

Bible Point ▶

God loves us and gives us good surprises.

Bible Verse

We trust God (adapted from Psalm 52:8b).

Growing Closer to Jesus

- Children will
- talk about surprises they've received,
 - hear how Abraham and Sarah were surprised to have a baby,
 - surprise each other with pictures and packages, and
 - thank God for the good things he gives us.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

- **Abraham and Sarah have a baby.**

Genesis
18:1-16; 21:1-7



In Abraham's desert-dwelling culture, visitors were rare. They provided both an obligation and a welcome diversion. A warm welcome and hospitality were requirements, and Abraham knew what it was like to travel in the desert. Thus, he was ready to welcome the travelers.

It may seem strange that the three men were "standing nearby" (18:2), but this was customary for strangers. They were not free to just approach someone else's tent in the desert. Many scholars believe that these men were angels, though the text doesn't directly say so.

For many years, God had been promising a son. Now for the first time, God predicted the time of the birth: Within one year, the son of the promise would be born. The shame of childlessness that had haunted them for decades was finally erased.

Isaac, the name Abraham gave his son, means "he laughs." Genesis 21:6 contains a play on words that's obvious even in English. Through the child named "he laughs," God had brought laughter to Sarah and to all who knew her.









Prayer

- Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16.
- How well do you follow the advice of this verse?
- Pray: Dear Lord, please help me to have joy in you every day, thanking you for your blessings and goodness. Help me to model joy to my students by...

Before the Lesson

- Collect the necessary items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed in the chart on the next page.
- Make photocopies of the "Today I Learned..." handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your children.
- Pray for the children in your class and for God's direction as you teach the lesson.

This Lesson at a Glance

	What Children Will Do	Classroom Supplies	Learning Lab Supplies
Welcome Time	Welcome! —Receive name tags, and be greeted by the teacher.	“Desert Tent Name Tags” (p. 135), scissors, marker, safety pins or tape	
Let’s Get Started Direct children to one or more of the optional activities until everyone arrives.	Option 1: Surprise Biscuits —Make a surprise snack, and hear how God surprised Abraham and Sarah.	Plastic tablecloth, refrigerator biscuit dough, cookie cutters, chocolate chips, toaster oven	
	Option 2: Rest Awhile —Prepare resting places and pretend food for each other, and hear how Abraham and Sarah prepared food for their visitors.	Pillows, blankets, cooking utensils, bowl of water, towel	
	Option 3: Baby Care —Care for dolls, and hear how Sarah cared for baby Isaac.	Dolls, stuffed animals	
	Pick-Up Time —Sing a song as they pick up toys and gather for Bible Story Time.	CD player	
Bible Story Time	Setting the Stage —Hide surprises for each other, sing the Bible verse song, and hear about Abraham and Sarah’s surprise.	Paper lunch sacks, toys, CD player	
	Bible Song and Prayer Time —Sing a song, bring out the Bible, and pray together.	Bible, CD player	
	Hear and Tell the Bible Story —Hear different kinds of laughs, and hear how Sarah laughed when she heard baby Isaac would be born.	Bible, CD player	
	Bubbles for Baby —Celebrate the birth of Isaac with bubbles and music.	CD player, bubble solution, large bowl, crepe paper or rhythm instruments	
	Do the Bible Story —Play a surprising singing game to remind them of God’s good surprises.	CD player	
Closing 	Cousin Joey’s Surprise —Hear about a surprise Whiskers is expecting, and tell Whiskers about Abraham and Sarah’s surprise.		
	Good Surprises —Eat surprise treats, and thank God for good surprises.	Biscuits from Option 1, napkins	

Welcome Time

SUPPLIES: “Desert Tent Name Tags” (p. 135), scissors, marker, safety pins or tape

- Kneel down and make eye contact with children as they arrive.
- Greet each child individually with an enthusiastic smile.
- Thank each child for coming to class today.
- As children arrive, ask them how they put last week’s lesson into practice. Use questions such as “What did you tell your family about Abram’s new name?” or “Did you get to see any stars at night? Tell me about that.”
- Say: **Today we’re going to learn that ► God loves us and gives us good surprises.**
- Hand out the desert tent name tags children made during Lesson 9, and help them attach the name tags to their clothing. Have extra name tags on hand for children that were not in class that day and to replace damaged name tags.
- Direct children to the Let’s Get Started activities you’ve set up.

Let’s Get Started

Set up one or more of the following activities for children to do as they arrive. After you greet each child, invite him or her to choose an activity.

Circulate among the activities to offer help as needed and direct children’s conversation toward the point of today’s lesson. Ask questions such as “What’s the best surprise you can think of?” or “Tell me about a time someone surprised you.”

■ Option 1: Surprise Biscuits

SUPPLIES: plastic tablecloth, refrigerator biscuit dough, cookie cutters, chocolate chips, toaster oven

Cover a table or work area with a plastic tablecloth. Set out cookie cutters and blobs of refrigerator biscuit dough, and let children make biscuit shapes to share with the class. As they work, explain that today they’ll hear about a time Abraham and Sarah had some surprise visitors. Point out that Abraham and Sarah prepared food to share with their visitors, just as they’re preparing food to share with the class.

After children finish making their biscuits, have an adult helper slip two chocolate chips inside each biscuit and bake the biscuits in a toaster oven while you continue with the lesson. Children will eat the biscuits during the Closing.

■ Option 2: Rest Awhile

SUPPLIES: pillows, blankets, cooking utensils, bowl of water, towel

Tell children that today they’ll learn how Abraham prepared a special place for some visitors to rest. Then set out pillows, blankets, cooking utensils, a bowl of water, and a towel. Encourage children to take turns being Abraham and the visitors. The Abrahams can make a comfortable place for their visitors to rest. And then they can offer the



It’s important to say the Bible Point just as it’s written in each activity. Repeating the Bible Point over and over throughout the lesson will help kids remember it and apply it to their lives.



If you have star-shaped cookie cutters, bring them in to remind children of last week’s lesson about Abraham’s family outnumbering the stars in the sky. Be sure to have children wash their hands.



visitors water to wash their hands and pretend food cooked with the cooking utensils. As children play, explain that the visitors had a special surprise for Abraham and Sarah. Remind children that ► *God loves us and gives us good surprises.*



BIBLE POINT ►

■ Option 3: Baby Care

SUPPLIES: dolls, stuffed animals

Set out dolls and stuffed animals for children to care for. Talk about ways to care for babies, such as rocking them, feeding them, or changing their diapers. Invite children to tell you about babies they know. As children play, explain that today they'll learn how God gave Abraham and Sarah a baby, just as he'd promised to do.

When everyone has arrived and you're ready to move on to Bible Story Time, encourage the children to finish what they're doing and get ready to clean up.

■ Pick-Up Time

SUPPLIES: CD player



Lead children in singing "Come Along With Me" (track 2) with the CD to the tune of "Come and Go With Me." Encourage children to sing along as they help clean up the room.



SING

**Come along with me and pick up all our things,
Pick up all our things,
Pick up all our things.
Come along with me and pick up all our things
So our room will be clean.**

(Repeat 2x.)

Bible Story Time

■ Setting the Stage

SUPPLIES: CD player; paper lunch sacks, toys



Tell children that when you turn the lights off and then on again, they're to stop what they're doing and raise their hands. Practice this signal a few times. Encourage children to respond quickly so you'll have time for all the fun activities you've planned.

Ask: • **What did you make or do when you came to our class today?** (Made biscuits; got to rest on the pillows; took care of babies.)

Say: **Some of you took care of babies, some of you made resting places for each other, and some of you made a snack that we'll share later. You were all learning important things about our Bible story.**

Ask: • **Who can tell me what we've learned about Abraham so far?** (That he trusted God; that God took care of him; that God changed his name.)

Say: **Abraham trusted God. We can trust God, too. Do you remember our Bible verse? Our Bible verse is from Psalm 52:8, and it says: ►We trust God. Let's say that together.** Repeat the verse together. **Now let's sing our Bible verse song!**

Lead children in singing "We Trust God" (adapted from Psalm 52:8b) with the CD (track 13) to the tune of "Jesus Loves Me."



SING

God, we'll trust and follow you (*point up*)
In all we say and all we do. (*Touch mouth with both hands; then extend arms.*)
We will trust you every day (*cross arms over chest*)
At home, at church, at school, at play. (*Turn in a circle with arms outstretched.*)
Yes, God, we trust you. (*Cross arms over chest; then extend arms upward.*)
Yes, God, we trust you. (*Cross arms over chest; then extend arms upward.*)
Yes, God, we trust you. (*Cross arms over chest; then extend arms upward.*)
We trust you every day. (*Cross arms over chest.*)

(Repeat.)

After the song, lead children in a round of applause for everyone's participation.

Say: **Thanks for that singing! Today we're going to learn more about Abraham. We'll find out about a special surprise that God gave Abraham and Sarah. ►God loves us and gives us good surprises, too. Let's play a special surprise game to help us get ready for that story.**

Give each child a paper lunch sack. Say: **In just a minute, I'd like you to walk around the room and choose something to put in your sack. It could be a toy, a block, a crayon—choose one thing that will fit in your sack. When you find something, put it in your sack and hold the top shut tightly. Then come back and sit down. Don't tell anyone what you've put in your sack.**

Let children walk around the room and choose items to put in their sacks. After a few minutes, flash the lights and wait for children to raise their hands. Invite any children who are still walking around the room to come join you in the story area.

Say: **Look at all these paper sacks. I wonder what's inside them? We'll all be surprised to find out, won't we? Who would like to surprise us first?**

Choose a child to show what's inside his or her sack. Continue until each child has surprised the class. As children display the contents of their sacks, make comments such as "Ooh, I never would have guessed" or "Wow, you sure surprised us."

When all the children have revealed the contents of their sacks, say: **Those were all good surprises. Let's have one more good surprise before we hear our story about Abraham and Sarah. I'll close my eyes, and you surprise me by putting all the toys back where you found them.**

Close your eyes while children put their toys away, and then collect the paper sacks. Say: **Let's bring out our Bible and find out about Abraham and Sarah's surprise.**

◀ BIBLE VERSE

◀ BIBLE POINT



■ Bible Song and Prayer Time

SUPPLIES: Bible, CD player



tracks 3, 4

Say: **Now it's time to choose a helper to bring me the Bible marked with today's Bible story. As we sing our Bible song, we'll pass around our special Bible. The person who's holding the Bible when the music stops will be our Bible helper today.**

Lead the children in singing "I'm So Glad for the Bible" (track 3) with the CD to the tune of "Give Me Oil in My Lamp." As you sing, pass around the special Bible.



SING

**I'm so glad for the Bible.
Keep me learnin', learnin', learnin'.
I'm so glad for God's book today.
I'm so glad for the Bible.
Keep me learnin', learnin', learnin'—
Keep me learnin' all about his way.**

**Let me hear 'bout God's love—
Keep me learnin', learnin', learnin'.
Let me hear 'bout God's love for me.
Let me hear 'bout God's love—
Keep me learnin', learnin', learnin'.
Let's shine the light for all to see.**

(Repeat first verse.)

When the music stops, invite the child who's holding the Bible to bring it to you. Stamp the child's hand with the *star stamp*, and thank the child for bringing you the Bible. Then stamp the other children's hands. Return the *star stamp* and *ink pad* to the Learning Lab.

Say: **I'm thankful for** [name of child who brought the Bible], **and I'm thankful for everyone in our class today. Let's thank God together for all our friends.**

Lead children in singing "I'm So Glad We're Together" (track 4) with the CD to the tune of "Give Me Oil in My Lamp."



SING

**I'm so glad we're together.
Keep us prayin', prayin', prayin'.
I'm so glad we're all here today.
I'm so glad we're together.
Keep us prayin', prayin', prayin'—
Prayin' for each other every day.**

Lead children in folding their hands and bowing their heads as you continue to sing.

**Thank you, Lord, for each one.
Keep me thankful, thankful, thankful.
Thank you for everyone who's here.
Thank you, Lord, for each one.
Keep me thankful, thankful, thankful—
Thankful for our friends both far and near.**

■ Hear and Tell the Bible Story

SUPPLIES: Bible, CD player



Open the Bible to **Genesis 18**, and show it to the children. Say: **Our Bible story comes from the book of Genesis in the Bible. Our Bible Big Book shows us pictures of our Bible story. In just a minute, we'll hear about Abraham and Sarah's special surprise. But first I want you to show me what you look like when you're surprised.**

Let children show you their surprised faces, and then ask:

- **How do you feel when you get a surprise?** (Happy; excited; it's fun.)

Say: **It's fun to get surprises. Sometimes people even laugh when they're surprised. When Sarah got surprised, she laughed. Let me hear you laugh.**

After children laugh, continue: **Now let me hear you giggle.**

After children giggle, say: **It's fun to hear you laugh and giggle. Usually when we laugh, we're happy or we're having fun. Let's have some fun now by listening to some different kinds of laughs on our CD.**

Play the "Ha, Ha, Ha!" segment (track 18) from the CD. You'll hear four different people laughing. After each laugh, pause the CD, and have children try to imitate the laugh. After the last laugh, stop the CD.

Say: **Each person has their own special laugh. Let's read our Bible story and find out why Sarah was laughing.**

Read the text for pages 6 to 8 from the back cover of the *Bible Big Book: Abraham*. As you read each page, invite children to point out details in each picture. After you've read the story, put the *Bible Big Book* away and out of sight.

Ask: • **Why do you think Sarah laughed when the visitors said she would have a baby?** (Because she was too old; because she was happy.)

• **How do you think Abraham and Sarah felt when baby Isaac was born?** (Happy; glad God kept his promise.)

• **Baby Isaac was a great surprise for Abraham and Sarah. Tell me about a time you got a good surprise that made you happy.**

Let children respond, and then say: **Surprises make us happy because they let us know people love us. ►God loves us, too, and gives us good surprises.**



■ Bubbles for Baby

SUPPLIES: CD player, bubble solution, large bowl, crepe paper or rhythm instruments



Ask: • **What do you think Abraham and Sarah did when baby Isaac was born?** (Laughed; had a party; put him in a diaper.)

• **What do you do when someone gives you a good surprise?** (Scream; laugh; hug them.)

Say: **Usually, surprises are exciting, happy things.**

And sometimes we celebrate those great surprises.

Bubbles are a fun way to celebrate, because as we blow into them they grow and grow—just like the happiness and laughter we feel! Let's use our bubbles and some other fun things to celebrate baby Isaac.

Distribute 18-inch crepe paper streamers or rhythm instruments. Play the “Celebration Music” (track 19), and blow bubbles with the *large bubble wands*. Let children wave their streamers or shake their rhythm instruments as they move to the music and pop the bubbles. When the song ends, collect the supplies and have children sit down.



BIBLE POINT ▶

Say: ▶ ***God loves us and gives us good surprises. It's fun to celebrate God's good surprises, too. Let's play a game to celebrate the wonderful surprise God gave to Abraham and Sarah.***

■ Do the Bible Story

SUPPLIES: CD player



track 20

Say: **We're going to learn a new song to sing while we play a game. Our game will be kind of like London Bridge, and it will be a surprise for us to see who gets caught.**

Lead children in singing “Good Surprises” (track 20) with the *CD* to the tune of “London Bridge.” After children are familiar with the song, sing it as you play a game similar to London Bridge. “Catch” a child on the last line of each verse. Repeat the song and the game until each child has been caught.



SING

**God gave Sarah a surprise
A surprise, a surprise.
God gave Sarah a surprise.
It was Isaac!**

**God gives us surprises, too—
Happy times for me and you.
God gives us surprises, too—
Good surprises!**



BIBLE POINT ▶

After you play the game, say: **That was fun! I'm glad that ▶ *God loves us and gives us good surprises.***



Say: **When Jesus was a baby, people were surprised and happy to see him, just like Abraham and Sarah were surprised with Isaac! Jesus is our best surprise! Let's thank God for sending him into our world.**

Pray: **Thank you, God, for sending Jesus, the most wonderful surprise ever. Thank you for loving us, taking care of us, and giving us what we need. We love you. In Jesus' name, amen.**

I wonder if our friend Whiskers would like to join us for some surprise fun. Let's all yell “surprise” and see if he comes out.

Lead children in yelling “surprise,” and then bring out Whiskers.

Closing

■ Cousin Joey's Surprise

SUPPLIES: none

Bring out Whiskers the Mouse, and go through the following puppet script. When you finish the script, put Whiskers away and out of sight.



Whiskers: Surprise! Here I am. What's all the yelling about?

Teacher: We wanted you to come join our surprise fun. We're learning that ► *God loves us and gives us good surprises.*

Whiskers: You don't say! Well, I'm about to have some surprise fun of my own. We're going over to my cousin Joey's house this afternoon, and he said he had a surprise for me. I wonder what it will be! (*Approaches a child*) What do you think Joey's surprise will be?

(Whiskers excitedly approaches children individually to ask what they think cousin Joey's surprise will be.)

Teacher: That's enough, Whiskers. Your friends don't know what your cousin Joey's surprise will be—then it wouldn't be a surprise. But we learned today about a special surprise that God gave to our Bible friends Abraham and Sarah. Do you remember our stories about Abraham and Sarah?

Whiskers: Hmm. Yes. Abraham was the one who took a long, long walk, and he never got lost because God helped him.

Teacher: That's right, Whiskers. Would you like to hear about Abraham and Sarah's surprise?

Whiskers: Wait a minute. Let me try to guess. Did God give Abraham 10 new camels?

Teacher: No.

Whiskers: Hmm. Did God give him lots more grass to feed his animals? Abraham had lots of animals, you know.

Teacher: Yes, we know, Whiskers. We heard that story. God did give Abraham plenty of grass for his animals, but that's not the surprise we learned about today. Children, let's tell Whiskers about Abraham and Sarah's surprise.

(Lead children in telling Whiskers about Abraham and Sarah's visitors, and then about baby Isaac.)

Whiskers: Wow! I bet they were really happy to have a baby after so long. That was a good surprise!

Teacher: ► *God loves us and gives us good surprises,* too, Whiskers.

Whiskers: Yeah. I can't wait to see the good surprise cousin Joey has for me. Now I'll have a surprise for him, too—the story about baby Isaac. I better go now. I think I hear my mom calling me. Goodbye, friends!



Permission to photocopy this script from Group's Hands-On Bible Curriculum® Preschool granted for local church use.
Copyright © Group Publishing, Inc., 1515 Cascade Avenue, CO 80538. group.com



■ Good Surprises

SUPPLIES: napkins, chocolate-filled biscuits from Option 1

Say: **Our friend Whiskers is going to find out about his cousin Joey's surprise. Right now, I have a surprise for you, too.**

Bring out the chocolate-filled biscuits prepared by the children and your helper. Give each child a biscuit and a napkin. Then say: **Take a bite of your biscuit, and you'll discover a sweet surprise inside.**

Let children enjoy their biscuits. Then say: **These treats were a nice surprise. Let's thank God for the treats and all the other good surprises God gives us. Dear God, we're glad that ►you love us and give us good surprises. Thank you for all the good things you give us. In Jesus' name, amen.**



Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the "Today I Learned..." handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with the children. Encourage parents to use the handout to plan meaningful family activities to reinforce this week's topic.



For Extra Time

If you have a long class time or want to add additional elements to your lesson, try one of the following activities.

Lively Learning: Bible Big Book Review

track 21



Have children use the *Bible Big Book: Abraham* to retell the Bible story to Whiskers. Encourage children to take turns using Whiskers and showing the pictures in the *Bible Big Book* as they listen to the entire story on the CD (track 21). As children review the story, lead them in repeating the Bible Point from each lesson:

- Lesson 9: ► God loves us and helps us follow him.
- Lesson 10: ► God loves us and wants us to love him.
- Lesson 11: ► God loves us and gives us what we need.
- Lesson 12: ► God loves us and calls us by name.
- Lesson 13: ► God loves us and gives us good surprises.

Make to Take: Sharing Surprises



Have children help you mix together 4 tablespoons baking soda and 4 tablespoons water in a bowl. Dip a cotton swab in the mixture and lightly paint an invisible happy face on a sheet of white paper. Explain that the paint you've just made is surprise paint that will show up on paper later. Remind children how happy Sarah and Abraham were when God surprised them with baby Isaac. Then distribute cotton swabs, and let children paint their own happy faces.

After a few minutes, paint over your invisible happy face with watercolor paint and watch children smile at the surprise.

Treat to Eat: Milk Curds and Bread

Let children help you spoon cottage cheese onto crackers. Point out that the cottage cheese and crackers are similar to the food Abraham served to his visitors. Talk about how surprised Abraham and Sarah were when they heard the visitors say that Sarah would have a baby. Remind children that ► God loves us and gives us good surprises, too.



Story Picture: Sarah Is Surprised

Give each child a copy of the “Today I Learned...” handout. Set out crayons or markers, and let children color their pictures of Sarah, and then let them glue fabric or construction paper to their tents. Help each child glue the fabric or paper only on the top of the tent so it can be lifted up to see Sarah peeking out as she listens to the visitors. As children work, review how Sarah was surprised by the visitors’ news. Remind children that ► God loves us and gives us good surprises, too.



Children may be skeptical about the invisible paint at first, but they'll soon catch on to the fun.

If you have time, children can paint over their face pictures during class. It's important that the invisible paint be completely dry before children paint over it.

Today I learned... God loves us and gives us good surprises.

Help me learn this:

We trust God (adapted from Psalm 52:8b).

Ask me:

- What did Sarah do when she heard the visitors' news?
- What was Abraham and Sarah's surprise?
- Tell me about a time you were surprised.

Family Fun

- Declare this week "Good Surprise Week." Set aside one day to surprise each person in your family—only good surprises are allowed! You might make favorite foods, take trips to favorite places, or give homemade gifts. At the end of the week, thank God for all the good surprises each person received.



Sarah Is Surprised
(Genesis 18:1-16; 21:1-7)

