

Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Older Children

Proper 9 (A)

Old Testament: Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67

BACKGROUND

The Season After Pentecost is the longest season of the church year, spanning almost half the calendar year. The weeks after Pentecost are called Ordinary Time coming from the word “ordinal” which means counted time. This time is not ordinary as in common or regular, but it is the time of counted weeks between Pentecost and Advent. The liturgical color of the season is green. It is often thought of as a season of growth both in our personal faith and in the life of the church. Common themes to focus on throughout the season are:

- Our relationship with God.
- Our relationship with Jesus Christ and with one another through our prayers, the sacraments and life in the body of Christ.
- The presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
- The Church and its work for God’s mission.

A NOTATION FOR THIS WEEK’S READING

The Book of Genesis provides the foundational stories of our faith, God’s calling of a people, their often-failed responses to God and God’s steadfast love throughout. The Abraham Saga tells of the formation of the d with the wickedness of men, God separates out one family line to bring divine blessing to all nations of Israel, beginning with the faithfulness of its patriarch Abraham. Although disillusion subsequent families of the world. Abraham the model of absolute faithfulness, trust and obedience is symbolic of Israel’s idealized self. At the request of God Abraham has left his homeland to travel to a promised land. He has entertained angels unaware and trusted God’s promise of an heir even at the ridiculous old age of he and his wife Sarah. Abraham has passed God’s test of faith by agreeing to sacrifice his only son Isaac. His willingness is proof enough for God who spares Isaac and provides a ram instead for the offering. For God’s promise of making a great nation from Abraham, Isaac must now marry. Abraham makes his servant swear an oath that he will not find a wife for Isaac from the Canaanite people [who had corrupt religious practices], but from one of Abraham’s relatives. So the servant sets out with gifts and camels to the Mesopotamia city of Nahor to seek a wife for Isaac. Before he leaves he seeks God’s guidance and blessing on his mission.

THEME

God Shows the Way

BEFORE CLASS

You will need: four bowls or pails, water, and two cups. For the sequencing activity you will a place to hang the cards such as a board, large paper, or string line and either tape or clothespins to attach the cards. Print out two sets of sequence cards. [See below] Find a playing area that includes a place to hang the cards. Check if there is an outdoor space for the water play.

BEGINNING

God had a plan for Abraham. God's plan for Abraham was to make him the father of a great nation. God always has a plan. God has a plan for me and God has a plan for each of you. When God has a plan, God doesn't let anything get in the way. The problem is we can't always see what God has in mind or understand what the plan is. So how can we know what to do? How can we try to live according to God's plan for us? We can learn a lesson from Abraham's servant in today's story. He prayed for God's help and blessing on the job he had to do.

OPENING PRAYER

Dear Lord, Teach us to be trusting and faithful like Abraham and his servant and to seek your help in everything we do. Amen.

THE STORY: GENESIS 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67

Can you count all the stars in the sky? There would be way too many, but that's how many relatives God promised Abraham in the generations to come. We know God always keeps promises. God gave Abraham and Sarah a baby when they were very, very old. Isaac was Abraham's and Sarah's only son. If the family was going to continue and grow Isaac had to get married and have children.

In those days the parents picked out the husbands and wives for their children. Abraham didn't want Isaac to marry a girl from the surrounding area because they practiced a different religion. So Abraham sent his trusted servant on a journey to the land where Abraham's relatives lived to find a wife for Isaac. He sent the servant with camels and gifts to give to the bride and her family. The servant knew this was a very important job. He wanted to be sure he chose the right wife for Isaac. So the servant prayed to God for help and guidance. He prayed, 'O Lord, the God of my master Abraham, if now you will only make successful the way I am going! I am standing here by the spring of water, let the young woman who comes out to draw water, to whom I shall say, "Please give me a little water from your jar to drink" and who will say to me, "drink and I will draw water for your camels also," let her be the woman who the Lord has chosen for my master's son.'

Just as the servant was finishing his prayer, Rebekah came to the well to draw water. The servant asked her for a drink. Rebekah was a kind and generous young woman. She took her water jar off her shoulder and offered it to the servant. Rebekah said, “Drink and I will also water your camels.” The servant’s heart was filled with joy. God had lead him to just the right woman. After the servant took a drink he asked Rebekah who her parents were. He had to make sure she was from the right family. When the servant heard the family was related to Abraham, he was now totally sure that Rebekah was the right bride for Isaac. The servant placed a ring on her nose and bracelets on her arm. Then he bowed down and gave thanks to God for leading him in the right direction. The servant needed to ask the family’s permission and to give them gifts. The family agreed to the marriage. The next one who had to say yes was Rebekah.

Rebekah also trusted God. When her family asked her, “Will you go with this man?” She answered, “I will.” The family blessed Rebekah, wishing her many successful children. Rebekah and her nurse traveled with the servant back to Isaac’s home. Isaac was out walking in the field when he saw the camels coming. Rebekah saw Isaac from a distance. She got down from her camel and asked the servant who he was. The servant answered that it was his master, Isaac. Rebekah felt happy when she saw Isaac and she knew she wanted to be his wife. So she quickly covered herself with a veil. The servant told Isaac everything that had happened. Isaac brought Rebekah to his home and married her. Isaac loved Rebekah very much. Everyone gave thanks to God for helping them make such good choices. **[Put the Rebekah triangle on the bulletin board. See the chart below.]**

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What was the test the servant set up to find the right woman?
- Why do you think he wanted to see who would offer to water his camels? (It would show kindness and generosity, or hospitality)
- What do you think Isaac might have been praying for?
- Why do you think Rebekah was willing to go with the servant?
- Have you ever asked God to help you make a good choice or show you what to do?

ACTIVITIES

This is a two-part team challenge to help the children remember the sequence of events and details from the story. Divide the class into two teams.

Activity One: Sequence cards

Each team puts index cards in order of occurrence on a board, large paper or string line. [See below for Sequence Cards]. Teacher checks for correct order. Only correct order allows them to go to Activity Two.

Activity Two: Water Relay

Children love anything that involves water. Start with this parallel to a Gospel story.

It can get very hot in the desert. The dry air and dusty roads can make you very thirsty. Many of the places where Jesus traveled were desert areas. Travelers in the desert counted on the hospitality and goodwill of strangers for their survival. One day Jesus was waiting by a well while his disciples went into town to buy food. Jesus was very thirsty. Even though he was sitting by a well he needed something to draw out water in. A kind woman came by and let him use her jar to drink. Jesus was grateful. In return he told the woman all about God and changed her life that day.

Each team divides in half and goes to opposite sides of the space. There is a “well” at each end. They line up behind their servant or Rebekah. There is water only on Rebecca’s side. Each servant must kneel, ask God for help, run to Rebekah’s well, and ask for water. Rebekah must remember to say, “Drink and I will also water your camels.” If she forgets, the servant has to go back to his starting line. The servant then asks her, “Will you come with me?” Rebekah says yes and they race back arm in arm to the servant’s home. The servant pours the water in his well, bows down and thanks the Lord, and passes the cup to the next servant. The winning team is the first to have all their players on one side. In the event of a tie, check to see who has the most water in the well.

GETTING CLOSURE

Invite the children to gather together. Invite them to share what they might have learned today or what their favorite thing was.

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear God, Thank you for answering our prayers and showing us the way to go. We ask for your continued guidance and love. Amen.

Written by Trudy Ardizzone.



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Sequence Cards

God promises to make of Abraham a great nation.	Sarah gives birth to Isaac
Abraham asks his servant to find a wife for Isaac.	The servant travels to the land of Abraham and Sarah's relatives.
The servant prays to God for help.	Rebekah comes to the well to draw water.
The servant asks Rebekah for water.	Rebekah gives the servant a drink and offers to water his camels.
The servant asks about Rebecca's family.	The servant places a ring and bracelet on Rebekah.
The servant asks the family's permission to take Rebekah.	The family says yes.
Rebekah says yes.	The servant and Rebekah travel back to his home.
Rebekah sees Isaac.	Rebekah puts on her veil.
Isaac marries Rebekah	

Abraham's Family Tree

