

YEAR B | QUARTER 3

4

Nothing Is Impossible

Community
We reflect God's love in our families.

POWER TEXT

"Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son" (Genesis 18:14, NIV).

KEY REFERENCES

- Genesis 18:1-16; 21:1-7
- *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chap. 12, pp. 137-139
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 1, pp. 159-161
- Student lesson on page 52 of this guide

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 3, The Father
- No. 21, Stewardship
- No. 22, Christian Behavior

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** that God fulfills His promises.
- **Feel** that nothing is impossible with God.
- **Respond** by sharing with others what God has done for us.

POWERPOINT

God keeps His promises and blesses our families.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Three travelers approach Abraham and Sarah's tents. When Abraham sees the travelers, he freely extends the courtesy of hospitality to meet their physical needs. They get the gift free; they don't have to ask for it. God also gives His gift (of a child) to Abraham and Sarah freely, without being asked to do so. Both gifts, given without being asked for, reflect God's caring character. God wants to fulfill His promises and to bless our families.

This is a lesson about community.

Abraham and Sarah were too old to have children. Hebrews 11 says they were "past childbearing age," unable to bear children, "as good as dead" (verses 11, 12, NIV). Only God could have fulfilled this promise. Abraham and Sarah couldn't do it by themselves. God is doing for us what is impossible for us to do for ourselves because He wants to bless each family.

Teacher Enrichment

Abraham's hospitality to the visitors—The following are characteristic of Bedouin hospitality:

• The almost royal honors paid to a chance visitor no matter how inconvenient the time, in this case the time of midday rest (a custom in the Middle East at that time and still practiced in some parts of the world today).

• The assurance that the visit is an honor to the host or even a providence.

• The lavish meal provided.

Did Abraham recognize the identity of his visitors? Abraham addressed one of the visitors as *My Lord*. The Hebrew word used is not *Yahweh*, but *Adonai*, equivalent to "Sir." However, note the following: "Two of the heavenly messengers departed, leaving Abraham alone with Him whom he now knew to be the Son of God" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 139).

Welcome

Welcome students at the door and direct them to their seats. Ask them how their week has been. Encourage learners to study their Sabbath School lesson regularly, and use several minutes to debrief students on the previous week's lesson.

Ask: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful? Which activity was the most fun?** Invite students to share their experiences and/or the handiworks they created for Sabbath School during the week. (The leader should be familiar with the previous lesson to be able to direct the discussion.) This is also a good time to have students recite the power text.

Have students begin the Readiness Activity of your choice.

Program notes

LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	Ongoing	Greet students at the door. Ask about their week.	
1 Readiness	10-15	*A. Impossible!*	two or three balloons, cellophane tape, felt-tip marker, straight pin
		B. Delayed Promise	Bibles, materials for a game the students like
* Prayer & Praise	15-20	See page 47. Prayer & Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, world map, pushpins, offering box/basket
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story	
		Experiencing the Story	Bibles, paper, pens/pencils
		Exploring the Bible	Bibles, paper, pens/pencils, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*Scenario*	Bibles
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*Break It!*	Bibles, inexpensive gifts, telephone book OR piece of wood
* Closing		A. Prayer and Closing Comments B. Reminder to Parents C. Coming Up Next Week	

1

READINESS ACTIVITIES

Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.

A

YOU NEED:
- ☐ two or three balloons
- ☐ cellophane tape
- ☐ felt-tip marker
- ☐ straight pin

Impossible!

Blow up two balloons and tie them. Draw a frowning face on one balloon. Pick up a straight pin and break the balloon. Draw a happy face on the second balloon. Then stick a two-inch piece of cellophane tape on it.

Hold up the straight pin. Say: **It seems impossible to poke a balloon with a pin and not have it pop. Let's try it and see what happens.** Carefully push a straight pin into the center of the tape on the balloon. Be sure the pin goes straight into the tape. The tape should resist the pin and keep the balloon from popping. Carefully remove the pin, and place another piece of tape over the pinhole. Let students take turns pushing the pin into the tape on the balloon, then covering the pinholes with more tape.

Debriefing

Ask: **What made this experiment hard? What made the experiment easy? Is there anything too hard for God to do? Of what are we reminded through God's promises? Let's say together our power text, Genesis 18:14:**

"Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son" (Genesis 18:14, NIV).

God made a promise to Abraham. No promise is too hard for God to keep. We need to remember that

God keeps His promises and blesses our families.

(Adapted from *The Children's Worker's Encyclopedia of Bible-teaching Ideas: Old Testament* [Loveland, Colo.: Group, 1997], pp. 18-20. Used by permission.)

B

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ materials for a game the students like

Delayed Promise

Select an activity (or substitute a treat) that your students really enjoy. Promise them at the beginning of Sabbath School that today they are really going to enjoy the activity (or treat), then put it off and continue with the regular program. Mention it again two or three times, but don't do it. Wait until you're near the end of the class, then finally do it. Afterward, debrief.

Debriefing

Ask: **How did you feel when it was getting close to the end of class and we still had not done the activity I promised to you? What did you think when we finally did? Now think of God's promise to Abraham and Sarah. Did God fulfill His promise to them right away?** (See Genesis 18:1-14.) **Why? What was God's purpose in allowing them to wait on Him for so long? When will the promise of salvation be fulfilled? Let's say together our power text, Genesis 18:14:**

"Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son" (Genesis 18:14, NIV).

Ask: **What does the answer to this question mean to us? Let's remember that**

God keeps His promises and blesses our families.

Prayer & Praise

Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). If they have given you permission, share one or two special items from students' Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"No Other Love" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 20)
"God Is So Good" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 33)
"He's Able" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 100)

Mission

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map
- ☐ pushpins

Use Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults (go to www.juniorpowerpoints.org and click on MISSION) or another mission report available to you. Using a world map, have the students identify and mark with pushpins the location where the mission story is taking place.

Offering

YOU NEED:
- ☐ offering box/basket

Continue to use the box covered with faces of people. Say: **God wants us to share the message of His love both in our home country and in other lands. While we may not be able to go to another land to share God's love, through our offerings & Prayers we can support those who do go.**

Prayer

Ask several class members to tell about good gifts they have received recently and describe their response to the giver. Then suggest that class members think about at least two of God's gifts to them and offer a silent prayer of thanksgiving for those two specific gifts. Close with a prayer for the students' joys and sorrows, for the birthday and other special event celebrants, as well as for the visitors.

Notes

2

BIBLE LESSON

Introducing the Bible Story

Call on volunteers to mention several of their goals or dreams for life. What specific things do they hope to receive, accomplish, or earn? Then lead into a discussion by asking the following: **How would you feel if Jesus were to visit you personally and promise that your fondest dream would be fulfilled—but He did not tell you when? What difference would it make in how you lived your life?**

YOU NEED:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pens/pencils

Experiencing the Story

Read Genesis 18:1-16 and Genesis 21:1-7 aloud together as a class. Then give students paper and pens/pencils. Allow them to work together if they wish. Say: **Imagine for a few moments that you lived back during the time of Abraham and Sarah and you had heard that they had a baby in their old age. Suppose that you had known them over the years before Isaac was born. Write a short news article based on what you discovered from this story—Genesis 18:1-16; 21:1-7. What was the attitude of Abraham and Sarah during the years of waiting for God to fulfill His promise to them?**

Allow five to 10 minutes. When finished, ask for two or three volunteers to share their articles.

Debriefing

Ask: **What did God promise Abraham and Sarah? Why did Sarah think having a baby was impossible? How do you think she felt when she realized that God's promise to her was being fulfilled at age 90? What does Sarah's experience teach us about God's ability to do the impossible?**

Say: **Nothing is impossible for God because God is all-powerful. Even if something looks impossible to us, God can make it happen! As our power point reminds us:**

God keeps His promises and blesses our families.

3

APPLYING THE LESSON

Exploring the Bible

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pens/pencils
- ☐ white/chalkboard
- ☐ markers/chalk

Divide students into class groups. Distribute paper and pencils. Write the following promises where all can see. Ask each group to find and read the promises, and then have a scribe in each group write what seems impossible to human minds about each promise, and how God fulfills the promise.

Promises: Psalm 34:10; Psalm 84:11; Isaiah 40:29; Isaiah 41:17; Matthew 6:30; Matthew 11:28; Mark 9:23; Mark 10:27; John 14:13; Titus 1:2.

When each group has completed its work, make a master list of seeming impossibilities and God's grace on the board with input from each of the classes.

Debriefing

Say: **Let's say together our power text, Genesis 18:14:**

"Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son" (Genesis 18:14, NIV).

Let's remember that God can do the impossible. He can and will do all that He has promised. The power point reminds us that

God keeps His promises and blesses our families.

Accommodations for students with special needs

Have students with visual impairments sit near the board or prepare for them ahead of time a handout, listing the Bible references.

Scenario

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles

Relate the following scenario to the students: **Janice wasn't listening much to what the preacher was saying. She did hear however one important truth, and that is that God promises to save us. That started her thinking again about how it was possible for God, who is perfect, to save imperfect people, like all of us. Sometimes she thought that it was impossible for God to save her.**

Debriefing

Ask: **How do you know it is possible for God to save imperfect people? Can God save Janice?** Ask someone to read Matthew 19:26. Have the students repeat once again the power text, Genesis 18:14:

"Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son" (Genesis 18:14, NIV).

Ask: **What hope or encouragement would you give Janice? How might you explain God's promise of salvation to her? Remember the message of the power point:**

God keeps His promises and blesses our families.

4

SHARING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ inexpensive gifts
- ☐ telephone book OR piece of wood

Break It!

Invite students to share with the class their experiences from the past week. Ask: **How did you experience that God keeps His promises? Did you tell someone about God's faithfulness in keeping His promises? Did you have a chance to do an act of kindness for someone?**

Bring out a thick telephone book or a hard, tough piece of wood. Tell the students that anyone who can break it will get something special. (Make sure it is impossible to do this.) Allow everyone who wishes to try breaking it. When they are all through and no one has been able to break it, say: **No one was able to break it, so no one earned the gift. But that's OK. I'll give you each a gift anyway, even though you couldn't do this. It's a free gift from me to you.** Then give students a special gift (an inexpensive gift you know they will like).

Debriefing

Once all have received a gift, ask: **How did it feel when you couldn't do what was required to get the gift? How did you feel when you got the gift anyway? Let's read Romans 6:23 and Ephesians 2:8, 9.** (Read them.) **How is this like or unlike God's grace? What did you have to do to get the gift today?** (accept it) **How can you receive God's blessings?** (by accepting Him as a personal Savior and Friend) Say: **God has promised to save us, and He can and will keep that promise as long as we accept it. Let's repeat the power point once again:**

God keeps His promises and blesses our families.

Closing

Prayer and closing comments:

Say: **Let's join hands & Pray. We'll thank God that all things are possible for Him.** Pray: **Dear God, we thank You for being strong and wise and more powerful than anyone or anything. Please help us to trust You, to remember that nothing is impossible with You! In Jesus' name, amen.**

Reminder to parents:

Say: **Check out the student Bible study guide to find Parents' Pages for your use in family worship, or however you wish to use them to spiritually guide your children. You may listen to the podcast of the lesson online at www .juniorpowerpoints.org/podcast.php?channel =1.**

Coming up next week:

Say: **Abraham's plan results in pain. God wants us to love even in difficult times.**

Notes

Student lesson

Nothing Is Impossible

Do you have a little brother or sister? If so, how did you feel when your parents told you that a baby would be added to your family? Did it seem like a long time before the baby was born? Were you very excited? Abraham and Sarah were even more excited when their baby was born. They had waited a long time!

The hot sun blazed down on the landscape. Everything was very still. The animals lay bunched together in the shade, their tails flicking away the occasional fly. Even the birds were quiet, resting. Abraham sat in the doorway of his tent. His eyes were heavy. But something caught his half-closed eyes.

What was that? He squinted. Travelers were coming. It was an odd time of the day for travelers. They would be hot and tired. Probably hungry too. Abraham got to his feet. "Sarah!" he called. "There are three strangers approaching." Abraham strode briskly out to meet them.

Abraham bowed low before the men, showing respect and great courtesy. "If I have found favor in your eyes, my lord," he said, "do not pass your servant by. Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way—now that you have come to your servant" (Genesis 18:3-5, NIV).

The three strangers smiled at each other. It was wonderful to be in the company of a kind and generous man. "Very well," they replied, "do as you say."

Abraham made sure his guests were comfortably seated, and then he hurried back into the tent to ask Sarah for help to prepare the food. "Quick," he said to her, "get three seahs [approximately 22 pounds, or 10 kilograms] of the finest flour and knead it and bake some bread" (verses 5, 6, NIV). Then Abraham ran out to his herd. He picked out a fat calf and gave it to a servant to prepare.

The preparations took awhile. Baking the bread. Cooking the meat. In the meantime the servants brought water to wash the strangers' dusty feet.

When the food was ready, Abraham himself served the men. He had given them the very best food he had: cheese curds, milk, and roasted meat.

One of the men looked up. "Where is your wife Sarah?" he asked.

Abraham was surprised by the question.

The man continued. "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son" (verses 9, 10, NIV).

Abraham's surprise evaporated. A twinkle appeared in his eye. He had a pretty good idea now just who the Person that was talking to him was! It was the same Person who had first promised him a son 25 years earlier!

Sarah stood behind the tent curtains. It was the only place where she could hear the conversation going on outside, because women weren't allowed to mingle with male guests. She laughed to herself when she heard the Stranger's words.

For 25 years Abraham had told her over and over that she would have a son. She used to have hope. But she was 89 years old now! *How can an old woman like me have a baby?* she thought.

Suddenly Sarah stiffened. "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child, now that I am old?' " the Stranger asked Abraham. "Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son" (verses 13, 14, NIV).

Sarah slid out of the tent and uttered the very first words that came to mind. "I did not laugh," she said. She was embarrassed and confused.

"Yes, you did laugh," the Stranger replied kindly (verse 15, NIV). Because He was who He was, He couldn't let a lie slip by. But He could forgive one.

Sarah realized that the Lord Himself had come to strengthen her and give her faith. God Himself was here in her front yard! And His words lodged deep in her heart. God, who had made everything out of nothing, could give her a child! Of course He could! Her very own child! What she wanted more than anything else in the whole world! Tears stung Sarah's eyes as she stepped back into the privacy of her tent. Tears of forgiveness. Tears of hope. Tears of joy.

KEY REFERENCES

- Genesis 18:1-16; 21:1-7
- *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chap. 12, pp. 137-139
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 1, pp. 159-161
- Our Beliefs, nos. 3, 21, 22

POWER TEXT

"Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son" (Genesis 18:14, NIV).

POWER POINT

God keeps His promises and blesses our families.







Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 33.

Sunday

READ Read Genesis 18:1-5 and this week's story, "Nothing Is Impossible."

MAKE On a long, narrow piece of paper, write the power text in the form of a question mark (?). Add a colorful border, then cut it out and put it where you will see it often (on your door, on the bathroom mirror, etc.). Review it every day this week.

PRAY Ask God to help you trust Him in everything.

Monday

READ Read Genesis 18:6-10.

WRITE In your Bible study journal, tell why you think that Abraham went out in the heat of the day and offered help to the three men without their asking for it.

DO Prepare a meal for your family. Make it as special as you know how.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God for His blessings and for the opportunities He gives us to reach out to others.

Tuesday

READ Read Genesis 18:11-16.

THINK Sometimes we may hesitate to ask God for some blessings because they seem impossible.

READ Read Isaiah 40:29; Matthew 11:28; and Titus 1:2. Based on these verses, what impossible promise has He made that you would like Him to fulfill for you?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Take a moment now and thank God for doing for you what you cannot do for yourself.

Wednesday

READ Read Genesis 21:1-7.

WRITE You just read about the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham and Sarah. In your Bible study journal, write about a promise to you that has been fulfilled. Is it a promise from God, or a promise from a person?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to help you see all the promises that He has already fulfilled for you—His gifts of grace to you.

Thursday

READ Read Psalm 34:10.

DO After reviewing the story of Abraham and Sarah, think about how you can share the story of God's grace with others. For example, think of a deed of kindness that you can secretly do for someone, even though that person may have been unkind to you. See what happens.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God that you may share with others His blessings.

Friday

READ Read Ephesians 2:8-10.

WALK Take a walk in some natural surroundings—in a park, perhaps. Observe as many things as possible that could be considered gifts from God to you.

REPEAT Say the power text aloud from memory.

PRAY When you are in a quiet place, say or write a prayer to thank God for the many gifts of His love. Remember, being saved is the greatest gift of all!