

Age-Level Overview

	Open the Bible	Activate Faith
Lower Elementary		
<p>WORKSHOP FOCUS: God’s light is bright—like stars in the sky.</p> <p>STARS IN THE SKY: Kids sparkle and shine as brightly as the personalized stars they create.</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles</p> <p>SUPPLIES: Collection of library books about stars and constellations, twinkling Christmas lights, glow-in-the-dark-stars (optional)</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: None</p> <p>SUPPLIES: Newspaper or mural paper, cardboard, Stars in the Sky Templates (page 29), watercolor paints, rock salt in a shallow dish, silver glitter, paper punch, colored ribbons, pencils, scissors, watercolor paintbrushes, water, small bowls, hanger (optional)</p>
Upper Elementary		
<p>WORKSHOP FOCUS: If we have God, we have home.</p> <p>GOD AT THE TABLE: Kids celebrate God at home by creating a personalized table runner.</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers</p> <p>SUPPLIES: Table runner, Bible-time map, pencils</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: None</p> <p>SUPPLIES: Burlap, felt, scissors, yarn, decorative fringe, tacky glue, examples of Christian symbols</p>
All Kids		
<p>WORKSHOP FOCUS: God gives directions and we must listen carefully.</p> <p>STEP 1, 2, 3: Kids test their listening and creative skills in this fun crayon and sandpaper on muslin creation.</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles, Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers</p> <p>SUPPLIES: None</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: None</p> <p>SUPPLIES: Sandpaper, muslin, cardboard, crayons, scissors, hand mirrors, craft iron (adult use)</p>



Visit www.sparksundayschool.org for more Spark content. Watch a short Lesson Prep Video that will prepare you and give you confidence to explore this Bible story with the kids you are leading. You will also find a downloadable Family Page for this rotation’s story filled with ideas for families to use to explore this story and live out their faith at home.

Workshop Focus: God’s light is bright—like stars in the sky.

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

- Each week, remember to welcome kids to the rotation. Keep in mind that for some kids, it may be the first time they are visiting your workshop!
- If kids have heard the story several times during previous weeks, read it again! Kids learn through repetition, and every workshop will explore the Bible story in a slightly different way.
- Remember that the Shepherds are there to support you as they accompany kids each week.
- Be sure to visit www.sparksundayschool.org to download the Family Page for this story. Make copies of it and ask Shepherds to distribute it during the Wrap Up.

Open the Bible (10 minutes)

Abraham and Sarah Storytelling

Set Up: Take a few minutes to set the stage for this star-filled story. String twinkling Christmas lights in the room and, if possible, hang some glow-in-the-dark stars. Place books where kids can access them.

Gather the kids into the room and ask them to find a safe spot to sit either on the floor or at their workspace.

Who can tell me what is in the night sky? Accept all answers. **Can you tell me a few things that you know about stars and constellations?** Encourage kids to share things that they might know from school or books or their families. **We have a great story today about Abraham and Sarah. I want you to listen carefully to see if you can tell what part stars play in the story.**

Turn off the lights and read the story with only the Christmas lights (stars) twinkling.

Pass out the Spark Story Bibles. Read pages 30-31 aloud to the kids.

Spark Resources

Spark Story Bibles

Supplies

Collection of library books about stars and constellations
Twinkling Christmas lights
Glow-in-the-dark stars (optional)

Turn the lights back on. Show the kids the picture on pages 30-31.

How many stars are there in the sky? Accept all answers. **Scientists still don't know for sure. They even keep discovering new ones! What was God telling Abraham when God compared the stars in the sky to his family?** (*It's going to be a BIG family!*) **What happens when all of those stars are in the sky and there are no clouds?** (*It is bright at night.*) **When all of us shine, we light up the world, too. God's light is bright—like stars in the sky.**

If possible, keep the collection of books about stars and constellations in the classroom for a few weeks. It will give kids a chance to enjoy the books and talk about the wonder of God. The books will also remind them of how God used the stars to show Abraham how bright the future would be and how many people would be part of his growing family.

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

Stars in the Sky

Set Up: Cover work area with newspaper or mural paper. Precut stars or provide star templates for kids to trace and cut. Have small bowls of water for watercolors.

Activity Instructions

Let's have some fun today creating our own sparkling, personalized star (or a number of stars if you are creating mobiles). **You can use a star template or star design of your own, some beautiful watercolor paints, and rock salt and glitter.**

Let's get started:

Guide kids through these steps to help them create sparkling personalized stars.

1. Let kids select 3-5 precut cardboard stars or they can trace templates of stars and cut out their own.
2. Punch a hole in one of the points of each star near the end of the point.
3. Write name or initials on the back of each star (write small).
4. Tie a piece of bright ribbon through the hole in each star as a loop/hanger.
Note: Make the ribbons different lengths if you want to use the stars as a mobile.
5. Prep 3-5 stars this way.
6. Place the prepared star shapes on the covered work area.
7. Follow the next sequence for each of the stars one at a time.

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Newspaper or mural paper
Cardboard
Stars in the Sky Templates
(page 29)
Watercolor paints
Rock salt in a shallow dish
Glitter, silver
Paper punch
Colored ribbons
Scissors
Pencils
Watercolor paintbrushes
Small bowls
Water
Hanger for mobile (optional)

- a. **Paint a star with watercolor paints. Have fun with different colors.**
 - b. **While the paint is still wet, sprinkle a pinch of rock salt on the paint to create a crystallized design.**
 - c. **If you'd like, sprinkle a bit of silver glitter to give the star even more sparkle.**
 - d. Let dry before moving.
8. Repeat steps 7a through 7d on additional stars.
 9. When all of the stars are dry, you can create a simple mobile by tying each of the looped ribbons to a hanger, or just hang them in a special place in a window at home.

Send (5 minutes)

Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven't already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

Have kids hold their sparkling stars or star mobile. (If they can stand the excitement once more, turn off the lights in the room and let the Christmas lights shine. Otherwise, just pray with the lights on.)

Spark Resources

Family Pages



Supplies

Finished stars or mobile from
Activate Faith

Prayer Time

I will start the prayer today by thanking God for the shining star standing next to me. Then we'll go around the circle and continue thanking God for the shining stars that God has created.

Dear God, you have created all of us as shining stars. We want to bring your light to the world as descendants of Abraham. Let your light shine through us. Thank you for creating (say name of kid to the left).

Continue prayer by going around the circle. Each child says, "Thank you for creating," and inserts the name of the person to his or her left.

When you've gone around the circle, finish the prayer with a big **AMEN!**

Workshop Focus: If we have God, we have home.

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

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- If kids have heard the story several times during previous weeks, read it again! Kids learn through repetition, and every workshop will explore the Bible story in a slightly different way.
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Open the Bible (10 minutes)

Abraham and Sarah Storytelling

Set Up: Place the table runner in the center of the group table.

Today's activity centers on the major move that Sarah and Abraham made and how they managed to still feel like they had a home because of their relationship with God. Be certain to be sensitive to kids in your group who may be transitioning schools, moving, or experiencing homelessness, and alter the lesson as needed.

Focus on the moving portion of the story. What did this require of Abraham and Sarah? How does one pack/travel/journey/survive? Share a map of the area where they would have traveled. What were some of the major challenges? What would make them more comfortable? Talk about the faith that is required to move into a new place.

Welcome kids into the classroom and gather around the table and the table runner.

Are any of you responsible for setting the table at your home? What are some of the things that you include? Do you do anything different when it's a holiday or special event? Accept all answers. **The family table can be very important to**

Spark Resources

Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies

A table runner (perhaps with personal significance to your family)
Bible-time map
Pencils

many people. It provides a time for people to gather together and spend time with the people they love.

In today's story, Abraham and Sarah have their family table and all of their possessions and their *entire* family sent packing from their country to a new land. Let's read the story and see what happened. As you listen, try and imagine what they might have done along the way to stay feeling connected to each other and to God.

Pass out Spark Bibles. Have volunteers read Genesis 12:1-8 (page 13).

How do you think the family felt about moving? Accept all answers. **In Abraham's time, moving far away hardly ever happened. Why do you think that might have been?**

(strength and safety in being together, knew the area, travel was difficult, it took a lot of faith to venture out to a new land)

What do you think the family might have done while traveling to feel connected to each other and God? *(sing songs, cook meals together, sew clothing, talk)* **The next time you gather with your family, wherever you are, remember that if you have God, you have a home.**

Let's put a Makes Me Feel sticker by the story and add the words *at home* to remind us that God is with us wherever we are.

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

God at the Table

Set Up: Pull together (or draw) a collection of basic Christian symbols for kids to use as is or for inspiration: cross, fish, home, church, praying hands, Bible, etc.



Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Burlap, 1 piece per kid (each piece cut to 12 x 36 inches [30 x 91 cm])

Felt

Scissors

Yarn

Decorative fringe

Tacky glue

Examples of Christian symbols

Activity Instructions

Today, as a reminder of how God is with us in our families and our homes, you will be creating a beautiful table runner. This table runner can symbolize the importance of creating a home wherever you are and remind you how Abraham and Sarah traveled to a new land that became their home.

You will be able to use some Christian symbols to decorate your table runner. The symbols can inspire and remind you of our connection to God. Let's take a look at a few examples. Show examples.

Can you think of some other symbols that you might want to incorporate?

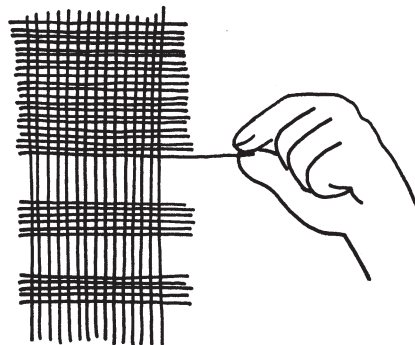
Accept answers that are appropriate to the concept of home and a connection to God.

The decorating part will be easy for you today, but let's take a quick look at how to pull some threads in the burlap to get a unique pattern or weave. You can essentially make long open "holes" in the burlap that will give your piece a very cool look.

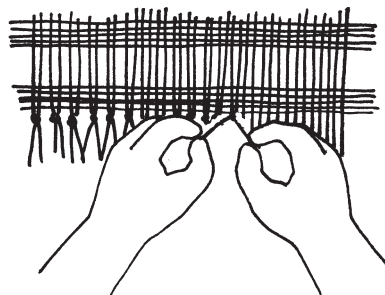
1. Give each kid a piece of burlap. Demonstrate pulling threads of burlap on a sample piece of burlap. Gently grip one to three strings and pull them all the way out of the burlap weave. Encourage kids to do this in several sections of the burlap.

2. **Use the thread-pull technique to pull threads out of the weave.** Kids can create a pattern or just have random threads pulled. Once kids get the hang of pulling threads, they can begin on their table runners.

If desired, they can use bits of yarn to gather the open sections of burlap (where the threads were pulled out) together and tie for more visual variety.



3. **Use tacky glue to add fringe to the ends of the runner.**
4. **Cut pieces of felt in shapes and patterns that are connected to Christian symbols, home, and family.**
5. **When finished, use the table runner as the centerpiece for a family meal or gathering.**



Send (5 minutes)

Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven't already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

Keep today's closing prayer simple and focused on home and connecting with God. Allow kids to take the lead in the prayer, and go around the table to create a sense of gathering and connection.

Spark Resources

Family Pages



Supplies

None

Prayer Time

Have kids place their table runners in front of them.

Dear God, please join us at the table when we eat. Keep us safe, and help us feel at home wherever we are.

Invite everyone to use their table runner with his or her family at an upcoming meal.

Workshop Focus: God gives directions and we must listen carefully.

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

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Open the Bible (10 minutes)

Abraham and Sarah Storytelling

Hi, everyone! Today we're going to test your listening skills. It's all for fun, but do your best to see if you can do everything that I ask.

1. **Stand on your right leg for 15 seconds.**
2. **Walk in a small circle.**
3. **Say hello to the person next to you.**

Read the next three rather quickly and in a way that kids are a bit thrown off by what is being asked.

4. **Go get all of your family members and start traveling through the desert.**
5. **Pitch a tent in the middle of the desert to sleep.**
6. **Get ready to build a new nation.**

Spark Resources
Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies
None

Okay, enough with the directions! When did they start to get hard to follow? The story of Abraham and Sarah has a whole bunch of directions for them to follow. Just listen to part of the story.

Pass out the Bibles. Have one of the older kids read from the Spark Bible Genesis 12:1-3 (page 13). Abraham was 75 years old when they set out on this journey, and the traveling was not easy. But Abraham was a great listener and he followed God's directions. God's relationship with Abraham and Sarah led to the foundation for the relationship that God has with all of us. A blessing is extended to all of us if we are faithful and listen and follow God's directions.

Put a Spark Spot sticker on page 13 by Genesis 12:3. Here, in the early pages of the Spark Bible, you discover that you are blessed by God.

What was Abraham's reaction to God's command to leave his home? (*He followed the directions.*) **What promises did God make in the story? What are the benefits of following God's directions? What makes it hard sometimes?** Allow time for kids to respond.

What does God want us to learn from this part of Abraham's story? (*God gives directions and we must listen carefully.*)

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

Step 1, 2, 3

Set Up: Set up an ironing station for adults to iron the sandpaper crayon drawings onto the pieces of muslin.

Activity Instructions

Today we're going to combine a set of directions with an art project. I am going to give you a very simple set of directions to follow. You will be creating a piece of art that uses some different shapes and colors.

Everyone will get the same directions and the same materials. I'm curious, do you think everyone's creation will turn out the same? Accept answers. **Let's do the project and then take a look at the end.**

Give kids the materials.

You will be coloring on sandpaper. You will want to press down hard and be sure to cover the sandpaper with as much crayon as possible.

- 1. On the first square: Select 2 color crayons. Color half of the square with the first color and half of the square with the second color.**
- 2. Use your scissors to cut the sandpaper square into four pieces.**

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Sandpaper (4 x 4 inches [10 x 10 cm]), 4 per kid
Muslin (15 x 15 inches [38 x 38 cm]), 2 per kid
Cardboard (20 x 20 inches [50 x 50 cm]), 1 per kid
Crayons
Scissors
Hand mirrors (a few)
Craft iron (adult use only)

3. **Set these aside.**
4. **On the second square: Use 2 other colors, and color a set of stripes on the square.**
5. **Cut the second sandpaper square in half.**
6. **Set these aside.**
7. **On the third square: Use any combination of colors to write your initials—*backward!* Show kids how to do this or ask older kids for help. Have a few mirrors handy.**
8. **On the fourth square: Use the 4 colors from squares 1 and 2 and cover the square with large filled-in circles.**

Now, place the piece of cardboard in front of you and place the muslin piece on top of it. Arrange your sandpaper pieces (you should have eight altogether) any way you like on the muslin square. Have the sandpaper/color crayon side facing up.

Great job of listening. Did you wish you could have asked a few questions along the way? What can we do when we're listening to God? (*pray*) So, let's take a careful walk around the room and see if the projects turned out the same or not. Walk around and look at each other's work. No one's will be exactly alike.

Listening can be challenging and the end result—end of the journey—may look different than your neighbor's, but it is part of God's plan and promise to us that God is there for us each day.

In order to finish your project today, you have one more direction to follow. Go to your artwork and very carefully turn each sandpaper piece over on the muslin. Place it exactly where you want it to be. There are volunteers here today who will walk around and transfer your color designs to the muslin. Then you can take them home.

NOTE: To set the crayon, place another piece of muslin over the first piece. Use a craft iron (set on cotton) and press down for about 10 or 12 seconds over each of the sandpaper pieces. When done, remove the second cloth and the sandpaper to reveal a unique transferred design.

If a set of volunteers is not available, carefully stack the artwork (cardboard, muslin, sandpaper) on top of each other, and then iron them one at a time after class and distribute the following week.

Send (5 minutes)

Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven't already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

Thank kids for doing such a great job of following directions. **Let's have fun with an active prayer that allows everyone to give a direction that everyone else can follow.**

Share and incorporate final unique creations into a prayer thanking God for giving us directions and asking for support and help in learning to listen so that we can live out our faith in our day-to-day lives.

Spark Resources

Family Pages



Supplies

None

Prayer Time

Dear God, thank you for giving us great directions and helping us listen.

Today we will pray with some direction-giving and some active listening.

Have one kid give a direction for everyone follow.

Examples: "Help us to pray" (everyone fold hands and pray), or "Let's all do three jumping jacks" (everyone do three jumping jacks).

Continue until everyone has had a turn.

Amen!

Stars in the Sky Templates

