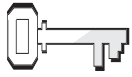


Heavenly Visitors



References

Genesis 18:20-33;
*Patriarchs and
Prophets*, pp. 132–144



Memory Verse

“Look not only to
your own interests,
but also to the
interests of others”
(Philippians 2:4, NIV).

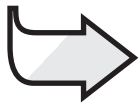


Objectives

The children will:
Know that God
wants us to speak
out for others.

Feel a concern for people,
including those who
do not yet know Jesus.

Respond by thinking of ways that
they can speak out for God.



The Message

God wants me to
speak out for others.

Monthly Theme

God calls us to serve others.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Abraham invites three travelers to stop for food and water. As they eat, Sarah is inside the tent listening. When one visitor says Sarah will have a baby, she laughs. One traveler says, “Why did Sarah laugh? Is anything too hard for the Lord?” Then Abraham and Sarah know their guest is the Lord. When the Lord tells Abraham that Sodom will be destroyed, Abraham pleads for the people there and begs God to spare them.

This is a lesson about service.

When Abraham begged God to spare Sodom, he was speaking out on behalf of those people who lived there. Speaking out for others is a part of the Christian life. When we see people being mistreated or in need, it is a Christian service to speak for those people to the authorities or others who can help. Children should be encouraged to tell an adult when they see someone in need.

Teacher Enrichment

Lot, the son of Abraham’s brother Haran, settled in Sodom. The people of Sodom and its twin city Gomorrah were very wicked and lived as though there was no God. Though Lot lived in Sodom, he did not do the wicked things that other people did. Abraham, by speaking out for the people of Sodom, saved Lot and his family from the fire that destroyed the city.

“And the man of faith pleaded for the inhabitants of Sodom. Once he had saved them by his sword, now he endeavored to save them by prayer” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 139).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 1.

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	A. <i>Spread the Secret</i> B. <i>Who's the Stranger?</i>	gift for each child, paper bag elderly guest
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	none <i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> offering container none
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	striped sheet, green cloth pieces, Bible-times costumes, bowl, food tray, water jug, cups (see activity) Bible Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Say It! Pray It!</i>	chalkboard or whiteboard, chalk or marker, Bibles
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Prayer Promise</i>	Prayer Promise pledge cards (see p. 47), pens or pencils

*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

Welcome children at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they're pleased/troubled about. Ask if they wish to share something from the daily activities completed during the previous week. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.



Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- paper bag
- small gift for each child
- Bible

A. Spread the Secret

Before class place some small inexpensive gifts, one for each child (bookmark, pencil, sticker, etc.), in a paper sack. After the group quiets down, whisper to several children one by one, "I have a surprise for you in a few minutes." Let one or two talkative children see what is in the sack. Then turn your back on the class for a short time. The rest of the children will try to find out what you whispered from those who heard it.

Debriefing

To debrief, ask: **Who did not hear the secret?** Pause while hands go up. **How did you feel about not knowing?** (annoyed, OK, curious, etc.) **Who heard the secret but didn't tell?** Pause while hands go up. **Why didn't you tell?** (Because it was a secret; don't know.) **Who did tell? Why did you tell?** (Because it was good news, etc.)

Sometimes secrets are such good news that we can't help sharing.

In Revelation 22:12 there is a "secret" that God wants us to share. Have someone find and read the verse. **So what is the secret?** (Jesus is coming soon.) **Is this a secret God wants you to keep quiet about? What does God want you to do about His good news? Our message today tells us:**



GOD WANTS ME TO SPEAK OUT FOR OTHERS.

Say that with me.

Let each child choose a gift.

You Need:

- elderly guest

B. Who's the Stranger?

During the week, recruit an elderly person to visit your Sabbath School. Encourage him or her to wear a ragged jacket and hat and to walk with a cane. Have this person enter your room late and act confused. Ask the person to sit down, then ignore him/her as you proceed with the next activity. The "stranger" should shuffle around, start coughing, ask for water in a muffled voice, then mention being cold. You absent-mindedly say: **Just a moment, (name), I will be with you in a moment.** Repeat this procedure two or three times and keep overlooking your guest's needs. After about 5 minutes the person is to leave the room, and wait outside.

Soon after that, call the class to attention.

Say: **I want you to meet a stranger who needs our help.** Turn to where the elderly adult had been sitting. Act shocked that no one is there. Call the stranger by name. Wring your hands and worry over losing the person. Ask a child to check outside the door. The child then leads the person back into the room.

Say: **I want you to meet a stranger who needed our help.** Introduce the person

by name. Ask the person to tell about his or her life and love for God. Help the children see that this is an interesting person. Then proceed to the debriefing.

Debriefing

Say: **Let's talk about what happened. How did you feel?** (sorry, ashamed, sad) **Why?** (We should have been kind.) **How many of you spoke to our visitor? Why?** (They probably did not because of the way you treated the person.) **Did anyone try to be kind to him (or her)?** Affirm the children who were kind.

Ask: **What might you have done to remind me to be kind to our elderly visitor?** (asked you to help them find out what he or she needs; smile; sit beside the visitor; be friendly; etc.) **Today's message will help us to remember to speak out for others. It says:**



GOD WANTS ME TO SPEAK OUT FOR OTHERS.

Say that with me.

Prayer and Praise

**Any
Time**



Fellowship

Report the children's joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Review last week's memory verse. Invite children who have something to share to do so at this time. Greet and introduce visitors. Acknowledge birthdays or special events.



Suggested Songs

"Wonderful, Wonderful" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 39)

"Jesus Keeps His Promises" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 41)

"Teach Me, Lord" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 110)

"The Lord Hears Me" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 105)

Begin the last verse singing twice: "The Lord hears me when I speak out for Him."



Mission

Say: **All over the world people are speaking out for Jesus, telling others about His love. Our story today tells about a child who lives far, far away.** Use a story from *Children's Mission*.



Offering

Use a container that represents the part of the world where offerings will go this quarter.

You Need:

- offering container



Prayer

Ask the children what they did during the week to help someone else. Did they expect a reward? Did they receive a reward? In your prayer express thanks for their willingness to serve others without expecting a reward.

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- striped sheet
- green cloth
- Bible-times costumes
- mixing bowl
- bread
- tray of food
- jug of water
- cups

Experiencing the Story

Characters: Abraham, Sarah, the three guests in Bible-times costumes

Props: mixing bowl, pita bread, a tray of food, a jug of water, cups, the tent, lengths of green cloth

Setting the scene:

Drape a striped sheet over some chairs (or a table) so it looks like a tent. Leave one corner of the sheet free so that “Sarah” can enter the tent. Ask some children to be the great trees of Mamre and to hold up pieces of green cloth to cast shade near Abraham’s tent. Explain to them that they are to “sway” in the breeze and provide shade as indicated throughout the story. Ask an adult to help the “actors” “act” at the right times.

Say: **As I read the story, Abraham, Sarah, and their three guests will pantomime, move about, and do what the story says.**

Read or tell the story.

One warm day, Abraham was sitting at the entrance to his tent. He looked up and saw three men walking on the road. He got up and ran to meet them.

“Please, stay a while at my tent,” Abraham invited. “I will give you water to wash with and some food to eat. You can sit in the shade of the trees and rest awhile.”

“Thank you, we will,” the men agreed. And so they turned back and rested in the shade of the trees. *[The trees sway and cast their shade. The guests sit near the trees.]*

Abraham hurried to the tent. “Sarah,”

he called, “get some flour. Bake some bread for our guests.” *[Sarah kneels, mixes in a bowl, and “bakes” real pita bread over an imaginary fire.]*

Abraham hurried to get food for his servant to cook. When the food was ready, Abraham served his guests. *[Abraham carries a tray of food to the guests.]*

While the guests ate, Abraham stood in the shade and watched. Sarah stayed just inside the tent, listening.

“Where is Sarah, your wife?” one of the guests asked.

“She’s in the tent,” Abraham answered.

“Next year at this time she will have a son,” the guest announced. Back in the tent Sarah chuckled. *[Sarah laughs.]* Imagine having a son at her age!

One of the guests frowned. *[A “guest” frowns.]* “Why did Sarah laugh?” he asked. “Is anything too hard for the Lord?”

Suddenly both Abraham and Sarah knew that their guest was the Lord.

The guests finished eating and stood up to leave. Abraham walked with them out past the trees. The Lord stopped to talk to Abraham *[the same “guest” stops by Abraham as the others walk away]*, but the others continued on their way.

“I have heard how very wicked Sodom is,” the Lord said. “So I have come to see for Myself.”

Oh, no! Abraham knows Sodom is an evil city. His nephew Lot lives there with his family. Abraham loves Lot’s family. Abraham also feels concern for all the people of Sodom.

“Lord,” Abraham said, “are You going to destroy the good people of Sodom along with the wicked? Suppose there are 50 good people in Sodom. Will You not save the city?”

“Oh, yes,” God answered. “If I find 50 good people in Sodom, I will not destroy it.” Abraham thought some more. His

kind heart made him ask the Lord again, "What if there are only 45 good people?"

"I will not destroy Sodom if there are 45 good people," God replied.

Still Abraham was not satisfied.

"What if there are just 40?"

"I will not do it if there are 40," God said.

"For 30?" Abraham asked.

"No, not for 30," God said.

"What if there are only 20?" Abraham pleaded.

"Not even for 20," God assured him.

"Don't be angry with me, Lord,"

Abraham begged, "but let me ask one more time. Will You save the city for just 10 good people?"

The Lord answered, "For the sake of 10 good people I will not destroy the city."

Then the Lord left to go on to Sodom and Abraham returned to his tent, satisfied. He had done all he could to speak out for the people of Sodom.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Did Abraham know who his visitors were?** (not in the beginning) **When did Abraham realize that he was talking to the Lord?** (When the Lord asked why Sarah laughed.) **How many times did Abraham ask God to consider the number of good people living in Sodom?** (six) **Why did Abraham speak out for the people of Sodom?** (He loved Lot; he cared about the people living there; he didn't want them to die.) **We can be like Abraham and speak out for people in need. Remember our message . . .**



GOD WANTS ME TO SPEAK OUT FOR OTHERS.

Say that with me.

Memory Verse

Open your Bible to Philippians 2:4 and read the verse aloud: "**Look not only to your own interests, but also to**

the interests of others" (Philippians 2:4, NIV). Repeat the following activity until the children know the verse:

Look	Hold hand above eyes.
not only to	Shake head no.
your own interests	Point to self.
but also to the interests of others.	Point to others.
Philippians 2:4	Palms together, then open.

Bible Study

Form five small groups, each with one adult helper. Assign the following Bible references, one to each group.

Exodus 7:2-7 (Moses and Aaron speak to Pharaoh)

2 Samuel 12:7-10 (Nathan speaks to David)

Acts 2:14-21, 41 (Peter speaks at Pentecost)

Acts 8:26-35 (Philip and the Ethiopian)

Acts 9:10-19 (Ananias speaks to Saul)

Say: **Read the text assigned to your group and discover what the message from God was and who delivered it to whom.** Allow time for reading and reporting.

Debriefing

Say: **Does God expect us to preach to large crowds?** (yes, no, maybe when I'm grown up) **Does God want us to tell people when they have done wrong to others?** (sometimes, maybe, depends on the situation) **What message does God want us to deliver to those around us?** (Jesus is coming again, Jesus loves you, Jesus is our Friend, etc.) **Why?** (God wants everyone to know about Jesus and to be ready when Jesus comes.) **Let's remember our message:**



GOD WANTS ME TO SPEAK OUT FOR OTHERS.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- Bible

You Need:

- Bibles

3

Applying the Lesson

You Need:

- chalkboard or whiteboard
- chalk or marker
- Bibles

Say It! Pray It!

Read the items below aloud, one at a time, and ask the children to think of how they might speak out for those involved. List their ideas where all may see.

1. You are on the playground at school. You see a big boy taking a ball away from one of the little boys.
2. Your mother is talking on the phone with your grandmother. She has just learned that your grandfather is very sick and is in the hospital. She starts to cry.
3. You are watching a soccer game at school. The red team beats the blue team. They start teasing the kids on the blue team and are calling them losers.
4. Your best friend is upset because her parents are getting a divorce.
5. Two girls in your class are making unkind remarks about the way another girl dresses. The other girl turns away with tears in her eyes.
6. Your pastor is having surgery next week.

Debriefing

Help the children find and read Philippians 2:4 in their Bibles. Read the text aloud: **“Look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”**

Say: **Let’s look at the list of your ideas. Do these show that you are speaking out in concern for the interests of others?**

What is the one thing that most of you thought of? (prayer) That’s right. When we can’t do anything else to help others, we can always pray for them. Abraham wanted to help the people who lived in Sodom, so what did he do? (He asked the Lord to spare the city for the sake of the few good people who lived there.) And sometimes that’s all we can do too. We can pray for people and let them know that we care. Let’s remember our message:



GOD WANTS ME TO SPEAK OUT FOR OTHERS.

Say that with me.

4

Sharing the Lesson

Prayer Promise

Distribute two copies of the prayer pledge below to each child. Say: **We have been talking about speaking out for others, asking God to help them. Think of someone you know that you want to “speak out for.” What do you want God to do for that person? Do you want them to know more about Jesus? Do they need something—food, a job, a place to live, to give up smoking?**

When we pray and ask God to do something for another person, we want to tell God just what we want Him to do. This is called “intercessory prayer,” because we are asking God to intercede, to help that person in a special way. On both of your prayer pledge papers, write that person’s name and what you want God to do for them. Adults assist as needed.

Debriefing

Say: **What do you think about asking God to do something special for someone else? Do you think God will hear your prayer? Take the pledges home with you and put one where you will see it every day. Sometime this week, you can give or send the other to the person you are praying for. This will tell them that you really do care about them. How do you think they will feel when they know you are praying for them? How will you feel? Let’s say our message together again:**



GOD WANTS ME TO SPEAK OUT FOR OTHERS.

Closing

Invite two children to pray, asking God to give the group courage to speak out for others who need His help. Close with your own prayer, thanking God for being with each child as they speak out for others and for Him.

You Need:

- two copies of prayer pledge for each child
- pens or pencils

Because I care about _____, I promise to pray every day and ask God to show His love for them too. I want God to _____. I believe God will hear my prayer because He cares about my friend too.



Signed: _____

Date: _____

Heavenly Visitors

References

Genesis 18:20-33;
Patriarchs and
Prophets,
pp. 132-144

Memory Verse

“Look not only to
your own interests,
but also to the
interests of others”
(Philippians 2:4,
NIV).

The Message

God wants me
to speak out
for others.

Do you talk to God when someone you care about needs help? Do you ask God to do something for them? Even when people are bad, we can speak out for them. A long time ago, Abraham bargained with God for some people. It happened like this . . .

One hot day Abraham sat in the shade of his tent, looking out upon the valley where he lived. A movement caught his eye. Three men stood just beyond his camp. They talked together as if trying to decide which way to go.

Quickly, Abraham jumped up and ran out into the road. Reaching the men just as they turned toward Sodom, Abraham bowed low.

“Please, stay a while at my tent. I will give you water and some food to eat. You can sit in the shade of the trees and rest.”

“Thank you, we will,” the men agreed. “Go and do as you said.”

Abraham hurried back to the camp and into his tent.

“Sarah,” he called to his wife, “we have guests. Please bake some bread for them.” Then Abraham hurried to get food for his servant to cook. Soon the food was ready. Abraham, himself, served his guests. While they ate he stood in the shade of a tree nearby. Sarah stayed just inside the tent where she could listen to the men.

“Where is Sarah, your wife?” one of the guests asked.

“She’s in the tent,” Abraham answered.

“Next year at this time she will have a son,” the guest said.

Back in the tent Sarah chuckled. Imagine having a son at her age!

“Why did Sarah laugh?” the stranger asked. “Is anything too hard for the Lord?”

Now both Abraham and Sarah knew that their guest was the Lord Himself.

When Abraham’s guests finished their meal, they got up to leave. As was the custom, Abraham walked a short distance with them. The Lord stopped to talk to Abraham as the others walked on.

“I have heard how very wicked Sodom is,” the Lord said.

Abraham had heard of evil things that people did in Sodom. He thought of Lot and his family who lived there. Abraham loved his nephew’s family. He was sure Lot was not wicked, but Abraham worried about the people of Sodom. Many of them did not yet know God.

“Lord,” Abraham said, “are You going to destroy the good people of Sodom along with the wicked? Suppose there are 50 good people in Sodom. Will You not save the city?”

The Lord answered, “If I find 50 righteous (good) people in Sodom, I will not destroy it.”

Abraham thought some more.



His kind heart made him ask the Lord again, "What if there are only 45 good people?"

"I will not destroy Sodom, if there are 45 good people."

Still Abraham was not satisfied. Three more times he asked the Lord to save the city. The sixth time Abraham begged the Lord, "Don't be angry with me, Lord, but let me ask one more time. Will You save the city for just 10 good people?"

The Lord answered, "For the sake of 10 good people I will not destroy the city."

Then the Lord went on to Sodom, and Abraham went back to his tent, satisfied that he had done all he could to save Sodom.

Daily Activities

Sabbath

- If possible, go with your family to sit outdoors under a shady tree. Read and discuss Genesis 18:20-33 together. Talk about the great trees at Mamre and how they gave shade to Abraham's visitors. Then thank God for trees.
- Read the memory verse together. Ask your family what it means.

Sunday

- Read the lesson story for family worship today. Ask: Why did Abraham care what happened to the people in Sodom? Who cares about us?
- Draw a picture of something that especially interests you. Is your interest something that God is interested in? Why? Ask God to help you use your interest for Him.
- Use the motions learned in Sabbath School to teach the memory verse to your family.

Monday

- With your family, think of another story you know about Abraham helping people. (Hint: See Genesis 14.) Why did Abraham help those people? Did Abraham receive a reward? Should people receive a reward for helping others?
- Share the prayer pledge made in Sabbath School with the person of your choice. Tell them how much you care about them. Remember to pray for them every day.

Tuesday

- During worship today, count out 50 small stones (or dried beans or rice grains) and pretend that they are the people of Sodom. Remove stones as you read the lesson story together, until only 10 stones are left. Does

God still care about 10 people? About one person? Ask: How did Abraham help the people of Sodom?

- Are there bad people in your town? Does Jesus love them? How do you know? (See Romans 5:8.) How can you help them? Pray for people in your town who do not know Jesus.

Wednesday

- With your family, read and discuss Isaiah 58:7. What needs are found in that verse? How can your family help someone with those needs? Make a plan and do it.
- Sing a song about helping others. Then pray that God will help you to help people in need.

Thursday

- With your family's help, make a list of five people you know who need to know Jesus. List one interest you think each person has. How might your family "look to their interests"? Ask God to show you a way to help one of them today. Save your list for tomorrow.
- Ask your family to say the memory verse with you.

Friday

- Act out the lesson story during family worship tonight. Or read about the lesson in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 138–140.
- Ask each family member to choose a person from the list you made yesterday. Think of something of interest to that person that could help you tell them more about Jesus. Then send a card (one you make is best) or a Bible verse to them. Tell them that you care about them.
- Sing about God's love for people. Then pray for the people you care about.