



then, come not only through the man of God's choosing, but through the woman God chooses, a theme which reaches its climax in Mary's conception of Jesus (Luke 1).

### ***Genesis 12:1-9***

At the age of 75, Abram is called by God to pack up his home and his family and head for the promised land - Canaan. God blesses Abram and promises to make him "a great nation" Abram packs up, moves and discovers the Promised Land inhabited by the Canaanites. God promises the land (Canaan) to Abram's offspring

Note that the word "covenant" can be translated "testament." Our Bible is therefore made up of the "Old Covenant" and the "New Covenant." How are the covenants different? How are they the same?

Note the blessings in this passage. Not only is Abraham blessed, and his descendants, but he is the means for the blessing of the nations. I will bless those who bless you. Three major religions – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – "bless" Abraham, that is, they consider him the father of their faith. What implications does this verse have?

### ***Genesis 15:1-7***

Lord appears to Abram in a vision. Abram complains of no heir. God reaffirms God's promise and uses the stars in the sky to illustrate how numerous Abram's descendants will be.

### ***Genesis 16:1-15; 21:8-21***

Sarai presents Abram with her slave woman, Hagar, to be his wife and she conceives and bears a son, Ishmael. She then becomes proud, incurs Sarai's wrath, and runs away. God meets her in the wilderness, saves her and sends her back with a promise that her son, Ishmael (God hears), will be great. After Isaac is born and weaned, Sarah again becomes jealous (Ishmael is after all, eldest son) and convinces Abraham to send Ishmael away.

It is important to know that the Islamic faith looks to Abraham as their father, but sees Ishmael instead of Isaac as the son that carries God's promise. The conflict between Ishmael and Isaac (or more correctly, their mothers, for the boys got along okay) is in many ways a microcosm of the conflict between Jews and Arabs that continues to this day.

The Koran tells, among other things, that Abraham visited Ishmael many years later and was very pleased with what he had become. Islam also teaches that the near-sacrifice of the "only son" (22:2) must have meant Ishmael, not Isaac, because as first-born Ishmael was the "only" child for many years before the birth of Isaac. They believe the name "Isaac" was inserted into this verse of scripture by later generations who wanted to show it was "their" descendent, Isaac, who was the child saved from sacrifice.

### ***Genesis 17:1-8, 15-22***

God renames Abram - Abraham (which is a dialectical variant to the Hebrew) which translates to "ancestor of a multitude". A new name denotes a new relationship or status between God and Abraham. God is promising Abraham his ancestors will be plentiful and there will be kings among them. God covenants with Abraham and with all his descendants promises Abraham the land of Canaan. For Sarai - a new name, Sarah which means "princess". She will be blessed with child within the year and she will give rise to the nations including kings. Abraham laughs at God's covenant since Sarah and Abraham are both near 100 years of age. God reassures that through Sarah and Abraham's son, Isaac, God will establish his everlasting covenant. Note: this is the third time the covenant is offered.

### ***Genesis 18:1-15***

The Lord, in the form of three guests, visits Abraham and Sarah. Some translators say God was one of the three ... It is a story which displays oriental hospitality of ensuring guests receive the best meal and seats in the house. Here Sarah overhears the visitors say she will be blessed with Abraham's child and she laughs in disbelief. Out of fear, Sarah denies her laughter when the Lord asks her about it The Lord assures Sarah that with God all things are possible. Note: this is the fourth time the covenant is offered.

Sarah is frequently criticized for laughing and not believing the promise. Note, however, that Abraham also laughed in Ch. 17. This is the only time the promise is delivered directly to Sarah.

### ***Genesis 21: 1-7***

True to God's promise, Sarah conceives and bears Abraham a son. They name the child Isaac since God brought laughter for Sarah. The name Isaac will remind Sarah, Abraham and all who hear of the story of God's limitless possibilities.

Following Isaac's birth, Hagar and Ishmael are sent away.

### ***Genesis 22:1-19***

The near-sacrifice of Isaac. It should be noted that child sacrifice was a common, though not universal, practice in the days of Abraham. The thought was that the slaying of an innocent child, without sin, would atone for the sin of the one who made the sacrifice. In the Abraham story, the sacrifice seems to be asked to prove Abraham's loyalty, his willingness to give up everything, even his most beloved son, for God.

Note that there is no hesitation on Abraham's part as it is written in the Biblical text, nor is there any sign that Isaac struggled, or that Sarah knew what was going on. These omissions have been the source of a great deal of speculation (pulled from oral tradition) in Jewish literature, but is not part of the canon.

The obvious parallel for Christians is that while God spared Abraham's son, God's own son, Jesus, was not spared and became the living sacrifice for all our sins.

### Teaching this Story to Kids

**Near-sacrifice of Isaac** – We are often squeamish about teaching this story to children, and with good reason. For children, who identify not with Abraham and his faithfulness to God, but to Isaac and the role of the victim/sacrifice, there will be a lot of questions. Try to avoid giving set answers to their questions and instead allow them to wrestle with the text by asking their questions back to them. “Why do you think...” Resist avoiding the issue. Without it we lose much of the impact of the story, and almost all of its relevance to Christianity – there is a parallel between Isaac and Christ on the cross. It is important to emphasize that Isaac was NOT sacrificed – God stopped Abraham in time. God did not desire this sacrifice, and child sacrifice is not to be part of God’s covenant with Abraham’s descendents.

**Importance of a child** – In a perfect world all children are anticipated and loved as much as Isaac. Sadly, this is not the case for all our children – don’t assume that it is. If you have someone who adopted a child, or who struggled to conceive, and who is willing to share their story, they can give children an idea of how having a child was so important to them, and why they wanted one so much. However, the situations are not exactly parallel. In ancient Jewish thought there wasn’t a sense of “heaven” or “eternal life.” Rather your continuance was through your children. No children? Your existence was wiped from the face of the earth. (Incidentally, that is why punishments in the Bible sometimes included killing not only the evil doer, but all his children as well – so he’d have no continuance and be wiped out.)

**Commitment** – What does it mean to make a commitment? A commitment to God? What kind of choices would Abraham be forced to make if he was a person living in modern America? How easy is it to always choose God?

**Hagar, Ishmael, Islam** – This is a point that we often overlook – in fact many Christians don’t know that Abraham is the point of commonality between the religions. Most children will have more sympathy for Hagar and Ishmael than they will for Sarah. Although they might not still agree with it, it is important for them to understand culturally what an eldest son represented. In sending them away, Sarah was not just being mean, she was protecting her own son – and the child that she understood *God* had chosen – from being essentially disinherited.

### Lesson Summary

LESSON GROUP A (Isaac – promise, birth, near sacrifice)

- Creation Station* - Children will make a scrapbook page for Abraham’s family. Younger children can have two weeks in this lesson.
- Fisherman’s.Net* - Children will explore the Abraham and Sarah program. Older grades will get two weeks in this workshop.
- Loaves and Fishes Café* - no lesson this rotation.
- Make a Joyful Noise* - Optional music rotation for younger children. Children will “follow the leader” using rhythm instruments and sing “Father Abraham.”

- Mountaintop Movies* - *Two weeks. In week one, children will look at the scene of Abram and Sarai leaving their home Children will watch the part of the TNT movie that relates to the promise of Isaac from the three visitors up to the command to sacrifice Isaac, writing their own feelings/story conclusion.*
- Moved by the Spirit* - *Act out the story of the three visitors and Sarah's laughter.*
- Temple Courtyard* - *Storytelling. Abraham or Sarah tells the story and asks the children to repeat it back to them.*

#### LESSON GROUP B (Ishmael & Isaac)

- Creation Station* - *Children will make family scrapbook pages for Isaac and Ishmael, their moms, and Abraham.*
- Fisherman's.Net* - *Abraham CD, especially "giving of the covenant" section. We will reflect on the question, "does the promise include all the children of Abraham, or only Isaac?" Create letter between the brothers.*
- Loaves and Fishes Café* - *Children will prepare some traditional Jewish and Islamic foods and discuss how both traditions are tied to a son of Abraham.*
- Mountaintop Movies* - *We will watch TNT Abraham's video section that tells of Hagar's story (???) and will decide how we might rewrite the movie if we were telling it from Hagar and Ishmael's point of view.*
- Moved by the Spirit* - *Re-enact the conflict between Sarah and Hagar.*
- Temple Courtyard* - *Activities to show similarities and differences between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*

#### LESSON GROUP C (call)

- Creation Station* - *Children will modge-podge magazine cutouts of "blessings" onto a pre-cut poster board star.*
- Fisherman's.Net* - *Children will use the Abraham CD to explore the concept of calling*
- Loaves and Fishes Café* - *Children will make an easy version of a traditional Native American traveling food, pemmican.*
- Mountaintop Movies* - *Children will look at video and discuss what life would have been like for one who wandered the desert.*
- Moved by the Spirit* - *Music based lesson on moving to a different place.*
- Temple Courtyard* - *Games to help with the locations of events in the Abraham story.*

#### **Bibliography**

[http://mediaguidetoislam.sfsu.edu/dailylife/07b\\_resources.htm#top](http://mediaguidetoislam.sfsu.edu/dailylife/07b_resources.htm#top) media guide to Islam

[http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/cariadoc/recipe\\_toc.html](http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/cariadoc/recipe_toc.html) Islamic recipes

<http://www.rotation.org> Abraham and Sarah lesson plans

*This material is copyright 2014 by Lisa K. Martin and Trinity Reformed UCC, Pottstown, PA. Permission is granted for use within your local church setting. Further distribution is prohibited.*

<http://ancienthistory.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=http://www.bible.ca/maps/> Maps of Abraham's journey

Kirk of Kildare <http://www.kirkofkildaire.org/quest/contents.html>

# Abraham and Sarah, The Promise of a Child – Creation Station

## At a Glance

Children will make scrapbook pages for Abraham and Sarah using “family photos” that were taken ahead of time.

## Outcome Objectives

- (1) Children will know the events in Abraham and Sarah’s life leading up to and including the birth of Isaac.
- (2) Children will be able to interpret staged pictures as to where they fit in the story.
- (3) Children will summarize what is happening in the pictures by journaling on their scrapbook page.

## Supplies Needed

Blank scrapbook pages, papers, stickers, and other supplies.

Scissors, Glue sticks

Pictures, printed out using digital camera

Completed scrapbook to give children an idea of what a finished product can look like.

## Advance Preparation

Using a digital camera, take and print pictures for some or all of the following parts of the story. (Those in BOLD are most key to this story) TIP: Try and get close-ups rather than full body shots – they make much more interesting pictures.

Genesis 12:1-9

Life in Haran – take “family” photos of Abram & Sarai with family members they would have left behind.

Packing up – snapshot of A&S packing household necessities

Final farewell – A & S saying tearful goodbyes to family and friends.

### **Genesis 15:1-7**

Abram gazing at the night sky. (Any dark blue background will do)

Close up picture of a lot of stars

Genesis 16:1-15; 21:8-21

Picture of Hagar and Abram’s “wedding.”

Hagar and baby Ishmael.

Abram playing with his son.

Genesis 17:1-8, 15-22

Abraham and Sarah with new nameplates showing the meaning of their names.

Abraham laughing.

**Genesis 18:1-15**

Picture of three guests at dinner  
Sarah busy cooking for visitors.  
Sarah peeking behind tent at visitors  
Sarah laughing.

**Genesis 21: 1-7**

Sarah pregnant, still laughing  
Baby Isaac  
Changing baby Isaac's diapers or other baby chore  
Abraham and Sarah playing with baby Isaac

Genesis 22:1-19

Abraham and older child Isaac, Abraham carrying rope.  
A picture of a ram (get off computer/internet)  
(afterwards) picture of Abraham embracing Isaac

After you print out your pictures, cut them apart leaving a 1/8" white margin. Write the scripture verse pertaining to that part of the story on the reverse side and group them together.

**Opening Activity**

Invite the children to tell you as much as they can about the story of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac. Place key points on an easel. Fill in details yourself, or read from the Bible or Bible storybook.

**Main Lesson**

Explain that since a picture is worth a thousand words, you are going to tell the story in pictures. Show examples of completed scrapbooks and scrapbook tools that are used to tell a family's story. Make a point of showing the children the journaling on each page that helps explain what is going on in the picture.

Divide the children into groups of two or three and give them a packet of photos. You may want to give them all the same pictures, or give different pictures to each group.

Show the children the pictures you have printed out and explain that the Bible verse is on the back.

The goal:

- (1) To figure out what is going on in each picture using the Bible if necessary.
- (2) To paste your pictures on your scrapbook pages, using the tools provided to make the page attractive.
- (3) Journal a few lines for each picture and the page in order to help explain the story.

### **Life Application**

Discuss God's promise and the outcome.

What did God promise?

Did Abraham and Sarah believe God? What was their reaction?

Did God keep the promise right away?

What promises does God make to us?

### **Journaling**

Ask children to divide their paper into boxes the way they might for a cartoon and to draw the Abraham and Sarah story scene by scene in their cartoon boxes.

### **To take home**

Optional: scan and print a copy of everyone's scrapbook pages for each child to take home.

### **Adjustments for age levels and abilities**

For younger children, pick one part of the story and work together to put the scrapbook page together. Pre-cut things like matting papers and have more stickers available.

For younger children it may also help to have fewer tools and supplies to choose from as it can lead to indecision.

### **If you have extra time...**

Children can do a second page with extra pictures.

### **If time runs short...**

The closing discussion will echo discussions during opening times and at other rotations. It is okay to work on pages right up to the end of the hour, however, it would be nice to share your pages with each other.

### **Be creative**

There are TONS of scrapbooking tools and papers out there. Borrow as many as you can from church members who are involved in this hobby.

# **Abraham and Sarah , The Promise of a Child – Fisherman's.Net**

## **At a Glance**

NOTE: Older children will go through this program over two weeks to get the greatest understanding of what is happening. K-1 children will only get one week with computers and will focus on parts of the program that don't require reading.

## **Outcome Objectives**

- 1) Children will have an overview of the story of Abraham and Sarah
- 2) Children will be able to discuss Abraham's near sacrifice of Isaac in contrast to the sacrifice of God in Jesus.
- 3) Children will apply the lessons of faith found in the story of Abraham and Sarah to the requirements of faith in their own lives.

## **Software Summary**

For a complete overview of this program, check out the website at:

<http://www.sundaysoftware.com/abe/abe.htm>

Main Learning areas: (right to left, as if reading Hebrew)

- I. The Giving of the Covenant
- II. Sarah and Abraham's Visitors
- III. The Near Sacrifice of Isaac
- IV. Insane Fanat-asy (What will others say about me?)
- V. Pay It Forward (A living out the call takehome activity)

Additional Activities:

- a. Bible Timeline
- b. Middle East Map Game
- c. Abraham Quiz
- d. NRSV text of the Abraham stories.

## **Supplies Needed**

Paper and markers with paper easel.

## **Advance Preparation**

You MUST learn and be familiar with the program in order to teach it. Go through at least once, and preferably twice with the teaching outline provided at Sunday Software. Make notes to yourself to help teach the program.

## **Opening Activity**

Pair students together, even if that means some computers stay vacant.

*This material is copyright 2014 by Lisa K. Martin and Trinity Reformed UCC, Pottstown, PA. Permission is granted for use within your local church setting. Further distribution is prohibited.*

Explain that just as Abraham and Sarah went on a journey, you are sending each pair on a journey and that for that journey they will need to follow a map. Explain that when they hit a STOP sign on the map, they are to turn their chairs around and face the teacher for discussion. Failing to stop or follow directions can result in loss of computer privileges.

### Main Lesson

Week 1      I. Giving of the Covenant  
                 II. Sarah and Abraham's Visitors  
                 b. Middle East Map Game

Week 2      III. The Near Sacrifice of Isaac  
                 IV. Insane Fanat-asy  
                 V. Pay it Forward  
                 c. Abraham Quiz

### Life Application

#### Week 1

Stop 1 (following the giving of the covenant)

What is a covenant?

Do we have a covenant with God? What is it?

Stop 2 (following the visitors)

Complete this sentence: If God told me that I was going to \_\_\_\_ I would probably laugh.

Do you believe that nothing is impossible with God? Why or why not?

What part of Sarah's song makes sense to you? Why?

Middle East map game.

Allow children to play the game as often as time permits. Set up teams and challenges if you have the time to do so. Geographic literacy is important to Biblical understanding.

Remind children at the end of week 1 that they will be returning to Fisherman's.Net next week to learn the rest of the story.

#### Week 2

##### **Stop 1** The Near Sacrifice of Isaac

What is faith? What is your definition of faith?

Have you ever "killed" someone in a video game? How realistic is that ?

How horrible would it be to have to kill someone in real life?

How horrible would it be to have to kill someone you loved? Your own child?

Would you have followed through on God's orders?

How would you have felt if you were Sarah?  
How does this story reveal the character of God?  
How is the story similar to/different from Christ's sacrifice?

## **Stop 2** Insane Fan-stasy

Questions: If your faith were a car, what kind of car would you say it is right now?  
If your journey w/ God was a road, what kind of road are you on now?  
What sign is God waving to you on the road ahead?  
What two people can help you most on your journey right now?

### **To take home**

Printouts from the programs.

### **Adjustments for age levels and abilities**

**NOTE:** Younger children will only have one week in the lab. Depending on the ages and abilities on the day of class, they can learn the story of Abraham and Sarah using the Play and Learn Children's Bible. Close their hour by allowing them to draw a picture of what they might have seen on their journey using Kid Pix 3. If they are using this program, allow them to click through all the live animation activities. Then go through them together on one computer and discuss what is going on.

### **If you have extra time...**

Week 1 – replay the map game  
Week 2 – replay the quiz

### **If time runs short...**

Discussion is as important as the program itself – Be sure to leave time to discuss what you have seen.

### **Be creative**

This is a HUGE program. Find what looks best to you and what teaches the lesson best and include it.

# **Abraham and Sarah, The Promise of a Child – Make a Joyful Noise**

## **At a Glance**

Children will create rhythms that help them remember the story of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac.

## **Outcome Objectives**

- 1) Children will learn key phrases from the poem about Abraham Sarah and Isaac.
- 2) Children will be able to give a general outline of events of the story.
- 3) Children will improve their ability to keep a steady beat and understand the musical concept of rests.

## **Supplies Needed**

Rhythm instruments for each child. Egg Shakers can be easily made.

## **Advance Preparation**

Make Egg Shakers by filling plastic Easter Eggs with rice, beans, or pebbles, then sealing with a permanent glue. You can color code the different materials as they each make a slightly different sound.

Make sure to practice the poem so that you have the rhythm/rests down. Some of the lines are a little awkward – if you can think of a way to improve them without losing the meaning, please do so.

## **Opening Activity**

For a warm up, stand in a circle and sing the song “Father Abraham” using traditional movements and some that children suggest. Suggestion: for older kids, come up with more complicated movements – i.e., a special handshake -- or they’ll think the whole thing is dumb.

Read the story of Abraham from the “Children’s Story Bible” summarizing some parts for younger age groups.

## **Main Lesson**

### ***Jazz Rhythms.***

Jazz Rhythms include one person or group telling the main story, usually in verse form, while other people pick up on a key word or phrase. All phrases are said at the same time. Rhythm instruments can be added to emphasize the percussion sound of the voices, but aren’t necessary. For this unit we are using Egg Shakers.

Begin by reading the poem line by line, having the children say each line after you. Shake the eggs 1-2-3-4 as you say it. Then try again shaking only on 1-3 or 2-4 beat.

As you read poem (each line should be said in a 4/4 measure, generally with a rest on the fourth beat. Practice saying ahead of time to get it consistent.)

**Abraham, Sarah and Isaac – Jazz Rhythm**

Abraham  
Left Haran  
And journeyed to  
A brand new land.

For years and years  
They walked and walked  
They prayed to God  
And talked and talked

He was old  
And Sarah, too  
To them God told  
A promise true

You'll have a child  
A special one  
And name him Isaac  
A brand new son

Sarah laughed  
How can this be?  
For I am over  
Ninety

It may seem strange  
It may seem odd  
But nothing is  
Too great for God!

Now “Jazz it up!” Teach children these repetitive rhythms.

Group 1 – (rest, rest) Abra-ham (toss egg for “Abra” and give extra shake for “ham”)

Group 2 –Sa-rah (rest, rest)

Group 3 – (rest) I-saac (rest) (this is awkward at first ☺!)

Group 4 – many children many children (eighth notes)

Group 5 – Speak the first line of each stanza four times. Alternately, have them say the last, or most important line of the stanza.

Other – any word or phrase that can be said in 4/4 time can be added – be creative!

Now get one or two groups started with their rhythm, then say the poem on top of it. Try it several different ways. What rhythms sound best?

### **Life Application**

Ask children to summarize the story, prompting them “and then what happened” and gently correcting any mistakes.

Ask questions about trusting God. For example: If you had been Abraham and Sarah (100 and 90 years old) would you have trusted that God would give you a son? Why or why not? Are there things about God that are hard to believe? Why do we believe them?

### **Journaling**

Ask children to write a story or draw a picture about the most important part of the Abraham story.

### **To take home**

A copy of the Jazz Rhythm poem.

### **Adjustments for age levels and abilities**

Older grades can read the poem, but it will cut down on how well it sticks in their memory. Encourage at least some work without scripts in front of them.

Younger children will have a harder time coming up with things that are hard to believe and you can skip this part of the Life Application discussion.

### **If you have extra time...**

Let the children write an extra stanza that explains the story, or that explains something “impossible” that they have faith in.

### **If time runs short...**

You don't have to practice all the repetitive rhythms, especially if you have a group that has a hard time “getting it.” Pick one or two that you think are most important.

### **Be creative**

Music anyone? What would the poem sound like if you added a tune? Come up with one, or let the children come up with some different options. Which one do you like best?

## **Abraham, Sarah and Isaac – Jazz Rhythm**

Abraham  
Left Haran  
And journeyed to  
A brand new land.

For years and years  
They walked and walked  
They prayed to God  
And talked and talked

He was old  
And Sarah, too  
To them God told  
A promise true

You'll have a child  
A special one  
And name him Isaac  
A brand new son

Sarah laughed  
How can this be?  
For I am over  
Ninety

It may seem strange  
It may seem odd  
But nothing is  
Too great for God!

# **Abraham and Sarah, The Promise of a Child – Mountaintop Movies**

## **At a Glance**

There are two movie choices here. The NEST entertainment video “Abraham and Isaac” is 25 minutes and animated and works well with younger children. The Bible Collection movie “Abraham” starring Richard Harris and Barbara Hershey is excellent and will be preferred by older students. Its downfall is that it is 150 minutes long and you will have to edit to fit it into a single class time.

## **Outcome Objectives**

Children will understand the sequence of events in the Abraham story leading up to the birth of Isaac.

## **Movie Summary**

NEST – A problem with this movie is that it portrays Ishmael as a bad child, and Isaac as the good one. Nothing in the scriptures indicate that Ishmael ever behaved badly to deserve being sent away. Since Ishmael is to Islam what Isaac is to Judaism and Christianity, that isn't a benign statement on the part of the movie creators, and one that goes against the tolerance of our denomination. Care should be taken to explain that the movie people made that part of the story up.

On the other hand, “Abraham” has a scene where Ishmael is playing with his younger half-brother Isaac. Afterward, Abraham and Sarah have a discussion about what can possibly be done – they can't imagine a good outcome between the brothers. That scene makes Sarah appear a lot more sympathetic than she normally does in the scriptures when she sends Hagar and Ishmael away. Sarah's awareness of something going on before the journey to the sacrifice is also interesting. However, these also are reading into the text.

## **Supplies Needed**

Bibles  
Paper Easel and marker

## **Advance Preparation**

If you are using the Bible Collection “Abraham” you will need to decide where and how to edit the film. Find the passage in Genesis that corresponds to where you are starting the movie.

## **Opening Activity**

Bookmark Genesis where the movie story begins.

## **Main Lesson**

Stop at the places you determined. Ask children to describe what happened in that part of the story.

Have the child write that part of the story on the paper easel.

Continue.

**Life Application**

Ask children to retell the story in their own word.

**Journaling**

Give children a chance to rewrite the outline on the paper easel in their own journal pages.

**To take home**

You may copy some puzzles or games from the NEST movie accompanying storybook.

**Adjustments for age levels and abilities**

Pick the movie that best fits the needs of each age group.

**If you have extra time...**

Unlikely, but you can watch more of your movie.

**If time runs short...**

Skip the easel and have kids write in their own journal pages.

**Be creative**

See about setting up a movie night for all the kids to watch the entire Richard Harris movie. This could even be an all-church event.

# Abraham and Sarah, The Promise of a Child – Moved by the Spirit

## At a Glance

Children will listen to the story of the visitors who announce Isaac's birth as found in Genesis 18:1-15, and the fulfillment of the story in 21:1-7. They will create conversations that might have taken place at certain points of the story.

## Outcome Objectives

- 1) Children will learn the story of the three visitors and the promise made to Abraham and Sarah.
- 2) Children will understand why Sarah laughed and why having a child at her time of life was impracticable.
- 3) Children will understand that through God all things are possible.

To learn the story of Abraham and Sarah and the three visitors and to discuss what it felt like to be told that impossible was going to happen.

## Supplies Needed

Children's Story Bible and/or Bible

## Advance Preparation

Be familiar with the story of Abraham in general and verses 18:1-15 and 21:1-7 in particular.

Have Bible costumes available for the children to wear during the drama.

Have journal pages available for children to write their own scripts.

## Opening Activity

**Trust Walk** – Take turns blindfolding children and leading them around a simple obstacle course. If your students are mature enough, you can pair them in twos and have one partner be blindfolded as the other leads him/her around.

Questions: Did you trust me/your partner? Why or why not? When is it hard to trust? When is it easy? What living person do you trust most of all? Why?

## Main Lesson

Read the story from the story Bible or regular Bible. At the following moments, stop, and ask children to become the characters involved to make up a dialogue (or monologue) telling what is happening, what they are thinking, or what they might have said.

18:5 What the visitors might have said after Abraham ran off.  
18:6 What Sarah and a servant might have talked about while they made the cakes.  
18:11 What Abraham and Sarah would have said to each other if they'd been alone together.  
18:14 A monologue by Sarah about why she laughed.  
18:15 What the visitors said to each other as they left Abraham and Sarah  
21:3 What baby Isaac would have said to his old parents if he'd been able to talk.  
21:7 What Sarah and the visitors might have said if they'd come back after Isaac's birth.

Encourage them to come up with a mini-skit with several lines said by each character, not just a simple retort. Give several children a chance to come up with different dialogue. Make light notes. After you've gone through all the scenarios, costume up, read through the story with children acting the parts, and insert the made up dialogue in appropriate parts.

### **Life Application**

God kept an amazing promise to Abraham and Sarah. Do you think this made it easier for them to trust God in the future or harder? Why?

If the children have already been through lessons explaining the near-sacrifice of Isaac, you can carry forward this issue of trust into that story. If they haven't you can either read that story 22:1-18, or if there is not enough time, skip this discussion – it will be picked up on by another teacher during another lesson.

### **Journaling**

Write a section of script for an important moment in the story.

### **To take home**

Make copies of any script notes you or the children made and let them take them home.

### **Adjustments for age levels and abilities**

Younger children will do better with conversation than actually acting out their skits. Try saying "I wonder what the visitors would have said... Then what did they say next?... I wonder how they were feeling?..." etc. When you go to act out the play, simply read the story and have the children go through the motions, but don't insert their own skits and dialogue.

### **If you have extra time...**

Continue the concept of trust into the near-sacrifice of Isaac.

### **If time runs short...**

Don't worry about putting the whole show together. The acting of each individual part will be enough to help the children learn the story. End by reading the story again rather than acting it out.

### **Be creative**

If the children are interested, write some scripts out. Feel free to focus on the area they are most interested in portraying rather than insisting that all scenarios get equal time.

## **Special News Bulletin**

**Cast:** Three Reporters for C.R.E.W. News – Omar Jacobson, Deborah of Gilead, and Japeth the Canaanite – Two servants, Abraham, and Isaac.

**News Reporter (Omar):** Good morning viewers! I am Omar Jacobson, here once again at station C.R.E.W. with today's news. We have just received word of a breaking story. Abraham, the Patriarch has taken his beloved son, Isaac to Mt. Moriah for sacrifice. Deborah of Gilead is live on site with an update. Deborah, can you tell us what is happening?

**Deborah:** Yes, Omar, I am here with two of Abraham's servants. Apparently they were left behind to wait while Abraham and Isaac went up the mountain for the sacrifice. Can you tell us what has happened?

**Servant #1:** Well, Deborah, we came here with our master and his son. We traveled for two days and two nights, and on the third day, we could finally see the mountain, and knew that we had almost reached our destination.

**Deborah:** Tell me, what was the trip like?

**Servant #2:** It was a long hard trip. Master Abraham seemed very sad and distracted for the entire journey! Usually he enjoys traveling and spending time with Isaac, but this time it was different. He didn't talk much to any of us for the entire trip.

**Deborah:** And what happened when you got here?

**Servant #1:** Abraham told us to wait here while He and Isaac went up the mountain alone. We had brought wood and prepared a fire for the sacrifice, but had not brought an animal to sacrifice. Isaac asked his father about this, and he replied, "God will provide." I don't know where he expected to find a suitable animal here on this mountain!

**Omar:** Deborah, Let me break in here. Some of our spotters have just sighted Abraham and Isaac returning down the mountain. We are cutting to Japeth the Canaanite. Japeth, what can you tell us about this?

**Japeth** (Looking through binoculars): I have spotted two men coming down the mountain, and they seem to be laughing, singing and embracing each other. Deborah, if you can hear me, I believe they are headed your way.

**Deborah:** Thanks Japeth. Here they come now. Gentlemen, I'm Deborah of Gilead, CREW News, can I have a word with you before you go on your way?

**Abraham:** Sure, how can we help you?

**Deborah:** We have been talking to your servants here about your trip up the mountain for sacrifice. They reported that you had no animal to sacrifice. Now you are both laughing, singing, and rejoicing ... what exactly happened up on Mt. Moriah?

**Isaac:** Well, Deborah, I can tell you, it has been a pretty eventful day for both of us.

**Servant #1:** Master, what about the sacrifice? Did you find a proper animal?

**Abraham:** Hold on just a minute. There's a lot more to this story than you can ever imagine.

**Deborah:** Really? How do you mean that?

**Abraham:** We made this whole trip because God spoke to me and told me to offer my beloved son, Isaac as a sacrifice to Him. Now this . . .

**Deborah:** (breaking in as Abraham speaks): A sacrifice!! You were planning on killing your son?

**Abraham:** Well Deborah, as I was saying, God told me to offer my son. Now, we all know that God doesn't require human sacrifice as some false gods do, so this seemed like an unusual command. But, yes, after careful consideration, I planned on following God's command.

**Deborah:** It has been widely reported that Isaac is your miracle child, born to you and Sarah in your old age. I have heard that God told you that He would give you as many descendants as there are grains of sand. How could He accomplish this if you killed Isaac?

**Abraham:** I don't know, but I have learned to trust God. I believed that He would provide, even if He had to raise Isaac from the dead.

**Deborah:** Isaac, what did you think about all of this?

**Isaac:** Father kept all of this to himself on the trip here. I wondered why he seemed so sad. We traveled here and prepared the wood and fire for the sacrifice. I grew concerned about the fact that we did not have a lamb for the sacrifice. I asked Father about this, and he replied, " God will provide a lamb."

**Servant #2:** Just as he told us!

**Deborah:** So what happened? Isaac is alive. Did you change your mind about obeying God?

**Abraham:** Oh, no! We prepared the altar. Then I bound Isaac with ropes and laid him on the altar. I had the knife raised and was just about to bring it down when I heard a voice. "Abraham! Abraham!" an angel said. "Lay down the knife. There is no need to offer your son. God knows that you love Him even more than this beloved son. Look over in the bushes."

**Isaac:** We both looked over in the bushes and there was a ram, caught by his horns! It was perfect for the sacrifice – not a spot or blemish on it! Father released me and together we offered the ram to God.

**Deborah:** Wow! What an exciting turn of events!

**Abraham:** We were still rejoicing and praising God when the angel spoke again. He said he had a message from the Lord, "Because you have obeyed me and have not withheld even your beloved son, I swear by my own self that I will bless you richly. I will multiply your descendants into countless millions, like the stars of the sky and the sand of the seashore. They will conquer their enemies, and through your descendants, all the nations of the earth will be blessed – all because you have obeyed me." God once again confirmed his promise to me! >From now on this place will be called Jehovah-jireh, "The Lord Will Provide."

**Deborah:** This has certainly been an eventful day. I believe that is all from here. This is Deborah of Gilead, reporting live for CREW News. Now, back to you, Omar.

**Omar:** From today's happenings, we can see that God will keep His promise no matter what is happening around us, no matter what other people do, no matter what it looks like God is doing. He remains faithful though we are often faithless. And that's all we have time for now. Stay tuned to CREW News for additional updates to this and other stories. This is Omar Jacobson. Good day, and God bless.

# Abraham and Sarah, The Promise of a Child – Temple Courtyard

## At a Glance

Abraham or Sarah will visit the classroom and introduce ancient storytelling practices through the telling of their story. Children will then be asked to retell the story.

## Outcome Objectives

- 1) Children will gain insight into the principles of oral tradition
- 2) Children will recall the major points of Abraham and Sarah's story.

## Supplies Needed

A walking/talking staff

Butcher paper for "timeline"

Optional: find an electric "campfire" so the room can be darkened, and the story told around the fireside.

## Advance Preparation

You will need an actor who will be well researched in the Abraham and Sarah story, and who can practice retelling it without notes. There aren't a lot of detailed notes here because the only way for this to work is to know and talk about the Bible story.

## Opening Activity

Have the actor appear in street clothes and explain that today you will be pretending to be Abraham or Sarah and telling the story. Explain what kind of behavior you expect the children to have during the storytelling. Then the actor leaves to dress in character.

Meanwhile, the session leader plays a game of telephone with the children. The teachers whispers something to the first person, then each person whispers on down the line. You may ask the person to repeat what they said one time only. Suggestions:

Engine, engine, number nine

Going down Chicago line

If the train falls off the track

You won't get your money back.

Monday's child is fair of face, Tuesday's child is full of grace

Wednesday's child is full of woe, Thursday's child has far to go

Friday's child is loving and giving, Saturday's child works hard for a living

And the child that's born on the Sabbath day, is good and kind and sweet and gay.

Discuss that Abraham and Sarah lived many thousands of years ago, centuries before the written word. Tell them that the way that their story got passed down from generation to generation was

through stories that were told again and again around the fire by gifted storytellers. Instruct the children to listen closely to our storyteller, and imagine that you are living in that time and place. When the story is done, you will get a chance to retell the story.

### **Main Lesson**

Abraham or Sarah will tell these three stories: Call of Abram and Sarai (a summary of Genesis 12:1-9, 15:1-7, 17:1-8, 15-22); the visitors and Sarah's laughter (Genesis 18:1-15 and 21:1-7); and the near-sacrifice of Isaac (Genesis 22:1-19)

After each story, stop. Select a child to hold the storyteller's staff and retell the story. If they get stuck, invite another child to try, and so on. At the end of the third story, Abraham or Sarah can leave.

### **Life Application**

Explain that a true storyteller would have listened to the story dozens of times before having to tell the story back again, and that they were specially trained in the art of remembering, much as we are schooled in reading and writing. They were much less likely to forget a detail than we are.

Ask children if there are any movies/videos that they know word for word. How many times did they watch the movie before they learned it word for word?

How long do you think it would take for you to remember the Bible word for word? How do you feel about people who stop going to church and Sunday School because they figure they know everything?

### **Journaling**

Ask children to pretend that they are the first person ever to write down the story of Abraham and Sarah. Younger children can draw the picture instead.

## **Shepherd Notes**

### **Weekly Responsibilities**

Your role is to be the group's nurturer, who provides continuity from week to week. Remember that the teachers have different students every week and don't get to know them all very well. That's where you come in. Some suggestions include:

- ❖ Greet children from your group as they arrive to opening time – try to remember specific things about each one of them, and ask them about their week.
- ❖ Take attendance (stamp passports if they are being used)
- ❖ Get complete information on any visitors and give that information to the church office for a mailing. Introduce visiting children (and their parents) to teachers, students, and other church members.
- ❖ Make a note of any children who have missed more than one week and either send them a note yourself, or make a note for the church office to contact them.

In addition you are responsible for:

- ❖ Keeping track of each student's journal and placing journal pages in their journals.
- ❖ Reminding teachers to leave time for journaling.
- ❖ Running errands, i.e. to get more glue or make extra copies.
- ❖ Discipline problems that involve a child leaving the classroom.
- ❖ Escorting children to and from the bathroom.

### **Specific Responsibilities this rotation**

*Creation Station -*

*Fisherman's Net -*

*Loaves and Fishes Café -*

*Mountaintop Movies -*

*Moved by the Spirit -*

*Temple Courtyard -*