

# FAITH @ HOME

Week of March 17

Second Sunday in Lent

## ADULT AND SMALL CHILD

**READ:** Genesis 15:1-6

**REFLECT:** God made a promise to Abram. God promised that Abram would have many children, as many children as he could count in the stars in the sky. That's the important part because Abram has a hard time believing this promise. He wants to believe it, but it is hard. Maybe because keeping promises is hard. Or maybe because promises get broken. As a family, remember all of the big and small promises that you have made to each other. Remember the promises made on days that weddings and baptisms were celebrated. Remember how you have promised to love each other and keep each other safe.

**RESPOND:** Find an opportunity to go outside and look at the stars. Count all of the stars you can see, and then tuck your child into bed after reading this story of Abram in your child's Bible. You may do this more than once this week, perhaps by adding glow in the dark stars to your child's ceiling. Remember that when we find it hard to trust in the promises we have made, God points us to the stars. God challenges us to count the stars, if we are able, because that's how many times God will keep God's promise.

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: ELSA ANDERS COOK



Elsa Anders Cook is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ who has served churches in New York, Maine, Washington and Pennsylvania. She volunteers at church now while supporting her husband in his service as a Major in the United States Army. Together, they have a toddler and a baby on the way. She blogs at [cookingwithelsa.org](http://cookingwithelsa.org).

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## ADULT AND ELEMENTARY

**READ:** Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18

**REFLECT:** God "...brought him outside and said, 'Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.' And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness..." In this reading, Abram is talking with God. Abram has tried to be a good man, he has attempted to live a good life. And yet, he fears that it all means nothing because he and his wife Sarai have no children to continue their family. They are old and have sadly accepted that they will never be parents, never be blessed with a child together. And yet, God makes a wild, incredible, unbelievable promise to Abram. God promises Abram that he and Sarai will have a child, and from that child, there will be descendants as numerous as stars in the sky!

**RESPOND:** Sometimes in our lives we are weighed down with the fear that we are not enough. That we are too small and insignificant to make a difference or to do good in the world. We feel we have failed. Perhaps we are trapped in a situation that is frustrating or frightening, lonely or limiting. We might not be able to imagine how anything could ever get better or ever change. Like Abram, we might be tempted to give up. Do you ever feel this way? Yet God tells us to look to the nighttime sky and count the stars. Have you ever tried to count stars? Is it even possible? There are so many stars and so much goodness that God has planned for us, we can't even imagine it! Through God, the impossible becomes possible; and God reminds us that we are righteous, beloved by God.

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: LISA BROWN



A native of Pittsburgh, Lisa is passionate about creatively enriching the spiritual lives of people of all ages. She is the author of *The Best VBS Workbook Ever!* She is also a contributor to: *Faith Formation with a New Generation*, 2020 InsideOut camp curriculum, The Anglican Communion's Thy Kingdom Come global prayer initiative, and the 2018 Lenten Kyrie Project. She is also a frequent writer for Building Faith, a workshop leader, and an active member of Forma and the eFormation communities. Lisa was previously the Director of Children's Ministry at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania. She is currently the Director of Digital Ministry for Membership Vision. She is intrigued by the idea of helping people find God in the digital space and writes about it on her digital ministry blog at <https://www.membershipvision.com/latest-posts/>.

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## ADULT AND YOUTH

**READ:** Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18 & Philippians 3:17-4:1

**REFLECT:** Have you ever sat and thought about your ancestors and wondered how their actions placed you where you are today? Abraham can be viewed as an ancestor and specifically, a religious ancestor. When he confirms to God that he was a believer, when no one else he would have known would have believed in one God, he sets us on a course to be in relationship with God. Paul's letter to the Philippians goes a step further to explain Jesus Christ died for us so to ensure we will always have home in heaven with God. With ancestors like those, our salvation has been solidified.

**RESPOND:** Talk with your parents or guardians about your ancestors. After learning about your past, start to think about your descendants. What are traditions or ideas you would like to pass on to them? How will you encourage them to build or develop their own relationships with God? Afterwards, pray for those in the past and pray for those to come that they will discover their own special relationship with God.

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: WALLACE BENTON



Wallace Benton serves as the Assistant to the Rector for Youth Ministries at St. David's Episcopal Church in Roswell, GA. He's been fortunate to have grown up in the Episcopal Church and became interested in youth ministry after volunteering with his former youth program after college. Wallace has worked diocesan retreats and activities such as New Beginnings and Happening. Currently, he is the lay director for New Beginnings in the Diocese of Atlanta. He is also a member of the Episcopal Youth Ministry in ATL podcast (which you should check out immediately!).

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## ADULT AND ADULT

**READ:** Philippians 3:17-4:1

**REFLECT:** We must end this race well. The Christian life is a marathon and not a sprint. We have all seen the runners who start hot out of the gates only to lose all of their energy and fall behind in the end. Paul's encouragement to us is to not let that be your story. One of the best ways to do this is in community. It is living out the core convictions and values of Christ every day in the context of community. We follow those who are following Christ. We live with the end in mind. We think constantly of the finish line knowing our hope is in Christ and not here on this earth. If we look to earthly things to fulfill and satisfy us we will only end up disappointed. The earth and creation were never designed to do that. Looking to them takes our eyes off of heaven and Christ who is there and causes us to stumble, which leads to not finishing the race. Our pursuit in this life must be Jesus and his kingdom. May our eyes remain fixed on the glorious finish he has promised.

**RESPOND:** Find a recipe for something new and make it together. Note how each stage, from beginning to end, is pivotal for the success of the dish.

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: CJ QUARTLBAUM



CJ is a writer and speaker from Brooklyn, NY. He spends most of his time hanging with his family, playing with his daughter, playing basketball, and reading. He's passionate about seeing the gospel spread in his city, in Brooklyn as it is in heaven. You can catch up with him on Twitter @CJ\_Quartlbaum or at [CJQuartlbaum.com](http://CJQuartlbaum.com).

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