

Lesson 2: Genesis 16
Abram's Faith Falters

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Introduction

Have you ever prayed for something and it did not appear that God answered your prayers? Well, that is what happened to Abram and Sarai when they did not want to wait on God's promise for a child of their own. They took matters in their own hands and involved a maidservant named Hagar.

Progression of Events

Remember in Chapter 15 when God promised Abram a child of his own? Ten years after the promise of a son to be Abram's heir, Sarai still has not yet conceived a child (Genesis 16:3). Instead of waiting and praying to God about her doubts, Sarai decided it was time to take matters in her own hands, and give her handmaid Hagar to Abram in the hopes to have children through her. At that time, a woman felt shame when she could not produce offspring. The common practice was to use a substitute wife, usually a servant of the household, to produce children. Then the wife would take the children as her own. Abram would have accepted this as a common practice of his time. Sarai did not have faith in what God had promised her and Abram. Sometimes when God does not answer our prayers as fast as we think He should, we give into the temptation of making it work out our way. This is how we get into trouble and

things start going the wrong way. Sarai was no different from us, with her lack of faith in God. Abram did not make the situation any better. Instead of reminding his wife to have patience and wait for God's answer, he just went along with her idea. He gave into his own fears of not having a child. When Hagar became pregnant, the tension between the two women became unbearable. Sarai said to Abram, "You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my servant in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the Lord judge between you and me" (Genesis 16:5). Sarai should have asked God to forgive her for her mistake, but she blamed Abram for all the troubles she was having. She treated Hagar so badly that Hagar ran away from home.

An angel of God found Hagar in the desert and asked her, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going" (Genesis 16:8)? God knew the whole story, but in His wonderful wisdom He knew Hagar needed to talk about what was happening. She was running from her problems, and needed to face them directly. As we all know, running from our problems will never solve them. It is hard to stop and think when we are going through a trial. Instead, we need to go to God in prayer. Sometimes, the problem is so severe we may need to fast in addition to prayer. Hagar needed to correct her attitude, return to her home, and deal with the issues she had with Sarai. The angel of

God told Hagar, "Go back to your mistress and submit to her" (Genesis 16:9). The angel of God also said, "I will so increase your descendants that they will be too numerous to count" (Genesis 16:10). If God told you to go back and face your problems, would you do it? It is hard to admit we have done wrong and to say "sorry", however it is necessary. God blessed Hagar for returning home as He asked. The angel of God said, "You are now with child and you have a son. You shall name him Ishmael, for the Lord has heard of your misery" (Genesis 16:11). God knows of our trial, before we even come to Him in prayer. Hagar's suffering was no fault of her own, but at the hands of Sarai and Abram. She listened to what God told her and He blessed her as a result of that obedience. We often have such trials that need God's intervention. Just remember, no problem is too difficult to solve for God. As you can see, God took a bad situation and gave blessings as a result of obedience. So, Hagar returned home to give birth to Ishmael and at the time of his birth Abram was eighty-six years old.

When Sarai took matters into her own hands she showed ineffective faith. She did not trust in God. God has preserved examples such as this story so we can learn not to make the same mistake. Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, gave His life so we could have eternal life.

Questions for Discussion

1. Was Sarai patient?
2. Was there shame when the wife could not have children?
3. Did Sarai have faith in God?
4. What was Sarai's idea of having children?
5. Did Abram try to stop Sarai?
6. When Sarai treated Hagar badly did she run away or did she stay at home?
7. What should we do when we have problems?
8. What was the name of Hagar's son?
9. How old was Abram when Ishmael was born?
10. What does the word "promise" mean?

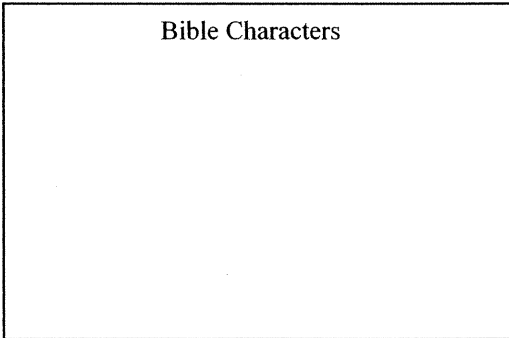
Memory Verse

"You are the God who sees me"
(Genesis 16:13).

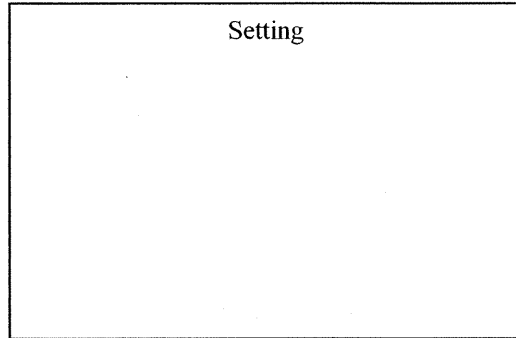
JUST FOR TEENS!

Use this graphic organizer to help older students understand the story's progression.

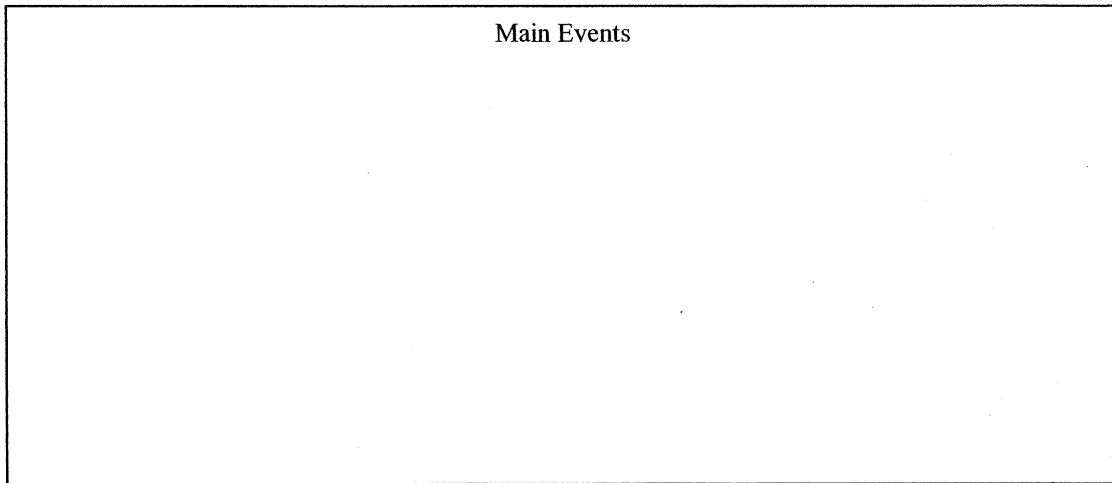
Bible Characters



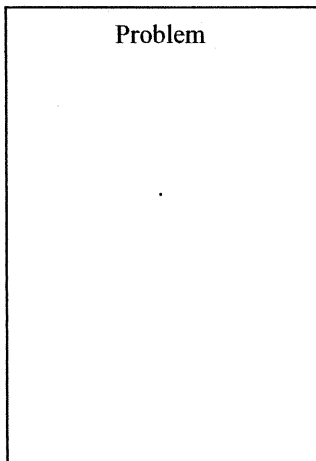
Setting



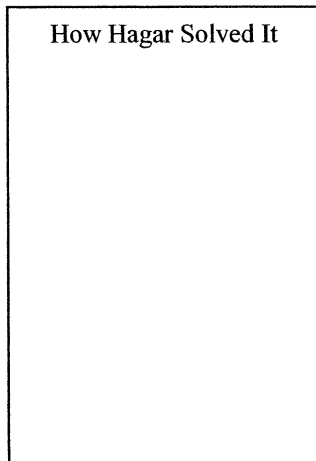
Main Events



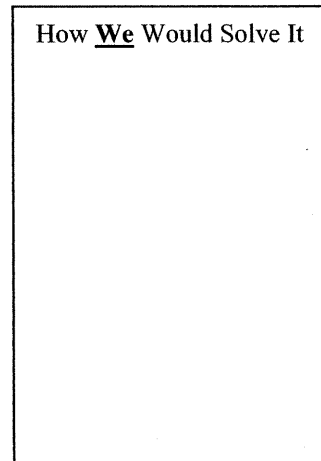
Problem



How Hagar Solved It



How We Would Solve It



God Sees You! What Do You See?

Remember when Hagar felt all alone? God saw her and was watching over her. He does the same for us each and everyday. Make these fun binoculars and find out what you can see too!

What You Need:

- Toilet paper rolls (2 per student)
- Markers
- Glitter glue
- Paint
- Decorations of any kind (feathers, pipe cleaners, yarn)
- Colored masking tape
- Hole punch
- Yarn

How To Make It:

- Give each student two toilet paper rolls to decorate with whatever craft supplies you bring. This can be as involved as you like it or simply coloring with markers.
- Once the toilet paper rolls are decorated, use the colored masking tape to tape the two rolls together.
- Punch a hole on the outside of each toilet paper role and tie yarn so that the binoculars can hang around the student's neck.
- Play a game about all the things they can see with their new binoculars.
- Be sure to remind them that God is watching them each and everyday!

Make A Stop Sign!

All of us struggle with faith from time to time. When we do, it is important for us to remember to stop immediately and seek God through prayer! Make this stop sign to help students remember to stop and pray!

What You Need:

- Octagon tracing patterns (2 sizes – one a little larger than the other)
- Red and white construction paper
- Popsicle sticks or straws
- Glue
- White chalk

How To Make It:

- Each student must trace 2 red octagons with the smaller tracer and 1 white octagon with the larger tracer.
- Students then cut out their octagons.
- Students then glue the two red octagons to the white octagon leaving a rim of white showing. This should look like a stop sign we see on the streets everyday.
- Students then use white chalk to write 'STOP' on one side of the sign and 'Pray and Believe' on the other side of the sign.
- Glue the popsicle stick or straw to the bottom

