

A Good Shepherd  
Sacred Story

**God Blesses Abram's Choice**

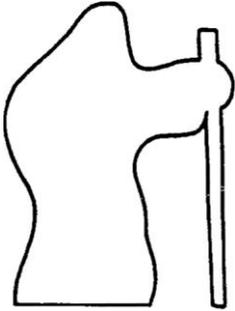
Adapted by:  
Brenda J. Stobbe

**Illustrations by:  
Jennifer Schoeneberg**

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## **GOD BLESSES ABRAM'S CHOICE .... MATERIALS**

- small wicker basket to hold:
  - wooden figure of Abram
  - wooden figure of Sarai
  - wooden figure of Lot



Abram



Sarai



Lot

## GOD BLESSES ABRAM'S CHOICE .... GENESIS 13:1-18

### ACTIONS

After speaking, stand and get the story from it's shelf. Return to the circle and sit down, placing the basket next to you.

During the few seconds of silence gently stroke one or more of the wooden pieces to center yourself and the children.

Place the Abram figure in the center of the storytelling area.

Add Sarai and Lot to the center area.

Move the three figures to the far left.

Gently touch the Abram figure.

Move the three figures back to the center area.

Emphasize the word "very" and hold up a finger each time you mention a possession.

Touch the Lot figure gently.

Gently touch the Abram figure.

Move Abram and Lot slightly to the right, apart from Sarai.

### WORDS

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

All of the words to this story are inside of me. Will you please make silence with me so I can find all the words to this story of God's people?

After Yahweh called Abram to go to a new land Abram traveled many places.

Abram; his wife, Sarai; and his nephew, Lot; found Yahweh in all those places.

Abram went to Egypt once, because there was a famine and he could only find food in Egypt.

Then Yahweh told Abram to leave Egypt and go back to the land God showed him.

So Abram, Sarai and Lot went to the land of Canaan.

Now Abram was a very rich man. He owned many sheep and cattle and had a lot of money.

Lot, his nephew, also had many sheep and cattle and sometimes his people fought with Abram's people over who should have the land to feed their animals.

This made Abram sad.

So Abram took Lot and went to a place where they could see the whole land.

Gesture, moving your arm from right to left to indicate the "whole" area.

Turn the Lot figure first to the right, then to the left.

Point to the right as you talk of east and to the left as you speak of west.

Touch the Lot figure as you speak. Then move him far to the right.

Shake your head slowly and sadly.

Turn the Abram figure in all directions as you speak.

Move Abram to the left next to Sarai. Then move them together further left.

Abram said to Lot, "We have this whole country. You choose the half you want and I'll take the rest. Then our families won't have to fight."

Lot looked to the East. Then Lot looked to the West.

The East was rich and green, but the West was dry, brown desert.

Lot said, "I'll take all the land to the East." So he and his family moved to the East near the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Yahweh was sad because the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were unkind and wicked.

Then Yahweh talked with Abram and said, "Look as far as you can see, Abram. All that land I will give you. I will also give you many, many children."

So Abram choose to live in Hebron and wait for the blessings promised by Yahweh.

#### WONDERING QUESTIONS:

I wonder how Lot felt about his choice of the good, green land?

I wonder if Abram was sad that he was left the brown, dry land?

I wonder if God did bless Abram later on?

I wonder if you've ever given up something that was really nice to someone else?

Carefully place each of the wooden figures in the basket.

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

After speaking, stand and carry the basket back to the shelf. Return to the circle and sit down.

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

Be certain every child has had an opportunity to select work before dismissing the entire circle to their activities.

I wonder what you will choose for your work today? Let's go around the circle and choose what each person wants to do.

### GOD BLESSES ABRAM'S CHOICE .... TEACHER HELPS

As we continue to deal with the J source\* we find a story unfolding that would seem to make it impossible for the promise of Yahweh to Abram to come true. Trying to prevent arguments among his large family Abram tells Lot that they can share this land to which Yahweh has sent them. In a generous offer Abram gives Lot first choice. Lot looks out over the Jordan Valley, rich and green with the bustling cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Then he looks back to the west--to the dry parched land of their recent wanderings. Many scholars believe that when Lot looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah he saw much of what they'd left behind in Egypt. Here were glittering cities and lavish entertainment as opposed to the rough life of a nomad. (The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible; edited by Charles Laymon, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987, p. 13.) His decision is made swiftly and he moved to the area that God would least choose for God's people. In doing so, he may have assured that the blessings would go to Abram who remained faithful to the original call God gave him.

The story ends with a promise, but no action on God's part. The J source Yahweh holds us with anticipation. We, like Abram, have no idea that God will really fulfill God's word. We only sit with Abram at the Oaks of Mamre and wait.

The theological implications of the story are difficult for children. The idea of "waiting" is hard for children anyway and the fact that Abram didn't get any immediate rewards for taking the lesser of the pieces of land may be troublesome to some of the children. Abram had the faith to wait and see. Lot did not. Lot wanted all that was made ready for him, he did not choose to wait and see if God had anything better in mind.

The wondering questions begin with wonderments about how Lot felt about taking the better of the two pieces of land. Some children may say that Lot was happy that he got the best part, while others, usually a little older, may talk about Lot's feelings of guilt at taking the best land and leaving the other land to Abram.

The second question wonders if Abram was sad about having to take the brown, dry land. Again some children will believe that he must have been sad. Or they may even say he was angry about it. There will also be some children who may respond that God would make it OK for Abram later on.

The third wondering question is crucial. It's a faith development question. In the responses you get to this question you will begin to notice the various stages of the children in your classes. Some children will immediately say that God will bless Abram later, while others may hold back with that assurance. Those who are so certain of God's blessings have probably not had a major delusion yet of an adult figure not following through on a promise. Remind yourself that your promises to a child in the Good Shepherd room are helping to establish the child's faith development. If you promise a child he/she can paint today--they must be able to paint. If you promise any activity, do your very best to follow through and ALWAYS explain if something comes up that does not allow you to keep your promise immediately and make arrangements to fulfill it as soon as possible.

The final question brings the wonderment home. Perhaps the children have shared with a friend and have allowed the friend "a better portion". Or maybe the children have had to give up something special when a new child joined their family or when they moved. Allow time for feelings to be expressed before moving into the work/art response time.

#### SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Share a time when you took less and let a sibling or friend have the better part. (Small pieces of candy bar, etc.) How did you feel?

Was there anything wrong with what Lot did? Should he have offered to take the poor land?

Does God always bless the person more who chooses to take less than another person?

\* The Old Testament is made of several different sources. They have marked differences, while also containing some similarities. The J source (standing for Jahwhist as in Y[J]ahweh) brings us a God who seems very human. This God talks with others; comes down from heaven to check things out; has worries and concerns about power; intervenes with personality, though not always logic; and remains always bound to God's people. The J source never explains away this everyday God, but rather accepts that it's God's choice to be however God chooses to be. (The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible; edited by Charles Laymon, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987) (The Book of J; translated by David Rosenberg and interpreted by Harold Bloom, New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1990)