

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C– Second Sunday in Lent
Lesson Plans for Older Children
RCL Old Testament Readings – Track One

Scripture: Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18

Background: Lent is a reflective season – an opportunity to go deep within ourselves and focus on our relationship with God and with others. The forty days of Lent remind us of the forty days that Jesus spent in the desert following his baptism, pondering who he was and what he was to do. They also remind us of the forty years that the people of God wandered in the desert following the Exodus from Egypt, learning how to be the community of the people of God. The Hebrew Scripture lessons in year C focus on the covenants or promises that God made with the people of God. Like Jesus, we choose to enter this time of “desert,” in order to remember the promises of God, hear the stories of ways in which they were fulfilled (hint: They didn’t always look the way the people expected!), and the ways in which we are called to participate in those promises in our own time – to discover who we are in God and what we are to do.

A Notation for This Week’s Lesson: In this week’s lesson, we turn to one of the foundational stories of our faith, which tells us how God made a promise to Abram and Sarai to make them the starting place of the family of God, even though it seemed impossible, as they had no children of their own.

Theme: God Promises Abram and Sarai

Before Class: You will need bibles or copies of the lesson for each child. Determine which activity options you will be using and gather the materials needed. You will need the bowl of sand from last week, and a star to place in the sand. (Any type of star is fine. Wooden stars are easy to find at craft stores, or you might simply cut a star from cardstock.)

Beginning: Gather the children in your usual manner, perhaps with an opening song or greeting. Remind them that the seasons of the church year have changed, and it is the time of Lent, the time we set aside to pay attention to the ways in which we come close to God, and to step away from things that separate us from God. Remind the children that through their baptism, they are always a part of God’s great family, “that they are marked Christ’s own, forever.”

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for the gift of Lent, the time we pay special attention to the ways we can come closer to you. Help us to hear your promises, and to remember that we are part of your great family. Amen.

The Story: Help the children find Genesis 15 in their Bibles or hand out the reading. The word Genesis means “beginning,” and the book of Genesis is at the very beginning of the Bible. This story is about the beginning of the family of God! As with all lectionary readings, we enter this story in the middle of the action, so it is good to review a little bit about the Abram/Sarai story. Ask the children what they know or remember about Abraham, or tell this backstory yourself.

Abram and Sarai were part of a large family that moved from the great city of Ur to a smaller city called Haran. Haran was at the very edge of the desert, and Abram would go to the desert to come close to God. One time when he came close to God, he knew that God was asking Abram and Sarai to travel to their own land, land that was not in the city, and which would require them to go through the desert. Moving was hard work – Abram and Sarai had herds of animals and many servants. They trusted God and went into the desert, looking for the land that God had for them. They also took along Abram’s nephew, Lot, and his family, servants and animals. Abram and Lot settled on different plots of land, near each other, but Lot was captured by an enemy army, and Abram had to go out and rescue him. After Abram rescued Lot, he became worried. He was worried that enemy armies would continue to attack in their area. He worried because he didn’t have children who would grow up to work, own, and defend his land. Today’s story begins as a conversion that Abram had with God while he was worried about these things.

Genesis 15:1-12 and 17-18 can be read aloud, readers theatre style, with one person reading the part of God, one person reading the part of Abram, and one person reading the narrative bits. The text of this is printed at the end of this lesson. Even if you choose to use the handout for reading aloud, have the children locate Genesis 15 in their Bibles so that they can connect the story with its Biblical context, and practice their Bible skills.

Reflection Questions: (Use the ones that interest you and your community of children)

- I wonder how Abram and Sarai felt when they didn’t think they would ever have children?
- I wonder how it felt to hear God promise descendants?
- I wonder if they believed God right away, or if it took some time?
- I wonder if there is anything that seems impossible to you?
- I wonder how Abram and Sarai felt when they saw the stars after God made this promise?
- I wonder if you have ever gone out at night to look at the stars?

Activity Options:

- 1. Mobile or Story bag:** Each story in the coming weeks lends itself to a symbol, which can be created to hang on a mobile or to fill a story bag that the children can take home at the end of Lent to remember the promises of God. (The symbols will be a star, a burning bush, stones, a portion of a map or a road, and a cross.) *The symbol for this week is a star.*
 - a. For the Mobile:** You will need the embroidery hoop hanger that you created last week. You will need to be prepared for children who were not here last week, either by helping them create the hanger (directions in week 1), or by having a few hangers prepared for them. Draw a large star for each child on a piece of construction paper or cardstock. Have the child cut out the star (or pre-cut it for younger children). Punch a hole in the top of the star with a hole punch, and string yarn through the hole punch. Have the child decorate the star while you talk about the reflection questions for the story. You could use glitter glue, or simply decorate the star with crayons or markers. Tie the yarn to the embroidery hoop so that it hangs down.
 - b. For the Story Bag:** You will need a small cloth bag for each child. (These would be easy to make, or can be found inexpensively at craft stores. Burlap or muslin would be good choices to reflect the colors of the desert.) Prepare the star as above for the mobile, eliminating the hole punch and yarn. Have the child cut out

and decorate the star while you talk together about the reflection questions. Add the star to the story bag.

2. **Journal:** An inexpensive journal can be created for each child to use during Lent. Composition books work well, or you might simply gather several pieces of notebook paper, and make construction paper covers by stapling them together down the sides. Journaling can be in words or pictures, and can be free-form, or follow a prompt. A possible prompt for this week is this: *Who is in your family, both people related to you and people that are in your family by choice? What stories do you know about your family? Are there places that are special to your family? Have you ever moved to a new home?* Alternatively, the journal could also be a place for exploring possible Lenten disciplines, such as prayer, fasting, or charitable giving.
3. **Congregational Project:** If your congregation takes on a particular project for Lent, consider how to incorporate that into your class time.

Getting Closure: Gather in your story area as you prepare to end class. This can be a good time to share concerns and prayers. You might choose to again remind each child that they are a child of God through the tracing of an invisible cross on their foreheads.

Closing Prayer: (This can be done as a body prayer by placing your hands on the mentioned body part as you pray.)

God be in my head and in my understanding.
God be in my eyes and in my seeing.
God be in my mouth and in my speaking.
God be in my heart and in my loving.
God be in my hands and in my touching.
God be in my legs and in my moving.
God be in my life and in my journey.
Amen.

God's Agreement with Abram

(Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18, International Children's Version)

Narrator: After these things happened, the Lord spoke his word to Abram in a vision:

God: "Abram, don't be afraid. I will defend you, and I will give you a great reward."

Abram: "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. Look, you have given me no son, so a slave born in my house will inherit everything I have."

God: "He will not be the one to inherit what you have. You will have a son of your own who will inherit what you have."

Narrator: Then God led Abram outside and said,

God: "Look at the sky. There are so many stars you cannot count them. Your descendants also will be too many to count."

Narrator: Abram believed the Lord. And the Lord accepted Abram's faith, and that faith made him right with God. God said to Abram,

God: "I am the Lord who led you out of Ur of Babylonia so that I could give you this land to own."

Abram: "Lord God, how can I be sure that I will own this land?"

God: "Bring me a three-year-old cow, a three-year-old goat, a three-year-old male sheep, a dove, and a young pigeon."

Narrator: Abram brought them all to God. Then Abram killed the animals and cut each of them into two pieces, laying each half opposite the other half. But he did not cut the birds in half. Later, large birds flew down to eat the animals, but Abram chased them away. As the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep. While he was asleep, a very terrible darkness came.

The sun went down, and it was very dark. Suddenly a smoking firepot and a blazing torch passed between the halves of the dead animals. So on that day the Lord made an agreement with Abram. The Lord said,:

God: "I will give this land to your descendants. I will give them the land between the river of Egypt and the great river Euphrates."

Published by the Office for Formation and Vocation Ministries of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

© 2016 The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. All rights reserved.