

## **Beginning a Journey of Faith: Abraham and Sarah**

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Olympia, WA

Written and adapted by Beth Tobin, January 2007

# **Storytelling Workshop**

### **Overview:**

Through interactive storytelling, children will experience Abraham telling the story of his travels, his encounters with God, and God's covenant with him. Students will build an altar and share how they have been blessed. Students will also help to place glow-in-the-dark stars on the ceiling of the movie room.

### **Location:**

This workshop will take place in the movie room - as "live" theatre.

### **Room Set Up:**

Before class, expose glow-in-the-dark stars to light so they are "charged." As an enhancement, this workshop could be held in the dark, using a fake campfire for affect and several fake trees. Have flashlights available for children to use if desired.

### **Supplies:**

- Costume for "Abraham"
- Fake campfire and trees
- Flashlights
- Glow-in-the-dark stars (At least one per child)
- Fist-sized rocks for altar building
- Faith Journal Page to distribute at the end of class.
- Ladder
- Sticky Tack
- Permanent Marker
- Pencils
- Maps of the Land where Abraham lived and traveled

### **Advance Preparation:**

- Please read the background information based on Genesis 12-25, and read the passages outlined in the Rotation Overview.
- Be familiar with and/or memorize the memory verses.
- Read through the Biography of Abraham several times to become familiar with it. Memorize any parts possible.
- Be dramatic in your reading and role playing.
- Gather supplies and set up the room as desired.

### **Lesson:**

Welcome the children to class. Be sure to introduce yourself - as Abraham! Be in character from the moment the kids arrive. Invite students to sit up front. *They may even wish to sit on the floor around the campfire. Some may wish to hold a flashlight responsibly.*

Hand out one glow-in-the-dark star to each child. Have them write their name, or their initials on their star using the permanent marker. As one student at a time hands you his or her star, climb the ladder and stick it to the ceiling.

While you are doing this, tell the students that the stars are an important symbol to help us remember your (Abraham's) story. Ask them what they know about you (Abraham) and stars? Accept all answers. Let them just wonder and offer suggestions.

Tell them that the story of Abraham can be found in the Book of Genesis in the Bible. Ask them if that is the Old or New Testament? (OT) Have them find Genesis 12. Show them that this is where the story of Abram begins. ("You're story.") and have them keep a finger or something there while they find Genesis 25 - where the story ends. Let them know that you will be telling them the story today instead of them reading it from their Bible. Encourage them to ask you any questions they may have.

When you are finished sticking up stars, turn out the lights and begin your story.

*When noted in script, build an altar to praise and worship God.*

### **God's Promise to Abram**

A long time ago, I lived in the land of Haran, and back then I was called Abram. I am the son of Terah who was descended from Shem. My father, Terah, had taken our family, and returned to Haran after living in Ur, when one day God said to me: "Leave your country, and your kinfolk, and your father's house, and go to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great. I will bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you, and through you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

So I heeded what the Lord had said and departed; I was seventy-five years old when I left Haran. With me I took Sarai my wife, and Lot, my brother's son, and all our goods and cattle, and the people we gathered in Haran. And we went into the land of Canaan.

And we passed through Canaan to Shechem in the plain of Moreh, which was occupied then by the Canaanites. At Shechem God appeared to me and said:

"This land I will give to your people."

So I built an altar to the Lord at Shechem. Then I moved and came to a mountain to the east of Bethel where I pitched my tent with Bethel to the west and Ai to the east. Here too I built an altar and called upon the name of the Lord before continuing my journey to the south.

There was famine in the land, so I continued to Egypt and lived there until the famine was over. Then I returned to the place between Bethel and Ai where I had built another altar and there again I called on the name of the Lord.

## **Abram & Lot**

I was very rich in cattle, in silver and in gold, and Lot who traveled with me was also very rich, having flocks and herds and tents. The land was not able to support us all; we could not live together in one place and there was trouble between the herdsman of my herds, and the herdsman of Lot. There were Canaanites and Perizzites also living off the land, so I said to Lot;

“Let there be no trouble between you and me, nor between your men and my men, for we are relatives. Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself, I beg you, from me. If you choose the left hand, I will go to the right. Or if you move to the right then I will go to the left.”

Lot lifted his eyes and looked out over the whole plain of Jordan, and saw how well the land was watered everywhere. It was like the garden of the Lord and like parts of the land of Egypt.

So Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan. He went toward the east, and we separated one from the other.

I lived in the land of Canaan and Lot lived in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent near Sodom.

And when Lot had departed, God said to me:

“Lift up your eyes now, and look northward, southward, eastward, and westward. For all the land which you see I will give to you and to your descendants forever. And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anybody could count the dust of the earth, he would also be able to count your descendants.

“Arise, walk through the land, the length of it, and the breadth of it, for to you I will give it all.”

Then I moved my tent and went and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and there I built an altar to the Lord.

Soon afterward, there was war in the land and Lot and his possessions were captured and taken from Sodom. So I rescued Lot and his goods and his people, and restored them.

## **Abram's Vision**

After these things the word of God came to me in a vision, saying; "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield and your great reward."

"Lord God," I said, "what will you give me since I am without children and my heir is a servant, Eliezer of Damascus?"

Then the word of God came to me saying:

"Not a servant but a child of your own shall be your heir."

He took me into the open and said:

"Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you can do so. As numerous as the stars shall be your children and your children's children be."

And I believed in the Lord and the Lord regarded me with favor.

Then God said to me:

"I am the Lord that brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give you this land to inherit."

"Lord God," I said, "how shall I know that I shall inherit it?"

"Bring me a heifer three years old," God said to him, " a she-goat three years old, a turtle dove and a young pigeon."

I gathered all these animals as offerings. He took them to God and divided them into pieces, laying one against another. But the smallest he did not divide. When the birds of prey came down upon the remains of the offerings I drove them away.

As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon me and, lo, a great and fearful darkness fell upon me. Then God said to me:

"Know for certain that your children shall be strangers in a land that is not theirs. They shall live in bondage and be oppressed for four hundred years. But the nation that shall oppress them I will judge, and afterwards they shall emerge with great possessions."

“You yourself shall go to your fathers in peace, and be buried in a good old age. Your children shall return here in the fourth generation.”

When the sun was down and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp passed between the pieces of the offering.

And on that day God made a covenant with me saying:

“To your children and to all your children’s children, I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the Great River, the river Euphrates. All the people who dwell within it, I have delivered to you.”

### **Abraham is Named**

When I was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to me and said:

“I am the Almighty God. Walk in my ways and be perfect. I will make my covenant with you, and your people shall increase greatly.”

I knelt down, with my face to the ground, and God talked to me saying:

“My covenant I shall keep with you. No longer will you be called Abram; from you shall many be descended. Your name shall be Abraham for I have made you a father of many nations. I will keep my covenant with you and my covenant shall be everlasting with you and your descendants through all generations. Your line shall prosper and from it shall arise nations and kings. To you and to them I will give the land of Canaan, in which you are a stranger, as an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.

“As for Sarai, your wife, you shall call her no longer Sarai, but her name shall be Sarah. I will bless her, and from her you shall have a son. She shall be a mother of nations and of kings.”

“I bowed down and laughed to myself, saying:

“Can a man a hundred years old have a son? And Sarah, a woman of ninety, can she have a child?”

“Sarah, your wife, shall bear a son, and you will call him by the name Isaac. With him and with his children after him I will make my everlasting covenant.”

The Lord did as he had promised, and Sarah bore me a son in our old age, at the time chosen by God, and I called the son Isaac, a name, which means ‘He laughs.’

At this time you can have each student take a stone from the pile, and as they build an altar, they should say aloud one way that they feel blessed by God. (Example: family, health, hobbies, etc.)

### **Reflection/Closure:**

If time allows, ask the students one or more of the following questions from their Faith Journal page. Students may also work in teams to look up and answer questions. If there is no extra time, please hand out the Faith Journal page and encourage students to work on them at home.

1. What are the three main promises God made to Abraham and his descendants? If they don't remember they can look them up. (12:1-3, 15:5-7, 17:1-8)
2. Who was Isaac? (21:9-21)
3. Why do you think Isaac was given a name similar to laughter? (18:10-15, 21:1-7)
4. How do the stars help us to remember this story? How many stars can you see in the night sky? *(About 6,000 stars can be seen from earth without using a telescope, but there are billions of stars in our galaxy!)*
5. Have students recall the two memory verses: *(See next page.)*

## **Memory Verses:**

### **Genesis 17:7**

*“I will always keep the promise I have made to you and your descendants, because I am your God and their God.”*

### **Genesis 22:17a**

*“I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore.”*

**Close with a word of prayer...** Dear Heavenly Father, you have blessed us all so richly. We thank you for being a constant guide in our lives, and for always keeping your promises. Help us to follow you and continue to grow closer in love to you and to one another. In Jesus name we pray, AMEN!!

#### **Resources:**

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**Abraham & Sarah**

Augustana Lutheran Church

Last edited by: [CreativeCarol](#), August 27, 2004