

HEARING AND EXPLORING THE OLD TESTAMENT (*Genesis 18: 1-15, 21:1-7*)

If you have four fairly good readers, read today's story in parts. Define the actors by giving Sarah a head scarf, Abraham a man's hat, and a gym bag for the traveler. Or, have one or two readers read the story.

NARRATOR: The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground.

ABRAHAM: "My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on--since you have come to your servant."

NARRATOR: So the travelers said, "Do as you have said." And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said,

ABRAHAM: Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes."

NARRATOR: Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

TRAVELER: They said to him, "Where is your wife Sarah?"

ABRAHAM: "There, in the tent."

TRAVELER: "I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son."

NARRATOR: And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age.

SARAH: So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have grown old, and my husband is old, will we have a baby."

TRAVELER: "Why did Sarah laugh, and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too wonderful for the LORD? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son."

SARAH: But Sarah denied, saying, "I did not laugh"; for she was afraid. The traveler said,

TRAVELER: "Oh yes, you did laugh."

NARRATOR: The LORD dealt with Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as he had promised. Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which

God had spoken to him. Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him.

SARAH: Now Sarah said, "God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me." And she said, "Who would ever have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."

Questions to ponder together:

I wonder why God chose old people like Abraham and Sarah to be Isaac's parents?

I wonder why God came as three travelers instead of sending one angel?

Imagine how Sarah laughed. Was it a happy surprised laugh or a no-way laugh or something else.

Why do you think Sarah denied that she laughed?

Has God ever surprised you?

PRAYING FOR GOD'S WORLD

Together create a "happy" prayer. Challenge each worshiper to think of one prayer thanking or praising God for something that makes them happy (and yes video games qualify). Go around the circle with each person adding their happy prayer. Conclude praying the Lord's Prayer together.

Activity to Prepare for Gospel

Collect a variety of pictures of people engaged in various types of work, for example, farmer, teacher, food server, nurse, clergy person, factory worker, etc. Pull these from the Internet or cut them from magazines/newspapers. Together look at the pictures. Discuss: ♦Who works for God? ♦Does anyone you know do these jobs? ♦How are each of these people working for God?

Gospel Story : The Apostles (Matthew 9:35–10:23)

Sing the words below to the tune of "This Old Man." Participants sing the phrases repeated from the previous verses as they become familiar. Even younger children will catch on quickly:

Jesus Christ, he called one: "Matthew, come, our work's begun." Matthew followed Jesus from that very day. Follow Jesus everyday.

Jesus Christ, he called two: "Peter, be my friend so true." Peter followed Jesus from that very day. Follow Jesus everyday.

Remaining verses:

♦three: "Andrew, will you follow me?"

♦four: "James, I need one helper more."

- ◆five: “John, I’ll make you feel alive.”
- ◆six: “Philip, bring your walking stick.”
- ◆seven: “Bartholomew, come to heaven.”
- ◆eight: “Thomas, come! It’s getting late.”
- ◆nine: “James, come be a friend of mine.”
- ◆ten: “Thaddaeus, come and be my friend.”
- ◆eleven: “Simon, follow me to heaven.”
- ◆twelve: “Judas, offer me yourself.”

Art: Fingerprint Apostles

Make stamp pads by soaking folded paper towels in washable paint. Put each pad in a foil pie pan. Show participants how to press a finger first on the pad, then onto paper to make a fingerprint, each making 12 prints. Older participants can help younger participants. Keep moist wipes nearby for clean-up! Invite participants to use felt pens to turn the fingerprints into pictures of Jesus’ 12 friends and helpers. As an optional step, everyone could add themselves, their family members and their friends to the pictures as additional friends and helpers of Jesus.

Game: Follow Jesus

Invite participants to sit scattered around the room (on the floor, on chairs or both). Starting with an older participant (youth or adult), ask: ◆Will you follow Jesus? If the person says “Yes,” he or she walks behind you, holding your waist. Repeat for several more participants before asking a volunteer to take the lead. Continue the game, frequently switching leaders. You can also use a ritual question and response: ◆The leader (Jesus) asks: “Will you follow me? ◆The participant (a disciple) responds: “Yes, I am one of your followers.”

Discussion and Art Response: Friends of Jesus

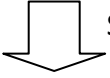
Read aloud Romans 5:10-11, preferably from a Good News Translation, Second Edition. After the reading, discuss: ◆You are a friend of God. ◆You are a friend of Jesus. ◆How does it feel being a friend of God and Jesus? Distribute paper and crayons, markers or colored pencils. Invite each participant to draw a picture of her- or himself with Jesus. When participants have finished, invite volunteers to share their finished pictures. Discuss: ◆How can we draw closer to Jesus this week?

Silent Meditation: God Chooses You

Gather participants in a circle. Invite participants to think silently about these words: ◆God chooses you. After a minute of silent reflection, invite participants to think silently about these words: ◆God loves you. After another minute of silence, invite volunteers to share their thoughts and feelings. Consider joining hands at this point and praying in unison the Lord’s Prayer.

Music

From a hymnal, sing or play a hymn or song reflecting today's theme. Here are several possibilities: ♦ "Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love" ♦ "God Has Spoken to His People" ♦ "O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee" ♦ "They Will Know We Are Christian by Our Love" ♦ "The Prayer of St. Francis"



See below for coloring sheet .

