

Pray for Our Country

Quarter 5 • Lesson 2

Focus on Spiritual Formation

1. *Connecting*: Talk about what you know about your country.
2. *Teaching*: Learn how Abraham pleaded with God to save the righteous people in 2 cities (Genesis 18—19).
3. *Responding*: Pray for the people in different regions of your country.

SUPPLIES

- Bible
- Map of your country
- Optional Supplies:*
 - Memory Verse poster
 - *The Action Bible*, images of Abraham
 - Paper
 - Pencils
 - *The Action Bible*, pages 52–55
 - Student Pages

Teacher Devotion

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

2 Chronicles 7:14

The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.

Psalms 103:8

The world needs Jesus. It seems like there are people all around who are hurting, dying, crying out. Sadly, other people are profiting from their pain. When you see other people sinning, what do you feel toward the sinner? Do you feel pride? Do you feel disgust, fear, concern, hatred? Or do you feel compassion?

The Old Testament cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were filled with wicked, violent people who had run far from God. God is holy and cannot tolerate sin. He knew these cities had to be destroyed. Yet when Abraham asked Him to spare the cities if as few as 10 righteous people were found in them, God agreed. God is both Judge and Love.

He looks at your village, your region, your country, and He is filled with compassion. When you pray for your country, God hears. This week, ask God to give you His heart for your country. Humbly pray that its people and leaders will turn away from sin and run to God. Pray for God to heal your land.

Family Connection: Tell families that this week you are teaching about the importance of praying for their country. Encourage them to pray with their children for their village or city and their country. They can choose a particular leader or region to pray for. If families are not sure what to say or how to pray to the God of the Bible, encourage them to ask their children to teach them.

LESSON TIME

1. Connecting: Talk about what you know about your country.

Greet your children by name as they arrive. Ask them what they like about living where they do.

Divide the children into groups of 4–5. Have them share in their groups everything they know about your country. They may talk about things such as names and positions of leaders, history, national symbols like flags, what the land or weather is like, etc. After several minutes, gather the groups together. Invite a spokesperson from each group to share 5 things with the class.

Optional Supplies: Give each group a piece of paper and pencil to write their lists.

Our country is a special place with many good things. Sadly, there are also a lot of bad things that happen in our country, just like in every other country. These bad things make God sad. However, these things do not keep God from caring about our country. He wants everyone in our country to know that He loves them. He wants everyone to accept His gift of salvation. And He wants Christians in our country to pray for those who do not know Him. God listens to our prayers! They make a difference.

Today we will hear a story in the Bible about a man who prayed to God on behalf of the people in two very evil cities. Prayer on behalf of others is called “intercession.”

2. Teaching: Learn how Abraham pleaded with God to save the righteous people in 2 cities (Genesis 18—19).

Teacher Tip: Your children may not feel they have much power in their lives. The children need to know that their voices do matter to God. He hears their prayers.

The Bible story in our last lesson included one of the most important people in the Bible—Abram. After that story about Abram and his wife, Sarai, God changed their names. He changed Abram’s name to Abraham and Sarai’s name to Sarah.

- What do you remember about Abraham?

If possible, show *The Action Bible* images as you tell the story.

You may remember that Abraham had allowed his nephew Lot to choose where he wanted to live because their animal herds had become too large for them to stay together. Lot chose to live in the luxurious Jordan River valley, and God gave Abraham the rest of the land. The place where Lot had chosen to live was near the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Many years passed. The people in those cities grew more and more sinful, yet Lot still lived among them.

One day, as Abraham rested in the shade of his tent, he saw three men walking toward him. He jumped up and went to speak with them. He said, "Do not continue walking. Let me get some water. Let me get you something to eat." They agreed, so Abraham and Sarah provided a meal for them.

Later in the story we find out that 2 of the men were angels and the other was God Himself! As they were leaving, God told Abraham that the wicked things done in Sodom and Gomorrah had grown so terrible that He was going to judge the cities and destroy them.

Abraham asked God, "Will you kill the good people along with the wicked? What if there are 50 good people? Will you destroy everything and not save the cities for 50 people who follow you? Would you really kill the righteous people with the wicked. Please, will not the Judge of all the earth do what is right?"

The Lord agreed to spare the cities if 50 righteous people were found. But then Abraham started to think. What if there were not 50 men and women who were righteous? The cities were really wicked! So he humbled himself and asked the Lord if He would spare the cities if there were only 45 righteous people.

The Lord has far more compassion for the people of earth than any human, even Abraham. Justice is very important to Him, so He said yes to Abraham's request.

But Abraham was not done. As he thought about how evil those cities were, he realized there probably were not even 45 righteous people. So he asked the Lord if He would spare the cities if there were only 40. When the Lord said yes to that, Abraham went down to 30. When the Lord said yes to that, Abraham went down to 20. Again the Lord agreed.

Finally, Abraham said, "Do not be angry with me, Lord, but let me speak just once more. What if only 10 righteous people can be found there?" Imagine the joy that God had in Abraham because of his compassion for the innocent. It was the same compassion that the Lord has. But the Lord knew that there were not even 10 righteous, good people in the cities. Now Abraham would know that, too.

Optional: If you are using The Action Bible, have the children read the next part of the story on pages 52–55.

- **What have you learned about God through this story so far?**

God is compassionate and slow to anger. He is also holy and cannot tolerate sin and wickedness. Still He always cares about His people. God cares about justice—things being good and right.

- **What have you learned about interceding, or praying, on behalf of other people and cities?**

When Abraham asked God to show mercy, God listened. He listens when His people pray on behalf of others.

That evening Lot, the nephew of Abraham, was sitting at the entrance of the city of Sodom when he saw two men coming towards him. We know that they were the angels sent by God.

The people of the city were so wicked that Lot knew these important guests would be in danger if they spent the night in the city square. The people would hurt them badly. He begged them to stay with him in his house, so they went with him.

The angels warned Lot that they were going to destroy the city. Lot and his family had to flee. They asked Lot if there was anyone else they might be able to save. The only people he could think of were the two men who were engaged to his daughters. But when Lot warned them, they thought he was joking.

By early morning, the angels urged Lot to quickly leave the city with his wife and two daughters. They were to flee to the mountains, but Lot begged to go to a nearby town instead. The angels agreed but told the family to hurry. The Lord would show compassion on them, just as Abraham had asked. He would not begin His terrible judgment until they were safely away. They were told to not even look back.

The sun had risen when God brought judgment against Sodom and Gomorrah. Hot sulphur fell from the sky. All the homes and people were destroyed. Disobeying the angels' command, Lot's wife turned and looked back at Sodom. She immediately turned to a stone of salt!

Abraham had asked God to show compassion on those in the cities who were righteous, even if there were as few as 10 righteous people. Sadly, there were not even 10. Still God listened to Abraham's request and spared the lives of Lot and his two daughters.

I will read some statements to you. Tell me how you know they are true from this story of Abraham.

- God listens when we pray for our country and cities.
- Our prayers for our country and cities make a difference.
- It is okay to come to God more than once with things that worry or disturb us. He always listens.

God is always just when He punishes people for their sins.

Point out that God wants us to ask Him to make the people in our cities and towns more open to loving Him. He knows that when people love Him, our cities and towns become safer and better places.

3. Responding: Pray for the people in different regions of your country.

Read 1 Timothy 2:1–3 to the children, if possible from your Bible. Encourage them to listen carefully to what these verses say about God and prayer. Show the Memory Verse poster if you are using it.

*I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving
be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority,
that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.
This is good, and pleases God our Savior.*

1 Timothy 2:1–3

- What do these verses tell us about God?

God is pleased when we pray for all people, including leaders of our country and city, town, or village.

- **What do these verses tell us about prayer?**

Prayer is important. There are different kinds of prayer, such as prayers of thanks, making requests for ourselves, and intercession. We should especially pray for the government leaders of our country and city or village. Even if we do not agree with their actions, we are to pray that they make good decisions.

God loves every person and every country in the world. He is sad when people turn away from Him and do evil things. When we pray for our cities and nations, God listens. Let's do a prayer activity for our country now.

Walk in a big circle around your teaching space. When you get to the north side of your space, yell, "North!" Ask the children to gather around you, and lead them in a prayer for the people living in the northern part of your country. They can bow their heads as you pray. Use the following prayer or pray your own words:

Dear Heavenly Father, We pray for the people who live in the northern part of our country. We pray that more and more people in this region will hear about You and accept Your love for them. We pray especially for the government leaders in this area. We pray that men, women, and children will turn to You and do what is right. In Jesus' name, amen.

Next move to the west side of the circle and yell, "West!" Have the children find partners and pray with them for the people in the western part of the country.

Continue to the south side of the circle. Have children bow their heads and pray quietly for the people living in that region.

Finally, move to the east side of the circle and ask for volunteers to pray out loud for the people living in that part of your country.

Optional Supplies: If you have a map of your country, show it to the children at each stop of the "North, West, South, East" prayer activity. Encourage them to pray for the people in specific cities and towns.

Gather children back in the centre of your teaching space. Close the lesson by praying this blessing based on Psalm 103:8 over the children:

Blessing: God loves this country. He sees its hurting people, and His heart is filled with compassion. God longs for them to turn away from sin and run toward Him. Pray for our country. May God hear your prayers and change the hearts of the people!

Optional: If you are using Student Pages, the children can do this activity on them.

Lead the teens in singing this quarter's song, if possible.

"Great Are You Lord" by All Sons and Daughter: <https://youtu.be/vQLMnPYoR9k>