

Age-Level Overview

	Open the Bible	Activate Faith
<p>Lower Elementary</p> <p>WORKSHOP FOCUS: God wants us to be happy.</p> <p>DON'T WORRY, BE HAPPY! Kids will learn how laughter helps their health as they participate in giggling exercises.</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles</p> <p>SUPPLIES: Small slips of paper</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: None</p> <p>SUPPLIES: None</p>
<p>Upper Elementary</p> <p>WORKSHOP FOCUS: Everyone is important to God.</p> <p>ESTIMATION EXERCISES: Kids learn the importance of single units as they practice estimating distance, time, and amounts.</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers</p> <p>SUPPLIES: Salt, black paper, 1/8 teaspoon</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers</p> <p>SUPPLIES: Measuring tools (rulers, yard sticks, or measuring tapes), paper, pencils, masking tape, paper clips, stopwatches or clocks with second hands, clear plastic jar, small items (buttons, marbles, etc.)</p>
<p>All Kids</p> <p>WORKSHOP FOCUS: God's love lasts through all time.</p> <p>IT'S ABOUT TIME: Kids actively learn how time is divided into days and years, and learn how to pass the time when waiting.</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles, Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers</p> <p>SUPPLIES: Watch or clock with second hand</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: None</p> <p>SUPPLIES: Lamp; extension cord; stopwatches, sand timers, or clocks with a second hand; masking tape; shoes with shoelaces</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 wants us to be happy.

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.sparksondayschool.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

Welcome to Spark Science. I'm glad you're here. Before we get to today's story, I have a challenge I'd like you to try. First, stand up and show me that you can hop with both feet. Let kids do a few hops. **Now put this piece of paper in front of your toes.** Distribute paper slips. **Can you hop over the paper?** Let kids demonstrate they can do this. **Now hold on to your toes. Without letting go of your toes, hop over the paper.**

Encourage kids to giggle and laugh as they try (and fail) at this challenge. **That is one tough challenge! I'm so glad we can smile and laugh even when we are having a tough time. Laughing helps us feel better.**

Everyone sit down now, so we can hear a story about a tough challenge. One person who faces this tough challenge reacts the same way we did—by laughing! Let's find out what the challenge is, and who does the laughing. Hand out Bibles. **Turn to page 30 in your Spark Story Bible, and let's read about Abraham and Sarah.**

Spark Resources
Spark Story Bible

Supplies
Small slips of paper

What is the tough challenge facing Abraham and Sarah? (*having a baby*)

Why is having a baby a tough challenge? (*because they are old*)

Who laughs in the story? (*Sarah*)

Why do you think she laughs? (*various answers*)

God knew that Abraham and Sarah wanted children. And God wanted Abraham and Sarah to be happy. God wants us to be happy, too.

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

Don't Worry, Be Happy

Set Up: Create a large open area.

Activity Instructions

When do you laugh? (*When something is funny. If someone tickles me. When I feel silly.*)

There are lots of different times and reasons we laugh. Imagine we're all going to get up in front of a big group and tell a joke or funny story.

- 1. Everyone stand up. Does anyone feel nervous or silly?** (*yes, no, a little bit*) **A nervous giggle usually sounds a bit high-pitched and funny, sort of like "tee hee hee."** You might even cover your mouth with your fingers while you are giggling. **Let's all practice our nervous laugh.** (*tee hee hee*) Repeat several times.
- 2. Laughing is one way our bodies use up extra energy, and laughing makes us feel good. Sometimes people even laugh when they are crying. Have you ever done that?** (*yes, no, sometimes*) **Do you think that type of laugh will sound the same as a nervous laugh?** (*No!*) **It probably sounds more like "boo-ha-hoo-ha-hoo-ha."** Ready? **Let's all do that together.** Repeat several times. Don't be surprised if real laughter breaks out.
- 3. Did you know that your body doesn't know the difference between fake laughter and real laughter? Both types increase your breathing and can help strengthen some muscles. Let's try another fake laugh. We've done tee-hee, and ha-ha-ha, now let's do a really deep "Ho, ho, ho!"** (*That's Santa Claus!*) **Everyone put both hands on the sides of your bellies, use deep voices, and go, "Ho, ho ho!"** Repeat several times.
- 4. Next, let's do a laughter roller coaster. We're going to start on the bottom with a low and slow "ho, ho, ho"; speed up the middle as we say "ha, ha, ha"; then reach the top with a super fast, high-pitched "tee, hee, hee." We'll go up and down a couple times as a group. Ready, set, laugh!** (*Ho, ho, ho, ha, ha, ha, tee, hee, hee, ha, ha, ha, ho, ho, ho*)

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

None

5. **How are you feeling?** (*good*) **We know that laughing makes us feel good, but sometimes we need something to get a laugh started. Let's make two lines. Each line needs to face the other line. The person you're facing is your partner. When I say go, make silly faces at each other, and start laughing, either real or pretend. Ready, set, go.**
6. **Move so you're facing a new partner. When I say go, shake hands. As you shake hands, introduce yourself with a silly name, with a greeting like "Hi, I'm Billy Banana-eater." After you both say your names, start laughing. Ready, set, go.**
7. **Move to a new partner. This time, when I say go, imagine you are each drinking laughing juice. Let your face show how it tastes, and then when it hits your tummy, start giggling. Go.**
8. **Move to a new partner. When I say go, imagine you are a tube of laughter toothpaste. Every time someone squeezes your tummy, a little bit of laughter escapes from your mouth. Go.**
9. Other options include:
You are a laughing refrigerator. Every time someone opens the door (lifts an arm), you laugh until the door is closed (arm is lowered).

You are a laughing hyena. Scamper around the room, laughing as you go.

Open a laughing can or bottle.

Try to catch a laugh and put it in a box.

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.

Think back to the beginning of today's Spark Science session. We started with an impossible challenge. How did you feel? Allow kids' responses. **An impossible challenge can be pretty frustrating. But Sarah in today's story showed us that laughter can help us feel better. So we followed her example and all got pretty silly, didn't we?** (*yes*) **So how do you feel now?** (*happy, silly, tired*) **Whenever you face a difficult challenge, remember that God is with you and wants you to be happy.**

Spark Resources
Family Pages



Supplies
None

Prayer Time

Dear God, we know you want us to be happy. You have given us much to be happy about. When we are sad, nervous, or scared, help us to find joy in knowing that with you, anything is possible. Amen.

Workshop Focus: Everyone is important to God.

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.
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Open the Bible (10 minutes)

Abraham and Sarah Storytelling

Set Up: Set the black paper flat on the floor or table where all the kids will easily see it.

Welcome to Spark Science. I'm glad you're here. Today we are going to feed our minds with lots of imagery. What is imagery? (*using words to make pictures in your mind, imagining things*) **Do you like to add salt to a lot of the foods you eat?** (*yes, no*) **Since I said we're going to feed our minds, I thought I'd start with a seasoning image.**

Fill the 1/8 teaspoon with salt. Sprinkle the salt on the black paper. **As we read today's story, imagine you are one grain of salt on this paper. Turn to page 13 in your Spark Bible. We'll read chapter 12, verses 1 to 9, and then skip forward to chapter 18.**

Why do you think God singled out Abraham, one man among many, to become the patriarch of a large family? (*various answers*) **Do you think God is only concerned with one person at a time?** (*No!*)

Spark Resources
Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies
Salt
Black paper
1/8 teaspoon

What would happen if the Bible contained the stories of everyone God helped?
(*It would be too long to read.*) **To keep us from being overwhelmed, we only hear or read the stories of a few people. But everyone is important to God.**

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

Estimation Exercises

Set Up: Place enough of the small items in the clear jar so that it is about one-quarter full. Keep the other items in reserve. Count how many items are in the jar and write that number on a piece of paper.

Activity Instructions

What is the opposite of one? (*many, a lot*) **Hand out the Bibles. Look on page 17, chapter 17, in your Bibles to find out how many descendants God promised Abraham. Mark the place with a Spark Spot sticker and tell me what you found.** (*God promised Abraham that he would be the “ancestor of a multitude of nations” [17:5]. God told Abraham he would be “exceedingly numerous” [17:2].*) **How many is “exceedingly numerous” or a multitude?** (*hundreds, thousands, a lot*)

Many times when scientists are talking about really big numbers, they don’t use specific numbers, either. They use estimates. For example, if you ask how many bees are in a hive, they don’t count each one, they estimate. What other examples can you think of? (*grains of sand, ages of rocks, distance to stars, number of snowflakes, etc.*)

Developing good estimation skills takes practice. It also involves making use of single units, or measurements you already know.

- 1. Find a partner to work with. Measure each other’s height so you have solid numbers to start with. Make sure you write the numbers down.** Distribute paper and pencils and measuring tools.
- 2. Now that you know how tall you are, let’s put that knowledge to work. Without lying down, use two pieces of tape to estimate your height on the floor.** Give each kid two small pieces of masking tape. **Use your measuring tool to see how close you were.**
- 3. Your body length is a unit. Estimate the floor dimensions, and the distance up to the ceiling of this room, in body lengths. For example, I might estimate the room is 4½ of my body lengths long. A taller person would estimate fewer body lengths, while a shorter person would estimate more body lengths. Write your estimates down on your papers. Use your measuring tools to check all the answers you can.**

Spark Resources

Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies

Measuring tools: rulers,
yardsticks, or measuring
tapes, 1 per 2 kids
Paper
Pencils
Masking tape
Paper clips
Stopwatches or clocks with
second hands
Clear plastic jar
Small items (buttons,
marbles, etc.—enough to fill
the jar)

4. **Let's change your unit. How many Spark Bibles tall are you? Write down your estimate, then work together to check your accuracy.**
5. **Let's make it even tougher. How many paper clips tall is your Bible? How many paper clips tall are you? Write down your estimates, and then check their accuracy.**
6. **Have you ever heard or used phrases like "I'll do it in a minute" or "Just 10 more minutes!"? Do you actually time those periods? (no, not usually) How do you know when a minute, or 10 minutes, is up? (estimate) Can you think of any good ways to estimate time? (various responses) One easy way to gauge short amounts of time is to sing songs. How long do you think it takes to sing one verse and chorus of "Jesus Loves Me"? (30 seconds, 2 minutes) Use the second hand on the clock (or stopwatch or timer) and see how close your estimate is. What is a longer song you could sing? (various responses) Now a song is your unit.**
7. **Other times, we need to estimate the number of things. For example, in some versions of today's story, God tells Abraham his descendants will be as numerous as the stars. How many is that? (500; 1,000; 1 billion) Not even scientists know exactly how many stars there are. They definitely use estimates. One way to get an estimate is to divide space into areas. You count the number of items in one area, and then multiply that number by the number of areas. Show the jar. Imagine the items in here are the stars you can see at 10 o'clock tonight. I know there are (give the amount) of items in this area. Imagine the rest of the jar represents the areas of sky we would see at 10 p.m. six months from now. Pass the jar around. How many stars would you estimate are visible in our night sky? Write the number down. As they write down their estimates, fill the jar completely full with small items. I'll divide the contents into piles for each pair of you to count. We'll add the numbers up, find the total, and check your accuracy.**

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.

When we first gathered, I sprinkled salt on black paper. Show the paper. **The salt represents the stars you can see on a clear night in a dark area. How many do you think that might be? (500; 1,000) Scientists estimate it is about 2,000. Even though there are lots of stars, each star is important. For example, what would Earth be like if we removed the star (take away one grain of salt) that is our sun? (cold, lifeless, dead)**

Spark Resources
Family Pages



Supplies
None

Everything in our universe is important, even when it is one among many. Think of something that is tiny and numerous to add to our closing prayer.

Prayer Time

Dear God, just as each star in the sky is important, we are important, too. So is every (*ant in a colony, flea on a dog, snowflake in a snowstorm, etc.*). **Help us to tell others how important they are to God. Amen.**

Workshop Focus: God's love lasts through all time.

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Open the Bible (10 minutes)

Abraham and Sarah Storytelling

Welcome to Spark Science. I'm glad you're here. Let's start with a simple challenge. When I say go, close your eyes. When you think one minute has passed, open your eyes and stand up. Mentally note when the first person opens his or her eyes (the person might not stand up immediately). Let no more than 2 minutes pass before asking everyone to open his or her eyes and stand.

When all you are doing is waiting, it can be very difficult to tell how much time has passed. Kids started opening their eyes after ___ seconds, while others waited ___ seconds! Hand out Bibles. **Speaking of waiting, the main characters in today's story have to wait for a lot more than a minute for something special to happen. Turn to the story of Abraham and Sarah. It is found in Genesis, chapter 12, in your Spark Bible (page 13), or page 30 in your Spark Story Bible.**

How old was Abraham when God led him away from his home? (75) How old was Abraham when Isaac was born? (100) So how long did Abraham wait for God to keep the promise? (25 years) That is a long time. But Abraham never doubted God's love or God's promise, for Abraham knew that God's love lasts through all time.

Spark Resources
Spark Story Bibles
Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies
Watch or clock with second hand

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

It's About Time

Set Up: Place the lamp in the middle of the meeting area. Use the tape to make numbers in a large circle around the lamp, one number for each kid.

Activity Instructions

In this story, God never told Abraham and Sarah exactly when they would have a child, just like I didn't tell you when exactly a minute was up. A minute is one way we measure time. Do you think Abraham and Sarah measured time in the same way? (yes, no) Did they have clocks? Calendars? What could they have used to measure time? (the sun, the stars, the seasons)

Let's start with a measurement that Abraham, Sarah, and all of us use. How long is a day? (24 hours) Someone explain how we know how long a day is. (If you start from when it gets light out, then wait through the entire time it is light, and then wait through the darkness until it is light again, that is one day.)

- 1. Let's see a day in action. Stand on a number around the lamp. The lamp will represent the sun. Turn on the lamp. Now turn your backs to the sun. Everyone raise your right hand. When I say go, turn slowly to the right. Stop as soon as you can see the sun, not just sunlight.** If possible, turn off any other lights. **Go.**
- 2. When you first see the light, that is dawn. Keep turning to the right as you go through daytime. Stop when you can't see the sun. Now it is dusk. As you keep turning, you will be going through the night.** Let the kids go through several "days."
- 3. Now that we know how they determined the length of a day, let's talk about a year. How long is a year? (12 months, a long time)**
- 4. How did they determine how long a year is? (You have to go through all four seasons. A year is how long it takes the earth to make a big circle around the sun. It's the time between birthdays.)**
- 5. An earth year is usually 365 days. A year happens when the earth makes one entire circle around the sun. First we're going to do a year in one day. Walk in a circle all the way around the lamp with your left cheek and left arm facing the sun. Stop when you get back to your number.** Give time for the entire group to make one circuit.
- 6. Guess what. If you lived on Venus, that is what your year would be like. That's because Venus turns around so slowly, that one day on Venus lasts longer than a year!**
- 7. If we wanted to act out a real earth year, we'd have to twirl in circles 365 times as we walked in the circle around the lamp.** Note: Some kids will probably want to try this: 365 twirls are guaranteed to make them dizzy. It

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Lamp (with no shade)
Extension cord
Stopwatches, sand timers, or
clocks with a second hand
Masking tape
Shoes with shoelaces

works better if only a few kids do a few twirls at a time, and then let other kids have a turn.

8. **Abraham and Sarah had to wait 25 years from the time God led them away from their home country until Isaac was born. If you have to wait a long time for something you really, really, really want, what can you do to pass the time?** (*find a hobby, read a book, play a computer game*)

9. **One way to pass the time is to keep your mind and body busy. For example, if your mom says, "We're leaving in 2 minutes," what can you do in 2 minutes? Find a partner and let's time how long it takes for each person to do the following actions.**

How long does it take for you to tie the laces on two shoes?

How long does it take you to recite the Lord's Prayer?

How long does it take to tell the story of Abraham and Sarah?

How long does it take to say the alphabet backward—Z, Y, X . . . ?

Let the kids brainstorm other activities to time.

When we are waiting for something to happen, time can seem to pass very slowly. One trick to make time seem to pass faster is to get actively involved in something with your mind or body.

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.

As we finish up our time together, listen to this joke. Once a man asked God, "God, how long is a hundred years to you?" "Less than a second," answered God. "And how much is a million dollars to you?" asked the man. "Less than a penny," answered God. "Can I have a penny?" asked the man. "In a second," replied God.

This joke helps us remember that God does listen to us, but just like we each had a different sense of time in measuring a minute at the beginning, so it may be with God. However, God's love for us lasts through all time.

Prayer Time

Dear God, we know that you hear us, and that your love for us lasts through all time. When we are waiting for things to happen, help us keep our minds and bodies busy in ways that would make you happy. Amen.

Spark Resources

Family Pages



Supplies

None