

Sarah Laughed

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 18:1-15

One hot summer afternoon Abraham was sitting by the entrance to his tent near the sacred trees of Mamre, when the LORD appeared to him. Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. He quickly ran to meet them, bowed with his face to the ground, and said, "Please come to my home where I can serve you. I'll have some water brought, so you can wash your feet, then you can rest under the tree. Let me get you some food to give you strength before you leave. I would be honored to serve you."

"Thank you very much," they answered. "We accept your offer."

Abraham quickly went to his tent and said to Sarah, "Hurry! Get a large sack of flour and make some bread." After saying this, he rushed off to his herd of cattle and picked out one of the best calves, which his servant quickly prepared. He then served his guests some yogurt and milk together with the meat.

While they were eating, he stood near them under the trees, and they asked, "Where is your wife Sarah?"

"She is right there in the tent," Abraham answered.

One of the guests was the LORD, and he said, "I'll come back about this time next year, and when I do, Sarah will already have a son."

Sarah was behind Abraham, listening at the entrance to the tent. Abraham and Sarah were very old, and Sarah was well past the age for having children. So she laughed and said to herself, "Now that I am worn out and my husband is old, will I really know such happiness?"

The LORD asked Abraham, "Why did

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.*)

Abraham and Sarah travelled along the rivers, where there is water, and food can grow; and in some places there are even shade trees. *Set out the oak trees next to the river.*

One hot summer afternoon Abraham was sitting by the entrance to his tent, when the Lord appeared to him. *Set up the tent. Put Sarah inside it, and put Abraham in front of it.* Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. *Set the three angels a little way off from the tent.* He quickly invited them to rest by his tent and have some water and food. *Move Abraham over to the angels.*

"Thank you very much," they answered. "We accept your offer."

Sarah laugh? Does she doubt that she can have a child in her old age? I am the LORD! There is nothing too difficult for me. I'll come back next year at the time I promised, and Sarah will already have a son."

Sarah was so frightened that she lied and said, "I didn't laugh."

"Yes, you did!" he answered.

Genesis 21:1-7

The LORD was good to Sarah and kept his promise. Although Abraham was very old, Sarah had a son exactly at the time God had said. Abraham named his son Isaac, and when the boy was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, just as the LORD had commanded.

Abraham was a hundred years old when Isaac was born, and Sarah said, "God has made me laugh. Now everyone will laugh with me. Who would have dared to tell Abraham that someday I would have a child? But in his old age, I have given him a son."

Move Abraham quickly to the back of his tent. Abraham told Sarah to bake some bread, and told his servant to prepare one of the best calves for dinner, and brought water so his guests could wash their feet. *Move Abraham back to the front of his tent, and move the angels over close to the tent.*

While they were eating, the guests asked, "Where is your wife Sarah?"

"She is right there in the tent," Abraham answered.

One of the guests said, "I'll come back about this time next year, and when I do, Sarah will already have a son."

Sarah was listening from the tent. Abraham and Sarah were very old, too old to have children. So she laughed and said to herself, "Now that I am worn out and my husband is old, will I really know such happiness?"

The Lord asked Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh? Does she doubt that she can have a child in her old age? I am the Lord! There is nothing too difficult for me. I'll come back next year at the time I promised, and Sarah will already have a son."

Bring Sarah out of the tent and stand her next to Abraham. Sarah was so frightened that she lied and said, "I didn't laugh."

"Yes, you did!" he answered.

The Lord was good to Sarah and kept his promise. *Put baby Isaac in Sarah's arms.* Sarah had a son exactly at the time God had said. They named him Isaac, which means "laughter". Sarah said, "God has made me laugh. Now everyone will laugh with me. Who would have dared to tell Abraham that someday I would have a child? But in his old age, I have given him a son."