

## Unit Overview: Abraham and Sarah's Big Family

### Remembering These Stories

The Bible is the story of God and God's people. It begins with Abram and Sarai in Genesis 12, and it continues from the Old Testament, the Hebrew Scriptures, into the New Testament and throughout history up to today. These stories are our family stories, the stories of our faith ancestors. Like all family stories, one hears tales of joy and of sorrow. Indeed, there are many early difficulties in the story of Abram and Sarai, who later become Abraham and Sarah.

### Remembering How These Stories Connect with One Another

Abram and Sarai live with all their family in the land of Haran. In those days, most children did not leave their families to strike out for a new country, but Abram and Sarai did. They did because God made a promise, or a covenant, with them. God would give them a new land, a new country. God even gave them new names: Abraham and Sarah. In this new land, they would prosper and become the parents of a nation. This promise is revealed in the first story of this unit, "Abram and Sara Find a New Home."

However, years go by, and although they are settled, they have no family. Abraham has a son with Sarah's maid, Hagar. But even before Ishmael is born, Sarah and Hagar are at odds as we learn in "A Family with a Big Disagreement." Hagar leaves, but when God intervenes, she returns to her family.

Then an amazing thing happens when three travelers are welcomed by Abraham. One of them tells him that Sarah will have a baby boy. Sarah laughed at the thought, but even at her age, Sarah gave birth to Isaac. So in "God Made Sarah Laugh," the beginning of Abraham and Sarah's family is finally revealed.

However, the "big disagreement" is not resolved with the birth of Isaac. Sarah is worried that Ishmael will become more important than Isaac. The solution is to send Hagar and Ishmael away as told in "A Family Changes Its Shape." But even then God watched over them, separated from their family, and continued to keep God's promises to Abraham and Sarah.

The last story in this unit, "God Tugs at Rebekah's Heart," takes God's family into the next generation as Abraham's servant seeks a wife for Isaac. Now the family of Abraham and Sarah are poised to grow as God promised.



### Remembering Why These Stories Are Important to Our Faith

God keeps God's promises. On the strength of this knowledge, Abraham and Sarah left their family without knowing where God would lead them. As part of God's promise, or covenant, with

Abraham and Sarah, they would be God's people, and God would be their God. The people of God forgot, and continue to forget, that promise, but God did not and continues to keep that promise with us today.

### Remembering to Wonder

- How do we honor God's covenant with us today? As individuals? As the church?
- What might these stories teach us about family disagreements?
- Which character in the story do you relate to the most? Why?