

# THE LORD APPEARS TO ABRAHAM

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: GENESIS 18



*In the midst of great wickedness, God brings His people into a relationship with Himself.*

## The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

### Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

**God initiated contact with Abraham again** – “And the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre.” With these opening words of chapter 18, we see once again that God is the one who took the initiative to reveal Himself to His people. God’s initiative in visiting with Abraham is all of grace. If God did not reveal himself to Abraham or to us, neither we nor Abraham would know Him. As we continue reading the passage, we learn that Abraham was going about his normal life again after encountering God the first time. He trusted the promise of God, but in his old age there was nothing Abraham could do to bring about the fulfillment of God’s promise of a son through Sarah. Already Abraham had taken his wife’s maidservant to produce a son and God responded by saying that Ishmael was not the one to fulfill the promise.

**God reaffirmed his covenant and promise** – God reaffirmed his covenant and promise to Abraham. God is mindful of the frailty of man and is aware of the effects of sin upon us. How quickly we can begin to doubt! In this passage, God affirmed his promise to Abraham because he knew that doubts had already begun to find a foothold. God need not have appeared to remind Abraham of the promise but in his mercy he chose to. Doubts were revealed when Sarah laughed in response to the promise of a son because she was old and advanced in years beyond childbearing. Though the Lord questioned Sarah, he did not rebuke her unbelief. He knew that the child of promise she was to bear represented the future line of Israel and the Savior. Abraham’s faith in the promise of God, the future redeemer, had been counted to him as righteousness and, similarly, Sarah need not be judged. For even as she doubted, her sin was covered by the life of Christ to come and his atoning sacrifice.

**God heard Abraham’s prayers to spare the righteous of Sodom** – Though God had chosen Abraham out from among sinful man, God had not chosen the evil city of Sodom. In this most amazing exchange, we see how our prayers interact with God’s purpose and plan. In the passage we see how God announced His plan to judge the wickedness of Sodom. Abraham appealed to God on behalf of any righteous people in Sodom: first fifty, then forty-five, then thirty, then twenty, and finally ten. Truly God would not destroy even one that He had chosen, but in fact there was not one righteous person found inside the city. In this exchange between Abraham and God we catch a glimpse of how God hears our prayers and responds to them. In the end, God’s angel rescued Lot who was just outside the city by dragging him by the hand against his objections. God will save those whom He has chosen.

## THE LORD APPEARS TO ABRAHAM

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: GENESIS 18

### Where Is Jesus?

*Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption*

God appeared to Abraham demonstrating that He is a God who desires to dwell with mankind. This means that God desires to dwell with us too. Jesus, came to earth to die so that all men might have fellowship with God. God, through His Spirit, can dwell in each of our hearts.

Paul shares it this way with Timothy:

So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, who has saved us and called us to a holy life - not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

(2 Timothy 1:8-10)

### ON THE ROAD TO EMMANUS

**Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.**

**Bible Passage: Psalm 8**

#### **Connecting the passage to Christ:**

The writer of Hebrews (Hebrews 2:6-9) quotes Psalm 8:6-8 and attributes the description to Jesus. Specifically we read in Hebrews 2:9 "but we see Jesus."

#### **Questions for reflection:**

- After reading Hebrews 2:6-9, how would you say this passage relates to Jesus? *(This passage talks about the Son of God's humility in giving up His glory to become a man.)*
- Knowing that Psalm 8:5 refers to Jesus, how might Philippians 2:6-11 fit into this description of Christ? *(The passage in Philippians not only talks about the humility of the Son of God but also the subsequent exaltation of Christ which Psalm 8:5 also refers to.)*

## THE LORD APPEARS TO ABRAHAM

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: GENESIS 18

### SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

#### BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

## ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them "Why do you think this passage is in the Bible for us today? How is it supposed to affect our lives?"

### HOW CLOSE IS SODOM?

#### Supplies:

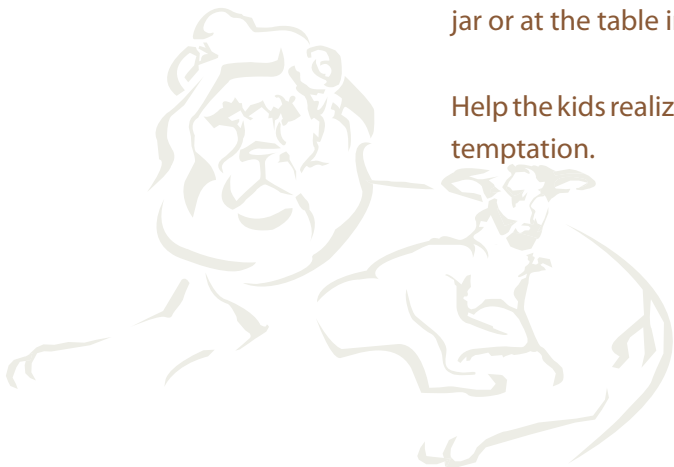
- White Board
- Markers

Draw a rectangle on the board and write the word Sodom in the middle of it. Ask the children where they would place Abraham in relation to the city (Genesis 18:16) and where they would put Lot (Genesis 13:12). Read the description of Sodom to the class from Genesis 13:13. Ask the children to decide which man was wiser and why. Try to help them understand that if we live in the shadow of temptation we are more vulnerable to it.

Here are some practical examples.

- Where should you sit to do your homework, at your desk or near the TV set?
- Where is the best place to do your early morning devotions, lying in bed (where you can fall back to sleep) or in the living room with a light on?
- Where is the best place to sit waiting for dinner, in the kitchen next to the cookie jar or at the table in the dining room?

Help the kids realize that their environment really can affect their ability to withstand temptation.



## THE LORD APPEARS TO ABRAHAM

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: GENESIS 18

### BELIEVE IT OR NOT

**Supplies:**

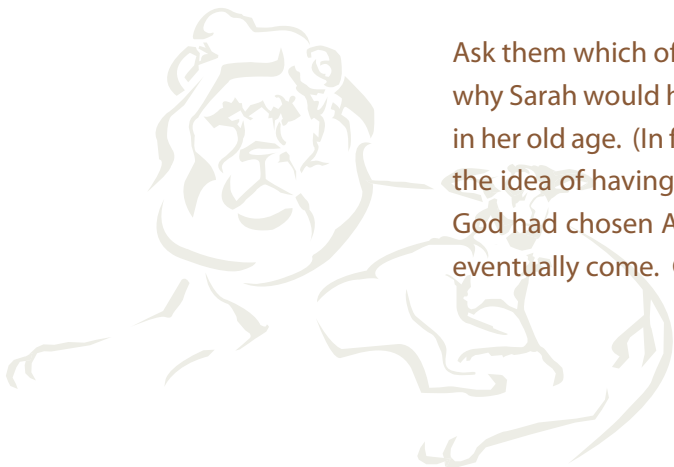
- paper
- pencils

Share the following ten facts. Have the children write down which they think are true and which they believe are false.

1. The tallest man in history was Robert Wadlow who was measured to be 8 ft. 11.1 inches. He also has the record for the biggest feet, shoe size 37, but died of an infected foot.
2. Toilet paper was invented in 1857 to replace old store catalogs people had used.
3. The most push-ups done by a man in one hour is 3,416.
4. The largest snowflake ever reported and listed in The Guinness Book of World Records was 15 inches wide and eight inches thick.
5. Umbrellas were originally invented in the Middle East around the time that Joshua entered the Promised Land to protect against the heat of the sun.
6. Kleenex tissues were originally invented as an air filter material for army gas masks.
7. The coin toss so familiar at the start of football games was originated by Julius Caesar, who instituted the practice to help people settle disputes. If heads came up then it was said that Caesar agreed.
8. The tuxedo was invented in Tuxedo Park, New York as a less formal jacket option.
9. Cinderella is an adaptation of a Scottish story. In this earlier version, Cinderella is named Rashin-Coatie, the fairy godmother is a baby calf and the glass slipper is made of satin. But the details of the prince, the ball, and the slipper left behind are all the same.
10. The world's largest crayon is 10 feet long and weighs 332 pounds.

After reading all the items on the list, go through them one by one and find out, by a show of hands, who thought each statement was true. The class should be surprised in the end to discover that they are all true!

Ask them which of the bits of trivia surprised them most. Then go on to talk about why Sarah would have doubted the Lord's words and laughed about having a child in her old age. (In fact, the children may also laugh as you share the facts!) To Sarah, the idea of having a child seemed impossible. Yet, that is exactly what happened. God had chosen Abraham and Sarah to be the family through which Jesus would eventually come. God is able to bring His plan to pass.



## THE LORD APPEARS TO ABRAHAM

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: GENESIS 18

### ROTTEN POTATOES

Read the following list to the children and ask them what should you do with each item, sort out the good or throw the whole lot away?

- You buy a bunch of bananas and one banana is bad. Should you save the rest or throw them all away?
- You buy a bag of peanuts in the shell and the third one you eat tastes terrible. Should you spit it out but eat the rest, or throw them all away?
- You go to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and find out the slice of bread you got out is green with mold. Should you slice off the bad part and eat the slice, get a new slice, or throw the whole loaf away?
- You go to get a slice of cheese and notice a white fuzzy texture to the topside of the slice. Should you wash off the mold and eat it anyway, get another slice from the same package, or throw them all away?
- You are helping your mom peel potatoes. You reach in the bag and the very first potato you touch mashes in and is slimy. Should you check the bag and pick out the good potatoes, or throw them all away?
- If out of the city of Sodom most of the people are wicked, should God save the ten who are righteous or throw them all away into His judgments?

The wickedness of sin is a greater offense to God than a moldy slice of bread or a rotten potato is to us. Yet God not only saves us, He saves us in spite of the rottenness of sin. We are all like those in Sodom, yet because of Christ's death God reaches out to us in love and transforms our lives.



## THE LORD APPEARS TO ABRAHAM

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: GENESIS 18

### PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

### IN CLASS PROJECT

The first and second grade children can use the preschool coloring sheet and questions. Have the older children draw a picture of Sarah hiding behind the door laughing.

### FOR OLDER GRADES

Use the following activity for practical application and discovery of this lesson.

Read Romans 3:10-18 to the class.

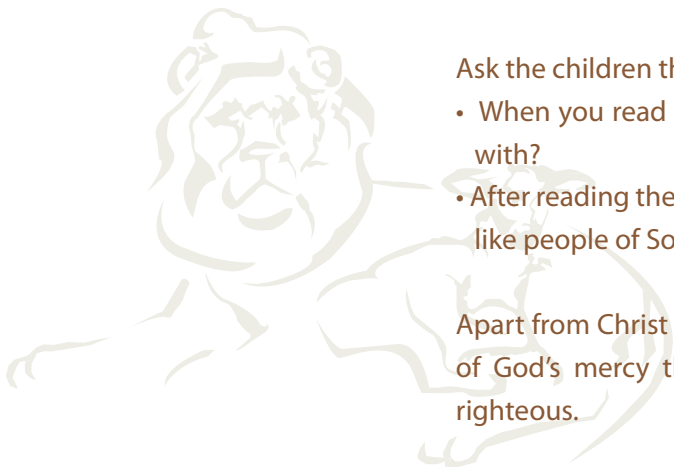
Review the story of Abraham pleading for Sodom.

Though the evil of Sodom and Gomorrah was particularly evil, there was no one righteous in the city. Though Abraham pleads for the righteous, we learn from Romans 3:10-18 that apart from Christ, none are righteous, not even one. Even when the angels save Lot, it is not because Lot is righteous; indeed he is portrayed as a wicked man willing to sacrifice his daughters. Lot is not saved because of what he did, but because of God's mercy. In fact, if it hadn't been for the angels physically grabbing hold of Lot (Genesis 19:16), he would have been destroyed as well.

Ask the children the following questions:

- When you read the story of the judgment of Sodom, who do you most identify with?
- After reading the scripture in Romans, do you wonder if in fact you are really more like people of Sodom?

Apart from Christ we are sinners bent on rebelling against God. It is only because of God's mercy that we have the power to withstand sin and be counted as righteous.



## THE LORD APPEARS TO ABRAHAM

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: GENESIS 18

### A LITTLE BIT MORE

**Righteous** – Righteous is one of those theological words that many people cannot define. If you simply think of being righteous as fully keeping the law of God, it is easy to understand why we read in Romans 3:10 that there is

“no one who is righteous, not even one.”

When appealing to the Lord, Abraham was thinking there would be people in Sodom who had not sinned and served the Lord only. He was likely thinking there might be some who were not so evil as others.

Just like Abraham, we are sinners who are not righteous in and of ourselves. Abraham started out as an idolater. It was only in believing God's plan that his faith was credited to him as righteousness (Romans 4:9). Whose righteousness was credited to Abraham's account? The same as is credited to our account, that of Jesus Christ who is the only one who was able to fully keep the law.

