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Isaac and Rebekah

Scripture

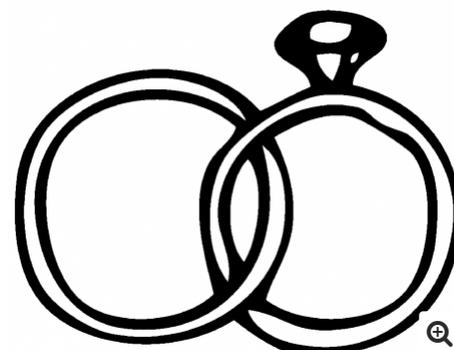
[Genesis 24](#)

Focus

God continued to keep the promises made to Abraham by providing a wife for Isaac.

Faith Nurture Goals

- Recall the promises God gave to Abraham and Sarah.
- Tell how God answered the servant's prayer.
- Give a personal example of answered prayer.
- Feel sure that God hears and answers prayer.



Leader Reflection

Preparing to Tell God's Story

Leaping over a couple of decades, Sarah has died and Abraham is old. Now the focus is on the future of Isaac, the covenant son. It's time for Isaac to get a wife. Strangely, Isaac is the one person who is in the background of the story. This reflects the times as well as the marriage practices of millions of people still today. Whatever its drawbacks, we can also recognize the strengths.

The story that follows is intricate, beautiful, even romantic. It begins when old Abraham calls his unnamed senior servant to make him swear that he would not get a wife for Isaac from among the neighboring Canaanites, but go back to his family, which he had left years before. But Isaac is not to go. Abraham's fear is that Isaac may settle back in the land from which Abraham had come and abandon the promised land.

If you're going to get a good wife for your son, there needs to be a display of wealth. So the servant's camels are loaded with all kinds of good things. But the selection process involves more than money; it requires great wisdom and discretion, and, most of all, great faith.

Abraham's servant recognizes his need for divine help in order to make the right choice. His prayer is very specific, setting out a test for the prospective bride. The girl who is willing to draw water---a hard task for both the traveler and his camels---will be the chosen one. The bride must be someone who shares Abraham's ideals of hospitality and the obligation to help others, both touchstones of Abraham's own faith.

Amazingly, the test leads directly to the family Abraham had left many years before---to Rebekah, Abraham's grandniece, and her brother Laban. Clearly God was leading the way, but the gold nose rings and bracelets played their part as well. Everything falls into place.

When Abraham's servant meets Rebekah's family he tells the story all over again, emphasizing how Rebekah's appearing was an answer to prayer. Her brother Laban and her father, Bethuel, agreed and were ready to send her, along with Abraham's servant, back home to Canaan. Then Abraham's servant unloaded all his gifts for Rebekah and her brother and her mother. Abraham was obviously a worthy and wealthy prospective father-in-law.

On seeing all that wealth, Rebekah's brother Laban tries a new tactic---delay. Most likely, the request to have them remain for a few more days was not because they were going to miss Rebekah so much as that it might lead to more gifts. Abraham's servant wisely insisted he must leave soon, and they give in with Rebekah's consent.

Like the ending of a romantic novel or movie, this story comes to a close with Isaac looking out over the countryside, watching the camel's approach. Rebekah veils herself for meeting her husband. Isaac loved her, and she became his wife.

Faith, determination, cunning, drama, and love, all wrapped up in one wonderful story. Above all, a covenant remembered, renewed, and kept.

Steps

Step 1 Breathe

Use this time to focus your attention on God.

Do this with me: calm your head, heart, and hands as you slowly breathe in . . . and out. *(Demonstrate a few deep "in and out breaths" with eyes closed.)*

Step 2 Tell and Wonder

Materials: Story pictures printable page

Files: [Story Symbols \(full unit\): Year 2 Unit 2](#) [Printable : Story Pictures](#)

Let's enter God's story together. Here's the story symbol for the part of God's story that we'll be spending time in today. I wonder what clues it gives us about the story we're about to hear? *(Show the story symbol. Accept any answers without giving away whether or not the kids have guessed correctly.)*

Listen closely as we read the story together to see which story our symbol represents.

Read "Isaac and Rebekah" aloud, pausing throughout to allow children to answer the wondering questions.

NOTE: *It's always a good idea to read through the story beforehand so you'll be able to tell it well.*

Re★formed

This story illustrates the subtle combination of prayerful human action and God's sovereign will.

You can also read the story from a children's Bible or a simplified translation of Scripture like the New International Reader's Version (NIRV). Remember to pause throughout to allow time to wonder.

Story: Isaac and Rebekah Genesis 24

Open your Bible to Genesis 24. Point out the name of the book and the chapter number. Tell the kids that this is where today's story comes from. Also let them know that today you have pictures (see the printable page) to show them as you tell the story.

Hold up the story pictures indicated below as you tell the story.

Picture 1

You remember little Isaac, don't you? He was the child God promised to Abraham and Sarah. Isaac grew up to be a fine young man who loved God. God blessed Abraham and his family, giving them everything they needed, and much more.

By this time, Abraham was very old. His wife, Sarah, had died when she was 127 years old. Isaac must have missed his mother very much. "It's time for Isaac to have a wife," Abraham thought when he saw how lonely Isaac was.

But where would Isaac find someone to marry? Where Abraham lived in Canaan, most people did not love God. "Isaac must have a wife who loves and serves God," Abraham thought.

So Abraham called his most trusted and important servant. "Isaac needs a wife," Abraham told the servant. "Go back to my people, to the faraway country where I used to live. Find a wife for Isaac there. It won't be easy, but God's angel will go before you to help you."

The servant promised to do exactly what Abraham told him.

If you were the servant, what plan would you have to make sure you found just the right person?
(Pause for responses.)

Picture 2

So the servant took ten of Abraham's best camels and got them ready for the long trip. He loaded them up with food and water and all kinds of wonderful and expensive gifts. Then the servant, along with all the camels, started to walk across the hot desert. He traveled for many days.

I wonder who will get all these gifts. Who do you think? (Pause for responses.)

Picture 3

One day the servant finally came to the country where Abraham used to live. He stopped his camels by the well outside a small town. It was near evening, the coolest time of day, when many women from the town came to the well to get water. As Abraham's servant watched the women coming, he thought, *How will I ever know who should be Isaac's wife?*

So the servant knelt down and prayed. "Dear God, many women are coming to the well. Please help me find the right one for Isaac. I will ask one of these women for a drink. If she is the one you have chosen for Isaac, please let her offer to get some water for me and for my camels."

Now we know how the servant planned to find the right wife for Isaac—he asked God to guide him. Do you think the right one will be the very first woman the servant talks to? (Pause for responses.)

Picture 4

God heard the servant's prayer, and God answered. Even before the servant had finished praying, a beautiful woman came to the well carrying a water jug on her shoulder. Her name was Rebekah. She lowered the water jug into the well and pulled it up. The servant hurried to meet her.

"Please give me a little water from your jug," the servant said.

"Here," said Rebekah, handing him the jug. "Drink all you want. I'll get some water for your camels too!"

The servant's heart began to beat faster and faster. Was this woman the one? He watched without saying a word as Rebekah emptied the water jug into the trough and ran back to the well for more. You can imagine how much water ten thirsty camels drink, but Rebekah did not complain.

When the camels had finished drinking, the servant gave Rebekah some beautiful gold bracelets and a golden ring. "Who are you?" the servant asked. "Is there room in your father's house for me to spend the night?"

When the woman told the servant who she was, the servant knew for certain that God had answered his prayer. The Lord led him straight to a family who were relatives of Abraham and who believed in God! The servant bowed his head and worshiped God.

Why do you think it was so important for Isaac to marry a woman who believed in God and wanted to serve God too? (Pause for responses.)

Picture 5

Rebekah ran home and told her family all that had happened. Immediately her brother Laban went back to the well to invite Abraham's servant to their home. At Rebekah's house, the servant was treated with great kindness. But he wouldn't eat until he had told Rebekah's family all about Abraham and Isaac and how God had answered his prayer.

"Will you let Rebekah return with me to Isaac?" the servant asked.

"Yes! Rebekah may go," her father and brother said. "This is what the Lord wants to happen!"

The servant was so happy that he bowed down to the ground and worshiped God! Then he gave many wonderful gifts of gold and silver and clothing to Rebekah and to her family.

The next morning the servant said, "Let me go back home to my master Abraham now."

Rebekah's family answered, "Give us a few more days to see Rebekah before we must tell her goodbye."

But the servant repeated, "Please let us leave today."

"Are you willing to go with this man?" the family asked Rebekah.

Rebekah thought about it. It would be hard for her to leave her home and her family to go to a strange country and marry a man she had never even met.

But Rebekah said, "I will go!"

If you were about to leave home to move to a strange new place and live with people you had never met, I wonder what questions or fears might be going through your mind. (Pause for responses.)

Picture 6

Rebekah said goodbye to her family. She got on a camel, and soon she and the servant were on their way back to Abraham and the land of Canaan, where Isaac was waiting.

One evening, after many, many long days, Rebekah saw a young man in the field. She asked, "Who is that man in the field that is coming to meet us?"

"That's Isaac!" the servant said.

Rebekah got off the camel and covered her face with a veil. When Isaac reached them, the servant told him everything that had happened.

Not long after that, Rebekah and Isaac were married. Isaac loved Rebekah. And he was no longer lonely.

Step 3 Pray

Close in prayer, using the following prayer or your own words:

Dear God, you are amazing! The way you helped the servant find just the right wife for Isaac is beautiful and exciting. Help us to know for sure that you will keep all your promises to us also. Amen.

See [5 Ways to Pray with Kids](#) for other ways to pray.

Step 4 Respond

Select and do one or more of the response activities from God's Big Story card #16 or check out [5 Ways to Retell a Bible Story with Kids](#) for some fun ways to retell this story. Include older kids in the retelling by having them read the story aloud while the younger children act it out.

**God's Big Story cards can be ordered from FaithAliveResources.org.*

Easy Extras

1. Prayer Balloons

Materials: Colored construction paper • yarn or string • tape

Express your delight at the way God answered the servant's prayer. Talk with the kids about your own prayers that God has answered. Perhaps they can share some requests of their own or of their families that God has said yes to. Ask if God answered all their prayers in exactly the way they hoped. If not, invite them to tell how God answered them.

Acknowledge openly and clearly that God doesn't always say yes to our prayers. Point out that God sometimes says "yes," sometimes "no," and sometimes "wait." Yet God **always listens**. God always knows what's best for us. We can trust God no matter what we receive.

Distribute sheets of construction paper. Tell your group that they will make balloons and write prayers on them. Have them cut out balloons for each prayer they would like to write. Tell them to make the balloon shapes as big as the paper. As kids cut out balloon shapes, ask them to think about the prayers they could write on them: prayers for other people and prayers for themselves or their families.

Suggest that the kids begin their prayers with **Dear God**, followed by the rest of the prayer. Have them sign their first and last initials to each prayer they write and tape string to the back side of the balloon. Be sure to include a few prayer balloons of your own.

When everyone has finished making one or more prayer balloons, tape the balloons as a mural on a wall or chalkboard. Have each person read the balloons he or she wrote. Then ask the group to close their eyes as you conclude by asking God for each thing the kids listed.

Encourage the kids to continue praying throughout the week, asking God to answer the specific prayers they wrote in class. You can either let them take their balloons home, or leave them up in your space as a reminder of their prayers.

If you're leading this session online, have each child make their prayer balloons and then hold them up to their screen at the end to share what they wrote. You could also collect the balloons after your meeting, and use them to make a mural to show the children the following week.

Tip

Pair older children with younger children, asking the older child to write out the younger child's prayers. Or encourage younger children to draw a picture of their prayer.

2. Age-Specific Activities

Click below to access the full age-specific *Dwell* session for this story:

- Kindergarten-1st Grade: [Rebekah and Isaac](#)
- 2nd-3rd Grade: [Isaac and Rebekah](#)