



"This is the Story..."

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Week 4: A Family

Genesis 12-24

Intro Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WeBh0QcpGkA&list=PLiSifKtmhnBYndDKZqJJ2xS8wuUH7JJH3&index=6&t=0s>

Review the big story: God created the cosmos and humans and called it all good. We were created to live in harmony, but sometimes we miss the mark. Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, and all of humanity missed the mark, and they had to live with the consequences, but God stuck with them and continued to love them.

- **Key verses:** Genesis 12:1-2, Genesis 17:5

Tell the story: God called a family, Abram and Sarai, to be a blessing to all the earth. God asked them to leave everything they knew and to trust God's leading and provision. They said yes, and began a big adventure. What follows is a story of a family of humans who love each other and love God, and who also miss the mark a lot. Sometimes they forget to trust God and make some bad choices, but God sticks with them. God makes a two-way covenant with them. They agree to stick with God, and God agrees to stick with them.

- Read Genesis 12:1-9. The Abraham and Sarah saga continues through Genesis 24, so you may want to read all of that - or choose a few chapters so you get a little taste of the story.
- Read page 25 in the *Shine On* story Bible.

Prime the pump:

- **Things to notice:**
 - This is the first story we hear of someone being called by God. There will be a lot more of these in the rest of this big story! If you're interested in the ways God calls people, maybe you want to start keeping track of these stories.
 - Skim the story and see if you can count how many times Abram/Abraham builds an altar. What does his worship of God look like?
 - This story is full of strange little stories. Here are a few head-scratchers. Dig into them if you like. It's also enough to read the stories and know that even "great" families like this one are messy.
 - Read Genesis 12:10-20 and Genesis 20.
 - Read Genesis 19:24-26.
 - Another major story in this saga is the story of Abraham almost sacrificing Isaac (Genesis 22). What is going on here? Why do you think this happened? Did God really ask Abraham to do this?
- **Background information:**
 - God blessing people and creation isn't new to us by now! The Hebrew word used here in Genesis 12 is *barak*, and in its noun form *barakeh*. It literally means "to kneel down," and

usually is used to imply one party honoring another. We think a lot about honoring God. Here we see that it's two-way. How does that feel to you?

- "Blessed" is a term we hear thrown around a lot in our culture. But God's blessing of Abram and Sarai is very different from the way the term gets used in today's world. They are not blessed for a prosperous or easy life. They are blessed *to be a blessing*. What does this even mean?
- This is the beginning of the "people of the covenant." As we will notice in coming weeks, sometimes they become exclusive. But in Genesis 12:3b, we see that God's intention is broad. "In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Keep this original intention in mind as you continue to read the big story!
- Male circumcision is part of the covenant God makes with Abraham. It may seem like a very strange agreement to make! Why do you think this was what God asked of God's people?

**Hint: Dig around into the reasons doctors recommend circumcision to some patients today...

- **Conversation starters:**

- Abram and Sarai were unable to have children, yet God promised them that they would be parents of a great nation. They tried to take matters into their own hands in Genesis 16, resulting in Ishmael's birth. Then in Genesis 18, God reveals God's answer to their dilemma. And in Genesis 21, their son, Isaac, is finally born. What do you make of this long journey to fulfillment of a promise?
- The whole story of Hagar and Ishmael is a squirmy one. How can Abraham and Sarah, people of God, treat them this way? Notice that God provides for Hagar and Ishmael when they are oppressed.

Microsong: "A Family" (Listen: <https://youtu.be/L9CWIM9Sr9k>)

And then God called a family to be a blessing to the earth. And asked them to leave everything to trust this promise and this love. They said yes and made mistakes but God came back time and again, ahhhhhhhhhhh....

Sing the big song: (Listen: https://youtu.be/B1L9qmaOm_k)

This is the story of how it all began. God made matter, and chaos shattered.
Eve and Adam, they tried to hide.

The world got violent and God replied with a mark and a flood and a rainbow sign, God's love
written on skin and sky,

And then God called a family to be a blessing to the earth, ahhhhhh

'cause God loves every one of us, it's true, and God loves the universe.

Go do your household project!