

Age-Level Overview

	Open the Bible	Activate Faith
Lower Elementary		
WORKSHOP FOCUS: God surprises us.	SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles	SPARK RESOURCES: None
YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND IN GOD: Kids watch a video portraying that it's good to have a friend through life's surprises.	SUPPLIES: None	SUPPLIES: DVD player, TV, <i>Wall-E</i> or <i>Monsters, Inc.</i>
Upper Elementary		
WORKSHOP FOCUS: God makes things happen in surprising ways.	SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers	SPARK RESOURCES: None
A WHOLE NEW YOU: Kids watch a video portraying characters who learn surprises about themselves.	SUPPLIES: None	SUPPLIES: DVD player, TV, <i>The Princess Diaries</i> or <i>The Parent Trap</i>
All Kids		
WORKSHOP FOCUS: God's surprises lead to great things.	SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles, Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers	SPARK RESOURCES: None
WITH FRIENDS LIKE GOD, YOU CAN'T GO WRONG: Kids watch a video where characters are faced with unexpected changes in their lives.	SUPPLIES: None	SUPPLIES: DVD player, TV, <i>Meet the Robinsons</i> or <i>Pocahontas</i>



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 surprises us.

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

Welcome kids as they arrive. Gather in a circle. **Welcome to Video. Today you're going to hear a great story about some people who were surprised by God with some very good news. We'll meet Abraham and Sarah, and we'll find out that even though they are very old, they are going to have a baby. That makes Sarah laugh, but in the end, it's the best surprise she and Abraham could ever have. Do you know any funny stories? How about jokes? I bet someone knows a knock-knock joke. Let's hear it.** Allow a few kids to share. If you need one, there's always: Knock. Knock. Who's there? Dwayne. Dwayne who? Dwayne the bathtub. I'm dwoining! **It's fun to laugh, even at silly stories. Listen for some laughter in a story that isn't quite as silly.**

Read Abraham and Sarah's Visitors from the Spark Story Bible (pages 34-37). Have kids follow along. Emphasize the surprise and the laughter.

Why did Abraham think it would be surprising if he had a child? (*He was too old.*)
Sarah felt the same way. Where was she when the messengers told Abraham he'd be a father? (*hiding in the tent*) **What did Sarah do when she heard the story?** (*laughed*) **What's it like to laugh when you're not supposed to, like in church or in school at a serious time? Have you ever laughed so much you couldn't stop?**

Spark Resources
Spark Story Bibles

Supplies
None

What was that like? Allow time for kids to respond. **You have to admit, Abraham and Sarah must have thought God was crazy. But we know that it all works out in the end. God surprises us, but not without reason.**

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

You've Got a Friend in God

Set Up: Preview and select the DVD clip you would like to use. Set up the TV and DVD player in your space. Make sure that everyone in the room will be able to see it. If desired, prepare a snack for the kids to enjoy while they watch the DVD. Ask shepherds to help you with this. *Before serving any food, always check with caregivers for kids who have food allergies. Provide an alternative if necessary.*

Video Option 1: *Wall-E* (2008, G, animated)

Start cue: (Chapter 5, 12:08) We see Wall-E's home, and the cockroach scurries by before Wall-E.

End cue: (Chapter 10, 31:23) Wall-E and Eve are playing Pong. Wall-E shakes his head, and the scene fades.

Scene set-up: Wall-E has been cleaning up the earth for a long, long, long time. When he meets Eve, he is surprised and excited to have another robot that can relate to him.

Activity Instructions for *Wall-E*

Move to the area where you will watch the video, and invite kids to settle in. **One of the great things about God is that there is never an end to the surprises. Who else could have come up with all the funny animals and people? Over and over again, God has surprised people by saving them even when they were doing stupid stuff. And the biggest surprise of all is that God loves you just as much as Adam, or Abraham, or Sarah, or Rebekah, or, well, you get the idea. What surprises you about God? God's love? God's creativity? God's anger?** Allow time for kids to respond. **How does it make you feel that God has promised to be with you no matter what? Are you surprised?**

Like Abraham and Sarah in today's story, Wall-E has been wandering the earth for many years. But Wall-E seems to be the last robot alive. Like Abraham needed Sarah, Wall-E needed someone surprising to care about and to care for. Let's see what happens when they meet.

Spark Resources
None

Supplies
Option 1: *Wall-E*
DVD player and TV

Option 2: *Monsters, Inc.*
DVD player and TV

Watch the clip using the start and stop cues above.

After the clip, ask some questions to connect the video with today's story. **Eve surprised Wall-E several times with her abilities and tools. When Abraham and Sarah were surprised by God's messengers, they just went along the story. Why do you think Abraham and Sarah could follow God's directions so easily?** Allow time for kids to respond. **What was more surprising: that old Abraham and Sarah got to start something new, or that God promised everything through just two people?** Allow thoughtful responses.

God surprises us with ideas, plans, and challenges. Just as Wall-E and Eve eventually had an important job to save the people, Abraham and Sarah saved their people by beginning a family that would grow and grow. As we remember these stories, we can remember to trust God, and know that the surprises mean good things are coming.

Video Option 2: *Monsters, Inc.* (2001, G, animated)

Start cue: (Chapter 11, 22:01) Sully is walking along the scare floor mumbling to himself.

End cue: (Chapter 16, 38:01) Hide-and-seek in the bathroom stalls. Sully says, "Hey, you're good."

Scene set-up: Sully meets Boo for the first time and is surprised to find out that the real human being is someone he can be nice to and care about.

Activity Instructions for *Monsters, Inc.*

Move to the area where you will watch the video, and invite kids to settle in.

What's it like to meet someone new for the first time? Have you ever been surprised to find out someone you thought was mean was actually nice? Friends change over time. People change. We can be surprised over and over again by the people around us and the things they do. Abraham and Sarah faced many surprises in their life. They were on the move most of the time, traveling wherever God told them to go. Surprise! Go here. Surprise. Go there! And, it seems like they just trusted God and did it. How hard would it be for you to do whatever someone else told you? What would you do if someone tried? Allow time for kids to respond. **Well, it's not a surprise that God will ask you to do something some day.**

Like Abraham and Sarah, Sully, in today's video, does whatever the boss tells him, and he does it well. He's the best scary monster in the factory. Everything's fine, until he meets a tiny little girl, Boo. Surprise! She's not really a threat like everyone thinks. She's just a kid who needs a little help. If you could ask for a surprise of any kind, what would it be? Allow thoughtful answers.

Watch the clip using the start and stop cues above.

After the clip, lead the kids through these questions to help them make the connection between the video and the story of Sarah and Abraham. **What is the biggest surprise Sully gets from Boo?** (*She's not afraid of him and she's not dangerous.*) **What's the scariest thing that ever happened to you? How would that compare with hearing or meeting God?** Allow kids time to respond. **Abraham and Sarah had surprise meetings with God on a regular basis. They lived their life by God's direction. The biggest surprise happened when God's messenger told them they would have a child. What's the best news you've ever had? In other words, what's the best thing that ever happened to you?** Allow time for kids to respond.

God surprises us in all sorts of ways. Wait for your surprise, and know that it means good things are coming.

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.

Thanks for your participation today. I'm eager to hear about a surprise that comes to you from God.

Spark Resources
Family Pages



Supplies
None

Prayer Time

As we pray today, I'm going to say, "It's no surprise that God loves ____," and point at someone. When I point at you, jump up and say your name and hold your hands in the air. Once everyone has their hands up, we'll high five each other and say "Amen," all at the same time.

Workshop Focus: God makes things happen in surprising ways.

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

Gather in a circle and begin when everyone has arrived. **Welcome to Video. Today we're going to learn about Abraham and Sarah and the surprise message they get from God. Have you ever received surprising news from anyone? Can you tell us about it? What's the biggest surprise you've ever had?** Allow time for kids to respond. **Not everyone likes surprises. How about you? Would you rather make a list for your birthday and get everything on it, or would you rather be surprised?** Allow quick responses. **In what ways have you ever surprised someone?** Allow time for kids to respond.

Abraham and Sarah followed God's direction no matter what. God must have surprised them many times. God sent them here and there. God called them important, but they were still wandering in the desert for years. What do you think it would be like to live away from home in the desert a long, long time? Allow thoughtful responses.

Hand out the Spark Bibles. **Let's read about Abraham and Sarah's surprise. Pair off and take turns reading. When you finish, choose a sticker and mark a surprising part of the story.**

Spark Resources
Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies
None

Why do you think Sarah laughed? (*because she was old and didn't think she'd ever have children*) **Tell about a time when you laughed so hard it hurt. What was the situation? Is it still funny, or is it surprising that it was only funny then?** Allow time for kids to respond. **Good laughter is a great feeling. I imagine God laughs with us.**

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

A Whole New You

Set Up: Preview and select the DVD clip you would like to use. Set up the TV and DVD player in your space. Make sure that everyone in the room will be able to see it. If desired, prepare a snack for the kids to enjoy while they watch the DVD. Ask shepherds to help you with this. *Before serving any food, always check with caregivers for kids who have food allergies. Provide an alternative if necessary.*

Video Option 1: *The Princess Diaries* (2001, G)

Start cue: (Chapter 8, 28:08) The queen is signing papers just before Mia arrives.

End cue: (Chapter 14, 47:09) Mia and her mom hug, and Mia says, "This is more fun than princess lessons."

Scene set-up: Mia is stunned to discover that she is a princess. Her first experiences are one surprise after another.

Activity Instructions for *The Princess Diaries*

Move to the area where you will watch the video. **When God surprises people in the Bible, they have all sorts of different reactions. Some people are scared. Some run away. Some say, "No way!" Today we're going to watch a clip from *The Princess Diaries*. It's the scene where Mia first finds out she is a princess. What would your reaction to this news be?** Allow time for kids to respond. **Let's watch and see Mia's reaction.**

Watch the clip using the start and stop cues above.

Following the clip, discuss the scene using these questions, or your own. **How is Mia's surprise similar to Abraham and Sarah's?** (*The news is completely unexpected.*) **What's the biggest difference between the two stories?** (*Mia's story doesn't involve promises from God.*) **What would it be like to suddenly find out you are not the person you thought you were? This is true for Mia and Sarah equally.** Allow time for kids to respond. **How do you feel when you get good news? What do you do to celebrate?** Allow time for kids to respond.

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Option 1: *The Princess Diaries*
DVD player and TV

Option 2: *The Parent Trap*
DVD player and TV

Like Abraham and Sarah, Mia got unexpected news. This week, be ready, because God surprises us all the time.

Video Option 2: *The Parent Trap* (1961, PG)

Start cue: (Chapter 2, 3:53) The fancy car is pulling into camp to drop Susan off.

End cue: (Chapter 5, 24:00) The girls are looking at a picture that Sharon pulls from under her pillow. Susan says, "But it's my mother, too."

Scene set-up: Susan and Sharon, twins who don't know each other, end up at the same camp. They are surprised and shocked to discover that their parents are the same people.

Activity Instructions for *The Parent Trap*

Move to the area where you will watch the video. **Abraham and Sarah had already spent many years together before this story takes place. How do you feel when you have to give up something familiar—your seat in the car, your bed for company, your house in a move?** Allow time for kids to respond. **We don't get much sense that Abraham and Sarah fight back against God's surprises. Sarah's laugh makes her more human, more like us. She has the reaction that makes sense to us.**

In the movie we are going to watch today, two girls meet for the first time, even though they are twins. They were too young to remember when they were sent in different directions as kids. They are now in for the surprise of their life when they realize that they are sisters. What would you do if you found out today that you had a twin brother or sister? What would your reaction be? Allow time for kids to respond. **Let's see what happens in the movie.**

Watch the clip using the start and stop cues above.

Following the clip, discuss the scene using these questions, or your own. **Why do you think two parents would ever keep their twin daughters apart? What would it be like to meet a twin you didn't know you had?** Allow time for kids to respond. **The girls in the movie have something they never thought they'd have—a sister. Abraham and Sarah are surprised by God to find out they will have a baby. What's it like to share good news with friends? How do you tell your family when something good happens?** Allow time for kids to respond. **Now that you know God will surprise you someday, what do you hope that surprise will be?** Allow thoughtful answers.

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.

Thanks for your thoughts today. I'm never surprised with how interesting your comments can be. As we remember this story of Abraham and Sarah, we know that God will bring us good surprises.

Spark Resources

Family Pages



Supplies

None

Prayer Time

For our prayer today, let's have some surprising requests. Take a minute to think of something you need from God, or something you want to say thanks for. Close your eyes, and wait for me. I'm going to tap you on the shoulder, and when I do, you can ask God for what you need or thank God for whatever you are grateful for. What you pray will be a surprise to all of us. You can say, "Pass," if you need to. When everyone's done, I'll say, "Amen," and you can say it, too. Tap people in random order to make the surprise more fun.

Workshop Focus: God's surprises lead to great things.

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

Gather in a circle and begin when all kids have arrived. **Welcome to Video. Today we're going to hear the story of Abraham and Sarah. It involves laughter, so before we begin, let's all have a good laugh.** Take turns getting kids to laugh. If it's a bit of a struggle, invite them to laugh like a character such as a big man, a little child, a tall skinny person, a monkey, a dog. Just have fun laughing. **Okay, when Sarah heard God's messengers tell Abraham that they would have a child, she laughed. She was in her 90s, after all. God surprised Abraham and Sarah, but God's surprises lead to great things.**

Pass out Bibles to kids. **Let's hear the story.** Read the story of Abraham and Sarah's Visitors from the Spark Story Bible (page 34). When finished, have the younger kids help the older kids choose a sticker for the Spark Bible. **How old were Abraham and Sarah? (99) How many kids did they have so far? (none) How do you react when you have to do things in a whole new way, like changing teachers or schools, or hanging out with different friends?** Allow time for kids to respond. **Our surprises don't automatically lead to great things. But over and over in the Bible stories, God's surprises do lead to great things.**

Spark Resources
Spark Story Bibles
Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies
None

Today we're going to watch a video clip to remind us that God's surprises are out of this world.

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

With Friends Like God, You Can't Go Wrong

Set Up: Preview and select the DVD clip you would like to use. Set up the TV and DVD player in your space. Make sure that everyone in the room will be able to see it. If desired, prepare a snack for the kids to enjoy while they watch the DVD. Ask shepherds to help you with this. *Before serving any food, always check with caregivers for kids who have food allergies. Provide an alternative, if necessary.*

Video Option 1: *Meet the Robinsons* (2007, G, animated)

Start cue: (Chapter 1, 6:03) Lewis is on the roof, sitting glumly by a box.

End cue: (Chapter 6, 25:10) Lewis makes a deal with Wilbur. They shake hands when Lewis says, "Do we have a deal?"

Scene set-up: In the story of *Meet the Robinsons*, Lewis discovers a whole new family he wasn't aware of. It's both exciting and scary.

Activity Instructions for *Meet the Robinsons*

Like Abraham and Sarah, Lewis doesn't know exactly how things are going to turn out, but unlike Abraham and Sarah, God is not part of the story. What's the difference between my promise to you and God's promise? Allow time for kids to respond.

Let's watch the clip to see how things turn out for Lewis.

Watch the clip using the start and stop cues above.

What do you think of all the surprises in Lewis's life? Do you like him more? Are you worried about him or happy for him? How do you think his life will change?

Allow time for kids to respond.

Abraham and Sarah have similar questions about their future. They know about parenting from others, but now they will have that job themselves. How do you think their life will be different? Remember, they're living in a tent and traveling all the time. Allow time for kids to respond.

It's fun to know that God will surprise you. Wait for it. When it happens, it will lead to great things for you and your family and friends.

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Option 1: *Meet the Robinsons*
DVD player and TV

Option 2: *Pocahontas*
DVD player and TV

Video Option 2: Pocahontas (1995, G, animated)

Start cue: (Chapter 12, 30:41) Pocahontas stands up on the rock just after John Smith lowers his weapon.

End cue: (Chapter 18, 49:17) The tree says that John Smith is handsome. John says, "Oh, I like her," and Pocahontas says, "I knew you would."

Scene set-up: Pocahontas and John Smith meet and get to know each other, creating a new way of thinking about their cultures. They are surprised at what they discover.

Activity Instructions for Pocahontas

The world looks different through the eyes of a stranger or a child. In the story of Abraham and Sarah their whole world is about to be seen in a whole new way. What's it like to change the way you do something, like the clothes you wear or the sports you play? Allow time for kids to respond.

In the story of Abraham and Sarah, the surprise is good news, and it means a possible bright future for their people. It's easy to imagine how great Abraham and Sarah felt. What would it be like if someone told you your family would live on forever? How would you feel to know you are the chosen family of God? Allow time for kids to answer.

Like Abraham and Sarah, Pocahontas saw that her world would soon be changing, but in a surprising way that might not be so happy. Still, she stood up for what she believed in.

Watch the clip using the start and stop cues above.

After the clip, ask some questions to make connections between the video and the story of Abraham and Sarah. **What was new and exciting for Pocahontas and John Smith? What surprised each of them? What surprised both of them?** Allow time for kids to respond.

Pocahontas found herself in the middle of two different kinds of people. She surprised them by looking for their similarities instead of their differences. What's it like to not take sides in a fight? Have you ever had a chance to help someone who was being picked on? What did you do? Or what could you do in the future? Allow time for kids to respond. **God arrives in surprising ways in situations like this.**

At home or at school or at church or anywhere, God will surprise you, and with a friend like God, you can't go wrong.

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.

Thanks for your attention and your conversation today. It's always good to hear what you have to say. I hope you know what a great friend you have in God, and how having a friend like that means you can't go wrong.

Spark Resources

Family Pages



Supplies

None

Prayer Time

Let's pray with some clapping for our families today. We'll take turns, like this: "God bless ____ (CLAP) and ____ (CLAP) and ____." until you've named everyone you want to name from your family. When we're done, we'll give our families a standing ovation and say, "Amen!"