

**Lesson 5: Genesis 21**  
*Jealousy*

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## *Jealousy*

### **Introduction**

Who is the older brother or sister? Were you ever jealous of your baby sister or brother? Do you know what it means to be jealous? Well, it has been a year since the “stranger” predicted Sarah would have a baby. Now Sarah gives birth to her son and we see how the family begins to deal with the new addition.

### **Progression of Events**

Once again, Sarah is laughing because now she has given birth to a healthy baby boy. As they promised God, the boy was named Isaac because the name means “laughter.” This is indeed a miracle because Sarah is well past the age of childbearing. At the time of Isaac’s birth, she is 90 years old and Abraham is 100 years old.

A long time has passed since God promised Abraham and Sarah this beautiful baby. One commentary states they have waited about 25 years! God did not immediately fulfill His promise to Abraham. He needed Abraham to learn some lessons about counting on God instead of leaning to his own understanding. Many of us are like that today. We must learn through our trials to be patient and wait upon the Lord. Sometimes when we pray for something it may take many years before we see what God has in store for us.

As we learned in Genesis 17, on the eighth day of Isaac’s life, he was circumcised. Isaac grew to be a strong and healthy boy and soon it was time for him to be weaned.

Unfortunately, as Isaac grew, Sarah began to feel badly toward Hagar again and also about Ishmael – Isaac’s half-brother. This rivalry would have consequences.

In many cultures, a child is weaned somewhere between the age of 3 and 6 years old. In celebration of Isaac’s weaning, Abraham held a great feast. During the feast, Sarah saw Ishmael mocking Isaac.

Although the Bible does not say exactly what Ishmael said or did, it was enough to make Sarah very upset and she decides that it was not good for Isaac if Ishmael and Hagar lived with them any longer. Some scholars believe Sarah felt Ishmael would do harm to Isaac if Abraham died so that Ishmael would be the heir. There seems to have been some jealousy at work between the brothers. With all of this in mind, Sarah asks Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away to a distant country.

Jealousy is a very dangerous emotion. Jealousy is when you covet something someone else has and it changes how you act. You may want something so bad you decide to steal it or treat someone badly that does have it. This can lead to emotions of hate and resentment. It is better for Christians to count their blessings and acknowledge what God has given them. When we practice this positive thinking, we will be happy for those who have things we admire. We will enjoy participating in times with them and not have negativity weigh on our hearts. If we find ourselves feeling jealous, we should immediately go to God and

confess this emotion to Him. We should then ask for His help to fight off the emotion and count our blessings. He will help us see all of the beautiful things we already have in our lives.

Ishmael is Abraham's first son and Abraham does love him. He resists Sarah at first and doesn't want to see Ishmael leave.

While contemplating what to do, God speaks to Abraham and tells him to listen to Sarah's voice. God tells Abraham that it is through Isaac he will fulfill His promise about making Abraham's descendants a great nation. God promises Hagar and Ishmael will be okay and that Ishmael will also become a nation because he is Abraham's son.

Abraham woke early the next morning and did as God commanded him. He had faith God would take care of his son Ishmael and make a nation of him.

Once again, Abraham is right to trust in God. Ishmael does survive and later marries a wife who gives birth to twelve sons who become the Arabian nations.

How can we battle jealousy? We can follow the qualities Jesus showed us while He was here on earth. We show love, humility, tell the truth and serve others.

## Questions for Discussion

1. Why did Sarah and Abraham name their son Isaac?
2. Why did Abraham throw a party for Isaac?
3. What did Ishmael do at the celebration of Isaac's weaning?
4. What did Sarah ask Abraham to do with Hagar and Ishmael?
5. Why didn't Abraham want to send Ishmael away?
6. Why did Abraham finally agree to send Ishmael to live in another country?
7. What is jealousy?
8. How can jealousy be dangerous?
9. What should we do if we begin to feel jealous?
10. When Isaac was born, how do you think Abraham and Sarah felt toward God?
11. Do you think Abraham and Sarah thanked God daily for Isaac?
12. Does God ever tire of hearing us say thank you?

## Memory Verse

"Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age at the very time God had promised him." (Genesis 21:2)

# JUST FOR TEENS!

Today, the teens will look at the root of jealousy and learn a strategy to overcome covetous thought.

Begin by talking about what jealousy is and why Ishmael might have been jealous of Isaac. Have the students tell stories about a time they have been jealous or when friends they know have acted jealously. Talk together about what causes jealous feelings.

Teach students that one way to overcome jealous thoughts is to focus on being thankful for what you have. Read Philippians 4:6-8. Talk about the scriptures and how they teach that God will supply all of our needs and we should make our requests known to Him. Focus then on verse 8 which tells us what things we are to think on. One way to combat jealous feelings is to think on things that are good.

A gratitude journal is a strategy some use to combat jealous feelings and to recognize the blessings God has given you in your life. A gratitude journal is something you do every morning to set the pace for the day. You select five things you are thankful for and write them in the journal. Then you say a short prayer thanking God for the blessings in your life. This gives you a positive outlook for the rest of your day.

You may want to make gratitude journals with the teens. This can be done by purchasing handmade paper and using special attachments to bind the paper into a journal. The journal doesn't have to be large as the students will only add five things per day. By making the journal together, it may help them put the gratitude process into practice the very next day. You may also decide to simply purchase some blank journals for the students in a variety of designs and let them pick one. Small journals are available at local dollar stores.

# Baby Isaac Craft

Students will make baby Isaac and use it to tell the story of Abraham and Sarah.

## What You Need:

- Large beads (one per student)
- 4inch by 4 inch squares of felt
- thin black or brown yarn
- thin permanent marker
- ribbon
- clothespins

## How To Make It:

- Students will begin by placing their square of felt in the shape of a diamond.
- They will then glue the bead to the top of the diamond. You may decide to use hot glue guns for this so that it will instantly stick. The bead will be baby Isaac's head.
- Students will then glue the clothespin under the bead for baby Isaac's body.
- Show students how to wrap the felt around the clothespin as if you were swaddling a baby.
- Use the ribbon to tie the felt so that it won't come unwrapped.
- Using the thin permanent marker, students will add a face to their bead.
- Lastly, students will glue thin yarn to baby Isaac's head for hair.

# Have a Baby Shower!

Students can have a baby shower for Sarah. They will draw a picture of the present they would bring to Sarah at the birth of Isaac. Then gather the group together to share what they would bring. Talk about why they chose each object. Have a special baby shower snack and play a few baby shower games!

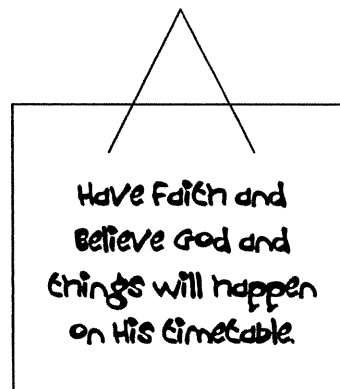
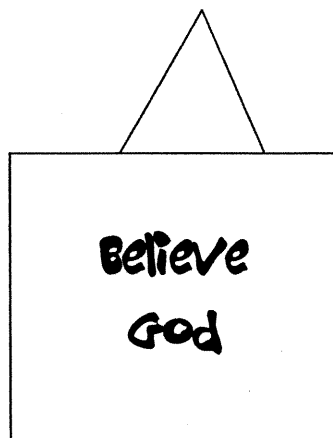
# Have Faith and Believe Wall Hanging

## What You Need:

- Tag board
- Colored paper
- Ribbon
- Beans or rice
- Sprigs of wheat
- Copies of printed sheet (next page)

## How To Make It:

- Students will choose two sheets of colored paper to glue to one piece of tag board.
- Using a hole punch, students will make two holes at the top of the paper. The teacher will need to do this step for young children.
- Lace ribbon through the holes and knot it so that it won't slip back through the hole.
- Students will glue the 'have faith.....' statement printed below on one side of the paper.
- On the other side of the paper, students will write 'Believe God' with glue. They will then place beans or rice into the glue to make the letters show up. For younger students, the teacher can write it with glue and the children can add the beans. We recommend beans for younger students as they are easier to handle.
- Lastly, students will glue sprigs of wheat to the paper as decoration.



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