

God Cares for Hagar and Ishmael

Lesson 13

Genesis 21:8-21

Bible Point:



God always hears us.

Key Verse:



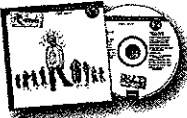
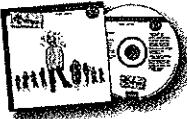
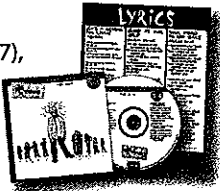
"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (Luke 11:9).

Weaving Faith Into Life:



Children will communicate with God about their needs.



Lesson Sequence	What Students Will Do	Classroom Supplies	Teacher Pack Supplies
1 Getting Started	Blah, Blah! (about 5 min.) Attempt to communicate by using only the word <i>blah</i> .	Paper, pens, scissors	
2 Bible Story Exploration	Wilderness Journey (about 15 min.) Listen to the Bible story of Hagar and Ishmael, and make bushes to hide behind.	Bible, CD player, newspaper, tape	CD: "Hagar and Ishmael, Parts 1 and 2" (tracks 24 and 25) 
	Are You Listening, God? (about 15 min.) Continue the Bible story, and discuss times God has answered their prayers.	Bible, CD player, paper, pens	CD: "Hagar and Ishmael, Part 3" (track 26) 
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	Open Doors (about 15 min.) Make doors to remind them that God will answer when they knock.	Scissors, staplers, markers, glue, brown grocery bag, Bible Truth Sleuth, CD player	CD: "God Is Our Help" (Psalm 33:20) (track 27), "Lyrics" poster 
	Prayer Journals (about 10 min.) Write in Prayer Journals.	Pens, Bible Truth Sleuth, index cards, Bible Backdrop	

God Cares for Hagar and Ishmael

Genesis 21:8-21

It was typical in Abraham's culture to have a celebration when a child was weaned, which was usually around two to three years of age. The celebration for Isaac was probably even bigger than most because he was something of a miracle child.

Unfortunately the joyous occasion soon turned to bitterness. We don't know if Ishmael's mocking of Isaac happened on the day of the celebration, but it must have occurred soon afterward. Ishmael had been born to Abraham through Hagar, Sarah's maidservant, after Sarah decided to take things into her own hands and had Abraham sleep with Hagar to "build a family" (Genesis 16:2). By the time Isaac was two, Ishmael was about 16 (Genesis 16:16; 21:5).

It's easy to understand why a mother would be upset by a 16-year-old teasing her two- or three-year-old. But the animosity ran deeper than the teasing. Sarah and Hagar had been at odds since Hagar was pregnant with Ishmael (Genesis 16:4-10). Abraham's decision to send Hagar and Ishmael away probably had been a long time in coming.

Abraham didn't want to send Hagar and Ishmael away. He knew it was wrong according to his culture and according to anyone's standards of fatherhood. When God told Abraham to go ahead and do what Sarah wanted, God didn't say it was right. But God did promise to take care of Ishmael, eventually making a great nation of his descendants as well as of Isaac's.

The area where Abraham lived was desert, so Hagar and Ishmael would have had a tough time finding food and water. The skin of water and the food Abraham gave them was probably as much as they could comfortably carry but wouldn't have lasted very long. Abraham had to have known that without God's help, the two wouldn't live a week.

Remember that Ishmael was at least 16 by this time. If Hagar had to put him under a bush, he must have been terribly weakened by fluid deprivation. He likely wasn't far from death, as Hagar estimated (Genesis 21:16). We don't know for sure why God responded to Ishmael's crying and not to Hagar's sobs. It may have been because of God's commitment to Abraham to take care of Ishmael.

It seems odd that God responded to Ishmael's cry but sent an angel to speak to Hagar. It may be that Ishmael was simply too weak to even get water for himself. It also seems likely that the well had been there all the time but Hagar didn't see it until God made it visible to her. God was actually there taking care of them and providing the water they needed, but they couldn't see it until they acknowledged their need for God. When they cried out to God, God heard and responded. And we can count on God to always do the same for us!

Devotion for Teachers

Jesus, because of you we know that God always hears us. We praise you for that and for revealing the power of God to meet every need, even before we ask.

Weaving Faith Into Your Life: Look through a photo album and pick one picture that represents a challenging time for you. During that time, did you seek God's help or sense his presence? Or was it more difficult to rely on him? Pray about a challenge you're facing right now. Ask God to show you some ways that show he hears you.