**Messy Church – May 2020**

**Abraham**

We have looked at a number of stories recently that come from the second part of the Bible, the New Testament. This month we are looking at a person whose story is told in the Old Testament, the first part of the Bible. In fact, his story is told in Genesis, the very first book in the Bible. The story starts in chapter 11.

The stories are:

1. Traveling
2. Camels
3. Counting grains of sand
4. Laughter
5. Cooking
6. Babies

**Stories and Activities**

1. **Travelling**

When we first hear about Abraham, that isn’t what he was called. Originally, he was called Abram. He lived in a place in the Middle East called Ur, with his wife Sarai and his father Terah. Terah set off to go to Canaan, but only got as far as Haran. He stopped there. After he died, God spoke to Abram. God told him to go to a new land, and take his wife, and his father’s household with him. So, they packed up and went to Canaan.

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When Abram travelled, he lived in a tent. Do you have a tent? If you have a tent, ask if you can put it up in the garden. Maybe you could sit in it and have tea. If you don’t have a tent, you will need string, a large piece of cloth, and some canes or sticks. You need to tie the canes together so that you can spread the cloth over them. The simplest tent you can make this way is like a ridge tent. Abram’s tent would have been bigger than this and more complicated, with separate rooms inside for people. The whole group would have had several tents. If you can’t make a big tent, see if you can make a small one with twigs, cotton and a smaller piece of cloth or a paper tissue.

Would you like to live in a tent all the time? What would be good about it? What would be bad?

1. **Camels**

You will need: print out of a camel, crayons or paints, scissors.

Cut out the camel, leaving the two bits connected and colour it. Fold it in two, and make it stand up.

In Abram’s day, there weren’t any cars or lorries. You either had to walk, or ride an animal such as a camel, a horse or a donkey. Camels were particularly good when there were deserts, as they can go for a long time without drinking. Abram and Sarai would have packed all their belongings onto animals, but they would only have been able to travel at walking pace. They probably didn’t have carts. As Abram travelled around, he became more and more wealthy, which meant he had more sheep and goats and camels. He had people to look after them. Journeying was quite a challenge.

Have you moved to a new house? Did you help pack? Would you have liked to carry all your things yourself?

**3. Counting Grains of sand**

Before Abram set out God told him that he was going to be the first of a big nation of people. This was odd, as Abram and Sarai were quite old, and didn’t have any children. A bit later, God said that they would have so many descendants, trying to count them would be like trying to count the stars in the sky or the grains of sand on a beach. The 20th June is the longest day this year (it’s usually the 21st, but this is a leap year). This means that it isn’t dark, if there aren’t clouds, until late. In any case, the number of lights around make it difficult to see the stars.

Can you get a bucket of sand? Take a teaspoonful of the sand. Can you count how many grains? Perhaps if you divide it in half and half again you could count that, then work out how many grains in the teaspoonful, then how many teaspoons to the bucket full and work out how many grains in the bucket. Have you built sandcastles on a beach? If you have the right sand, make a sand castle. How many sandcastles could you make on a beach?

Abram was going to have a lot of descendants, wasn’t he!

**4. Sarah laughs**

After a number of adventures, Abram and Sarai where camped by some trees in a place called Mamre. By this time, Abram had become Abraham, and Sarai, Sarah, which actually means “princess”. Anyway, while they were there, they had some visitors. They were sent by God to tell Abraham and Sarah that now was when they would start their family.

Abraham invited them to have a meal. Sarah thought she was far too old to have children and she laughed. The visitors heard her, and told her that nothing was too hard for God.

Do you like laughing? Can you think of a joke or a funny story you could tell you mother and father?

What else makes you laugh?

**5. Cooking**

Abraham had invited the visitors to have a meal. They had to make it right from the basic ingredients. The Bible talks about them making bread. Have you ever helped make bread? How long does it take? How long does it take to cook your dinner?

Think about waiting for a meal to be prepared from the basics. Would you be hungry, waiting? What if you have been travelling all day?

Ask if you can help cooking dinner, maybe preparing vegetables or something. Help by setting the table.

Think about food. Remember people who regularly don’t get enough to eat.

**6. Babies**

Nine months after the visitors came, Sarah had a baby boy, and they called him Isaac, which means laughter.

When you have a new baby in a house lots of things change. Imagine trying to look after a baby in a tent. Have you still got any of your baby toys? What sort of toys do babies like? Can you make a toy for a baby? You could try to make a soft toy, or a rattle or a mobile. You could make a soft toy by getting a clean old sock, stuffing it with something soft, and adding buttons or fabric for eyes and a mouth. The eyes need to be fastened very well, so they can’t be pulled off.

You could make a rattle from a plastic container with dried peas or small stones in it.

A mobile could be made from coat hangers twisted together. You could make more camel shapes and hang them from the hangers.

What other things do you need for a baby?

Celebration

One song that talks about Abraham is “Father Abraham had many sons”. It’s not very biblical, but it is fun. <https://youtu.be/5o_J30x6E6s>

Abraham travelled a long way. He set out in Ur and went up the river to Haran. Then he crossed over to the coast and went through Canaan and on into Egypt. The he went back into Canaan. He was told by God that he would have lots and lots of descendants – that’s children and grandchildren and great grandchildren and great great grandchildren and…. you get the idea. But it was a long time before he had a son. Sarah laughed when she was told she would have a child. She thought she was much too old. But God kept his promise, and now there are millions of people who can tr4ace their descent from Abraham. And we join them in a way, because God wants us to follow Him, as Abraham did, and become as much part of God’s family as Abrahams other descendants.

Watch the video, <https://youtu.be/AhGeO1Ug1DU>

While we think of Abraham travelling, we can sing “One more step along the world I go”.

<https://youtu.be/7PXV3dwaeNU>

When we thought about the time it takes to prepare a meal, we thought about being hungry. In our prayer we’ll remember people who are hungry for various reasons, and people who help them.

Prayer:

Father God, thank you for the food we have. We’re sorry that we don’t always appreciate it, and often waste it. We remember people who are hungry. With the virus, and people not going to school and not being able to work there are a lot of children and adults who are going hungry. Thank you for people who try to help them, for example by running foodbanks, and giving food to them. We remember people in other countries who never have enough food. Thank you for the people who try to help them, as well.

Amen

When we think of Abraham having as many descendants as stars in the sky we remember that God made the stars. We can sing “My God is so big”

<https://youtu.be/yiWYtwFt9Jc>

Enjoy our celebration.

Then have tea or a treat if it isn’t tea time!

If you send me pictures of anything you do, I will share them on the Church Facebook page (if you want to send pictures that you don’t want shared, just tell me. I’ll only share the one’s you’re happy to share.)

Harlington Messy Church Team

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTMWR_QCxujkh1zHjTFcoJw>