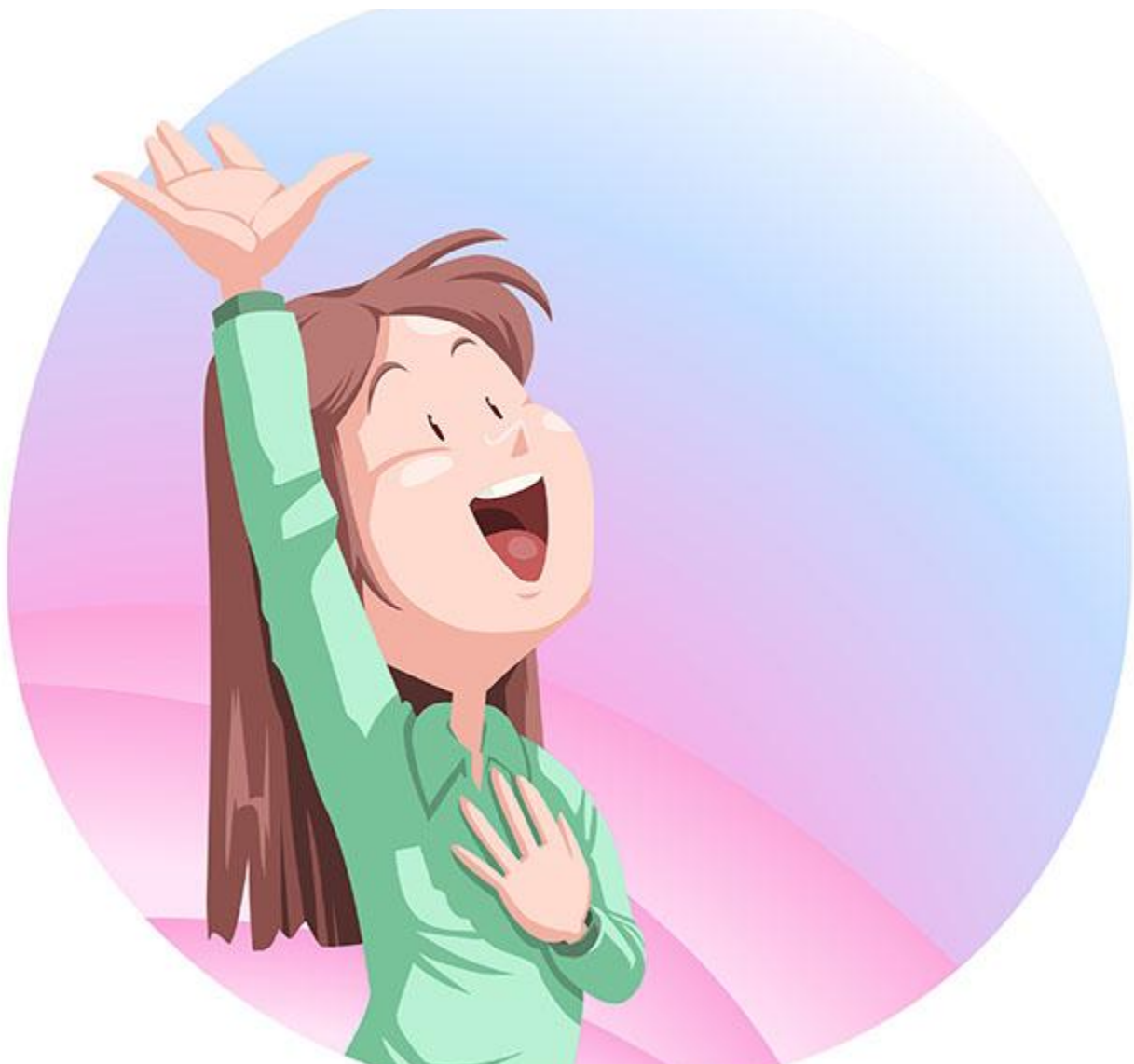


Laughing with God...A Promise Kept

The Birth of Isaac

Genesis 18:1-15; 21:1-7 NIV

Bible Lesson & Activities for Children



THE **SUNDAY SCHOOL** STORE

The Birth of Isaac: God Keeps His Promises!



We can always trust that God will be faithful to His promises, but He doesn't always act in the timing that we might hope for. Patience can be difficult, but we know God has a plan for our best interests. The story of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac reminds us that God always works things for our benefit. This lesson uses a little laughter to recount Sarah's reaction to the angelic announcement, and story elements to celebrate God's goodness.

God keeps His promises and provides for us, no matter what. He loves and cares for us and will give us what we need, when we need it...even if it seems to take longer than we'd like. He promised Abraham descendants and later sent a son, Isaac. He also promised a Messiah and later sent HIS Son, Jesus!

Passage: Genesis 18:1-15; 21:1-7

Target Audience: Kindergarten-6th grade

Materials Needed: Construction paper; decorative supplies; glue; markers or crayons; tape; scissors; paper bags; paper plates; jokes; play food; toilet paper tubes; Bibles.

More Resources Online

- Watch the [video demonstration of the object lesson](#).
- Watch the [video example for the craft projects](#).
- Watch the [video Bible story "Sarah Laughs"](#) from Saddleback Kids Club
- Watch the [video Bible Bible story "Dance, Laugh, Love"](#) from Crossroads Kids
- For more free illustrations, visit [Christian Clip Arts](#) and [Ministry-To-Children](#)

Object Lesson (5 minutes)

Greet children and start off with some silly jokes:

Hello, children of God!

What makes you laugh? Laughter is a wonderful gift from God, and something to enjoy. But what do you find funny? Do you love a good joke? I sure do, and I want to share some hilarious jokes with you! *Offer students some silly corny jokes and riddles. For added effect to the story theme, pause for a "waiting period" before some of the punchlines.*

Here are some ideas, or choose your own:

-What do you get when you combine a fish and an elephant?

Swimming trunks!

-What do you call a cow in an earthquake?

A Milkshake!

-Did you hear the one about the broken pencil?

Ehh, it had no point.

-Why can't you hear a pterodactyl in the bathroom?

The "p" is silent!

-Why did the golfer bring two pairs of pants to the range? He thought he might get a hole in one!

Now, maybe you didn't really think those jokes were very funny. And perhaps you don't think they were worth waiting for or even listening to. I get it. But there are some things in our lives that are very worth the wait, and very worth a laugh! Today I want to tell you about a Bible story that has to do with waiting and with laughter.

There was a man in the Old Testament named Abraham. Well, actually, his name was originally Abram, and God changed it to Abraham, but that's not really part of this story...anyway, God made a promise to Abraham that he would be the father of many

nations. He was going to have a lot of descendants: grandchildren and great-grandchildren and people continuing on and on and on...the tricky thing was, though, when God told this to Abraham, Abraham and his wife (Sarah) had no children. That was an extra sad thing in those days, as children were necessary to carry on the family name and help out with things. Not only did they have no children, they were quite old. Older people normally cannot have kids anymore, because that's how God designed our bodies. But God told Abraham it would happen, and Abraham believed Him.

Well...he believed for a while. But almost 25 years went by, and still no sign of children. Abraham and Sarah were starting to doubt. Maybe God had a different plan. Maybe He changed His mind? Maybe He wanted them to do something different. It's hard to be patient and trust in God when things seem to take a very long time for Him to fulfill His word.

Then one day, Abraham received some very special visitors. These were angels, messengers sent from God. Abraham knew they were important, and he called for Sarah to prepare some special food for them. Then as they were talking, the Heavenly messengers told Abraham something remarkable. They said that they would return the next year, and Sarah would have a son! This seemed so utterly unbelievable that Sarah laughed. How could she have a child in her old age? (She was almost 90.) Well, laughing at God isn't always the best idea. In fact, sometimes I think God laughs at us! The angel told her that nothing is too hard for God.

Sure enough, the promise came true. A year later, Sarah gave birth to a son! Abraham was a hundred years old when he was born! God was faithful. He delivered according to His word. Abraham and Sarah had to be patient. They waited a long time for their son to be born. But God always keeps His promises. Sometimes He says "wait", but His blessings are worth the wait! He can do the impossible. Abraham and Sarah didn't think they would ever have children, but God didn't forget about them or neglect them. He has His own

timing, and it's always perfect. We can trust in that, too. There might be things we don't understand. We might wait for something and think it will never happen. We might think that God is taking too long or doesn't care about us, or can't do something. But He always provides and cares for us. He loves us and knows our struggles and needs. In fact, Abraham did become the father of many nations. Through his line eventually came another son, the Son of David, the Son of God: Jesus. He is the ultimate fulfilled promise, our assurance that God always cares for us and loves us.

Oh, and that son Abraham and Sarah had? They named him Isaac...which means "laughter." So laugh WITH God, because He gives us joy and blessings!

Prayer: (Invite the children to repeat each line)

Dear God,

Thank you for the gift of laughter

Thank you for being faithful to your promises.

Help us to trust in you

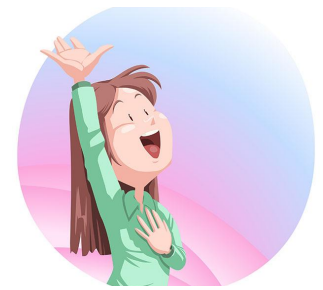
Even when waiting feels hard.

Thank you for your love

We love you, God!

In Jesus name, Amen!

Game & Activities Suggestions (10 minutes)

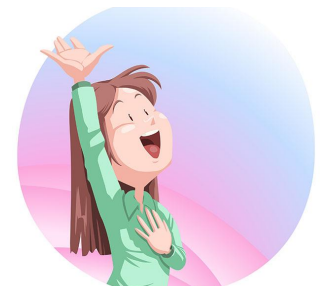


This Bible lesson celebrates how God is always faithful to His promises. Reviewing the story of Abraham, Sarah, and their son Isaac reminds all of us that God’s timing might require patience, but is always perfect! Consider a few simple activities to kick things off:

- “Don’t Make Me Laugh”: Have one student be “it”, and invite the others to do their best to make the “it” laugh, while he or she tries not to give in and chuckle. Once a student makes the target laugh, he or she becomes the next target.
- “Knock-knock” face off: take time to share silly jokes and riddles with students and talk about the blessing of laughter.
- Waiting game: Discuss how long a minute feels. Without looking at a clock, see if students can guess the length of one or two minutes, trying to get as close as possible to the second.
- Count the sands: When God made His covenant with Abraham, He told him that his descendants would number the sands on the shore or the stars in the sky. Have students try to count grains of sand in a pinch, to explore how large that number is.
- In tents serving relay: Have students line up and take turns racing relay style back and forth across the room, picking up plates and play food items and bringing them to a “tent” home base, to remember the part of the story when Sarah prepared food for the visiting angels.
- What’s in a name? Discuss meanings of names and find out if students know where their names came from, to celebrate the naming of Isaac.

Explain to students that this story comes from Genesis, the first book of the Bible, and celebrates how God made and kept a promise to one of His faithful followers.

Main Bible Teaching (15 minutes)



This passage is from Genesis, and continues the story of Abraham and Sarah, covering several previous chapters. Some background information and explanation may be necessary. This is a story that could potentially be acted out or done with puppets, or students could take turns reading verses. Read the story out loud or use a storybook version for younger students.

Genesis 18:1-5 NIV The LORD appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. (2) Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground. (3) He said, "If I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, do not pass your servant by. (4) Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. (5) Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way—now that you have come to your servant." "Very well," they answered, "do as you say."

A bit of background might be necessary here. It could be helpful to provide students with the story of God's covenant with Abraham, reminding them that God had promised Abraham many descendants and blessings, but Abraham and Sarah had no children. They waited a long time and it seemed that nothing was happening. God hadn't forgotten them, though! In this scene, some very special visitors came to Abraham. It is uncertain how Abraham knew that these were angelic guests, but he bowed before them and

insisted they rest and take some food. He was aware that something amazing was taking place.

Ask: Have you ever waited a long time for something important? What are some things that are hard to wait for?

Genesis 18:6-8 NIV *So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. "Quick," he said, "get three seahs of the finest flour and knead it and bake some bread." (7) Then he ran to the herd and selected a choice, tender calf and gave it to a servant, who hurried to prepare it. (8) He then brought some curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared, and set these before them. While they ate, he stood near them under a tree.*

Abraham and Sarah were living in a desert tent, but he still wanted the finest for these heavenly visitors. He had Sarah make special cakes and prepared meat and milk. It would have taken a while to make these things, and Sarah and Abraham got them ready with their own hands, not asking servants or cooks to do the work. Do angels eat? Well, in this case they evidently did, and Abraham wanted them to have the best.

Ask: What would you do if you had angels visiting you? What meals do you prepare for special visitors?

Genesis 18:9-15 NIV *"Where is your wife Sarah?" they asked him. "There, in the tent," he said. (10) Then one of them said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son." Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him. (11) Abraham and Sarah were already very old, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. (12) So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I now have this pleasure?" (13) Then the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will*

I really have a child, now that I am old?’ (14) Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son.” (15) Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, “I did not laugh.” But he said, “Yes, you did laugh.”

Sarah was old, past the age when women usually are able to have children. She had given up on the dream of having babies, but these messengers promised that she would have a son in a year. It seemed so impossible that she laughed to herself, wondering what these men were thinking and why they would make such an incredible promise. When they asked her about her laughter, she tried to deny it. Sarah was laughing to herself, so it was probably not a laugh that would have been loud enough to hear if these men were not SPECIAL visitors. They told her that God was more powerful than normal physical limitations. Nothing is too hard or too wonderful for God. He can do anything, even things that seem like they shouldn't happen! The angel reiterated the promise of a son.

Ask: If you could ask God for something that seems impossible, what would you ask for?

Genesis 21:1-7 NIV *NOW the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised. (2) Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. (3) Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him. (4) When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God commanded him. (5) Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. (6) Sarah said, “God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me.” (7) And she added, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.”*

This passage jumps ahead a couple of chapters, following up with the “epilogue” of the promise. Not surprising for us, God kept His promise, and the angel's words came true. Sarah became pregnant and had a son, when Abraham was a hundred years old! Nothing is too impossible for God. His promises might take time, but they will always be kept. They named the boy Isaac, which means “laughter.” Originally, the laughter was in disbelief and doubt at God’s word, but it became something to bring joy and gladness.

Ask: What does your name mean? Why are names in the Bible significant?

It’s worth pointing out (especially for older students) that there are some similarities between Isaac and Jesus. Both were born after a promise from God and a waiting period; both born in seemingly impossible circumstances and foretold by angels, and both had special names. Isaac was a special and important son, but only a foreshadowing of the greatest Son born for us! God always fulfills His word. We might have a hard time waiting for Him sometimes, but we can trust that He hears and cares about our prayers. He is always with us and will always do what He says. We can trust in God and know that He has great plans for us, no matter what.

Ask: How can you be patient when things seem hard or impossible?

Close with prayer, thanking God for His promises and faithfulness, and asking for trust when life seems tough.

Craft Activities (15 minutes)

Sometimes waiting on God's timing can feel frustrating. We don't always understand what He's doing, but we know that we can trust in Him and rely on His promises. These crafts remind students of that, focusing on the foretelling and birth of Isaac, son of Abraham and Sarah. An "in tents announcement poster" creatively recalls the visit of the angels. A "Blessed Baby" uses creative materials to recall Isaac. Let's get crafting!

Craft one: "In Tents Announcement Poster"

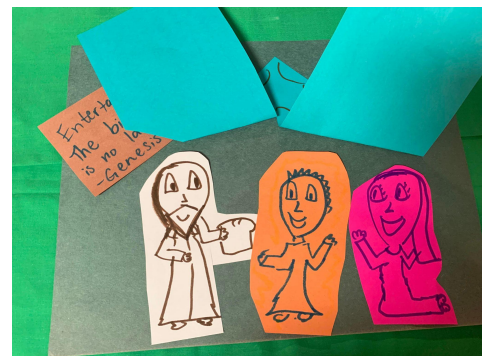
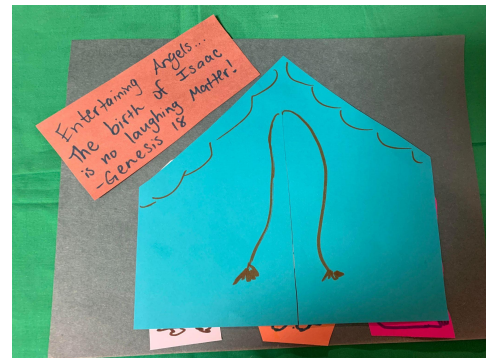
You will need:

- Construction paper or cardstock
- Markers or crayons
- Glue or tape
- Scissors
- Extra decorations as desired



Procedure:

1. Create "characters" for Abraham, Sarah, and an angel (or multiple angels). Print, color, and cut from an image, or draw and cut to make your own.
2. Place the characters on a construction paper or cardstock paper using glue or tape.
3. Add extra background decorations, verses, and captions to the paper.
4. Cut out a large triangle from another piece of paper, big enough to cover the characters.
5. Cut a slit in the center of the triangle and position it over the characters.
6. Lift the "tent flaps" to see the figures inside and tell the story.



Craft Two: “Blessed Baby Isaac”

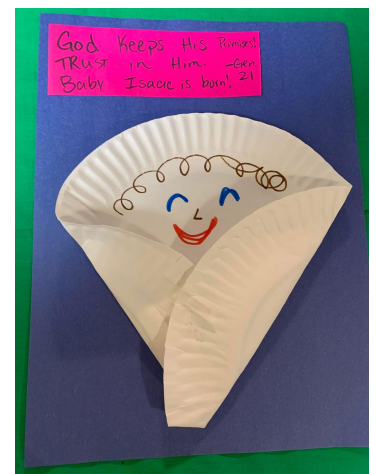
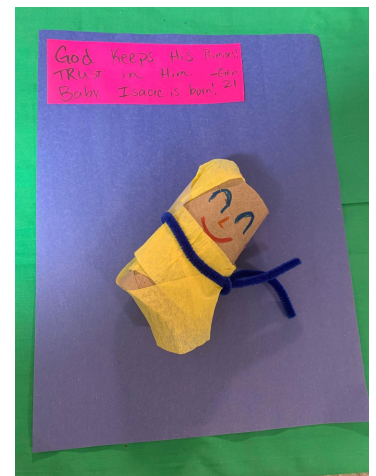
You will need:

- Paper or cardstock
- Toilet paper or paper towel tube
- Paper plate (optional)
- Tape or glue
- Scissors
- Markers or crayons
- Cloth or crepe paper



Procedure:

1. Decorate a paper tube or a paper plate to resemble a baby. Wrap paper or streamers around a tube, or fold the paper plate inward to make a “swaddling cloth” appearance. Add a face.
2. Add verses or captions to a piece of paper to create a background.
3. Attach the “baby” to the background, adding additional decorations as desired.
4. Option: attach a hanger or magnet to place the “baby” within vision and recall God’s promises.



Genesis 21:6 NIV

“God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me.”





Word Search Puzzle

Laughter - Isaac - Sarah - Abraham - Genesis - Mamre

Flour - Child - Lord - Cakes - Command - Son

F	K	X	S	A	R	A	H	P	U	G
A	F	W	F	S	D	L	D	C	X	W
C	H	I	L	D	X	C	N	G	H	P
D	O	P	O	V	L	T	E	W	L	E
Y	N	C	U	I	C	G	W	N	A	A
D	L	O	R	D	V	E	N	I	U	B
I	F	M	S	S	O	N	M	N	G	R
Q	S	M	N	Z	J	E	A	G	H	A
I	C	A	K	E	S	S	M	W	T	H
S	O	N	A	U	R	I	R	P	E	A
H	I	D	A	C	Z	S	E	U	R	M

Word Search Answers

F	K	X	S	A	R	A	H	P	U	G
A	F	W	F	S	D	L	D	C	X	W
C	H	I	L	D	X	C	N	G	H	P
D	O	P	O	V	L	T	E	W	L	E
Y	N	C	U	I	C	G	W	N	A	A
D	L	O	R	D	V	E	N	I	U	B
I	F	M	S	S	O	N	M	N	G	R
Q	S	M	N	Z	J	E	A	G	H	A
I	C	A	K	E	S	S	M	W	T	H
S	O	N	A	U	R	I	R	P	E	A
H	I	D	A	C	Z	S	E	U	R	M