

LOVE IS BELONGING

ABRAHAM AND SARAH LOOK AT THE STARS



Bible reading



Genesis 15:1-6

<https://bit.ly/3ZRqWnw>

After these things happened, the Lord spoke his word to Abram in a vision. God said, “Abram, don’t be afraid. I will defend you. And I will give you a great reward.”

But Abram said, “Lord God, what can you give me? I have no son. So my slave Eliezer from Damascus will get everything I own after I die.” Abram said, “Look, you have given me no son. So a slave born in my house will inherit everything I have.”

Then the Lord spoke his word to Abram. He said, “That slave will not be the one to inherit what you have. You will have a son of your own. And your son will inherit what you have.”

Then God led Abram outside. God said, “Look at the sky. There are so many stars you cannot count them. And your descendants will be too many to count.”

Abram believed the Lord. And the Lord accepted Abram’s faith, and that faith made him right with God.

Genesis 17:3-7

<http://bit.ly/3zPtUM>

Then Abram bowed facedown on the ground. God said to him, “I am making my agreement with you: I will make you the father of many nations. I am changing your name from Abram^[a] to Abraham. This is because I am making you a father of many nations. I will give you many descendants. New nations will be born from you. Kings will come from you. And I will make an agreement between me and you and all your descendants from now on: I will be your God and the God of all your descendants.

Bible video

God’s story: Abraham and Sarah – Crossroad Kids’ Club <https://youtu.be/NdqrwGJYePQ>

Arrival activity

Big entrance challenge – As children arrive at the front door offer a huge big welcome and be sure to use their name. Then, as they get to their group, the group could all welcome them too.

This is the day to create secret ways of belonging together, such as secret handshakes, team colours to wear for the day, a secret group language.

The group could also create self-portraits that could be displayed as a group gallery.

Big Question:

- ♥ What do you belong to?
- ♥ How do you know you belong?

Drama

Out of the album (Sarah)

Hello there, my children, how lovely to see you all. You’re all looking pretty bright eyed and bushy tailed – goodness, that makes you sound like a load of squirrels, doesn’t it? I’d rather think of you as... well, as stars.

God said that to me and my hubby once. We were getting on a bit, as you can see, and we’d given up on having children, but God said we’d have as many children as there were stars in the sky! Can you picture that? You can’t even count the stars – can you imagine getting

that many children to wash their hands before dinner? Of course, he didn't mean they'd all be our sons or daughters directly, but that we'd be the beginning of a big family. Little Isaac came along first, and when he grew up he married Rebecca and they had twins, Jacob and Esau.

You should have seen them – as different as chalk and cheese they were, despite being twins, my grandsons. Then they gave me fifteen great-grandchildren or more, and they went on to give me great-great-grandchildren and great-great-great-grandchildren and... well, don't ask me to draw my family tree because there'd be far too many twigs and branches to include. Even Jesus would be on there! In fact, I bet you'd be on there somewhere too – a twiglet, maybe. God's love is so great that we all belong, everyone's included and nobody's unwelcome. It's a great big family of God!

Story

A box filled with items and images/photos from Abraham and Sarah's story. This can be done up front with all the children or in smaller groups.

You will need a box with various clues relating to the story inside (see below).

The box could be at the front when the children arrive, to get them thinking and curious about its purpose and contents.

Begin by explaining that this box is full of things that tell someone's story. I wonder whose story it is?

Who do we think it belongs to? Are there any clues? **The stickers on the outside could have a big love heart with A and S in it. Turn the box round to show another bit of writing that says Abraham 4 Sarah.**

OK, so we know this story box belongs to Abraham and Sarah. Does anyone know anything about them to start us off? Take comments and suggestions from all groups.

Shall we open it and see what's inside?

Encourage children to come and lift an item out of the box and explore what it might be telling us about Abraham and Sarah's story together. **Here are the items and which part of the story they might link to, but you could add others.**

Walking sticks: To show that they were old.

Birth certificates: For Abraham and Sarah to show their age (100 year old), and one for Isaac too. Perhaps lots of blank ones for the family that is to come.

Baby nappy/cloth: Showing that they had a child, perhaps followed by LOTS of nappies for their big family to come.

Bible: With the story marked in Genesis so you can follow along and fill in gaps.

Bag of laughs/a laughing picture: To remember how Sarah laughed when she heard God's promise.

God's promise written on a scroll:

Read out the promise that God gave to Abraham.

Lots of stars in a jar or a picture of the night sky with the question, "How many stars?": Ask the children if they can guess how many stars there are. Explain that God gave Abraham a promise that his family would have as many people in it as the stars in the sky.

A family tree: either a wooden one (like a prayer tree) that you can add name tags onto OR a paper version showing Abraham's family tree leading all the way to us.

Blank name tags (could be star shaped): I wonder whose names should be on here? Encourage each child to write their name on a tag and come and add it to the giant family tree.

We all belong to God's big family that was part of the promise to Abraham and Sarah. And look, there's more blank name tags for lots more names to be added.

Put all the pieces back in the box and close it. This can be used by any of the groups during the day. Leave the family tree out on display.

Wondering questions

- ♥ I wonder how many stars there are in the sky?
- ♥ I wonder how many different places you feel you belong and if there's anywhere you feel you don't belong?
- ♥ I wonder what it means to be part of God's family?



Small group prayer

Prayer star light

You will need:

- Paper
- Glue
- Star stickers
- Battery operated tea light

Make a cone out of the paper and decorate the cone with the star stickers. As the children are sticking on the stars, remind them that they are all part of God's family. Encourage them to think about their friends and family and add a star for each person.

They could also think about other people or situations they want to pray for and stick on more stars. Play some quiet music while they are doing this. When everyone has completed their cone, place a tea light under each one and have a few moments of quiet just looking at the lights together.

The cones will be used again in the large group prayer.

Activity/craft

Sensory jar

You will need:

- Small jars
- Star sequins
- Baby oil



What you do:

1. Pour some oil into the jar.
2. Add some star sequins
3. Secure the lid and shake the jar.
4. You can decorate the lid as desired.
5. Watch the sequins float in the jar.

STEM activity

Coffee filter colouring

You will need:

- Coffee filter papers or kitchen towel
- Felt tips
- Water
- Pipettes (optional)

What you do:

1. Decorate a coffee filter paper or a piece of kitchen towel using felt tips, trying to fill as much of the space as possible.
2. Use the pipette or end of a teaspoon to drop droplets of water onto the colour. Watch as the colours spread out and merge together.
3. Explain that, although we are separate beings, we all belong to God. We can come together with God (the water) and belong as a part of God's family.





Recipe

Handprint toast

We all belong to God's family, but God made each of us unique. This recipe uses handprints and fingerprints to help reflect on how we all belong to God but how we are all different.

You will need:

- Sliced bread (white works best – gluten free if needed)
- Food colouring in different colours
- Milk (or milk alternative)
- Paint brush (new)
- A toaster

With a slice of bread for each child, get them to press down in the bread with the flat of their hand to make a handprint in the bread. Mix some food colouring into some milk or milk substitute. Using the coloured milk, decorate around the handprint using a paint brush or fingertips. Lightly toast the bread and then enjoy eating it.



Games

Tell me something

This game is played sitting in a circle. Some children might need some support thinking of responses. The game helps children get to

know each other a little bit and realise how much they have in common. Of course, the one thing we all have in common is that we are members of God's family and are loved by God.

The first person tells everyone a fact about themselves e.g. "I was born in a hospital in Scotland".

The second person then tells everyone a fact about themselves, but it must link somehow to the previous sentence e.g. "I went to hospital last week when I bruised my finger" or "My granny lives in Scotland".

The third person then tells a fact about themselves based on the thing the second person said, and so on. (If the group struggles, you could do it so that anyone can respond if they can link to the previous sentence in some way.)

Join us

This game is a tiny bit like musical chairs. Set out chairs around the room in sets of three and get the players to sit on the chairs so that they are in threes, apart from one set of chairs, which only has two players sitting there. Players keep their hands on their knees. You may need to manipulate the numbers by one or two leaders joining in to make up groups of three.

When the music begins, the group which is just two people hold hands and run to another group to "steal" one of that group by grabbing their hand and running back to their chairs to sit down as a threesome.

As soon as that new threesome has sat down, the remaining pair now join hands and run to "steal" a member of another threesome and take them back to their chairs, though not from the team that has just stolen from them.

When the music stops, any group which is not sitting down is out and their chairs are removed from the game.

Large group prayer

Tealight meditation

Place the tea lights made in the small groups in the centre of the room.

Ask everyone to sit in a comfortable position in a circle.

Take a few mindful breaths, feel the body where it is, and allow your energy to settle.

Focusing on the lights in the centre of the room:

Think of the stars and how many there are. Abraham was promised that his descendants would be as many as the stars.

We are all part of this one big family – we all belong.

PAUSE...

You belong to it too.
Know you are loved,
You are never alone.
You are loved by God, and you belong.

PAUSE...

Look around slowly,
Look at everyone here.
We're connected.
You are loved by God, and you belong.

PAUSE...

Think of the earth and everything in it,
The stars in the sky,
All are magnificent.
All unique but all connected.
We're more similar than different.
You are loved by God, and you belong.

PAUSE...



You're worthy and you belong,
Knowing that you are welcome.
This world is yours,
You are loved by God, and you belong.

PAUSE...

Slowly come back to the present and stretch up to the top of the room.

Bringing your senses back to the present.

And we all say AMEN.

