

## Grade 1—Unit 12

# Carrying Out God’s Plan

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This unit focuses on the story of Isaac and Rebekah’s meeting and marriage. Abraham’s servant is faithful in carrying out orders to find a wife for Isaac. Rebekah steps into the unknown by going with the servant to marry a man she does not know. Both Abraham’s servant and Rebekah say “yes” to God.

### **LESSONS**

1. Preparing to Follow God’s Plan
2. Following God Through Prayer
3. Receiving a Blessing

# Unit 12: Carrying Out God's Plan

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## Unit Information

### SUMMARY

This unit follows the family of Abraham and Sarah more closely, as they strive to be faithful to God. As God keeps promises to Abraham, God shows the future of their family by indicating that Rebekah is to marry Isaac.

### KEY BIBLE TEXTS

Genesis 24\*

**Psalm 25:1-2 (memory verse)**

**Psalm 25:4 (main memory verse)**

**Nahum 1:7 (memory verse)**

*\*texts used in lessons*

### BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

#### A Life of Getting Ready

Genesis 24 is a simple narrative that tells how Rebekah became Isaac's wife. The story is told without distractions and detours into other events of the time. The listener is gathered into the telling as the characters become real.

Abraham broke his extended family ties when he trusted God to lead him to a new land. Yet, when it came time to find a wife for Isaac, Abraham continued the traditional pattern. He wanted Isaac to have a wife from his own clan, a wife he could trust to keep family traditions intact. As it still does to many in the Middle East today, that meant finding a wife from within the extended family.

Abraham asked his chief servant, a key player in the story, to help find a wife for his son. This trusted servant was the vehicle for furthering God's promise to Abraham. He was bound by oath to try to find a wife from among Abraham's relatives. Abraham's servant had witnessed his master's trust and faith in God over the years. Because of Abraham's faith, the servant also prayed and trusted God to guide his actions. He trusted that God would also guide the actions of the one he would meet.

#### Meeting at the Well

After a lengthy journey, Abraham's servant arrived in the town of Nahor. He prayed for guidance, specifically asking God to make the right girl offer to give water to both him and his camels (Genesis 24:12-14). Rebekah met the conditions of the prayer and took the stranger home to meet her family.

The servant offered gifts to Rebekah as soon as she finished watering the camels (Genesis 24:22). After he told his story, the servant offered gifts to the entire family. Giving these gifts was the way of showing a potential bride something of the wealth and desirability of the groom. The gifts were not a "bride price." They were used to sway the bride's family to decide in favor of the prospective groom.

## **Saying “Yes” to God**

After Rebekah consented to be Isaac’s bride, the servant was eager to return home with his mission accomplished. Rebekah was sent on her way with a blessing. Blessings were most often given to sons, particularly firstborn sons. But Rebekah received a blessing before she left home for the unknown.

This blessing provided courage and assurance of Rebekah’s role. It reinforced the fact that she was now a woman (even though she may have been 12-13 years old) and had womanly responsibilities. The blessing given to Rebekah was twofold: that she would have many children and that her children would experience success. “Our sister, may you increase to thousands upon thousands; may your offspring possess the gates of their enemies” (Genesis 24:60).

Rebekah left with the servant, and traveled to Canaan to meet her future husband. It was unusual and yet typical at the same time. Most women and men did not know their spouses before marriage. Even if the traveling was a symbolic one, from one tent to another, marriage was a journey into the unknown. Rebekah traveled quite a distance to meet her husband. In her willingness to go with such short notice, Rebekah showed an adventurous spirit, courage, and spunk.

Isaac, out walking in the fields, saw the caravan approaching. After a report from the servant, Isaac and Rebekah were married. There are signs of a happy beginning to the marriage. Isaac took Rebekah to his tent and loved her. Rebekah comforted him after his mother’s death (Genesis 24:67). And with that happy ending, this portion of the Genesis saga comes to a close.

## **ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS**

- Abraham and Sarah and their family followed God. We should follow God, too.
- We can talk to God through prayer.
- Rebekah trusted God. We can trust God, too.

## **WORSHIP**

1. Lesson 2, Extend the Lesson, provides directions for a prayerful worship experience.
2. Focus on the main memory verse, Psalm 25:4. How does this verse apply to Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Rebekah? How does this verse apply to us today? Talk about this as a group.

## **BULLETIN BOARD IDEAS**

1. Cut out footsteps and write on each of them a way that we can follow God. Arrange the footsteps on the bulletin board in a walking pattern. At the beginning of the footsteps, have a picture of a well. At the end of the footsteps, have a picture of Isaac and Rebekah.
2. Label the bulletin board “Our Prayers to God” and put up the illustrated prayers from Lesson 2, Extend the Lesson. Supply sheets of paper for students to add to the prayer bulletin board as they wish.

## MEMORY PASSAGES

This unit offers the following verses for students to memorize. You may copy and clip the following verses for students to take home.

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul; in you I trust, O my God. Do not let me  
be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me.

Psalm 25:1-2

Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth  
and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.

Psalm 25:4

The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble.  
He cares for those who trust in him.

Nahum 1:7

## MEMORY VERSE CONNECTIONS

*Make this memory verse connection during Worship #2:*

Read Psalm 25:4, “Show me your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.”

## ASSESSING TEACHING / LEARNING

Observing students and their interactions is one of the best ways to discover if students are practicing the lessons. Look to see if they cooperate with each other, if they use caring words, and if they practice peacemaking skills.

A quiz is also included at the end of the unit.

# Carrying Out God's Plan

## LESSON 1: PREPARING TO FOLLOW GOD'S PLAN

### Objective

Students will recognize that every day we prepare to follow God.

### Key Concepts

- Abraham wanted Isaac to have a wife from Abraham's hometown.
- Abraham, his family, and his household prepared to follow God.
- We should prepare to follow God every day.

**Text:** Genesis 24:1-10

**Estimated Lesson Time:** 30 minutes

### Materials

- Bible
- String or yarn for making bracelets
- Cereal or macaroni
- For Extend the Lesson: paper, crayons, markers

### Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the Bible story from Genesis 24:1-10, using the paragraphs in lesson step 4.
- Find colorful string or yarn and interesting shapes of cereal or macaroni, for making the bracelets. (Be sure to save one bracelet for Lesson 3.)

## INTRODUCING THE LESSON

**Review the story of the birth of Isaac.** Imagine what things were like when Isaac was a child. Mention the nomadic lifestyle, tents, cattle, and sheep. What kinds of activities might Isaac have done when he was growing up? How was his life like the students' lives? How was his life different?

## LESSON STEPS

**1. Marriage customs.** Explain that today's lesson begins after Isaac is grown up. In fact, Abraham decides that it is time for Isaac to get married. Ask students if they recall stories about how their parents, grandparents, or aunts and uncles met and married. Allow a brief time for sharing. If you are married, you might want to share your own story.

Explain to the students that in Abraham and Isaac's time, things were done differently from today:

- Sometimes parents helped find someone for their children to marry.
- A man who wanted to marry a woman would take gifts to her family to show that his family was wealthy and he could afford a wife.
- The couple who was to be married sometimes did not know each other, and relied on what others told them to do.

**2. Abraham's special circumstances.** Abraham was very old by the time his son Isaac was ready to be married. He couldn't go and look for a wife for Isaac, so instead, he asked his servant to do it. Abraham wanted the bride to be from his homeland, and not from the land where they were now living. Consider with the children why this was important. Being nomads, would Abraham and Sarah have known well the people who lived around them? Would they have known if those people worshipped God in the same way? Abraham wanted a wife for Isaac to be from a family he knew, and a family that worshipped God as they did.

**3. Preparing for the journey.** Abraham made preparations for the servant's journey back to his homeland, getting gifts ready to give to the family of the bride. The Bible says that Abraham's servant took ten camels and other choice gifts. It also states that the woman who was chosen was given a nose ring and two bracelets.

Ask what other kinds of preparations may have been needed for this journey (*food and water for the people and animals*).

**4. Tell the Bible story.** Opening your Bible to Genesis 24:1-10, tell an appropriate version of the story in your own words, or use the following:

Abraham was now very old, and the Lord had blessed him in every way. He said to the chief servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, "I want you to go back to my country, where my own relatives live, and find a wife for my son Isaac."

The servant asked, "What if the woman doesn't want to come back with me to this land? Shall I take your son back to the country you came from?"

"No," said Abraham. "Do not take my son back there. God promised to give me this land for my children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren."

Then the servant took ten of Abraham's camels and left, taking with him all kinds of good things from his master. He set out for Aram Naharaim and made his way to the town of Nahor.

After telling the story, explain that just as Abraham and his servants prepared to follow God to find a wife for Isaac, we also need to follow God. Every day we make many decisions, and we should think of how we are following God in the things we do.

**5. Make reminder bracelets.** Using the string or yarn and cereal and/or macaroni, invite the students to make bracelets as a reminder to follow God. The bracelets are also a symbol of the gifts Abraham sent to the woman chosen to be Isaac's wife. Encourage the children to think about ways to follow God as they wear their bracelets throughout the day.

## **EXTEND THE LESSON**

*(This activity will extend the lesson to longer than 30 minutes.)*

- **Following God.** Discuss ways in which the students can follow God every day, then invite them to draw a picture and write about one way to follow God.
- **Invite a recently married couple** to talk with the class about their decision to be married and how it differed from Isaac's decision to be married.

# Carrying Out God's Plan

## LESSON 2: FOLLOWING GOD THROUGH PRAYER

### Objective

Students will recognize that prayer is important.

### Key Concepts

- Abraham's servant prayed to God, and God answered the prayer.
- We can pray to God and God will listen to us, too.

**Text:** Genesis 24:11-28

**Estimated Lesson Time:** 30 minutes

### Materials

- Bible
- 1 cup, 1 bucket, water
- Self-hardening clay to make water jugs (save one water jug for lesson 3)
- For Extend the Lesson, option one: *Bless This House* by Leslie Staub
- For Extend the Lesson, option two: drawing paper, crayons, markers

### Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the Bible story from Genesis 24:15-28 in your own words, or use the paragraphs in lesson step 3.

### INTRODUCING THE LESSON

**Talk about prayer.** What is prayer (*talking with God*)? When do people talk with God? What things do people talk to God about? (*Answers will vary.*) Point out that in the last lesson you talked about how we prepare to follow God. Add that prayer is a good way to prepare to follow God.

### LESSON STEPS

**1. Review the story** from the last lesson and the preparations Abraham needed to make to send his servant to find a wife for Isaac.

**2. Introduce today's story.** The servant began his journey back to Abraham's homeland. When he arrived outside the city, he stopped at the well. Explain the significance of the well as the water supply. People did not have indoor plumbing, so someone from each household had to go to the well to get water for their household. Ask the students how they use water throughout the day (*for bathing, brushing teeth, drinking, cooking*). Have them imagine what it would be like if they had to go to the well for their water. Would they use as much water? Add that the water at the well was not only for people, but for animals to drink, as well.

Because everyone needed water every day, the well was a gathering place. Abraham's servant stopped at the well, because it was a good place to meet people.

**3. Tell the Bible story.** When the servant stopped at the well, he prayed to God. Open the Bible to Genesis 24 and read verses 11-14. Then tell the rest of the story (verses 15-28) in your own words or use the following:

Even before the servant was finished praying, a young woman named Rebekah came to the well with a water jug. She filled her jug, and the servant went over to her and asked for a drink of the water. Rebekah gave him a drink and said she would also get water for his camels.

When the camels were finished drinking, the servant gave Rebekah a nose ring and two bracelets. He asked her about her parents. It turned out that her parents were distant relatives of Abraham! The servant asked if there was room at her parents' house for him to stay that evening. Rebekah said that there was plenty of room! She left the well to let her family know that they would have a guest for the evening.

After Rebekah left, the servant prayed again. (Read the prayer from Genesis 24:27.)

You might need to explain some of the prayer, adding that this was a prayer of thanks for God's continuing love and faithfulness.

**4. How much water?** Demonstrate what it was like for Rebekah to draw so much water for the servant and for each of the ten camels. Use a cup to fill a bucket with water. How many cups did it take to fill the bucket? How many buckets might it take to fill a trough for the camels? (Instead of pouring the water down the drain, use it to water plants in the room.)

**5. Make clay water jugs.** Using self-hardening clay, roll the clay into a ball and use a finger to make a "well." Encourage the students to think about the servant's prayer and how God answered it each time they look at the jug. It is a reminder that they can pray to God and God will listen to them, too.

## **EXTEND THE LESSON**

*(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30 minutes.)*

- **Read the book** *Bless This House* by Leslie Staub, and follow it with more discussion about prayer.
- **Illustrate a prayer.** Invite students to illustrate their own written prayer or draw a prayer, using drawing paper and crayons. Allow time for those who wish to share their prayers with the rest of the class.

# Carrying Out God's Plan

## LESSON 3: RECEIVING A BLESSING

### Objective

Students will recognize that we need to trust God as we follow God.

### Key Concepts

- Rebekah trusted God.
- Rebekah followed God even though she did not know where she was going.
- We need to trust and follow God, too.

**Text:** Genesis 24:29-67

**Estimated Lesson Time:** 30 minutes

### Materials

- Bible
- Bracelet from Lesson 1
- Water jug from Lesson 2
- Self-hardening clay (enough for each student to make a coin)
- Assorted fancy buttons, to make impressions in the clay

### Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the story from Genesis 24:29-67 in your own words, or use the paragraphs in lesson step 1.

### INTRODUCING THE LESSON

**Review the story so far** by showing the items the students made. As you hold up a bracelet, children may respond with what it was like to find a husband or wife during the time that Abraham and Isaac lived, as well as the preparations that needed to go into such an event. Ask if they remember what they are to think about when they look at their bracelet (*ways to follow God*). Hold up a clay water jug and review the story of the servant finding Rebekah at the well. Ask what the children are to think about when they look at their water jug. (*We can talk to God and God will listen.*) Can the students guess what might happen next in the story?

### LESSON STEPS

**1. Tell the Bible story.** Opening the Bible to Genesis 24:29-67, tell the story in your own words, or use the following:

Abraham's servant went to Rebekah's house and met her parents and her brother, Laban. Laban took care of the camels and gave them straw and food, and brought water to wash the servant's feet. Food was prepared and set before Abraham's servant, but the servant said that before he ate, he wanted to tell why he was there.

And so the servant told all about Abraham. He said that Abraham had become wealthy and had flocks and herds, silver and gold, camels and donkeys. He told how a son, Isaac, was born to Abraham and his wife Sarah when they were very old. Now that Isaac was grown, Abraham wanted to find a wife for their son. But he wanted Isaac's wife to come from his homeland.

The servant explained how he had stopped at the well and prayed that God would show him the right woman to be Isaac's wife. He prayed that the woman would offer to get water for his camels. And before he was finished speaking, Rebekah came to the well. She gave the servant water and offered to get water for his camels.

Abraham's servant ended his story there. Rebekah's father, Bethuel, and her brother, Laban, said that this was of the Lord. They said that Rebekah should become Isaac's wife. When the servant heard this, he prayed and gave thanks to God. And then he got out the gifts he had brought for the family—jewelry and clothing, silver and gold.

In the morning, the servant wanted to return to Abraham right away. The family called for Rebekah and asked her if she would go back with the servant to marry Isaac. Rebekah answered that she would go.

So Rebekah and her maids returned with the servant to meet Isaac and his family. And Isaac and Rebekah were married.

**2. Trusting God.** Review with the students that Rebekah didn't know who she was going to meet or what her future would be like. But she trusted God and went along with Abraham's servant anyway.

We can trust in God like Rebekah did, too. Ask the children for ideas of ways we can trust God (*to take care of us, to be with us, etc.*).

**3. Make coins** with self-hardening clay, to symbolize the gold and silver given to Rebekah's family. Roll the clay into a ball and flatten with a fancy button, leaving an imprint. Tell the students that these coins are to remind them to trust God.

## **EXTEND THE LESSON**

*(This activity will extend the lesson to longer than 30 minutes.)*

• **Retell or act out the story.** Pair students to tell the story of Abraham's servant and Rebekah to each other, using the bracelets, water jugs, and coins as props. They may act out parts of the story, if they choose.

# Unit 12 Quiz

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## True or False:

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Isaac traveled to find a wife for himself.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Rebekah is the name of the woman found to be Isaac's wife.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Rebekah is first met at the store.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. God will listen to our prayers.

## Circle the best answer:

5. Abraham's servant asked Rebekah for

- a. A lamp
- b. A drink
- c. A book

6. Rebekah \_\_\_\_\_ God.

- a. Trusted
- b. Disobeyed
- c. Ran away from

7. We talk to God when we \_\_\_\_\_ .

- a. Run
- b. Pray
- c. Fight

8. What is something we can talk to God about?

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**Answers to Unit 12 Quiz:**

1. False
2. True
3. False
4. True
5. b. A drink
6. a. Trusted
7. b. Pray
8. Answers will vary.