

GOD'S BIG PLAN

A New People!

Genesis 24-35

Supporting Scriptures: Romans 9:9-14; Hebrews 11:9, 17-20

Lesson Goals: To see that God keeps His promises.
To see that God answers prayer.
To see that God passed His promise from Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob.

Scripture Memory God is able to do whatever he promises. Romans 4:21b (NLT)

NOTE: Familiarize yourself so much with this story that it can be told as a STORY, not as “He said. . . She said” or read. But, to reinforce that these ideas are not your own, hold your Bible as you tell the story.

The Lesson: Let's review what we have learned about Abraham and God's Big Plan. (Review the previous story. Encourage more and more students to share.)

What was God's promise to Abraham? (A new people, but also for everyone to be blessed through him.) How did God start completing that promise? (By giving them Isaac.)

What difficult thing did God ask Abraham to do? (To offer his one and only son back to God.) What did Abraham do? (He obeyed.) And what happened? (God provided a ram to die in Isaac's place.)

READ: Genesis 24:1-4, 7 (CEV) - (Hold the Bible in your hands throughout the story.)

By the time Abraham was 140 years old, he decided that Isaac needed a wife. But there was a problem. Abraham didn't want Isaac to marry any of the young ladies around them in Canaan because they weren't followers of God. So, Abraham sent his best servant on a journey to find Isaac a wife. Abraham sent his servant to Mesopotamia, where Abraham had once lived, saying, “God will go before you and help you find the right person.” She must return with the servant because Isaac needed to stay where he was, on the land that God had promised Abraham.

The servant readied ten camels and gifts and traveled through the desert to Mesopotamia, to the city of Abraham's brother, Nahor. The servant arrived at a well in the land of Mesopotamia and bowed down to pray, “God, help me to find the right girl. When I ask for a drink of water, let her be the one who offers to water my camels, too.” And before the servant had finished praying, a beautiful, young girl came from the city to the well to get water for her family. The girl's name was Rebekah. The servant asked for a drink and after giving him a drink, Rebekah offered to water his camels, too. Trip after trip she made from the well to the trough until all ten camels had finished drinking. The servant watched everything she did. He wanted to be sure that this was the one. And she was! She was even from Abraham's family! The very next day, Rebekah left the home she had always known and went with the servant. She was married to Isaac and he loved her very much and they lived together in the land that God had promised Isaac's father, Abraham.

After Abraham died, God reminded Isaac of the promise of a new place and people, and God passed this promise on to Isaac. God would keep His promise to Isaac just as He had kept it for Abraham. Isaac and

Rebekah lived in this wonderful place that God had given them and they had children, twins. The older was named Esau and the younger, Jacob. As they grew up, Esau loved to be outside and he especially loved to hunt. And just like most brothers and sisters, Jacob was the opposite of Esau. Jacob liked quiet, peaceful things and liked to stay inside. Because Esau was born first, he should have received all that was his father's, even a blessing to live and rule well. God's plan was different, though. God had even told Rebekah while she was still pregnant with the twins that the oldest would one day serve the youngest. That meant that Jacob, instead of Esau, would be the one in control. And just as his father Abraham had done, Isaac sent Jacob away to Mesopotamia, to the home of Rebekah's brother, to find a wife.

Jacob left his parents and headed toward Uncle Laban's. That first night, as it was getting dark, Jacob stopped to rest. He fell asleep with a stone for a pillow and had a dream. In the dream, he saw a ladder reaching up to heaven! Angels were going up and down on the ladder. In the dream, God repeated His promise to Isaac. "Your people will be so many that they will be like the dust on the earth. All of the families of the earth will be blessed because of you. I will be with you," God continued. "I will take care of you and one day, I will bring you back to this land I have promised you." What a dream! When Jacob woke up, he promised that if God kept this promise, Jacob would choose to serve this God. Jacob even promised to give God a tenth of all that he had because he knew that all of it was given to him by God.

Jacob arrived in Mesopotamia, to the city of Haran, and Uncle Laban was excited to see him. Jacob met and fell in love with Uncle Laban's daughter, Rachel. Jacob wanted to marry her. Uncle Laban had a plan. Fathers never let their youngest daughters marry before their older ones, and Rachel had an older sister, Leah. But Laban answered Jacob, "Sure, you can marry Rachel, but you must work for me for seven years first." To have Rachel as a wife made seven years seem like a short time to Jacob. But on their wedding day Laban switched sisters and Jacob married Leah instead! What a surprise! Jacob stayed with Leah, but he still loved Rachel. Now, Laban would give Rachel to Jacob as a wife - for seven more years of work! And Jacob agreed! God was good to Jacob. God gave Jacob thirteen children, one daughter named Dinah and twelve sons! Their son's were named Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph and Benjamin.

And then something amazing happened as Jacob and his family were heading back to the land of Abraham and Isaac. God reminded Jacob of his promise. And as God had passed His promise from Abraham to Isaac, He was now passing His promise to Jacob. And God changed Jacob's name. Jacob would now be known as Israel. And these twelve sons of his were the beginning of the new people God had promised Abraham, a new nation. They would forever be known as the nation of Israel, God's special promise to Abraham.

Review:

Now, let's review what you have learned. Who wants to retell the story? (Ask your group if anything was left out or told inaccurately.) Would anyone else like to retell the story?

Does God keep His promises? (Yes!) How do you know? (Because He gave Abraham a son. And that son had a son who had twelve sons. God's new people would come from those twelve sons.)

What do you remember about Jacob's dream the night he had a stone for a pillow? (He saw a ladder to heaven and angels.) Can we approach God? (No. Our sin separates us from God.) So how can we have a friendship with God? (God approaches us and bridges the gap between us and Him made by our sin.) How does God get rid of that separation? (By blessing all the families of the world through Abraham's descendant, Jesus. God provided His One and Only Son to close the gap between us and God. Will you accept Him and serve Him today, as Jacob did?)

**Planning for Next Week
Lesson 11 • Jacob's Favorite Son
Genesis 37-40**

PRESCHOOL LESSON

SING: "We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder"

SHARE: Father Abraham and Sarah enjoyed their son Isaac. They watched him grow into a wonderful man. And one day, Abraham thought that it was time to help Isaac find a wife.

Abraham called his best servant. Abraham sent his servant to Mesopotamia - Mess-oh-poe-**tame**-e-ah. Try it with me; Mess-oh-poe-**tame**-e-ah. Mesopotamia is where Abraham had grown up. Abraham wanted a good wife for Isaac. Abraham's servant took ten camels and many gifts with him. Clop, clop, clop and spit, spit, spit went the camels!

The servant traveled until he came to a well in the land of Mesopotamia. At the well, the servant prayed for God's help. (Fold hands in prayer) "God, please help me find a wife for Isaac. When I ask for a drink of water, let her offer to water my camels, too." And before the servant had finished praying, a beautiful, young girl came from the city to the well to get water for her family. The girl's name was Rebekah. When the servant asked her for a drink of water, she gave it to him and gladly watered his camels, too! Sweet Rebekah lowered her jar into the well and ran to the trough that the camels drank out of. She poured her water in. She ran back to the well and filled her jug again. She did this many, many times until the camels had finished drinking. And camels drink a lot of water!

The servant had found the wife for Isaac that he was looking for. And the first thing he did was to tell God "Thank you!" Rebekah agreed to go with the servant. She agreed to become Isaac's wife. Isaac married Rebekah and loved her very much!

PRAY: Thank you, God, for answering prayer.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Memory Verse Activity - Pictographs were used in this area and were the basis for the cuneiform alphabet. Re-write the memory verse in pictures. Review the memory verse to learn it. If this is too difficult, write the memory verse out, in English, on 10 camel cut-outs.
- Study about Mesopotamia.
 - Look at a map of the area and trace the journey from Canaan to Mesopotamia.
 - Provide word puzzles that allow your students to discover new words from the word “Mesopotamia.”
 - Make your own cuneiform, using the cuneiform alphabet.
- Teach your students how to make “Jacob’s Ladder” with yarn. (There is also a “Jacob’s Ladder that can be made with small wooden blocks and yarn.)
- Provide camel crafts. Coloring pages will be interesting as well as paper plate or lunch bag camels. Be creative!
- Did you know that one camel can drink as much as 20 gallons of water at a time? Imagine how long it must have taken Rebekah to water the servant’s ten camels. Run a relay race to help Rebekah water the camels.

In preparation, you will need four large trash cans, two at each end of the relay course. You will also need two clean, empty gallon milk jugs. Each team will have a “well” trashcan and a “trough” trashcan. Fill each “well” with water.

Divide your students into two teams. To begin, the first in line for each team is given the milk jug. Water must be moved from the “well” of each team to the “trough.” The team to transfer the most water wins.