

# Abraham and Sarah

## Genesis 12:1-4a, 17:1-7, 15-16

Abram was ninety-nine years old when the Lord appeared to him again and said, "I am God All-Powerful. If you obey me and always do right, I will keep my solemn promise to you and give you more descendants than can be counted." Abram bowed with his face to the ground, and God said:

I promise that you will be the father of many nations. That's why I now change your name from Abram to Abraham. I will give you a lot of descendants, and in the future they will become great nations. Some of them will even be kings.

I will always keep the promise I have made to you and your descendants, because I am your God and their God. I will give you and them the land in which you are now a foreigner. I will give the whole land of Canaan to your family forever, and I will be their God.

Abraham, you and all future members of your family must promise to obey me. 10-11 As the sign that you are keeping this promise, you must circumcise every man and boy in your family. 12-13 From now on, your family must circumcise every baby boy when he is eight days old. You must even circumcise any man or boy you have as a slave, both those born in your homes and those you buy from foreigners. This will be a sign that my promise to you will last forever. Any man who isn't circumcised hasn't kept his promise to me and cannot be one of my people.

Abraham, your wife's name will now be Sarah instead of Sarai. I will bless her, and you will have a son by her. She will become the mother of nations, and some of her descendants will even be kings.

**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.

*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. From your perspective the two rivers slant away from each other making a blunted "V" with a small gap near its base.)* People can live beside the rivers, and if they travel they can travel along the rivers, where there is water and food can grow.

*Place a block near the head of the Euphrates: farthest away from you on your left.* Here is the city of Ur, a man named Terah

lived. *Put another block on your left, nearer to you.* Terah brought his family to live here, in the city of Haran.

*Put Abraham next to Haran.* One of Terah's sons was named Abram. God spoke to Abram and

### Story Materials

- Desert Bag
- Abraham figure
- Sarah figure
- Bluefelt "rivers":
  - Nile
  - Euphrates
  - Sea

said “Leave your father and your home, and go to a land that I will show you”. *Put Sarah down next to Abram.* Abram and his wife Sarai obeyed God, and left Haran with their nephew Lot and everything they owned. *Move Abram and Sarai from Haran, closer to the Mediterranean.* *When you move the figures, move them a few steps at a time, making tracks in the sand:*

For the rest of their lives, Abram and Sarai lived in tents and travelled back and forth over the land that God showed them. *Move Abram and Sarai along the shore of the Mediterranean to the right as far as the river Nile, and then back to the river Euphrates.*

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, God spoke to him again. God said: “I am God All-Powerful. If you obey me and always do right, I promise to give you more descendants than can be counted. I promise that you will be the father of many nations. So I now change your name from Abram to Abraham. (Abram means “great father” but Abraham means “father of many”.) I will give you a lot of descendants, and in the future they will become great nations. Some of them will even be kings. I will give you and them this land where you are now a stranger.

And I now change your wife’s name from Sarai to Sarah. I will bless her, and you and Sarah will have a son together. She will become the mother of nations, and some of her descendants will even be kings.