

Stories of the Hebrew Bible

Lesson 3: The Call of Abraham and The Promise to Hagar

2.21.2021

Objectives: Explore faith that risks being “called” to a new place, trusting in covenant.

Materials: Teachers should download lesson plan and attachments onto their desktop.

Time allotments: Suggested for 60 minute online class.

1. Zoom Welcome (as youth arrive into the breakout classroom)

- Teachers and youth are expected to log on to zoom at 11:15am (15 min before class begins at 11:30am) so that everyone can be organized into correct breakout classrooms. We want to make sure there is an attentive adult in each breakout classroom with youth.
- Greet youth and ask everyone to correct their display name as needed. Ask everyone to select “gallery view” to see everyone else.
- Staff will take attendance.

2. Zoom Icebreaker: Tree Pose (5 minutes, begin while waiting for everyone to arrive)

We say that Unity is a place where people lead lives of integrity, service, and joy. We say that at church we find and keep our balance. So in the spirit of yoga... who can stand on one leg the longest, in a tree pose, *with their eyes closed?!?!*



3. Chalice Lighting: Light the chalice, saying these words together: “We light this chalice as a symbol of our faith; the light of truth and the warmth of love.”

Teacher reads: (from uncertain source) “Go out on a limb. That’s where the fruit is.”

(from Arianna Huffington, author and former Editor-in-chief of *The Huffington Post*)

“Failure is not the opposite of success; it’s part of success.”

4. Brief Check-in (5 minutes)

Begin a simple ritual for weekly check-in so that everyone’s voice is heard (e.g. sharing a joy or sorrow so that everyone feels present in class).

5. Trust Activity (10 minutes)

Last class we talked about the biblical covenant God made with Noah on behalf of humanity and the earth. We defined covenants as acts of trust and gifts of relationship. What allows you to trust?

For our zoom activity today, we tested how long each of us could hold a Tree Pose. Let's try again! This time try closing your eyes or holding the pose longer than you did earlier.

Questions for Discussion:

- At what point did you start questioning or doubting whether you could continue to hold the pose? (*Hint: participants may notice doubt when their body begins to shake or leans to one side, because their range of control is tested.*)
- Prior to doubting, is there a need to really trust? When does trust kick into gear? Do you experience a combination of trust and doubt? (*Hint: trust is NOT the absence of doubt but a confidence in something greater.*)

6. Story: The Call of Abraham (20 minutes)

Teacher contextualizes:

- Abraham (originally Abram before name was changed by God) is the founding patriarch of the Israelites, as well as for Muslims and Christians.
- The covenant made with God will be a recurring theme in the stories of the Hebrew Bible. It is this covenant – this special promise of love and trust – that allows the descendants of Abraham to claim their promised land.

Screen share lesson attachment 3a (The Third Great Age of Time: God chooses Abraham). Ask for youth volunteers to read aloud.

Questions for Discussion:

- God calls Abraham to leave his home/family and travel to a new, unknown place that God will show. How would you feel about leaving a place/people you know, to risk traveling to a whole new place?
- Think about the trust exercise we did. What would make you doubt God's promise? What would make you trust?
- Abraham and Sarah laugh at God's incredible promise of a son, a promise that sounds preposterous and unrealistic at their age. And yet a son is born, and their laughter of disbelief turns into a laughter of surprise and joy! Have you ever been surprised or astounded at something unbelievable actually come true?

7. Story: The Promise to Hagar (20 minutes)

Screen share lesson attachment 3b (The Promise to Hagar). Ask for youth volunteers to read aloud.

Questions for Discussion:

- Does the story of Hagar change your perspective or response to any of the questions we asked after reading The Call of Abraham?
 - What would make you doubt God’s promise? What would make you trust?
 - Even if you didn’t feel welcome in the place you knew, how would you feel about leaving a place/people you know, to risk traveling to a whole new place?
 - Have you ever been surprised or astounded at something unbelievable actually come true?
- Are the people who imagine world peace or making unbelievable promises of racial equality just idealists and dreamers or prophetic leaders?
- What would it take to trust enough to risk moving to a new place, life, or reality?

8. Announcement: We have regular RE next Sunday!

9. Extinguish the chalice, saying together: *“May the light of truth and the warmth of love go with us in our hearts.”*

10. Leave zoom breakout classroom: wait until all youth have left, click “Leave” then “Leave Meeting.”