

Abraham and Sarah's Visitors

Lesson At-a-Glance

Scripture Reference

**Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; 18:1-15;
21:1-7**

Lesson Focus

God keeps promises.

Bible Memory Verse

**"Is anything too wonderful for the
LORD?" Genesis 18:14a**

Gather (10 minutes)

| | Spark Resources | Supplies |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| Arrival Activity Kids play at a makeshift campsite. | Spark Activity Pages, Spark Coloring Pages | Blanket, blocks, toy cooking pots |
| Circle Time Kids play a giggle game. | Spark Song CD, Spark Songbook | Music source |
| Opening Prayer Kids pray together. | None | None |

Open the Bible (15 minutes)

| | Spark Resources | Supplies |
|--|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Abraham and Sarah's Visitors Story Kids act out the story with lots of laughter. | Spark Story Bibles, Spark NRSV Bibles | Construction paper, markers |
| Name Art Kids will create art out of their names. | Leaflets | Markers, chenille stems, clear tape |

Activate Faith (15 minutes)

| | Spark Resources | Supplies |
|--|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Feed the Visitors Kids will make food out of play dough to feed surprise guests. | Leaflets, Spark Bible Stickers | Play dough, clear tape |
| Stars of God's Promise Kids will share things about themselves. | None | Flashlight |

Send (5 minutes)

| | Spark Resources | Supplies |
|--|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Closing Conversation Kids will talk about promises. | Leaflets | None |
| Closing Prayer Kids will create a web of joy while giving thanks for things that bring them joy. | Family Pages | Supplies Yarn (1 skein) |

Introduction

Bible Background

The people in Abram's day lived in tents, cooked over fires, and resided in extended family groups. These Genesis stories show that God keeps promises even when it seems unlikely.

In the Old Testament the meaning of names was very important. Abram and Sarai were renamed Abraham and Sarah, and the changes highlight God's activity in their lives: *Abram* means "exalted father," and *Abraham* means "father of many nations." Both *Sarai* and *Sarah* translate as "princess." Abraham and Sarah name their son Isaac, from the Hebrew word for "laugh." This name refers to the laughter of Sarah, as well as the happiness the baby brings to both parents in their old age.

Why This Story Matters

We can trust in God because God delivers on promises. Kids know what it feels like when someone makes and keeps a promise. They also know what it feels like when someone does not keep a promise. God promised to be with us always—in good and bad times, no matter what. Kids may understand God's promise in terms of a loving parent or caregiver. Parents and caregivers cannot promise that bad things won't happen, but they can promise to be present in the ups and downs of life.

Gather (10 minutes)

Arrival Activity

If some kids arrive earlier than others and you need a lesson-based activity, make copies of the Activity Page and Coloring Page, and set them out for kids to try.

Set up an area in your space to look like a campsite. Cover a table with a blanket for a tent, create a pretend fire pit out of blocks, and use toys as cooking pots and other camping gear. Invite kids to play at the campsite as they arrive.

Spark Resources

Spark Activity Pages
Spark Coloring Pages

Supplies

Blanket
Blocks
Toy cooking pots

Circle Time

After everyone has arrived, gather in a circle. Welcome everyone and invite kids to introduce themselves by sharing their first, middle, and last names, and a nickname if they have one. Next, play the Giggle Game. **In our story today, Sarah laughed when she heard that God was going to give her a son because she was 90 years old. Without touching each other, try to make one another laugh. Make funny faces, tell jokes, and act silly. Laughter is contagious! Thank God for laughter!**

MUSIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Song 1: "Father Abraham" (tracks 15 and 32 on Spark Song CD, page 83 in Spark Songbook)

Sing this song as you continue to dive into stories about Abraham and his family. Do all the motions, and create your own new ones!

Song 2: "I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy"

Sarah laughed when she heard she was going to have a baby, and when Isaac was born, both Abraham and Sarah were filled with joy! Sing this song to celebrate our amazing God who keeps promises.

Opening Prayer

Invite kids to stand in a circle and link arms. **God, we are so glad you always keep your promises. Help us to trust in you always, and to know that no matter what, you are with us. Amen.**

Spark Resources

Spark Song CD
Spark Songbook

Supplies

Music source

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

None

Open the Bible (15 minutes)

Abraham and Sarah's Visitors Story

Invite kids with Spark NRSV Bibles to each find and sit with a buddy with a Spark Story Bible.

Before kids arrive, make nametags for six characters—Abram, Sarai, three visitors, and baby Isaac. Abram and Sarai's will be two-sided with "Abram" on one side and "Abraham" on the other, and with "Sarai" on one side and "Sarah" on the other.

Ask six volunteers to help you tell the story. Give each character a nametag to hold. **Now, the rest of us are going to provide the laugh track for the story. Let's practice laughing like we just heard the funniest thing ever. Practice laughing. Okay—when we get to the place in the story where Sarah laughs, we are all going to laugh.** Read the story from the Spark Story Bible starting on page 34, and ask the characters to pantomime the actions as you read. If you have fewer than six volunteers, you can reduce the number of visitors or not include baby Isaac.

Next, have buddies show each other the Abraham and Sarah's Visitors story from their own Bibles. Younger kids can work with their buddies to find Squiggles on each page of the story, and older kids can show their younger buddies where the story starts in Genesis 17 on page 17 of the Spark NRSV Bible. Invite kids to draw a star or place a Spark Bible sticker next to each of these verses: Genesis 17:1; 17:16; 18:1; 18:15; 21:1; and 21:7.

Spark Resources

Spark NRSV Bibles
Spark Story Bibles

Supplies

Construction paper
Markers

Bible Memory Verse

"Is anything too wonderful for the LORD?" Genesis 18:14a

Invite buddies to *laugh* this verse together, then mark it with a sticker in the Spark NRSV Bible.

Name Art

In our story, names are really important. We know something about Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac because of their names. How does your name tell people something about you? Buddies write their own name and their buddy's name on their leaflets, and decorate the area around the name with images or words that describe who they are. Older buddies can help younger ones who don't know how to write yet. **Now it is time to create an action figure of yourself! Shape a chenille stem into yourself and tape it to the leaflet.**

Invite kids to read and discuss the Bible Bits together.

Spark Resources

Leaflets

Supplies

Markers
Chenille stems
Clear tape

Activate Faith (15 minutes)

Feed the Guests

Abraham and Sarah welcomed surprise guests who came to their tent. In Bible times it was common for people to say hello to surprise guests and invite them into their homes to share a meal. With your buddy, figure out what meal you would share with unexpected guests in your home. Make a meal out of play dough and tape it to the table on the leaflet.

Ask for volunteers to read the Did You Know? items aloud. Invite kids to place a sticker or special mark next to the item they found the most interesting.

Spark Resources
Leaflets
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies
Play dough
Clear tape

Blessing Ball

Sit in a circle on the floor. If the kids are comfortable with the dark, make your space as dark as possible. **God promised that his family would be blessed to be a blessing, and that his descendants would be as many as the stars in the sky. We know God keeps promises, and we are all part of Abraham and Sarah's family. We are each one of the stars in Abraham and Sarah's family-sky. Let's play a game together to name all of the stars in our group.**

1. Choose one kid to be IT and give IT the flashlight.
2. IT shines the light on one of the kids and asks, "Who is this STAR?" Everyone calls out the STAR's name.
3. The STAR shares one thing about himself or herself that most people don't know, or does one silly action while the light is shining on him or her. After sharing, the STAR becomes the next IT. (Silly Action Ideas: sound or act like an animal, wiggle your nose, fall over, snore, etc.)
4. Continue playing the game until everyone has had a chance to be a STAR.

Spark Resources
None

Supplies
Flashlight

Send (5 minutes)

Closing Conversation

God keeps promises. Nothing is impossible for God! God promised Abraham and Sarah a child and a big family, and when Abraham and Sarah were almost 100 years old, they had a baby boy. They were so happy! When do you make promises? Do you always keep your promises? Review the Fun Facts on the leaflet, then read through the suggestions in Faith on the Go, and ask each kid to tell you what they are going to try this week.

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
None

Closing Prayer

Distribute Family Page to kids, and every time they see a baby this week, they can remember God's promise to Abraham and Sarah, and how happy Abraham and Sarah were to have a baby boy!

Spark Resources
Spark Family Page

Stand in a circle, with one person holding the yarn. The person with the yarn names one thing that brings them joy, then continues holding the end of the yarn while tossing the skein to someone across the circle. Continue until everyone has shared something that brings them joy. You will have a web of joy when you are done! Raise the web overhead, and share this prayer together.

Supplies
Yarn (1 skein)

God of Joy, thank you for your promises that bring great joy. Thank you for all the things that bring us joy. We know nothing is impossible for you! Amen.

As you say goodbye to kids, make sure they take home their leaflets and Family Pages.