

The Story of Sarah

Background

Focus: the mother of the Great Family (Genesis 12-23)

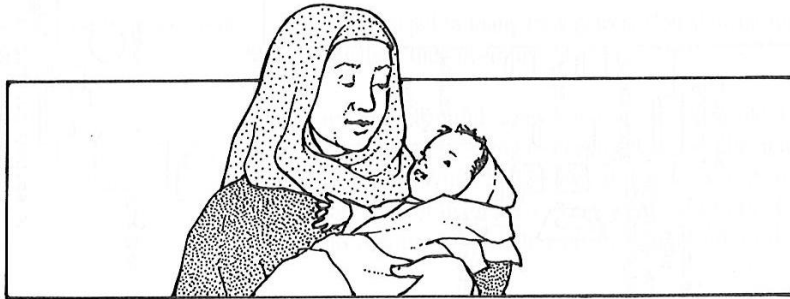
“The Great Family” has become as many as the stars in the sky and the grains of sand in the desert. But there is still an original mother and father to remember, honor, and learn from.

Material

The basket for The Story of Sarah is on one of the Old Testament shelves.

It contains:

- a tan felt strip underlay
- Sarah figure
- Abraham figure
- Hagar figure
- Ishmael figure
- Isaac figure
- tent
- 2 baby blankets
- spring of water
- sack of grain
- cave



STORY ICON FOR THE STORY OF SARAH

Movements

Move with deliberation to the shelf where the material waits.

Pick up the basket containing the material and return to the circle. You may need to say:

Words

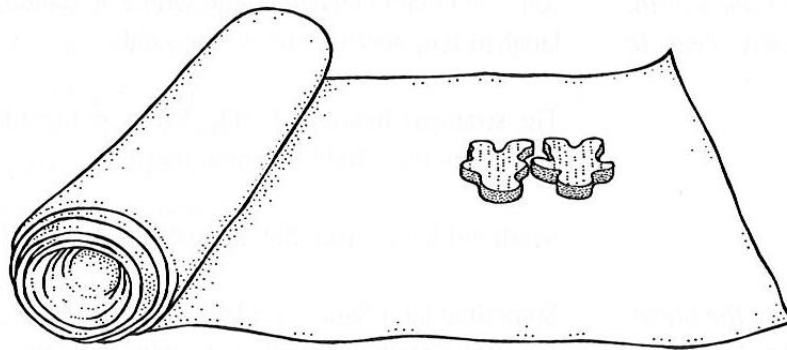
Watch. Watch where I go.

Everyone needs to be ready.

Take the underlay from the basket and unroll it just enough so that the first object will fit, right to left (storyteller's perspective).

Place the figures of Abraham and Sarah on the underlay a little apart. When you say that they "fell in love," push them together.

Once in the great city of Ur there was a girl named Sarai, which means "Princess." In the same city there was a man named Abram. They met and fell in love.



PEOPLE PUSHED TOGETHER (STORYTELLER'S PERSPECTIVE)

Place the tent on the underlay.

They traveled to many new places. God showed them the way. All their lives they lived in tents.

Sarai was beautiful, even when she was very old. Once they went to Egypt and the King of Egypt, called the Pharaoh, wanted her for himself. When he discovered that she was Abram's wife, he made them both leave. They went back to the land of Canaan, to Hebron, where they pitched their tent for the last time.

Place the baby blanket – but no baby - on the underlay.

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.

Place the figure for Hagar on the underlay.

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

When Hagar was about to have a baby, Sarai became angry because *she* wanted to be the mother. Hagar was afraid, so she ran away into the wilderness.

Place the spring of water on the underlay.

Place the figure of Ishmael wrapped in a baby blanket on the underlay.

The angel of the Lord found Hagar by a spring of water in the desert and told her to go back. The angel told Hagar that she would have a son and should name him Ishmael. She went back and Ishmael was born.

Many years went by and God appeared to Abram. God said to him, "We will be together forever." God also blessed Sarai and promised to give her a son of her own. So Abram became Abraham and Sarai became Sarah.

Three strangers came out of the desert. The strangers said, "In the spring of the year God will bless Sarah and she will have a son." Abraham laughed. Sarah, who was standing by the door, laughed too, because she was too old.

The strangers heard and said, "Sarah, did you laugh?" She said, "No." She was afraid for some reason.

Pick up the baby blanket on the underlay and wrap the Isaac figure in it when you speak of his birth. Place him on the underlay next to Ishmael.

Sarah did have a son. She named him Isaac, which means laughter.

Place the sack of grain on the underlay as you mention the bread and water.

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, Abraham gave Hagar and Ishmael some bread and water and sent them into the desert. When they had nothing left to eat or drink, Hagar put Ishmael under a bush and walked far away so she wouldn't have to watch him die. The baby 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. Their family is still alive today.

Take Sarah and Abraham from their positions at the beginning of the lesson and Isaac out of the baby blanket and place them on the underlay beside the sack of grain. Take Abraham and Sarah away when you speak of them going away and

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

then bring them back when you speak of them coming back.

Place the cave on the underlay.

Then Sarah, full of many years, died. And Abraham buried her in a cave at the end of his new field by the trees.

Isaac married Rebecca, and they had twins. The Great Family began to grow.

Sit for a moment and look at the story from beginning to end to let the story rest. Then begin the wondering.

- I wonder what part of the story you liked best?
- I wonder what part of the story was the most important?
- I wonder what part was about you or what part you were in?
- I wonder if we could leave any of the story out and still have all that we need?

After the wondering is over, put the story away carefully. Pick up each object in reverse order and remind children what the object is, saying, for example, "Here is the cave where Sarah was buried." After all of the story is back in the basket, carefully model how to roll the underlay back up and place it in the basket as well. Return the lesson to its spot on the shelf. Then return to your spot in the circle and dismiss the children one by one to do their work.

Jerome W. Berryman, *The Complete Guide to Godly Play Volume 6: 15 Enrichment Presentations for Fall* (2006), pp. 38-43.

