



God Cares for Hagar and Ishmael

Genesis 21:8-21


Five- and six-year-olds are beginning to catch on to the power found in manners. “Please” becomes the key word that seems to deliver most of a child’s desires. Children at this age may have difficulty understanding that God doesn’t always answer our prayers in the way we want them to be answered, no matter how nicely we ask. Even so, use this lesson to teach children that God always hears us when we pray.



► Bible Point
God hears us when we pray.
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Key Verse
“So I say to you: 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 talk to God.
.....

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started <i>about 10 min.</i>	Welcoming Song Sing or listen to songs to welcome everyone to church.	CD player Teacher Pack: CD	
2 Key Verse Activity <i>about 10 min.</i>	God Listens Whisper through a door, and have the door open.	Bible	Ask another adult to help during this activity.
3 Bible Exploration <i>about 15 min.</i>	Theo’s News Find out what headphones have to do with the Bible.	Surprise Box (any box will do), Theo puppet, CD player, headphones Teacher Pack: CD	Place the headphones in the Surprise Box, and hide the box where it’s easily accessible.
	Bible Time: Hagar and Ishmael Find out how Hagar learned that God hears us when we pray.	Bible, CD player, washable markers Teacher Pack: CD, “God Provides” poster (from the Big Bible Poster Pack) 	

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.





LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
<p>4</p> <p>Weaving Faith Into Life <i>about 20 min.</i> <i>(Choose 2 centers.)</i></p>	<p>Center 1: Hear Today Make desert scenes to remind them that God heard Hagar and God hears us.</p>	<p>My Bible Playground, glue sticks, 1 sheet of sandpaper, 1 sheet of blue tissue paper, scissors</p>	<p>Remove the Lesson 13 pages from each My Bible Playground student book. Cut one 1-inch square each of blue tissue paper and sandpaper for each child.</p>
	<p>Center 2: Please and Thank You Have fun making and asking for food and drinks.</p>	<p>punch bowl with flavored drink, ladle, carrot sticks, crackers, paper plates, cups, and napkins</p>	
	<p>Center 3: Say What? Listen to the sound of other children's voices, and guess who's talking.</p>		
	<p>Center 4: Drawn to Prayer Draw a prayer to God.</p>	<p>paper, washable markers, stickers</p>	
<p>5</p> <p>Lasting Impressions <i>about 10 min.</i></p>	<p>Be a FaithWeaver Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word.</p>	<p>My Bible Playground</p>	
	<p>"Thanks for Listening" Prayer Thank God for hearing and answering their prayers.</p>		
	<p>Weaving Faith at Home Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.</p>		

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.





God Cares for Hagar and Ishmael

Genesis 21:8-21

BIBLE BACKGROUND
FOR LEADERS

Ishmael Mocks Isaac

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It was typical in Abraham's culture to have a celebration when a child was weaned, which was usually when the child was around 2 or 3 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 bitter. 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 had 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 2, Ishmael was about 16 (Genesis 16:16; 21:5).

Sarah and Hagar had been at odds ever since Hagar was pregnant with Ishmael (Genesis 16:4-10). Abraham's decision to send Hagar and Ishmael away had probably been a long time in coming.

Abraham Casts Out Hagar and Ishmael

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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 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 Isaac's.

The area where Abraham lived was desert, and the skin of water and the food Abraham gave them was probably as much as they could comfortably carry, but it wouldn't have lasted very long.

God Responds to Hagar and Ishmael's Suffering

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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).

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 is likely that the well had been there all the time but Hagar didn't see it until God "opened her eyes"—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.

The Jesus Connection

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Pray about a challenge you're facing right now. You can cry out to God. Because of Jesus, we can trust that God always hears us. You can write your prayer here.





Welcoming Song Supplies


CD player

Teacher Pack

CD: “Learning and
Laughing” (track 2),
“Rejoice in the Lord
Always” (Philippians
4:4) (track 29)


1 GETTING STARTED

Welcoming Song

 **Tip** Consistently use the same signal to announce a transition to the next activity. You could flip the lights off and on, use a train whistle, have a puppet rustling inside a bag, or sing cleanup songs. Keep it simple, consistent, and fun.

What You'll Do

As children arrive, greet each child and welcome him or her with a smile. When it's time to begin, use your signal to bring the children together in a circle. Lead the kids in doing the actions and singing “Learning and Laughing” (track 2 on the CD) to the tune of “Boom, Boom, Ain't It Great to Be Crazy?”

 **Boom, boom—** (*throw a fist in the air for each “boom”*)

It's great to be in church. (*clap to the beat*)

Boom, boom— (*throw a fist in the air for each “boom”*)

It's great to be in church. (*clap to the beat*)

Learning and laughing with all my friends! (*twist in place*)

Boom, boom— (*throw a fist in the air for each “boom”*)

It's great to be in church. (*clap to the beat*)

(Repeat 2x.)

Say: Today we'll learn that ► **GOD HEARS US WHEN WE PRAY.** We can be happy that we can talk to God every day, everywhere. Let's sing a song and be happy because of God.

Sing “Rejoice in the Lord Always” (Philippians 4:4) (track 29 on the CD). As you sing, have children jump up with arms in the air for each “rejoice.”

 **Rejoice! Rejoice!**

And again I say rejoice!

Rejoice! Rejoice!

Again I say rejoice!

Rejoice in the Lord always.

And again I say rejoice!

Rejoice in the Lord always.

And again I say rejoice!

(Repeat from the beginning 2x.)

Rejoice! Rejoice!

And again I say rejoice!





Rejoice! Rejoice!
And again I say rejoice!
And again I say rejoice!
And again I say rejoice!

Say: I'm so happy you're at church today and I'm so happy that ► **GOD HEARS US WHEN WE PRAY!** Let's learn more about the way God listens to us.

2 KEY VERSE
ACTIVITY

God Listens

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Have children sit in a circle. Open your Bible to Luke 11:9, and show children the words. Tell kids the Bible is God's special book.

Say: **Our Key Verse from the Bible, Luke 11:9, says, "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." That means that we can ask and God will hear us. Let's say our Key Verse together.** Lead the children in repeating the simplified Key Verse after you: **Ask and God will hear you (Luke 11:9).**

Say: **Now let's have some fun discovering what it's like when God hears us.**

Have children form two groups. Have one group be the Talkers and one group the Listeners.

Say: **One at a time the Talkers will whisper through the door something they'd like to say to God, and then they will knock on the door.** Have an adult volunteer take the Talkers outside your room and tell the children to form a line.

Stay with the Listeners on the other side of the door, and have them also form a line. Have the first child in line put his or her ear to the door and listen to the child on the other side. Say: **When you hear the knock at the door, you can open the door.** Each time the door is opened, have the Talker repeat what he or she whispered through the door, but loudly this time so everyone can hear. Lead the Listeners in shouting, **"Knock and the door will be opened to you!"** If time allows, let each child have a turn to talk and listen.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- What did you like or not like about trying to hear a whisper through a door?
- What do you like about the way God can hear you, no matter what?



God Listens Supplies

Bible

God Listens Easy Prep

Ask another adult to help during this activity.





Theo's News Supplies

Surprise Box (any box will do)
Theo puppet
CD player
headphones
Teacher Pack
CD: "Here, Theo"
(track 5)

Theo's News Easy Prep

Place the headphones in the Surprise Box, and hide the box where it's easily accessible.

Say: **God hears us when we pray, and he knows the best way to answer our prayers. Remember that you can ask and God will hear you!** Lead the kids in saying the simplified Key Verse one more time: **Ask and God will hear you (Luke 11:9).**

3 BIBLE EXPLORATION

Theo's News

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Say: **Friends, it's time for Theo's News!**

Have children sit in a circle. Then begin "Here, Theo" (track 5 on the CD). When the CD segment ends, bring out the Surprise Box, and put Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet on your hand. Then follow along with the script.

Theo: Hi, everybody!

Teacher: Hello, Theo! Tell us what interesting news you've dug up about the Bible today.

Theo: I hid it in the Surprise Box.

Teacher: Let's look inside to see what Theo dug up for us today.

(Invite a child to open the Surprise Box, and have the kids pass the headphones around the circle so everyone can see them up close. Give kids time to guess what they'll learn from the Bible today.)

Teacher: Friends, what can we use headphones for?

(Pause for kids to answer your question.)

Teacher: Theo, why did you hide these headphones in the Surprise Box?

Theo: Well, we can use headphones to listen to things like music, even when it's noisy around us.

Teacher: That's right, Theo! It can be hard to hear when we live in such a noisy world.

Theo: Yes it can—even for dogs, and we have some of the best ears around!

Teacher: You're right again, Theo. But no one can hear quite like God can. No matter what, we can always know that ► **GOD HEARS US WHEN WE PRAY.** Friends, let's read the Bible and find out how God heard Hagar when she cried out to him.

Theo: Have fun, boys and girls!

Teacher: Friends, say goodbye to Theo.

Encourage children to wave or say goodbye to Theo. Then put Theo away in a safe place for next week's use.



Bible Time: Hagar and Ishmael

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Open your Bible to Genesis 21, and show children the words. Tell kids the Bible is God's special book.

Say: **Today the Bible tells us that ► GOD HEARS US WHEN WE PRAY. One day, a man named Abraham decided to have a big party for his son Isaac. Let's pretend that we're at Isaac's party as we listen to the CD. First, think about some things you'd like to say to God. You'll get a chance to say them as we listen to the CD.** Help kids decide what they'd like to say. **Every time you hear "God loves to hear us talk to him" and the music on the CD, I'll call on a few of you to share what you want to talk to God about.**

Play "God Cares for Hagar and Ishmael" (track 28 on the CD). Pause the CD each time you hear music, and call on children to tell what they'd like to say to God. Stop the CD at the end of the track.

Ask:

- **What's amazing about the way God heard Hagar and Ishmael's cries?**
- **What's amazing about the way God could hear each of you when you talked?**

Set out the "God Provides" poster, and say: **Everyone take a marker and draw one of the things you said during the song.** Allow time. **Now everyone point to what you drew on the poster while we pray about our drawings.** Take a minute to pray with each child for what he or she drew on the poster. Close the prayer with **"In Jesus' name, amen."** Then say: **God heard our prayers just now!**

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What made Hagar and Ishmael's prayers different from ours?**
- **Why do you think prayers don't always have to be said out loud with words?**
- **What do you think about what God did to answer Hagar and Ishmael's prayers?**

Say: **Just as God heard Abraham, Hagar, and Ishmael, ► GOD HEARS US WHEN WE PRAY. God is always listening to us, no matter where we are or what we're doing. God loves to hear us and answer our prayers.**



Bible Time: Hagar and Ishmael Supplies

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- Bible
 - CD player
 - washable markers
 - Teacher Pack**
 - CD: "God Cares for Hagar and Ishmael" (track 28)
 - "God Provides" poster (from the Big Bible Poster Pack)





Center 1: Hear Today Supplies

My Bible Playground
glue sticks
1 sheet of sandpaper
1 sheet of blue tissue
paper
scissors

Center 1: Hear Today Easy Prep

Remove the Lesson
13 pages from each
My Bible Playground
student book. Cut one
1-inch square each of
blue tissue paper and
sandpaper for each
child.

Center 2: Please and Thank You Supplies

punch bowl with
flavored drink
ladle
carrot sticks
crackers
paper plates
cups
napkins

ALLERGY
ALERT

4 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Choose at least two of the learning centers to help reinforce today's Bible lesson. Gather the needed materials, and put the supplies in an out-of-sight area until you're ready for them. Allow the children to choose which center they'd like to explore first. Then circulate among the children as they create and explore. Encourage them to make connections between their activities and the Bible by asking them the questions included with each center's description.

CENTER 1:

Hear Today

What You'll Do

Help kids write their names on their My Bible Playground pages. Then have children form pairs.

Say: **Work with your partners to each glue the square of sandpaper to the desert on your page. As you and your partner work, talk about how Hagar and Ishmael prayed. Allow time. Now glue the square of blue tissue paper to the well and talk about what happened after Hagar and Ishmael prayed to God.**

Talk With Kids

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- Touch the sandpaper on your page and tell about something that gave you a hard time this week.
- Touch the blue paper on your page and tell about something wonderful that happened this week.
- What do you like about the way God wants us to talk to him about everything?

Say: **God heard Hagar when she cried out to him in the desert. She was scared being all alone in the desert and without any water. God loved hearing Hagar and Ishmael's prayers, just as he loves hearing yours and mine. God wants us to talk to him about everything, and ► GOD HEARS US WHEN WE PRAY.**

CENTER 2:

Please and Thank You

What You'll Do

Have children clean their hands. Say: **Let's practice asking and receiving!** Have kids form pairs. Invite one child in each pair to go first. **Ask your partner for something to**



eat. Help the partner make a special snack for the child with the carrot sticks and crackers and deliver it to his or her friend. Turn back to the first child. **Now you may ask for something to drink.** Let the partner use the ladle to get a drink in a cup, and then bring it back to the child. Have kids switch roles until everyone has a snack.

Say: **God hears you when you ask for things in prayer. God hears you when you pray just as clearly as you heard your partner ask for a snack. It doesn't matter where we are, what we're doing, or how busy it is around us— ► GOD HEARS US WHEN WE PRAY.**

Pray: **God, thank you for hearing what we ask for when we pray and thank you for our snack. In Jesus' name, amen.**

Talk With Kids ■■■■

As children eat, lead them in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What do you think about the way God can always hear us when we talk to him?**
- **What are some questions you would like to ask God?**

Say: **It was fun to practice asking and receiving at snack time! Let's always remember that we can ask God about anything, and that ► GOD HEARS US WHEN WE PRAY.**

■ **CENTER 3:**

Say What?

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Have children sit in a large circle facing outward. Instruct children to close their eyes as you stand in the middle of the circle.

Say: **I'll walk around the inside of the circle and tap someone gently on the top of the head. When I tap you, you can say a prayer to God. Then everyone else will try to guess who spoke. Raise your hands when you have a guess. Whoever guesses correctly can take a turn in the middle of the circle and choose someone new to say a prayer.**

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What was hard about trying to guess your friends' voices? What was easy?**
- **What are some differences in our voices?**





Center 4: Drawn to Prayer Supplies

.....
paper
washable markers
stickers

Say: **God knows each of our voices, and he knows exactly what we need before we even ask. Isn't that great? You can spend some time this week letting God hear your voice and remember that ► GOD HEARS US WHEN WE PRAY!**

■ CENTER 4:

Drawn to Prayer

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Say: **We can pray for ourselves and we can also pray for others. God hears all of our prayers, no matter what they're about. Use the markers and stickers to make a picture of a prayer you'd like to tell God about someone you know—maybe a prayer for one of your family members or friends.**

Allow kids time to create their prayer pictures, and then say: **Turn to a partner and tell about the prayer you drew.** Allow kids to share.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- What's good about praying for someone else?
- What do you like or not like about drawing a picture as a way to pray?
- What's your favorite way to pray?

Say: **God hears our prayers no matter how we pray or what our prayers are about. God heard Ishmael's prayers through his crying, and Hagar's cries for Ishmael. ► GOD HEARS US WHEN WE PRAY whether we say our prayers for ourselves or for others, and whether we use words or say our prayers in other ways.**

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5 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

After the children have cleaned up the centers, bring everyone back to the circle area on the floor. Review the lesson activities and the Bible Point, and then encourage the children to share what they remember about what they learned from the Bible today.

Also use this time to challenge kids in their faith. Encourage them to choose a Daily Challenge for applying today's lesson to their lives this week. Use this challenge for encouraging your children's growing relationships with Jesus.

Daily Challenges Supplies

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My Bible Playground





Talk With Kids

Say: Today we learned that ► **GOD HEARS US WHEN WE PRAY.** I'd like each of you to choose a way to talk to God this week.

Read these three ideas for children to choose from:

- **Ask your mom or dad to help you record your voice as you pray. Play the recording back and listen—God heard your prayer, just like you hear it on the recording!**
- **Whisper a prayer really quietly, and then shout a prayer really loudly! Remember that God hears you no matter how quiet or how loud you are.**
- **Draw a prayer you have for a family member, and then give him or her your picture. Then tell your family member you're praying for him or her.**

Have kids each whisper in your ear or tell you which idea they've chosen, and then circle it on each child's My Bible Playground page. Make sure you choose a challenge as well and tell kids which challenge you chose. Your commitment will inspire children and will give them an opportunity to see God at work in your life as well as theirs!

“Thanks for Listening” Prayer

What You'll Do

Say: **Bow your heads and think of something or someone to pray for. God will hear your prayers, even if you choose to not say them out loud.** Invite each child to complete the sentence in the following prayer.

Pray: **Dear God, we're so thankful that you hear us when we pray. Thank you for being so good to us and answering our prayers. I pray for...** Invite those who would like to share to say the things or people they want to pray for. **Help us remember to talk to you every day. We love you, God! In Jesus' name, amen.**

Weaving Faith at Home

Have children take home their My Bible Playground pages whether they worked on them or not. Have the children tell their parents the challenge they committed to in the “Daily Challenges” activity. Encourage the parents to help their kids fulfill this commitment during the week. By working together and focusing on the same goals, you and parents can help children weave faith into their lives!

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families. Available at group.com/digital.

