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Altars, Altars Everywhere

Key References: Genesis 11:27-12:9; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chap. 11, pp. 125-131; *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 1, pp. 138-147; Our Beliefs, nos. 21, 17, 3.















powertext

"Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me" (John 12:26).

Imagine that half your family is moving away. You can choose to go or to stay. How would you feel about leaving them—and your friends—to go somewhere you knew nothing about?

powerpoint

We can serve God wherever He leads us.

Lot faced an important decision. For someone so young, it seemed that changes were always coming his way. And they weren't always happy changes. Sometimes they were pretty scary.

First, his father, Haran, had died at an early age. Lot went to live with his grandfather Terah. Then Terah moved the entire family out of the city of Ur, where Lot's father was buried. Lot had to pack up and leave his birthplace, his friends, everything!

Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 47.



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Sunday

READ Read Genesis 11:27–30 and this week's story, "Altars, Altars Everywhere."

LEARN Begin to memorize the power text.

RESEARCH Use an encyclopedia, concordance, or Bible dictionary to find out as much as possible about altars. Write, in your Bible study journal, what you find.

PRAY Ask God to help you be willing to follow His leading.

Monday

READ Read Genesis 11:31, 32.

THINK Why is Abram's family background important?

CREATE Draw Abram's family tree, starting with Terah.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God for your own family.

Tuesday

READ Read Genesis 12:1–3.

THINK How did Abram know that this message came from God?

REFLECT Think about a time God sent you a message that led you to do some special service for Him.

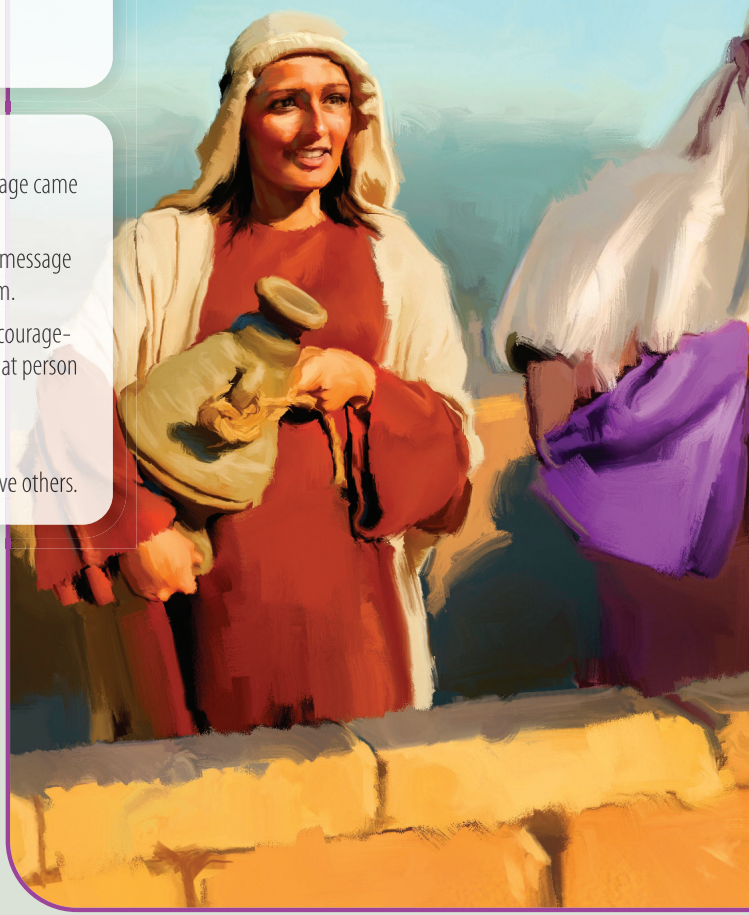
SERVE Find someone who needs help or encouragement. Allow God to use you to reach out to that person through acts of kindness.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God for empowering you to serve others.

In the company of his grandfather and his two uncles, Nahor and Abram, Lot set out for the land of Canaan. The most direct way to Canaan would have been to go across the Arabian Desert, but that was impossible. No one would have survived that. Instead they set out on an indirect route up the great Euphrates River. Along the way, after traveling 600 miles, they settled in a city called Haran.

Life in their new home brought with it more changes in the family. In their



homeland they had been faithful to God and had followed His leading. Regretfully, however, when they settled in the land of Haran some of them began to worship other gods. Little by little they adopted the practices of the surrounding people.

After Grandfather Terah died, God told Abram, Lot's uncle, to go on to Canaan. This was where they had been headed in the first place. It was time, Abram said, to move again.

Everyone knew that Abram was faithful to God. If he said God had brought him a message, it was not something that could be ignored. Now he said that God had warned him of the dangers of staying where they were. But Canaan sounded so distant, so different from



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Wednesday

READ Read Genesis 12:4, 5.

THINK Who were the people Abram took with him? What can you learn from Abram and his people about leaving everything behind to serve where God calls you?

LIST In your Bible study journal, list three people for whom you can do something special and ways you can help them. Surprise one person each day for the next three days by doing what you listed.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask that God will bless the people in your life through your acts of service.

Thursday

READ Read Genesis 12:6, 7.

FIND In your Bible, find two other people who served God and others in a strange land. How did their service differ from Abram's? How was it the same?

BUILD Build an altar out of simple materials. Write out the power text, including the reference, and place it on your altar.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to give you ideas about how to leave the world a better place because of your service for Him.

Friday

READ Read Genesis 12:8, 9.

THINK Why do you think Abram built an altar wherever he pitched his tent? What were some of the advantages for Abram and the people around him of having an altar to worship God?

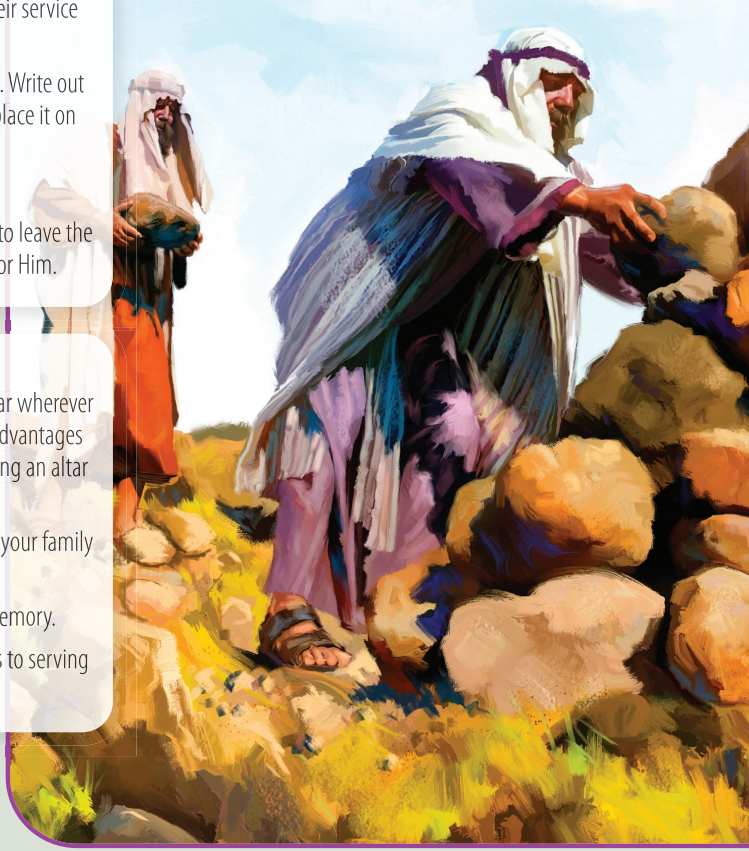
DISCUSS Brainstorm about service activities your family can do together in your area.

SHARE Repeat the power text aloud from memory.

PRAY Kneel together and dedicate your lives to serving God wherever He leads you as a family.

what the family was used to. Instead of living in solid, comfortable homes, with four walls and a roof, they might be spending the rest of their lives in flimsy tents. And the people who lived in that place were known to be even more wicked than the people of Haran. Why would this decision to go on to Canaan be a good idea? Lot's uncle Nahor declared that he and his family were staying in Haran.

Abram and his wife, Sarai, and their family prepared to leave. As they packed their belongings, they urged Lot to come with them. "God has made us a promise," Abram said. "He told me: 'I will make you



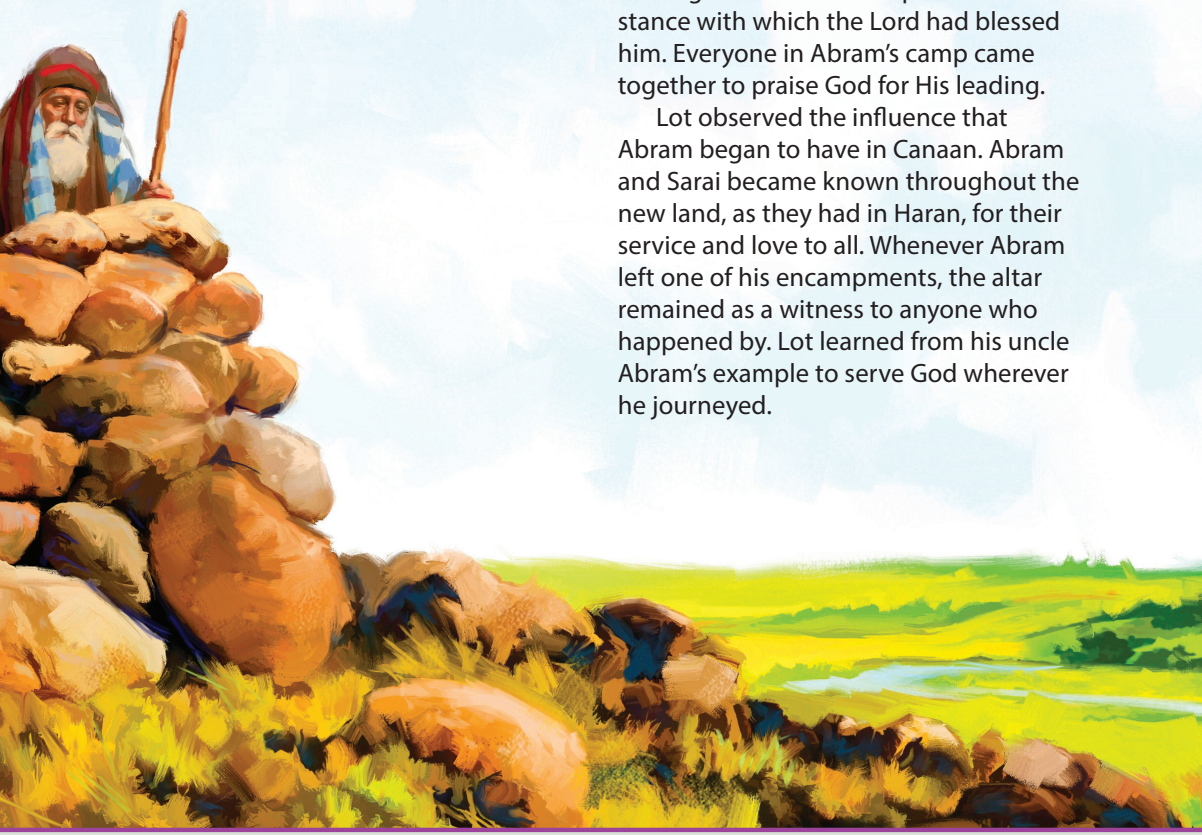
into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing' (Genesis 12:2). If we follow His leading, our people will become a great nation. God said this, and I believe Him."

Lot was torn. Whom should he follow? Finally, when Abram was ready to leave, Lot decided to go with him. Throughout this great migration to Canaan, however, Abram never claimed to be a great leader. Wherever he went, Abram always acknowledged that God, his heavenly Father, was the leader of His people. When they reached a place called Shechem, they camped in a broad, grassy valley. It was a beautiful, fertile area, known for its grainfields and orchards. To show his thanks for God's leading, Abram built an altar.

Canaan had long been the home of a people who worshipped idols. As Abram further explored Canaan, he came across many altars that were built to honor false gods. The Canaanites had actually offered human sacrifices on these altars. In these surroundings Abram boldly placed his own altars for the worship of the one true God.

Wherever Abram pitched his tent, he immediately set up an altar to God and called his people to worship. These were joyful celebrations. Abram felt responsible to give back to God a part of the substance with which the Lord had blessed him. Everyone in Abram's camp came together to praise God for His leading.

Lot observed the influence that Abram began to have in Canaan. Abram and Sarai became known throughout the new land, as they had in Haran, for their service and love to all. Whenever Abram left one of his encampments, the altar remained as a witness to anyone who happened by. Lot learned from his uncle Abram's example to serve God wherever he journeyed.



PUZZLE 6

THE CALL

Instructions: To find the three-word answer to this puzzle, place the correct three-, four-, and five-letter words in the blank spaces of the seven-letter words. Each of the seven-letter words is found in Genesis 12, and the verses are listed for you. You have been given one of the answers to get you started. When you have placed each of these in the correct spaces, take the letters in the shaded boxes and place them in the boxes on the right. These 10 letters give you the three-word answer.

Puzzle Clue: The story of Abram shows us what is expected of us when __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __.

