

A Good Shepherd
Sacred Story

Abram and Sarai

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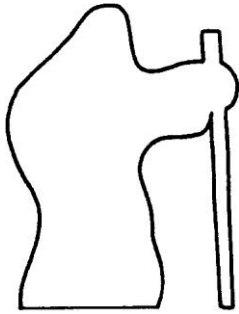
ABRAM AND SARAI MATERIALS

- medium wicker basket to hold:

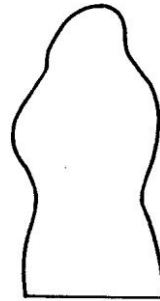
- wooden Abram figure
- wooden Sarai figure
- wooden camel figure
- wooden donkey figure
- wooden sheep figure
- 3 wooden altars

- desert box (optional):

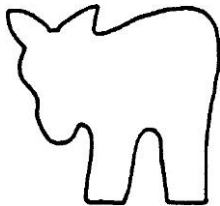
This story is written to be told in the desert box. During the work/art response time, encourage the children to do it that way. If you have more than 12 children in your circle for the story presentation, we recommend telling the story on the floor without the desert box so all children can see.



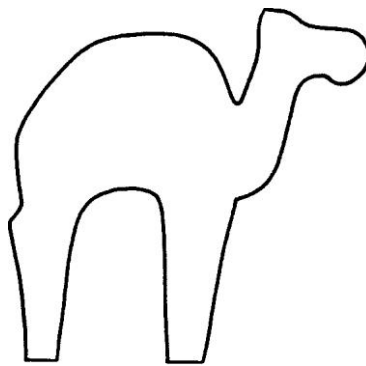
Abram



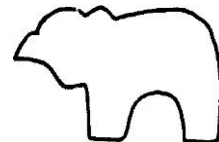
Sarai



Donkey



Camel



Sheep

ABRAM AND SARAI ..•. GENESIS 12:1-8, 13:3-4, 14-18 and 17:8, 15

ACTIONS

After speaking, go to the shelf and carry the story back to the circle. Put it on your left. Then, walk to the desert box and pull it back to the circle and place it horizontally in front of you.

After speaking, allow at least 15 seconds silence while you reverently touch the wooden figures or gently touch the sand to center yourself and the children.

Place Abram and Sarai in front of you to the right of the desert box.

Place the camel, donkey and sheep with Abram and Sarai.

Slowly move all the figures into the desert box on the right side.

Take and altar from the story basket and place it in the desert box on the right side.

WORDS

Watch carefully where I go to get this story so you will always know where to find it if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

All the words to my story are inside me. Will you make silence with me so I can find the words?

God came to a faithful man named Abram. Abram had a wife who was named Sarai.

God said to Abram, "If you go from this place and keep going until I tell you to stop, I will make you a very great man. I will give you many riches, and many blessings of land and children."

Abram and Sarai were a little afraid to leave the land they were in. It was home.

Besides they knew that the God of the people of Israel, Yahweh, was in the place they lived.

But they were not sure Yahweh would be in the place they were to go.

But, in faith, they packed their bags and left. The name of their home was Haran. They waved goodbye to all their friends.

They stopped at a place called Shechem. God talked to Abram at Shechem so Abram knew God was there, too. He built an altar so everyone who saw it would know that the God, Yahweh, was there just like in Haran.

Slowly move all the figures to the center of the desert box.

Take an altar from the story basket and place it in the center of the desert box.

Move Abram, Sarai and the animals outside the desert box on the left. Take the last altar and place it with the figures outside the desert box on the left.

Gently touch first Abram and then Sarai as their names are changed.

Put all the wooden pieces back into the story basket.

After speaking, stand and carry the basket back to its shelf. Pull the desert box back to its place. Then return to the circle.

In two other places with strange names like Ai and Bethel God talked with Abram. Each time Abram built an altar so everyone would know that Yahweh, the God of the people of God, was there too.

Finally, Abram and Sarai came to a place in Canaan between Bethel and Ai. God said, "This is the land that I will give to you and your children, Abram.

From now on your name will be Abraham, which means 'father of many' and Sarai will be called Sarah. "

That promise is called a covenant. Because Abram left his land when God told him to, and found God everywhere, God gave him a land--and much more. But that is another story.

WONDERING QUESTIONS:

I wonder if Abram and Sarai cried when they left their home in Haran?

I wonder if they were surprised to find God in other places?

I wonder if Abraham and Sarah liked their new names?

Watch carefully how I put these materials away so you will know how to use them if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

Watch carefully to see where I return this story so you will always know where to find it if you choose to make it your work today or another day.

Dismiss the children to their work when everyone has had an opportunity to choose their work.

What will you make your work today? Will you work with a story or will you do something to show what you remembered from the story? Let's begin.

ABRAM AND SARAI. ... TEACHER HELPS

The goal of this story is to help the children begin to understand that no matter where they go, God will be there. Most Biblical scholars agree that this is a very important "beginning" in the life of the Jewish people. The promises of land, wealth and heirs are first promised in this story. These promises will from now on be referred to as a covenant. The covenant made with Abram and Sarai is a conditional covenant. God is willing to bless Abram and make him a great nation IF Abram leaves his home and goes to the land which God will show him. And Abram goes in faith, but not for spiritual reasons. Abram has just been promised wealth, children and LAND. In Genesis 11:30 the stage has already been set. "Now Sarai was barren, she had no child." The promise of an heir must have been tempting to Abram and Sarai. But even more, perhaps, the promise of land. Abram was one of the habiru, or wandering nomads. These people went from grazing spot to grazing spot following the needs of their animals and limited by land that was available to them. To be promised a land of their own was beyond Abram's wildest dreams.

The places where Abram and Sarai found Yahweh were Shechem (she-kurn), Bethel (beth-I) and Ai (long a, long i).

Children who have moved will identify with the concerns Abram and Sarai had about moving from their home. Part of the consistency we try to achieve in our Good Shepherd setting is to say to the children that these stories and especially our God in these stories, is everywhere we go.

Again we have a story about the relationship of God and the people of God. In this story God initiates the relationship and sets the terms of the relationship. Abram and Sarai have the choice of accepting or rejecting the terms. Their acceptance of the terms of this relationship make them a model of faith for us through the New Testament and now.

The wondering questions begin with the question the children are the most likely to have experienced. Those children who have moved know how difficult it can be to leave a home, family and friends. There may be some children in your class who are still feeling some pain from a recent move. Accept that pain without trying to make it better. You can't and shouldn't take it from them. Just be there to help them when they need you.

The second wondering question about being surprised to find God helps us to wonder if Abram and Sarai ever doubted that God was really everywhere. Some children will say that

they were surprised to find God in the other places, while others will say, "No, cause they really knew God was there."

The third question about the name changes is a chance for children to decide how they feel about their own name. A child's name, just like an adult's, is very special. And yet most children go through a time when they believe they want a different name. An option during the children's work/art response time is to have a book with names and their meanings available for them to look at. Be sure to make this option known to them.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN:

Abram and Sarai must have had mixed feelings about moving from their home to wherever God would send them. Those of you who have moved, please share the most exciting part about your move and the saddest or most difficult thing about the move.

God made promises to Abram and Sarai in this story that God would always stay with them and bless them. Do you think God still keeps those promises today? Is God always with us? Does God still bless us?

Abram and Sarai found God each place they stopped. Think about all the places you go during the week: lessons, school, practice, home, church and to homes of friends. Where is it easiest to find God? Where is it the hardest to find God?