abraham placed/entrusted his whole life in the hands of God.



First Phase: Development of the Topic in Own Subject Lessons

Teaching Steps	Orthodox Religious Education
Overall Lesson Objectives / Competences for the Encounter Day	The school students will learn what blessing means to Abraham and express what is a blessing for them.
Introductory phase	The teacher shows a picture of Abraham (M12). The school students answer the following questions (artful thinking): What do they see? What do they feel? What are they thinking?
Elaboration I	The school students depict their own image with Abraham and God, on the topic of Abraham's blessing from God.
Fuse I	The school students present their results and put up their paintings in the special space they had created.
Elaboration II	The teacher writes a greeting from another religion inside a heart. The heart symbolizes the love we should show to other people (M13).
Fuse II	The school students present their results.
Elaboration III	The teacher writes on the board a greeting sentence "God be with you". Then the school students in groups, are asked to write a poem about how they feel and what they think about this greeting.
Fuse III	The school students present their results to the plenary. Then they vote for the best poem and with the help of the music teacher they try to sing it.
Consolidation / Completion	The school students sit at a circle and each one says a greeting from another religion.

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



[M12] Picture of Abraham

A. Genesis Chapter 12,1-3

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.'

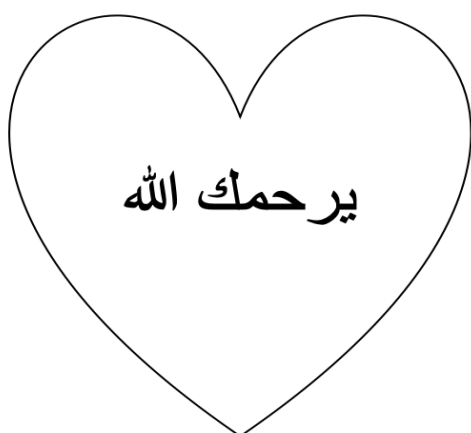


B. What is a blessing for me: (Use only one word)





[M13] Blessing Hearts



Bibliography

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