

Sarah: The Mother of the Great Family

Genesis 11:24–25:11

This lesson comes from *Volume 6 of The Complete Guide to Godly Play*. The lessons in *Volume 6* are all Old Testament Extension Lessons. We generally introduce these lessons to children who have spent at least three years working with the Core Lessons in *Volume 2* and are now developmentally ready for more.

In the early years of Godly Play, the children meet Sarah in the story of “The Great Family.” They hear the story of how the Great Family has become as many as the stars in the sky and the grains of sand in the desert. But there is still an original mother and father to remember, honor, and learn from. This story extends the story of “The Great Family” (*The Complete Guide to Godly Play, Volume 2, Lesson 7*) by telling more about Sarah, the mother of the Great Family. It includes the important and complicated relationship between Hagar, Sarah, Abraham, and God.

How to Use This Parent Page

With your child, begin by looking together at the illustration below and listening as your child recalls—and in a sense relives—the experience of today’s lesson. Invite your child to respond to the drawing. You might say, for example:

- I wonder what you can tell me about this picture?
- I wonder what this picture has to do with today’s story?

Just listen. This is not a time to quiz children on what they may or may not recall about the lesson, but to be quietly present as they share their own experience. This will be different for each child—one may retell much of the presentation, another recall a single moment that had meaning, and yet another talk about their own

creative response. Again, your role is not to correct or supplement what your child tells you, but simply to listen in a supportive way. You are supporting the formation of young—sometimes very young—theologians.

Then, if you wish, you can read with (or to) your child the condensed version of today’s presentation offered below. Whether you read the lesson or simply listen as your child shares what was received in today’s lesson, ask the Wondering questions printed in the left column. Remember, there are many right answers! Be open to what the presentation can mean to you and your child. God will teach you new meanings every day. Conclude by sitting quietly for a moment and then saying “Amen.”

The Presentation

Once, in the great city of Ur, there was a woman named Sarai, which means “princess.” In the same city there was a man named Abram. They met and were married.

They traveled to many new places. Abram and Sarai had been married for a long time, but they had no children. God had promised them that they would be the mother and father of a great family, but how could that be with no children? This made Sarai worry.

Finally, she told Abram to take a second wife, which was a custom in those days. Abram took Hagar, Sarai’s helper, for a second wife. When Hagar was about to

Wondering

- **I wonder** what part of this story you like the best?
- **I wonder** what part of this story is the most important?
- **I wonder** where you are in the story and what part is about you?
- **I wonder** if there is any part of the story that we could leave out and still have all that we need?

have a baby, Sarai became angry because she wanted to be the mother. Hagar ran away into the wilderness. The angel of the Lord found Hagar and told her to go back. She went back and Ishmael was born.

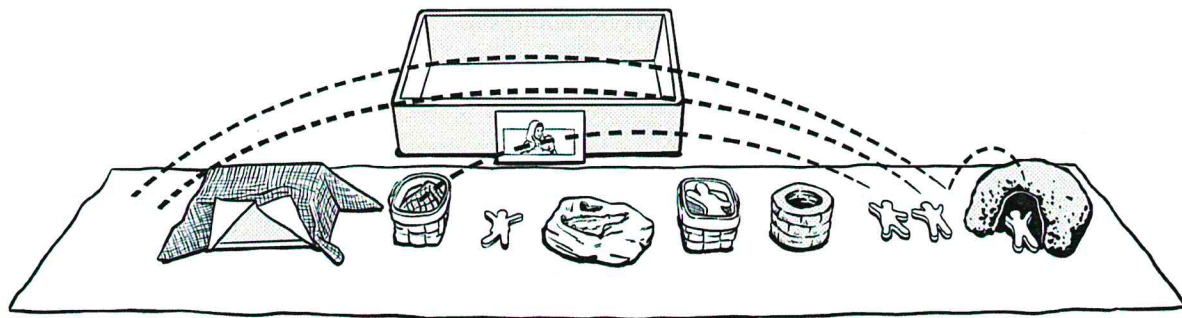
A few years went by and God appeared to Abram. God told Abram that Sarai was going to have a son of her own and the great family would continue. Abram became Abraham, and Sarai became Sarah.

Three strangers came out of the desert and told Abraham and Sarah that they would have a baby. Sarah laughed, because she was too old, but she did have a son. They named him Isaac, which means laughter.

Sometime later Sarah saw Ishmael, Hagar's son, playing with Isaac. She grew angry all over again and told Abraham to send them away. The next morning he sent them into the desert. When they had nothing left to eat or drink, Hagar left Ishmael under a bush and walked far away so she wouldn't have to watch him die. The child began to cry and God heard him. An angel came to Hagar and told her to open her eyes. When she did, she saw a well of water. Hagar and Ishmael drank the water and lived. God promised to bless Ishmael. Their family is still alive today.

One day Sarah watched Abraham and Isaac go away. They were going to Mount Moriah. She watched from inside the tent as they left. A week passed. She wondered if she would ever see Isaac again. Finally, she saw them coming back and went out to greet them.

Then Sarah, full of many years, died. And Abraham buried her in a cave near the Oaks of Mamre. Isaac married Rebekah and they had twins, and the Great Family began to grow.



Godly Play Defining the Types of Lessons, Part III

In every Parent Page, we offer information about Godly Play to help you understand both its methodology and purpose. Today we will continue our discussion of the different types of lessons in the Godly Play curriculum: Core Lessons, Extension Lessons, Enrichment Lessons, Afterwards Lessons, and Synthesis Lessons.

■ **Synthesis Lessons** make a synthesis of key lessons in the four genres. The

Synthesis Lesson for the Sacred Stories integrates key narratives to make a lesson about the Holy Trinity. The Synthesis Lesson for the parables synthesized all the parables around a series of questions concerning the whole corpus of parables. The synthesis for the Liturgical Action Lessons draws together key liturgical lessons into a series of circles.