




God Cares for Hagar and Ishmael

Genesis 21:8-21

Fifth- and sixth-graders have great concern for the world around them. They're becoming more interested in world affairs and are disturbed by injustice when they see it. Use this lesson to nurture that thinking outside of themselves and to encourage kids to talk to God about everything on their minds. Kids who know that God hears them when they pray will stay better connected to God.



► **Bible Point**
God always hears us when we pray.

LESSON	WHAT KIDS DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	Whisper Chain <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Try to listen perfectly to another person's whisper.	CD player Teacher Pack: CD	
2 Bible Exploration	Can You Hear Me? <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Look at a picture of a lonely person, and write personal reflections.	Bible, sticky notes, pens Teacher Pack: "Can You Hear Me?" poster 	
	Hagar and Ishmael <i>(about 15 min.)</i> Consider Hagar's time in the desert, and then discuss times God hears us.	Bible, bread or popcorn, 1 plastic cup per child filled with very little water, large pitcher of water	

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
Kids will have a conversation with God about a specific situation in their lives.

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.



LESSON	WHAT KIDS DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	Stories of Listening <i>(about 15 min.)</i> Write stories based on the Key Verse.	Bibles, pens, paper	
	Ask, Seek, Knock <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Write 3 requests they have for God, and pray about them throughout the week.	Bible Buzz, pens	Tear out the Lesson 13 pages from each Bible Buzz student book.
4 Lasting Impressions	Daily Challenges <i>(about 5 min.)</i> Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word.	Bible Buzz	
	Weaving Faith at Home <i>(about 2 min.)</i> Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.		

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.



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Genesis 21:8-21

BIBLE BACKGROUND
FOR LEADERS

Ishmael Mocks Isaac

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

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

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

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.





Whisper Chain Supplies

CD player

Teacher Pack

CD: "Whisper Sounds"
(track 23)

1

GETTING STARTED

Whisper Chain

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Welcome kids warmly as they arrive, and ask them how their week went.

Have kids create a "whisper chain" by standing shoulder to shoulder in a single line.

Say: **Let's see how accurately you can transfer a message from one end of the chain to the other.**

Stand at one end of the chain, and whisper this statement from the Key Verse, Luke 11:9, into the first person's ear: **"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."** Then have that person whisper what he or she heard into the next person's ear. Continue on down the line until the message reaches the last person. Have the last person repeat the message aloud, and then tell the group your original message.

For added effect during this activity, play the "Whisper Sounds" segment (track 23 on the CD).

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Gather kids together and lead them in this discussion.

Ask:

- **Would you say we listened well or that we have room for improvement in passing along our message? Explain.**
- **What can make it hard to listen during important conversations in life, such as those at school, at home, and at church?**
- **What can make it difficult to listen to what God's telling you?**
- **What obstacles could keep God from hearing us?**

Say: **Sometimes we may have a hard time listening. But today we're going to discover that ► GOD ALWAYS HEARS US WHEN WE PRAY. You heard me right—*always*. To do that, we're going to hear about a woman in the Bible who got into trouble and really needed God to hear her. Let's find out what happened.**



Can You Hear Me? Supplies

Bible
sticky notes
pens

Teacher Pack
"Can You Hear Me?"
poster

Hagar and Ishmael Supplies

Bible
bread or popcorn
1 plastic cup per child
filled with very little
water
large pitcher of water

**! ALLERGY
■ ALERT**

2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

Can You Hear Me?

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Have kids gather around the "Can You Hear Me?" poster, and give them sticky notes and pens. Read aloud Genesis 21:14-16.

Say: **Take a few minutes to reflect on the person in this picture and the situation Hagar and Ishmael faced in the desert of Beersheba. Think about a time you felt like them or the person in the poster. Take a minute to write a few words describing how you felt at the time. Then place your notes on the poster.**

Allow time for kids to reflect, write, and place their notes on the poster.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- What about this picture reminds you of Hagar and Ishmael?
- What situations or times in life does the poster remind you of?
- Tell about a time you felt alone or disconnected from everyone else.

Say: **Thinking about a time you were alone or felt no one was listening to you can help you understand the situation Hagar and Ishmael found themselves in. Thankfully, Hagar and Ishmael weren't truly alone. God heard their prayerful cries, and ► GOD ALWAYS HEARS US WHEN WE PRAY. Let's find out more about Hagar and Ishmael and why they were wandering in the desert.**

Hagar and Ishmael

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Invite a willing child to read aloud Genesis 21:8-13. Give each child a piece of bread or popcorn and a cup with very little water.

Say: **Spread out in the room far enough away from each other that you can't touch anyone and can have a quiet space to yourself. You may eat your snack and drink your water as you think about a time you felt excluded, the way Hagar and Ishmael were excluded. Since this is a time to think about feeling left out, don't talk to anyone else.** Allow a few minutes for reflection.

Read aloud verses 14-16. Say: **As you finish your snack, think quietly about situations that have made you feel alone and scared as Hagar and Ishmael were.**





Close your eyes and imagine you're back in one of those situations, and think about what you needed to feel safe and secure again. Allow a few minutes.

Read aloud verses 17-21. **In Hagar and Ishmael's scary and lonely situation, they desperately needed water. How many of you need more water to quench your thirst after such a dry snack?** Pour water into the cups for kids who request more, and allow them to drink.

God heard Hagar and Ishmael's cries and even though they didn't pray by speaking out loud, God knew their needs and answered their prayers. Take one more minute on your own, and talk to God about the things you need as you drink your water. Allow time.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Gather everyone in a circle and lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **Is there anything about what happened to Hagar and Ishmael that upsets you? Tell about it.**
- **Tell about a time you felt alone and scared the way Hagar probably felt in the desert.**
- **In your own life, when do you want God to hear you? Why?**

Say: **Hagar and Ishmael were in a dangerous, life-threatening situation and definitely needed God to hear them. God heard their cries as prayers for help and provided the water they needed to survive. ► GOD ALWAYS HEARS US WHEN WE PRAY, too, whether we speak our prayers, say our prayers in our heads, or pray through cries, laughter, groans, shouts, whispers, or anything else. Let's find out more of what God does when we pray.**

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Stories of Listening

Stories of Listening Supplies

Bibles
pens
paper

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Have kids form three groups, and give each group a Bible, a pen, and paper. If your group is larger than 21, form six small groups.

Have groups look up the Key Verse, Luke 11:9, and invite a willing child to read the passage aloud: "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."

Ask:

- **What do you think this verse has to do with God hearing our prayers?**



Say: I'm going to assign each group a different part of this verse. It's your group's responsibility to write a short story about the section I assign to you and tie it to prayer. Here's an example of what I mean. If your group has the section "seek and you will find," you could write a story about someone who's searching for help from God. This person tries everything but finally finds help when he simply prays.

Give groups eight minutes to write their stories, and help as needed.

Say: I'm going to read the verse aloud one more time. When I read the section of the verse that was assigned to your group, one person from each group can stand up and read your story that goes with that section. Take a minute to decide who from your group will share your story. Allow time.

Say: "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you..." (pause for the child to read this group's story) "...seek and you will find..." (pause for the child to read this group's story) "...knock and the door will be opened to you." Pause for the child to read this group's story.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- What story can you relate to best? Explain.
- When you think of prayer like knocking on a door, how would you describe the way you feel God answers the door?
- God's answers to prayer aren't always immediate, but God's *always* listening. What can knowing God's listening to you do for your patience as you wait for an answer?

Say: Whether it's something in any of our stories or an issue in our lives, we can talk to God about it, because ► **GOD ALWAYS HEARS US WHEN WE PRAY.** God responded quickly to Hagar and Ishmael's cries, and sometimes God will do that for us, too. In the times we're waiting for an answer, we can keep praying and know that God's listening.

Ask, Seek, Knock

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Have kids form a circle. Then have them find the Key Verse, Luke 11:9, on their Bible Buzz page and read it aloud: "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."

Say: According to this verse, God hears us whenever we ask him to listen. That's great news, because all of us want God to listen to us—when we're sad, happy, confused, curious, or angry. God will hear us any time we talk to him. For example, God will listen to us right now, if we ask him. We're going to think of three requests we want God to hear and do something about. I guarantee God will listen.



Ask, Seek, Knock Supplies

Bible Buzz
pens

Ask, Seek, Knock Easy Prep

Tear out the Lesson 13 pages from each Bible Buzz student book.





Find the “Ask...Seek...Knock!” section on your Bible Buzz page. Work together in pairs to follow the directions, and then we’ll discuss. Make sure everyone has a pen, and allow five minutes.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- When you pray, do you expect God to do everything to make the prayers come true? Why or why not?
- What can you do to work with God in finding solutions to the things you pray about?
- What can you do when the answers you get from God aren’t what you expected?

Say: ► **GOD ALWAYS HEARS US WHEN WE PRAY**, but his answers don’t always come quickly the way they did for Hagar and Ishmael, or in exactly the way we want. That doesn’t mean God isn’t listening. No matter how long you’re praying about an issue, you can trust that God is listening to you every time you pray. Let’s decide on ways to make sure we pray this week.

4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

What You’ll Do ■■■■■■

Say: Let’s be mindful to pray this week because ► **GOD ALWAYS HEARS US WHEN WE PRAY**. Just as God heard Hagar and Ishmael in the desert, God’s always listening to us.

Have kids find this week’s Daily Challenges on their Bible Buzz page and choose one to do this week. They can choose one or more of these three options:

- Draw a prayer to God each day.
- Write in a journal how God has answered your prayer.
- Talk to God about a specific need in your life or the life of someone you know.

Make sure you choose a Daily Challenge as well, and tell kids what you chose. Kids will be more inclined to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same.

Daily Challenges
Supplies

Bible Buzz



Talk With Kids

Ask:

- **What's a practical way you're going to do your Daily Challenge? Share a time, a place, or other ideas.** Allow time.

Say: **Keep praying even if God's answers don't come as quickly as they did for Hagar. And remember, God knew what Hagar needed just from her tears! He knows what you need, too. Remember that ► GOD ALWAYS HEARS US WHEN WE PRAY as we follow through on our Daily Challenges this week.**

Weaving Faith at Home

Encourage kids to talk with their parents about the Daily Challenges they chose and what they learned about the way God listens to our prayers. Kids can also do the activities in the "HomeConnect" section of their Bible Buzz pages with their families.

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

Have kids sit in a circle and silently pray about the requests they wrote on their Bible Buzz pages. Then pray: **God, thank you for always hearing us when we pray. Please help each of us with the requests we've told you about, and lead us in the steps we can take. In Jesus' name, amen.**

