

A Covenant and a Commission

Theme Lesson

PREPARATION

Objective

Students will understand how God's purpose is reflected in both the Great Commission and the covenant with Abraham.

Outcomes

1. Students will understand how God's covenant with Abraham is linked to the Great Commission.
2. Students will realize that telling others is God's plan and command to all believers.

Directions

1. Find out the population of your city and country.
2. Preview the "Math Sample Chart."
3. Review the Theme Lesson, scripture references, and response. Consider how this lesson will apply to your unique group of students.
4. Review the "Key Word Wheel," definitions, and verses. Consider which words relate to this lesson. Suggested: "Purpose," "People," and "Proclamation."

**PREPARATION: 15 min.****TEACHING: 35 min.**

Materials

- Bibles
- "Math Sample Chart" (p. 2)
- "Key Word Wheel" poster (Introduction p. 6)
- "Key Word Cards" (Introduction pp. 7-8)
- simple calculator
- chalkboard or dry erase board
- chalk or dry erase marker
- lined paper
- pencils or pens

Math Sample Chart

City Population: _____

How many years? _____

Country Population: _____

How many years? _____

$2 \times 1 = 2$	6 months
$2 \times 2 = 4$	6 months
$4 \times 2 = 8$	6 months
$8 \times 2 = 16$	6 months
$16 \times 2 = 32$	6 months
$32 \times 2 = 64$	6 months
$64 \times 2 = 128$	6 months
$128 \times 2 = 256$	6 months
$256 \times 2 = 512$	6 months
$512 \times 2 = 1,024$	6 months
$1,024 \times 2 = 2,048$	6 months
$2,048 \times 2 = 4,096$	6 months
$4,096 \times 2 = 8,192$	6 months
$8,192 \times 2 = 16,384$	6 months
$16,384 \times 2 = 32,768$	6 months
$32,768 \times 2 = 65,536$	6 months
$65,536 \times 2 = 131,072$	6 months
$131,072 \times 2 = 262,144$	6 months
$262,144 \times 2 = 524,288$	6 months
$524,288 \times 2 = 1,048,576$	6 months
$1,048,576 \times 2 = 2,097,152$	6 months
$2,097,152 \times 2 = 4,194,304$	6 months
$4,194,304 \times 2 = 8,388,608$	6 months
$8,388,608 \times 2 = 16,777,216$	6 months
$16,777,216 \times 2 = 33,554,432$	6 months
$33,554,432 \times 2 = 67,108,864$	6 months
$67,108,864 \times 2 = 134,217,728$	6 months
$134,217,728 \times 2 = 268,435,456$	6 months
$268,435,456 \times 2 = 536,870,912$	6 months
$536,870,912 \times 2 = 1,073,741,824$	6 months

TEACHING (CORE)

PRE-LESSON ACTIVITY: MULTIPLICATION GAME

Directions

1. Warmly welcome students to your time of discovering more about God's purposes together.
2. Ask, "How many of you like math? Is it your favorite subject? If not, what do you like?" Allow responses.
3. "There are many stories with numbers in the Bible. Can you think of some examples?" Invite students to give you ideas. (possible answers: Jesus' feeding of the 5000, 40 days and 40 nights of the flood, marching around Jericho seven times, numbering of all the Israelites who left Egypt, twelve tribes of Israel, twelve disciples, etc.)
4. Invite your students to help you with some Bible math related to God's purpose to make his name known among all the nations.
5. Ask for a student with good handwriting to be a "scribe." Direct him or her to stand in front of the board. Invite another student to work the calculator.
6. Set up this scenario. "Imagine that the world has only one Christian right now. This Christian's only job is to help one other person come to know and honor God as their Savior. If that person becomes a follower of Jesus, how many do we have then?" (two) Instruct the "scribe" to write $2 \times 1 = 2$.
7. Then say, "These two people, then each help one other person know and honor God." Instruct the "scribe" to write $2 \times 2 = 4$ below the first equation. "They double again, to a total of four. People continue to double like this. All along, each person is only helping one person know God and honor him as God."
8. Ask, "At this rate, how long would it take for all the people in our city to believe in Christ?" Tell the "scribe" the population of your city and have him write it on the board. Then instruct the scribe to continue writing equations in a column: $4 \times 2 = 8$, $8 \times 2 = 16$, etc. Instruct the student with the calculator to multiply and find the answers to tell the scribe. Use the "Math Sample Chart" provided to check the students' answers. Have them stop when the answer is greater than the population of the city. Allow students to watch this process.
9. When the population of the city is reached say, "Imagine it takes six months to help a person come to Christ. Each equation line will represent six months." Ask, "How long would it take for the population of our city to be reached?" Allow time for students to count the equations to figure out the number of six-month periods. Divide by two to get the number of years.
10. Tell the scribe the population of your country and have him write it on the board. Ask, "How about our country?" Work with the calculator and the scribe until the answer becomes large enough to match or exceed the population of your country.
11. Count the total number of equations to find out how many six-month

Materials

- simple calculator
- chalkboard or dry erase board
- chalk or dry erase marker
- "Math Sample Chart" (p. 2)

periods it would take. Divide by two. This is how many years it would take to reach the total population of your country.

12. Summarize this activity by saying, *“God works through people, one at a time, two at a time, four at a time, to make his name known in all the earth.”*

THEME LESSON: ABRAHAM, JESUS, AND US

Directions

1. Teach your students, *“Jesus gave his disciples a command just before he left the earth and went to heaven to rule and reign with God.”*
2. Have them turn in their Bibles to Matthew 28. Read Matthew 28:17-21 together. Explain that they were to go into the whole world and make disciples. They were to baptize these new followers and teach them to obey everything Jesus had taught.
3. Say, *“To the disciples, this might have seemed like a brand new idea. But to Jesus, who had been with God from the beginning, this command related to the covenant God made with Abraham. Remember that in Genesis 12, God told Abraham he would be blessed so that he would be a blessing to all nations.”*
4. *“Remember, the Bible is one story with one purpose. We can tell that Paul understood this from what he wrote in the New Testament book of Galatians.”* Have students find Galatians 3. Read Galatians 3:7 and 29, *“Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham ... If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”* Explain. *“All believers are spiritual sons of Abraham. This included the disciples of Jesus’ day and all believers since that time. Believers in Christ are heirs of the promise and blessing of Abraham.”* Ask, *“Why did God bless Abraham?”* (so that he would be a blessing to all nations) Ask, *“Why does God bless us, the sons of Abraham?”* (so that we will be a blessing to the nations)
5. Point to the word “People” on the “Key Word Wheel” poster. Continue, *“Just as God worked through people when he worked through Abraham, God has chosen to work through people, all during the Old Testament times, New Testament times, and even into our modern times. How does Jesus’ command to his followers, the Great Commission, relate to the covenant God gave to Abraham?”* Allow responses. Then say, *“By making disciples of all the nations of the world, the disciples were bringing the blessing of Abraham to them.”*
6. Point to the middle hub on the “Key Word Wheel” poster that says “Purpose.” Ask, *“If you were God, trying to get the people of our earth to find out about you, what might you do to advertise yourself? Make commercials? Get business cards? Do something powerful or explosive? Make speeches? Give gifts to everyone? Make a movie? Create a web site?”* Listen for some creative ideas from your students. Say, *“These are some of the ways in which people tell others about their business, themselves, or their organizations.”*
7. Add, *“God’s way of making himself known is not to make videos or commercials about himself. His way of advancing his purpose is to work*

Materials

- Bibles
- “Key Word Wheel” poster (Introduction p. 6)

through people, people who tell or proclaim his Word.” Point to the word “Proclamation” on the “Key Word Wheel.” “Although we might think this is slow or old-fashioned, it’s not. Through our math activity, we can see how quickly people can spread the word about Jesus if every Christian is serious about just reaching one person, one at a time. This is how God works. Through his people, who know him and love him.”

IN CLOSING: REVIEW AND RESPONSE

Directions

1. Ask whether your students know the song, “Father Abraham.” Review the words of the chorus together, for fun:
Father Abraham had many sons,
Many sons had Father Abraham,
I am one of them,
And so are you,
So let’s all praise the Lord.
2. As a group, write new words to this song (or another familiar tune of your choosing). Use phrases that tell how God works through his people to help others know him.
3. Think of people whose full-time work is to tell people in other nations about Christ. Pray together for these missionaries and their families.

Materials

- lined paper
- pencils or pens



HEROES OF HISTORY: AMY CARMICHAEL

Directions

1. Set the stage for this story. Say, *“Amy Carmichael was born in Ireland. At an early age, God gave Amy the desire to love and serve the poorest people in the slums of Ireland. She invited street children to her family’s home where she taught them about Jesus. She also held Bible studies for ‘shawlies.’ These girls worked in factories. They were so poor that they could not afford winter hats. To keep warm, these women wrapped shawls around their head and body. In 1895, Amy sailed from Europe to India to become a missionary. Would her work with the poor in Ireland prepare her for her ministry in India?”*
2. Introduce this vocabulary word:

Caste system: a way of ranking people in Hindu society from highest to lowest. People in the high castes are priests, teachers, and rulers. Middle caste people are businessmen, merchants, artists, and farmers. The low castes have people who do manual labor and jobs that no one else would want to do. Hindus are born into their caste and cannot move to a higher rank by hard work or education.
3. Read the stories to your group.
4. Discuss the questions together or in small groups.
5. Together, discover the important role this person had in making God’s name known in all the earth.



PREPARATION: 15 min.

TEACHING: 25 min.

Materials

- “Amy Carmichael” illustration (p. 7)
- “Amy Carmichael Story” (pp. 8-9)
- “Amy Carmichael Discussion Questions” (p. 10)



Sacrifice: the Best Jewels of All

When Amy Carmichael first came to India as a missionary, she decided to wear the Indian sari and fit in to Indian culture as best she could. Although she didn't wear jewelry, Amy thought the gold and silver necklaces, bangles, rings, anklets, and earrings the Indian women wore were very pretty.

Even the members of the Starry Cluster—the group of Christian Indian women who went with Amy from village to village sharing the Good News about Jesus—were decked out head to toe in jewels. But Amy soon learned that, in India, a woman's jewels were a source of pride. They showed how rich her family was, how important her husband was, or what caste or social group she belonged to. Amy was worried—it did not seem good for Christians to care about these things. Still, she hesitated to say anything. She did not like how some missionaries made the Indian Christians adopt English-looking clothes and ways of doing things.

“Lord,” she prayed, “if you want the women to give up their jewels, have the women themselves ask whether they should, not me.”

One day Ponnamal, a member of the Starry Cluster, heard a child say, “When I grow up, I want to join the Starry Cluster so I can wear jewels like Ponnamal does.” This bothered the sincere Indian woman. That was not a good reason to join the Cluster!

Ponnamal prayed and asked God what she should do. She knew that an Indian woman with no jewels would be laughed at. But then God seemed to say to her, “You will be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord.” Ponnamal realized that she was like a jewel to God, even if she wore no jewelry at all.

Ponnamal took off all her jewels. One by one, the other women in the Starry Cluster also took off their jewels. Sure enough, many people laughed at them. These Christians were very strange! But some women and girls noticed how these Christians loved and served one another, just like they were sisters, regardless of wealth or caste. Many more came to join the group—and later to be workers at Dohnavur Fellowship. How could people tell they were a part of this special group? None of the women wore any jewels. But many took new names like “Jewel of Victory” or “Jewel of Praise.”

Many years later, a watchman for a robber band told Amy, “If those hundreds of girls wore jewels according to Indian custom, not all the money in the world could hire a watchman to guard them.” With a thankful heart, Amy realized that God had used the women's sacrifice of giving up their jewels to protect them from harm and danger.

Sacrifice includes being willing to give up something for God.

Compassion

As Amy Carmichael and the Starry Cluster went from village to village preaching the gospel, she noticed small girls who seemed to live in the Hindu temples. They were beautifully dressed and very graceful. “Who are those children?” She asked.

“Those are the temple children,” Ponnamel replied sadly. “They are married to the gods.”

Amy was shocked. How could anyone give or sell their child to the temple? Gradually she learned why. If parents were not able to arrange a good marriage (which, in India, was done at an early age), their child was “married to the gods” to avoid disgrace. Or a widow might sell her child to the temple to get much-needed money. Or maybe it was to fulfill a religious vow or promise. Whatever the reason, Amy knew it was a terrible life for a child.

She decided to do something about it. Sometimes she tried to get the children away from the temples. But the temple children were watched night and day.

“Watch out,” the children were told, “or you will be captured by that child-catching Missie Ammal.” (Ammal means “mother” in Tamil.)

On March 6, 1901, Amy and the Starry Cluster returned late at night to their village of Pannaivilai after many months on the road. The next morning as Amy relaxed on the porch sipping her tea, a neighbor woman appeared with a young girl she had found the night before.

The child crawled right into Amy’s lap. “Are you the child-catching Missie Ammal?” the little girl asked. “My name is Preena, and I want to stay with you — always!”

Gradually Preena told her story. Her mother had

“married her to the gods,” but she was always scared. Once she ran away and went home to her mother. But her mother took her right back to the temple, and her hands had been branded with a hot iron from running away. She was watched closely.

Still seven-year-old Preena wanted to run away. How she slipped past the temple guards on March 6, no one knows. (An angel must have led her out of her prison, Amy thought, just like the apostle Peter.) If Preena had escaped a few days earlier, Amy would not have been home. And if the neighbor had found the girl earlier in the day, she would have taken her back to the temple already. Only God could have planned it so well.

Now Amy was sure God had sent Preena to her to take care of. But, the missionary thought, how can I take care of a small girl while traveling from village to village preaching about Jesus Christ?

God soon gave her an answer. When more temple children came to her for protection, Amy realized she and the Starry Cluster needed to quit traveling and make a home for them. She called the home Dohnavur Fellowship.

An ancient Indian proverb says, “Children tie the feet of the mother” — meaning a mother is not free to come and go as she pleases. Her duty is first of all to her children. Amy let her feet be “tied” because she had compassion on the temple children. She didn’t just feel sorry for them. She let her compassion for them change her life.

Compassion is sympathy for another person that goes beyond just feeling sorry and makes you take action.

Amy Carmichael Discussion Questions

AMY CARMICHAEL, PART 1 – SACRIFICE: THE BEST JEWELS OF ALL

From God's Word

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship” (Romans 12:1).

Let's Talk About It

1. Why did Ponnammal decide to take off her jewels?
2. How did this affect the way the Christian Indian women thought about themselves? How did it affect the way other women thought about them?
3. How can we offer ourselves as “living sacrifices” to God in our country? Be as detailed as possible.

AMY CARMICHAEL, PART 2 – COMPASSION

From God's Word

“This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another’” (Zechariah 7:9).

Let's Talk About It

1. Why did Amy feel compassion for the temple children?
2. What did her compassion do for the temple children? What changes did it make in Amy’s life?
3. Is there someone in your neighborhood or school you feel sorry for? How would being “kind and merciful” help that person? How would it change your life?