



Sample story introduction

Have a go!

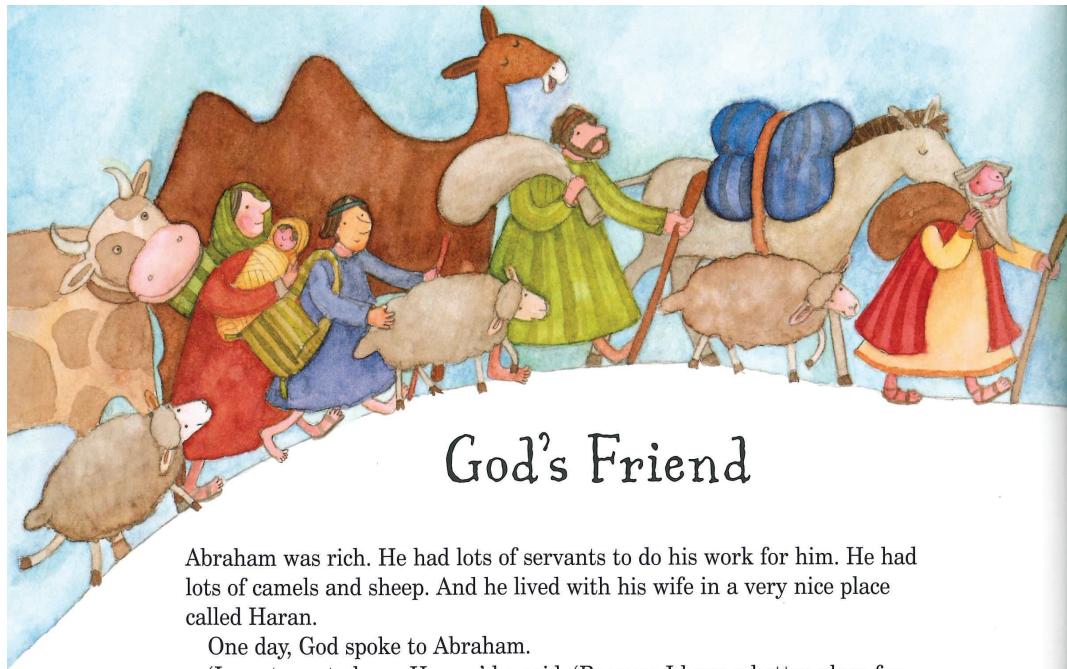
One of the best things about Open the Book is its simplicity. With a script to follow, introduction, reflection, stage directions and tips for costumes and props, there's very little preparation to do before you can stand before 200 or so children and bring a Bible story to life.

We've reproduced a story here for you to have a go at in your church. The story – called God's Friend – is taken from *The Lion Storyteller Bible* by Bob Hartman, published by Lion Hudson plc, 2008. Copyright © 2008 Bob Hartman. Illustrated by Krisztina Nagy. Used with permission of Lion Hudson plc.

The introduction and final reflection and prayer are from the Open the Book handbook.

Get a few children involved, and some other adults, and have some fun!

Do also take some pictures of your presentation and email them to us
enquiries@openthebook.net We'd love to see how you dramatise the story, and hear how people react to it.



God's Friend

Abraham was rich. He had lots of servants to do his work for him. He had lots of camels and sheep. And he lived with his wife in a very nice place called Haran.

One day, God spoke to Abraham.

'I want you to leave Haran,' he said. 'Because I have a better place for you to live in.'

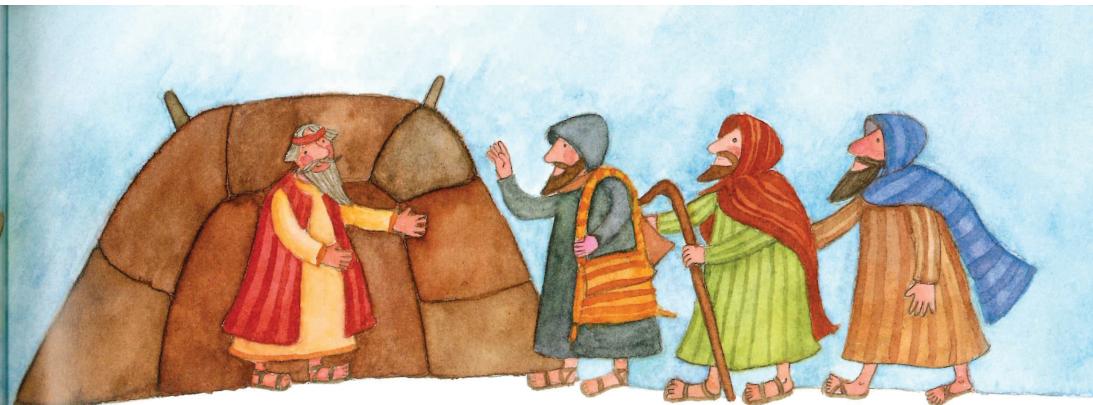
Now Abraham might have said something like, 'Where?' or 'How far?' or 'Thank you very much, but I'm quite happy here.' But he didn't. In fact, he said nothing at all. He just gathered up his wife and his servants and his camels and his sheep, and went where God led him.

Why? Because Abraham trusted God. It was as simple as that.

Canaan was the name of the place where God led Abraham. 'A land flowing with milk and honey' is what some people called it. Which means that there were many cows and goats and bees there, and plenty of flowers and grass for the animals to eat. It was altogether a pretty place. Even nicer than Haran. And Abraham liked it very much.

The only problem was that Abraham had no children. And besides that, both he and his wife, Sarah, were very old. Grandpa- and Grandma-old, and maybe even older than that.

But Abraham trusted God. So one night God said to him, 'Abraham, look up. Do you see the stars? One day you will have so many children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren that counting the stars will be an easy job compared with counting them.'



'Now Abraham, look down. Do you see the ground? One day, there will be more members of your family than there are bits of earth on that ground.'

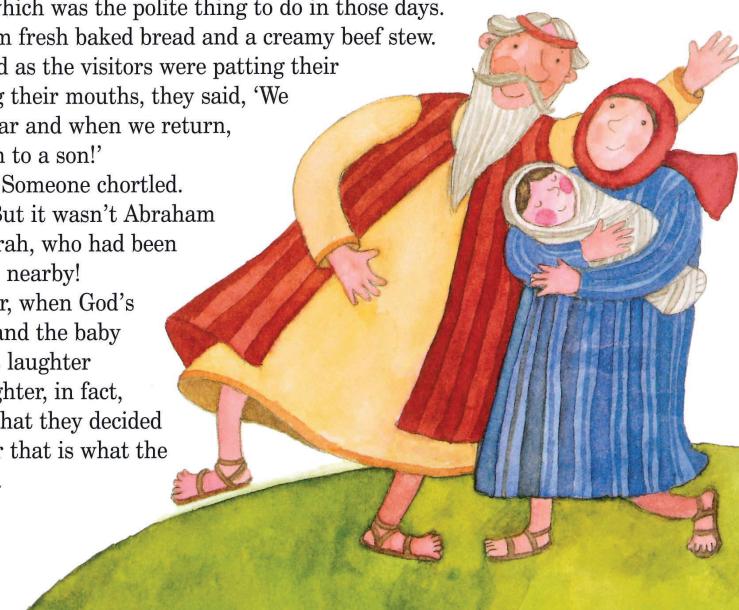
What did Abraham do? He chuckled, that's what. He giggled, he chortled, he laughed! 'Me and my wife have children?' he cackled. 'We're much too old for that!'

But God wasn't joking. 'You will, indeed, have a son,' he said. 'And through your family, I will do something wonderful for the world!'

So Abraham trusted God, and it wasn't long before God sent three messengers to visit him. Abraham was very kind to them. He washed their feet, which was the polite thing to do in those days. Then he served them fresh baked bread and a creamy beef stew. It was delicious! And as the visitors were patting their tummies and wiping their mouths, they said, 'We will be back next year and when we return, Sarah will give birth to a son!'

Someone giggled. Someone chortled. Someone laughed. But it wasn't Abraham this time. It was Sarah, who had been listening in the tent nearby!

And, the next year, when God's promise came true and the baby was born, there was laughter again. So much laughter, in fact, that 'Laughter' is what they decided to call their son. For that is what the name 'Isaac' means.



INTRODUCTION

Last week we heard how God gave people a fresh start. People began to trust God, and he became their friend. Do you have a friend you like to share things with? Isn't it good to have a friend you can trust.

Today's story is about a man called Abraham who learned to trust God.

Let's OPEN THE BOOK at the story called 'God's Friend'.

Read God's Friend in The Lion Storyteller Bible (2008 expanded edition)

CONCLUSION

So God's promise to his friend Abraham came true! He did have children, and grandchildren...and great grandchildren! And Abraham was glad that he'd trusted God.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Close your eyes and think of a good friend who you can trust.

Allow time for reflection.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for friends we can laugh with and friends we can trust. Thank you that Abraham trusted you and was called a 'friend of God'. Help us to understand what it means to trust you and be a 'friend of God' too. Amen.

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

Essential: Narrator, Abraham, Sarah.

Additional: Voice of God, three messengers.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- This story works very well with puppets. If you decide on this option, there is a downloadable script available (see below). If you decide not to use puppets, then act out the story simply using the characters in the story.
- Abraham and his family can move around to show that they have left Haran.
- Divide children into three groups to giggle, chuckle and laugh as the words are mentioned in the story. Have a clear 'stop' signal.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- For puppet presentation:

Puppets can be used with or without a screen:

With screen: a screen can be made using photographic lights tripods or any other means of stringing a cloth up. You need loud voices or a microphone to make sure you can be heard. The advantage is that your words can be pinned to the back of the screen for easy reference!

Without screen: these puppets tend to be bigger and held on the arm. You can actually walk around with them as they go on their long journey, and more exaggerated movements are possible. Your words can be discreetly pinned to the backs of the puppets

- For acting the story:

Use props to set the scene: washing bowl, towel, bread, bowl of 'stew', three bowls, three spoons, baby doll.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- Puppet script
- Photographs of puppets
- Instructions for making puppets or suggestions for purchase of puppets.
- Information on making or buying a puppet screen.

MY NOTES
