

## **Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides**

**Feb 5th**

**Icebreaker Questions (Pick at the least one question, but use as many as your group feels comfortable)**

1. What was your favorite snack growing up? Do you still enjoy it today?

### **Bible Study Questions**

1. What does it mean to you when you hear about someone of “deep faith”? What does deep faith look like?
2. Hebrews 11:6 says that “without faith, it is impossible to please God.” Why is faith so important?
3. Read Genesis 12:1-9
  - What all was Abram giving up by following God’s lead?
  - What all did God promise?
  - How might this call have been exciting? In what ways would it be challenging or scary? What hesitations would you have if you were in Abram’s shoes?
  - Why do you think that Abram chose to obey?
4. Throughout history, God has continually called people to follow him into the unknown. As Christians, we intellectually know that God’s way is better. But many Christians hold back in following God’s lead. What factors most often cause us to say “no” to God?
5. When was a time in your life that God called you out of your comfort zone to take a step of faith? What happened?
6. Is there something that you sense God calling you to do now? What are you doing about that?

## Feb 5<sup>th</sup>: Abraham: A Journey of Faith The Calling

I have heard it said from time to time that a person (often a politician) is a man or woman of deep faith. It is said as a term of respect, but is a bit ambiguous. What does it mean to have deep faith? It could be said that in Minnesota, anyone who drives out on a frozen lake to ice fish is engaging in deep faith. As Christians, we are called to be people of faith. Hebrews 11:6 says that it is impossible to please God without faith. Over the next two months, we will be exploring faith through the life of Abraham.

- I. **Faith: Confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see:** This is the literal definition that we have in Hebrews 11:1. While faith is a major theme in the Bible, this is the only place that we have a definition prompting that idea that...
  - a. **The Bible cares more about faith demonstrated than defined:** The rest of Hebrews 11 contains example after example of people who demonstrated deep faith. Perhaps it is because faith is not meant to be intellectual, but lived. The one individual who receives the most attention is Abraham.
- II. **God's calling prompted Abram to leave all that was known and secure:** In Genesis 12:1, God tells Abram to leave behind his country and father's family to go to a mysterious land of which God would show him. To leave one's family was to abandon a known culture, a shared language, and the protection of family. We are also told that Abram is 75 years old at this time, meaning that we wasn't at the age in which people generally start new adventures. When he set out, he knew that he likely would never be coming back.
- III. **God's promise to Abram:** In Genesis 12:2-3, God lists several things that he will do for Abram if he obeys.
  - a. **Make him into a great nation:** This was a remarkable promise since Abram at the age of 75 was yet to have any children.
  - b. **Make his name great**
  - c. **Bless him as well as those who blessed him**
  - d. **To bless the whole world through him**
- IV. **Abram acted trusting that God's blessing would be greater than what he would leave behind:** Abram chose to take the gamble and to trust this unknown God. For anyone reading this

story, the big question that they are asking is, "can this God be trusted?"

It is notable that the original audience is the Israelite people who were walking their own journey of faith. They had left the security of Egypt (they were slaves but at the least they had homes and food) and were traveling through a hostile desert to an unknown land occupied by superior forces. They were asking the question, "Can God be trusted?"

### Conclusion

In the movie the Hobbit, Bilbo asks Gandolf if he could promise that he could make it home safe. Gandolf responds that he can't make that promise, but that if he did make it home, he wouldn't be the same. Throughout history, God has called people to leave their security behind and to trust him into the unknown. For some the calling involved the mission field, for others in involved sharing their faith or serving in a ministry. For some, it meant obediently waiting in a difficult situation. Regardless of the call, God is looking for people who will listen to his voice and respond.

As a church, we have a mission to point people of all backgrounds toward Jesus Christ. Could God be calling our church into a new season of ministry...a season that could stretch us and take us out of our comfort zones? If so, are we willing to follow?

**Note:** The line about the world being blessed through Abraham is important. This would be fulfilled through his future descendent, Jesus who would bring redemption to the world.