

Hagar and Ishmael

Storyteller: (*spreads out the Desert Bag*): This is the Desert Bag. So many wonderful and important things happen in the desert, we need to know what it is like. We can't get the whole desert into our church, so here is just a little piece of the desert. *The Storyteller smooths the sand while s/he talks.* The desert is a dangerous place. There is little water, and almost nothing grows there. It is hot in the daytime and cold at night.

Genesis 21:8-21

The time came when Sarah no longer had to nurse Isaac, and on that day Abraham gave a big feast.

One day, Sarah noticed Hagar's son Ishmael playing, and she said to Abraham, "Get rid of that Egyptian slave woman and her son! I don't want him to inherit anything. It should all go to my son."

Abraham was worried about Ishmael. But God said, "Abraham, don't worry about your slave woman and the boy. Just do what Sarah tells you. Isaac will inherit your family name, but the son of the slave woman is also your son, and I will make his descendants into a great nation."

Early the next morning Abraham gave Hagar an animal skin full of water and some bread. Then he put the boy on her shoulder and sent them away.

They wandered around in the desert near Beersheba, and after they had run out of water, Hagar put her son under a bush. Then she sat down a long way off, because she could not bear to watch him die. And she cried bitterly.

When God heard the boy crying, the angel of God called out to Hagar from heaven and said, "Hagar, why are you worried? Don't be afraid. I have heard your son crying. Help him up and hold his hand, because I will make him the father of a great nation." Then God let her see a well. So she went to the well and filled the skin with water, then gave some to her son.

God blessed Ishmael, and as the boy grew older, he became an expert with his bow and arrows. He lived in the Paran Desert, and his mother chose an Egyptian woman for him to marry.

The Storyteller smooths the sand while s/he talks. The desert is a dangerous place. There is little water, and almost nothing grows there. It is hot in the daytime and cold at night.

If any of the children reach out to touch the sand, smile at them but say "You may work with the desert bag later in the Story Room. Right now we all need to be ready to listen to the story. This is how you get ready. *Demonstrate folding your hands in your lap. Then smooth the sand in one smooth motion around the edges of the desert bag, reinforcing the limits imposed by the edge of the bag.*

At the edges of the desert are two great rivers: the Nile -- *place a strip of blue felt down the right side of the desert, slanting in toward your knees* -- flowing in to the Mediterranean Sea, -- *put the blue sea down next to your knees touching the mouth of the Nile* -- and the Euphrates flowing from the mountains east of the sea down toward the Indian Ocean. *Leaving a small space between the Mediterranean and its headwaters, put the Euphrates down from near your left knee, slanting toward the far corner of the desert bag on your left. You are North, and the two rivers slant away from each other making a blunted "V" as you look at it.* Abraham and Sarah travelled along the rivers, where there is water and food can grow. *Put Abraham and Sarah in the desert bag near one of the rivers.*

Although God promised them that they would have more

Story Materials

- Desert Bag
- Two rivers and sea
- Figurines:
 - Abraham
 - Sarah
 - baby Isaac
 - Ishmael
 - Hagar
- waterskin
- bread
- well

Tray, basket or shallow open box to hold the story

descendants than the stars in the sky, for a long time Abraham and Sarah had no children. Sarah said Abraham should marry a second wife, a slave named Hagar, who might have children with him -- *put Hagar in the desert bag between Sarah and Abraham* – and Abraham and Hagar had a son, called Ishmael. *Put Ishmael in the desert bag next to Hagar.*

Some years later, Sarah and Abraham welcomed three angels in their tent. The angels promised that Sarah would have a son of her own that year. Abraham and Sarah called their son Isaac, which means Laughter. *Put Isaac in the desert bag next to Sarah.*

Sarah wanted Isaac to be Abraham's only son, so she told Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away. Abraham worried about Ishmael and Hagar, but God spoke to Abraham and promised to care for them. So Abraham gave Hagar a loaf of bread and a skin full of water, -- *put the bread and waterskin at Hagar's feet* -- and sent her away with Ishmael. *Put Abraham, Sarah and Isaac back in the basket.*

Hagar and Ishmael wandered in the desert until their water was gone. *Scoop up the bread and waterskin in your hand, and move Ishmael and Hagar to and fro making tracks in the sand. You can slip the bread back into the basket when its convenient but hang on to the waterskin.* Hagar put Ishmael under a bush, -- *put the bush in the desert bag and put Ishmael under it* -- and then went a way off so that she wouldn't have to watch him die. *Move Hagar away from Ishmael making tracks in the sand.* And she cried bitterly.

God called to Hagar from Heaven and said “Hagar, why are you worried? Don’t be afraid. I have heard your son crying. Help him up and hold his hand, because I will make him the father of a great nation.” Then God let her see a well. *Put the small circle of blue felt near Hagar.* So she went to the well and filled the skin with water -- *put the waterskin down “in” the well and pick it up again, then move Hagar back to Ishmael* -- then gave some to her son.

God blessed Ishmael, and as the boy grew older, he became an expert with his bow and arrows.