



Introduction

How do we prepare to meet God? How do we recognise God? How do we honour God once we have recognised his presence? These are the questions we shall be looking at this week, as we learn about a visit made to Abraham and Sarah, which ended with a surprise revelation.



Bible notes for leaders

Old Testament Genesis 18.1-10a

The story of Abraham to this point reveals the struggle he has had to live with and fulfil the promise of his calling (12.1-3). Abraham and his wife Sarah are very old and have had no children. This is something they are sad about. This chapter introduces a dramatic change of events. It begins with the rather strange arrival of three men – or were they angels or the presence of God (vv. 1-3)? This emphasises the way in which God's purpose for Abraham has become caught up in the ambiguities of his life.

It is not clear what is happening. Abraham offers characteristic desert hospitality but it seems over-generous in the circumstances. Some suggest this is because he is at last taking his responsibility to be a blessing to the world, come who may, seriously. As the story begins to introduce Sarah, Abraham becomes more marginal. It is about Sarah fulfilling God's plan. Sarah laughed to herself when the visitors said she would be with child. How often do we laugh when we think of what God might have planned?

Psalm 15

New Testament Colossians 1.15-28

Gospel Luke 10.38-42



Set the scene

- Print or draw some speech bubbles on A4 paper. Write different exclamations such as 'wow', 'NO WAY', 'Really?!?!?', on the speech bubbles, and display them in the room in which you meet.



Get started

Get ready

Divide the young people into groups or pairs and give each some paper and a pen. Explain that you are going to say an event or activity (holding a birthday party or going on holiday), and each group or pair has 30 seconds to write down as many things as they can that they would do to prepare for that event. After 30 seconds, the group with the most things on its list gets a point. Play the game with several activities, finishing with 'Meeting God'. The winning team is the one with the most points at the end of the game.



Use the Bible

Honour

Invite the young people to read through today's Bible passage and make a list of all the words that are to do with honour and status. Where do we hear those words today? Are they words we use in everyday life? To whom do we give honour and status?

Status

Abraham refers to himself as a servant – he puts his full resources into meeting the needs of his very important visitors. Invite the young people to come up with ideas of how they might serve people around them – start by thinking about how they might serve each other or others in the church.

Get on with it

Sarah is far from the star of today's story, yet she plays an essential role in the events of these verses. Abraham is the one who appreciates the situation and decides on how to respond, but it is Sarah and the servant who do a lot of the actual work to make preparations. Talk with the young people about the ways in which we can help others and serve God without being in the limelight.





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Be active

Model meal part two

Invite the group to plan a menu for a meal for very special guests. The meal should be balanced and provide for those with different requirements. Challenge the group to plan an appropriate menu that might show someone is truly welcome. Once the menu is planned, explain that they will then need to plan the process of preparing the meal, what should be done, when. You could take this to the end point and invite a guest or guests to join your group on a future occasion and the group should prepare the planned meal. If you have access to cooking facilities this could be a hot meal. If not, it should be something that could be served cold or brought hot in heated trays or flasks.



Make connections

- Where do we see God in the world? Abraham knew straightaway that his visitors were, in some way, God, and he treated them accordingly. Whilst we might not see God in the same way as Abraham did, we can often see evidence of God in the world around us and in the people around us and the way they behave. Discuss with the group ideas about places and people that have shown them God in the world.
- Today's passage shows Abraham going all-out to welcome these three men – despite the suddenness of their appearance. Ask the young people to think about whether they let God into their lives with such complete abandon – does everything come second to making sure that God and his wishes come first? What things compete for their attention?
- Abraham knew the importance of taking a break and of feeling refreshed, even in the heat of the midday sun! Invite the young people to talk about the things they do to refresh themselves when life is difficult or stressful. How do they take a break? Do they make time to rest and reflect, away from the business of their lives?



Pray it through

Alphabety God

Abraham made sure he gave God the honour he deserved, and we need to remember to do the same in our prayers. Sit the group in a circle, and have each person in turn come up with an ending to the sentence 'Thank you, God, for being...'. The first person chooses an ending beginning with 'a', the second with 'b' and so on until you've got to 'z'.

Restful God

Play some restful music and have a time of silence. Encourage the young people to sit or lie down, away from the distractions of others, and to shut their eyes. Invite the young people to use the time to ask God to refresh them – to rest and to reflect on the things they've done during the week and the ways in which they've met God. Finish with a short prayer.



Resources

Music

'Honest Questions' by Daniel Bedingfield on *Gotta Get Through This*, Polydor, 2002.

This track links to the image of a meal and the nourishment we need to receive.

YP²