

Resource: Familiarization, Internalization, Articulation (Fia)

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Familiarization, Internalization, Articulation (Fia)

GEN

Genesis 1:1–2:3

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Genesis 1:1–2:3 and put it in your hearts. Listen to an audio version of Genesis 1:1–2:3 three times, in three different translations, if possible. Then, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 1:1–2:3 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

This is a story about how God created the world out of nothing. God is special among all gods, because he speaks creation into existence. God shows his authority over creation by naming the things he creates. This story is mostly about God himself. God's creation is not as important as God.

God's people used this creation story to show that their God is the one true creator God. They wanted to show that he is not like the other gods—our God is all powerful and gives authority to all things himself.

This story has some poetry in it because it is written in the same style as the creation stories of the cultures around them. Although it may sound like poetry sometimes, it is also a true story that happened long ago, but the writer did not see it happen. He learned about these things from his ancestors.

Stop here and discuss with your translation team: Tell each other a story from your culture about the creation of the world. Do people believe that it is true? If so, how does the story begin? How can you tell the difference in your language between a true story and an untrue story? Pause this audio here.

The first words in Genesis say, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The words "heavens and the earth," when said together, refer to everything in the entire universe. Most Bible scholars believe that this means that nothing existed before God created the heavens and the earth. The word in the original language for "create" usually means to make something out of nothing. Only God can create something.

When God made the earth, at first it was empty, like a desert or wilderness. Nothing lived on it. There were no plants or animals. It was like deep waters covered the earth. God's Spirit or breath hovered over the deep

waters. God himself was there. He was probably hovering or moving above the waters like a protection. God was about to begin creating the things on the earth.

This story is clearly divided into an introduction, a section for each of the 6 days of creation, and then a section about the 7th day. Days 1 and 4, 2 and 5, and 3 and 6 correspond with each other.

On day 1 God spoke and light appeared. God separated light from darkness. This shows that God wants light to be in the daytime and darkness to be at night. God is making an orderly creation.

On day 2 God creates the waters in the sky and the waters on the earth. God is making an orderly separation of the sky and the seas.

On day 3 God is separating water from land. He is showing two places where his creation can live—some in the water and some on the land. God also creates the vegetation, or the plants, that live on the dry land. God creates two kinds of plants. Some plants have seeds in them, like grain. Some plants have fruit that have seeds in their fruit. Both of these kinds of plants have seeds to make it possible to produce new plants just like their parent plants.

These first three days show us the places where God's creation lives and the way God made time into days and nights.

The 4th day corresponds to the 1st day, because now God creates the things that give off the light. God calls the things "lights," and then he says that there is a larger light for the day and a smaller light for the night. God does not name these lights, probably because he wants to show that the lights themselves are not gods. These lights show us that time follows an order through days, months, and years.

Stop here and discuss as a team: Tell a story from your culture about things that people in your culture worship besides the creator God. Pause this audio here.

The 5th day corresponds to the 2nd day. Now God fills the two "waters," the sky and the water on the earth with animals. He fills the sky with birds and the water with fish. Creatures in the water include both the large animals and the small ones. God blesses them and then gives them a command to fill the earth.

The 6th day corresponds to the 3rd day. God creates two things on the 6th day in order to fill the dry land. He creates animals who have children just like themselves. He creates people who also reproduce other people just like themselves. The original language shows us that the 6th day is the most important day of creation. God gives us more detail on this day—he tells us that he created human beings on the 6th day. God says he creates humans in his image. People carry the image of God. That means that they are somehow like God physically and spiritually. They can think and they have a conscience, or a way to tell right from wrong. In the Old Testament, sometimes representatives of a king or queen were called an image. God is saying that people are representatives of him. God made it clear that he made both men and women in his image. God also blessed people in the same way as the animals and plants by telling them to multiply and fill the earth. But he gave them a special task of ruling over creation and taking care of it. God gave people and animals plants and fruit trees for food.

Stop and discuss as a translation team: How will you talk about God creating people in his own image? Pause this audio here.

At the end of each day, except for the second day, God says that every day is good, or beautiful. But when God looked over everything he had made on the 6th day—including people—he said it was very good!

By the end of the 6th day God had completed his creation work—which included everything in the heavens and earth. He made holy, or set apart, the 7th day and blessed it. He rested, or he stopped creating his work. God did not rest because he was tired—this resting refers to him stopping work.

Stop and discuss as a translation team: God made the 7th day "holy," or set apart. Talk about things in your culture that are set apart for a special purpose. How do you talk about them?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 1:1–2:3 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has an introduction and 7 scenes.

Introduction: This story starts with an introduction that shows what the earth was like when God first created it from nothing.

In the first scene: God creates light and separates it from darkness on the first day.

In the second scene: God separates the sky and water on the earth on the second day.

In the third scene: God separates the water from the dry land on the third day. He also creates all the plants.

In the fourth scene: God creates specific lights like the sun, moon, and stars on the fourth day.

In the fifth scene: God fills the sky and water with birds and fish on the fifth day.

In the sixth scene: God fills the earth with animals and the first man and woman on the sixth day. He finishes his creation work on the sixth day.

In the seventh scene: God stops working and makes the seventh day a special day set apart because it was the day he finished his work.

The characters in this passage are:

- God
- Birds, fish, land animals
- Man and woman

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting: It is important to remember that this story begins with a description of the empty and formless earth before God began to make order on the earth and fill it with living things. God's Spirit or breath hovers over the waters, creating a sense of suspense that soon God will start working to create the world.

This story is a report of the things God created in the order that he created them. This report of God's creation uses a lot of repetition. The author says each day's creation in the same way.

Stop here and discuss as a translation team: How do you report a list of things that someone does in the order that they do them? What kind of repetition or structure do you use to remember the list? Pause this audio here.

It is important to remember that on the first day God separates light from darkness. God saw that the light was good. Then he names day and night. Then it was evening and morning, the first day.

Then on the 2nd day God separates sky from water. God names the sky. Then it is evening and morning, the 2nd day.

Then on the 3rd day God separates water from dry land. God names the sea and the land. God says it is good. Then God creates vegetation—plants that have seeds and plants that have fruit—on the dry ground. God says it was good. Then it is evening and morning, the 3rd day.

These separations provide orderly space for people and animals to live. These first three days show us the places where God's creation lives and the way God made time into days and nights. The next three days show God filling the sky, the water, and the land with his creation.

On the 4th day God creates the lights in the sky to mark special times of the year and to mark the days, months, and years. He describes the greater and lesser lights and explains their purpose. God saw that it was good. Then it is evening and morning, the 4th day.

On the 5th day God creates all kinds of creatures, big and small, in the water. God also creates all the kinds of birds that fly in the sky. God saw that it was good. Now God begins to bless parts of his creation. God blesses the creatures of the sea and the birds and he commands them to multiply and fill the earth. Then it is evening and morning, the 5th day.

It is important to remember that God gave many more details about his creation on the 6th day. He created livestock like cows and goats, creeping things that crawl close to the ground, and wild beasts or animals. He said that they were good. Then he made people in his own image. God blessed the people and commanded people to fill the earth with other people. God said the people had authority and responsibility over his creation to take care of it. God gave people everything they needed—every plant that has seeds. God gave animals every green plant to eat. Then God said it was all very good! Then it is evening and morning, the 6th day.

It is important to remember that the description of each day ends with a phrase that means the work of that day was ended—It was evening and morning, the 1st (or whichever) day. This means that when the morning came, that day was finished.

Stop the action: Stop here and discuss as a team: How will you end the work of each day in your story? Pause this audio here.

It is important to remember that for each day, except for the 2nd day, God says that something is good.

The six days of creation ends with a summary that says, "The creation of everything—all the many things—in the earth was completed."

It is important to remember that God ends this story by creating a special day of rest.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 1:1-2:3 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This story has 8 scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- God
- Birds, fish, land animals
- Man and woman

First, act out the story without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the story. Help each other remember every part of the story.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then restart the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and earth and everything in them. The earth was empty and formless. God's Spirit moved over the deep waters of the earth. Then God spoke. God commanded light to appear, and it did. God saw the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day and the darkness night. Then evening passed and morning came, and it was the first day.

Pause the drama. Ask the actor playing God "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "Happy to begin to see order in the world." Restart the drama.

Then God commanded space between the waters of the sky and the waters of the earth. God called the space sky. Then evening passed and morning came, and it was the second day.

Then God commanded the water to gather together so dry ground could appear. God called the dry ground land and the water sea. And God saw that it was good—it pleased him. God commanded plants with seeds and plants with fruits to grow. The seeds will produce more plants just like the ones they are from. And that happened. And God saw that it was good. Then evening passed and morning came, and it was the third day.

Then God commanded lights to appear in the sky. The greater light ruled the day, and the lesser light ruled the night. God also made the stars. These lights show us day and night, years and months, and special times of the year. God saw that it was good. Then evening passed and morning came, and it was the fourth day.

Then God commanded fish and everything that moves to appear in the water, and birds, large and small, to appear in the sky. Everything, big and small, that swims in the water, and every bird also gave birth to children like themselves. And God saw that it was good. God blessed the fish and birds and said, "Be fruitful," which means to have many children. Then evening passed and morning came, and it was the fifth day.

Then God commanded the animals to appear. These were all kinds of animals—the ones that live near households, the small animals and insects near the ground, and the wild animals. Each animal could also give birth to others like themselves. God saw that it was good.

Pause the drama. Ask the actor playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "I love being an artist, I'm so proud of what I've made, This is beautiful! There's one thing left to make." Restart the action.

Then God said, "Let's make humans to be our representatives and to be like us. They will rule over all the fish, birds, and animals on the earth." So God created humans—men and women—to be like him. God blessed the men and women and told them to have many children and fill the earth. They will rule over the earth and all the fish, birds, and animals on the earth. God gave the people and all the animals all the plants for their food. God looked at everything he had made, and he saw that it was *very* good! Then evening passed and morning came, and it was the sixth day.

Pause the drama. Ask the actor playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "This is such a special day! I've made my favorite thing, people! They are like me!" Ask the actors playing the people, "How do you feel?" You may hear things like, "This world is beautiful! Did God create this just for us?" Restart the action.

God had completed everything he made in the heavens and the earth before the seventh day started. So God stopped working and rested, or didn't work, on the 7th day. God blessed the 7th day and said it was a special day set apart for him.

Pause the drama. Ask the actor playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "I am so satisfied in this creation. I have completed this work well."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 1:1–2:3 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

In the beginning God created everything in the universe—he created the **heavens** and the earth. Here, heaven means sky or things above the earth.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **heaven** when it means sky. Look up heaven in the Master Glossary for more information. Pause this audio here.

In the Old Testament, God is the only thing that can do the action of creating something. Creating something means to make it new or to renew or restore it. In this passage, both the English words "create" and "make" are used, but they mean the same thing. Sometimes, God uses materials to make something, like he used dirt to make man, but often he makes something out of nothing.

Before God began creating order in the earth, you can say that the earth was empty and formless, or that it was a formless wasteland. Darkness covered the deep waters, which is like a large area of water with nothing else—just water stretching as far as you can see and so deep you cannot touch bottom.

The Spirit of God was hovering, moving, or flying over the waters. The **Spirit of God** can be the "power of God," or "wind from God," but it should not sound like it is destructive. Basically, God himself was there.

Stop here and discuss how you will translate the phrase **Spirit of God**. We use the more general phrase Spirit of God in the Old Testament, but you can look up Holy Spirit in the Master Glossary for more information about the spirit of God. Pause this audio here.

When God starts speaking and creating, sometimes translations say that God says, "Let there be light," but this really means that God himself commanded the light to appear.

For each day but day 2, God says this is "good." This means that God is pleased with what he has created. It does not mean that the object or the day is good or better than something else, but that God takes pleasure and feels happy when he sees it.

This begins the list of days of creation. At the end of each day there is an expression that means, "this certain day was completed." You can say that the day was completed when the night passed and morning came. A more natural way to say this in your language may be something simple like, "the first day ended."

Stop here and discuss as a translation team: How do you show in your language that a step on a list is completed? Pause this audio here.

When God separates the water below and the water above, he is creating the sky. This sky is like there is a roof or a tent or upside down bowl above the earth that separates the water from the earth from the water above the sky.

Stop here and discuss as a translation team: What word will you use for the idea of the "space" or "firmament" that God creates? What word will you use for "sky"? Pause this audio here.

God made the lights to show us the seasons, days, and years. The seasons are special times of the year that we need to know. They may be festival times, harvest times in the community, or any time of year that is important to the community.

In the fifth day God fills the sky and water with living animals. God puts fish and large sea creatures in the water—everything that moves in the water. We do not know what kinds of large sea creatures, so try to remain vague in your description.

God puts all kinds of birds in the air—this includes small birds and big birds that eat other animals.

On the sixth day, God puts the three kinds of animals on the land:

- Cattle is domestic animals that live around homes.
- Creeping things scurry or move close to the ground like snakes, lizards, insects, mice, and small animals.
- Wild animals are animals that live in the wild—sometimes they are dangerous.

Throughout this passage, the general word for God is used, not God's personal name Yahweh. When God makes people he says "Let *us* make humans in our image." We do not know why God used the term "us" to show himself. Bible scholars have several ideas. Maybe God is talking to his heavenly court of angels. Maybe God is already referring to the trinity of himself, his son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. But his original audience would not

have understood that yet. Maybe God is showing his majesty. In the Old Testament, kings sometimes referred to themselves as "we" to show honor and reverence. Maybe God is talking to himself and consulting with himself about what he wants to do. Most Bible scholars believe that God is showing that we should honor and respect him as king.

God says he creates humans **in his image**. People carry the image of God. That means that they are somehow like God physically and spiritually. They can think and they have a conscience, or a way to tell right from wrong. In the Old Testament, sometimes representatives of a king or queen were called an image. God is saying that people are representatives of him. God made it clear that he made both men and women in his image. We do not know exactly what "God made people in his image" means, so keep this vague in your language also.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **image of God**. Look up image of God in the Master Glossary for more information. Pause this audio here.

Did God make one man and one woman at this time, or many people? This is a general statement about God making humans. In the next passage we hear details about the first man and woman. Here, you can say that God created people, some female and some male.

God tells people to rule over the earth. This means that people should rule peacefully and responsibly. They should reign and subdue the earth, and this means to use power to use the earth for their needs, like farming and tilling the land. This is royal language—God wants people to reign like kings and queens over the earth.

God had finished his work—the kind of work done by a skilled labourer or artisan. God finished his work, but he was not tired. He did not need to rest because he was tired. He had just completed everything he had to do, so he stopped working. You may either say, "He stopped working," or "He rested."

God **blessed** the seventh day, which means that he made it special—he made it good. God called the seventh day **holy**, which means set apart for a special purpose. In this context, he set it apart for rest.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **blessed** and **holy**. Look up blessed and holy in the Master Glossary for more information. Pause this audio here.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 1:1–2:3

Audio Content

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Genesis 2:4–25

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 2:4–25 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 2:4–25 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

This passage is a narrative account of some parts of the creation story. It is not a second creation. Rather it fills in some of the details that are not told in the previous passage. The previous passage tells the story of the creation of the universe and everything in it. The previous passage talks about the order in which things were

created. The previous passage also provides some commands for the man and woman who had been created. The current passage provides more details about how some of the creation occurred. It does not repeat all the story of the creation. The author did not write a scientific account of the beginnings of the universe. We don't know how long it took for everything to be created. In this passage of Genesis, the author gives a narrative explanation of how people were created and how their relationship with God began. The emphasis is on how God related to the man and the woman.

The introduction to this section says, "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that God made the earth and heavens." This is a typical introduction in the book of Genesis. This kind of introduction usually introduces generations of people, but here it is introducing generations, or a history, of the earth.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: After God created the earth, we have a description of its initial condition. The earth was dry. Rain had not yet fallen on the earth. Water came up from the ground as a spring or covered the ground with a mist. And there was no one to take care of the plants and work the soil. God had already created trees. These plants would be the grains that people planted and harvested. Imagine what the earth looked like at this time. Describe some of the plants that might not yet be on the earth at this time. Pause this audio here.

Then God created a man by forming his body from dust. Dust is the loose dirt that is the top layer of soil on the ground. God breathed the breath of life into that body so that the body became a living man. The story doesn't repeat the details from the previous passage.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Why is it important that God breathed the breath of life into the man? How is this different from the way God created animals? Pause this audio here.

We have a description of the location of the Garden of Eden and how it was formed. The Garden was full of fruit trees. From the description, it seems that every tree gave some sort of fruit that the man could eat. God put two trees in the middle of the garden: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Evil means that the man would decide for himself what he can and can't do. This makes him think of himself as a god. From later verses, we know that the fruit of these trees gave life and gave the knowledge of good and evil. We don't know what this fruit looked like. Many cultures think the fruit was an apple, but the passage doesn't tell us this. We need to be sure that we don't describe a specific fruit.

Stop here and look at some pictures of different kinds of fruit as a group. Pause this audio here.

There is one river that divides into 4 branches. We have the name of 4 rivers that formed the boundaries of the garden. Two of those rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, still exist today.

Stop here and look at a map of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers including the area where they enter the Persian Gulf. The map should include the areas where the other two rivers flowed. The map should have the ancient names and current names of the countries of Ethiopia and Assyria. Pause this audio here.

The other two rivers have disappeared. This garden was put in the east. This means that it was east of Israel, or the land given to Abraham at a later date. Some think that the Garden was in the area where the Tigris and Euphrates enter the Persian Gulf. We don't know the actual location of the Garden.

God is very present in this story. God creates the man. God plants the garden. God puts the man in the garden. God talks with the man. We see that God cares for the man. God gives the man clear instructions and warnings about what the man may or may not do. God tells the man to tend the garden and to watch over the garden. Tending the garden would mean that the man will take care of it. To watch over something means that you protect it or look after it. Then God tells the man, "You may eat any fruit that you want from the garden except the fruit from the tree that gives the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat the fruit from that tree, you will die."

God sees that the man needs a companion. God brought all sorts of animals and birds to the man. These animals could have already been created, or God could have created some just to bring to the man. The man named each animal as it was brought before him. Not one of these is suitable to be a companion for the man. Then God causes the man to go into a sleep, takes a rib from his side, and creates a woman. When the man sees the woman, he begins to sing a piece of poetry or a song. The feeling is that the man is so full of joy at the sight of her that

he can't contain his joy. He sings. His song has 2 statements that mean the same thing. This is an expression of their loyalty to each other.

Stop here and discuss in your group why it was important for the man to have a companion. Why do you think he was so happy when he saw her? Identify some of the specific aspects of the relationship between God and the man and woman. Where do you see God taking care of them? Pause this audio here.

The man is full of joy and expresses that the man and woman are committed to each other very strongly. This explains why a man leaves his father and mother, and the two are united into one. This probably means that the man is no longer as loyal to his father and mother, especially emotionally. Now the man and woman are loyal to each other above everyone else.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Why did God put this statement into scripture? In your culture, how do a man and a woman become united as one? Give examples of what people do when they are united. Pause this audio here.

The story ends with a statement that the man and woman are naked but not ashamed. This is the only time in the Bible that nakedness isn't caused by poverty or guilt.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Imagine a time when no one feels shame. What does it look like?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 5 scenes.

First scene: The earth and heavens have been created and the way they look is explained. In the previous passage God created trees and plants. There is no one to take care of plants and grains, no one to work the soil. Also, it hasn't rained yet so the earth is dry. Water comes from springs in the ground or a mist that covers the earth.

Second scene: Then God creates man. God takes the dust from the ground and forms a man's body. The dust is the loose surface dirt that drifts and blows when there is wind. When God breathes into the man's nose, he becomes a living human being.

Third scene: God planted a garden and put the man in the garden. The story tells us the names of the 4 rivers in the garden and where they are located. The garden is full of fruit trees and the man can eat the fruit except the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God says to the man, "You are not to eat from that tree or you will die." God places the man in the garden to take care of it and watch over it.

Fourth scene: God realizes that the man needs a companion. First God brings all the animals and birds He has created and presents them to the man. The man names each animal and bird. God sees that none of these are acceptable as a companion.

Fifth scene: God puts the man to sleep and takes a rib from the man. God uses this rib to create a woman. This scene finishes with the man's reaction to the woman. They are both naked and not ashamed.

The characters in this story include:

- God
- The man
- The woman
- Various animals

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives to visualize the story and the action in it.

In the first scene, the earth is a desolate place. There are no wild plants or grains growing on the earth. This gives a fuller description of what the earth looked like after God separated the land from the water in the previous passage. It is important to remember that this isn't a separate creation but a fuller description of the creation from the previous passage.

In the second scene, God takes the dust from the ground and forms a man's body. The dust is the loose surface dirt that drifts and blows when there is wind. When God breathes into the man's nose, he becomes a living human being.

In the third scene, God plants a garden in the land of Eden. This garden is located in the east. This means that the garden is east of Israel. God puts the man in the garden. The story tells us that God put all sorts of fruit trees in the garden—trees that were beautiful and produced delicious fruit. The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil are in the middle of the garden. We don't know what those trees looked like nor what the fruit looked like.

Stop here and look at some pictures of different types of fruit and trees as a group. Pause this audio here.

The passage describes the 4 rivers that flow through or around the area. Two of these rivers have disappeared. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers still exist. God placed the man into the garden and told him to take care of it. In the previous passage, the man was given more specific instructions. Remember that this passage isn't repeating what happened in the previous passage. The scene ends with God saying to the man, "Do not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." God says, "If you eat this fruit, you will die."

Stop here and look at a map of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers including the area where they join the Gulf. The map will include the countries of Assyria and Ethiopia. Pause this audio here.

Scene 4 starts with God saying that the man needs a companion. Then God either creates some specific animals and birds or brings ones he had already created and presents each one to the man. The man gives them names.

Stop here and look at pictures of some different types of animals and birds as a group. This includes both domestic or tame animals and some wild animals. Pause this audio here.

Scene 5 starts when none of the animals or birds prove to be an acceptable companion. God causes the man to fall into a deep sleep and takes one of his ribs. Then God uses that rib to form a woman. God presents her to the man. The man then makes a poetic statement of joy. The scene finishes with an explanation that says that this is the reason that man is to leave his parents and join with his wife so that they become one. The last statement says that the man and woman are naked but not ashamed. This is the most important point in the story.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you show that a statement is the most important point in a story?

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 5 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- God
- The man
- The woman
- Animals and birds

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story. You will need to collect some objects to help with the acting out the story or team members can mime being the trees, rivers, and animals. The "stop the action" is for the second time the team acts out the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story.

As the story begins, God is the only character present. The story says that God has created the heavens and the earth. Then there is a description of the earth. Have the person playing the role of God look at the earth and note its condition. There are no plants or trees that people have planted for food. It doesn't rain. The water comes from springs in the ground or from mists. The person playing God can walk around and note these things.

Stop the action: You can ask God how he feels about the creation at this point. You may hear, "It is good," or "I still have work to do. It isn't finished yet."

Then God takes some dust from the ground and forms the body of a man. The person playing the role of the man should be lying on the floor or ground. God blows into the nose of the man and the man becomes a living person. At this point the man can get up and look around.

Stop the action: Ask God why he made the man. You may hear, "To be in my image or to have someone to rule over the earth" or "To have someone to take care of the earth." Ask the man what he sees. You may hear, "I can't see anyone except God" or "There is nothing here except God."

God takes the man to a garden that God has made. There are all sorts of trees with delicious fruit in the garden. Use pictures or chairs or even tree limbs to indicate that there are many trees around the garden. God and the man would be walking in the garden. Note that the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil are located in the middle of the garden. Use something like an object or two team members to represent these two trees. Use objects or team members to indicate the 4 rivers. Note that there is 1 river that branches into 4 rivers.

After locating the rivers and the trees, God speaks to the man. God places the man in the garden to tend and watch over it. Have God give these instructions to the man. Then God tells the man not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. God says, "If you eat that fruit, you will die."

Have the person playing the role of God give all the instructions to the man while the man listens.

Stop the action: Ask the man about the garden. "What do you see and what do you smell?" You may hear, "It is beautiful, the fruit looks delicious, I'm the only one here." Ask the man to repeat the instructions about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Ask the man why God gave those instructions. You may hear, "So I wouldn't eat from that tree by mistake" or "To take care of me or to warn me of danger" or even "I don't know."

Then God says that the man needs a companion. God then brings all the animals and birds that He has created. Other team members can play the role of several of these animals and birds. God brings each creature to the man and the man names each one. The man doesn't find a suitable companion among the animals and birds.

Stop the action: Ask the man, "How do you feel right now?" The man may reply "alone" or "lonely" or "discouraged because he found no companion."

God causes the man to fall into a deep sleep. God takes a rib from the side of the man. Then God makes a woman. The man wakes up and God presents the woman to the man. The man exclaims,

Stop the action: Ask the man how he feels when he sees the woman. You may hear, "Happy or glad or now I have a partner." He may repeat the entire poetic statement that the man made. Ask the woman how she feels when she sees the man. You may hear, "happy" or "glad." Ask how they feel about not having any clothes on. You may hear, "What are clothes, we don't need clothes, why wear something?"

Make sure that God says the sentence, "This is why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united as one."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The story starts with the phrase, "This is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth." Some translations say that these are the **generations** of the heavens and the earth. Generations here means account or story. The word **create** means to make something from nothing. Use the same word for create that you used in the previous passage. **Heavens** can refer to the sky or the place where God lives. Here it means the sky and the objects in it. Use the same term for heavens that you used in the previous passage. Heaven is in the Master Glossary.

God's name in this passage is a combination of 2 names for God—LORD, or **Yahweh**, and God. The word used as LORD or Yahweh is the proper name for the God of the Jews. In later years, the Jewish people stopped pronouncing the name of Yahweh because they believed the name was too special to say out loud. They used other names, like Jehovah. Most English translations use the word LORD, which means the supreme master over everything. The name "God" means divine or supreme being. In this passage the two names are used together. This does not happen often. LORD and God refer to the same divine or supreme being. Use the same word for God that you used in the previous passage. For more information on LORD as the personal name for God—Yahweh—see the Master Glossary.

The passage says that the Lord God had not sent rain on the **earth**. **Springs** of water came up from the ground to provide water for the earth. Some translations use the word "mist" instead of "springs." A **mist** is a collection of very small drops of water that float in the air and can be blown by the wind. The earth is the name of the planet that we live on. Use the word you have in your language for our planet.

The LORD God made **man** from the **dust** of the ground. Use the same word for man here that you did in the previous passage. Dust would be the surface layer of the ground or dirt. It is fine and spreads easily. God **breathed the breath of life** into the man's nostrils. This means that God blew into the man's nose. The breath that God blew into the man's nose gave the man life. The man became a living human being, or you might say the man became alive.

The LORD God planted a garden in **Eden** in the east or the direction where the sun rises. Eden is the name of the area where the garden is located. The LORD God planted many **fruit trees** in the garden and these trees gave delicious fruit. You want to use a plural word for **fruit** if you have one in your language. In the middle of the garden, the LORD God put the **tree of life** and the **tree of the knowledge of good and evil**. The fruit of the tree of life causes the person who eats that fruit to live forever. The fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil causes the person who eats that fruit to know what is good and what is **evil**. Evil means that the man would decide for himself what he can and can't do. This makes him think of himself as a god. Check the Master Glossary for a fuller discussion of evil.

The river which flows from the land of Eden watered the garden. It divided into 4 branches. You will need to use the names of the rivers. Make sure that these don't form another word in your language. The Pishon goes around the entire land of Havilah. The gold in Havilah is pure, meaning that nothing has mixed with the gold. Havilah also has a sweet smelling resin. This is a substance called Bdellium which is a fragrant, transparent, yellowish gum-resin, the sap from a particular tree and valued for its use as a perfume. You don't need to use the word Bdellium. You can say that it is a type of perfume or sweet smelling sap from some of the trees there. The sap of a tree is the liquid that rises in the tree to give nourishment to the upper branches and leaves. Havilah also has precious stones like Onyx. Onyx is a multi-colored stone that can be made smooth or carved into different shapes.

Show a picture of some onyx stones.

The second branch of the river is called the Gihon. It flowed around the entire land of Cush. Cush was the ancient name for Ethiopia. The third branch called the Tigris flowed east of the land of Asshur. Asshur is another name for the ancient country of Assyria. Today the northern part of Iraq and the adjoining part of Turkey make up the ancient land of Assyria. The fourth branch is called the Euphrates. Check to see if your language has words for the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. These rivers still exist today so you should use the same words that your language already has for those rivers. You will need to use the names of the countries and the names of the river.

Stop here and again show your translation team the maps of the area with the four rivers and the areas they flow into.

The Lord God places the man in the Garden of Eden to **take care** of the garden and to **watch over it**. To take care of the garden could mean to tend or to cultivate or to farm. This means that the man would have worked the land so that the fruit trees produced well.

Then the LORD God warned the man. God said, "You may eat any fruit you want in the garden except the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you will surely die." The fruit doesn't make the person evil. Evil means that the man decides for himself what he wants to do or doesn't want to do. This means that he is acting like he is a god. Use a generic word for fruit. We don't know what the fruit was, so don't use a specific type of fruit such as apple. **Surely die** means that the man will die for sure

Then the LORD God said, "It's not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him." In this passage the helper is a companion or co-worker or partner, not a servant. The helper and the man would work together and compliment each other. So the LORD God formed from the ground all the wild animals and the birds of the sky. These animals had already been created as we saw in the previous passage. Use the same words for the animals and birds that you used in the previous passage. This is not another creation of the animals. This is providing additional details of how God created the animals and birds. God brought the animals and birds to the man and the man gave each one a name. There were **wild animals** and **livestock**. Livestock refers to domesticated animals that we would use in farming or daily life such as sheep, horses, donkeys, chickens, dogs and cats. Wild animals would be those who are not tamed or domesticated such as lions or tigers. Use a general word such as domesticated or farm animals or livestock. The man didn't find a suitable helper for himself among all these animals.

The LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. This was a sound sleep meaning it would not be easy for the man to wake up. God took a rib from the man. The passage doesn't say which side. This means you simply say that God took a rib from the man. God made a woman from the rib. Use the same word for woman that you used in the previous passage. God closed the wound or healed the wound in the man's side.

Then the LORD God brought the woman to the man. This is the same action as when God brought the animals. But this time, the woman is an acceptable helper or companion. The man exclaimed. This is a happy expression. You want to choose a word that shows happiness or excitement. The man has been looking for a companion from all the animals. Now he has found one. He says, "At Last!" or "Finally!" The man is saying that the woman's bones come from the man's bones. The woman's flesh comes from the man's flesh. He names her woman because she came from a man. He uses a poetic form for expressing these comments. How would you express this type of poem in your language? Use the word you used in the previous passage for woman.

This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife and the two are united into one. This means that the man doesn't continue to live with his parents. He is no longer loyal to his parents but forms a new relationship with his wife and is loyal to her. Rather he takes his wife and lives with her in a new home and they become united together. United means that they become one person or that they form a new family together.

The man and the woman were naked and felt no shame. They lived in the Garden of Eden and wore no clothes. They didn't need any clothes. They felt no shame. They felt no need to hide themselves or parts of themselves from each other nor from God.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 2:4-25

Audio Content

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Genesis 3:1-24

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Genesis 3:1-24 and put it in your hearts. Listen to an audio version of Genesis 3:1-24 three times, in three different translations, if possible. Then, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage?
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage?
3. What does this passage tell us about God?
4. What does this passage tell us about people?
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 3:1-24 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

This passage takes place after God created the earth and everything on it. God put the man and woman in a beautiful garden. God told them they could eat from any tree in the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the middle of the garden. The man and woman were together in the garden, naked, but not ashamed.

This passage describes what happened when the man and woman disobeyed God and ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the middle of the garden. In this passage, both the personal name for God, Yahweh, and the general term for God are used together.

Out of all the wild animals Yahweh God made, the snake was the most clever. The snake was very smart and had a plan. The plans of a clever person can be good plans, or they can be bad plans. The passage does not tell us yet if the snake's plans are bad or not. We do not know what kind of snake this was.

Stop here. As a group, look at a picture of a snake together. Pause this audio here.

Later passages in the Bible seem to imply that the snake was Satan, the spiritual being who led a rebellion against Yahweh. This passage does not say the snake was Satan, but it does say that Yahweh God created the snake. There is nothing in this passage to tell us that the snake is more than a normal snake.

The snake said to the woman, "Did God really say that you cannot eat from any of the trees in the garden?" The snake says this either as a question or a statement of shock and surprise. The snake uses this question to cause the woman to doubt what God told them.

The woman answered, "We can eat from all the trees in the garden. But God did say, 'You cannot eat from the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden. If you even touch it, you will die.'" Here, the woman exaggerates what God told the man. In the previous passage, God did tell the man not to eat from the tree in the middle of the garden, but he did not tell him they would die if they even touched the tree.

The snake said, "You won't die! God knows that if you eat from that tree, your eyes will be opened." The snake is not saying that someone will physically open the man and woman's eyes. The snake says that if they eat the fruit from that tree, they will have new knowledge and understanding.

The snake continued. It said, "You will become like God, knowing the difference between good and evil." "Good and evil" probably refers to knowing everything there is to know.

Stop here. Discuss as a group: What kinds of things do people in your culture do in order to gain knowledge about everything they can? Who gives people knowledge? Where do people go to get knowledge? What kind of knowledge is important to your people? What do people in your culture think about people who want to get all the knowledge they can? Pause this audio here.

The woman saw that the fruit looked delicious and would make her wise. The passage does not tell us what kind of fruit was on the tree. The woman took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave the fruit to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it too. Her husband was probably standing with the woman the entire time she talked to the snake.

As soon as the man and woman ate the fruit, their eyes were opened. This means that they had new knowledge and understanding. The man and woman realized that they were naked, and they felt shame because they were naked. When people feel shame, they feel like they have lost respect or honor. Before this, the man and woman had never felt shame because they were naked.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do you describe shame in your culture? What makes people feel shame in your culture? Tell a story of something that would make someone feel shame. Pause this audio here.

So the man and woman sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves. They somehow attached the fig leaves together to make coverings. They probably wore these coverings around their waist. Fig trees have very large leaves, so they were good leaves for doing this.

Stop here. As a group, look at a picture of a fig tree and a fig leaf. Pause this audio here.

When the day was cool, probably around sundown or early evening, the man and his wife heard the sound of Yahweh God coming into the garden. Even if Yahweh God was not walking on feet like people do, they could hear whatever sound he made as he came towards them. They hid from Yahweh God in the garden. But Yahweh God wanted to talk with the man and the woman. He called to the man, "Where are you?" Yahweh God asked the man a question rather than telling him what he already knew he did.

The man answered, "I heard you in the garden. I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid."

Yahweh God said, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from the tree I told you not to eat from?"

Instead of answering directly, the man said, "The woman that you put here with me gave me some of the fruit, and I ate it!"

Then Yahweh God said to the woman, "What did you do?" Again, Yahweh God chooses to ask questions rather than tell the woman what she did.

The woman said, "The snake tricked me, or lied to me, and I ate the fruit."

So Yahweh God talked to the snake first. Yahweh God was not pleased with the snake, so he cursed the snake and punished, or judged the snake. Yahweh God said, "Because you did this, I will curse you among all the livestock, or cattle, and all wild animals."

Yahweh God then humiliated the snake more. He says, "You will crawl on your belly and eat dust the rest of your life." Here, Yahweh God probably does not mean that the snake lost its legs or that the snake will only eat dust the rest of his life. Instead, these phrases emphasize that the snake is now lower than all the other animals.

The next part of this passage is difficult to understand. There are many interpretations of this part of the passage because in the original language, the word for descendants could mean one descendant or many descendants. Yahweh God continued to speak to the snake. He said, "I will make you and the woman enemies, and your descendants and her descendants will be enemies too." Descendants here probably refers to all the snake and woman's children, their children, and anyone who would call the snake or the woman their ancestors. Here, Yahweh God probably means that all the woman's descendants and all the snake's descendants will be enemies forever. However, some people think that Yahweh God is saying that the snake and only one descendant of the woman, Jesus, will be enemies with each other.

Then Yahweh God continues talking to the snake: "He or it will strike at your head, and you will strike at his heel." God is saying that the woman's descendants will strike at or try to hurt the snake's head. The snake will strike at or try to hurt the person's heel. Some people think this is talking about one descendant, Jesus,

conquering Satan one day. Most Bible scholars, however, believe that this is a general statement about, and explanation for, how all people and all snakes will not like each other.

Now Yahweh God turns to the woman. Yahweh probably did not curse the woman, but instead told the woman about the consequences of what she did. Yahweh said, "I will make it more painful for you to be pregnant, and you will give birth in pain." The next part seems surprising because after all that pain, the woman will still "desire, or be attracted to, her husband, and he will rule over her." Some people think Yahweh said to the woman, "You will desire your husband just like he will desire you." Other people think Yahweh said, "You will desire to control your husband, and he will rule over you, or be your master." However, in all these translations, Yahweh was probably telling the woman that her relationship with her husband would be challenging as they struggle to control each other rather than work together in unity.

Then Yahweh God spoke to Adam. This is probably the first time Yahweh used the man's name, Adam. The name "Adam" sounds like the word for "man" in the original language, Hebrew. Yahweh probably did not curse the man, but just told the man about the consequences of what he did.

Yahweh said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate some of the fruit from the tree I told you not to eat from, the ground is cursed because of you." Yahweh himself is cursing the ground. Then he tells Adam, "You will have to work hard all your life to make the ground grow food for you to eat. The ground will grow thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat plants that grow in the ground." Thorns and thistles have sharp points. They are hard to clear from the ground to grow food. Yahweh God is telling Adam here that from now on Adam will have to plant crops in fields in the ground and harvest them.

Stop here. As a group, look at pictures of thorns and thistles. Pause this audio here.

Yahweh God continued, "You will work very hard and have to sweat to get enough food to eat. You will do this until you return to the ground, because you were made from the ground. You were made from dust, so you will return to dust." Here, Yahweh God means that one day the man will die. When humans die, their bodies become dust, or dirt, again. Yahweh God is also reminding Adam that he made him from the ground originally when he took some dirt to form Adam's body.

Then the man, Adam, named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of everyone who lived. The name "Eve" is similar to the Hebrew word for "life." Then Yahweh God made clothing from animal skin for Adam and his wife. We do not know what kind of animal skin God used or how he obtained the skin. The clothing was probably something like a long robe without sleeves.

Yahweh God spoke to himself. He realised that humans are "now like us." God realises that like himself, humans know everything about both good and evil. Now he wants to prevent them from an even worse problem. He says to himself, "What if the humans reach out, take the fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever..." God knows that if they eat, or continue to eat, from the tree that gives life, they will never die. So Yahweh God banished the man and woman from the garden in Eden, which meant that they could never come back into the garden. He sent Adam out of the garden to work to grow food from the ground that Yahweh God made Adam from.

After Yahweh God banished them, he put a cherubim on guard probably at the east entrance of the garden. Cherubim are guardians of sacred places. They are often symbols of Yahweh's presence. They have the body of a lion, the wings of a bird, and the face of a human.

Stop here. As a group, look at a drawing of a cherubim. Pause the audio here.

Yahweh God put a flaming sword that swung back and forth to guard and protect the way to the tree of life. The sword was probably floating in the air.

Stop here. As a group, look at a picture of a sword. Pause the audio here.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 3:1-24 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has five scenes.

In the first scene: The snake talks with the woman and tricks her into eating the fruit that Yahweh God had said not to eat. The woman gives it to the man, who was with her, and he eats the fruit too. The man and woman realize they are naked, and they are ashamed.

In the second scene: During the evening, Yahweh God walks in the garden. The man and woman hide because they are afraid. Yahweh God asks the man some questions. The man says the woman gave him the fruit. The woman says the snake tricked her.

In the third scene: Yahweh God curses the snake. Then Yahweh God tells the woman she will have pain when she gives birth, and that she will desire her husband but her husband will control her. Then Yahweh God tells the man that he will have to work very hard to grow food, and that the man will one day die.

In the fourth scene: Adam, the man, names his wife Eve. Yahweh God makes Adam and Eve clothes.

In the fifth scene: Yahweh God decides to send the man and woman out of the garden. He puts a cherubim and flaming sword to guard the way to the tree of life.

The characters in this passage are:

- The snake
- The snake's descendants
- The woman, named Eve
- The woman's descendants
- The man, named Adam
- Yahweh God
- and the cherubim

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

Scene one begins with a word that shows us that a new story has begun.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do you begin new stories in your language? Do you have any words or phrases that you use to begin new stories? Pause this audio here.

Now, the snake, the cleverest of all the wild animals Yahweh God made, talks with the woman. It is important to remember that the woman's husband is probably with her while the snake is talking. The snake says, "Did God really say that you cannot eat the fruit of any tree in the garden?" The snake asks the question as if it is surprised. However, the snake is trying to make the woman doubt what God said.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do you show that someone is surprised when you tell stories in your language? Pause this audio here.

The woman answers, "We can eat the fruit of any tree in the garden." Then the woman makes a contrast. She says, "But, it's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we can't eat. God said to us, 'You cannot eat or touch the tree in the middle of the garden. If you do, you will die.'"

Then the snake makes a strong contrast. He replies, "No! You won't die! God knows that as soon as you eat the fruit you will become wise. You will know everything, just like God does."

As the snake and woman talk, they use the plural "you." This means that when they say "you," they refer to both the woman and the man. They also only use the general name for God, and not God's personal name, Yahweh.

The woman sees that the fruit of the tree is both good to eat and beautiful to see. She wants the fruit because it will make a person wise. So she takes some of its fruit and eats it. The language the passage uses here emphasizes the woman's actions to show that her actions are important.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do you emphasize someone's actions when you tell stories in your culture? Tell a story from your culture that has an important action in it. Pay attention to how you talk about the action—your tone of voice, your emotion, and your words. Pause the audio here.

The woman gives some of the fruit to her husband, who is with her, and he eats it. It is important to remember that the original language implies that the man was standing near the woman during the entire conversation. Some translations include that information. Immediately, the man and woman become wise, and they suddenly feel ashamed because they aren't wearing any clothes. So they attach fig leaves together to cover themselves.

Scene two happens later, probably around sunset or early evening.

Stop here and discuss as a group: What words or phrases do you use to describe different times of day? What word or phrase do you use to describe early evening in your language? Pause this audio here.

You might want to rearrange the action in this scene. That evening Yahweh God comes and walks in the garden. The original language seems to show that Yahweh God came regularly at this time of day to walk with them. When they hear the sound of Yahweh God's footsteps, or the sound of God entering the garden, the man and his wife went behind the trees so he would not see them. Yahweh God calls out to the man, "Where are you?"

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do you call out to someone when you are trying to find them? Pause this audio here.

The man replies he hid when he heard Yahweh God in the garden because he was afraid, since he is naked. Yahweh God first asks the man, "Who told you that you are naked?" When Yahweh God asks this question, he means, "How did you find out you were naked?" Then God asks the man if he ate from the tree Yahweh God had told him not to eat from. The man does not reply directly. He immediately says, "The woman you gave me, she gave me some fruit." God now directly speaks to the woman. He asks, "What have you done?" which really means, "Why did you do that?" The woman says that she ate the fruit because the snake lied to her.

In scene three, Yahweh God speaks to the snake. He curses the snake. When God curses a person, this means he is not pleased with the person, so he punishes them by cursing them. It means that something unpleasant is going to happen to someone.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do people curse other people or things in your culture? What type of language do people use in these curses? Pause this audio here.

Yahweh God speaks to the snake, the woman, and the man. When he speaks to them, what he says is in poetry form, or special language.

Yahweh God says to the snake, "Because you did this, I will curse you among all the animals." God is not cursing all the animals here—he is only cursing the snake. Then Yahweh God makes the snake very low. He says, "You will move on your stomach and your head will always be in the dirt. I will make you and the woman hate each other, and I will make your descendants and her descendants hate each other. Her descendant will bruise or strike at your head, and you will bruise or strike at its heel." Here, both the woman's descendant and the snake do the same action of striking or bruising each other. The passage seems to only talk about one descendant who will bruise the head of the snake, and only one snake who will strike at the heel of the person. However, in the original language, descendant may really mean many descendants. Therefore, most people believe that this is talking about snakes and people in general.

Then Yahweh God says to the woman, "I will make it more painful for you to be pregnant, and you will give birth to children in pain." God makes a contrast here. He says, "In spite of this, you will desire your husband, but he will control you."

Then Yahweh God used Adam's name for the first time. He said to Adam, "Because you listened to your wife and ate the fruit of the tree that I commanded you not to eat from, I will curse the ground because of you. You will struggle to grow food from it all your life. The ground will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will

eat plants from the ground. By the sweat of your face you will have food to eat." Here, "by the sweat of your face" is a saying that means the man will work so hard for food that his entire body will sweat very hard.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do you talk about working very hard? What kind of special phrases do you use to describe hard work? Pause this audio here.

Yahweh God says the man will work hard like this until he returns to the ground he was made from. This means the man will die. Yahweh God continues, "You were made from dust, and you will return to dust." Here, "to return to dust" refers to the man dying. Dead bodies turn back into dust and dirt after a long time.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do you talk about dying? What kinds of special phrases do you use to describe dying? Pause this audio here.

Scene four is a break from the action. It provides background information to the story.

Adam names his wife Eve, which may mean "life." Eve will become the mother of all the living people. This is special language which means that all people on earth are descendants of Eve.

Scene 4 ends with God making clothing for Adam and Eve from animal skins. God either put the clothes on Adam and Eve himself, or he gave them the clothing and they put it on.

In scene five, the storyline starts again. Yahweh God talks to himself. Yahweh God says to himself, "Look, these human beings are now like us, because they know both good and evil, or, they know everything." The word "look" means that Yahweh God is saying something important here. Yahweh God is probably not talking to a group of gods or angels here. In that time, sometimes rulers would call themselves "us" as a sign of respect, so that might be why Yahweh uses "us" here.

Then Yahweh God sends the man and woman away from the garden in Eden in a forceful way. The man and woman have no choice about whether or not to leave the garden. Yahweh God sends Adam out to work the ground, or dirt, Adam was made from. We see the idea of Adam returning to the ground, or dirt, he was made from several times in this story.

Then we see what Yahweh God did to protect the path to the tree of life. Yahweh God put a strong cherubim at the east of the garden.

He also puts a flaming sword that flashes back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. We do not know if this sword was fire in the shape of a sword, or a sword that was on fire or was shining with bright light. Swords were symbols of protection.

Stop here and discuss as a group: What symbols of protection do you have in your culture? When you think of a sword with fire coming out of it, what feelings do you have? Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 3:1-24 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This story has five scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- The snake
- The snake's descendants
- The woman, named Eve
- The woman's descendants
- The man, named Adam
- Yahweh God
- and the cherubim

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the story without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the story. Help each other remember every part of the story.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then restart the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

The snake was the most clever of all the animals Yahweh God had made. The snake said to the woman, "Is it true that God said you cannot eat from any tree in the garden?"

The woman answered, "That is not true. God said that we can eat the fruit of any tree in the garden. But God said that we cannot eat the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden. God said that if we even touch the tree, we will die."

The snake said, "No, that is not true. God knows that if you eat the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden, you will know all good and evil things, like God does."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the snake. "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person may answer things like, "I want to trick the woman so that she eats the fruit," or "I am lying to the woman," or "I want to see people suffer!" Restart the drama.

The woman saw that the fruit was good to eat and very beautiful. She wanted the fruit because it would make her wise. So she took some of the fruit and ate.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the woman, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person might answer things like, "I want to be wise," or "I am giving into what I want," or "I doubt that what God told me was right," or "I want to be like God." Restart the drama. She also gave some fruit to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Ask the person playing the woman's husband, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person might answer things like, "I've heard what the snake said, and the snake has convinced me," or "I'm doubting that what God told me was right," or, "My wife is doing it, so it should be okay." Restart the drama.

The man and woman realized they were naked. They felt shame, so they sewed clothes out of leaves.

Pause the drama. Ask the people playing the man and woman, "What are you thinking or feeling?" They might answer things like, "This is a new feeling," or "We feel deeply humiliated and guilty that we're not wearing clothes," or "We feel bad, but we don't think we can go to God for help." Restart the drama.

In the early evening, the man and woman heard Yahweh walking in the garden, so they hid. Yahweh God called out, "Where are you?" The man told Yahweh that he was hiding because he was ashamed. Yahweh asked, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from the tree I commanded you not to eat from?"

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing God, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person might answer things like, "I know what happened, but I want the man to tell me," or "I am very, very sad that the man disobeyed me." Restart the drama.

The man answered, "The woman you gave me. She gave me the fruit, and I ate it."

Yahweh asked the woman what she did.

The woman answered, "The snake tricked me. That's why I ate it."

Pause the action. Ask the people playing the man and woman, "What are you thinking or feeling?" They might answer things like, "We feel guilty, so we're trying to blame other people for what happened," or "We're so ashamed that Yahweh found out what we did." Restart the drama.

Then Yahweh cursed the snake. Then Yahweh told the woman that she would be in pain when she had children and that she would desire her husband, but he would control her. Then Yahweh told the man that he would have to work hard to grow food, and that he would one day become dust.

Pause the drama. Ask the people playing the man and woman, "What are you thinking or feeling?" They may answer things like, "We are very sad," or "We are devastated to find out everything that will happen because of what we did," or "We are angry at what has happened." Restart the drama.

Then God made clothes for the man and woman, and sent them out of the garden so that they could never eat from the tree of life. God put a cherubim and a flaming sword in front of the entrance to the garden to protect the way to the tree of life.

Finish the drama. Ask the person playing God, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person may answer things like, "I am very sad that so many things are wrong now that the man and woman did this," or "I don't want the man and woman to eat from the tree of life, and live like this forever."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 3:1-24 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

The **snake** was the most clever of all the animals **Yahweh God** had made. A snake is a long, thin animal without legs.

God's name in this passage is a combination of two names for God: LORD, or Yahweh, and **Elohim**, the general word for God. The word used as Yahweh is the proper name for the God of the Jews. In later years, the Jewish people stopped pronouncing the name of Yahweh because they believed the name was too special to say out loud. They used other names, like Jehovah. Most English translations use the word LORD which means the supreme master over everything. The name "God" means divine or supreme being. In this passage the two names are used together. This does not happen often. LORD and God refer to the same divine or supreme being. Use the same word for Elohim or God that you used in the previous passage. For more information on Yahweh as the personal name for God see the Master Glossary.

When the snake and the women talk together, they only use the word Elohim or God when they talk about God.

The snake asked the woman, "Did God really say you cannot eat from any tree in the **garden**?" Use the same word for garden that you used in previous Genesis stories.

The woman saw that the fruit would give her **wisdom**. In this story, wisdom refers to insight or understanding. It refers to knowing all things, including good things and evil things.

The man and woman realised that they were **naked**. Use the same word for naked that you used in previous stories. Remember that it should be a word that you can use among both men and women. You may say that they were not wearing clothes.

The woman ate some of the fruit, and gave it to her husband, who was with her. They suddenly felt shame because they were not wearing any clothes. They sewed **fig** leaves together to cover themselves. This probably means that they found a way to attach the leaves to each other. Figs are a kind of tree with very large leaves.

Stop here. As a group, look at a picture of a fig tree and fig leaves. Discuss the best word or phrase to describe fig leaves in your language. Pause this audio here.

Then Yahweh God **cursed** the snake. Curse means punishment or judgement. It means that something unpleasant is going to happen to someone. Although many languages have a way to pronounce a curse on someone or something, be sure that the word you choose does not mean someone has performed magic. When God curses a person, this means he is not pleased with the person, so he punishes them by cursing them. Look up curse in the Master Glossary for more information, and use the same word in all of your next passages.

Stop here and discuss as a group: In your language, how will you describe animals or people who are cursed? Pause this audio here.

Yahweh God told the snake, "I will make you and the woman hate each other, and I will make your **descendants** hate her descendants." Descendants in Hebrew, the original language, can either mean one or many. In this case, descendants most likely refers to someone's children and those children's children. Anyone who called the snake or woman an ancestor was a descendant of the snake or woman.

Yahweh God continued, "The woman's descendant will **bruise** your head, and you will bruise his heel." In the original language, bruise meant to strike, attack, or hurt something.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you describe this part of the story when the descendants of the snake and of the woman hate each other and try to harm each other? Pause this audio here.

Then Yahweh God told the woman that she would have pain when she gave birth and that she would **desire** her husband, but he would control her. Control may also imply that the man wants to be like his wife and desires her also. Desire means to deeply want something, often in a sexual way much like men and women desire each other.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Based on the different interpretations of this part of the story that you've heard about, how will you translate this part of the story? Pause the audio here.

Then Yahweh God told the man, Adam, that because the man listened to the woman and ate the fruit, the ground was cursed. The man would work hard to grow food from the ground his whole life, but the ground would grow **thorns** and **thistles**. Thorns and thistles are spiky plants that are hard to pull from the ground.

Stop here. As a group, discuss what word or phrase describes thorns and thistles in your language. Pause this audio here.

Yahweh God told Adam that Adam would return to the "**dust** of the ground." Use the same word for dust or soil in this story as you have in previous stories.

Adam named his wife **Eve**, because she would be the mother of all the living. The name Eve sounds like the word for "life." The name Adam sounds like the word for "man."

Yahweh God made **clothes** from an animal's skin for Adam and Eve. Remember that clothes here refers to a long shirt or robe that probably had no sleeves.

Then Yahweh God decided to send them away from the **Garden of Eden** so they would not eat fruit from the **tree of life** and live forever. Use the same phrases for tree of life and Garden of Eden as you used in previous stories.

Yahweh God put a **cherubim** to guard the way to the tree of life. Cherubim are supernatural beings that have wings. They often guarded holy places. They are different from angels, who are messengers for God. Look up cherubim in the Master Glossary for more information.

Stop here. As a group, look at a drawing of a cherubim. Discuss as a group what word or phrase describes cherubim. Use the same word for all the next passages. Pause the audio here.

Yahweh God also put a flaming **sword** at the entrance to the garden. A sword is a long, sharp metal used as a weapon.

Stop here. As a group, look at a picture of a sword. Pause the audio here.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 3:1-24

Audio Content

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Genesis 4:1–16

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Genesis 4:1–16 and put it in your hearts. Listen to an audio version of Genesis 4:1–16 three times, in three different translations, if possible. Then, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage?
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage?
3. What does this passage tell us about God?
4. What does this passage tell us about people?
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 4:1–16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

This passage is the first of two passages about Adam and Eve's children. This passage tells the story of their oldest son, Cain, who murdered his younger brother, Abel.

The story starts by giving background information about Cain and Abel's birth and work. The passage says that Adam knew his wife, Eve. That means that Adam and Eve had sexual relations with each other—they slept with each other to have children.

Stop here and discuss as a group: What common words or phrases do you have in your language to say a husband has had sexual relations with his wife? What kinds of expressions do you use when you talk about sexual relations in groups where both men and women are present? Pause this audio here.

Eve became pregnant and gave birth to a baby named Cain. Eve realised that Yahweh had helped her and she was thankful for that, so she said, "I have gotten, or received, a man with Yahweh's help." Then Eve gave birth to another son, Abel.

Some time later, Abel became a shepherd. Shepherds took care of flocks, or groups of sheep. People used sheep to make food and clothes. Cain worked the soil, which means that he became a farmer. Farmers worked to grow plants from the ground for food.

Stop here. As a group, look at a picture of a flock of sheep. Look at a picture of a baby sheep. Pause this audio here.

The main action of this story starts at some point after Cain and Abel grew up, probably after a harvest, when it was time to gather up the plants that they had planted. Cain gave some of his crops as an offering, or gift, to Yahweh. Abel also gave an offering, or gift, to Yahweh. Abel gave Yahweh some of the fattest parts of some of his firstborn lambs, which are baby sheep. The passage does not tell us how Cain and Abel gave these gifts to God. We know that later, people would build altars, which are usually tables of stone, to burn these kinds of gifts on.

Yahweh was pleased with Abel and accepted his gift, but Yahweh was not pleased with Cain and did not accept his gift. We do not know why Yahweh accepted one gift and rejected the other one. We only know that in addition to accepting and rejecting the gifts, Yahweh was pleased with Abel himself, and Yahweh was not pleased with Cain. This situation made Cain very angry and his face fell. In other words, Cain's face looked angry or sad. Cain was probably both angry and sad.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Talk about a time when you or someone you know was both angry and sad at the same time. What kinds of things did they do? How did you know they were angry and sad? Pause the audio here.

Yahweh asked Cain, "Why are you so angry? Why is your face fallen, or sad? Look, if you do what is right, I will lift you up, or accept you." Maybe Yahweh is saying to Cain that he will lift up his face that has been looking downward because Cain is sad. Yahweh is not asking Cain why he is angry. Yahweh is telling Cain that Cain should not be angry because Yahweh will accept Cain if Cain does what is right.

Now Yahweh tells Cain what will happen to him if Cain refuses to do what is right. God says, "But if you refuse to do what is right, sin is crouching at the door. Sin desires to control you. But you must overcome sin and rule over it." Sin refers to disobeying Yahweh. Yahweh compares sin to a wild animal that is lying on the ground, ready to jump on another animal in order to harm or eat it. Yahweh says that sin desires to control and harm people in the same way a wild animal desires to eat other animals. In other words, many times people allow sin to control their lives. Yahweh is either commanding or inviting Cain to resist sinning, or disobeying Yahweh.

It seems that Cain did not follow Yahweh's advice. One day some time later, Cain spoke to his brother. It is possible that he invited his brother to come to the field with him. While they were in a field, far away from people, Cain attacked Abel and killed him.

Some time later, Yahweh asked Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" This sounds like the question Yahweh asked Adam in the garden when he asked him, "Where are you?"

Cain lied and strongly denied that he knew what happened. He said, "I don't know. Am I my brother's guardian?" or "Am I supposed to take care of my brother?"

Yahweh said, "What have you done?" Yahweh is asking another similar question to what he asked Eve in the previous story. He already knows what happened. Now he tells Cain that he knows. Yahweh says, "Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground, which drank your brother's blood from your hand." Yahweh uses special language to compare Abel's blood to a person who cries out and tells Yahweh that Cain murdered him. The people hearing this story would understand that the blood, or Abel, is asking Yahweh to punish Cain for his wrongdoing.

Then Yahweh curses Cain. Yahweh tells Cain that he is "banished from the ground," which means that the ground will no longer produce good crops for Cain. Cain will no longer be able to be a farmer. This is all happening because Cain killed Abel.

Yahweh continued, "No matter how hard you work, the ground will not give you good crops. From now on you will be homeless and must wander the earth." Cain will no longer belong anywhere.

Cain replied to Yahweh, "My punishment is too great, it is too hard, to endure. You have banished me from the ground and I will be hidden from your face." The phrase "hidden from your face" means that Cain will no longer be able to be in Yahweh's presence.

Stop here to discuss as a group: What phrases or words do you use in your language when you talk about someone who is no longer allowed in the presence of someone else? What does this mean for Cain that he was no longer able to be in Yahweh's presence? How will Cain's life change? Pause the audio here.

Cain continued, "Anybody who finds me might kill me." Although we only know about Adam, Eve, and Cain, this suggests that there must be other people on the earth by this time.

Yahweh said to Cain. "No. I will punish whoever kills you seven times more harshly, or severely, than I punished you." In some traditions, this could mean that if someone kills Cain, seven members of the killer's family will also be killed. However, here Yahweh might not mean that he will punish someone who kills Cain exactly seven times more harshly than he punished Cain. The number seven sometimes means that something is complete, so Yahweh might mean that he will completely punish anyone who kills Cain.

Then Yahweh put a mark on Cain, so that no one would kill him. Yahweh is compassionate to Cain even though Cain killed his brother. The passage does not say what kind of mark Yahweh put on Cain or what the mark looked like; however, we know that people must have been able to see the mark and understand that the mark meant that Yahweh owned Cain, and they should not kill Cain.

Then Cain left the presence of Yahweh, and wandered in an area called Nod, which was to the east of Eden. Nod means "Land of wandering," or "Place where people wander."

Stop here. As a group, look at where Nod and Eden might have been on a map. Pause this audio here.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

DEFINING THE SCENES

GENESIS 4:1-16

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 4:1-16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four scenes.

In the first scene: Adam and Eve have two sons, who are named Cain and Abel.

In the second scene: Cain and Abel give Yahweh gifts. Yahweh accepts Abel and his gifts, but rejects Cain and his gifts. Cain becomes very sad and angry. Yahweh warns Cain not to sin.

In the third scene: Cain looks for Abel, attacks him in a field, and kills him. When Yahweh asks Cain where Abel is, Cain lies and says that he does not know. Yahweh confronts Cain and punishes Cain.

In the fourth scene: Cain leaves Yahweh's presence and wanders the world.

The characters in this passage are:

- Adam
- Eve
- Cain
- Abel
- and Yahweh

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

The **first scene** begins with a word that shows that this passage is introducing background information about the main characters of the story. Adam and Eve had two sons, named Cain and Abel. Cain was a farmer and Abel was a shepherd.

Stop here and discuss as a team: What words or phrases do you use in your language to show that a story introduces background information? How do you talk about the work that someone does? Pause this audio here.

The **second scene** takes place a while later, after Cain and Abel grew up and became men. One day, probably after a harvest, Cain gave Yahweh some of the plants from his crops, and Abel gave Yahweh some of the fat from the firstborn lambs in his flock. Yahweh accepted Abel and his offering, but rejected Cain and his offering. This made Cain very angry, and his face was sad. The original language uses special language here to show anger and sadness. It says that Cain's nose was burning to show that he was angry. Then it says that his face fell or looked downwards to perhaps show that he was sad.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do you talk about someone being very angry and very sad all at the same time? What special words or phrases do you use? Pause this audio here.

Yahweh asked Cain, "Why are you so angry? Why is your face sad? or Why is your face looking down?" These are questions Yahweh does not expect an answer to. Yahweh is instead telling Cain that Yahweh will lift up Cain, or accept him, if Cain does what is right.

Yahweh continued, "If you do what is right, I will accept you. If you refuse to do what is right, sin is crouching at the door. It wants to control you, but you must defeat it." Here, Yahweh does not mean that sin is an animal that is physically crouching at the door. Instead, Yahweh compares sin to something like a wild animal crouching at the door. Sin is like an animal that crouches at a door, because it wants to attack and control someone. A door is usually an entrance into a house. In this case, the door may be like the entrance into Cain's thoughts or into his heart. Yahweh's description shows how much sinful desires want to control people, and how close Cain is to allowing his sinful desires to control him and lead to Cain sinning.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story that compares something not alive to something that is alive. Then, talk about comparing sin to a wild animal that crouches at a door waiting to come in and control or harm you. How does this make you feel about sin? Pause this audio here.

Now talk about how you will translate this section of the story. How will you talk about sin crouching at the door, desiring to control Cain? Pause this audio here.

In **scene three**, Cain looked for his brother. We do not know how much later this was after Yahweh talked to Cain. Cain may have said to his brother, "Let's go into the fields." Cain and Abel went to a place outside the area where people lived, perhaps to an area where people grew crops. Then Cain attacked and killed his brother Abel. We do not know how Cain killed Abel.

Some time later, Yahweh asked Cain, "Where is your brother? Where is Abel?" We do not know how much later this was after Cain killed Abel. But we do know that Yahweh already knows the answer to this question. Like in the previous story about Adam and Eve, Yahweh does not accuse Cain of wrongdoing. He asks Cain to speak about it himself.

Cain lied and answered, "I do not know. Am I my brother's guardian?" or "Do I take care of my brother?" Cain does not expect an answer to this question; instead, he is very angry and strongly denies that he knows anything about Abel. Cain is saying that he is not responsible for his brother.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do you deny something in an angry way? Talk about a time when you or someone else denied something in an angry way. Pay attention to the words and tones of voice you used when you were talking. Pause this audio here.

Yahweh said, "Why have you done this terrible thing? The voice of your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground." Here, Yahweh describes Abel's death in a similar way that he described sin waiting for Cain. Yahweh does not mean that Abel's blood is literally making a crying sound from the ground. Rather, Yahweh means that Cain has killed Abel and Abel's blood is on the ground, so when Yahweh sees Abel's blood on the ground, it is as if Yahweh hears Abel's voice calling out for Yahweh to punish Cain.

Yahweh continued, "So now I will curse, or punish you, away from the ground because the ground swallowed your brother's blood." Again Yahweh uses special language and says that the ground has a mouth, like a person has a mouth and can swallow things. The phrase "the ground swallowed your brother's blood" means that Abel's blood fell onto the ground and the ground soaked up Abel's blood.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Yahweh describes sin, blood, and the ground as if they were not objects but people. How do you make these kinds of comparisons in your language? Can you give some examples? Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Why do you think Yahweh used so much description when he talked with Cain? Pause this audio here.

Yahweh continued, "The ground will not give you good crops anymore, no matter how hard you work! From now on you will not have a home, and you will always go from place to place throughout the world."

Cain said, "My punishment is too much for me to endure! Listen, you have sent me away from the ground and from your presence." The word "listen" shows that Cain is about to say something he really wants Yahweh to pay attention to.

Cain continued, "You have made me someone who goes from place to place without a home. Anyone who finds me will kill me!"

Yahweh replied strongly. Yahweh is definite in his plans to protect Cain. He says, "No. I will punish whoever kills you seven times more severely than I punished you." And Yahweh put a mark on Cain so that no one who met Cain would kill him. The only thing we know about this mark is that it is something people can see and something that will show that Yahweh owns Cain.

You might want to re-arrange the information in **scene four**. Cain went away to the east of Eden, and lived in an area called Nod, or Land of Wandering. He left the presence of Yahweh.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 4:1-16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This story has four scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Adam
- Eve
- Cain
- Abel
- and Yahweh

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the story without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the story. Help each other remember every part of the story.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then restart the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Eve gave birth to two sons, Cain and Abel. When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd and Cain became a farmer. Later, Cain brought Yahweh some of the plants he grew as a gift. Abel brought Yahweh the best parts of some of the firstborn lambs from his flock. Yahweh accepted Abel and Abel's gift, but did not accept Cain and his gift. That made Cain very angry and sad.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abel, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person might answer things like, "I'm happy that Yahweh accepted my gift," or "I want to only give my very best things to Yahweh," or "I love Yahweh so much!" Ask the person playing Cain, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person might answer things like, "I'm very angry that Yahweh rejected my gift," or "I'm sad and depressed that Yahweh rejected my gift," or "I'm jealous that Yahweh accepted Abel but rejected me." Restart the drama.

Yahweh asked Cain, "Why are you so angry? Why do you look so sad? If you do what is right, you will be accepted. But if you refuse to do what is right, watch out! Sin is crouching at your door. It wants to control you, but you must overcome it."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing God, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person might answer things like, "I want Cain to do the right thing," or "I want to warn Cain about sin so that he avoids it because I love him," or "I care about Cain and want him to overcome sin," or "I know that Cain can choose not to sin." Restart the drama.

One day Cain looked for his brother. While they were in the field, Cain attacked and killed Abel. Afterwards, Yahweh asked Cain where his brother was, and Cain responded that he didn't know. Yahweh said, "What have you done! Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground! Now you are cursed and banished from the ground, which swallowed your brother's blood. The ground will not give you good crops, no matter how hard you work! You will be a homeless wanderer on earth."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Yahweh, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person might answer things like, "I am shocked at what Cain has done," or "I feel very sad and angry, because Cain's punishment will be great," or "I am very sad and angry at what Cain did—I tried to warn him, and I'm sad that he didn't follow my warning." Restart the drama.

Cain said, "My punishment is too great for me to handle. Now that you have banished me from your presence and I am a wandering fugitive, anyone who finds me might kill me."

Yahweh said, "No, whoever kills you will be punished seven times more." And Yahweh put a mark on Cain to protect Cain.

Finish the drama. Ask the person who plays Cain, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person might answer things like, "I am overwhelmed by my punishment—it feels worse than death to wander without a home or community," or "I was afraid I might die because of my punishment, but Yahweh promised to protect me," or "I am amazed that Yahweh will protect me even after what I did." Ask the person who plays Yahweh, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person might answer things like, "I want to be kind to Cain even though he has done this terrible thing," or "I want to make sure no one kills Cain."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 4:1–16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Adam **knew** his wife Eve. To know someone means to have sexual relations with someone. This word for sexual relations in the Bible usually refers to sexual relations between a man and his wife, because it talks about experiencing someone else fully. In this case, Adam had sexual relations with his wife Eve, she conceived a child, and she gave birth to Cain. Use a phrase here that is appropriate to use in a group that includes both men and women.

Eve said, "With **Yahweh's** help, I have gotten a son." This passage uses God's personal name, Yahweh. Look up Yahweh in the Master Glossary and use the same word here you used in previous passages.

Eve named her son **Cain**. The name Cain sounds like the word for "from" or "got." Later, Eve gave birth to Cain's brother and named him Abel.

When it was **harvest time**, Cain brought Yahweh an **offering** from his **crops**. Crops refer to the plants that people grow to eat. Harvest time refers to the time of year when people gather those plants from their fields.

The word used for an **offering** was a gift that people usually brought to Yahweh to honor him or say thank you to him. That is probably the meaning of offering in this story.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Look up offering in the Master Glossary. What words or phrases in your language would you use for this idea of offering? Pause this audio here.

Yahweh accepted Abel and his offering, but rejected Cain and his offering. This made Cain very sad and angry.

Yahweh asked Cain, "Why are you so angry? Why do you look so dejected? You will be accepted if you do what is right, but if you refuse to do right, then watch out! **Sin** is crouching at the door." This is the first time the word sin appears in these passages. Sin refers to an act of disobedience to Yahweh. When people sin, they break their relationship with Yahweh. Be sure that the word you use here does not mean that someone has failed to perform a religious act like ritual prayer or following certain religious rules. Look up sin in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for sin in all the next passages.

Stop here and discuss as a group: What words or phrases in your language do you use to describe sin? Pause this audio here.

One day Cain and Abel were in a **field**. Here, field refers to a wide open space. It may be where people grow crops. Cain attacked Abel and killed him.

Later, Yahweh asked Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?"

Cain said he didn't know. He asked, "Am I my brother's **guardian**?" Here, guardian refers to someone who protects and is responsible for someone else.

Yahweh said to Cain, "Why have you done this terrible thing! When I see your brother's blood on the ground, it is like I hear his voice calling out to me. Now you are **cursed**." Cursed means punishment or judgement. It means that something unpleasant is going to happen to a person. Although many languages have a way to pronounce a curse on someone or something, be sure that the word you choose does not have any magical connotations. In the Bible, when God curses a person, this means he is not pleased with the person. So, he punishes them by cursing them. Look up curse in the Master Glossary and use the same word here that you used in the last passage.

Yahweh put a **mark** on Cain to show others that Cain belonged to him, and no one should harm or kill Cain. We do not know what this mark looked like. It was a sign or symbol that others could see.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you talk about this mark in your translation? Pause this audio here.

Cain lived in the Land of Nod, which means, "Land of wandering," or "Place where people wander."

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you translate "Land of Nod"? Pause this audio here.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 4:1–16

Audio Content

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- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 4:17–26

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Genesis 4:17–26 and put it in your hearts. Listen to an audio version of Genesis 4:17–26 three times, in three different translations, if possible. Then, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage?
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage?
3. What does this passage tell us about God?
4. What does this passage tell us about people?
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 4:17–26 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

This passage is the second of two passages about Adam and Eve's children. This passage happens after Cain killed his brother Abel. It describes Cain's descendants. It also describes the first time many different things happened—it describes the first city, the first people to live in tents and herd many different kinds of animals, the first people who play harps and flutes, the first people to hammer metal into tools, and the first time people worship Yahweh by name.

Cain had sexual relations with his wife. Cain's wife may have been his sister. Some people think that other humans also existed at the same time that Adam and Eve existed, and Cain could have gotten a wife from somewhere else.

Cain's wife became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Cain founded, or started, a city. In those days, cities were probably a settlement of people surrounded by a wall. Cain named the city after his son Enoch. No one knows where the city of Enoch was.

Here, the passage describes the family line of Cain. Enoch had a son named Irad. Irad became the father, or ancestor, of Mehujael. Mehujael became the father, or ancestor, of Methushael. Methushael became the father, or ancestor, of Lamech.

Now the author tells us more about Lamech. Lamech married two women, named Adah and Zillah. This is the first time in these passages that a man marries two women. Adah gave birth to Jabal. Jabal was either the ancestor of people who raise animals and who live in tents, or he was the first person to do these things. In the previous passage Abel raised sheep, but Jabal might have been the first person to raise a lot of different kinds of animals for livestock and live in tents. The livestock may have included goats, sheep, and cows. These tents were houses made of animal skins held up by poles and connected to the ground with pegs. Tents were easy to take down and move from one place to the other. Jabal and his descendants probably moved around with their herds of animals as they grazed on the land for food, so tents were easy to use as they moved around.

Stop here. As a group, look at a picture of what a tent might have looked like. Pause this audio here.

Jabal's brother was named Jubal. Jubal was the ancestor of people who played the harp and flute. He might have been the first person to play the harp and flute, or he might have invented the harp and flute. The harp was an instrument made of wood and strings and played by pulling on strings. The flute was a long, hollow pipe played by blowing air through it.

Stop here. As a group, look at pictures of a harp and flute. What instruments do you play in your culture that are similar? When do you play music? Pause this audio here.

Lamech's other wife, Zillah, had a son named Tubal-cain. Tubal-cain was an expert at making tools out of bronze and iron. He probably made these tools by hammering the bronze and iron metals.

Stop here. As a group, look at pictures of bronze and iron, and then tools people made out of bronze and iron. Pause this audio here.

Zillah also had a daughter named Naamah. Naamah was probably the oldest daughter of Zillah.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Talk about husbands and wives and their children. What words do you use for husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, sons, and daughters? What words do you use for oldest and youngest sons and daughters? Pause this audio here.

One day, Lamech said to his wives, "Adah and Zillah, hear my voice." The phrase "hear my voice" was a common phrase that meant "listen to me." Here, Lamech is boasting about his victories or how strong he thinks he is. Lamech does this by reciting or singing them a special song about his strength. Lamech continued, "I killed a man who attacked me, I killed a young man who hit me. If someone who killed Cain was punished seven times, someone who kills me will be punished 77 times." Lamech boasts that anyone who killed Cain would be punished severely, but anyone who killed him would be punished even more harshly!

Now we hear about the rest of Adam and Eve's family. Adam had sexual relations with his wife again, and Eve gave birth to another son. This probably happened before Lamech was born. Eve was very happy and she named her son Seth. She said, "God has given me another child to replace Abel, because Cain killed Abel."

When Seth grew up, he had a son named Enosh. The rest of the book of Genesis is about Seth's descendants.

Around that time, some people started to call on the name of Yahweh. To "call on the name of Yahweh" is a phrase that means to worship, or pray to, Yahweh and call him by his name. Some people find this confusing because in later passages in the Bible Yahweh tells his personal name, Yahweh, to a man named Moses. It may be that people used the name Yahweh early in history, but the people of God began to really use the name fully after God appeared to Moses and told him his name, Yahweh.

Stop here and discuss as a team: What phrases do you have in your language that refer to worship? How do you use the name or names of God in worship? Why is it important to use God's name when you worship? Pause this audio here.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 4:17–26 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three scenes.

In the first scene: Cain's descendants are described.

In the second scene: Lamech's family is described.

In the third scene: Adam and Eve have another son, named Seth. Seth has a son named Enosh.

The characters in this passage are:

- Cain
- Cain's wife
- Cain's son Enoch
- Cain's descendants: Irad, Mehujael, Methushael, and Lamech
- Lamech's two wives, who were Adah and Zillah
- Adah's two sons, who were Jabal and Jubal
- Zillah's two children, who were Tubal-cain and Naamah
- Adam
- Eve
- Seth
- Enosh
- and Yahweh

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

The first scene describes Cain's descendants. It describes Cain's children and their children.

Stop here to discuss as a group. Have some people in the group describe their family lines in the way you describe family lines in your culture. What words, phrases, or styles do you use when you describe family lines and genealogies? Pause this audio here.

The second scene describes the family of one of Cain's descendants, who was named Lamech. Then the story breaks the description of the family line to give us a song that Lamech told his wives. Everything Lamech says here is a song or poem. People would use these kinds of songs or poems to boast about things they had done or their victories. One day, Lamech said to his two wives, "Adah and Zillah, listen to me. Listen to me, you wives of Lamech. I killed a man who attacked me, I killed a young man who hurt me." Here, Lamech repeats himself to emphasize what he's saying. When Lamech talks about killing a man and a young man, he might be talking about something that has already happened, or he might be describing what would happen if someone attacked or hurt him. Lamech continues, "If someone killed Cain, they would be punished seven times. If someone kills me, they will be punished 77 times more than whoever killed Cain!" This is the most important part of the song.

Stop here to discuss as a group. How do people in your culture boast about their victories? You can sing some of the songs or recite some of the poems that people would use to boast. What words or phrases do people use? How do you know when people are saying or singing the most important part of the song? Pause this audio here.

Scene three returns to Adam and Eve. It describes Adam and Eve's descendants. Because scene three probably takes place during the time Cain lived, not during the time that Lamech lived, scene three describes things that happened before scene two. Eve gives birth to Seth, and Seth has a son named Enosh. Sometime during the time that Enosh was living, people begin worshipping God with God's personal name of Yahweh.

This passage is the second part of a story that begins in the previous passage. The previous passage begins with Adam and Eve having children, and this passage ends with Adam and Eve having children.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 4:17–26 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This story has three scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Cain
- Cain's wife
- Cain's son Enoch
- Cain's descendants: Irad, Mehujael, Methushael, and Lamech
- Lamech's two wives, who were Adah and Zillah
- Adah's two sons, who were Jabal and Jubal
- Zillah's two children, who were Tubal-cain and Naamah
- Adam
- Eve
- Seth
- Enosh
- and Yahweh

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the story without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the story. Help each other remember every part of the story.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then restart the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Cain had many descendants. One day one of Cain's descendants, named Lamech, told his wives that he had once killed a man who attacked him, and that anyone who killed him would be punished 77 times instead of seven times like Cain.

Pause this drama here. Ask the person playing Lamech, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person may answer things like, "I'm boasting about how strong I am and how people can't hurt me," or "I want my wives to think I'm strong and can't be hurt," or "I want to show I'm stronger than my ancestor, Cain," or "I won't hesitate to kill even a child who hurts me." Restart the drama.

Adam and Eve had another son. Eve named the son Seth, and said, "God has given me another son to replace Abel, who Cain killed."

Finish the drama. Ask the person playing Eve, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person might answer things like, "I am sad that Abel is dead, but happy to have a new son," or "I know what happened between my other sons, and I'm happy to have a new son."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 4:17–26 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Cain **knew** his wife. Use the same word or phrase that you used in previous stories for sexual relations between a man and his wife.

Cain's son, who was named Enoch, had a son named Irad. Irad became the father, or ancestor, of **Mehujael**. The name Mehujael might mean "God made me live." Mehujael became the ancestor of **Methushael**. The name Methushael probably means "Man of God." Methushael became the ancestor of Lamech.

One of Cain's descendants, Lamech, married two women, Adah and Zillah. Adah had a son named **Jabal**. The name Jabal probably means "God leads the procession—a group of people who walk together in celebration." Jabal's brother was named **Jubal**. The name Jubal probably means "God brought in the procession." Zillah had a son named **Tubal-cain**. The name Tubal-cain probably means "procession," which is a group of people walking together in celebration. The names of the three brothers, Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal, rhyme. They are full of excitement, and together might refer to the sounds instruments make.

Zillah also had a daughter named **Naamah**. The name Naamah probably means "pleasant and beautiful."

Eve gave birth to another son. She named that son **Seth**. The name Seth might sound like the word for "given, or assigned for a role."

Eve said, "**God** has given me another son to replace Abel." The word for God here is the general term for God. Use the same general term for God that you have used in the previous passages, and remember that God is in the Master Glossary.

Seth had a son named **Enosh**. The name Enosh means "man, or humans."

Around this time, people began to **worship Yahweh** by his personal name, Yahweh. Worship means to show awe and wonder about God. Different cultures and languages have different words for worship. Some words for worship refer only to certain ceremonies or rituals people must do. But in many passages where the word worship is used, worship means more than just performing rituals. It includes love, awe, and wonder of God. Be sure that the word or combination of words you choose for worship includes this idea. Look up worship in the Master Glossary for more information, and use the same word for worship in all the rest of your passages.

Stop here and discuss worship as a group. Describe how you worship in your culture, and notice what words or phrases you use. How do you worship in your culture? What words or phrases do you use when you describe worship? Pause this audio here.

Be sure to use the same word for Yahweh that you have used in previous passages, and remember that Yahweh is in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 4:17–26

Audio Content

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- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 5:1–32

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Genesis 5:1–32 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 5:1–32 three times, in three different translations, if possible. Then, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 5:1–32 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

The previous passage showed us the line of Adam's descendants from his son Cain. But now we start a new section of Genesis. This section shows us a very important line of descendants of people. Right before this, we see that Seth, Adam's son, begins to use God's personal name of Yahweh and follow him. Seth's family line is the line that God has chosen to save and to become his people. God wants to show us the story of his people. He starts by showing us the line of descendants from Adam, through Seth, to Noah. This is the first of the two most important genealogies in Genesis. The original language says, "This is the book of the generations of Adam." This list of Adam's descendants follows one line of descendants.

Stop here and discuss as a translation team: In your culture how do you start a story about a list of important people in your history? Tell a story that lists an important family line that includes children and grandchildren. Pay attention to how you tell this story. Pause this audio here.

This passage starts with a review of the fact that God created mankind in his image. God wants to show that the multiplication of people is a result of his blessing to people when he created them. He told people to multiply and fill the earth, and this line of descendants shows that that happened.

The information about each man in the list of descendants from Adam to Noah is the same. However, Enoch's story is a little different. Enoch did not die, because he "walked with God." Enoch had a close relationship with God and talked with him and followed him. The only two people who "walked with God" in this way were Enoch and Noah. One day, Enoch disappeared because God took him to where God is.

Noah's story is a little different too. Noah's father Lamech names him Noah, which sounds like the word for "relief" or "comfort." Lamech makes a statement about his son Noah. Lamech says that Noah will bring relief from the pain and suffering that the ground or land causes us because God has cursed it when the first man and woman sinned. Noah will bring relief from "our hard work," and from "the work we have to do with our hands." These statements about work mean the same thing—they are repeated for emphasis.

Then at Noah the list of family members branches out to the three sons of Noah. From these three sons the three main branches of the people of the world will be descended.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 5:1–32 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has 3 scenes.

In the first scene the author introduces the list of descendants of Adam and reminds his audience that God made people in his image.

In the second scene the author lists the next 9 men in the list of descendants, and their ages.

In the third scene the author tells the story of Noah's birth, how Lamech names him, and the names of Noah's three sons.

The characters in this passage are:

- God
- People of the earth, made in the image of God
- Adam
- Seth
- Enosh
- Kenan
- Mahalalel
- Jared
- Enoch
- Methuselah
- Lamech
- Noah
- Shem
- Ham
- Japheth

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting.

The story starts by saying that this record is written in a book—it is not just an oral record of the names of the people. Then the story introduces or reviews how God created mankind, or people. This introduction is very similar to the description of God's creation of man found earlier in Genesis. This is an important introduction, because the following list shows people's line from Adam, the first man, to Noah, the man from whom the current population of the world is descended. You may re-order these verses by giving the introduction of the creation of people and then saying that what follows is a written record of the generations of people from Adam.

The author of Genesis talks about each of the ten names in the list in the same way. First, the author says the name of the man and his age when his first son was born. Then, he says the number of years he lived after his first son. Then he said that the man had other sons and daughters. Then he said the total number of years of his life, and then, that he died. This structure changes at Enoch, because Enoch did not die—God took him to heaven. The tenth name is Noah, and more information is also given about Noah. It is important to remember that all three of Noah's sons are named. The author also explains why Lamech gave Noah his name.

Stop here and discuss as a translation team: How do you structure lists of names like this? How do you remember the list? What information is important to include in this list? Spend some time talking about how you will remember each name on this list. Perhaps you can gather stones, leaves, or sticks to represent each person in the list of names and practice listing the names and the information about each person. Pause the audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage again and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 5:1–32 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- God
- People of the earth, made in the image of God
- Adam
- Seth
- Enosh
- Kenan
- Mahalalel
- Jared
- Enoch
- Methuselah
- Lamech
- Noah
- Shem
- Ham
- Japheth

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the story without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the story. Help each other remember every part of the story.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then restart the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

The author of the book says, "This is a written record of the descendants of Adam. God created humans in his image. He created men and women, and he blessed them. He called them humans."

Pause the drama. Ask the actors playing men and women, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like "I am happy to be different than the animals," "I am grateful to be blessed." Restart the drama.

When Adam was 130 years old, he became the father of a son who was in the image of Adam. He named him Seth. After the birth of Seth, Adam lived another 800 years and had other sons and daughters. Adam lived 930 years, and then he died.

Stop the action. Ask the actor playing Adam, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "I am grateful that God allowed me to live so long after I sinned," "I am grateful and proud of all the children I had!" Restart the drama.

Now try to say exactly the same thing about Seth as you did about Adam, but substituting Seth's name for Adam and then Enosh's name for Seth, and so on through each name. Be sure that you remember how many years old

each man was when his first son was born, how many more years he lived, and how long each man lived altogether. Repeat this for Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, and Jared.

When Enoch was 65 years old he became the father of Methuselah. After the birth of Methuselah, Enoch lived in close fellowship with God for another 300 years. He had other sons and daughters. Enoch lived 365 years, and he walked closely with God. Then one day he disappeared, because God took him. He did not die.

Pause the drama. Ask the actor playing Methuselah, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "I love God, I'm happy to go be with him," "I'm surprised that I don't have to die!" Restart the drama.

When Methuselah was 187 years old, he became the father of Lamech. After the birth of Lamech, Methuselah lived another 782 years, and he had other sons and daughters. Methuselah lived 969 years, and then he died.

When Lamech was 182 years old, he became the father of a son. Lamech named his son Noah because he said, "Noah will bring us relief from our work and painful work of farming this land that Yahweh has cursed." After the birth of Noah, Lamech lived another 595 years, and he had other sons and daughters. Lamech lived 777 years, and then he died.

Pause the drama. Ask the actor playing Lamech, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "I am hopeful that my son Noah will help us get comfort and relief," "I can see that my son Noah is special." Restart the drama.

When Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham and Japheth.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 5:1-32 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

This passage starts by introducing the fact that this is a written record of the **generations** or descendants of Adam. Generations in this context usually shows that this is a new section of Genesis. After this list of descendants, the next major story in Genesis, the story of Noah, will begin.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for generations. Look up generations in the Master Glossary for more information. Pause this audio here.

Adam is the proper name of the first man that God created.

God created human beings, or **mankind**. He named them mankind, or human beings. Mankind refers to both men and women—it is people in general.

God created these people **in his image**. Use the same phrase here that you used in previous passages, and remember that image of God is in the Master Glossary.

God **blessed** the people he made. Translate the idea of blessed in the same way you have before. See the Master Glossary for more information on bless.

Enoch walked in close **fellowship** with God. This means that Enoch talked with God and followed his commandments.

The general word for **God** is used throughout this passage except for when Lamech talks. Lamech uses the personal name for God, **Yahweh**, when he says that Noah will give them relief from the work of the ground that Yahweh has cursed. Translate God and Yahweh in the same way you have before. You can see the Master Glossary for more information on the words for God and for Yahweh.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 5:1-32

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (9262345 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 6:1–8

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Genesis 6:1–8 and put it in your hearts. Listen to an audio version of Genesis 6:1–8 three times, in three different translations, if possible. Then, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 6:1–8 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

This passage is the conclusion of the narrative story of Adam and his descendants before the flood. This story also shows us why God chooses to destroy the earth in the next passage.

We see from the stories of Adam and his descendants that they really did have many children and filled the earth with people. This story focusses on the girl children. The daughters of people were very beautiful, and this caused the sons of God to take these daughters as their wives.

Who are the sons of God? Bible scholars do not know. There are three possibilities. The sons of God may be angels who married human women. However, we do not see angels getting married anywhere else in the Bible, so this is not a strong possibility. The sons of God may be kings or princes, since the title "sons of God" has been used for royalty. The sons of God may be the descendants of Seth, whose family line is listed right before this. Seth's family line followed God and therefore may be called "sons of God." We are not sure of any of these interpretations, so it is best to keep "sons of God" vague just like it is.

We do not know who the sons of God are, but we know that the marriages between them and the beautiful women of the earth were not pleasing to God. We know this because God says, "My spirit will not remain, or interact, with humans for a long time." We remember that God breathed into people his breath, or spirit, when he created them. Now God is saying that he will not allow people to remain alive, with his breath in them, for such a long time. He will reduce their number of days, or maximum life years, to 120 years. God will reduce their number of years because people are "mortal," or just flesh and not divine. They are not gods. God is saying that people are just people—they are not perfect and they sin.

Now the passage describes life during that time. The Nephilim are another group of people that we do not know much about. The name Nephilim is found in other parts of the Bible to refer to strong men or to giants. That may be what Nephilim means here too. So now we have both the Nephilim and the children of the sons of God and the beautiful women on earth. Some say the Nephilim and the children of the sons of God are the same, but they may be two different groups of people. In any case, the Nephilim are famous and strong warriors.

Stop here and discuss as a translation team: Tell stories about famous and strong warriors in your culture. Are these warriors considered people of good character or not? How do you describe them? What do people think about them? Pause this audio here.

Because of the wickedness of humans God decides to remove, or "wipe out," all living creatures on the ground and in the sky. God regrets making humans—his heart is full of pain. He is sad and grieving that he made

humans because he sees where their sin has led them. God does not think he has made a mistake; instead, he is sad that humans have sinned or disobeyed God, and that disobedience has caused them much suffering.

God favors, or gives grace, to Noah. This means that God has some sort of relationship with Noah, and Noah tries to follow and obey God. Because of this relationship, God chooses to save Noah and his family. Noah has not earned this favor from God because of his good works—instead God has chosen Noah because of God's grace and mercy on him.

Stop here and discuss as a translation team: How do you describe good relationships between God and people? When God or someone shows favor to someone else, why do they do that? What kinds of things do they do to show favor? Pause this audio here.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 6:1–8 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has 3 scenes.

In the first scene the sons of God marry women, and God is not pleased. God reduces the number of years of human life.

In the second scene the author describes the state of the earth. The Nephilim and children of the sons of God and women were on the earth.

In the third scene God regretted that he made people. But God favored Noah.

The characters in this passage include:

- God
- Sons of God
- Beautiful daughters of men
- Nephilim
- Children of the sons of God and daughters of men, who were mighty, famous men
- Noah

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting.

This story begins with the description that people were filling the "face of the earth," or that many people were living on the earth. Both daughters and sons are being born to people, but this story focuses on the daughters who marry sons of God. That's why only daughters are mentioned here.

Although we do not know who the sons of God were, it is clear from the passage that God was not pleased with these marriages. The sons of God simply took whomever they wanted as wives, without following normal marriage customs. God said that his Spirit, or the life he had given people, would not stay with people for as long as before. God said that people are only "mortal," or only "humans," rather than divine beings. So God reduced the number of years of life to 120.

In scene 2 God describes who is alive during this time period. This section begins with "in those days." The Nephilim and the children of the sons of God may or may not refer to the same people. In any case, both the Nephilim and the children of the sons of God were the heroes and mighty warriors of that time.

In scene 3 God sees the wickedness, or the evil, of people. In other words, he saw that people were doing bad things and rebelling against him. In addition, God saw that even their thoughts and intentions—or thoughts of

their hearts—were bad. God made a decision at that time. You could even say "God decided" instead of, "God said that he will wipe out the human race." God changed his mind and wished he had never made people. God was sad.

Stop here and discuss as a translation team: How do you discuss in your language someone being sad? What words or phrases do you use to describe this sadness? Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 6:1–8 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- God
- Sons of God
- Beautiful daughters of men
- Nephilim
- Children of the sons of God and daughters of men, who were mighty, famous men
- Noah

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the story without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the story. Help each other remember every part of the story.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then restart the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

People multiplied on the earth and daughters were born. The sons of God saw that the daughters were beautiful. They took them as wives. God was not happy. He said, "My spirit will not stay with them for such a long time, because they are people who sin. In the future, people will not live longer than 120 years."

Pause the drama. Ask the actor playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "Sad to see people living like this," "wishing I could have more time with people, but they shouldn't live so long in their sin." Restart the drama.

In those days, giant Nephilim lived on the earth. And the children of the sons of God and women became heroes and famous warriors on the earth.

Pause the drama. Ask the actors playing people, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "Look how strong we are! We don't need God!" Restart the drama.

God saw how wicked people were. He saw that what they thought and intended was always evil. He was sorry he had made them, and he was very sad. God said, "I will completely destroy the humans I have made. I will

destroy everything alive—people, all the animals on the ground, and all the birds. I am sorry I made them." But God favored Noah.

Pause the drama. Ask the actor playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "I am heartbroken," "I am so encouraged that there is at least one man who loves me."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 6:1–8 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

As people multiplied, **sons of God** married beautiful human women. We do not know to whom the "sons of God" refer. Sons of God does not refer to literal biological sons of the creator God. There are three possibilities. The sons of God may be angels who married human women. However, we do not see angels getting married anywhere else in the Bible, so this is not a strong possibility. The sons of God may be kings or princes, since the title "sons of God" has been used for royalty. The sons of God may be the descendants of Seth, whose family line is listed right before this. Seth's family line followed God and therefore may be called "sons of God." None of these interpretations is sure, so it is best to keep "sons of God" vague just like it is in the text.

Stop here and discuss as a translation team: How will you talk about **sons of God** in this story? Pause this audio here.

The sons of God **took in marriage** any of the beautiful women they wanted. It is clear that the sons of God did not follow normal marriage practices. They just took whichever women they wanted to as wives.

Then **Yahweh**, or "the Lord," said "My Spirit will not put up with humans for such a long time." The name of God throughout this passage is Yahweh. Translate Yahweh the same way you have in previous passages. See the Master Glossary for more information on Yahweh.

When God talks about "my Spirit," in this context **spirit** probably refers to the life-giving spirit that God gave to Adam when he created him. You could translate this as "my spirit that causes people to live," or "my life-giving power." Spirit is so closely related to God himself that you could just say "I will not put up with humans." Translate spirit in the same way you have in previous passages. For more information about God's Spirit, see Holy Spirit in the Master Glossary.

God said he would not put up with, or continue to live with, humans, because they are only **mortal flesh**. Mortal flesh simply refers to the fact that humans are not divine—they die eventually and they disobey God.

During this time, giant **Nephilim** lived on the earth. Nephilim is a general name of a group of people that is found elsewhere in the Bible as well. However, here the Nephilim live before the flood, and they would have been killed later during the flood. That means that this term must just be a general term for people seen as giants or powerful warriors.

God saw that everything people thought or did was wicked, or evil. He was sorry he had made them. God's **heart was broken**, which means that God was very sad. God said that he was going to wipe the human race **from the face of the earth**. This means that God would completely destroy people. God goes on to say that he will completely destroy all living things on the earth—the large and small animals on the dry land, and all the birds.

However, **Noah found favor with God**. Noah pleased God. We know from the next passage that Noah obeyed God and had a good relationship with him.

Stop and discuss in your language group: How do you talk about when someone is pleased with someone else? What kinds of things does someone do if they please someone else? How will you talk about how Noah found favor with God?

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 6:1–8

Audio Content

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- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 6:9-22

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 6:9-22 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

After the story of how Adam and Eve disobeyed God and were made to leave the special garden God had made for them, they had children. Those children had children. The earth began to fill with people. These people disobeyed God. They were corrupt and violent. This means that they were dishonest in their ways. Corrupt also means that something is spoiled or rotten. Violent means that they used force. God saw the corruption of the people and decided to destroy the people. This all happened before the story of Noah starts.

The story of Noah is a narrative story of how God destroyed the people and animals that had been created but saved Noah, his family, and some of the animals. The author of Genesis tells parts of the Noah story more than once. Each time the author adds more detail. This is similar to the way the author tells the creation story. This is the first Noah story.

The story starts by saying that these are the generations of Noah. This phrase is used many times in Genesis. The Noah story is the second time this phrase is used. It usually starts a new story about a major character. In this story, we learn about Noah.

We don't know where Noah lived. We will see later that the boat lands on the side of a mountain in the present-day country of Turkey. Some people think that Noah lived in the area between the Tigris River and the Euphrates River.

Show a map of this area that includes the area of Turkey where Mount Ararat is located. The map will include the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers.

Noah was a good man. The story says he was righteous and blameless. This means that Noah had a right relationship with God.

Describe a relationship that you would consider to be close fellowship.

Noah followed God's ways. Noah was not perfect. Noah did disobey God at times. God saw that Noah was a good man. Noah was married and had 3 adult sons named Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Each son was also married.

In a previous passage, Noah is 500 years old. He was 600 years old when the rain started falling after Noah entered the boat. We don't know how long it took Noah to build the boat. Noah's age is not mentioned in this story but his age is mentioned in other stories.

God went to Noah and said to Noah, "I have decided to destroy all living creatures. They are all violent or do violent things." God uses the word corrupt which means something bad or rotten. It can also mean that someone who is corrupt is someone who does something bad or evil.

Imagine what the other people were doing. What are some of the things that they probably did that caused God to be so angry with them? What do you think that Noah was doing that caused God to see Noah as blameless and righteous? How was Noah different from the rest of the people?

Then God tells Noah to build a boat. This was not a boat that Noah had seen before. The people at this time made small boats of skins that they used along the edges of the rivers.

Show a picture of a small boat made from skins.

God tells Noah the type of wood to use for building the boat. We don't know exactly what this wood was but we do know that it was good for building boats. God told Noah to use tar to make the boat waterproof. Tar is the black gummy substance that we get from pine trees. Putting this substance on the inside and outside of the boat would make it waterproof. No water would leak into the boat. God didn't tell Noah to put a rudder or sail on the boat to steer it. This boat would not look like most boats that you may have seen.

Show a picture of tar being used on a boat or some wood.

Show a picture of pine trees that produce tar.

God told Noah how to build the boat. God told Noah to make the boat 150 meters long, 25 meters wide, and 15 meters high. God told Noah to make 3 levels or 3 floors in the boat. God told Noah to make stalls or nests for the animals who would be in the boat. God told Noah to put a door on the side. God also told Noah to leave a space of 50 centimeters between the top side of the boat and the roof. This space was to go all the way around the boat.

Take some pieces of paper or pieces of wood or sticks and try to make a boat just following the directions given to Noah. It looks like a box. Put it into water to see if it floats. Be sure that the bottom of the boat is flat. Do not put a rudder or a sail on the boat. You can also try to draw a picture using just these instructions.

Talk about what it was like for Noah to try to build something he had not ever seen before just from these directions.

Show a picture of the ark after the team has tried to build a model of the ark.

Show a picture that is a crosscut of the boat so that they can see how the inside was made. Discuss how your culture makes boats waterproof so that they don't leak.

The boat would look like a long, narrow box. A boat built like this would float. It was large enough to have space for all the animals and for the eight people who were on the boat. We don't know if anyone helped Noah build the boat.

Show a picture of stalls that would be in the boat God told Noah to build. Show a picture of nests such as those found in a chicken coop.

Then God said to Noah again, "I am going to destroy every living thing that breathes." God said, "I am going to cover the earth with water so that everything will die." This is a flood. Many times, a flood happens quickly with water rushing into or through an area. A flood often happens after a heavy rainstorm. The rain falls so quickly and with such force that it doesn't have time to go into the ground and it runs off the ground into the lower areas. The water moves with such force that it destroys structures in the way.

Show a picture of a flooded area. The picture should show the water covering the area as well as some of the destruction caused by the water.

Discuss as a team: what do you know about floods? What have you experienced or what have others told you about floods?

After the description of the destruction to the earth, God makes a contrast with his promise to Noah. God said to Noah, "But I will confirm my covenant with you." A covenant is a solemn promise or agreement. God was telling Noah that Noah and his family would be safe in the boat. This covenant was a promise made by God and

depended on God. God didn't demand anything from Noah. God also told Noah to take his wife, his three sons and their wives and go on the boat. This put eight adults on the boat. God told Noah to put a pair of each kind of animal, bird and creeping things on the boat—a male and a female of each one. God also told Noah to make sure that there was enough food on the boat for all those animals and for Noah's family.

Talk about some of the kinds of animals that would have been on the boat. Imagine the scene with the animals coming to the boat to get on the boat. What kind of food would you put on the boat? How much food would you put on the boat?

Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

First scene: This scene is the introduction to the story of Noah. We learn information about Noah's character and Noah's family. No one is speaking in the first scene.

Second scene: We learn about the wickedness of the people on the earth. God sees all that is happening. God speaks in the second scene.

Third scene God tells Noah that all living creatures are going to be destroyed. God tells Noah to build a large boat or ark. God gives specific instructions about the size of the boat, the type of wood to use to build the boat, the number of floors in the boat and even where to put the door. Noah does not speak in this scene.

Fourth scene: God reminds Noah of why Noah is to build the boat. God reaffirms the covenant with Noah. God tells Noah to put a pair of animals, a male and female of each species on the boat. God tells Noah that these animals will come to Noah. God also tells Noah to put food on the boat for the animals and for Noah's family. Noah does not speak.

The characters in this story include:

- God
- Noah
- Noah's wife
- Noah's 3 sons
- The wives of each of the sons
- The animals
- Other people

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In the first scene, Noah is introduced. Noah is a righteous man. Noah is the only blameless person on the earth at this time. Noah was not sinless. Noah walks in close fellowship with God. Noah's 3 sons are also introduced in this scene. We don't know if they helped Noah build the boat. Noah's wife and the sons' wives are not mentioned yet. God sees all the corruption with the people and decides to destroy them.

Noah walked in close fellowship with God. This means that they could walk and talk together and enjoy each other's company.

In the second scene, God observes the corruption and violence on earth. The passage repeats this phrase twice. Why would God repeat this observation twice? In your language how do you emphasize something really important?

In the third scene, God says to Noah, "I have decided to destroy all living creatures on earth because they have filled the earth with violence." Then God tells Noah to build a boat. God tells Noah the type of wood to use. God says to make the boat 150 meters long, 25 meters wide, and 15 meters high and to put 3 floors in the boat. God tells Noah to make the boat waterproof by covering it with tar inside and out. God tells Noah to put stalls and nests for the animals to use. God tells Noah to put a door on one side. God tells Noah to leave a 50 centimeter space around the roof between the sides of the boat and the roof.

In the fourth scene, God continues to give instructions to Noah. God tells Noah that there will be a flood that will destroy every living thing on earth. Then God tells Noah that Noah and his family will be safe. This is a contrast with what will happen to everyone else. God tells Noah to put a pair of animals, a male and a female, from each species on the boat. Then God tells Noah that these animals will come to Noah. This means that Noah and his sons didn't have to go and search for the animals. God tells Noah to put enough food on the boat for all the animals and for Noah's family. God did not tell Noah how long he would be on the boat with the animals. Noah did everything exactly as God commanded.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- God
- Noah
- Noah's wife
- Noah's 3 sons
- The wives of each of the sons
- The animals
- Other people

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

At the beginning of the first scene, Noah is introduced. In this scene, we learn that Noah is a righteous man. He is the only blameless man living on earth at this time. Noah walked in close fellowship with God. Noah has 3 sons named Shem, Ham and Japheth.

Stop the action: Ask the person playing Noah to describe his relationship with God. You may hear, "I talk with God regularly, I can tell God anything, it feels good to be in close contact with God." Ask the three sons, "Tell us

about your father. What kind of man is he?" You may hear, "He is a good man, he is honest, he treats us well, people like him, he tries to follow God's ways." Restart the action.

Noah is blameless.

Stop the action: Ask Noah how he lives a blameless life. You may hear, "I worship God," or "I try to obey what God says," or "I treat those around me with respect not violence." Restart the action.

In the second scene, God sees that the world has become corrupt and is filled with violence.

Stop the action: Ask God, "What are you seeing among the people on earth?" You may hear, "I see corruption," or "I see the violence between men and between men and women and between women. The people are not following my ways." Restart the action.

Then in the third scene, God tells Noah, "I have decided to destroy all living creatures for they have filled the earth with violence. I will wipe them all out along with the earth."

Stop the action: Ask God, "How are you feeling as you make this decision?" You may hear, "I feel sad or sorrow that the people are behaving like this. I regret having created them." Ask Noah, "How do you feel when you hear God talk like this?" You may hear, "I feel sad or lonely," or "I don't understand." Restart the action.

Noah builds the boat following the directions that God has given. The boat is 150 meters long, 25 meters wide, and 15 meters tall. Noah waterproofs the boat. Noah constructs the stalls for the animals. Noah places the door on the side of the boat.

Stop the action: Ask Noah, "Why are you building this boat?" You will probably hear, "Because God told me to build it." Restart the action.

In the fourth scene, God says to Noah, "I'm about to cover the earth with a flood that will destroy everything that breathes. Everything on earth will die."

Stop the action: Ask Noah, "God is telling you that a flood is coming. How do you feel about that?" You may hear, "I don't know what a flood is." Or, "I will be in the boat so I'll be safe." Or, "I'm afraid for my friends and relatives." Restart the action.

God tells Noah, "I will reaffirm my covenant or my solemn promise with you." Then God tells Noah to go into the boat and to take his wife, his 3 sons, and the wife of each son. This makes 8 people going onto the boat.

Stop the action: Ask Noah's wife, "How do you feel about leaving your friends and family behind?" You may hear, "I'm afraid for them," or, "I don't want them to die." Ask the 3 sons, "How do you feel about this flood that is coming?" You may hear, "I'm not afraid," or "I don't understand why this is happening," or "I'm worried about my friends." Ask the wives of the sons, "What are you feeling as you are getting on the boat?" You may hear, "I'm afraid for my family," or "I don't understand why I'm doing this," or "I wish my parents were with us." Restart the action.

God tells Noah to bring a pair of every kind of animal, male and female, and a pair of each kind of bird, male and female, onto the boat. God tells Noah that the animals will come to Noah. God also tells Noah to put enough food for the animals and for his family on the boat.

Stop the action: Ask Noah, "How do you know if you have enough food for everyone?" You may hear, "I hope I have enough because I don't know how long this will last," or "I don't know how much to put on the boat." Restart the action.

Noah obeys God. Noah does everything exactly as God says to do it.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This is the story of Noah. The text uses the word **generations** of Noah. In this context, the word means that this is the story of Noah or this is an account of Noah. The word can also mean history of Noah or record of events of Noah. Generations is in the Master Glossary.

Noah was a **righteous** man. Noah was a **blameless** man. Noah walked in close **fellowship** with God. Both words, righteous and blameless, carry the same idea. Righteous means that Noah conformed to a moral standard. Blameless means that Noah didn't have any defects. It does not mean that Noah was sinless. Only someone who is righteous and blameless can walk in fellowship with God. Fellowship implies a good relationship. This is the first time that the word righteous comes up in Genesis. The Master Glossary has some suggested activities to help determine the best way to describe or say righteousness in your language.

One activity that might help is to use a broken clay pot or a broken cup. Break it and ask the group to restore it. They will see that once it's broken, it can never be restored to its original state. Help the group to understand that God can restore the object to its original useful form. This is righteousness. God restores it to its original form. The group may also find that there are idioms or word pictures in the language that might help. One example could be to say: being right in God's sight. Here are two ways you might describe Noah: One way to say this is to say Noah was a good man who obeyed God. Another way is to say Noah was the only man at that time who was honest and who walked with God. After you do these suggested activities, you may find a better way to say this in your language.

Noah had 3 sons named Shem, Ham et Japheth. The story doesn't tell us anything about the sons. Their names will be mentioned again many times in God's Word. As you say them in your language, make sure they don't have a specific meaning in your language.

God saw that the **earth** had become **corrupt** and full of **violence**. The earth refers to our planet. Use the same word for earth that you have used in previous passages. God repeats this observation about the earth twice. When we say that someone is corrupt, we usually mean that this person does bad things or evil things to others so that his own situation becomes better. For example, someone corrupt may take a piece of property from someone else without paying the value of that property. Violence means that these corrupt people did things with a force that injured the other person.

God tells Noah that all living creatures on earth will be destroyed. God says, "I will **wipe them out**." To wipe something out means that it is erased or removed so that it looks like it never existed. Think about how you erase a blackboard. Or you might draw something on the ground and then sweep over it so that the ground is smooth again. This is what it means when you wipe something out.

God tells Noah to **build** a boat. Here the word "build" means to create or make. The word used for build would need to work with the idea of a very large boat. God tells Noah to use a specific type of wood. However, the word for this wood is only used in this story. Therefore, no one knows exactly what kind of wood Noah used. The wood was a good kind of wood for boat building.

God tells Noah to waterproof the boat by coating it with a substance similar to tar or pitch or asphalt. This is the same substance we use on roads. This substance comes from pine trees. Noah was to smear this stuff on the inside and on the outside of the boat to keep it from leaking.

Show the picture of a boat being waterproofed using pitch from pine trees.

God then tells Noah to put decks and **stalls** throughout the interior of the boat. The word for stalls can also mean nests. Noah is going to bring animals onto the boat. By dividing the area into stalls or nests, then each pair of animals would have a place of safety and rest. A bit further in the passage, God tells Noah how many decks to put in the boat.

God tells Noah the dimensions of the boat. In the original language the word **cubit** is the measure used. A cubit is the length of the average forearm of an adult male. This is a common way to measure things and is used frequently in the Bible. We can change the word cubit to a measurement that we generally use. Some people use meters, others use feet, while others will use fathom or some other unit of measurement. The numbers are generally rounded off which means that the measurements are not exact. If you use meters, the boat is 150 meters long, 25 meters wide, and 15 meters high. This makes a really large boat that will float. God tells Noah to leave a 1/2 meter, or 50 centimeters, of open space around the top of the boat between the side and the roof.

This is the length of one cubit or about the length of the average forearm. Then God tells Noah to put a door in the side of the boat. Cubit can be found in the Master Glossary.

God repeats that the earth will be destroyed by a flood. Then God says, "I will confirm my **covenant** with you. A covenant is a special agreement that is a solemn agreement between two people or groups of people. Each side usually makes a promise to keep the agreement. See the Master Glossary for a fuller discussion of the meaning of covenant.

God tells Noah and his family to enter the boat. The animals come to the boat to enter. Noah does not have to go and find the animals. They come to the boat. God tells Noah to put food on the boat for the people and the animals.

Noah does exactly as God commanded.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 6:9-22

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (23631114 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
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[mp3 zip](#) (16066888 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 6](#)

Genesis 7:1-24

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Gen 7:1-24 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This passage is a narrative story of how God destroys the earth with a flood. Noah is the main character in the passage. God tells Noah what to do and repeats the instructions that were given in the previous passage. God provides some different details with the instructions in this passage. Noah obeys God's instructions. The story repeats what Noah does as he obeys God. Then there is a description of the flood that destroyed the earth. The story may seem confusing at times. The story will say that the rain starts to fall. Then the story backs up and gives us additional information about getting the people on the boat and says that the rain starts. Then again, the story backs up and gives additional information. This repetition happens 4 times. Then we get a description

of the actual flood. In that description, the story repeats 4 times that every living thing died in the flood except for those on the boat.

The previous passage ended with the statement that Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him. This means that Noah had built the boat and prepared everything for the animals and his family. No one had yet gone onto the boat. This next passage starts with a time phrase or a word that indicates that after all that work was done, God then gave Noah more instructions. Here we see that God gives Noah more specific instructions regarding the animals who were to go onto the boat.

In the second creation story, we had two names for God used in the story. In that story, they were used together as the Lord God. In this story we have the same two names for God—Yahweh, the personal name for God, and the word for God. Each name is used separately.

God said that Noah was the only righteous man, or the only man with a right relationship with God, in all the world. This is a repeat of the description of Noah as a righteous man in the previous passage.

In the introduction to the story of Noah, we had the word generations which mean account of or story of Noah. In this passage, we have the word generation again. The word generation has a different meaning in this context. Here it means those people who live at the same time as in your generation or those who are living at the same time as you. The word is not referring to Noah's ancestors but to his contemporaries.

God tells Noah to take his family and get on the boat. This is Noah's immediate family: Noah, his wife, the three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, and their wives-8 people. In some places, the word family or household could mean a large group of people or even a clan. In this story, the word household only means the 8 people listed.

Discuss what the word "family" means in your language and culture. What words would you use to describe the 8 people in Noah's immediate family?

God tells Noah to put the animals on the boat. But this time God gives Noah more details about the animals and birds. Noah is to take seven pairs of each kind of the clean animals and 7 pairs of each kind of birds. This means that Noah was to take 7 males and 7 females of each kind of clean animal and each kind of bird. Then for all the other animals, Noah is to take one pair, or one male and one female of each kind. Clean animals refers to those animals that God has approved for eating and for sacrifice or to be used in the worship of God.

Discussion: Does your culture have groups of animals that are acceptable for eating and groups that are not to be eaten? Does your culture use animals in the worship of God? How do you know if an animal is acceptable for eating or for worship? How do you describe those acceptable for eating?

Then God tells Noah that the rain will start in seven days. God is telling Noah exactly how much time he has to get everything done that God has commanded. Again we have the phrase, "Noah did everything that God commanded."

Discuss the idea of obeying or obedience. How do you determine that someone has obeyed? What happens to the person who doesn't obey?

Noah was 600 years old when he went on the boat. The passage tells us that Noah had done everything that God had commanded. The passage repeats what Noah did. The rain began to fall and to cover the earth. Then, the writer again repeats that Noah was 600 years old. However, this time the age given is more specific. The rain starts in the 600th year, second month, and 17th day of Noah's life.

Discuss: How do your people count age?

The passage uses poetry to describe the type of rain that fell. Different translations use different poetic forms to describe the rain. Some say the windows of heaven opened and the water poured out. Another says that the rain fell in mighty torrents. Another says the floodgates of the sky opened. The rain was strong and lots of it. Water also came up from the ground. This is also a poetic expression. Different translations use expressions like burst forth or gushed out.

Discuss rain storms you have been in. Have you ever seen it rain so hard that you couldn't see something in front of you? How do you describe such rain? What are some of the words you have for rain? Can you use poetry or a song to describe the rain?

After saying that the rain had started and that it rained for 40 days and 40 nights, the writer repeats again who was on the boat. Noah, his wife, his 3 sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth and their wives, plus the pairs of animals and birds. This time, the writer does not mention the 7 pairs of clean animals. After they were all in the boat, God closed the door.

Discuss: Why do you think it's important that God closed the door?

The final part of this passage describes the destruction caused by the rising water. As the rain continued, the waters rose and the boat floated. Those on the boat were safe. By the end of the 40 days and 40 nights of rain, water covered the highest peaks of the mountains by about 7 meters. Nothing that could breathe survived. All living things on earth died—all the animals, all the birds, and all the people on earth died. The writer repeats 4 times that everything and everyone died.

Discuss: How does your language make it clear that something is important?

Discuss: Why do you think God includes that the water was 7 meters above the highest mountain peak?

The flood waters covered the earth for 150 days. During this time the boat floated. The only people and animals who survived were in the boat.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 5 scenes.

First scene: Noah has done everything that God had commanded him to do. God repeats the instructions to Noah and adds an instruction. Noah is to put 7 pairs of clean animals, or animals used for sacrifice, on the boat and 7 pairs of each kind of bird. Noah is to put 1 pair of the other kinds of animals on the boat. God tells Noah that in 7 days the rain will start. Noah does everything that God tells him to do.

Second scene: Noah and his family, 8 people in total, enter the boat. All the animals enter the boat. Noah does just as God has commanded.

Third scene: The rain starts after 7 days and the flood covers the earth. Noah is 600 years 2 months and 17 days old when the rain starts. The description of the rain falling and coming up from the earth is poetry.

Fourth scene: This scene is a repeat of the description of what Noah does. Noah and his family, 8 people in total, go onto the boat. The animals all come on the boat. However, this repetition only mentions the pairs of the animals. The distinction of 7 pairs of clean animals is not mentioned. Once all are on board, God closes the door.

Fifth scene: This scene is a description of the flood. As the water level rises, the boat begins to float. The rain continues until the highest peak is covered with about 7 meters of water. Every living thing on earth dies. Those in the boat are safe. The floodwaters covered the earth for 150 days.

The characters in this story include:

- God
- Noah
- Noah's wife
- Noah's 3 sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth
- The wives of the 3 sons
- The animals

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

This passage starts with a time phrase that shows us that this happened after the previous passage.

Discuss: How do you indicate that time has passed or that what happens now is occurring after this other thing has happened? Try telling a short story about studying and then taking a test or purchasing food and then cooking dinner. Notice how you link the two events.

The passage repeats information in each section. The instructions about getting on the boat and the rain starting are repeated 4 times. It may sound repetitive, but it is necessary to include the repetition. You need to be clear that these are not new instructions. This is not a new story or another flood. This is repeated instructions or descriptions of one event.

In the first scene, God tells Noah to take his family (8 people in total) onto the boat. God also tells Noah to take 7 pairs, male and female, of the clean animals, or animals used for sacrifice. God tells Noah that the rain will start in 7 days. Noah does everything that God said.

Show the picture of the boat again. Show the picture of the inside of the boat that shows the stalls and nests. Show a picture of some of the animals that would be considered clean animals.

In the second scene, we learn that Noah is 600 years old. Noah, Noah's wife, Noah's 3 sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth and their wives all go on the boat. The animals, the clean animals as well as those not approved for sacrifice, come and get on the boat. The birds also come to the boat. Everything is done just as God commanded.

In Scene 3, the rain starts to fall and the flood waters start to cover the earth. Noah's age is given again. He is 600 years, 2 months, and 17 days old. The second listing of his age is just a more specific way of saying his age. You can say that someone is 4 years old. Or you can say that someone is 4 1/2 years old. Both statements would be true. The second listing is more exact. The description of the rain falling and the water coming up from the ground is in a poetic form. This can be poetry or a song. The rain falls for 40 days and 40 nights.

Show a picture of torrential rain. Show a picture of flood waters rising. Show a picture of water erupting from the ground.

In scene 4, there is a repetition of all that Noah did. Noah and his family enter the boat. The pairs of animals and birds enter the boat. This part of the passage does not mention the 7 pairs of clean animals. When all are on the boat, God closes the door.

In scene 5, it rains for 40 days. The flood waters rise. The boat starts floating. As the water covers the ground and continues to rise, every living thing dies. The water rises to about 7 meters above the highest mountain peak. Every animal, every bird and every person who breathed, died in the flood. Notice the repetition in this scene. It mentions 4 times that all living things died. The only people and animals who survived were on the boat. The flood waters remained for 150 days.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 5 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- God
- Noah
- Noah's wife
- Noah's 3 sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth
- The wives of the 3 sons
- The animals
- Other people

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

God is the only person who speaks in this passage.

In the first scene, God is talking to Noah. God tells Noah again, that the earth will be destroyed by a flood. God says to Noah, "You are the only righteous person."

Stop the action: Ask Noah, "How does it feel to have God call you a righteous man?" You may hear, "I love talking with God," or "I love my relationship with God," or "I'm not sure what I do that is so different from other people." Restart the action.

God tells Noah to put on the boat 7 pairs of animals that are considered acceptable for sacrifice. Noah is to put 7 pairs of each kind of bird on the boat. God says that this is to ensure that life will survive after the flood.

Stop the action: Ask Noah, "Tell us about clean animals." You may hear, "These are the animals that God accepts as a sacrifice when we worship God," or, "I don't know about this. This is the first time I heard about using certain kinds of animals for sacrifice." Restart the action.

God tells Noah again that it is going to rain and that the rain will last for 40 days and 40 nights.

In the second scene, Noah and his family go on the boat. They take all the animals on the boat. After 7 days, the rain starts.

In the third scene, God starts the rain, and it falls in mighty torrents. Water also comes up from the earth.

Stop the action: Ask Noah's wife and children, "Have you ever seen rain like this? How would you describe this rain?" You may hear, "I have never seen rain before," or "it's raining so hard, I can't see anything out there," or "This rain is really hard." Ask the people who aren't on the boat, "What do you think about this rain?" You may hear, "I've never seen rain like this before," or "This rain is going to do serious damage to this area," or "I need to find higher ground right now. The water is rising," or "Noah and his family are safe on that boat. I wish I had listened more," or "This water is rising so fast, I'm afraid we are going to die." Restart the action.

In the fourth scene, the action seems to back up and start again. We hear that Noah and his family go on the boat. All the animals enter the boat. Once everyone is on the boat, God shuts the door.

Stop the action: Ask Noah's wife, "What did you feel when you heard the door shut?" You may hear, "I was afraid." Or, "I wish I had my parents and brothers and sisters with me on this boat." Or, "I feel very secure here on the boat. I think we will be safe." Ask the wives of the sons, "How did you feel when you heard the door

shut?" You may hear, "I wish I had my parents and siblings here with us." Or, "With the door shut, we can't leave and no one else can get in." Or, "I don't understand what is happening." Ask the other people: "How did you feel when you saw the door to the boat shut?" You may hear, "Why are they on that boat? There's no water here." Or, "I think they are crazy to get on that boat with all those animals." Or, "I don't understand why they built this boat and put all those animals on it." Restart the action.

In the fifth scene, we have the description of the flood. As the waters rose, the boat started floating. The water covered the highest peak by 7 meters. Everything on earth that could breathe died. The only people who survived were those on the boat. The only animals and birds that survived were those on the boat. The floodwaters covered the earth for 150 days.

Stop the action: Ask Noah and his sons, "How did you feel as you saw the water cover the highest peak and realized that you are the only ones who survived?" You may hear, "Sad for those people," "Happy that we are alive," "Why did all those people have to die?" Ask Noah's wife and daughters-in-law, "How did you feel when you saw the floodwaters cover even the highest peak?" You may hear, "I'm so sad. My parents and siblings are now dead." Or, "We have lost everything except what we have on this boat." Or, "I wish they could have been with us." Or, "I'm glad we are safe." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This passage uses two names for **God**. The name LORD is the translation of the Hebrew name of God, **Yahweh**. Use the same word that you used in the creation story for Yahweh. Use the same name that you used for God when you come across the name, God, in this story. If you want to review your choices, the Master Glossary has a discussion on these names.

God told Noah to take his family on the boat. Some translations use the word **household**. This would mean the people living in Noah's house. In this passage the family members that went on the boat were Noah, Noah's wife, Noah's 3 sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth and their wives: 8 people total. Rather than use a word that might be confusing, you can just say who went on the boat with Noah. If you need further information, the word household is in the Master Glossary.

God tells Noah that Noah is a **righteous** man or that he has a right relationship with God. Use the same term for righteous that you used in previous passages. The Master Glossary gives an explanation of this word. God says that Noah is the only righteous one in this **generation**. Here the word generation means those who live at the same time as Noah. The word generations is in the Master Glossary.

God tells Noah to put 7 pairs of clean animals on the boat. The Master Glossary says that being clean means that the animals are fit for service to God or for eating. Since God has not yet given instructions about clean and unclean animals, some translators have chosen to define this as animals that are fit for sacrifice and eating.

God says that all life will be wiped out from the earth.

Stop here and discuss as a translation team: Do you have a special way to say that all life will be destroyed?

The next section backs up a bit and describes the rain. This part is poetry or poetic expression.

Stop here and discuss this as a translation team. What are some poetic ways in your language that you might describe the rain falling and the water coming up from the earth? Some expressions that have been used include: the windows of heaven opened; torrents of rain poured out; the floodgates of heaven opened, and rain poured out. Here "heaven" refers to the sky. Water burst forth from the earth or water gushed forth from the earth are 2 examples of how to describe what happened to the earth. The rain fell so hard and so fast that people probably could not see through it.

Then we have the description of the flood and the destruction. As the rain fell and the water came up from the earth, the boat began to float. The water rose until the highest mountain peak was covered by about 7 meters of water. Some translations use the word **cubit** as the measurement. This was the common measurement of the time. The Master Glossary explains that a cubit is the average length of a man's forearm, or about 50

centimetres. You may convert this measurement to a unit of measurement that makes sense to your people. Some will use feet and yards. Others will use meters. There may be some other unit of measure that you use in your area.

Then the story repeats 4 times that every animal and every person on earth died. Only those in the boat survived. The floodwaters remained for 150 days.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 7:1-24

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (21403246 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 4](#)
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Genesis 8:1-19

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 8:1-19 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This passage is a narrative description of how the flood that destroyed the earth ended. In the last passage the story tells us how Noah and his family and all the animals went on the boat. The rain began, the flood waters covered the earth and everything that was living died in the flood. Noah, his family and all the animals who were on the boat did not die. After 40 days and nights, the rain stopped. The water covered the highest peak by 7 meters. The flood waters covered the earth for 150 days.

But God remembered Noah. This word remembered does not mean that God had forgotten Noah. The word remember in this passage is not the opposite of forget. Rather the word remember in this context means that God intended to show mercy to Noah and his family. At this point in the story, Noah, his family and the animals have only what they have on the boat for survival. If the flood waters don't go away, they might die. Because God intends to show mercy to Noah, God sends a wind to blow across the earth. We don't know the exact day that God sent the wind. Wind helps water evaporate or dry up. When you hang out clothes on a windy day, the clothes dry faster.

God also remembered all the beasts and livestock that were with Noah on the boat. Beasts are wild animals—animals that are not tame. Lions, tigers, and leopards are wild animals. Livestock refers to domestic animals or the animals we use with farming. They are also considered to be the clean animals used for sacrifice. They are not wild. Sheep, goats, horses, cows, and chickens are types of domestic animals.

Discuss in your group: What is the common way to refer to these two classes of animals in your language?

In the last passage, poetic descriptions were used to describe the water coming up from the earth and the water falling from the sky. In this passage, the poetic expressions continue. Because the rain stopped and the water coming from the earth stopped, then the water that was on the earth could evaporate faster. God did three things here to stop the flood.

1. Send a wind to help blow the water away.
2. Stop the water from coming from the earth or springs of the deep.
3. Stopped the rain falling from the sky like a flood.

With the help of these actions, it took 150 days for the water to recede so that the land could become dry. This is not 150 days added to the 150 days in the last passage. When it says that God remembered Noah, it means that God started the actions of moving the water away soon after the 40 days and 40 nights of rainfall were finished. At that point, everything was covered by 7 meters of water. With God's actions, it took 150 days for the water to recede. God didn't take all the water from the earth. Rivers, lakes and oceans still had their water. Other water evaporated back to the sky. This left dry land for the trees and plants.

The passage tells us the time in two ways. It says that the water was on the earth 150 days. In the previous passage, we learn that the rain started on the 17th day of the second month. In this passage, the boat came to rest on land on the 17th day of the 7th month—that is 5 months later. Dividing the 150 days by 30 days also results in 5 months. Noah and those on the boat floated for 5 months. Some translations use the term 5 months and others keep the specifics of the 7th month and 17th day.

Discuss in your group: How do your people report time? Which way of saying the length of time makes the most sense to them?

The boat came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. Ararat is a mountain that is 17,000 feet or almost 5200 meters high. It is located in Turkey. There is a range of mountains that go from Turkey to Northern Iran and are called the mountains of Ararat. No one knows exactly where the boat landed.

Show a map of the Mount Ararat region that includes the range of mountains.

Show a photo of the mountain range.

The passage begins to talk about how long Noah waited on the boat. First, after the boat stopped on dry land, Noah waited 2 1/2 months until he could see other mountain peaks. Then Noah waited another 40 days and opened the window. Noah released a raven. The raven flew around. The raven is one of the birds that is considered to be unclean because it will eat dead animals. Noah also released a dove, but the dove came back to the boat.

Show a picture of a raven. Show a picture of a dove.

The dove returns to the boat. Noah realizes that the ground is still covered with water. Noah waits 7 days and sends out the dove again. This time the dove returns with an olive leaf in its beak. Noah understands from this that the flood waters were almost gone and some trees have started growing again. Noah waited another 7 days and sent the dove out again. This time the dove doesn't return.

Show a picture of an olive tree and olive leaves.

By now Noah is 601 years old. Noah knows that the earth is almost dry. But Noah waits another 2 months. The earth was dry. Noah does not leave the boat until God tells him to leave. God said to Noah, "Come out of the boat—everyone is to come out." God tells Noah to release all the animals and birds so that they can start multiplying and fill the earth. Multiply means that the animals are to have babies who will have babies. So, Noah, his wife, his sons, his sons' wives, and all the animals come off the boat.

Discuss as a translation team: The passage lists these specific numbers for the times that Noah waited, or the flood lasted. Why do you think God included all these numbers in this passage?

Discuss in the team what life would have been like for Noah and his family during that year on the boat. Imagine you have been on a boat for over a year. What would be the first thing you would do after coming off the boat?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: In the first scene, the rain has stopped but the earth is covered with flood waters. The boat is floating around. The flood waters gradually go down. After 150 days of this, the boat comes to the mountains of Ararat.

Second scene: After the boat comes to rest on a mountain side, Noah waits for 40 days. Then Noah sends out birds to see if the earth is dry. When the dove doesn't return, Noah waits 2 more months. The earth was dry.

Third scene: God tells Noah to leave the boat. Noah obeys God and all his family as well as all the animals leave the boat.

The characters in this story include:

- God
- Noah
- Noah's wife
- Noah's 3 sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth
- The three sons' wives
- The animals

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

First scene: Even though the world was covered in water, God remembered Noah.

Stop here and discuss with your team: How will we show the contrast in our language between the flood covering the earth and God remembering Noah and those on the boat?

Noah, his family, and the animals are on the boat. The rain has stopped. The water covers the highest peak by 7 meters. Every living thing has died except those on the boat. The boat is floating. Sometime after the rain stops, God sends a wind to blow over the earth to dry up the water. God stops the water that was coming up from the earth. God has stopped the rain. The water starts going down. It takes 150 days or 5 months for the land to appear. The boat comes to rest on a mountain in the Mountains of Ararat. It takes another 75 days for the other peaks in the mountain range to appear.

Second scene: Noah waits on the boat 40 more days after these peaks appear. Noah opens a window that he has made in the boat. Then Noah sends a raven and a dove out to see if things are growing again. The raven flies about over the earth. The dove returns to the boat. The dove couldn't find any place to land because the earth was still covered by water. Noah waited 7 days and sent a dove out again. This time the dove returns with an olive leaf in its beak. Because of the olive leaf, Noah realizes that the flood waters are almost gone. After 7 more days, Noah sends a dove out. This time the dove does not return to the boat.

Third scene: Noah is now 601 years old. Noah can see dry land from the window of the boat. Noah, his family, and the animals have been on the boat for 10 1/2 months. Noah waits another 2 months. The earth was dry at last. This account of the end of the flood includes many sets of numbers of days or months that Noah and his family were on the boat.

40 days of rain

1. 150 days or 5 months on the boat floating and then the boat lands on a mountain side
2. 75 days or 2 1/2 months after the boat landed, Noah could see other peaks.
3. 40 days after seeing the peaks, Noah could see land. Noah sent out the raven and the dove. The dove returned.
4. 7 days later, Noah sent out the dove again and it returned
5. 7 days later, Noah sent out the dove again and it didn't return.
6. 60 days more or 2 months, Noah waited. Then God said to leave the boat.

A total of 379 days or 12 1/2 months.

Discuss as a group: Why are these numbers important? How does your culture indicate that the time spent in waiting for something is important? How can you translate these numbers so that no one is confused by them?

As each number is mentioned, we are told what Noah was doing at that time. You will need a word to describe the passage of time or a word that connects the times. The text uses words like: after, then, later, another, etc.

Discuss as a group: what are the time connecting words you use in your language? Practice telling a short event that has several time differences in it so that you can determine what words you use. You might talk about getting ready to go on a trip. You bought your ticket, waited 4 weeks, and then got your suitcase out. The next day, you began to put clothes in it. After 5 minutes of packing, you stopped to bring out some other clothes. You packed those, then 10 minutes later, you had a phone call. Telling a story with times in sequence such as this can help you with your connecting the time in the way your language naturally does it.

After the earth is dry, God speaks to Noah. God tells Noah to take his wife, his sons, and their wives and all leave the boat. God tells Noah to release all the animals, both the wild animals and the domestic animals. Each pair of animals is to be released. God says that these animals are to be fruitful and multiply. This means that each pair of animals should have babies. Those babies will grow up and have babies. This will continue until the earth is full of animals. Noah does what God says. Noah and his wife, his sons, and their wives all leave the boat. The animals all leave the boat. Each pair or each male and female of animals leaves the boat. The birds come out from the boat.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- God
- Noah
- Noah's wife
- Noah's 3 sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth
- The three sons' wives
- The animals

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

First scene: As the action of this story starts, the team needs to remember that the people and animals have been on the boat through 40 days and 40 nights of torrential rain. They can look out from the boat and see nothing but water. They know that every living creature has died. They are the only ones living.

Stop the action: Ask each of the persons on the boat how they are feeling right now. You may hear, "Grateful to be alive," or "Missing my family and my home," or "I don't know what's going to happen to us," or "I'm tired of this boat already," or "I don't know what God is going to do about this. I'm afraid for the future." Restart the action.

After the rain stops, at some point, God sends a wind to help dry the water from the land. God stops the water coming up from the ground. God has stopped the rain. It takes 150 days or 5 months from the time the rain stopped for the water to go down enough for a mountain peak to appear. The boat lands on the side of a mountain. It takes another 75 days for other mountain peaks to appear.

Stop the action: Ask the people how they are feeling now that the boat has stopped floating. You may hear, "I'm glad we aren't floating anymore," or "I don't know where we are," or "Nothing looks familiar out the window," or "When can we leave the boat?" or, "I'm tired of these animals," or "I miss my family and my friends," or "I want to go to my home. There is nothing outside the boat," or "Everything was destroyed by the water. How will we live when we leave this boat?" Restart the action.

Scene two: Noah waits another 40 days after the other mountain peaks begin to appear. Then Noah opens the window and lets a raven fly free. The raven flies back and forth but doesn't return to the boat. Noah also lets a dove fly free. The dove returns to the boat. Noah knows that the ground is still covered with water.

Stop the action: Ask Noah why he is sending out these birds. You may hear, "I want to see if the water has gone. Is there dry ground? To see if there is food on the land." Restart the action.

Noah waits 7 days and sends a dove out again. This time it returns with an olive leaf in its beak. Noah waits 7 days and sends a dove out again. This time the dove doesn't return.

Stop the action: Ask Noah why he thinks the dove didn't return. You may hear, "I think the dove has found a place to get food. There must be a number of places now with trees and plants. It looks like God is causing things to grow again. I think we can leave the boat soon." Restart the action.

Noah continues to wait on the boat. Another 2 months pass. Then God tells Noah to go off the boat.

Stop the action: Ask Noah why he waited until now to leave the boat. You may hear, "I waited for God to tell us when to leave. God told us when to get on the boat and God shut the door. God should tell us when it's okay to get off the boat." Restart the action.

God told Noah, his wife, his sons, and his sons' wives to leave the boat. So, they all left the boat. God also told Noah to release all the animals and the birds. God said that the animals and birds should all have babies so that they multiply to fill the earth. Noah and his family obeyed God. They left the boat. The animals all left the boat. The birds all left the boat. They came out in pairs or the male and female of each kind. When they left the boat, it had been over 1 year since they entered the boat. They had spent 12 1/2 months on the boat.

Stop the action: Ask Noah and his family how they are feeling now. You may hear, "I'm so glad to have my feet on the ground again. Where are we? Nothing looks familiar to me. Thank God we are safe now. I'm glad God took care of us. I'm glad I don't have to be with the animals again. It feels strange to be the only people here. I'm glad I'm alive but I miss my family. This doesn't look like home. I'm not sure how to live here." Ask God how he is feeling. You may hear, "I'm glad that Noah's family will re-start the human family on earth. I hope this family does a better job than the people before them. I hope they follow me."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The word **remember** in this context means that God was planning to show mercy to Noah. You could also say that God is thinking about Noah or considering Noah's situation or that God is turning his attention to Noah and his situation. The word remember does not mean that God had forgotten Noah and now has Noah in mind again.

God does three things about the flood. God sends a wind to blow across the earth. God stops the rain coming from the sky and stops the water from coming up from the earth. Here the same poetic descriptions for the rain and water coming from the earth would be used that were used in the previous passage. Some translations use the word heavens while others use sky. This is referring to water that falls from above. Use the same word for the **earth** that you have used in other passages.

Noah sent out two different kinds of birds. The **raven** is a bird that eats other dead animals or the meat of a dead animal. The raven could have lived on any dead animals that were floating. The **dove** would eat seeds and small things that crawl on the ground. The dove can't find a place to land nor food the first time it goes out. Then when it goes out again, it finds a fresh, green **olive** leaf. The olive tree grows in all the countries around the Mediterranean Sea. If your culture does not have olive trees, you could just say that the dove found a fresh green leaf.

Show a picture of the dove, the raven, and olive leaves.

Noah's family and all the animals left the boat. The animals came off the boat in pairs. This means that the male and the female of each kind of animal came off together.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 8:1–19

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (20489106 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 8:20–9:17

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 8:20–9:17 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This passage is a narrative story of what happened to Noah and his family after they left the boat. The flood is over. They have been on the boat 12 1/2 months. God has told them to come off the boat and also to bring all the animals off the boat. Noah obeyed God and left the boat.

Then Noah built an altar and worshiped God. Noah came off the boat. Then he built an altar to worship God. This act of worship is the first thing Noah did when he left the boat.

This is the first time that an altar is mentioned. An altar is usually built of stones and serves as a place to burn animals offered in sacrifice. The animal may also be killed on the altar or it may be killed elsewhere and then placed on the altar for burning. Killing and burning animals was the way that the people worshiped and honored God.

Show a picture of an altar with a sacrifice burning on it.

Discuss as a group: Why did Noah worship God at this point? How does your culture worship God? Tell about a time when your community worshiped and honored their god. What did they do?

Noah offered his sacrifice as a burnt offering. This means that the entire animal was burned. Noah and his family did not save a part of it for eating. Noah used some of the animals and birds that were considered to be clean. This means that they were animals fit for use as sacrifice or worship. The word is plural so we know he used several animals but we don't know how many. This means that Noah made a huge sacrifice to God. The odor of the burning animals was a pleasing aroma or odor to God. God is often pleased when he smells a sacrifice burning.

Both the general name for God as a divine being and God's personal name Yahweh are used in this passage. The two names are not used together as they were in the creation story. The first two times God is mentioned in this passage, he is called Yahweh.

After God smelled the pleasing aroma of the sacrifice, God said something to himself. This means that God thought to himself and made a decision. God was not speaking to others at this time. God made a promise when he spoke to himself. God said, "I will never again curse the ground because of the human race." God is saying very emphatically that he will never again treat the earth harshly or punish it like he did in the flood.

Discuss as a group: Talk about how people in your community punish or treat someone harshly who has done something wrong.

God said that humans only think of evil from the time of their childhood. In other words, people do things against God and against what is right and good. However, God shows his mercy to people. God promises that He will never again destroy all living things. He says that the normal rhythms of life and nature will continue. God uses poetry to show how serious he is. He talks about these rhythms of nature in contrasting pairs—seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night. All of this was God speaking to himself.

Discuss as a group: How does your culture talk about the rhythms of nature continuing on forever? For example, if you don't have hot and cold seasons, you might have rainy season and dry season.

Then God blessed Noah and his sons by promising to do good things for them. God told Noah and his sons to be fruitful and multiply to fill the earth. This is a repeat of the command God gave to Adam and Eve. Noah and his sons should have children and those children will have children. They should spread out over the earth so that there are people everywhere.

Discuss as a group: Why do you think God told them to fill the earth?

God tells Noah and his sons that they will be masters over the fish, animals and birds. God says that these creatures will fear Noah and his sons. The animals will be afraid that people will harm them. God tells Noah and his sons that these animals and birds are now to be used as food just as the grain and vegetables have been food for them. However, God tells Noah and his sons not to eat any meat that still has blood in it. They are to drain the blood from the animals because the blood is necessary for life.

God then goes further with the instructions about blood. God says that he requires the blood of a person who kills his brother, which means any other person. This means that if someone kills someone else, they must also die. Animals who kill a person must also die. God reminds Noah and his family through poetry that people should not kill each other because people are made in God's image, just as he said in the creation story. Then God repeats the order to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth with people.

Discuss as a group: Why would God use poetry to explain that we are made in God's image? How does your culture use poetry or song to emphasize something important?

Then God confirms the covenant or sacred agreement that he is making with Noah and his descendants. This covenant even applies to the animals. God says, "I will never again use floodwaters to destroy the earth." Then God promises a sign. A sign is a signal that something is true or will happen. God puts a rainbow in the clouds. The rainbow is the sign of the covenant that God is making. God says, "When I see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember this covenant." This does not mean that God will forget the promise he has made. This means that God will remain faithful and keep his promise. God repeats that the covenant is between God and people as well as between God and the animals. This covenant or promise not to destroy the earth again with a flood is eternal or everlasting.

Show a picture of a rainbow.

Discuss as a group: What do your people believe or think when they see a rainbow? What were you taught as children about the rainbow? Why is seeing a rainbow after a rain important for faith?

God repeats that the rainbow is the sign of the covenant. God says, "I'm confirming this covenant with all the creatures on earth."

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

First scene: As soon as he leaves the boat, Noah builds an altar and sacrifices animals as an act of worship of God.

Second scene: God smells the aroma of the burning animals and is pleased. God decides that he will never again destroy the earth with a flood.

Third Scene: God blesses Noah and his family and tells them to be fruitful and multiply. God also gives them all the animals, fish and birds as food. God warns them not to eat the meat with the blood still in it and not to kill another human. God reminds them that they are made in God's image. God tells them again to be fruitful and multiply.

Fourth Scene: God repeats his promise that he will never again destroy the earth with a flood. God promises to put a rainbow in the clouds as a sign of this promise. God says, "When I see this rainbow, I will remember my promise not to destroy the earth with a flood."

The characters in this story include:

- God
- Noah
- Noah's sons
- Noah's wife
- The wives of Noah's sons
- The animals

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In the first scene, Noah builds an altar and sacrifices animals and birds as a burnt offering. This is the first thing that Noah does when he comes off the boat. Be sure that you are connecting this scene to Noah leaving the boat.

Discuss how you indicate that something happening is the next thing in your language. Why is it important to indicate that Noah's act of worship was the first thing he did after leaving the boat?

Noah used stones that would be found near the boat. The altar serves as a place to burn the animals and birds. The word animals is plural. We don't know how many animals Noah sacrificed but he probably sacrificed many more than one. The animals came from the 7 pairs (male and female) of the clean animals or animals that were declared fit for use in the worship of God. This would be animals such as sheep, goats, bulls, or birds like doves. Noah's family are not mentioned in this scene. They were probably nearby and participated in the worship. This was a burnt offering meaning that the entire animal would be burned so that only ashes remained.

Show the picture of the altar with an animal being burned on it.

In the second scene, God is talking to himself or talking in his heart. God smells the aroma of the burnt offerings and is pleased. God begins speaking to himself and makes a promise. God says that people are evil from their childhood. Even with that God says, "I will never again curse the ground." God says, "I will never again destroy all living things." God uses poetry to say that this promise is for as long as the earth exists. The poetry is in the form of contrasting pairs: planting and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night.

In the third scene, God comes to Noah and begins to talk with Noah. God blesses Noah and his sons and tells them to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. This is the same command that God gave to Adam and Eve in the garden. God tells Noah and his sons that they now have authority over all the animals, fish and birds. God also says that these creatures will be afraid of Noah and his sons and will be terrified of them. God tells Noah and his sons that they can now eat any of the animals but must first drain the blood from the meat. God specifically says that they are not to eat anything with the blood still in it. Then God tells them that it is forbidden to kill another human being. God says that if someone kills another person, the person who killed someone also must die. And if an animal kills a human being, that animal must die. God repeats the command to be fruitful and multiply. God reminds Noah's family that God made them in God's image. God uses poetry to express this. This is the same wording that God used in the creation of Adam.

In the fourth scene, God confirms the covenant or solemn promise God has made not to destroy the earth again with a flood. God is making this covenant not only with Noah and his sons but also with all the animals. God includes every living creature on the earth in this covenant. God promises to put a rainbow in the clouds as a sign of this covenant. When God sees the rainbow, he will remember the covenant. God tells them that the rainbow is the sign of this covenant and God is confirming it with all living creatures on earth. God repeats this promise 3 times.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- God
- Noah
- Noah's sons
- Noah's wife
- The wives of Noah's sons
- The animals

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

In the first scene, Noah and his family have left the boat just as God ordered. All the animals have left the boat. Then Noah builds an altar and worships God. Noah takes some of the clean animals and birds or the animals and birds fit to be used as a sacrifice to God and offers these as burnt offerings. This means that the entire animal is burned so that only ashes remain. The scene does not mention Noah's family but they would normally be present.

Stop the action: Ask Noah, "Why are you stopping right now to worship God?" You may hear, "I want to worship God because he has brought us safely through this flood." Or, "I'm grateful for what God has done and want to thank God." Or, "This is the way I worship God and I want to worship right now." Or "I want to thank God for saving me and my family." Ask other family members why they are participating. You may hear, "God saved us. We should worship him." Or, "I'm just helping my father." Restart the action.

In the second scene God is the only character. God smells the aroma from the burning sacrifices and is pleased. Then God begins to talk but is talking to himself. God makes a promise that he will never again curse the earth because of people. God says that from the time they are children, humans think only of evil. Even though humans are like this, God promises that he will never again destroy all living things. Then God uses a form of poetry to emphasize this promise.

Stop the action: Ask God, How are you feeling right now?" You may hear "I am pleased with Noah and his family," or "I want a relationship with the descendants of Noah," or "I have another plan for dealing with evil in the world," Restart the action.

In the third scene, God speaks to Noah and Noah's sons. God tells them to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

Stop the action: Ask the three sons, "What do you understand from what God just said? What are you to do?" You may hear, "It means that we are to have many children," or, "it means that we need to live in separate areas so that we begin to populate those places." Ask Noah, "Do you know when God used this same command before now?" You may hear, "God said this to Adam and Eve," or "I didn't know God said this before." Restart the action.

God tells Noah and his sons that all the fish, animals and birds are now in their power. These creatures will react with fear and terror when they see humans. God tells Noah and his three sons that these animals, fish, and birds are to be food for them just as the grain and vegetables have been food in the past. But God also tells them that all meat must have the blood drained out of it before eating. Then God gives them a warning. God says that no one is to kill another human being. If anyone does kill another human being, that person must also die. God says this applies to any animal that might kill a person as well as another person who might kill someone. God reminds them that people are made in God's image. Then God repeats the instruction to be fruitful and multiply.

Stop the action: Ask Noah and his sons why they must drain blood from the meat before eating it. You may hear, "I don't know," or "Blood carries life. We can't eat that." Ask Noah, "How do you feel about being master over all the animals?" You may hear, "This was good of God to give us this responsibility," or, "I'm sorry they are afraid of us now. I won't mistreat them," or "This will be a big responsibility." Ask Noah's sons what they think about the punishment for killing another person. You may hear, "This seems fair. We should not kill anyone. The one who kills someone else should be punished." Ask them all, "What do you think about being made in God's image?" You may hear, "I don't understand what that means," or "God must love us a lot," or "This means that we need to act like God wants us to act." Restart the action.

In the fourth scene, God is still talking with Noah and his sons. God confirms the promise he made to himself earlier. Now Noah and his sons hear this promise. This is a covenant or a sacred promise. God says that this covenant is with all people and all the animals and birds who were on the boat. God promises that he will never again destroy the earth with a flood. Then God gives them a sign of this covenant. God puts a rainbow in the clouds. God tells them that when he sees the rainbow he will remember his covenant or promise not to destroy the earth with a flood. God tells Noah that the rainbow is the sign of this covenant. God repeats this 3 times.

Stop the action: Ask Noah and his sons how they feel when they hear this promise. You may hear, "I'm so glad. This flood was a terrible thing," or "we can trust God to keep his promise," or "I'm glad God gave us a sign so we won't forget and God won't forget this promise." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Noah built an **altar** to God. Altar is discussed in the Master Glossary. People usually make it out of stones. People killed animals on the altar and burned them as a sacrifice to God. This was the way to worship God. This is the first time that an altar is used in scripture. Noah burnt animals on the altar to show thanks and honor to God.

Show a picture of an altar made from stones with an animal being burned on top of it. Discuss in the group how you will describe an altar. You could say it was a table of stones where an animal could be sacrificed and burned.

Yahweh is the name for God used the first two times that God is mentioned in this passage. The Master Glossary discusses Yahweh. Use the same name that you have used in previous passages for Yahweh. Noah took some of the **clean** animals and birds from the animals that had been on the boat and sacrificed them in this act of worship. Clean animals were the animals that were considered fit for sacrifice and for eating. See the Master Glossary for a discussion of clean. God had told Noah to take 7 pairs of these animals, a male and a female in each pair, on the boat. We don't know how many of these animals and birds Noah used in the sacrifice but the number is plural. These animals and birds were offered as a **burnt offering**. This means that the entire animal was burned so that the only thing remaining was ashes. Noah and his family did not save part of the animal for eating. With several animals being used, this was a big sacrifice. See the Master Glossary for a discussion of burnt offerings.

God began to talk to himself. God was not talking to Noah or someone else. Some translations say that God was talking in his heart. People thought that the heart was the center of thoughts and will.

Discuss as a group the best way to say that God was talking to himself.

As God was speaking, God said, "I will never again **curse** the ground." The Master Glossary has a discussion of the word curse. It means to pronounce judgement or a punishment on someone or something. You used this word in the story where Adam and Eve disobeyed God. You would use the same word for curse in this passage. God says that everything that people do is bent towards **evil** from the time they are children. The word evil is in the Master Glossary. It means that the people are doing bad things or things against God. God makes a promise that as long as the earth remains, he will never again destroy all living things. God uses poetry and makes 4 contrasting statements to illustrate how long this will be. God says as long as the earth remains, there will be

- Planting and harvest
- Cold and heat
- Summer and winter
- Day and night

There are places that don't have distinct seasons of the year or where it stays warm or hot the entire year. Other pairs of words that might indicate the same idea would be to talk about rainy season and dry season or the time when the leaves fall and the time when the leaves grow.

Discuss as a group how best to say this list of 4 contrasting statements so that people understand that God is making a promise that is everlasting.

After God had talked with himself or in his heart, he then speaks to Noah and his sons. God tells them to **be fruitful** and **multiply** and **fill the earth**. This is the same command that God gave to Adam and Eve in the garden. Be fruitful means to have children. Multiply means that those children will grow up and have children. To fill the earth means that they will spread out so that people live in every part of the earth.

Now God is giving Noah and his family animals, fish, and birds to eat. God also gives them a command. God says that Noah and his sons must drain the **lifeblood** from the meat before eating it. People believed that as long as blood was in the animal, it was alive. They believed that blood gave life. Making sure that the blood has been drained from the meat is making sure that the animal is truly dead.

Then God tells Noah and his sons that human life is precious. Anyone who kills another human being must also be killed. God says, I require the blood of anyone who kills another. This means that the person must die because he can't live without blood. Some translations use the word brother. This does not mean just your biological brother but a fellow human being. God says that if a wild animal kills a human, the animal must die. Then God explains that humans are made **in God's image**. This same language was used in the creation story. Use the same wording that you used in that story. God tells them again to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

God then says a poem to say, "Anyone or any animal who kills a human must die. Because God made people in his image." God is saying that people are special. He uses poetry to show that this is important.

Discuss as a group the best way to express this poetry so that your people will understand that people are important.

Then God again speaks to Noah and his sons. God confirms with them the **covenant** that God made when God was speaking to himself. Covenant is explained in the Master Glossary. It is a permanent agreement between two people. Here the covenant is between God and human beings. God includes the animals and birds—every living creature—in the covenant. God promises that there will never again be a flood that will destroy the earth.

Then God says that there will be a **sign** of the covenant. Sign is discussed in the Master Glossary. A sign is a signal that something is true. Here God promises to put a rainbow in the clouds. The rainbow is the sign of the covenant.

Show a picture of a rainbow.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 8:20–9:17

Audio Content

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Genesis 9:18–29

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 9:18–29 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the last passage, we saw that the first thing Noah did was to worship God through the offering of a sacrifice. Then God made a new covenant or agreement with Noah. God promised that the earth would never again be destroyed by a flood. The rainbow is the sign of this promise.

This passage is a narrative story of what happens to Noah and his family after they leave the boat. Noah plants crops and his sons begin to have children. When the flood ends, Noah and his family are the only people on earth. Noah has 3 sons named Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Each son is married. Everyone on earth is descended from one of these three sons.

After Noah worshiped God, Noah began to farm the land. Noah planted a vineyard. Some people believe that Noah was the first person to plant a vineyard. A vineyard is a garden with grapevines which produce grapes that can be eaten or pressed, squeezed, to form juice to drink. If the juice is allowed to sit for a while so that it will ferment, then it becomes wine, or a drink with alcohol in it. It takes time for the grapevines to grow and produce grapes. It takes time for the grape juice to ferment and produce wine. Therefore, some time has passed since Noah left the boat.

Show a picture of grapevines.

Show a close-up picture of grapes.

Show a picture of grape juice or wine.

Noah drank some of the wine he had made and he became drunk. To be drunk means that after drinking enough alcohol, you are no longer in control of everything you do and say. In this case, Noah took off his clothes and lay down without anything to cover him and went to sleep in his tent. Noah was probably lying on his back.

Show a picture of a tent made from animal skins or cloth such as those used by the Bedouin.

Ham is the youngest son of Noah. Ham is the father of a son named Canaan. Ham went into the tent and saw Noah lying there uncovered, with his body and genitalia exposed for anyone to see. In many cultures it is shameful to be naked in front of someone. Ham saw this. Ham did not cover his father but went and told his brothers what he had seen. Thus, Ham exposed Noah's shame to his brothers. Shem and Japheth heard that their father was naked or uncovered. Then they took a garment or a robe and put it over their shoulders. This means that each one held up one side of the garment. They backed into the tent and dropped the garment over their father so that he was covered. They did not see the nakedness of their father. They never looked at their father. They looked away the entire time. Noah was so sound asleep from the wine that he did not wake up with all this activity in his tent.

Discuss as a group: How would sons in your culture deal with their father in such a condition?

Later Noah woke up from the deep sleep that the wine caused. He was no longer drunk or out of control of his senses. Noah learned what his son Ham had seen and done. Then Noah cursed Canaan who was Ham's son—in other words Noah pronounced punishment or judgment on Canaan. The curse is pronounced as poetry.

Noah says that Canaan will be the servant of his relatives. But the way Noah says this means that Canaan will be the lowest servant. He will even be the servant of other servants. No one knows why Noah did not like what Ham did. No one knows for sure why Noah chose to curse the son of Ham, Canaan, instead of cursing Ham himself.

Discuss as a group: How would a father in your culture react to his son if he reacted as Ham did in this story?

Then Noah pronounced a blessing on his other 2 sons, Shem and Japheth. Blessing means that Noah is asking for something good to come to each of them. The blessings are pronounced as poetry. The blessings were different. For Shem, Noah was saying, "Praise Yahweh, who is the God of Shem. Make sure that you use the same names for Yahweh and God that you have used in other passages. Then Noah asked God to expand the territory of Japheth. Noah asked that Japheth share the prosperity of Shem. Finally Noah asks that Canaan, son of Ham, be the servant of Japheth.

Discuss as a group: How does your language express important statements like curses or blessings? Do you use poetry or a song? How do people know that this is important?

The passage ends by telling us that Noah lived another 350 years and died at the age of 950 years.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 2 scenes.

First scene: After an introductory statement about Noah and his sons, Noah plants grapevines, makes wine, drinks the wine to become drunk, and falls asleep with his body exposed. His son Ham sees him and tells the others. Shem and Japheth cover their father without looking at him.

Second scene: Noah learns what Ham has done and curses Ham's son, Canaan. Noah pronounces blessings for Shem and Japheth. The story ends with a statement about Noah's age at his death.

The characters in this story include:

- Noah
- Shem
- Ham
- Japheth
- Canaan is mentioned as Ham's son.

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Noah's 3 sons are the ancestors of all mankind. Canaan is specifically mentioned as Ham's son.

Noah began to farm the land. This means that he had to use a plow or hoe to work the ground so that something could be planted. We don't know where Noah planted his garden of grapevines. The boat came to land in the region of the Ararat mountains in present day Turkey. We don't know if Noah remained in that area or if he went somewhere else. It takes time to make wine:

1. Plant the grapevines which are very small plants.
2. These grapevines have to grow into mature plants which produce grapes.
3. It takes a season for the grapes to mature so that they are ready to use.

4. The grapes have to be harvested and either eaten or made into juice.
5. The grapes are pressed to squeeze the juice out.
6. The juice then sits in a protected place or jar for a period of time.
7. The juice will ferment or produce alcohol.
8. It takes several months for the wine to be ready to drink.

Stop and discuss in your language this process of making wine. Notice the vocabulary you are using for each part of the process. In many languages, the words are related or come from the same root word.

Because of this process, we know that some time has passed since Noah and his family left the boat.

Noah drank some of the wine and became drunk. To be drunk means that you are no longer in control of your thoughts and actions. Noah took his clothes off and lay on his back in his tent. He was in a drunken stupor. This means he was so sound asleep that he didn't hear his sons come in and didn't feel the cover that was placed over him.

The two brothers, Shem and Japheth, took a garment and held it up between them and backed into the tent. This might have been a large piece of cloth that people would wrap around themselves. Shem and Japheth did not look at Noah. They kept their eyes fixed towards the outside of the tent. They backed into the tent and dropped the robe or cloth over Noah. Noah's shame was now covered. Noah did not wake up when this happened.

When Noah woke up, someone must have told him what Ham had done. Noah pronounced a curse on Ham's son, whose name is Canaan. In the curse, Noah says that Canaan will be the lowest of all servants. Canaan will be the servant of other servants.

Then Noah praises the God of Shem and blesses Japheth. He uses poetry to do that. Noah repeats that Canaan will be the servant of both Shem and Japheth.

The passage finishes by telling us that Noah lived another 350 years and that when he died he was 950 years old.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 2 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Noah
- Shem
- Ham
- Japheth
- Canaan is mentioned as Ham's son.

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points. You will hear "stop the action" followed by some questions with suggestions of what you might hear as answers. You will then be asked to restart the action.

The story starts with an explanation that Noah's 3 sons are the ancestors of all people.

In scene 1, the story begins with Noah becoming a farmer. Noah has to work the ground so that it will grow plants. He would use a plow or a hoe to work the ground. Noah planted a garden of grapevines. This is called a vineyard. At first the plants would be tiny. Noah would need to keep working the ground, pulling the weeds and making sure the plants had water. After some time, the plants would grow large enough to produce grapes. The grapes can be harvested and eaten or they can be pressed so as to squeeze the juice out of them. The juice can be drunk immediately, or the juice can be left to ferment and produce alcohol. Once the juice has produced alcohol, it becomes wine. The wine would be left to age for some time before drinking it.

Stop the action: Ask Noah, "Why are you making wine?" You may hear, "I like the taste of good wine." Or, "Wine is good to drink with meals." Or, "I didn't realize that the juice would ferment and produce alcohol." Restart the action.

Noah drank the wine and became drunk. He was drunk enough that he took off his clothes and lay down in his tent. He was uncovered or exposed.

Stop the action: Ask Noah, "Have you ever been this drunk before?" You may hear, "Yes, often," or "Never!" Ask each of the sons, "Have you ever seen your father drunk before?" You may hear, "Never" or "Often." Ask each son, "How does it feel to see your father in this condition?" You might hear, "I'm embarrassed," or "I'm ashamed for him," or "I'm worried. I've never seen him like this before." Restart the action.

Noah was in a deep sleep or drunken stupor. Noah did not hear any of his sons enter.

Ham went into the tent and saw his father lying there uncovered, asleep. Ham saw the shame of Noah. Ham did not cover Noah. Rather Ham went out of the tent, found his brothers, and told them what he had seen.

Stop the action: Ask Ham, "What did you think when you saw your father?" You may hear, "I was astonished. I've never seen him like that before." or "I thought it was funny. I wanted to share the joke." Ask Shem and Japheth, "What did you think when you heard about your father?" You may hear, "I was surprised," or "I felt shame for him," or "He is my father, I have to help him." Restart the action.

Shem and Japheth take a cloth or robe, hold it up and walk backwards into the tent. They keep their eyes fixed on the outside. They never look at their father. When they get close enough, they drop the robe so that it covers Noah. They leave the tent without ever seeing Noah naked.

Stop the action: Ask Shem and Japheth why they don't look where they are going. You may hear, "I wanted to show respect for my father," or "I didn't want to see my father's nakedness," or, "It is shameful to see my father like that. I wanted to cover him." Restart the action.

In scene 2, Noah wakes up and realizes what Ham has done. Noah pronounces a curse on Ham's son Canaan. Then Noah pronounces blessings on Shem and Japheth. The curse and the blessings are poetic expressions.

The curse is for Canaan who is the son of Ham. Noah tells Canaan that he will be the servant of other servants.

Stop the action: Ask Canaan, "How do you feel about receiving a curse for something your father did?" You may hear, "I don't understand. I didn't do this, my father did." Restart the action.

Then Noah blesses Shem by specifically asking that Canaan become his servant. Noah blesses Japheth by asking that his territory be enlarged. He also asks that both Shem and Japheth be prosperous. Noah repeats that Canaan will be their servant.

Stop the action: Ask Shem and then Japheth, "How do you feel about this blessing?" You may hear, "Grateful that my father wants me to be prosperous," or "I don't really understand why Canaan is cursed," or "Ham was wrong in what he did so this blessing and curse are good things."

The story finishes with a statement of Noah's age when he died.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The sons of Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth were the **ancestors** of all people on earth. Another way to say this is to say that all people on earth are descendants of Noah and his sons.

After the flood, Noah became a farmer. You can also say that he began to cultivate the ground or Noah became a tiller of the soil. This means that Noah worked the ground using a plough or a hoe so that he could plant things that would grow. Noah planted a **vineyard**.

Show the picture of the vineyard.

A vineyard is a garden with grapevines. The grapevines produce grapes which can be eaten as a fruit or squeezed to make juice which you can drink. If the juice is left for a period of time, it begins to ferment or produce alcohol. Drinking fermented grape juice which is called **wine** can make you drunk. Drunk means that you have so much alcohol in your body that you can't think or act properly. You lose control of your body and your mind. Noah apparently drank enough wine that he fell into a drunken sleep or stupor. Wine is made from fruit juice. It does not have wheat or other grains that can also ferment and make alcohol. Make sure that the term for wine doesn't include wheat or other fermenting agents.

Noah was so drunk that he took his clothes off and lay down uncovered. He was naked in his tent. He was probably lying on his back so that his genitalia were exposed. This was shameful. Many translations use the term nakedness or something that tells us that Noah was exposed but is a polite way of saying it.

Shem and Japheth take a **garment** and use it to cover Noah. The garment can be a robe or a large piece of cloth worn as an outer garment. This can be used as a cover at night.

Noah's sons are always listed as Shem, Ham, and Japheth. This implies that Ham is the middle son. However, in this passage, it specifically says that Ham is the youngest son. The translation needs to make clear that Ham is the youngest son. When Noah heard that Ham told his brothers that he was naked, he cursed Canaan, the son of Ham. The Master Glossary has a discussion of the word curse. This is the first time that a human is cursing someone. Here Noah is asking God to punish Canaan. You should use the same word that you used when God cursed the ground in the Fall story.

In the curse of Canaan, Noah says that Canaan will be the lowest of servants. Canaan will be the **servant** of other servants. Canaan will be the servant of his relatives. The Master Glossary has a discussion of the word servant.

After cursing Canaan, Noah **blessed** Shem and Japheth. The word bless is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for bless that you used in the creation story.

In the blessing, Noah uses two names for God. **Lord** refers to the name **Yahweh**. Use the same name for [Yahweh] that you have used in previous stories. If you need to review this name, the Master Glossary has a discussion of Lord. **God** is the other name used in the blessing. Use the same name for God that you have used in previous stories.

Noah asks God to **expand the territory** of Japheth. This means to make the territory larger or give his family more space. Noah asks God to give prosperity to both Shem and Japheth.

The story ends by telling us that Noah lived another 350 years after the flood. Noah lived a total of 950 years.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 9:18–29

Audio Content

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Genesis 10:1-32

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 10:1-32 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This passage is the last part of the Noah story. When the flood was over and Noah's family came off the boat, each son had children. This is a fulfillment of the blessing that God gave Noah and his sons when God told them to multiply and fill the earth. As each son fathers the nations or tribes, they move out to different places and start fulfilling what God told them to do—fill the earth. This passage provides a list of the sons that Shem, Ham, and Japheth had and then gives the names of their sons who began to populate the earth after the flood. Sometimes this is referred to as the generations of Noah and his sons or the genealogy of Noah and his sons. The female children are not named. The passage tells us that each of these sons' descendants became a nation, a place with a specific territory and government. This is a list of names with a narrative description of some of the descendants.

Discuss as a group: How does your culture talk about ancestors or descendants? Think of your own family or tribe. How would you describe the beginning of your tribe or family to someone else?

Noah's sons were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. They are always listed in this order. The previous passage told us that Ham was actually the youngest son. This passage does not list the sons in the usual order. After the introductory sentence which does list them in their usual order, the passage begins with the generations of Japheth and his family. Then we hear the list of Ham and his family. Lastly, we hear the list of the oldest brother Shem's family.

First we hear the list of Japheth's sons and then two of the sons' descendants. Each name is actually the name of a nation of people that grew and lived near the sea. Some of them apparently sailed to other lands. Some of the names are mentioned again in later stories in the Bible. Many of these groups settled in lands around the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea or on the islands in the eastern part of the sea.

Show a map of the Eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea and Asia Minor including the islands.

Stop here and discuss: How does your culture describe your tribal origins? How is it similar to or different from this passage?

Next we hear about Ham's descendants. Ham is always mentioned as the middle son but we know from the previous passage that Ham is actually the youngest son. Ham has 4 sons and Canaan, the one who was cursed in the previous passage, is one of the sons mentioned. We hear about some of the descendants of some of the sons of Ham. Sometimes we hear more details about where these descendants live or stories of certain people. One of the descendants of Cush is Nimrod. Nimrod was a great hunter who built many famous cities and ruled

over a lot of territory. Many of Canaan's descendants went to live in the Middle East where Israel is located today. We will see many of these people groups or tribes in later passages in the Bible.

Show a map of the Middle East.

Stop here and discuss: Does your culture have ancient heroes? How are they described? How do we know that Nimrod was a great hero to the people who recorded this story?

Shem, who is the oldest son, appears last in this list. Shem had 5 sons but we only hear about the descendants of two of them. The passage particularly highlights Eber. It starts off by saying that Shem is the ancestor of Eber. Then it lists the generations between Shem and Eber. Then it lists the descendants of Eber. This would imply that Eber is an important descendant of Noah and Shem.

Show a map of the Middle East including Iran and Turkey.

Some names are repeated. For example, Havilah is a descendant of Shem. Ham also has a descendant named Havilah. These are different nations of people living in different areas.

The passage finishes with a statement that everyone is descended from Noah and his 3 sons. This happened after the flood.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: The descendants of Japheth are listed.

Second scene: The descendants of Ham are listed. We hear the story of Nimrod, one of Ham's descendants.

Third scene: The descendants of Shem are listed.

The characters in this story include:

- Noah
- Shem
- Ham
- Japheth
- Their descendants including Nimrod

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Have the maps provided with the previous script available. As the team works through the passage, have them show the movement from the Ararat Mountain region to the various areas around the Mediterranean Sea.

The passage starts with a brief introduction which says that this is an account of the descendants of Noah and his 3 sons.

In the first scene, Japheth has 7 sons. The daughters are not mentioned. Gomar is the first son of Japheth. Gomar has 3 sons. Javan is the fourth son of Japheth. Javan has 4 sons. These sons live near the sea and become seafaring peoples. This means that they were able to travel by boat from one area to another. The descendants of the other sons are not given.

In the second scene, Ham's descendants are listed. The passage lists more descendants for Ham than for the others. Ham has 4 sons. Cush, the oldest, goes to East Africa or the area between Ethiopia and Egypt. Cush's sons are listed. This takes Ham's descendants to the third generation. One descendant of Cush was named Nimrod. We don't know when Nimrod was born and we don't know who his father was. Nimrod was a hero to the people. He is listed as the greatest hunter in the world. People would compare others with Nimrod. Nimrod built a number of great cities in the areas of Babylon and Assyria.

Stop and discuss as a team: When you have a famous ancestor in your culture, how do you tell his or her story?

Ham's second son, Mizraim became the ancestor of the Philistines, a sea-faring people who lived around the Mediterranean Sea. Mizraim is another word for Egypt.

Canaan, who was cursed by Noah, is the youngest or last son of Ham mentioned. Canaan's sons became the ancestors of many of the people groups who lived on the Eastern side of the Mediterranean Sea. Many of them established tribes in the land that became Israel. Ham's daughters are not listed. The descendants of the other sons are not listed.

In the third scene, Shem's sons are listed. Shem was the oldest son but is listed last in this passage. Shem had 5 sons. The passage takes the descendants of Shem to the 6th generation.

1. Shem was the father of Arphaxad.
2. Arphaxad was the father of Shelah
3. Shelah was the father of Eber
4. Eber was the father of Pegleg and Joktan.
5. Joktan was the ancestor of 13 tribes. We don't know if these were sons or later descendants of Joktan.

Discuss as a team: Why do you think Shem is listed last? Why does the passage give us so many more descendants of Shem—to the 6th generation? How does your family talk about your ancestors?

Shem's daughters are not listed. The descendants of the other sons are not listed.

The passage finishes by repeating that Noah and his three sons were the ancestors of all peoples. Everyone living is descended from one of these three sons.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Noah
- Shem
- Ham
- Japheth
- Descendants of the three sons. Nimrod is one of the descendants.

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The story starts with an introductory statement that tells us that Noah and his 3 sons are the ancestors of everyone living on the earth today.

The first scene focuses on Japheth. Japheth is usually listed last. However, he is the middle son. Here we have the children of Japheth listed. Japheth has 7 sons. His daughters are not mentioned. One of Japheth's sons is named Gomar. Gomar has 3 sons. Another is named Javan. Javan has 4 sons. Javan's sons live near the sea and become sea-faring peoples. This means that they sail or move from one place to another around the sea.

Stop the action: Ask Japheth, "How do you feel about your descendants going out on boats?" You may hear, "No problem, I survived over a year on a boat," or "It bothers me but I have to trust God," or "I don't know why anyone would want to be on a boat." Restart the action.

The second scene focuses on Ham. Ham is the youngest son. Ham had 4 sons. His oldest son, Cush, goes to East Africa. He lives in the area between Ethiopia and Egypt.

Stop the action: Ask Cush, "Why did you go so far away to live?" You may hear, "I want to be free of the others," or "I want to see what other areas look like," or "This seems like an adventure for me." Restart the action.

One of Cush's descendants was named Nimrod. Nimrod was a great warrior and became a hero to the people. The people would compare others to Nimrod. They would say, he is like Nimrod, the greatest hunter in the world. Nimrod built many cities in the area of Iraq and Iran.

Stop the action: Ask Ham, "How does it feel to have a descendant like Nimrod?" You may hear, "It makes me feel proud," or "I'm glad he did so well." Restart the action.

Cush's second son was named Mizraim, which is another name for Egypt. He became the ancestor of the Egyptian peoples.

After listing some other descendants of Ham, the story goes to Canaan. Canaan is listed as the youngest son of Ham. Noah cursed Canaan after Ham saw Noah's nakedness in the tent.

Stop the action: Ask Canaan, "How does it feel to live under a curse like this?" You might hear, "I don't understand why I'm cursed when my father is the one who saw Noah." Or, "It is fine. Life is fine," or, "I'm trying to forget that and raise my family the best I can." Restart the action.

Canaan has the most descendants listed. Many of these established tribes or clans in the area that later became Israel. They spread out to cover the territory between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. They spread out from Lebanon in the north to Egypt in the south.

The third scene deals with the descendants of Shem. Shem is the oldest son. Shem has 5 sons. The passage takes Arphaxad who is the third son and lists his descendants for multiple generations. We learn that during the time of one descendant named Pegleg, the people of the world were divided into different language groups. The descendants of Shem go to the Arabian Peninsula and into parts of Iraq to live.

Stop the action: Ask Shem, "Why are you listed last?" You may hear, "Last but not least!" or "I was placed last so that people remember my descendants more," or "It doesn't matter where we are placed. All are important." Restart the action.

The story concludes with a repeat statement that everyone is descended from Noah and his three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The first sentence in this passage tells us that these are the **generations** of Noah and his sons. You have had this word generations before. Here it can mean that this is an account of Noah and his sons or the story of Noah and his sons. It is a list of the descendants of each son. Sometimes we use the word genealogy to describe the list of descendants. The Master Glossary has a discussion of the word generations.

The sons are not listed in birth order. Usually Noah's sons are referred to as Shem, Ham, and Japheth. In this passage, the descendants of Japheth are listed first. Japheth is actually Noah's middle son. When you say the names of the descendants, make sure that they don't have a particular meaning in your own language.

The descendants of Javan lived near the coast or the sea. One word that might be used is **seafaring**, meaning they went out onto the sea in a boat and travelled by boat. Another word is maritime which also means that they sailed or used boats. These are the people who settled on the coast and on the islands of the Mediterranean Sea. Each people group was identified by their **families**, or **clans**. This might mean their language groups or social and family groups. Groups of families or clans became **nations** with their own territories and governments. The word nation is discussed in the Master Glossary.

Ham is usually listed in the middle of the sons. However, we learned in the last story that Ham is actually the youngest son. The descendants of Ham settled in Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Israel. The names of these descendants will occur again and again. They need to be translated consistently. If other passages have already been translated, make sure that you are using the same names for these people groups.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 10:1-32

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (15243576 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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[mp3 zip](#) (10013692 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 11:1–9

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 11:1–9 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The previous story told about how God punished all humans because of their sins. But God saved Noah and started the new generation of human race through his family. God instructed Noah to be fruitful and to multiply and to increase greatly on earth. Years later, the number of people increased again, and people spread all over the world. This story is about how the people decided to stay in one place. But God will scatter the people so that they will live in different parts of the world.

At that time, people spoke one language. Together, they also moved from one place to another. As they traveled to the east, they found a plain in the land called Shinar. A plain is a land where the terrain is flat, and usually with grass and a few trees.

Stop and show the plains of the Shinar region.

The land of Shinar is a vast land area where old cities like Babylon, Akkad, and Erech were situated.

Stop and show a map of the Shinar region that shows Babylon, Akkad, and Erech.

It is in Shinar that the people lived together.

As they began to live there, the people decided to make bricks. Bricks are blocks that were made of mud or clay that were heated in order to harden. They also used bitumen, a substance that was used to make the bricks stick together. Both bricks and bitumen were used for constructing walls or buildings. The Israelites, however, used stone and mortar for construction.

Stop and show a picture of a brick and bitumen. If you don't use bricks and bitumen for construction or if there are no bricks and bitumen in your culture, stop and think of construction materials that can be used instead of bricks and bitumen.

Then the people decided to build a city and a tower that reached the heavens. Here, "reach the heavens" meant that they planned to build the tower to be so high that it should reach the skies.

Stop and show a picture of the city and the tower of Babel.

The people thought that by building the city and the tower, they could make a name for themselves. Here, the phrase "make a name for themselves" means that the people wanted to be famous and show that they are powerful. The city and the tower will serve as symbols that the people could do great things.

Stop and discuss the following questions: What are some of the objects or structures that symbolize greatness in your culture? When a person wants other people to honor him, how is this usually expressed in your culture? Answering this question may help you decide how to translate the phrase, "Let us make a name for ourselves."

They wanted to be a great nation. They wanted to stay together and stay powerful and strong. But God told the people from the beginning that they should multiply and fill the earth. However, they wanted to disobey God by staying together in one place.

So, God came down from heaven, to the earth where the people lived. The word for God used in this story is Yahweh, the personal name of God. God saw the city and the tower that the children of men were building. Here, the phrase "children of men" refers to the same people who were building the city and the tower. God may have returned to heaven after seeing what the people were building. In heaven, God may have thought about what he will do with the people. Then, using direct speech God spoke about the many possibilities that the people could accomplish because they spoke one language. Direct speech refers to a speech that reports the actual words of a speaker. Then God said, "Let us go down and confuse the languages of the people. Then they will not be able to understand each other." Here, God is either speaking to himself, or he is talking with the heavenly council of angels or spirit beings in heaven with God.

As a result, the people could no longer understand each other. Because of that, they could not continue building the city and the tower. So they abandoned the construction of the city and the tower. And instead of staying in one place, God scattered the people all over the face of the whole earth. This simply means that God scattered the people throughout the world. That place came to be called Babel. In Hebrew, Babel means confusion. Another name for Babel is Babylon.

Stop and show again the map of the Shinar region that shows Babylon, Akkad, and Erech.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has four scenes.

First Scene: The whole world spoke the same words and language. Moving eastward, the people found a plain in the land of Shinar. They decided to settle there.

Second Scene: As they settled, they decided to make bricks instead of using stone. They also had bitumen instead of mortar. Then, they planned to make a name for themselves by building a city and a tower that reaches the heavens. They thought that by constructing a city and a tower that reaches the heavens, they can live together and avoid living in other places.

Third Scene: God came down from heaven to see what the people were building. God saw the people's great potential because they spoke the same language. So God decided to confuse the people's language so that they will speak different languages.

Fourth Scene: God confused the languages of the people. As a result, the people could no longer understand each other. They stopped constructing the city and the tower, and they went to live in different places. In this way, God scattered the people all over the world. That place was called Babel because that was where God confused the language of the people.

The characters in this story include:

- God
- The people/the children of man

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives to visualize the story and the action in it.

In scene one, the people were speaking the same language. It is unclear what exact language the people spoke. But they were able to understand each other. The people were also moving to the east. They were looking for a place where they could live. The people likely walked when they traveled.

As they were traveling, they found a plain in the land of Shinar. They saw that the plain in the land of Shinar was a good place to live in. So the people stopped traveling and decided to set up their camp in that place.

Stop and show the plains of the Shinar region.

In scene two, the people talked to one another about how they could start living there. The people decided to make bricks. In this process, the people looked for mud or clay, and they molded them into blocks in the shape of a rectangle. After shaping, they heat them on fire so they will harden and become bricks. They also had bitumen to make the bricks stick together.

Stop and show a picture of a brick and bitumen. If you don't use bricks and bitumen for construction or if there are no bricks and bitumen in your culture, use or draw objects in your culture that best approximate bricks and bitumen.

Then the people decided to build a city and a tower that reaches the heavens.

Stop and show a picture of the city and tower of Babel.

In scene three, God came down from heaven. He went to see what the people were building. It is important to note that the city and the tower were not finished yet. Still, God may have gone around the city and saw the tower as the people were building them. God may have returned to heaven after this. Then, in direct speech, God expresses his thoughts about what he saw. His speech is introduced by the word, "Behold." In Hebrew, this word is used to call the attention of the listener so he or she will listen carefully to what is about to be said.

Stop here and discuss as a translation team: In your culture, what word or words do you use to prepare your listener for a very important statement?

Then God said that the people will keep on disobeying him because they spoke the same language. So God says, "Let us go down and confuse their language." Here, God is either speaking to himself, or he is talking with the heavenly council of angels or spirit beings in heaven with God.

In scene four, God confused the languages of the people. The people suddenly misunderstood each other as they were speaking. Because the people could no longer understand each other, people probably became frustrated. As a result, they left the construction of the city and the tower unfinished. Then, they left the place to live in other places. In this way, God scattered the people all over the world. The place where God confused the languages of the people came to be called Babel. In Hebrew, "Babel" means confusion.

Stop and show again the map of the Shinar region that shows Babylon, Akkad, and Erech.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has four scenes

The characters in this story include:

- God
- The people/children of man

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

For scene 1, have the actors playing the role of the people discuss something using the same language. Make sure that as they are talking, they are also walking and searching for a place where they could live. When they see the plain of Shinar, have the people set up their camp there. When the people arrive there, make sure they are excited for their new home.

Stop the action: Ask the actors playing the role of the people, "How do you feel?" You might hear things like, "We're excited for our new home!" or "Finally, we can start building our lives!" Restart the action.

For scene 2, the people are discussing among themselves about making bricks so they can build a city and tower. Have one person in the team say, "Let's make bricks and harden them with fire." Then have the people look for mud or clay and have them make bricks. Then, have another person say, "Come, let's build a great city for ourselves with a tower that reaches into the sky." Then, have another person say, "This will make us famous and keep us from being scattered all over the world." Make sure to show that the people are excited over their ideas.

Stop the action: Ask the actors playing the people, "How do you feel?" You might hear things like, "I'm excited for this plan!" or "The city and the tower will surely make us great, perhaps even greater than God!" or "I'm sure people will remember us because of this great accomplishment." Restart the action.

For scene 3, have the person acting as God come down from a high place. When God comes down to earth, he looks around the city and the tower. After seeing what the people were building, God returns to heaven. In heaven, God said that if the people will succeed, they will do this again. Have the actor playing God use God's direct speech as he speaks his thoughts about the people.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing God, "How do you feel?" You might hear things like, "I'm disappointed because the people disobeyed my command," or "Unless I stop this now, these people will keep doing things like this in the future." Restart the action. It is important to remember that when God said, "Come let us go down," God, might be speaking to himself. In this case, the actor playing God can speak his thoughts out loud. Again, make sure to use God's direct speech. God might also be speaking to his heavenly council of angels or spirit beings in heaven with God. The team may also act this out. In this case the group can portray God speaking to a group that represents the angels and the spirits.

For scene 4, God comes down again from heaven and confuses the people. Then the people suddenly become unable to understand each other. Make sure to show the people's frustration because they could not understand each other. Make sure also to show how they will leave the construction of the city and the tower unfinished because of their frustration. As the people are leaving to go to different places, have God do something that shows that he was the one that scattered the people all over the world.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing God, "How do you feel?" You might hear things like, "Their scattering is in line with my divine purpose," or "Their scattering fulfills my command which should result in their blessing."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Many years after the time of Noah, people increased in number and began filling the earth. At this time, the people spoke the same language and used the same words. They were traveling to the east until they saw the plain of the land called Shinar. The people decided to live in that land.

Then the people decided to make **bricks**. Using bricks and the bitumen they had, they decided to build a city and a tower that reaches the heavens. **Heavens** can refer to the sky, or to the place where God and his angels live, depending on the context. In this story, the heavens likely refer to the sky, since no structure can ever reach the heavens where God lives. For more information, you may look up heaven in the Master Glossary. The people said that by building the city and the tower, they can **make a name for themselves**. "Making a name for oneself" is an expression that means increasing one's honor or reputation. Elsewhere in Scripture, it is God who makes a name for a person or for himself. It is an act that is associated only with God. By making a name for themselves, the people thought that they could disobey God's command and stay in one place.

God came down to see what the people were building. The Hebrew term for God in this context refers to the personal name of God, **Yahweh**. For more information, you may refer to the Master Glossary on Yahweh. After seeing what the people were building, God may have returned to heaven. Then, God spoke about what he should do with the people. In introducing his speech, God said, "**Behold!**" Behold is an expression that is typically said before a very important statement. It is also translated as "Look!" It has the effect of slowing the flow of speech to prepare the reader or listener for an important statement.

God said that the people will keep on disobeying him if he will not stop the people now. So God decided to confuse the languages of the people. In speaking about his plan, God might be speaking to himself, or to his heavenly council of angels or spirit beings in heaven with God.

God confused the languages of the people. As a result, the people could no longer understand each other. Because of that, they left the construction of the city and the tower unfinished. They also left the place and went to live in different places. The place where God confused their language was called **Babel**. In Hebrew, Babel means confusion. In this way, God scattered the people over the **face of the whole earth**. The phrase, face of the whole earth is an expression that means "throughout the world." In this story, it means God scattered the people so that they will live in different parts of the world.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 11:1–9

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (12905617 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
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- [FIA Step 6](#)

Genesis 11:10–26

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 11:10–26 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 11:10–26 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

This genealogy, or family history, is about the descendants of Noah's son, Shem. Recall that after a massive flood, all people died except Noah and his family. After Noah and his family survived, God started a new generation of people through Noah's family. The previous stories told how Noah's family multiplied as time passed by. The people attempted to stay in one place and disobey God. But God prevented that and scattered the people. As a result, people lived in different parts of the world. The present passage resumes the story of Noah and his family. It is about Noah's son, Shem, and Shem's descendants. Shem is important because Abram is a descendant of Shem. Abram becomes an important ancestor of God's special people group.

The present genealogy starts with an introduction, "These are the generations of Shem." This introduction signals the start of a new section. It is in several places in the book of Genesis, as well as in the Old Testament. The Hebrew word for "generations" is a term that typically refers to a story or a record of a person's ancestry. Many translations say "genealogy" here. This record shows which family a person belongs to. This information is important because a person's social status, rights, and obligations depend on his genealogy, or family history.

Stop here and discuss these questions as a group: In your culture, how important is it for a person to know his ancestry? How does your culture record or trace a person's ancestry? What word or words do you use to refer to this record? How would you translate in your language the idea of genealogy, which is the history of the ancestors of a family, nation, or person? Pause this audio here.

After the introduction statement, the list of Shem's descendants begins. When Shem was 100 years old, Shem became the father of Arphaxed. Recall that Shem's descendants were in a previous story. There are four main differences between the previous and the present genealogy. First, the previous genealogy was about Shem's father, Noah, and Noah's descendants. The present genealogy is about Shem and Shem's descendants. Second, the previous genealogy lists the names of the fathers and all their children. The present genealogy lists only the fathers and their firstborn sons. Third, the previous genealogy does not mention the ages of the people. The present genealogy mentions the ages of the people. Fourth, the previous genealogy only listed Shem's descendants up to the fourth generation. The present genealogy lists Shem's descendants up to the ninth generation.

It was two years after the flood when Shem became the father of Arphaxed. This means that Shem immediately started his family after the flood dried up. After the flood, God commanded Noah and his family to have children

and fill the earth. Shem immediately begins to obey God's command. Also, this is the last time that the storyteller talks about the flood in this book.

Besides Arphaxed, Shem had other sons and daughters. Shem lived 500 more years, and then Shem died. Before the flood, people lived for hundreds of years until God decided to reduce the people's lifespan because of their sins. Shem lived longer than the other people in Shem's genealogy. The genealogy in many original texts covers about 300 years. If these dates are correct, that means Shem was still alive when Terah became Abram's father.

Stop here and as a group look at Shem's genealogy tree that ends with Terah and his three sons. Pause this audio here.

Terah's three sons are on this list: Abram, Nahor, and Haran. This ends Shem's genealogy.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 11:10–26 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has 9 scenes.

In the first scene: At 100 years old, Shem became the father of Arphaxed. Shem lived 500 more years, had many other sons and daughters, and then Shem died.

In the second scene: At 35 years old, Arphaxed became the father of Shelah. Arphaxed lived 403 more years, had many other sons and daughters, and then Arphaxed died.

In the third scene: At 30 years old, Shelah became the father of Eber. Shelah lived 403 more years, had many other sons and daughters, and then Shelah died.

In the fourth scene: At 34 years old, Eber became the father of Peleg. Eber lived 430 more years, had many other sons and daughters, and then Eber died.

In the fifth scene: At 30 years old, Peleg became the father of Reu. Peleg lived 209 more years, had many other sons and daughters, and then Peleg died.

In the sixth scene: At 32 years old, Reu became the father of Serug. Reu lived 207 more years, had many other sons and daughters, and then Reu died.

In the seventh scene: At 30 years old, Serug became the father of Nahor. Serug lived 200 more years, had many other sons and daughters, and then Serug died.

In the eighth scene: At 29 years old, Nahor became the father of Terah. Nahor lived 119 more years, had many other sons and daughters, and then Nahor died.

In the ninth scene: At 70 years old, Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

The characters in this passage are:

- Shem
- Arphaxed
- Shelah
- Eber
- Peleg
- Reu
- Serug
- Nahor
- Terah
- Abram
- Nahor
- Haran

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In scene one: At 100 years old, Shem should look like an old man. Still, Shem should hold something that may represent the infant Arphaxed. Shem lived for 500 more years, then died. Shem's children buried him and mourned for him.

In scene two: At 35 years old, Arphaxed should look like a middle-aged man. Arphaxed should hold something that may represent the infant Shelah. Arphaxed lived for 403 more years, then died. Arphaxed's children buried him and mourned for him.

In scene three: At 30 years old, Shelah should look like a middle-aged man. Shelah should hold something that may represent the infant Eber. Shelah lived for 403 more years, then died. Shelah's children buried him and mourned for him.

In scene four: At 34 years old, Eber should look like a middle-aged man. Eber should hold something that may represent the infant Peleg. Eber lived for 430 more years, then died. Eber's children buried him and mourned for him.

In scene five: At 30 years old, Peleg should look like a middle-aged man. Peleg should hold something that may represent the infant Reu. Peleg lived for 209 more years, then died. Peleg's children buried him and mourned for him.

In scene six: At 32 years old, Reu should look like a middle-aged man. Reu should hold something that may represent the infant Serug. Reu lived for 207 more years, then died. Reu's children buried him and mourned for Reu.

In scene seven: At 30 years old, Serug should look like a middle-aged man. Serug should hold something that may represent the infant Nahor. Serug lived for 200 more years, then died. Serug's children buried him and mourned for him.

In scene eight: At 29 years old, Nahor should look like a middle-aged man. Nahor should hold something that may represent the infant Terah. Nahor lived for 119 more years, then died. Nahor's children buried him and mourned for him.

In scene nine: At 70 years old, Terah should look like an old man. Terah should be near his sons Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

*Embodying the Text**Embodying the Text*

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 11:10–26 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has 9 scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Shem
- Arphaxed
- Shelah
- Eber
- Peleg
- Reu
- Serug
- Nahor
- Terah
- Abram
- Nahor
- Haran

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

You can act out each scene in two parts. In the first part, the father will tell his age, praise God, and name his oldest son. In the second part, the man's sons and daughters will tell their father's age when their father died. Then the sons and daughters will bury and mourn their father.

As an example, for scene one, have Shem hold the infant Arphaxed and say, "I am 100 years old, and praise God for this child! This child's name will be Arphaxed."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Shem, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am happy because with this child, we have started to obey God's command to multiply; or
- With this child, we begin a new generation of mankind.

Then, have Shem's children say, "Our father Shem has died peacefully at 600 years old." Then show how Shem's children bury and mourn Shem.

Repeat the same two-part sequence until scene eight when Nahor names Terah and when Nahor dies.

In scene nine, have Terah and his three sons do an activity together. They could eat or pray together.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Terah, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- God has truly blessed me with these three sons; or
- I feel that God has a great purpose for my sons.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The previous stories told how the people multiplied and scattered to live in different places after the flood. The present passage shows Shem's genealogy that ends in the ninth generation, at the birth of Terah's sons, Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

The genealogy starts with an introduction, "These are the **generations** of Shem." The Hebrew word for generations is a term that typically refers to a story or a record of a person's ancestry. It is also often translated as **genealogy**. In the book of Genesis, this word has two main functions. First, it functions to signal a new section or story; it is used thirteen times throughout the book of Genesis. Second, it functions to show which family a person belongs to. This information is important because a person's social status, rights, and obligations are based on his ancestry. In the present context, this genealogy serves to introduce the ancestral origins of Abram. Abram will become the next important character.

Since this is the sixth time that this word has appeared, be sure to use the same word for generations that you have used in the earlier genealogies. You may refer to the Master Glossary for more information on generations or genealogies.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 11:10-26

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (8896910 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 11:27-32

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 11:27-32 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story is about the family of Terah. Recall that the previous story was about the genealogy of Shem. The last generation mentioned in Shem's genealogy was Terah. The present passage continues the story beginning with Terah and his family. It tells more about Terah's sons and the wives that his sons had married. It also talks about where they lived, and at what age Terah died.

The story begins with an introduction, "Now these are the generations of Terah." The word "now" signals a new section, but not an entirely new section. This is because the Hebrew for the word "now" indicates that the present story is still connected to the previous story. Also, like in the previous story, the word for "generations" refers to a person's ancestry. This means that this story is also a type of genealogy. This genealogy talks about Terah's family, his descendants. It is important to remember that, during that time, a person's ancestry was important. A person's ancestry determined his social status, rights, and obligations.

Terah's sons were Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Among his sons, only Haran had children of his own. His children were Lot, Milcah, and Iscah. But Haran died earlier than his father, Terah. He died in the land of Ur of the Chaldeans where he was born. The Chaldeans referred to the Babylonians, so Ur was a place name for a region in Babylon.

Stop and show a map that shows the city of Ur within the province of Babylon.

It is important to remember that Babel, another place name for Babylon, was where the people had planned to build a city and a tower. God prevented the people from completing this building project and scattered them throughout the world. Terah and his family may have stayed in Babylon after God scattered the people. This may explain why the land of Babylon, or the land of Ur of the Chaldeans, was said to be the land where Haran was born.

Haran's wife was not mentioned, but Abram and Nahor's wives were mentioned. Nahor married one of Haran's daughters, Milcah. Nahor and Milcah, therefore, were blood relatives. In their culture, marriage between close relatives was common, sometimes even preferable. This was one of the ways that families maintained strong relationships and preserved their ancestry. Meanwhile, Abram married Sarai. A later story reveals that Sarai was Abram's half-sister. This means Abram and Sarai had the same father, Terah, but had different mothers.

Stop and discuss the following questions:

1. How does your culture view marriages between blood relatives?
2. How can you best translate this story with the impression that the marriages between Nahor and Milcah, and Abram and Sarai, were acceptable during their time?

Abram and Sarai had no children because Sarai was barren. Barrenness refers to a woman's inability to conceive a child. Sarai's barrenness was mentioned here because Abram and Sarai are going to be the main characters in the next stories. Sarai's barrenness will be an important information in these next stories.

Then Terah left the land of Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan. Canaan was the land named after Noah's grandson, Canaan. Terah took with him Abram and Sarai, as well as his grandson, Lot. At this point, it is unclear what happened to Nahor and Milcah, and Haran's other daughter Iscah. But Terah, Abram, Sarai, and Lot went on a journey to Canaan. However, before reaching Canaan, they stopped at a place called Haran.

Stop and show a map that shows the route from Ur to Canaan, with Haran in the middle.

This place is not related to Terah's son, Haran, because this place is spelled differently in Hebrew. It is in Haran where Terah, Abram, Sarai, and Lot will live for some time. It is also the place where Terah will die. He died at age 205.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has five scenes.

First scene: Terah and his three sons are together in Ur of the Chaldeans. Haran was with his children Lot, Milcah, and Iscah.

Second scene: Haran died and was buried in Ur of the Chaldeans.

Third scene: Nahor married Haran's daughter, Milcah. Abram married Sarai. Abram and Sarai had no children.

Fourth scene: Terah, together with Abram, Sarai, and Lot started their journey from Ur of the Chaldeans to the land of Canaan. After arriving in Haran, they stopped the journey and lived there.

Fifth scene: Terah died in Haran at the age of 205.

The characters in this story include:

- Terah
- Abram
- Nahor
- Haran
- Milkah
- Sarai
- Lot

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives to visualize the story and the action in it.

Remember that this story follows the "generations" or the "genealogy of Shem." Terah was the last generation in Shem's genealogy. This story opens with a Hebrew word that indicates that this is a new section, but that this new section is connected to the previous story.

In scene one, Terah and his sons, as well as his grandchildren from Haran are to be seen living together in Ur of the Chaldeans.

Stop and show a map that shows the city of Ur within the province of Babylon.

You may use an object and label it with the place names to indicate where they are staying. Another option is to write the name of the place on the ground. Still another option is to have one of the characters improvise a speech where he/she mentions that they are in Ur of the Chaldeans.

In scene two, Terah, and his sons Abram and Nahor, as well as his grandchildren from Haran, may be depicted as mourning the death of Haran. One of the characters may mention that Haran died in Ur of the Chaldeans where he was born.

In scene three, Nahor and Milcah, as well as Abram and Sarai, should be depicted as husbands and wives. It is important to show in this scene that Sarai was barren.

In scene four, Terah, together with Abram, Sarai, and Lot should be seen as preparing for a long journey. Terah may be depicted as explaining to the group where they are going.

Stop and show a map that shows the route from Ur to Canaan, with Haran somewhere in the middle.

Then, they may be shown stopping in Haran. Terah may be seen as instructing the group to stop the journey and set up camp there.

In scene five, Abram, Sarai, and Lot may be seen mourning over the death of Terah. Abram may improvise a speech here that mentions Terah's age.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has five scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Terah
- Abram
- Nahor
- Haran
- Milkah
- Sarai
- Lot

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

It is important to remember that scenes one to three take place in Ur of the Chaldeans. The birth of Haran's children, the death of Haran, and the marriage between Nahor and Milcah, as well as Abram and Sarai all take place in Ur of the Chaldeans. So, when acting out scenes one to three, be sure that it is clear that the scenes are taking place in Ur of the Chaldeans.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

In scene one, have all the characters appear in one home. They are living in Ur of the Chaldeans. They are doing an activity together, perhaps sharing a meal, a common activity that the whole family did together during that time.

In scene two, to show that Haran had died, Haran may lie on the ground, with his father Terah, his brothers, and his children standing around him and mourning over his death.

In scene three, Nahor and Milcah should be seen as husband and wife. Abram and Sarai, too, should be seen as husband and wife. To show that Abram and Sarai had no children, Nahor and Milcah may be surrounded by their children, while Sarai watches from a distance.

Stop the action: Ask the actors playing the roles of Abram and Sarai, "How do you feel?" You might hear things like, "We're sad because we don't have children of our own," or "Perhaps, God doesn't have a great plan for us." Restart the action.

Scene four should show two places. The first is in Ur of the Chaldeans where Terah, Abram, Sarai, and Lot are preparing for the journey. Then, on their way, they stop in Haran and decide to live there.

In scene five, Terah dies at an old age in Haran. Abram, Sarai, and Lot are mourning over Terah's death.

Stop the action: Ask the actors playing the roles of Abram and Sarai, "How do you feel?" You might hear things like, "We don't know what do and where to go now," or "I wonder what God wants us to do."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story is about the family of Terah, Shem's ninth generation descendant. It tells about how his family grew by marrying and having children. The story ends in Terah's death after he and his son, Abram, Abram's wife, Sarai, and his grandson, Lot had moved from Ur of the Chaldeans to the land of **Canaan**. Canaan was the land named after Noah's grandson, Canaan. This land will be important in later stories as this will be the land that God will promise to give to Abram's descendants. It will be considered the land of promise until the book of Deuteronomy, and subsequently, the land that the Israelites will call their homeland.

Show again the map of the route from Ur to Canaan, with Haran in the middle.

This story begins with an introduction, "Now these are the **generations** of Terah." The Hebrew word for, "generations" refers to a story or record of a person's ancestry. It is also translated as genealogy or history. It is an important word in Genesis that appears thirteen times. A person's ancestry was important because that was the basis of a person's social status, rights, and obligations. In the present story, this genealogy talks about Terah's family and how they moved from Ur of the Chaldeans to the land of Canaan. Since this is the seventh time that this word has appeared, be sure to use the same word for "generations" that you have used in the earlier genealogies. You may refer to the Master Glossary for more information on genealogies and generations.

Terah had three sons: Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Haran had his own children. Nahor marries Haran's daughter Milcah, and Abram marries Sarai. Yet Abram and Sarai do not have children. This is because Sarai was **barren**. Barrenness refers to a woman's inability to conceive a child. Because God commanded humans to multiply and fill the earth, bearing children was considered a great blessing that fulfills God's will. On the other hand, inability to bear a child was considered a great dishonor. People thought that women who were unable to have children were cursed by God. So, people often treated them with ridicule and disgrace. But the mention of Sarai's barrenness here was only because Abram and Sarai are going to be the main characters in the next stories. Sarai's barrenness will be an important issue in these next stories.

Terah left Ur of the Chaldeans to journey to the land of Canaan. He took with him Abram, Sarai, and Lot. But before making it to Canaan, they stopped in Haran and decided to stay there. Terah died in Haran at age 205.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 11:27–32

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (10631156 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 6](#)

Genesis 12:1–9

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 12:1–9 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story is about God's call and promise to Abram, and Abram's journey from Haran to Canaan. The present story begins with the word, "now" which indicates that this is a new story. But the Hebrew word for "now" suggests that this new story is still related to the previous story. In the previous story Terah, Abram's father, took Abram, his wife Sarai, and Lot to journey from Ur of the Chaldeans to the land of Canaan. But before reaching Canaan, they stopped in Haran and lived there. The previous story also mentioned that Terah died in Haran, but only to indicate that he will no longer play an important role in the next stories. Even though Terah eventually dies, the present story begins with Abram still living with his father in Haran.

Stop and show a picture of the landscape of Haran.

In the beginning of the story, God commands Abram to leave his country. A person's country refers to the land where he was born, and the land where he lives most of his life. This is also where a person works to provide for his family. God also commands Abram to leave his relatives. At that time, families and relatives tended to live close to each other. This was how they protected each other and preserved their family's lineage. Then God also told Abram to leave his "father's house." A household was usually composed of a father, mother, their children, and servants. The leader of the household was the eldest male in the family. Children, even when they marry, often stayed with or close to their father, as this was what entitled them for inheritance. By leaving his country, Abram is leaving his livelihood. By leaving his relatives, no one can protect him from any danger. By leaving his father's household, he is leaving any claim to inheritance. In other words, God is telling Abram to leave behind every source of his security. Instead, God wants Abram to trust him as he guides him to his promise.

Then, using direct speech, God promised several things to Abram. Direct speech refers to a speech that reports the actual words of a speaker. In this case, it refers to God's actual words of promises to Abram. First, God promised that God will make Abram into a great nation. This means that God will have Abram produce numerous descendants, own a land, and become an important and powerful nation. Second, God will bless Abram and his descendants. The idea of blessing is important in these promises. Blessing is when a person gives favor to another person. In this story, it means God will protect Abram, grant him success, and give him great wealth. Third, God will make Abram's name great. This means that God will give great honor to Abram so that all the people of the world will know of his trust in God. In turn, God expects Abram to become a blessing to others. Fourth, God will determine how he will treat other nations depending on how they will treat Abram. People who will bless Abram, God will also bless. People who will do harm against Abram, God will curse. Here, the idea of God cursing means that God will cause disasters to happen upon the person. Finally, God promised that the families of the world will be blessed through Abram. It will be revealed later that these promises are not only for Abram, but also for his descendants.

Stop and discuss the following questions:

1. How does a person show favor to another person in your culture? What actions are included in this favor?
2. When someone receives favor from someone else, what do they expect from them?

Abram obeyed God. At age 75, Abram left Haran with his wife, Sarai, his nephew, Lot, and all the people and possessions they had in Haran. They left Haran to go to the land of Canaan. Canaan was the land named after Noah's grandson, Canaan. The possessions they brought with them may include livestock such as sheep and cattle. The people they had do not refer to their children since Sarai was barren, which means that she did not have children. More likely, it referred to servants. A servant was someone who lives in the same household as his master to serve the needs of his master's family. It is unclear how long the journey was, but they arrived in Canaan after some time.

Abram traveled through the land of Canaan. He reached the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. The great tree of Moreh was a known place. It was under this tree that Canaanite priests taught the people of Canaan

about the worship of their gods. It was, therefore, a holy place for Canaanites. According to the story, this sacred tree was located in a city called Shechem. At that time, the Canaanites lived there.

Stop and show a picture of the great tree of Moreh. Show also a picture of the city of Shechem.

Then, God appeared to Abram at that place. It is unclear in what form God appeared to Abram, but what is certain is that God spoke another promise to Abram. God said that he will give "this land" to Abram's offspring. Here, "offspring" meant Abram's descendants, and "this land" refers to the land of Canaan. This means that God will give the land of Canaan for Abram's descendants to own and live in. After receiving this promise, Abram built an altar for God. An altar was made of stones that were used for ritual sacrifices.

Stop and show a picture of an altar that was made of a pile of stones with a person offering an animal sacrifice on top of it.

Even though it was not mentioned, Abram may have sacrificed to God in response to God's promise. By doing this, Abram marked Shechem as God's territory. This is why in later stories, Shechem will be a place where important events will happen in the lives of Abram's descendants.

Abram does not remain at Shechem. He continues his journey and pitches a tent at the hill country with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east.

Stop and show a picture of the hill country, and a map that shows where it is located between Bethel and Ai.

A tent was a shelter made of woven cloth or animal skin that was supported by wooden poles. It was, therefore, a movable and a temporary shelter. This means that Abram did not stay there for a long time.

Stop and show a picture of a tent with human settlers in it.

In that hill country, Abram again built an altar for God. He also called on the name of God. This means that Abram worshiped God in that place. Remember that the name of God used in this story is Yahweh, the personal name for God.

Then, after some time, Abram continued his journey toward the Negeb. The Hebrew for Negeb means dry land, which refers to the desert region in the southern part of Canaan. This region was mostly dry because there was not much rain in this part of the land. As such, livelihood like farming and raising livestock was nearly impossible.

Stop and show a picture of the desert of Negeb.

The direction of Abram's journey was from North to South, covering three places: Shechem, the hill country between Bethel and Ai, and Negeb. With this, Abram did see the land that God said he would show him.

Stop and show the route that Abram, Sarai, and Lot took, beginning in Haran, then to Shechem, then to the hill country between Bethel and Ai, and then to Negeb.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has five scenes.

First scene: God tells Abram to leave his homeland, his family, and his father's household. Then, using direct speech, God gave several promises of blessing to Abram.

Second scene: At age 75, Abram leaves Haran with his wife, Sarai, and his nephew, Lot. They journey to Canaan and arrive there. They travel with all their possessions and everyone they had.

Third scene: When they arrived in Canaan, they continued to travel south. They stopped by a city called Shechem. God appears to Abram and says that God will give the land to his descendants. Abram builds an altar for God.

Fourth scene: Abram continues his journey and pitches his tent at the hill country between Bethel and Ai. There, Abram also built an altar, and worshiped God.

Fifth scene: Abram continues his journey toward the Negeb.

The characters in this story include:

- God
- Abram
- Sarai
- Lot
- Abram's Servants
- Canaanites

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives to visualize the story and the action in it.

In scene one, it is unclear how God spoke to Abram. It is also unclear where Abram was and what he was doing at the time when God spoke to him. What is more certain is that Abram was still in Haran with his father, Terah.

Stop and show a picture of the landscape of Haran.

When God speaks to Abram, Abram may be in his own tent, seeing and hearing God in a vision. This is also how God will speak to Abram in a later story when God speaks again about his promise. When God speaks to Abram, he says that Abram needs to leave three places. These places were mentioned starting with the largest to the smallest. First, God says that Abram needs to leave his country. This is the largest land of the three. Next, God says that Abram needs to leave his relatives. This refers to the land area where all the people related to their family lived. Remember that families tended to live together during that time. Finally, God says that Abram needs to leave his father's household. This refers to the portion of land where his father and brothers lived. This is the smallest land of the three.

God's call for Abram to leave is connected to God's promise of blessings. The Hebrew word that begins God's promise shows that if Abram obeys God, God's promised blessings will be fulfilled. God said that he will make Abram into a great nation, and he will bless Abram. God also said that he will make Abram's name great, and then Abram will be a blessing to others. God also said that God will bless the people that will bless Abram, and God will curse the people that will harm Abram. Then God will bless the nations through Abram. Each promise is also connected with the same Hebrew word. This means that when God spoke these promises, he said it in one speech. Abram may be depicted as being amazed as he hears God's promises.

Scenes two to five will show Abram traveling. It is important to show that Sarai and Lot are with Abram when he travels, even though they are not mentioned. It is also important to show where they are at each scene.

In scene two, Abram looks older at 75 years old. Abram journeys to Canaan and arrives there with Sarai and Lot. They will travel with all their possessions, probably with sheep and cattle, as well as servants.

In scene three, Abram continues his journey and sees Canaanites all over the place. Then, he arrives at the great tree of Moreh at Shechem.

Stop and show a picture of the great tree of Moreh.

God appears to Abram and promises that he will give the land of Canaan to Abram's descendants. Here, God may have appeared as a man, and Abram will recognize him as God. After this, Abram will gather stones and will build an altar for God.

Stop and show a picture of an altar that was made of a pile of stones with a person offering an animal sacrifice on top of it.

In scene four, after some time, Abram will travel again and will arrive at a hill country between Bethel and Ai. Bethel should be located on the west side, and Ai on the east where Abram was encamped.

Stop and show a picture of the hill country, and a map that shows where it is located between Bethel and Ai. It is important to show that the place has several hills. Abram will pitch his tent on one of the hills.

Stop and show a picture of a tent with people in it. Abram will also gather stones and will build an altar for God and will worship God in that place.

In scene five, after some time, Abram will be seen traveling again to Negeb. The Negev should be seen as a desert region.

Stop and show a picture of the desert of Negeb.

Stop and show the route that Abram, Sarai, and Lot took, beginning in Haran, then to Shechem, then at the hill country between Bethel and Ai, and Negeb.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has five scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- God
- Abram
- Sarai
- Lot
- Abram's Servants
- Canaanites

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

It is unclear how much time passed by before one scene goes to another. Be sure to show that the movement from one scene to another was not immediate. There was an unspecified amount of time before each scene.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

In scene one, Abram may be depicted inside his tent. The person acting God may call him outside to give Abram instructions and promises. God instructed Abram to leave his country, relatives, and father's household, and go to a place that God will show him. Then, God said that he will make Abram into a great nation. God also promised to bless Abram and make his name great. Then, God said that he will bless those who will bless Abram, and curse those who will harm Abram. And through Abram, God will bless the nations of the world. Be sure to use direct speech to act out God giving his promises to Abram.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing God, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "I have a great purpose for Abram and his family" or "I am pleased with Abram. So, I will bless him and accomplish my purpose through him and his family." At the same time, ask the actor playing Abram, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like "It's not easy but I trust that God will take care of us, and he will fulfill his promise" or "God must have a purpose, so I will obey him." Also ask the actor playing Sarai, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "I don't fully understand what Abram is doing, but I will follow my husband," or "I'm sad to leave my family, but Abram is very excited, so there must be something wonderful coming from God!" Restart the action.

Scenes two to five will show Abram traveling. It is important to show that Sarai and Lot are with Abram when he travels, even though they are not mentioned. It is also important to show where they are at each scene.

In scene two, have the actors playing Abram, Sarai, and Lot travel from one place to another, representing the journey from Haran to Canaan. They should have some things with them that they will represent as their possessions, and some should play as their servants. Be sure to show that they have arrived in Canaan.

In scene three, Abram and his group should keep traveling until they reach the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. Some people may play as Canaanites passing by them as they travel, or Abram may say something like, "These must be the Canaanites" as they walk. They will arrive at Shechem. God will appear again and promise the land to Abram's descendants. Abram will then collect some stones which he will pile up to build an altar.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Abram, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like "If God promised this land to my descendants, that means God will give us our own son even if my wife is barren!" or "Praise God for this wonderful promise!" Restart the action.

In scene four, Abram and his group will continue traveling south until they reach a hill country between Bethel and Ai. Be sure to mark Bethel on the west, and Ai on the east. There, Abram will pitch a tent and stay for a while. There, he will also build an altar and worship God.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Abram, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "I will worship God for his promise!" or "God really deserves our worship!" Restart the action.

In scene five, Abram and his group travel to the Negeb. Be sure to show Negev as a desert place. Abram and his group may say something to describe the heat in the place.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story is about God's call and promise to Abram, and Abram's journey from Haran to Canaan. At that time, Abram was still living with his father, Terah in Haran. Abram obeys God and leaves Haran to journey to **Canaan**. Canaan was the land named after Noah's grandson, Canaan. This land is important as this is the land that God promised to give to Abram's descendants. It will be considered the land of promise until the book of Deuteronomy, and subsequently, the land that the Israelites will call their homeland. You may refer to the Master Glossary for more information about Canaan.

First, God calls Abram to leave his **nation**. The word nation refers to a place or territory that is governed by a group of people. You may refer to the Master Glossary for more information about nation. Then God said that Abram should leave his relatives, and his father's household. By doing this, Abram will leave everything that will secure his life. God, however, promised that he will **bless** Abram. Blessing is when a person gives favor to another person. In the Bible, God is the source of all blessings. When God blesses a person, it means that he is pleased with that person. Therefore, he promises and grants children, success, protection, even wealth to that person. In this story, God's promise of blessings includes giving Abram descendants that will become a great nation. It also includes granting Abram great honor. Those who bless Abram, God will also bless. As a result, Abram will become a blessing to others, and the families of the world will be blessed through him. God's blessing also includes protection for Abram so that those who will harm Abram, God will **curse**. Cursing is when a person wishes for something unpleasant to happen to another person. In the Bible, when God curses a person, this means he is not pleased with the person. So, he punishes them by cursing them. God's curses may include

inability to produce children, illnesses, military losses, and captivity. For more information on the words bless and curse you may refer to the Master Glossary.

When they arrived in Canaan, they saw Canaanites who were living in the land. They continued to travel south until they reached the **great tree of Moreh**. The great tree of Moreh was a known site of teaching and worship. It was a place where Canaanite priests taught their fellow Canaanites about the worship of their gods. They also worshiped their gods in that place. The great tree of Moreh was, therefore, a holy place for Canaanites. It is here that God will again appear to Abram.

Stop here and show again the picture of the great tree of Moreh.

When God appears, God promised that Abram's **offspring** will own and live in the land of Canaan. Here, offspring meant descendants. Abram builds an **altar** for God in that place. An altar was made of stones that were put together so that an object or animal could be placed on top of it. It was used for ritual sacrifices. For more information on the word altar, you may refer to the Master Glossary.

Stop here and show the picture of the altar again.

After some time, Abram continued his journey. He pitched a **tent** at the hill country between Bethel which was on the west, and Ai which was on the east. A tent was a temporary shelter made of woven cloth or animal skin. Pitching a tent was when a person uses wooden poles to support the cloth so it would stand and enable a few people to stay inside it. In that hill country, Abram also built an altar and **called on the name of God**. Calling on the name of God was another way of saying "worship." This means Abram worshiped God in that place. Remember that the name of God used in this story is **Yahweh**, the personal name for God. Your team should translate this name in the same way you have in other stories, and remember that Yahweh is in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 12:1–9

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (17192843 KB)

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Genesis 12:10–20

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 12:10–20 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story is about Abram's travel to Egypt. The previous story told how God called Abram out of Haran to go to Canaan. Along with God's call was his promise to bless Abram and his descendants. Abram obeyed God and went to Canaan. He took with him Sarai, Lot, all the possessions and the servants they had. They traveled

through the land to the southern part of Canaan, to the desert region called Negeb. In the present story, Abram travels to Egypt. This was prompted by the famine in the land of Canaan. Although they were not mentioned, Abram will travel with his family that included Sarai, Lot, their servants, and all their possessions.

The story opens with "now" which indicates that this is a new story. Then it is followed by important information that will set the story in motion. It says that "There was famine in the land." Famine is a situation when there is not enough food supply for everyone for a long time. As a result, people got sick and even died because of hunger. The land mentioned here refers to the land of Canaan. It is said that because the famine was severe, and there was nothing to eat in Canaan, Abram traveled to Egypt to live there for a while. Egypt was a country south of Canaan.

Stop and show the route from Canaan to Egypt. Egypt had fertile soil because of its river. The river provided enough water to soils so that planting crops, farming, and shepherding of livestock was possible.

Before Abram and his family arrived in Egypt, Abram talked to his wife, Sarai. Then Abram said that he knew that Sarai was a beautiful woman. Here, what Abram meant was that he knows that the Egyptians will find Sarai attractive. Abram also said that if the Egyptians realize that the beautiful Sarai was his wife, the Egyptians will kill him, but will let Sarai live. It is unclear why Abram thought this might happen to him. But it is clear that he really feared for his life. So, Abram said that Sarai should tell the Egyptians that she was only Abram's sister. It will be revealed later that Sarai is, in fact, Abram's younger sister as Sarai was 10 years younger than Abram. They have the same father, Terah, but they have different mothers. But here, Abram wants the Egyptians to believe that Sarai was not his wife, and that Sarai was only his sister. Abram believed that if the Egyptians realized that he was Sarai's brother, they would want to make Sarai happy. So the Egyptians will treat him kindly and let him live in peace in Egypt.

After some time, Abram and his family arrived in Egypt. When Abram came to Egypt the Egyptians saw that Sarai was a very beautiful woman. Just as Abram said, the Egyptians found Sarai very attractive. Pharaoh's officials also saw Sarai. Pharaoh was not a name, but a title that refers to the king of Egypt. "Pharaoh's officials" or "Pharaoh's princes" refer to the leaders who served under Pharaoh. Pharaoh's officials praised Sarai to Pharaoh. Praise is an important word throughout the Bible. It means honoring a person by speaking highly of him or her. In this story, it means that Pharaoh's officials reported about Sarai's beauty to Pharaoh. So, Pharaoh ordered his officials to bring Sarai to him. Pharaoh's house was where Pharaoh and his family lived.

Stop and show a picture of the palace of an ancient Pharaoh.

This means after hearing the report about the beautiful Sarai, Pharaoh wanted to take Sarai to be his wife. So, Pharaoh's officials brought Sarai into Pharaoh's house, and Pharaoh married Sarai. Thinking that Abram was Sarai's brother, Pharaoh treated Abram kindly to make Sarai happy. As a result, Abram received sheep, oxen, male donkeys, camels, and also male and female servants.

Stop and show a picture of a sheep, an oxen, male donkeys, and camels. A servant is someone who lives in the same household as his master to serve the needs of his master's family. A servant could be male or female.

But God punished Pharaoh and his household with plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. Plague is a general term that could either refer to a disease or a disaster. In this scene, it is unclear what plagues were inflicted on Pharaoh and his family. What is certain is that God punished Pharaoh because Pharaoh took Abram's wife. At this point, recall that in the previous story, God promised that people that will harm Abram, God will punish by curse. Here, God cursed Pharaoh with plagues to punish him and his household for taking Abram's wife. Sarai was part of Pharaoh's household at this point, but the story suggests that Sarai was not among those inflicted with plagues. Although it was not mentioned, Sarai may have been the one who told Pharaoh to ask Abram to explain why these plagues are happening to them. So Pharaoh called for Abram. That is, Pharaoh ordered his men to bring Abram to him. So Abram came to Pharaoh. Pharaoh might have asked Abram to explain the plagues. In response, Abram may have finally admitted to Pharaoh that Sarai was his wife, and God was punishing Pharaoh and his household for taking his wife. Then, Pharaoh asked Abram, "What have you done to me? Why didn't you tell me she was your wife? Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her to be my wife?" These questions are rhetorical questions. Rhetorical questions are questions that are asked to make a point rather than to get an answer. Pharaoh used these questions to show that he was upset that Abram deceived him. In this case, what Pharaoh meant was, "You should not have done this to me. You should not have told me that she was your sister. You should have told me that she was your wife."

Stop and discuss the following questions:

1. When a person of lower status offends a person of higher status in your culture, how does the person of higher status reprimand the person who offended him?
2. How will you best translate the rhetorical questions asked by Pharaoh in your language?

Pharaoh ends his speech with the statement, "Now then, here is your wife; take her, and go." The way that Pharaoh ends his speech suggests that he was upset that Abram deceived him. Because of this, Pharaoh returned Sarai to Abram, suggesting that Sarai was nearby, too, when Pharaoh was speaking to Abram. Having said this, Pharaoh decided that Abram and his family should leave Egypt. Pharaoh also commanded his men to make sure that Abram and his family leave Egypt.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has four scenes.

First scene: Abram goes from Canaan to Egypt.

Second scene: When Abram was about to enter Egypt, he talked to Sarai about deceiving the Egyptians about their true relationship. Abram feared that because Sarai was beautiful, the Egyptians might plan to kill him if the Egyptians knew that Sarai was his wife. So, Abram said that Sarai should tell the Egyptians that she was only Abram's sister. Abram said this so that the Egyptians will not kill him and let him live in peace in Egypt.

Third scene: When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that Sarai was very beautiful. Pharaoh's officials also saw Sarai's beauty. They praised her to Pharaoh and brought Sarai to Pharaoh's house to be Pharaoh's wife. Thinking that Sarai was Abram's sister, Pharaoh gave gifts of livestock and servants to Abram.

Fourth scene: God punished Pharaoh and his household with great plagues. This is because Pharaoh had taken Abram's wife, Sarai. When Pharaoh realized this, he ordered his men to bring Abram to him. When Abram came to Pharaoh, Pharaoh asked him rhetorical questions to express that he was upset that Abram deceived him. Pharaoh decided to return Sarai to Abram and have them leave Egypt.

The characters in this story include:

- God
- Abram
- Lot
- Sarai
- Egyptians
- Pharaoh
- Pharaoh's officials
- Pharaoh's men
- Abram's new servants

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that although it was not mentioned in the story, Abram traveled to Egypt with his family. His family included Sarai, Lot, the servants they acquired in Haran, and all his possessions which probably included livestock like sheep, cattle, and oxen. Abram and Sarai were old. Abram was 75 years old when he left Haran to go to Canaan. Sarai, as it will be revealed later, is 10 years younger than Abram.

In scene one, Abram and his family will journey south from Canaan to Egypt.

Stop and show the map of the route from Canaan to Egypt.

In scene two, as Abram and his family were about to enter Egypt, Abram will speak to Sarai. In Hebrew, Abram's speech begins with an expression that is typically used to introduce an important speech. The effect is to call the attention of the listener so that he or she will listen carefully.

Stop and discuss this question: How does a person in your culture normally begin a speech if he wants the other person to listen carefully to him? Thinking about this may help you decide how to best translate this Hebrew word.

As Abram speaks of Sarai's beauty, Abram may be portrayed as admiring Sarai.

It may be helpful to discuss how a husband shows admiration to his wife in your culture.

Then Abram's expression and tone will change as he gives instructions to Sarai about deceiving the Egyptians. For fear for his life, Abram told Sarai to tell the Egyptians that she was only Abram's sister, so that the Egyptians will not kill him and treat him well for her sake. Sarai will be listening silently as Abram speaks.

In scene three, Abram and his family enter Egypt. As they walk around Egypt, the Egyptians are amazed at Sarai's beauty. Pharaoh's officials, who were also there, will see Sarai's beauty. It is important to show that both the Egyptians and Pharaoh's officials have expressions that show that they admire Sarai's beauty. Then, Pharaoh's officials will report about Sarai's beauty and arrival in Egypt to Pharaoh. Then, Pharaoh will order his officials to bring Sarai to his house so he can make Sarai his wife.

Stop and show a picture of the palace of an ancient Pharaoh.

Upon meeting Sarai, Pharaoh may have asked her how Abram was related to her. And Sarai may have answered Pharaoh that she was only Abram's sister. Thinking Sarai was unmarried, Pharaoh makes Sarai his wife. Then, Pharaoh will give livestock and servants to Abram as gifts in honor of his new wife.

Stop and show a picture of a sheep, an oxen, male donkeys, and camels. If you do not have some or all these animals in your culture, it may be helpful to discuss what alternative animals can be used for this scene.

Abram is silent throughout this scene.

In scene four, God will strike Pharaoh and his household with great plagues. God did not speak here, but he may be seen speaking or doing a gesture that will cause Pharaoh and his household to be ill suddenly. Although Sarai was part of Pharaoh's household at this time, Sarai may not have been inflicted with plague. So, Sarai may be seen talking to Pharaoh to ask Abram to explain God's punishment. So Pharaoh ordered his men to bring Abram to him. When Abram came, Abram may be portrayed as explaining the truth to Pharaoh. When Pharaoh realizes the truth, Pharaoh asks Abram rhetorical questions or questions that do not expect an answer. It is important to show that Pharaoh was upset as he spoke to Abram. Then, Pharaoh decides to return Sarai to Abram and orders them to leave Egypt. Pharaoh also orders his men to make sure that Abram immediately leaves Egypt together with his family and all his possessions.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has four scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- God
- Abram
- Lot
- Sarai
- Egyptians
- Pharaoh
- Pharaoh's officials
- Pharaoh's men
- Abram's new servants

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

It is important to remember that although it was not mentioned in the story, Abram traveled to Egypt with his family. His family included Sarai, Lot, the servants they acquired in Haran, and all his possessions which probably included livestock like sheep, cattle, and oxen. Abram and Sarai were old.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

In scene one, have the team show that Abram and his family are traveling to Egypt with all their belongings and servants. As Abram and his family walk toward Egypt:

Stop the action. Ask the actor playing Abram, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "I'm worried about my family since we have not eaten yet, and we have nothing to eat" or "I hope we can find refuge in Egypt." Restart the action.

In scene two, before they arrive in Egypt, Abram will speak to Sarai. Be sure to use Abram's direct speeches as he speaks to Sarai. Also remember Abram's changing expression as he speaks about Sarai's beauty, and as he gives instruction to Sarai for fear for his life. As Abram and his family drew closer to Egypt, Abram spoke to his wife, Sarai.

Stop the action. Ask the actor playing Abram, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "I'm blessed to have a beautiful wife, but I'm also worried because the Egyptians might kill me if they find out that Sarai is my wife" or "I might be in danger when the Egyptians see me walking with my beautiful wife." Restart the action.

In scene three, Abram and his family will arrive in Egypt. As they walk around Egypt, the Egyptians and Pharaoh's officials will notice Sarai's beauty. Pharaoh's officials will report to Pharaoh about Sarai's beauty, and Pharaoh will order them to bring Sarai to him. As Pharaoh's officials are bringing Sarai to Pharaoh,

Stop the action. Ask the actor playing Sarai, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "I should tell Pharaoh that I'm just Abram's sister. If not, Pharaoh might kill him" or "I'm worried about my husband, Abram. I should ask Pharaoh to treat him kindly for me." Restart the action.

Then Pharaoh will make Sarai his wife and will give gifts to Abram. If the gift animals are not available for acting out this scene, you can use any object that may represent the animals. As this happens, Abram, too, will be silent.

In scene four, God will punish Pharaoh and his household with great plagues, except for Sarai. Sarai tells Pharaoh to ask Abram to explain God's judgment. Then, Pharaoh will order his men to bring Abram. When

Abram arrives, Pharaoh will ask him to explain God's judgment and Abram will tell the truth to Pharaoh that Sarai was his wife.

Stop the action. Ask the actor playing Pharaoh, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "I'm upset that Abram deceived me after I treated him kindly" or "Abram's God punished me because I took Abram's wife. I should return Sarai to him and ask them to leave." Restart the action.

At this point, Pharaoh will ask rhetorical questions to Abram. Be sure to use Pharaoh's rhetorical questions and his commands when speaking with Abram. Be sure also to show that Pharaoh is upset that Abram deceived him. Then, he will return Sarai and order them to leave Egypt. Pharaoh will also command his men to make sure that Abram's family leave Egypt immediately.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story is about Abram's journey from Canaan to Egypt and their life in Egypt. The story begins with the information that there was a severe **famine** in Canaan. Famine happens when there is not enough food supply for everyone for a long time. As a result, people got sick and even died because of hunger. Because of this severe famine, Abram decided to bring his family to go down to **Egypt**. Egypt was a country south of Canaan. Throughout the book of Genesis, Egypt will be a place of refuge for the main characters whenever they are in danger. But after the book of Genesis, Egypt will have a different reputation because it will be the place where Abram's descendants will become slaves. It will become a symbol of captivity and bondage. But in this story, Egypt was a place of refuge. Abram thought they might find food in Egypt because of its fertile land. This is why he decided to go to Egypt.

As they approached Egypt, Abram spoke to his wife, Sarai. Abram said that Sarai was a **beautiful** woman. The word, "beautiful" means that the person has an attractive appearance. It may also be used to describe a person with a good character. Fearing for his life, Abram warns that the Egyptians will kill him and spare Sarai if they find out that Sarai was his wife. So, Abram told Sarai to deceive the Egyptians and say that she was only Abram's sister. In this way, Abram expects that the Egyptians will treat him kindly and let him live peacefully in Egypt.

When they arrived in Egypt, the Egyptians and the officials of **Pharaoh** saw that Sarai was very beautiful. Pharaoh refers to the king of Egypt, and Pharaoh's officials, or princes referred to the leaders who served under him. You may refer to the Master Glossary for more information on the word Pharaoh. Pharaoh's officials **praised** Sarai to Pharaoh and brought her to Pharaoh. Praise is the act of honoring a person by speaking highly of him or her. It may be done using only words, or it can be accompanied with songs or actions. In the Bible, it is God who receives and is most deserving of the highest praise. Pharaoh made Sarai his wife. Then, because Pharaoh thought that Sarai was Abram's sister, Pharaoh gave livestock and servants to Abram as gifts.

But God will punish Pharaoh and his household with **plagues** for taking Abram's wife. A plague can refer to any disease or disaster. In the Bible, it is often a result of God's judgment or punishment. When it refers to a type of disease, it is usually contagious, and it often results in death. In this story, the specific plague that God caused was not mentioned. What is certain is that Pharaoh and his family suffered because of the plague. Then Pharaoh called for Abram. After realizing why God was punishing them, Pharaoh asked Abram rhetorical questions to show that he was upset that Abram deceived him. After this, Pharaoh decides to return Sarai and have Abram and his family leave Egypt.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 12:10-20

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (17029964 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 13:1-18

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 13:1-18 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The previous stories were about God's promise of blessing to Abram and his descendants. God also promised that they will own the land of Canaan. But because of the famine in Canaan, Abram and his family lived in Egypt for a while. After some time, they returned to Canaan. Abram returned more wealthy than before.

The present story continues from the previous story. After Abram and his family left Egypt, they returned to the desert of Negeb in the land of Canaan.

Stop and show a picture of the desert of Negeb.

Their journey was described as "going up" because the Negeb, which was the dry and hot land in the south of Canaan, was an uphill country. When Abram returned, he was very wealthy with livestock, silver, and gold.

From the Negeb, Abram went from "place to place until he came to Bethel." This means Abram stopped and camped in one place, and then moved to another place after some time. His last destination was in the hill country between Bethel and Ai.

Stop and show a picture of the hill country and a map that shows where it is located between Bethel and Ai.

Recall that Abram had camped there and built an altar there before.

Stop and show a picture of an altar that was made of a pile of stones with a person offering an animal sacrifice on top of it.

Abram worshiped God in that place. Remember that the name of God used in this story is Yahweh, the personal name for God.

Throughout Abram's journey, his nephew Lot was with him. Lot had flocks and herds of cattle, sheep, and goats, and tents of his own. The tents mentioned here do not only refer to the temporary shelters where people lived. In this context, the tents referred to the people traveling with Lot. This included his wife and servants. Abram and Lot had much livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzite peoples also lived in that area and had livestock of their own. There were so many livestock that the land could not support them all with enough food. Because of this, Abram and Lot's herders, or the people taking care of the livestock, began to argue.

Abram talked to Lot and told him that they and their herders should not fight. This is because they were kinsmen, or close relatives. Recall that Lot was the son of Abram's brother, Haran. Then, Abram asks Lot, "Is not the whole land before you?" He is not really asking a question. He wants to say to Lot, "Look, the whole land

is before you!" Abram tells Lot to choose where to go so that they can live far from each other, and their livestock will have enough food. If Lot chooses to go left, Abram will go right. If Lot chooses to go right, Abram will go left.

Stop here and discuss as a team: How do you resolve these kinds of conflicts in your culture?

So, Lot lifted his eyes, or looked around him, and saw the whole Jordan River Valley in the direction of Zoar. This means Abram and Lot must be standing on high ground where they could see the whole of Jordan Valley. This Jordan Valley is where the river of Jordan flows. It is because of this river that Lot realized that there was a great supply of water in that place. It was like the garden of God, which referred to the garden of Eden that God planted when he created man. That garden had its own river, and it was the place where God put the man and the woman after creating them. The Jordan valley was also like Egypt. Egypt, too, had its own river, the Nile River, which made it a fertile land. This is why, when there was a famine in Canaan, Abram and his family went to Egypt. The valley was also in the direction of Zoar. Zoar was a city in the southern area of the Dead Sea, where the Jordan river was connected. It was near the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. In a later story, God will destroy these two cities because of the great sins of the people living there.

Stop and show the map of the Jordan Valley, which includes the Dead Sea, Sodom, Gomorrah, and Zoar.

So, Lot decided where he will live. He traveled to the east and moved his tent near the city of Sodom. A tent was a shelter made of woven cloth or animal skin that was supported by wooden poles. It was a movable and temporary shelter.

Stop and show a picture of a tent with people in it.

Meanwhile, Abram decided to stay in Canaan. So, Abram and Lot separated from each other.

The men, or people who lived in Sodom, did not follow God. It is unclear in what way the people in Sodom were "wicked" and "great sinners." What is clear is that this was mentioned to show that Lot chose to live near a place that God will destroy later because of its sins. This will be important information for later stories. Meanwhile, Abram chose to stay in the land that God promised.

After Lot separated from Abram, God told Abram to look to the north, south, east, and west. This means that Abram must be standing on a high ground that allowed him to see the vast land around him. God said that all the land that Abram sees, he will give to Abram and his offspring forever. Here, "offspring" referred to Abram's descendants, and "forever" means that Abram and his descendants will own the land for a very long time. God also said that he will make Abram's offspring to be "As the dust of the earth so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted." This means that God will make Abram's descendants to become so many that counting them will not be possible.

By telling this to Abram, God reaffirms his promise from earlier to Abram. But what is important to notice here is that God provided more details about the promise that he gave to Abram before. In the first instance, God's promise only referred to "this land." Here, God said that the promised land will include all the land that Abram sees. Also, in the first instance, God promised the land to Abram's descendants. Here, God said that he will give the land not only to Abram's descendants but also to Abram himself. Finally, God said something here that he did not mention before. In this promise, God said that Abram and his descendants will own the land "forever."

Then God told Abram to "Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you." The Hebrew word for "Arise" does not suggest that Abram was seated or lying down. Rather, it is a word that is commonly used to introduce an important and urgent command. It means that the person should listen carefully and obey the command immediately. God's instruction to "walk through the length and breadth of the land" was a common practice in the time of Abram. Walking around the whole area of land symbolized that a person now owns the land.

Stop and discuss the following question: What is the common practice in your culture that shows that a person now owns the land?

So, Abram "moved his tent" and lived by the "great trees" or "oaks" of Mamre which were at Hebron. A later story will introduce a character named Mamre. It is possible that this place was named after him. A much later story will reveal that Mamre became another place name for Hebron.

Stop and show a picture of the great trees of Mamre. Show also where Hebron is located on the map.

There Abram built an altar to God. This means Abram worshiped God in that place.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has seven scenes.

First scene: Abram went from Egypt to the desert of Negeb. He journeyed with his wife, his nephew, Lot, Lot's wife, their servants, and animals. Abram came out of Egypt wealthy with livestock, silver, and gold.

Second scene: When Abram and his household reached the Negeb, they continued to travel from place to place. They finally came to Bethel and lived in the hill country between Bethel and Ai. There, Abram worshiped God in the altar he built there before.

Third scene: Lot had flocks and herds and servants of his own. Because Abram and Lot lived together in the same land, their livestock were not getting enough food. As a result, Abram and Lot's herders fought. In addition, there were Canaanites and Perizzites living with them in the land at that time.

Fourth scene: Abram talks to Lot. Abram said that they and their herders should not fight. To avoid conflict between them Abram tells Lot to look around and choose where he should live. Lot looked around and saw the whole of the Jordan Valley as a fertile and well-watered land. Lot chose the whole of the Jordan Valley.

Fifth scene: Abram and Lot separated. Abram stayed in Canaan, while Lot traveled to the east with his family, servants, and livestock. He lived in the cities near Sodom. The people living in Sodom were wicked and were committing sins against God.

Sixth scene: God talks to Abram and tells him to look around from where he was standing. God promised that all the land that Abram sees, he will give to Abram and his descendants forever. God also promised that Abram's descendants will be as many as the dust of the earth. Then God told Abram to walk through the entire land for God will give it to him.

Seventh Scene: Abram pitched his tent and went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron. There Abram built an altar for God.

The characters in this story include:

- God
- Abram
- Sarai
- Abram's servants
- Lot
- Lot's wife
- Lot's servants
- Canaanites
- Perizzites

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives to visualize the story and the action in it.

In scene one, Abram and his family are traveling from Egypt to the desert of Negeb.

Stop and show a picture of the desert of Negeb.

He travels with his wife, servants, Lot, Lot's wife, and Lot's servants and all their possessions. They most likely traveled by walking. If flocks of sheep and herds of cattle are not available for this scene, you may use any object that may represent the animals. Be sure also to show Abram's silver and gold. If these are not available for this scene, you may use any object that may represent silver and gold. The journey goes from a plain to a high ground.

In scene two, Abram and his are camping from one place to another until they reach the hill country between Bethel and Ai.

Stop and show a picture of the hill country, and a map that shows where it is located between Bethel and Ai.

It is unclear how long they stayed from one place to another. Most probably, their movement from one place to another is not immediate. The scene ends with Abram worshiping God at the altar that he built before.

Stop and show a picture of an altar that was made of a pile of stones with a person offering an animal sacrifice on top of it.

In scene three, there will be a change in focus. The setting is now full of people and animals. There are Abram and Lot's herders. Then there are Canaanites and Perizzites. And then all their animals are there. Abram and Lot's herders will fight at one point. But their fighting will end eventually.

As a result of the previous scene, Abram will talk to Lot directly in scene four. Both of them are standing on high ground where they could see the land around them. Then Lot looks around the land. He sees the Jordan Valley and gets excited to go there.

In scene five, Lot bids farewell to Abram. He journeys to the east, together with his wife, servants, and animals. Then, he will set up camp in the cities near Sodom.

Stop and show the map of the Jordan Valley, that includes the Dead Sea, Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Zoar. You may also show a picture of a tent.

The scene ends with Abram setting up camp somewhere in Canaan.

In scene six, Abram is standing on high ground. God talks to Abram directly and tells him to look around the land in all directions. As Abram looks around, God promises that everything he sees, God will give to him and his descendants. In addition, God said that Abram's descendants will be so many, like the dust of the earth. You may also try to go outside where there is sand. Then you may try counting the sand. God will also command Abram to walk through the entire land because God will give the whole land to him and his descendants. The scene ends with Abram walking through the land as God commanded. In reality, the land is very big. It may have taken Abram days to complete this walk. For the purpose of embodying this scene, you may simply walk around a small area and show the boundaries that may represent the huge land of Canaan.

In scene seven, Abram will bring his entire household near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron.

Stop and show a picture of the trees of Mamre. Show also where Hebron is located on the map. There, Abram will set up camp and build an altar for God. It is possible that Abram also worshiped God in that place.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has seven scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- God
- Abram
- Sarai
- Abram's servants
- Lot
- Lot's wife
- Lot's servants
- Canaanites
- Perizzites

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

In scene one, Abram and his household are traveling. His household included his wife, servants, Lot, Lot's wife, and all their servants. Abram has a lot of silver and gold.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Abram, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "I am glad we came out of Egypt safely" or "I thank God that he has blessed me with so many livestock, silver, and gold." Restart the action.

In scene two, Abram and his household arrive at the Negeb. There, they will pitch their tent. After some time, they will move to another place, and then later, to another place. Make sure to show that the movement from one place to another is not immediate. The scene ends when they set up camp in the hill country between Bethel and Ai. They should be familiar with the place since they already camped there before. Abram will worship God at the altar he made there before.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Abram, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "I worship God because we survived the famine here, and the threat in Egypt" or "I want to worship God for keeping us safe on our way back." Restart the action.

In scene three, Abram and Lot's herders are fighting over where their flocks and herds will eat. Some Canaanites and Perizzites are also there with their livestock.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Abram's herders, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "There is not enough food for all our livestock here." You may also ask Lot's herders, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "Unless our masters choose to live far from each other, the animals will not survive, especially with the Canaanites and Perizzites and their livestock also feeding here." Restart the action.

In scene four, Abram talks to Lot directly. They are both on high ground. Lot sees the Jordan Valley. He gets excited after seeing that the valley is a land that has plenty of water.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Lot, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "The whole Jordan Valley is like the garden of God or like Egypt because it has its own river, the Jordan river!" or "I heard that the people living in Sodom are wicked and sinning greatly against the Lord. I hope we will be safe." Restart the action.

In scene five, Abram and Lot separate from each other. Abram stayed in Canaan. But Lot travels to the east with his household which includes his wife, his livestock, and his servants. He pitches his tent near Sodom.

In scene six, Abram is standing on high ground. God talks to Abram directly. God tells Abram to look around from where he is standing. Abram will look to the north, south, east, and west. Then God said that everything Abram sees he will give to Abram. God will also tell Abram to walk around the land because he will give it to him. Abram walks around the land.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Abram, "How do you feel?" You may hear things like, "I'm excited that God will give me this huge land!" or "I'm excited that God will give me descendants!" Restart the action.

In scene seven, Abram will set up his camp near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron. It is important to remember that Abram's wife, Sarai, and their servants and animals are with him. Abram also built an altar for God. Abram may have worshiped God at that altar.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Abram, "How do you feel?" You may hear things like, "I will worship God for his promise to me and my descendants" or "God will fulfill his promise. So, I will worship him."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

When Abram and his household arrived at the Negeb Desert, they kept traveling from place to place until they reached Bethel. Using the altar that he built before, Abram **called on the name of God**. Calling on the name of God was another way of saying "worship." This means Abram worshiped God in that place. Remember that the name of God used in this story is **Yahweh**, the personal name for God. Your team should translate this name in the same way you have in other stories and remember that Yahweh is in the Master Glossary.

Abram and Lot had many livestock, and their **herders** fought for a place for their animals to eat. A herder or a herdsman is a person that takes care of livestock such as sheep, cattle, and goats. His duties include feeding the animals and making sure they are safe. In this story, they are referring to Abram and Lot's servants who also served as herders. The Canaanites and the Perizzites were also living there at that time. They, too, had animals to feed.

Abram tells Lot that they should not fight because they are **kinsmen**. In Hebrew, the word for kinsman is the same word for brother. It can also be translated as relatives. But Lot was not Abram's brother. Lot was Abram's nephew, because Lot was the son of Abram's brother, Haran. In this context, kinsman, therefore, does not mean "brother" but a close relative.

Then, Abram asked Lot to choose where he should live. Lot looked around and saw the whole Jordan Valley as a land with plenty of water. This Jordan Valley is a valley in the direction of Zoar, another city near the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. It has its own river called the Jordan River. So Lot chose the whole Jordan Valley because it is like the **garden of God**, and **Egypt**. The garden of God refers to the Garden of Eden that God created when he created man and woman. The garden has its own river that flows from it. Egypt was a country south of Canaan. It had its own river called the Nile River.

Abram and Lot go their separate ways. Abram stayed in Canaan. Lot journeyed to the east together with his family, servants, and animals. He **pitched his tent** in the cities near **Sodom**. A **tent** was a temporary shelter made of woven cloth or animal skin. Pitching a tent was when a person uses wooden poles to support the cloth so it would stand and enable a few people to stay inside it. Be sure to translate the word for tent in the same way that you have translated this word before. Sodom is a city near the Dead Sea. The men of Sodom are wicked and great **sinners**. Your team should translate **sin** in the same way you have in other stories and remember that sin is in the Master Glossary. In a later story, God will destroy these two cities because of the great sins of the people living there.

After Abram and Lot separated, God spoke to Abram and told him to "lift up your eyes." Here, God was telling Abram to look around in all directions from where he was standing. Everything that Abram sees, God will give to Abram and his **offspring**. The word for offspring literally means seed. It is a word that is used to refer to descendants. Be sure to translate the word for offspring in the same way that you have translated this word before.

Then Abram went to Hebron and pitched his tent near the great trees of **Mamre**. Mamre was another place name for Hebron. Abram was with his wife, servants, and animals. There, Abram built an **altar** for God. Remember to translate the word altar in the same way you have translated this word in the earlier stories. The word altar can also be found in the Master Glossary. Abram may have worshiped God in that place.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 13:1-18

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (15991528 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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[mp3 zip](#) (11707108 KB)

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Genesis 14:1-16

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Genesis 14:1-16 and put it in your hearts. Listen to an audio version of Genesis 14:1-16 three times, in three different translations, if possible. Then, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage?
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage?
3. What does this passage tell us about God?
4. What does this passage tell us about people?
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 14:1-16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

This story happens after Abram and Lot, Abram's nephew, separated. In the previous story, Lot decided to live in the city of Sodom and Abram decided to live by the trees of Mamre. Abram lived by a group of trees that belonged to Mamre, which is where God told him to live. But in this story Abram is drawn into a nearby conflict because of Lot.

This story and the next are two parts of one long story, and this story gives the background for the most important part of this story that happens in the next passage, or next part of this story.

This story is different from all the other Abram stories, because it is the only story of Abram fighting. This story shows that Abram is a good leader. This is also one of the few stories about Abram where God does not speak.

King Kedorlaomer of Elam, King Amraphel of Shinar which was also called Babylonia, King Arioch of Ellasar, and King Tidal of Goyim were conquering kings. These conquering kings were from the same area in the north that Abram used to live, an area called Mesopotamia. These kings ruled over large territories, and King Kedorlaomer was their leader.

Stop here and look at a map of the areas these kings probably controlled as a group. Pause this audio here.

King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboym, and the King of Bela, were rebel kings. The rebel kings controlled cities and smaller areas to the south of the conquering kings. King Kedorlaomer of Elam ruled over the rebel kings for 12 years. During those years the rebel kings probably paid King Kedorlaomer tribute, which were regular payments made by one king to another king who

had control over that city. The rebel kings rebelled in the thirteenth year. They may have been part of a wider rebellion against Mesopotamian control of their area.

Stop here and look at a map of the cities the southern kings controlled as a group. Pause this audio here.

In the fourteenth year, the conquering kings from the north began to defeat other kings in the south. The conquering kings defeated the Rephaites at Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzites at Ham, the Emites at Shaveh Kiriathaim, and the Horites in the hill country of Seir, as far as El Paran at the edge of the desert. Then the conquering kings turned back and came to En Mishpat, and conquered all the land of the Amalekites and the Amorites living in Hazazon Tamar.

Stop here and look at a map of all of the cities and areas the conquering kings conquered as a group. Pause this audio here.

The rebel kings prepared for battle in the Valley of Siddim. Here, the story repeats the names of all the conquering kings, and states that four kings, who were the conquering kings, fought against five kings, who were the rebel kings.

The Valley of Siddim was later renamed the Dead Sea Valley, or the Salt Sea Valley. The Valley of Siddim may have been a valley that later became part of the nearby lake.

The valley was filled with bitumen pits. Bitumen, or tar, was a sticky substance that builders used to hold bricks together in buildings or walls. When the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled after the conquering kings of the north defeated them, some of their men fell into the pits. The men may have died when they fell into the pits, or they may have purposefully hidden in the pits.

Stop here and look at a picture of tar or tar pits as a group. If your language does not have a word for tar, discuss other ways to describe the pits the men fell into. Pause this audio here.

A man escaped the fighting. The man who escaped may have been one of Lot's men, or he may have been a soldier fighting for one of the rebel kings.

The man told Abram the Hebrew what had happened. He told Abram that Lot had been captured from the city of Sodom, where Lot had been living. This is the first time the word "Hebrew" is used in the Bible. Here, it was probably used to describe the people Abram belonged to and show that he was different from the people he lived among.

Abram lived by the great oak trees belonging to Mamre the Amorite. Mamre and his relatives, Eshkol and Aner, were Abram's allies. Mamre and his relatives probably joined forces with Abram to defeat the conquering kings, because they receive rewards for their work in the next story.

Stop here and look at where Abram lived on a map as a group. Pause this audio here.

Abram gathered together 318 trained men from his household. These men were slaves or servants who were trained to fight. They chased the conquering kings north, to Dan. Abram divided his men and defeated the conquering kings in Dan, and then chased them further north, to Hobah. Then Abram returned with Lot, Lot's possessions, all the possessions the conquering kings took, and all the women and other captives the conquering kings took when they conquered Sodom and Gomorrah.

Stop here to discuss as a group. Tell a story about a major battle or war that your people have fought. Who fought against whom? What kinds of things happened during the fighting? What kinds of people worked together during the war?

Stop here and trace Abram and his men's journey to Dan, then Hobah, and back on a map.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 14:1-16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four scenes.

In the first scene: As you might remember, Abram originally lived in an area called Mesopotamia before God told him to move. Sometime while Abram was resettling, a group of four kings in Mesopotamia allied together and conquered nearby cities. The most important king was Kedorlaomer, the king of Elam. The other kings were Tidal king of Goyim, Amraphel king of Shinar (or Babylonia), and Arioch king of Ellasar. These conquering kings even conquered cities near Abram, like Sodom and Gomorrah. The conquering kings ruled for 12 years, but the year after that five kings to the south of the conquering kings rebelled. These rebel kings joined together in the Valley of Siddim (which was later called the Dead Sea Valley). The five rebel kings were King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboym, and the king of Bela (or Zoar).

In the second scene: The year the rebel kings rebelled, King Kedorlaomer and his allies, the other conquering kings, defeated the Rephaites in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzites in Ham, the Emites in Shaveh Kiriathaim, and the Horites in the hill country of Seir, as far as El Paran, which was near the desert.

Then the conquering kings turned back and conquered the territory of the Amalekites and the Amorites who lived in Hazazon Tamar.

In the third scene: Then the rebel kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboym, and Bela (or Zoar) prepared for battle in the Valley of Siddim. It was four conquering kings against five rebel kings. The Valley of Siddim was full of bitumen (or tar) pits, so when the rebel kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into the pits. The rest fled to the hills.

The four conquering kings then plundered Sodom and Gomorrah. They took all the possessions and food from the cities. They also captured Lot, Abram's nephew who lived in Sodom. They took Lot and all his possessions.

In the fourth scene: One of Lot's men escaped from the fighting. He told Abram the Hebrew what had happened. Abram lived by the oak trees of Mamre the Amorite. Mamre and his relatives Eshkol and Aner were allies of Abram.

When Abram heard that his relative Lot had been captured, he gathered the 318 trained men in his household and pursued the conquering kings as far north as Dan. Abram divided his men during the night, defeated the conquering kings, and chased them as far north as Hobah (which was north of Damascus). Then Abram returned with all the possessions the conquering kings had taken, including Lot and all of Lot's possessions, as well as the women and the other captives.

The characters in this passage include:

The four conquering kings:

- King Amraphel of Shinar (or Babylonia)
- King Arioch of Ellasar
- King Kedorlaomer of Elam
- King Tidal of Goyim

The five rebel kings:

- King Bera of Sodom
- King Birsha of Gomorrah
- King Shinab of Admah
- King Shemeber of Zeboiyim
- The king of Bela (or Zoar)

Other characters in this story include:

- Lot, Abram's nephew
- A man who escaped the battle
- Abram the Hebrew
- 318 trained men from Abram's household
- Mamre the Amorite, Abram's ally
- and Mamre's relatives Eshkol and Aner, also Abram's allies

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

This story begins at the same time as the end of the previous story. At the end of the previous story, Abram moved to live by the group of oak trees that belonged to Mamre. About that time, when this story began, war broke out in the area.

War broke out between five conquering kings and five rebel kings. Here, the story tells us the history of the war. Kedorlaomer of Elam was a powerful king who ruled over many cities and their kings, including five rebel kings in the south, near where Abram lived, King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboiyim, and the king of Bela (or Zoar). King Kedorlaomer of Elam's allies in the north, the conquering kings, were King Amraphel of Shinar, King Arioch of Ellasar, and King Tidal of Goyim.

Stop here and look at a map of the area as a group. Point out each king's territory or city on the map. Pause the audio here.

The story does not list the king's name in a special order, but King Kedorlaomer was the most important king in his allies.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you show who is most important in a list of names in your culture? Pause the audio here.

King Kedorlaomer ruled over the rebel kings for 12 years, and the year after that, the thirteenth year, they rebelled and war broke out.

Scene two takes place the year after the rebel kings rebelled, the fourteenth year. This is the year when Abram probably moved to live by the oak trees belonging to Mamre. King Kedorlaomer and his allies, the conquering kings, defeated and subdued the Rephaites in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzites in Ham, the Emites in Shaveh Kiriaoth, and the Horites in the hill country of Seir, as far as El Paran at the edge of the desert.

Then the conquering kings turned back and came to En Mishpat, and conquered all the territory of the Amalekites and the Amorites who lived in Hazazon Tamar. Then they came to Siddim Valley.

Stop here and look at a map of the area as a group. Trace the path of King Kedorlaomer and his allies as they conquered parts of this area. Pause the audio here.

In scene three, the rebel kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiyim, and Bela prepared for battle in the Valley of Siddim.

Stop here and look at a map of the area as a group. Point out the Valley of Siddim on the map. Pause the audio here.

The story repeats itself to let us know that it is about to describe a major battle.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How does your language and culture describe major battles in stories? Pause the audio here.

Visualize the battle. The Valley of Siddim was covered in tar pits. As the rebel kings fled, some fell into the tar pits while the rest fled into the hills.

Stop here and look at pictures of what tar pits may have looked like as a group. Point out the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah on a map. Pause the audio here.

The conquering kings plundered Sodom and Gomorrah. They took possessions and food. They also captured Lot, Abram's nephew who lived in Sodom, and took Lot and all of his possessions with them.

In scene four, one of Lot's men escaped and told Abram the Hebrew what happened. Abram lived near the oak trees of Mamre. Mamre, and his relatives Eshkol and Aner, were Abram's allies.

Stop here and, as a group, look at where Abram, Mamre, Eshkol, and Aner lived on a map. Pause the audio here.

Abram gathered 318 trained men from his household and pursued the conquering kings to Dan in the north. He divided his men and attacked in the night, defeating the conquering kings. They chased the conquering kings until Hobah, which was north of Damascus. Then Abram returned with Lot, Lot's possessions, everything the conquering kings had taken, and all the captives and women.

Stop here and trace Abram's journey north to Dan, then to Hobah, and then back as a group. Pause the audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 14:1–16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four scenes.

The characters in this passage include:

The four conquering kings:

- King Amraphel of Shinar (or Babylonia)
- King Arioch of Ellasar
- King Kedorlaomer of Elam
- King Tidal of Goyim

The five rebel kings:

- King Bera of Sodom
- King Birsha of Gomorrah
- King Shinab of Admah
- King Shemeber of Zeboym
- The king of Bela (or Zoar)

Other characters in this story include:

- Lot, Abram's nephew
- A man who escaped the battle
- Abram the Hebrew
- 318 trained men from Abram's household
- Mamre the Amorite, Abram's ally
- Mamre's relatives Eshkol and Aner, also Abram's allies

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the story without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the story. Help each other remember every part of the story.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then restart the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

King Kedorlaomer of Elam ruled over five rebel kings, King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboym, and the king of Bela (or Zoar) for 12 years. The five kings rebelled in the thirteenth year.

In the fourteenth year, King Kedorlaomer and his allies, King Amraphel of Shinar (or Babylonia), King Arioch of Ellasar, and King Tidal of Goyim, defeated the Rephaites in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzites in Ham, the Emites in Shaveh Kiriathaim, and the Horites in the hill country of Seir, as far as El Paran at the edge of the desert.

Then the conquering kings turned back and went to En Mishpat (later called Kadesh), and conquered all the territory of the Amalekites and the Amorites living in Hazazon Tamar.

The rebel kings prepared for battle in Siddim Valley. There were tar pits in Siddim Valley. As the rebel kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some men fell into the tar pits. The rest fled to the hills.

Pause the drama: Ask the person playing the rebel kings, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "We're humiliated at our defeat," "We've been badly defeated," or "We've lost everything." Restart the drama.

The conquering kings plundered the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and took all the possessions and food from the cities. They also captured Lot, Abram's nephew, and took him and everything he owned with them.

One of Lot's men escaped and told Abram the Hebrew what happened. Abram lived by the great trees of Mamre the Amorite. Mamre and his relatives Eshkol and Aner were Abram's allies.

Pause the drama: Ask the person playing Abram, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I'm angry that the kings have captured Lot," or "I feel like the conquering kings are my enemies because they captured my relative." Restart the action.

Abram gathered 318 trained men from his household. He followed the kings to Dan. He divided his men and attacked at night, and then chased the fleeing army to Hobah, north of Damascus.

Pause the drama. Ask the actors playing the conquering kings, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "We are surprised that this man was able to defeat us after so many other kings couldn't," or "We are humiliated at our defeat." Restart the action.

Abram returned with Lot, Lot's possessions, all the things the conquering kings took, and all the women and other captives.

Finish the drama. Ask the person playing Abram, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I'm amazed at our victory," "I'm happy I survived the battle," "I feel like God protected me and my relatives," or "I feel like God is keeping his earlier promise to curse those who curse me."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 14:1–16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

When Amraphel was **king** of Shinar, or Babylonia, Arioch was king of Ellasar, Kedorlaomer was king of Elam, and Tidal was king of Goyim, these four conquering kings fought against five rebel kings, King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboym, and the king of Bela, or Zoar. A king was someone who ruled over a city or territory. A king normally ruled for life and passed on his authority to one of his sons.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **king**. Look up king in the Master Glossary for more information. Pause this audio here.

Goyim meant "nations," so "King of Goyim" may have been an honorific title meaning king of nations. **Bera** meant "be evil" or "with evil." **Birsha** may have meant "with wickedness." The meaning of these names probably shows us that these kings are evil.

Stop here and discuss as a group: When telling a story, how do you let the audience know that the characters are evil people? Pause this audio here.

King Kedorlaomer of Elam had ruled the second group of kings for 12 years. The next year, they rebelled. The year after that, King Kedorlaomer and his allies defeated the Rephaites at Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzites at Ham, the Emites at Shaveh Kiriathaim, and the Horites in the hill country of Seir, as far as El Paran at the edge of the desert. Then the conquering kings turned back and went to En Mishpat, and conquered all the land of the Amalekites as well as the Amorites who lived in Hazazon Tamar.

The rebel kings prepared for battle at Siddom Valley, which was later known as the Dead Sea Valley or Salt Sea Valley. They fought against the conquering kings—King Kedorlaomer of Elam, King Tidal of Goyim, King Amraphel of Shinar, and King Arioch of Ellasar—four kings against five.

The valley was full of **bitumen**, or **tar**, pits. Bitumen was a sticky substance used to construct walls or buildings. Use the same word for bitumen that you used in previous stories. When the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah were defeated and fled, some of the men fell into the bitumen pits. The rest fled to the hills.

The conquering kings looted the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. They took possessions and food supplies from the cities. They also captured Lot, Abram's nephew who lived in Sodom. They took all of Lot's possessions with them.

A man escaped and told Abram the **Hebrew** what happened. This is the first time the word Hebrew is used in these stories. Here, it was probably used to describe Abram's ethnicity and make sure we know he is different from the surrounding ethnic groups. Make sure to use the same word for Hebrew here as you do later, and remember that the word Hebrew is in the Master Glossary.

Abram lived near the **oak** groves of Mamre. Oaks are a type of large tree.

Stop here and show the team a picture of an oak tree. If you do not have a word for this type of tree in your language, you may want to translate this "great" or "big" tree. Pause this audio here.

Mamre and his relatives, Eshkol and Aner, were Abram's **allies**. Allies refers to people who had promised to help each other fight their enemies.

Abram gathered 318 **trained men** in his **household** and pursued the conquering kings to Dan. The word used for trained men here refers to men, who were probably trusted servants, who had military training. Household

refers to all the people who lived in Abram's camp. It does not just refer to Abram's house. Household is in the Master Glossary.

Abram divided his men into groups and attacked at night. As the kings fled, he chased them to Hobah, north of Damascus. Abram returned with Lot, Lot's possessions, everything the kings had taken, along with the other captives and women.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 14:1-16

Audio Content

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Genesis 14:17-24

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 14:17–24 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 14:17–24 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

This story happens right after Abram rescued Lot from the conquering kings in the previous story. In this story, Abram meets two different kings and has two different interactions with them.

Abram defeated the conquering kings. He brought back all the captives and possessions the conquering kings took from Sodom and Gomorrah. When this story starts, Abram had either already returned to where he lived, or he was still on his way back to where he lived.

Abram and the King of Sodom met at the Valley of Shaveh, which was later called the King's Valley. The King of Sodom probably traveled north from Sodom to meet Abram.

Stop here and look at a map of the Valley of Shaveh as a group. Trace the King of Sodom's journey to the valley. Pause this audio here.

The Valley of Shaveh was near the city of Salem. Melchizedek, the king of Salem, met Abram and the King of Sodom in the valley. Salem was probably an old name for the city of Jerusalem, which would later become the religious capital for the Jewish people, who were Abram's descendants.

Stop here and, as a group, look at the city of Salem on a map as a group. Pause this audio here.

Melchizedek was a priest. This is the first time a priest is mentioned in these stories. Priests connected people to God and led people in worshiping God.

Melchizedek brought bread and wine to Abram. The word the story uses for "bread" refers to food in general. Melchizedek probably brought enough food and wine for all of Abram's soldiers. He may have used the food and wine to have dinner with Abram to celebrate Abram's victory.

Then, Melchizedek blessed Abram. This is the only blessing from a priest in stories in Genesis. Melchizedek used a short poem to give Abram his blessing.

Melchizedek said, "May God Most High, creator of heaven and earth, bless Abram." Melchizedek may have used God Most High to refer to a local god, or he may have used God Most High to refer to Abram's God. Later in the story, Abram also used the name God Most High when he spoke about his own God.

Melchizedek described God Most High as "creator of heaven and earth." "Heaven and earth" is a phrase that means, "everything in the universe—everything everywhere." Some people argue that Melchizedek said "owner of heaven and earth," not "creator of heaven and earth." However, he likely said "creator."

Melchizedek continued, "May God Most High, who delivered your enemies to you, be blessed." Here, Melchizedek used the word "blessed" in a different way. He praised God by acknowledging the good things God had done for Abram. Melchizedek talked about God delivering, or giving, Abram's enemies to Abram to defeat.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do people give blessings in your culture? How do people give formal blessings in your culture? Pause this audio here.

After Melchizedek's blessing, Abram gave Melchizedek one tenth of all the possessions he rescued and brought back from the conquering kings. This was not a tax, but probably part of the distribution of the possessions Abram rescued from the conquering kings.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What do people in your culture do to thank and honor God? Do they give things to priests? If so, why do they give things? Why do you think Abram gave a tenth to Melchizedek? Pause this audio here.

Then the King of Sodom spoke. He said to Abram, "Give me the people you rescued from the conquering kings, and take all the possessions for yourself." Here, the King of Sodom does not ask for more than his fair share, and he does not offer Abram more than Abram's fair share.

But Abram strongly refused what the King of Sodom said. Abram responded, "No, I raise up my hand and swear to Yahweh, God Most High, creator of heaven and earth, that I will definitely not take even a string or a sandal lace from you, so that you won't be able to say that you made me rich." Here, Abram used the same name for God Melchizedek used, "God Most High," as well as the name for God Abram normally used, God's personal name.

When Abram said he raised his hand and swore, this meant he made a gesture to publicly show he was making a solemn promise.

Stop here and discuss as a group if you have similar gestures or expressions in your language. Pause this audio here.

When Abram said he would not accept even "a string or sandal lace," he used a phrase that meant he would not accept anything at all from the King of Sodom, even if it had as little value as a thread or a small part of a sandal.

Stop here and look at a picture of a sandal as a group. Discuss as a group if you have any similar expressions in your language. Pause this audio here.

Abram continued, "I will accept only the food my men have already eaten from the possessions we rescued. But let my allies—Aner, Eshkol, and Mamre—have their share of the possessions."

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 14:17–24 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three scenes.

First scene: After Abram returned from defeating the conquering kings, the King of Sodom met him in the Valley of Shaveh, which was later called the King's Valley.

Second scene: Then King Melchizedek came and brought bread and wine. Melchizedek was the king of Salem and a priest who served God Most High. Melchizedek blessed Abram. He said, "May God Most High, creator of heaven and earth, bless Abram. I praise God Most High, who delivered your enemies to you."

And Abram gave King Melchizedek a tenth of all the possessions Abram had rescued.

Third scene: Then the King of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me all the captives you rescued, and keep all the possessions for yourself."

But Abram replied, "No! I swear by Yahweh, God Most High, I won't accept even a thread or part of a sandal from you. Then you won't be able to say you made me rich. But I will accept the food that my young men have already eaten from the possessions, and I ask that you give my allies, Aner, Eshkol, and Mamre, a fair share."

The characters in this story include:

- Abram
- King Melchizedek of Salem
- The King of Sodom
- Abram's young men
- The captives Abram rescued
- Abram's allies, Aner, Eshkol, and Mamre

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In the first scene, Abram returns after defeating the conquering kings from the last story. The King of Sodom meets Abram in the Valley of Shaveh, which is later called the Valley of Kings.

Stop here and look at a picture/map of the Valley of Shaveh as a group. Pause this audio here.

In the second scene, Melchizedek, the king of the city of Salem and a priest of God Most High, comes to meet Abram. He brings food and wine.

Stop here and look at the city of Salem on a map as a group. Pause this audio here.

Melchizedek blesses Abram, saying, "May God Most High, creator of heaven and earth, bless Abram. And may people praise God and say that He is great, because He has helped you to defeat your enemies."

Abram gives Melchizedek a tenth of all the possessions Abram rescued and brought back.

You may want to visualize this by using ten items to represent all the possessions Abram brought back. Demonstrate Abram giving one of those items to Melchizedek. Pause this audio here.

In scene three, visualize the dialogue between Abram and the King of Sodom. The King of Sodom says to Abram, "Let the people from my city return to me, but you can keep the possessions you brought back for yourself."

But Abram responds, "I swear, I will not accept even a thread or a part of a sandal from you, because then you might say, 'I made Abram rich.' I will only accept the food my young men have already eaten from the possessions we brought back, and I ask that you give my allies, Mamre, Eshkol, and Aner, a fair share of the possessions."

Stop here and look at a picture of the part of the sandal Abram refers to here as a group. Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 14:17–24 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Abram
- King Melchizedek of Salem
- The king of Sodom
- Abram's young men
- The captives Abram rescued
- Abram's allies, Aner, Eshkol, and Mamre

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the story without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the story. Help each other remember every part of the story.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then restart the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Abram returns after defeating the conquering kings. The King of Sodom meets him in the Valley of Shaveh, which is later called the King's Valley.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing the King of Sodom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "I am so excited that Abram defeated the conquering kings that I have traveled here to meet him," or "I am humiliated that Abram defeated my enemies when I could not." Restart the action.

The King of Salem and priest of God Most High, Melchizedek, comes to the valley. He brings food and wine. He blesses Abram, saying, "May God Most High, creator of heaven and earth, bless Abram. Praise God Most High, who gave you your enemies to defeat."

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Melchizedek, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "I know that I'm supposed to bless Abram," or "I know God is with Abram," or "I am grateful God used Abram to defeat the conquering kings." Restart the action.

Abram gives King Melchizedek a tenth of all the possessions he brought back.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Abram, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "I am thankful Melchizedek blessed me," or "I want to show Melchizedek respect." Restart the action.

The King of Sodom says to Abram, "Give me the captives you brought back and take all the possessions for yourself."

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing the King of Sodom, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "I want to reward Abram for defeating my enemies," or "I want to fairly divide the possessions Abram rescued." Restart the action.

But Abram replies, "No, I swear that I will not take even a thread or part of a sandal from you, so that you can't say you made me rich. I will accept only the food that my young men ate, and I ask that you give my allies, Mamre, Aner, and Eshkol, a fair share of the possessions."

Finish the action. Ask the actor playing Abram, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You might hear things like, "I'm confident that God will bless me, and I need nothing from the King of Sodom," "I don't want anything for myself, but I want to make sure I take care of my men and my allies," or "I don't want to be indebted to the king."

Ask the actor playing the King of Sodom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "Surprised that Abram didn't take more for himself."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

After Abram returned from defeating the conquering **kings**, the King of Sodom met Abram in the Valley of Shaveh, which was later called the King's Valley. A king was someone who ruled over a city or territory. A king normally ruled for life and passed on his authority to one of his sons. Use the same word for king as you used in the last story.

Then **Melchizedek**, the **king of Salem** came. **Salem** means "peace." Salem would later become the city of Jerusalem, which was the religious capital of Abram's descendants.

King Melchizedek brought Abram **bread** and **wine**. Here, the word for bread refers to food in general. Wine refers to a fermented grape juice.

Melchizedek was a **priest of God Most High**. This is the first time the word priest is used in these stories. Priests connected people with God by offering sacrifices to God for people, teaching the people about God, and taking care of places dedicated to their God. Later, Jewish priests were God's representative to his people and his people's representative to God.

Stop here and discuss the word for priest with your team. Do you have priests in your religion? You may want to avoid using terms for priests that mean something different from what Jewish priests did. As a team, discuss what word or descriptive phrase would be best for priests. Look up priest in the glossary, and use the same word in the next stories.

The story says Melchizedek was a priest of **El Elyon**. El Elyon means "God who is above all others" or "God who is the greatest."

Melchizedek **blessed** Abram. Blessed refers to when God helps, does good to, or favors someone or something. Try to avoid using a word related to luck or games of chance. When people bless a thing, it usually means that they are giving thanks for it and making it set apart for something special. Look up bless in the glossary, and use the same word for bless as you use in previous stories.

Melchizedek said: "May God Most High, creator of heaven and earth, bless Abram. I praise God Most High, who delivered your enemies to you." The second time Melchizedek uses the word **blessed** here, it refers to praising God. Melchizedek acknowledged the blessings of God here. You may want to use a different word for blessed here, or use the word praised.

Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the possessions he had brought back.

When Abram had done this, the King of Sodom said to Abram, "Let the people from my city return to me, but you can keep the possessions you brought back for yourself."

But Abram replied, "No! I swear with a raised hand to **God**, God Most High, that I won't keep even a thread or part of a sandal from what belongs to you." Here, Abram uses the name **Yahweh**, God's personal name, for God. Look up Yahweh in the glossary, and use the same name for Yahweh as you use in other stories.

Abram then used the name El Elyon, God Most High, the same name for God Melchizedek just used. Use the same word here as you used previously in the story.

Abram continued, "I don't want you to say, 'I made Abram rich.' I will accept the food my young men already ate, and ask that you give a fair share of the possessions to the men who went with me, Aner, Eshkol, and Mamre."

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 14:17-24

Audio Content

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Genesis 15:1-21

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Genesis 15:1-21 and put it in your hearts. Listen to an audio version of Genesis 15:1-21 three times, in three different translations, if possible. Then, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage?
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage?
3. What does this passage tell us about God?
4. What does this passage tell us about people?
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 15:1-21 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

This story takes place after Abram defeated the conquering kings, and met with the King of Sodom and King Melchizedek. This story uses the personal name for God, Yahweh, throughout most of the story. In this story, Yahweh gives Abram two promises. Yahweh promises that Abram will have many descendants, and Yahweh promises that Abram's descendants will get land of their own. Yahweh deepens his relationship with Abram and makes a covenant, a strong promise, with Abram. These promises and covenant are important both to Abram and to Abram's later descendants, the Jewish people.

This story began sometime after Abram met with the King of Sodom and King Melchizedek. Yahweh spoke to Abram in a vision. Visions are supernatural experiences through which Yahweh speaks to humans. Prophets often have visions. Though this story does not say that Abram was asleep during this vision, this vision probably happened at night.

Yahweh began, "Don't be afraid! I am a shield for you, and your reward will be great." Here, Yahweh is telling Abram that Yahweh will protect Abram.

Stop here and look at a picture of a shield as a group. Explain that a shield was used to protect someone from weapons in times of battle. Pause this audio here.

It's possible that Yahweh may have said instead, "Don't be afraid Abram! I am a benefactor, or helper, for you—I will give you help—and your reward will be great."

This is the first time Yahweh and Abram spoke together. Before this, Yahweh spoke and Abram only listened. Here, however, Abram responded, "Great God, what good is your reward to me since I don't have children? You haven't given me children, and my servant Eliezer from Damascus will be my heir." In Abram's time, childless couples sometimes adopted a son, who was sometimes a servant, to serve them and to inherit their wealth when they died. It is possible that Abram was referring to this practice when he mentions Eliezer. Here, Abram was not being disrespectful by talking to God.

Abram continued, "You have given me no descendants, so one of my servants will be my heir." Abram repeats himself here for emphasis.

Yahweh's word came to Abram. "The word of Yahweh came to him" is a phrase later used by Abram's descendants, Jewish authors, to show that Yahweh had set a person apart as a prophet. There is a similar phrase used here when Yahweh spoke to Abram.

Yahweh responds, "This man will not be your heir. You will have a son from your own body, and he will be your heir." Here, God uses a phrase "from your own innards" to make it clear that he is referring to an heir who will come from Abram's own body and won't be an adopted son.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What do you think of this promise by God that Abram will have a child? In your culture, who or what is responsible for whether or not people can have a baby? Pause this audio here.

Then Yahweh took Abram outside. Yahweh said, "Look up at the stars in the sky, and count them if you can. Your descendants will be like the stars in the sky."

Stop here. If you can, go outside at night as a group and look up at the stars. Try to count all the stars in the sky. Is it possible? How do you feel as you try to count the stars? What does that tell you about God's promise to Abram? Pause this audio here.

Abram trusted Yahweh's promise to him, and so Yahweh considered Abram righteous. The Old Testament idea of righteousness is based on the relationship between Yahweh and people, or between different people. Righteousness refers to holiness, right standing, or lack of guilt. Here, Yahweh considers Abram righteous because of the really good relationship between Yahweh and Abram.

Stop here and discuss as a group. Describe someone that you think has a good relationship with God—people who are not guilty and live in a holy or good way. What do they do? How do people treat them? What words do you use to describe these kinds of people? Pause this audio here.

The next promise Yahweh gives Abram starts with a word that shows it begins a different scene. The next promise probably happened on a different day. Yahweh said, "I am Yahweh, who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land as a possession." Here, Yahweh references the country—Ur—and people—the Chaldeans—Abram originally came from. Yahweh is reminding Abram of what he has already done for him.

Abram responded, "How will I know for sure that I will have possession of this land?"

Yahweh said, "Bring me a heifer, a female goat, and a ram, all three years old. Also bring me a turtledove and a young pigeon."

Stop here and look at pictures of a three year old heifer (which is a young female cow), a three-year-old female goat, and a three-year-old ram (which is a male sheep) as a group. Also look at pictures of a turtledove and a young pigeon (which are both types of birds) as a group. What words or phrases do you have to describe these animals in your language? Pause this audio here.

Abram killed the animals. He cut the heifer, female goat, and ram in half lengthwise. He did not cut the birds in half. He arranged the parts of the animals and the birds in two lines, facing each other. This was probably a type of ritual people used in the cultures around Abram to make covenants with one another. A covenant is a permanent agreement made between two people or groups that establishes peace or friendship. Both people agree to be faithful to this agreement and to remain in good relationship with each other. Both parties swear to be faithful to the covenant in a ritual celebration or sacrifice. Covenants are deeper than legal contracts because covenants require loyalty and sacrificial love by both parties.

Whenever birds of prey came to eat the dead animals, Abram chased them away.

Stop here and look at pictures of birds of prey as a group. What do you think of this request by God for Abram to cut these animals and line them up? Pause this audio here.

As the sun set, Yahweh caused Abram to go into a deep sleep. Abram felt terrified with a strange, overwhelming fear. This is the only time in stories about Abram that Abram is afraid when he speaks with Yahweh.

Stop here. As a group, tell stories of times that people have been very afraid. Pay attention to the words and phrases that people use to describe their fear. Pause this audio here.

Yahweh said, "You can be sure that your descendants will be strangers in a country that is not theirs. They will be oppressed slaves there for four hundred years. But I will punish the country that makes them slaves, and your descendants will leave with great wealth."

Stop here and discuss as a group: What do you think of God telling Abram things that will happen 400 years in the future? Pause this audio here.

Yahweh continued, "But you, Abram, will go to your ancestors in peace and be buried at a good old age." To "go to your ancestors" was a saying that meant "to die." To "be buried at a good old age" meant Abram would die after he had lived a long time.

Stop here and discuss as a group: What similar phrases do you have in your language? In your culture, how do you talk about things that will happen to your great great grandchildren? Pause this audio here.

Finally, Yahweh said, "After four generations your descendants will return here to this land. The sin of the Amorites is not great enough yet for them to be punished." Here, when Yahweh said "the sin of the Amorites is not great enough yet," he meant that the Amorites had not done so much sin that Yahweh had to punish them yet. When Yahweh refers to the Amorites here, he is probably referring to all the people who live in the land he will give Abram's descendants, not just one group of people. "Four generations" probably refers to about four hundred years.

Stop here and discuss as a group: What do you think of God's plan for the people who currently live in the land? Pause this audio here.

After the sun set and it was dark, Abram saw a smoking firepot and a flaming torch pass between the halves of the dead animals. Fire was often a symbol of the presence of Yahweh. This shows that Yahweh himself was walking through the halves of the animals. In this story, Yahweh is the only one who walked through the halves of the animals. Firepots were small clay pots with hot coals inside of them. They were used to bake bread. Torches were burning sticks used for light.

Stop here and look at a picture of a torch and a firepot as a group. Pause this audio here.

In this kind of covenant, people would walk through the middle of cut up animals to show that if they broke their promises they would become like the animals. Normally, both groups of people making a covenant would walk between the animals. Here, only Yahweh's presence, in the form of the firepot and torch, walks between the lines of animals. This shows that this covenant is unusual. Yahweh is taking full responsibility for keeping the covenant.

Stop here and discuss such rituals as a group. How do you show that you have created a covenant or contract in your culture? What kinds of rituals do you do to show that you have made a covenant? Pause this audio here.

Yahweh made a covenant with Abram that day and said, "I give your descendants this land, from the border of Egypt to the great Euphrates River. I give them the land where the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadomites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaeites, Amorites, Canaanites, Gergashites, and Jebusites live."

Stop here and look at a map of the areas these groups of people might have lived in as a group. Pause this audio here.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 15:1-21 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has five scenes.

In the first scene: Yahweh speaks to Abram and tells him that Yahweh will reward and protect Abram. Abram asks Yahweh what good Yahweh's blessings will be since Abram has no children and a servant will be Abram's heir. Yahweh responds that Abram will have children of his own.

In the second scene: Yahweh takes Abram outside and tells him to look at the sky. Yahweh tells Abram that Abram will have as many descendants as the stars in the sky. Abram believes Yahweh.

In the third scene: The next day, Yahweh promises to give Abram land. Abram asks how he can know for sure that Yahweh will give him land. Yahweh tells Abram to bring certain animals. Abram brings Yahweh the animals and cuts the animals in half.

In the fourth scene: As the sun sets, Abram falls into a trance. Yahweh tells Abram about Abram's descendants.

In the fifth scene: Yahweh makes a covenant with Abram. After the sun sets and it is dark, a firepot and torch pass between the two rows of cut animals. Yahweh says, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates. I give you the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadomites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Gergashites, and Jebuites."

The characters in this story include:

- Yahweh
- Abram
- Eliezer from Damascus (who is mentioned)

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In scene one, visualize the dialogue between Yahweh and Abram. This story probably starts at night. Abram is probably in a tent.

Stop here and look at a picture of a tent as a group. Pause this audio here.

Yahweh says to Abram, "Do not be afraid. I will protect you like a shield, and I will greatly reward you."

Stop here and look at a picture of a shield as a group. Discuss this question as a group: What kinds of symbols of protection do you have, like the shield was a symbol of protection for Abram? Pause this audio here.

In scene two, be sure to visualize the setting and movement of the scene. Yahweh brings Abram outside. It is night. Yahweh says to Abram, "Look at the stars. Can you count them?" Yahweh did not expect an answer to this question. He was showing Abram that Abram would have many descendants.

Yahweh continues speaking to Abram. He says, "Your descendants will be like the stars in the sky." Abram believes Yahweh, and so Yahweh considers Abram righteous. It is important to remember that Yahweh says Abram is in a good relationship with Yahweh because Abram believes God.

In scene three, visualize the dialogue between Yahweh and Abram. This scene begins with a word that is used to start a new scene, so it probably takes place on a different day than the previous scenes. We do not know what time of day this happens. Yahweh says to Abram, "I am Yahweh, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to have as a possession."

Stop here and, as a group, look at where Ur and the land of Chaldeans is on a map. Pause this audio here.

Abram asks Yahweh to give him a sign, or proof, that Yahweh will give Abram and his descendants this land.

Yahweh tells Abram, "Bring me a cow, a goat, and a ram, all three years old, along with a pigeon and turtledove."

Stop here and, as a group, look at a picture of a heifer, a female goat, a ram, a pigeon, and a turtledove. Pause this audio here.

Make sure to visualize what Abram does with the animals. He kills the animals. He cuts the cow, goat, and ram in half from back to front. He does not cut the pigeon and turtledove. Abram arranges the halves of the animals in two lines, facing each other. Their blood pools in the middle of the animals. Abram keeps the birds of prey from eating the animals.

The fourth scene takes place as the sun is setting. Abram falls into a deep sleep. Yahweh speaks to Abram. Be sure to visualize what Yahweh says. Yahweh says, "Know this for sure. Your descendants will spend four hundred years as strangers in a land that isn't theirs. They will be slaves and will be mistreated, but I will punish the country that mistreats them."

Yahweh then speaks about Abram. You may want to re-order what Yahweh says for clarity. Yahweh says, "You, Abram, will live to an old age before you die and are buried in peace."

Then Yahweh tells Abram that because the sin of the people currently living on the land has not reached its full extent, Abram's descendants will return to the land after four generations.

The fifth scene takes place after the sun sets. Deep darkness comes, and Abram is filled with terror. A firepot and torch appear and float between the two lines of cut up animals.

Stop here and, as a group, look at a picture of a firepot and torch. Pause this audio here.

Yahweh makes a covenant with Abram. Yahweh says, "I give your descendants this land. I give them the land from the river in Egypt to the great river Euphrates. I will give them the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadomites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Gergashites, and Jebuites."

Stop here and, as a group, look at a map of the land between the river in Egypt and the great Euphrates River. Show the team where the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadomites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Gergashites, and Jebuites might have been on the map. Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 15:1–21 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has five scenes.

The characters in this passage include:

- Yahweh
- Abram
- Eliezer from Damascus (who is mentioned)

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the story without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the story. Help each other remember every part of the story.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then restart the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Yahweh speaks to Abram. He says, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I will protect you like a shield, and reward you."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Yahweh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "In the previous story, Abram did not take any of the possessions the King of Sodom offered him. I am happy with Abram and want him to continue to be loyal to me." Restart the action.

Abram replies, "Yahweh, what good is what you give me since I do not have children? My servant, Eliezer from Damascus, will be my heir."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abram, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I'm very upset that I don't have any children to inherit my wealth," "I'm frustrated," or "I don't understand what good God's blessings will be if I do not have children to pass them on to." Restart the action.

Yahweh answers, "Eliezer won't inherit your wealth. You will have a child yourself, and he will be your heir."

Then Yahweh brings Abram outside. He says, "Look at the stars in the sky. Can you count them? Your descendants will be like the stars in the sky."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abram, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I'm reassured by what Yahweh is saying," or "I can't count the stars, so I'm amazed that my descendants will be so many." Restart the action.

Abram trusted Yahweh's promise. Yahweh was pleased and considered Abram's response of faith as proof of genuine loyalty.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abram, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I don't know how I will have a child, but I trust that God will do what he says," or "I have full confidence God will do as he says." Ask the person playing Yahweh, "How are you feeling?" The person might answer things like, "Because Abram believes me, I consider us to have a good relationship," or "I am generously considering Abram righteous." Restart the action.

Yahweh says to Abram, "I am God, who brought you out of the land of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land for you to have."

Abram says, "How do I know for sure that I will have this land?"

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abram, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I'm uncertain," or "I know this is a strong promise from God, but it's normal in my culture to ask for a sign," or "I believe God, but I want evidence." Restart the action.

Yahweh answers, "Bring me a heifer, a female goat, and a ram. All those animals should be three years old. Also bring a turtledove and a pigeon."

Abram brings a heifer, a female goat, a ram, a turtledove, and a pigeon. He cuts the heifer, female goat, and ram in half, and arranges the halves in two lines facing each other. He does not cut the birds in half. Birds of prey come to eat the animals, but Abram chases them away.

As the sun sets, Abram falls into a deep sleep. A deep darkness and terror comes over him.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abram, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I'm terrified," "I know God is coming, and I don't know what will happen," or "I know I have set up for a ritual, but I don't know what will happen next." Restart the action.

Yahweh speaks to Abram, and says, "Your descendants will live as strangers in a land that isn't theirs for four hundred years. They will be slaves and will be mistreated, but I will punish the country that enslaves them, and they will leave it with great wealth. You, however, will die in peace and be buried at a good old age. Your descendants will come back here after four generations, because the sin of the people who live here has not reached the full measure."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abram, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I'm glad to hear I will die in peace at an old age," "I'm amazed to hear about my descendants," or "I am reminded that I am also a stranger in a land that isn't my own, so I look forward to when my descendants will have this land as a home." Restart the action.

The sun sets and it is dark. A burning fire pot and torch pass between the pieces of the animals. On that day Yahweh makes a covenant with Abram. He says, "I give your descendants this land, from the river of Egypt to the great Euphrates river. I give your descendants the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Gergashites, and Jebusites."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Yahweh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I want Abram to understand that I will definitely fulfill my promises to him," or "I have made a solemn promise I plan to keep."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 15:1-21 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Later, God came to Abram in a **vision**. Visions refer to supernatural experiences. They refer to when God gives a person a divine revelation when they are awake. Dreams are what God causes people to see when they are asleep. If your language only has one word for vision and dream, you may want to specify whether the person was awake or asleep when they received the message from God.

Stop here and discuss the word for vision as a group. As a group, discuss what word or descriptive phrase would be best for vision. Look up vision in the Master Glossary, and use the same word in the next stories. Pause this audio here.

God said, "Do not be afraid. I am your shield, and I will greatly reward you."

Abram responded, "Adonay Yahweh, Great God, what good are your blessings since I don't have children?" Here, Abram uses a name for God, **Adonay**, that means "master." He also uses God's personal name, **Yahweh**. This combination of names for God is rare in Genesis, but is later commonly used by the prophets of Abram's descendants. Look up the word Yahweh in the glossary and use the same word you have used in previous stories.

Abram continued, "You have not given me children, so my servant, Eliezer from Damascus, will be my **heir**." An heir inherits property or wealth after someone dies.

God responded, "That man will not be your heir. You will have a child of your own, and he will be your heir."

Then God took Abram outside. God said, "Look at the stars in the sky. Can you count them? Your **descendants** will be the stars." Descendants refers to Abram's children, their children, and all the people who would come from Abram and consider him an ancestor. Abram's descendants would later be known as the Jewish people.

Abram **believed** God. Here, the word "believe" means that Abram trusted God and had confidence that God would fulfill the promises God made. This is the first time this word for believe has been used in these stories.

Stop here and discuss the word for believe as a group. What word or descriptive phrase would work best for believe? Look up believe in the Master Glossary, and use the same word in the next stories. Pause this audio here.

And so God considered Abram **righteous**.

The Old Testament idea of righteousness is based on the relationship between God and people, or between different people. Righteousness refers to holiness, right standing, or lack of guilt. Look up the term in the glossary and use the same word for righteousness in all the next stories. You should describe the concepts of righteousness in the same way throughout your translation. For example, you may describe righteousness as a right relationship with God. You may also describe it in legal terminology as blameless/innocent. Other ways to describe these concepts are:

- being right in God's sight
- being in right standing with God
- being accepted by God

Remember that in the Bible people can never be righteous on their own, or by doing enough good things. Your term or phrase for righteousness should not be based on doing good works.

Because this is such an important key term, spend some time on this. You may find some kind of appropriate analogy in your culture. For example, you can use the analogy of something being broken and therefore unuseable. Once the thing is broken, there is really no way to repair it so that it is perfectly restored to its usable condition. Perhaps this could be a clay pot, a gourd, a bow and arrow, or something like that. Perhaps it could be a bent arrow that can no longer hit the mark.

Righteousness is the concept that God restores those things that people can not restore themselves. He not only repairs the item, but makes it useful for its purpose again, as if it had never been broken.

Stop here and do the following activity. You ask the group to "show" you righteousness in pairs by acting it out without using any words. The group can discuss what they see and determine if the actions accurately show the concept. If so, you may use those actions to help you find an appropriate way to describe righteousness. Look up righteousness in the Master Glossary.

Abram asked, "How can I know for sure I will have this land as a possession?"

God told Abram, "Bring me a **heifer**, a female goat, and a **ram**, each three years old. Also bring me a young **pigeon** and a **turtledove**." A heifer is a young female cow that has not had a baby. A ram is male sheep that can have children. A pigeon and a turtledove are two types of birds.

Stop here and look at pictures of a heifer, female goat, ram, pigeon, and turtledove as a group.

Stop and discuss as a group: Do you have specific words for these animals in your language? Pause this audio here.

Abram brought God the animals. Abram cut the heifer, female goat, and ram in half. He did not cut the pigeon and dove in half. He arranged the halves of the animals in two rows facing each other. **Birds of prey** came down to eat the dead animals, but Abram drove them away. Birds of prey refers to birds that eat dead animals.

Stop here and show the group pictures of birds of prey. Discuss as a group: Do you have words for similar birds in your language? Pause this audio here.

As the sun set, God made Abram go into a **deep sleep**. Here, a deep sleep refers to something like a trance.

A thick darkness and terror came onto Abram. God said to Abram, "Know for sure that for four hundred years your descendants will be foreigners in a country that isn't their own. They will be mistreated slaves. But I will punish the country that mistreats them, and afterwards they will leave with great wealth. But you, Abram, will die in **shalom, peace**, and be buried after living a long life." This is the first time this word, "shalom," which means peace, is used in these stories. This word for peace means both an absence of conflict and a fullness, or completeness, of life.

Stop here and look up the term peace in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

God said, "In the fourth **generation**, your descendants will come back to this land. The **sin** of the Amorites has not reached its full measure." The word for generation does not refer to a fixed number of years but to a long lifespan. Here, four generations probably refers to a time period of about four hundred years.

Sin refers to an act of disobedience to God. Be sure that the word you use here does not mean that someone has failed to perform a religious act like ritual prayer or following certain religious rules. Here, sin is a general word that does not refer to a specific sin. Look up sin in the Master Glossary and use the same word in this story as you used in previous stories.

When the sun set and it was dark, a smoking **firepot** and blazing **torch** appeared and passed between the pieces of the animals. Firepots were small clay pots with hot coals used to bake bread. Torches were burning sticks used for light.

Stop here and discuss as a group if you have similar objects in your language. Pause this audio here.

Then, on that day, God made a **covenant** with Abram. A covenant is a permanent agreement made between two people or groups that establishes peace or friendship. Both people agree to be faithful to this agreement and to remain in good relationship with each other. Both parties swear to be faithful to the covenant in a ritual celebration or sacrifice.

Covenants are deeper than legal contracts because covenants require loyalty and sacrificial love by both parties. That may be why covenants often use kinship terms like "father" and "son." Certain kinds of covenants involve eating a family meal together to seal the promises to each other. In the ancient Near-East, only the Jewish people of Israel entered into a covenant with God. God makes covenants with his people to promise his love and faithfulness to them and so that they would also show love and faithfulness to God. God's covenants with his people showed that they were different from other people because of their relationship with God.

Stop here and look up covenant in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 15:1-21

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (20338139 KB)

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Genesis 16:1-16

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 16:1-16 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 16:1-16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

This story takes place after God made his covenant with Abram. This story describes the birth of Abram's oldest son, Ishmael, when Sarai tried to have children through her slave, Hagar.

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had not given Abram children. In Sarai's culture, it was probably considered a disgrace for a wife to have no children.

Stop here and discuss as a group: What does your culture think of women who haven't had children? Pause this audio here.

But Sarai had an Egyptian slave named Hagar, who was Sarai's property. Hagar may have been part of Sarai's marriage dowry, or she may have been given to Sarai in Egypt. Hagar was a personal servant of Sarai's.

So Sarai said to Abram, "Listen, God has prevented me from having children. Go to my slave. Maybe I can build a family through her." "Go to my slave" means to have sexual relations with the slave. In Sarai's culture, it was a common custom for a wife without children to give her husband a slave as a second wife in order to have children through that slave. Any children the slave gave birth to would be considered the first wife's children. Any son the slave gave birth to would inherit everything after the husband died, but if the first wife had a son of her own sometime later, the first wife's son would become the heir.

Stop here and discuss as a group: What does your culture think of having a child with the servant of your wife? What do you think God feels about this? Pause this audio here.

Abram agreed to what Sarai said. So after they had lived in the land of Canaan for ten years, Sarai took her Egyptian slave, Hagar, and gave Hagar to Abram as another wife. All the language the story uses here is almost exactly the same as the language in Genesis 3, when Eve took the fruit God had said not to eat and gave it to her husband, Adam.

You might want to use the same words and phrases here as you did in the previous story.

Though this story uses the same word for "wife" for both Sarai and Hagar, Hagar was still considered a slave and did not have the rights of a full wife.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Do you have any words or phrases in your language for second wife without the rights of a full wife? Pause this audio here.

Abram went to Hagar, and Hagar became pregnant. Here, "went to" is another phrase that means to have a sexual relationship with someone.

When Hagar realized that she was pregnant, she looked at Sarai with contempt. This means that Hagar began to see and treat Sarai with less respect—she began to despise Sarai, and Sarai became insignificant in her eyes. According to the custom of the time, if a slave who was a man's second wife acted as if she was equal to the first wife, the first wife still had the right to treat the second wife as a slave.

Then Sarai said to Abram, "You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering! I know I gave my slave into your arms, but when she learned she was pregnant, she looked at me with contempt." "Into your arms" refers to Sarai giving Hagar to Abram as a wife. This saying implies that Sarai gave Hagar to Abram so that Hagar would become pregnant.

Sarai finished, "May God judge between you and me!" "May God judge between you and me" was a phrase people commonly used to ask God to decide who was right in an argument.

Abram answered, "Listen, your slave is in your hands. Do whatever you want with her." "In your hands" means "in your authority." It refers to Sarai still having power over Hagar.

Then Sarai abused Hagar, and Hagar ran away.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Why do you think Sarai acted this way? What do you think of Sarai's behavior? Pause this audio here.

The angel of God found Hagar in the desert, by a spring of water beside the road to Shur. This is the first time the word "angel" appears in these stories. Angels were supernatural, spiritual beings who were messengers from God. However, in this story, the word "angel" is combined with the word "Yahweh," which is God's personal name. This phrase "angel of God" probably refers to God's presence appearing in the shape of a man.

The angel of God said, "Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?"

Hagar answered, "I am fleeing from my mistress, Sarai."

The angel of God commanded Hagar, "Go back to your mistress and be under her hand." The phrase "be under her hand" meant to be Sarai's slave and accept whatever Sarai did.

The angel also said to Hagar, "I will give you so many descendants you cannot count them." This is the same promise God made to Abram. Here, God is keeping his promise to Abram, even though Hagar is not Abram's first wife. Hagar is the only woman in Genesis that God promises descendants to.

The angel of God said, "Listen, you are pregnant and will have a son. You will name him Ishmael, which means God hears, because God has heard your suffering. Your son will be like a wild donkey." Wild donkeys lived in deserts. Unlike donkeys used by people, these donkeys were often free, untamed, and stubborn.

As a group, look at a picture of a wild donkey. Discuss as a group: What do you think of the statement that Ishmael will be like a wild donkey? What do you think of God predicting the personality of someone? Pause this audio here.

The angel continued, "His hand will be against everyone, and everyone's hands will be against him. He will live in hostility toward all his relatives." For someone's "hand to be against" someone else was a saying that meant they would fight with and be hostile towards each other.

Hagar gave God, who spoke to her, the name El Roi, which means "a God of seeing," or "God who sees me." Hagar is the only person in the Old Testament who gives God a name.

Hagar thought, "Have I really seen the back of him who sees me?" The original words the story used here are hard to understand. They might have been "Have I really seen the one who sees me?" or "Now I have seen the one who sees me!" or "Have I really seen God and lived?"

That is why the spring Hagar was by was named Beer Lahai Roi, which means "well of the living God who sees." The spring was between Kadesh and Bered.

Stop here and, as a group, look at where the spring, Kadesh, and Bered might have been on a map. Pause this audio here.

So Hagar gave birth to a son for Abram, and Abram named the son Hagar gave birth to Ishmael. Abram naming Ishmael showed that Ishmael was considered fully Abram's son. It also shows that Abram listened and respected what Hagar told him about what happened when she ran away. Abram obeyed God by naming Hagar's son Ishmael. Abram was 86 years old when Hagar gave birth to Ishmael for him.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 16:1-16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four scenes.

First scene: Sarai, Abram's wife, hadn't had children for him. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar. So Sarai gave her servant Hagar to Abram in order to have children through her. But Hagar began to treat Sarai badly. Sarai mistreated Hagar, and Hagar ran away.

Second scene: The angel of Yahweh came to Hagar near a spring of water in the desert, on the road leading to Shur. Yahweh heard Hagar's suffering, and he promised Hagar a son who will be like a wild donkey.

Third scene: So Hagar gave Yahweh the name, "God who sees me," because she thought to herself, "Have I really seen the one who sees me?" That is why the well she was next to was later called Beer Lahai Roi, which means "well of the living one who sees me."

Scene four: So Hagar gave birth to a son for Abram, and Abram named him Ishmael. Abram was 86 years old when Ishmael was born.

The characters in this story include:

- Sarai
- Abram
- Hagar
- Angel of God
- Ishmael (who is mentioned)

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting

Visualize how scene one sets up the story. You may want to rearrange scene one. Around 10 years after God made a covenant with Abram, Sarai talks frankly with Abram one day. So Sarai said to Abram, "Listen." This was a word that meant that what Sarai was about to say next was important.

Discuss as a group: In your culture, how would you let someone know that what you are going to say is very important to you and you would like them to pay attention? Pause this audio here.

She says, "I don't know what promises you think God made to you, but He has prevented me from having any children for you! Sleep with my slave Hagar. Maybe I can build a family through her." And Abram agrees to Sarai's plan.

In scene two, visualize the interactions between the three different characters: Sarai, Abram, and Hagar. Sarai gives Abram her slave Hagar as another wife. Abram sleeps with Hagar, and Hagar becomes pregnant. When Hagar realizes she's pregnant, she looks at Sarai with contempt, or hatred. Sarai says to Abram, "This is all your fault! I know I gave Hagar to you, but may Yahweh judge who is right, you or me!"

Abram replies, "Listen, Hagar is your slave. Do whatever you want to her."

So Sarai treats Hagar harshly, and Hagar runs away.

Scene three takes place in the wilderness, on the road to Shur, by a spring of water. Springs of water are above-ground sources of fresh water. This spring of water may have been near Egypt.

Stop here and, as a group, look at where the road to Shur and the spring of water might have been on a map. Pause this audio here.

The angel of God finds Hagar and says, "Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?"

Hagar responds, "I am running away from my mistress, Sarai."

As the angel of God speaks to Hagar, the story repeats "the angel of God said" three times. This shows that the angel of God says three different things to Hagar. The angel of God first tells Hagar to go back to Sarai, then the angel promises Hagar many descendants, and finally the angel of God tells Hagar what her son will be like.

The angel says, "Go back to your mistress, and submit to her."

The angel says, "I will give you more descendants than you can count."

The angel says, "You are pregnant, and will give birth to a son. You will name him Ishmael, which means 'God hears,' because God has heard your suffering. Your son will be like a wild donkey." He will be hostile to everyone, and everyone will be hostile with him. He will live in conflict with his relatives." This last thing the angel of God says is a verse of poetry.

Stop here and look at a picture of a wild donkey as a group. Discuss as a group: What kinds of poetic forms does your community have? How might you show what the angel says in a poetic form? Pause this audio here.

Visualize Hagar's response in scene four. Hagar gives God a name, "God who sees me," because she says to herself, "I have seen the God who sees me!" That is why the spring is later named Beer Lahai Roi which means "well of the living God who sees." It is between Kadesh and Bered.

Show the team where this spring might have been on a map.

Visualize the conclusion in scene five. Hagar returns, and has a son for Abram. Abram names the boy Ishmael. Abram has Ishmael when he is 86 years old.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 16:1-16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Sarai
- Abram
- Hagar
- Angel of God
- Ishmael (who is mentioned)

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the story without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the story. Help each other remember every part of the story.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then restart the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Sarai, Abram's wife, had not had children for Abram. But Sarai had an Egyptian slave named Hagar. So Sarai said to Abram, "Listen, God has prevented me from having children. Go to my servant. Maybe I can build a family through her."

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Sarai, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "I'm ashamed because I haven't had children," or "I feel like I have no other options but to give Abram my servant," or "Maybe this is what God meant to happen when he said he would give Abram many descendants," or "I'm desperate." Restart the action.

Abram agreed to Sarai's plan. So Sarai gave her Egyptian slave, Hagar, to Abram as another wife. Abram went to Hagar, and she became pregnant. But when Hagar saw she was pregnant, she began to despise Sarai.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Sarai, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "I'm angry at how Hagar is treating me," or "I feel humiliated by how Hagar treats me." Ask the actor playing Hagar, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "I'm proud to be pregnant," or "Sarai seems less important to me now that I'm pregnant and she isn't," or "I'm angry at Sarai." Restart the action.

Sarai said to Abram, "This is all your fault! I gave you Hagar, but now that she's pregnant, she despises me! May God judge who's at fault—you or me!"

Abram responded, "Listen, she's your slave. Do whatever you want with her."

Stop the action: Ask the actor who plays Sarai, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "I'm angry that Abram, the head of the house, hasn't fixed this," or "I feel threatened by Hagar," or "I'm still Hagar's mistress even though she's pregnant, so I'm angry that she's treating me with contempt." Ask the actor playing Abram, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "I just want there to be calm in my home," or "I don't want responsibility for this." Restart the action.

Sarai began treating Hagar harshly, so Hagar ran away.

The angel of God came to Hagar at a spring of water. The angel said, "Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?"

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing the angel of God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "I'm about to tell Hagar something important," or "I sought out Hagar for a reason." Restart the action.

Hagar answered, "I am running away from my mistress, Sarai."

The angel said, "Go back to your mistress, and be her slave."

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Hagar, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "I am afraid of what will happen if I return to Sarai," or "I'm amazed that the angel of God knows my name and knows who I am." Restart the action.

Then the angel said, "I will give you more descendants than you can count."

Finally the angel said, "You are pregnant and will give birth to a son. You must name him Ishmael, which means 'God hears,' because God has heard your suffering. Your son will be like a free, untamed animal. He will be hostile towards everyone, and everyone will be hostile towards him. He will live in conflict with his relatives."

Hagar named God El Roi, which means "God who sees me." She said to herself, "I have seen the God who sees me."

Finish the action. Ask the actor playing Hagar, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "I can't believe I'm alive after seeing God," or "I'm overwhelmed, because God has spoken to me," or "I'm amazed that God noticed me."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

The personal name for God, **Yahweh**, is used throughout most of this passage. Use the same name for Yahweh as you have in previous passages, and see the Master Glossary for more information about Yahweh.

Sarai, Abram's wife, had not given birth to children for Abram. But she had an Egyptian **slave** named Hagar. A slave is a person owned by someone else. The word used for slave here refers to someone's personal servant. Look up the word for slave in the glossary and use the same word here as you used in previous stories.

When Hagar saw that she was pregnant, she began to treat her mistress with contempt. So Sarai said to Abram, "This is all your fault! I know I gave my slave **into your arms**." The phrase Sarai uses here, **into your arms**, refers to the fact that Sarai gave Hagar to Abram specifically for Abram to make Hagar pregnant.

When Sarai began mistreating Hagar, Hagar ran away. The **angel of Yahweh** came to Hagar beside a spring of water in the wilderness, on the road to Shur. An angel is a supernatural, spiritual being who is a messenger from God. Angels appear to humans in human form, and they often come with a specific message or to do a specific task. Here, however, angel of Yahweh has a different meaning. The word angel is combined with God's personal name, Yahweh. The angel of the Lord, or angel of Yahweh, probably referred to God's presence appearing in human form. It might have referred to an angel who represented God.

Stop here and look up angel of the Lord or angel of Yahweh in the Master Glossary and use the same word or phrase for angel of Yahweh in all your next stories. Pause this audio here.

The angel said, "I will give you more **descendants** than you can count." Descendants refers to Hagar's children, their children, and all the people who would come from Hagar and consider her an ancestor.

Then Hagar gave God a name, **El Roi**. El Roi means "God is seeing" or "God who sees me."

Stop here and discuss as a team: How will you say the names of God, like this one? Look up El Roi in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Hagar said, "I have seen the God who sees me." That is why the well Hagar was by was later called Beer Lahai Roi. Beer Lahai Roi means "well of the living God who sees me." It could later be found between Kadesh and Bered.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 16:1-16

Audio Content

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Genesis 17:1-27

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Genesis 17:1-27 and put it in your hearts. Listen to an audio version of Genesis 17:1-27 three times, in three different translations, if possible. Then, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage?
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage?
3. What does this passage tell us about God?
4. What does this passage tell us about people?
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 17:1-27 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

This story describes God's covenant with Abram. It adds details to the covenant God made with Abram in previous stories. Here, God describes his part, Abram's part, and Sarai's part in the covenant. God gives Abram and Sarai new names and tells Abram what to do as a sign of the covenant between them.

Thirteen years after Ishmael's birth in the previous passage, Yahweh appeared to Abram when Abram was 99 years old. God said, "I am El-Shaddai, God Almighty. Walk in front of me and be blameless." The phrase "walk in front of me" meant to live a certain way and be devoted to someone. People typically used the phrase to describe servants who were loyal to their kings. God wanted Abraham to be loyal to him.

Stop here and discuss this phrase as a group. Tell a story about someone you know who was a loyal servant to their master, employer, or king. How do you describe loyal service to a king or master? Pause this audio here.

God continued, "I will confirm my covenant with you and will give you many descendants." Here, God is confirming the covenant he made with Abram in previous stories. A covenant is a permanent agreement made between two people or groups that establishes peace or friendship. Both people agree to be faithful to this agreement and to remain in good relationship with each other. Both parties swear to be faithful to the covenant in a ritual celebration or sacrifice. Covenants are deeper than legal contracts, because covenants require loyalty and sacrificial love by both parties.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Why do you think God is talking about the covenant again? Pause this audio here.

Abram fell facedown. People often reacted this way when God appeared to them. This gesture showed respect and submission to God.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do you show respect in your culture? Do you have any gestures that show respect? In your culture, what does it mean when someone falls face down in front of someone else? Pause this audio here.

God said to Abram, "Listen. For my part, this is my covenant with you. I will make you the father of many nations! I will change your name from Abram to Abraham, because I have made you the father of many nations." In Abram's culture, someone changing their name showed that there had been an important change in their life. The name "Abram" probably meant "the father is exalted" or "exalted father." The name Abraham may have meant "father of many."

God continued, "I will make you very fruitful, your descendants will become many nations, and kings will come from you." "Fruitful" meant someone would have many children and descendants.

God continued, "And I will maintain my covenant between me and you and your descendants throughout all the generations of your descendants. The covenant will last forever. I will be your God and the God of your descendants, who come after you. And I will give to you and your descendants after you the land where you currently live as a foreigner, the entire land of Canaan. You and your descendants will own the land forever, and I will be their God."

Stop here and look at a map of the area of Canaan as a group. Pause this audio here.

Then God said to Abraham, "For your part, you must keep all the requirements of my covenant. You and your descendants must do this throughout all the generations of your descendants. This is my covenant with you and your descendants, the covenant you must keep. Every man among you must be circumcised." "Circumcision" meant cutting off the loose skin at the end of a man's penis. Many of the people living around Abraham practiced circumcision, although Abraham's ancestors probably did not practice it. In the cultures around Abraham, circumcision was sometimes part of a ritual that men would do before they married or foreigners would do to enter a family. However, among Abraham's descendants, circumcision became an important sign of the covenant between God and his people.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Do you practice circumcision in your culture? If you do, does circumcision have any special meaning? Pause this audio here.

God continued to talk about the importance of circumcision. God said, "You must be circumcised as a sign of the covenant between me and you. Every boy born into Abraham's household or bought as a slave should be circumcised." The phrase "born in your household" probably refers to slaves and servants born to people who already served Abraham and his family.

God continued, "Your bodies will show a sign of my covenant, which will last forever." Here, this mark on their bodies showed that they trusted God, that they want to obey God, and that they are all a part of the same group of people.

Stop here and discuss as a group: In your culture, what ways do you have of marking a person to show that they are in a special relationship with God or with other people? Pause this audio here.

God continued, "Any man who is not circumcised will be cut off from his people for breaking the covenant." The phrase "cut off from his people" meant that anyone who did not get circumcised would be excluded from their family and community. The phrase "breaking the covenant" meant not fulfilling the terms of the covenant given by God—or not being circumcised.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do you make covenants in your culture? What kind of language do you use? What rituals do you have that show a covenant has been made? Pause this audio here.

God also said to Abraham, "For Sarai, your wife's part, you should no longer call her Sarai. Her name will be Sarah. I will bless her and give you a son through her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations. Kings of people will be among her descendants." The name "Sarah" was another way to say the name "Sarai." The Canaanite people that Sarah and Abraham lived among used the name "Sarah" instead of "Sarai." Both names meant "princess, or royalty."

Abraham fell facedown. He laughed and said to himself, "Will a son be born to someone who is 100 years old? Will Sarah have a child at 90 years old?" Abraham asks himself these questions but he does not expect an answer. He is surprised!

Stop here and discuss as a group: Why does Abraham ask these questions? How would people in your community react if someone told them that they would have children at 100 years old? Pause this audio here.

And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live before you!" Here, Abraham asked God to choose Ishmael as the heir of the special blessing God promised. Abraham does not believe he will get another child to be his heir, so he is making a suggestion to God on how he can get another heir. "Live before you" means "receive your special blessing and favour."

Then God said, "No, your wife Sarah will give you a son, and you will name him Isaac. I will confirm my covenant with him and his descendants as a covenant that lasts forever." The name "Isaac" means "he laughs."

God continued, "When it comes to Ishmael, I have heard you. I will definitely bless him. I will make him extremely fruitful and will give him many descendants. He will be the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. But I will confirm my covenant with Isaac, who will be born to you and Sarah by this time next year." God blesses Ishmael even though he will not be part of the covenant that God passes on to Isaac, Sarah's son. When God finished speaking, he left Abraham.

On that same day, Abraham took his son Ishmael and all those born in his house or bought with his money, every man in Abraham's house, and circumcised them like God had told him to. Abraham was 99 years old when he was circumcised. Abraham's son Ishmael was 13 years old. Abraham and his son Ishmael were both circumcised on that day. And all the men in Abraham's house, including those born in his house and those bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised along with Abraham. Here the story repeats the instructions God gave to Abraham to explain that Abraham did everything God told him to do.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 17:1–27 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has five scenes.

In the first scene: Many years later Yahweh appeared to Abram again. God said, "I am God Almighty. Live blamelessly and faithfully before me. Then I will make a covenant between me and you, and I will give you many descendants."

In the second scene: Abram bowed facedown. God described God's part of a covenant with Abram. God told Abram that God would give him many descendants and would always be the God of Abram's descendants. God changed Abram's name to Abraham.

In the third scene: God described Abraham's part of a covenant with God. God told Abraham to circumcise all the males in his household as a sign of the covenant.

In the fourth scene: God told Abraham that Sarai would have a son. God changed Sarai's name to Sarah. Abraham bowed low to the ground and laughed to himself, because he wondered how he and Sarah could have a baby when they were old. Abraham asked God if Ishmael could live under God's special blessing. God answered that Sarah would have a son, and they should name the son "Isaac." And Isaac would live under the covenant. Then God left Abraham.

In the fifth scene: That very day, Abraham took his son Ishmael and every man in his household, whether they had been born into his household or bought, and circumcised them.

The characters in this passage are:

- God
- Abram, who is renamed Abraham
- Sarai, who is renamed Sarah, is mentioned
- Isaac is mentioned
- Ishmael is mentioned
- and everyone born into Abraham's household or bought from a foreigner is mentioned

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

Scene one sets up the story. When Abram is 99 years old, Yahweh appears to him. This is the only time in this passage that God's personal name Yahweh is used. You may want to rearrange what God says here. God says, "I am God Almighty. I will confirm my covenant between me and you, and give you many descendants, if you serve me faithfully and live a blameless life."

In scenes two, three, and four God describes his part of the covenant, Abram's part, and Sarai's part. In these scenes, God often repeats himself or says similar things in different ways. This emphasizes that what he says is important. Since this covenant has important requirements in it, this repetition also makes sure what God says is clear to Abram.

In scene two, Abram bows face down on the ground. Make sure to visualize what God says to Abram. God begins to speak by using a word that means that what he says next is important. God says, "Listen." Then God changes Abram's name to Abraham, which means "the father of many nations." God goes on to say that God will give Abraham many descendants. Those descendants will become many nations, or people groups. These people groups will have kings to rule them. God says that the covenant will last forever. God says, "This is the covenant. I will always be your God, and the God of your descendants who come after you. I will give all of the land of Canaan, where you live now as a foreigner, to you and your descendants to own forever, and I will be their God."

Stop here and look at a map of the area of Canaan as a group. Pause this audio here.

In scene three, visualize what God continues to say to Abraham. God now tells Abraham what he needs to do to show that he wants to be part of the covenant. God says that every man must be circumcised as a sign of the covenant between God and his people. God gives them rules: "Through all the generations to come, every boy must be circumcised eight days after he is born, including those born in your household and those you bought from a foreigner, who are not your descendants. Everyone must be circumcised. Your bodies will have the mark of my covenant, which will last forever." God repeats himself. Then God says what will happen if his people do not follow these rules: "Any uncircumcised male who has not been circumcised in his body will be cut off from his people. He will be excluded from his people. He has broken my covenant."

In scene four, visualize the conversation between God and Abraham. God says to Abraham, "On the part of Sarai, your wife, you will no longer call her Sarai. Her name will be Sarah. I will bless her and certainly give you a son through her. I will greatly bless her and she will become the mother of many nations. Kings of nations, kings of people, will be among her descendants."

Abraham bows facedown, but he laughs to himself in disbelief. He thinks to himself, "Will a son be born to someone 100 years old? Will Sarah have a baby at 90 years old?" Abraham asks himself these questions but does not expect an answer. He assumes it is impossible for him and Sarah to have a child at their ages.

So Abraham asks God, "May Ishmael live under your special blessing?"

But God answers, "No, Sarah your wife will give birth to a son for you. You will name him Isaac. I will confirm my covenant with him and his descendants as a covenant that will last forever." God blesses Ishmael too, but he makes it clear that Ishmael is not part of this special covenant. Even though he is not part of the covenant, God will bless Ishmael with many descendants, 12 princes in his family, and will make him into a great nation.

In scene five, visualize what Abraham does on the very same day that God speaks with him. Scene five also repeats the same information in different ways to emphasize what happens. Abraham takes his son, Ishmael, and every man in his household, whether born into Abraham's household or bought from a foreigner, and

circumcises them, just like God told him. Abraham was 99 years old when he was circumcised, and Ishmael was 13. Both Abraham and Ishmael are both circumcised on that day, along with all the other males in the household, both those born into the household and those bought as servants, just as God told them. It is interesting to note that Ishmael is circumcised, even though the covenant will not be passed on through him. Everyone is circumcised along with Abraham because they are part of Abraham's household.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 17:1–27 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has five scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- God
- Abram, who is renamed Abraham
- Sarai, who is renamed Sarah, is mentioned
- Isaac is mentioned
- Ishmael is mentioned
- and everyone born into Abraham's household or bought from a foreigner is mentioned

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the story without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the story. Help each other remember every part of the story.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then restart the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

When Abram was 99 years old, Yahweh appeared to him. God said, "I am God Almighty. Serve me faithfully and live blamelessly, so that I will make a covenant with you, and I will give you countless descendants."

Abram bowed with his face on the ground.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abram, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I want to show God respect," or "I know something important is coming," or "I am overwhelmed that God has appeared to me and is making me a promise again." Restart the drama.

God said to Abram, "On my part, this is my covenant with you. You will be the father of many people. No longer will you be named Abram. You will be named Abraham, because I have made you the father of many people. I will give you many descendants. I will make nations from you, and kings will come from you. I will establish my covenant as a covenant that lasts forever between me and you and your descendants after you for all the generations to come. I will be your God, and the God of your descendants after you. I will give all of the land of Canaan, where you live now as a foreigner, to you and your descendants to own, and I will be their God."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I plan to greatly bless Abraham," or "I know Abraham doesn't have a permanent home right now, and want to promise that he and his descendants will have one on this land," or "This covenant is my idea, and I plan to keep my promises to Abraham," or "I want to promise Abraham that I will be his God forever," or "I know this covenant is serious, and will last forever." Restart the drama.

Then God said to Abraham, "You must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you through all of the generations to come. This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you must keep. Every male among you must be circumcised. You must be circumcised, and that will be the sign of the covenant between you and me. For all the generations to come every boy among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought from a foreigner who are not your descendants. Whether they are born in your household or bought with your money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your body will be an everlasting covenant. Any man who is not circumcised in his body will be cut off from his people because he has broken my covenant."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abraham, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I have heard of this ritual and understand that it will be a sign of God's covenant with me," or "I understand that this ritual will be a sign to me and my descendants that we have a covenant with God," or "I'm overwhelmed by the seriousness of this covenant." Restart the drama.

God also said to Abraham, "When it comes to Sarai, your wife, you must not call her Sarai anymore. Her name will be Sarah. I will bless her and give you a son through her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of many people. Kings will come from her."

Abraham bowed with his face to the ground. He laughed and said to himself, "Will a son be born to someone 100 years old? Will Sarah have a child at 90 years old?" And Abraham said to God, "I wish you might bless Ishmael and allow him to be my heir."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abraham, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I am laughing in disbelief, because it sounds so unlikely that a son would be born to people so old," or "I want to ask that Ishmael receives the blessings God is giving me," or "Maybe God means that Ishmael will receive these promises." Restart the drama.

But God replied, "No, Sarah, your wife, will give birth to a son for you. You will name him Isaac, and I will confirm my covenant with him and his descendant as a covenant that lasts forever. I will bless Ishmael also, just like you asked. I will give him many descendants. He will become the father of 12 princes, and I will make him into a great nation. But my covenant will be confirmed with Isaac, who will be born to you and Sarah around this time next year." When God was finished speaking, he left Abraham.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "I want to make sure Abraham understands my covenant," or "I know Abraham laughed, but I will do what I promise," or "My plan is to give Abraham and Sarah a son, even though they are old." Ask the person playing Abraham, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "I am glad that Ishmael found favor with God too," or "I am happy that Sarah will have a son!" Restart the drama.

That very day, Abraham took his son Ishmael and all the men who lived in his household, both those born in his household and those bought from foreigners, and they were all circumcised. Abraham was circumcised when he was 99 years old. Ishmael was circumcised when he was 13 years old. Everyone was circumcised with Abraham.

Finish the drama. Ask the person playing Abraham, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I believe God will do what he has said," or "My whole household has a permanent sign of God's covenant with me in my body," or "I am eager to fulfill my part of the covenant," or "I want to make sure I have done as God has said as soon as possible."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 17:1-27 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

When Abram was 99 years old, Yahweh **appeared** to him again. Appeared means that God showed and revealed himself to Abram. The story uses the same word here that was used when God appeared to Abram in a previous story and told him to leave his family and his home.

Yahweh said, "I am **El-Shaddai**." We hear two names for God here. The first name for God we hear is Yahweh. Yahweh is the personal name for God. It is only used here in this story. Look up Yahweh in the Master Glossary and use the same word here as you used in previous stories.

The second name for God we hear is El-Shaddai. El-Shaddai is a name for God that probably meant "God Almighty." This is the first time this name for God is used in the Old Testament.

Stop here and discuss what phrase you will use for God's name El-Shaddai. Look up El-Shaddai in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Blameless refers to something that is perfect, complete, and has no faults.

Stop here and discuss what word you will use for blameless. Be sure that you use the same word you have used in previous passages.

God continued to speak. Here, the story uses **Elohim** for God, which was a common word used for God in the Old Testament. Look up Elohim or God in the Master Glossary and use the same word here that you used in previous stories.

God said, "I will make a **covenant** between me and you and give you countless **descendants**." A covenant is a permanent agreement made between two people or groups of people that establishes peace or friendship. Both parties agree to be faithful to this agreement and to remain in good relationship with each other. Both parties swear to be faithful to the covenant in a ritual celebration or sacrifice. Covenants are deeper than legal contracts because covenants require loyalty and sacrificial love by both parties. That may be why covenants often use relationship terms like father and son. This covenant was also a solemn promise. Look up covenant in the Master Glossary and use the same word as you used in previous stories.

Descendants refers to Abram's children, their children, and so on. It refers to everyone in the future who considers Abram their ancestor.

Abram bowed facedown. God said, "This is my covenant with you. You will be the father of many people. Your name will no longer be **Abram**. You will be called **Abraham**." Abram probably meant "the father has a high rank" or "the father in high position." Abraham probably meant "father of many."

God continued, "I will make you extremely **fruitful**." Fruitful means that Abraham will have many descendants.

God continued, "Your descendants will become many **nations**, and **kings** will be among them!" Here, "nations" refers to many groups of people who live together and have the same language and government. It means different ethnic groups rather than different countries. Look up nation in the Master Glossary and use the same word you have used in previous stories.

A **king** was someone who ruled over a city or territory. A king normally ruled for life and passed on his authority to one of his sons. Look up king in the Master Glossary and use the same word you have used in previous stories.

"I will continue my covenant with your descendants, throughout the **generations** of your descendants." A "generation" refers to the average length of a person's lifespan, which was often seen as 70–100 years. Generations is sometimes translated as genealogy. Here, God is referring to all the descendants who will come after Abraham. Look up generations in the Master Glossary and use the same word you have used in previous stories.

God continued to describe the covenant between God and Abraham's descendants. God said, "Every male among you must be **circumcised**." This is the first time the word circumcise is used in these stories. Circumcised refers to cutting off the loose skin at the end of a boy's penis. Many of the people living around Abraham practised circumcision, often as part of a ritual before marriage. Among the Jewish people, who were Abraham's descendants, circumcision was an important physical and permanent sign of the **covenant** between

God and his people. Circumcision was a sign that the boy was a part of God's chosen people and that God's promises and covenant applied to him.

Look up circumcision in the glossary and use the same word in all of the next stories.

Stop here and discuss as a team: what word you will use for circumcision? Pause this audio here.

God continued, "You must be circumcised, and that will be the **sign** of the covenant between me and you." A sign is a signal or indication that something is true or will happen. Here, the sign refers to a reminder that you can see. This sign showed that Abraham and his descendants had a relationship with God and that they trusted God. This was a permanent sign that someone belonged to the people God had a relationship with.

Look up sign in the Master Glossary and use the same word here as you have used in previous stories.

God continued, "Throughout all the generations to come, every male who is eight days old must be circumcised. That includes those born in your **household**." "Household" refers to everyone living in Abraham's household, including servants, slaves, and other family members. Look up household in the Master Glossary and use the same word you have used in previous passages.

God also said to Abraham, "On the part of **Sarai**, your wife, you are to no longer call her Sarai. Her name will be **Sarah**." Both Sarai and Sarah probably mean "princess, or royalty."

God continued, "I will **bless** her and give you a son through her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations." Bless refers to when God helps, does good to, or favours someone or something. Try to avoid using a word related to luck or games of chance. When people bless a thing, it usually means that they are setting it apart for something special. Nations here refers to people groups. Look up bless and nation in the Master Glossary and use the same words here as you used in previous stories.

God continued, "**Kings** of nations, or peoples, will come from Sarah." Here, nations refers to a geographic territory and not necessarily a particular ethnic group.

Then God said, "I will give you a son, and you will call him **Isaac**." "Isaac" means "he laughs."

God says that Ishmael will be the father of 12 **princes**." "Prince" refers to a ruler of a tribe, but a prince is different from a king. Often, many princes served the same king.

God continued, "I will make him into a great nation, or people group. But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, who Sarah will give you by this time next year." And when he was done speaking with Abraham, God left Abraham. And Abraham did what God told him to do.

Every male in Abraham's household was circumcised. This includes all of Abraham's male family members and slaves. Some of his slaves were born to parents who were Abraham's slaves and were therefore also slaves of Abraham. Abraham also would have bought slaves from foreigners to add to his household.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 17:1-27

Audio Content

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Genesis 18:1-15

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 18:1-15 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then, as a team, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 18:1-15 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

This story takes place sometime after Yahweh confirms and describes his covenant with Abraham. This is the first in a series of four stories about Abraham and Lot. In this story, Abraham welcomes three visitors who are on their way to Sodom, which is where Lot lives. Abraham acts as a good host. One of the visitors is Yahweh, and he tells Abraham and Sarah that he will return the next year to give them a son.

Yahweh appeared to Abraham near the great trees that belonged to Mamre. Abraham and everyone in his household lived in tents near the great trees of Mamre.

Stop here and look at Mamre on a map as a group.

Stop here and look at a picture of what Abraham's tents might have looked like as a group. Pause this audio here.

One day Abraham was sitting at the entrance to his tent during the hottest part of the day. This was probably during the early afternoon, and Abraham was probably resting under the trees outside his tent.

Abraham looked up and suddenly noticed three men standing nearby. The story does not give us descriptions of the three men, but near the end of the story says that Yahweh speaks to Abraham. The three men were probably Yahweh and two of his messengers, but some people say that all three men were Yahweh's messengers. Throughout the story Abraham sometimes speaks to all three men and sometimes only speaks to the leader of the men.

Abraham ran to meet them. He welcomed them by bowing low to the ground. In Abraham's culture, bowing low to the ground was a gesture of respect and welcome. Abraham said, "Sir, if you consider me worthy, please do not pass by me, your servant." "If you consider me worthy" and "do not pass by me, your servant" are both extremely polite phrases. Abraham showed respect to these three men and spoke to them as if they were important men, even though he did not know who they were.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do you greet visitors when they come into your home? How do you show visitors respect? What phrases, greetings, or gestures do you use when you respectfully welcome important people into your home? Pause this audio here.

Abraham continued, "Please rest in the shade of this tree, and I will have someone bring a little water for all of you to wash your feet." In Abraham's culture, people washed their feet before going into someone's home. The visitors probably wore sandals, and the road they traveled on was probably hot and dusty. "A little water" is a humble phrase Abraham used to politely tell his visitors it wouldn't be any trouble for him to bring them some water.

Abraham continued, "And since you've honored me, your servant, with this visit, I will also bring a little bread so that you can refresh yourselves before you continue on your journey." "A little bread" is another polite phrase Abraham used to tell his visitors it wouldn't be any trouble to feed them. Everyone probably knew that Abraham would bring a lot of food for his visitors.

Here, Abraham acts like a good host. In Abraham's culture, being a good host and showing respect to strangers was very important. Hosts were responsible for taking care of their guests and keeping their guests safe. Abraham acts like a good host by respectfully greeting the men, inviting them to rest, giving them water to wash their feet, and offering them food.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do you show hospitality in your culture? How do you treat guests? Pause this audio here.

The three men agreed, "That is fine. Do just like you said."

So Abraham hurried back into the tent to Sarah. He said, "Quick, take three seahs of your best flour and knead them to make bread." "Seahs" refers to three large amounts of flour. One of these measures of flour may have been around 8 liters, 8 kilograms, or 2 gallons of flour. This made a very large amount of bread. To make bread,

people would mix flour and water with their hands until it became dough. They would knead the dough, which refers to pushing and pulling at the dough to make sure the flour and water mix together well. People would then bake the dough on hot stones to make round, flat loaves of bread. This was a special kind of bread that could be made quickly for visitors.

Stop here and look at a picture of the bread as a group. Pause this audio here.

Then Abraham ran out to his herd of cows and chose a calf, which is a young cow, that looked tender, or fat, and good to eat. He gave it to a servant, who hurried to get it ready to eat.

Abraham brought yogurt, milk, and the cooked calf to the three men and served the food to the three visitors. A calf provided good meat and was a valuable animal. Yogurt and milk were considered good and special food. Yogurt refers to milk that has become thick and sour. The milk Abraham served probably came from a cow.

Stop here and look at a picture of a baby cow or calf, yogurt, and milk. Discuss as a group: What kind of special food do you make for visitors? Pause this audio here.

While the men ate, Abraham stood near them under the shade of the trees to make sure his guests got everything they needed. It was a normal custom for hosts to do this. The men asked Abraham, "Where is Sarah, your wife?"

Abraham answered, "She's there, in the tent."

One of the men, who was Yahweh, said, "Listen, I will definitely return to you around this time next year, and your wife, Sarah, will have a son!"

Now, Sarah was listening behind the tent entrance. Abraham and Sarah were very old, and Sarah had stopped having her monthly periods, which meant she was past the time when women can have children.

So Sarah laughed silently to herself and said, "How could an old, worn-out woman like me have the pleasure of sleeping with my husband and having a baby? Especially since my master, my husband, is so old?" Here, Sarah uses a polite and formal word to refer to Abraham.

Then the man who was Yahweh said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh?" The man who was Yahweh knew that Sarah had laughed, even though the men probably could not hear her laughing.

The man who was Yahweh said, "Why did Sarah say, 'Can an old woman like me have a baby?' Is anything too hard for me, God? I will return around this time next year, and Sarah will have a son."

Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, "I didn't laugh."

But Yahweh answered, "Yes, you did laugh."

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 18:1-15 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three scenes.

First scene: Yahweh appeared to Abraham by the great trees belonging to Mamre. Abraham saw three men by his tent. He greeted them respectfully, and invited them to rest and eat. The men agreed.

Second scene: So Abraham walked quickly back inside the tent to Sarah and said, "Quick! Take three large portions of your best flour and make bread!" Then he ran out to his herd of cows and chose a tender and good-looking young cow and gave it to his servant, who quickly killed and cooked the cow. When the food was ready, Abraham took some yogurt, milk, and the meat, and served it to the men. As they ate, Abraham waited on them in the shade of the trees.

Third scene: The men asked, "Where is Sarah, your wife?"

Abraham answered, "She's inside the tent."

One of the men said, "I will return around this time next year and Sarah, your wife, will have a son!"

Sarah was listening to them from inside the tent. Sarah and Abraham were very old, and Sarah was past the time when she could have children. She laughed and said to herself, "Will an old and worn out woman like me have the pleasure of a baby, especially when my husband is also so old?"

Then Yahweh said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she say, 'Can an old woman like me have a baby'? Is anything too hard for God? I will return this time next year, and Sarah will have a son!"

Sarah was afraid, so she said, "I didn't laugh."

But Yahweh said, "No, you did laugh."

The characters in this story include:

- Abraham
- Sarah
- and the three visitors, one of whom is God

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

Visualize the setting and movement in scene one. One day, Abraham is sitting by the entrance to his tent near the trees of Mamre when God appears to him. It is probably hot, and Abraham is resting.

Stop here and, as a group, look at a picture of what Abraham's tent might have looked like. Look at a picture of what the entrance to Abraham's tent might have looked like. Look at Mamre on a map. Look at a picture of what the great trees of Mamre looked like. Pause this audio here.

The story tells us that Yahweh appeared to Abraham at the very beginning of the story, but Abraham probably does not know that God has appeared to him until scene three, when Yahweh speaks to Abraham and Sarah.

Abraham looks up and suddenly notices three men standing nearby. When he sees the men, Abraham quickly runs to meet them. He welcomes them by bowing low to the ground. Abraham says to one of the men, probably the one he thinks is the leader, "Sir, if you consider me worthy, do not pass by me, your servant." He then says to all three of the men, "Please rest under the shade of this tree and I will have someone bring a little water for you all to wash your feet. And since you've honored me, your servant, with this visit, let me also bring a little bread to refresh you before you continue your journey."

The men answer, "Thank you. Do what you've said."

Visualize Abraham's movement to scene two. Abraham hurries inside the tent to Sarah and says, "Hurry! Take three measures of your best flour and make bread."

Then Abraham runs out to his herd of cows and chooses a young cow that looks like it has tender and good meat. He gives the cow to a servant, who quickly prepares it. Once the young cow is cooked, Abraham serves his visitors the cow's meat along with yogurt and milk. Then Abraham stands nearby to serve the men if they need anything.

Stop here. Show the team a picture of a young cow, yogurt, and milk.

Visualize the conversation in scene three. Pay attention to the position of the characters and the flow of conversation. In this scene, the three men are probably still eating in the shade of the trees. Abraham stands nearby in case they need anything. Sarah stands inside the tent, behind the entrance to the tent. She can hear their conversation, but the men probably cannot see her. It is important to remember that in that culture, it is probably not proper for women to eat with men. That is why Sarah remains in the tent.

Stop here and discuss as a group: If this were your culture, what would the women be doing during a meal with guests? Where would the women be? How is this story different from your culture? Pause this audio here.

Pay attention to how the story names the three visitors during their conversation with Abraham. First, the story says the three men speak, then it says one of the men speaks, and finally it reveals that one of the men was Yahweh and Yahweh speaks.

The three men ask Abraham, "Where is Sarah, your wife?"

Abraham answers, "She's there, in the tent."

One of the men speaks. He begins with a word that means that what he is about to say is surprising and important. The man says, "Listen, I will return to you around this time next year, and your wife Sarah will have a son!"

Now, Sarah has been listening to this whole conversation behind the opening to the tent. Sarah is long past the age women can have children, so she begins to laugh to herself and thinks, "I am old and worn out, so how can I experience the joy of having children, especially since my husband is also old?" Sarah does not expect an answer to this question. She assumes that the answer to this question is that she cannot have children.

Now the story identifies the one man who speaks as Yahweh. Then Yahweh says to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she say, 'Can an old woman like me have a baby?' Is anything impossible for me, Yahweh?" The way Yahweh asks these questions shows that he does not expect a response from Abraham. He is saying that nothing is impossible for Yahweh.

Yahweh continues, "I will return around this time next year, just as I told you, and Sarah will have a son." Here, Yahweh repeats himself for emphasis.

Stop here and discuss as a group. Stories about Abraham repeat information a lot. Many times Yahweh says the same thing several times, but in different ways. In your stories, how do you show emphasis or help people remember information? Do you repeat information? Pause this audio here.

Sarah is so frightened that she denies it and says, "I didn't laugh."

But Yahweh says, "That is not true. You did laugh." Here, Yahweh contradicts what Sarah said and tells her it is not true. You should use whatever phrases or words you use in your language when someone contradicts someone else.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 18:1-15 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Abraham
- Sarah
- and three visitors, one of whom was God

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the story without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the story. Help each other remember every part of the story.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then restart the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Abraham lived by the trees of Mamre. One day, as he sat by the entrance to one of his tents, Abraham looked up and suddenly saw three men appear in front of him. He ran to them, and said to the leader, "Sir, if it sounds good to you, please stop and rest here a while. Rest in the shade of this tree. I will have water brought to wash your feet. And since you're honoring me, your servant, with a visit, let me prepare some food to refresh you before you continue your journey."

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Abraham, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "I want to be a good host," or "I'm surprised to see these three men," or "I feel obligated to greet these men well." Restart the action.

The men said, "All right, let's do what you've said."

So Abraham hurried to where Sarah was inside the tent. He said, "Hurry! Take three large portions of your best flour and make some bread." Then Abraham ran out to his herd of cows and chose a calf whose meat would be tender and good to eat. He gave the calf to a servant to cook. Then he served yogurt, milk, and the cooked calf to the three men. While they ate, Abraham served them under the shade of the trees.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Abraham, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "I'm rushing to be a good host," or "I'm preparing more food than we can eat to make sure I'm hosting my visitors well," or "I want to be generous to my guests." Ask the actor playing Sarah, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "I want to know who these men are and what is happening, so I'm listening to their conversation," or "I am curious." Restart the action.

The three men asked Abraham, "Where is Sarah, your wife?"

Abraham answered, "She's inside the tent."

One of the men said, "I will return around this time next year, and Sarah will have a baby."

Sarah was listening from inside the tent. Sarah and Abraham were very old, and Sarah could no longer have children. So Sarah laughed and said to herself, "How could a worn-out woman like me have the pleasure of having children, especially when my husband is so old?"

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Sarah, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "I'm laughing in disbelief, because I can't imagine having a child when I'm so old," or "This sounds impossible to me," or "I'm old and tired, and I know my body can't have children anymore, so I don't believe God will give me children." Restart the action.

Then Yahweh said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she ask, 'Can an old woman like me have a baby'? Is anything too hard for God? I will return around this time next year, and Sarah will have a son."

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Yahweh, who is one of the three men, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "I'm offended that Sarah doesn't believe me," or "I'm annoyed that Sarah thinks it would be too hard for me to give her a baby." Restart the action.

Sarah was afraid, so she said, "I didn't laugh."

But Yahweh said, "No, you did laugh."

Finish the action. Ask the actor playing Sarah, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "I've just realized I'm talking to God, and I'm terrified," or "I'm afraid because I didn't realize God could hear me." Ask the actor playing Yahweh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "I want Sarah to know I could hear her," or "I want Sarah to know I know she laughed."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Yahweh, God, appeared to Abraham while Abraham was by the great trees owned by Mamre. This story uses God's personal name, Yahweh. Look up Yahweh in the glossary and use the same word for Yahweh that you used in previous stories.

One day, Abraham was sitting outside the entrance to his tent when he looked up and suddenly saw three men standing nearby. Abraham ran to meet them. He bowed low to the ground and began, "**Sir**." The word Abraham uses here sometimes refers to Yahweh, but it can also be a respectful term used for humans. Here, Abraham probably did not know he was speaking to Yahweh and meant to say "sir."

Abraham invited the men to rest and eat with him. The men agreed.

Then Abraham hurried inside the tent to Sarah and said, "Hurry! Take three **seahs** of your best flour and **knead** it and make bread." "Seahs" refer to large portions of flour. They may have been around 8 litres, 8 kilos, or 2 gallons. To "knead" flour means to push a pull at a mixture of flour and water until the flour becomes a dough that can be shaped into bread.

Then Abraham ran to his herd of cows and chose a tender and good **calf** and gave it to a servant to quickly prepare it. A calf is a baby cow.

When the food was ready, Abraham served the men the roast meat, **yogurt**, and milk. Yogurt refers to milk that has become thick and sour.

As the men ate, Abraham waited on them in the shade of the trees.

As the visitors talked with Abraham, one of the visitors said that Sarah would have a son the next year. Sarah, who was listening inside the tent, laughed silently to herself and said, "How could a worn-out woman like me have that kind of pleasure, especially when **my master, my husband**, is also so old?" In the story, Sarah uses a respectful form of the word husband to refer to Abraham.

Then Yahweh asked Abraham why Sarah laughed. Sarah was afraid, so she said she did not laugh. But Yahweh said, "No, you did laugh."

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 18:1–15

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (13920838 KB)

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Genesis 18:16–33

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Genesis 18:16–33 and put it in your hearts. Listen to an audio version of Genesis 18:16–33 three times, in three different translations, if possible. Then, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage?
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage?
3. What does this passage tell us about God?
4. What does this passage tell us about people?
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 18:16–33 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

This story takes place immediately after the last story. This is the second in a series of four stories about Abraham and Lot. Although Lot does not appear in this passage, the men are on their way to Sodom, the city where Lot lives. Most of this story is a conversation between God and Abraham. In this story, Abraham asks God not to destroy innocent and guilty people together. Abraham wants to know if he can trust God to be a good and fair judge.

The three men who had visited Abraham got up to leave right after eating with Abraham. Abraham walked with the men. It was common in Abraham's culture to walk with guests for a while when they left to show respect and appreciation for their visit.

Stop here and discuss as a team: How do you say goodbye to honored guests in your culture? Pause this audio here.

They looked down towards the city of Sodom. When they looked down towards Sodom, these men were probably on a high place or cliff in the hills outside of the area of the trees of Mamre, where Abraham lived.

Stop here and look at a map of the great trees of Mamre. Look at a map of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Pause this audio here.

Then one of the men, who was Yahweh, thought to himself, "Should I hide my plan from Abraham? Abraham's descendants will become a great and powerful nation, and all the nations on earth will be blessed through Abraham. This will happen because I have chosen him to command his children and their families to keep the way of Yahweh, my way, by doing what is righteous and just." The phrase "to keep the way of Yahweh" means to obey God and live how God wants. The way to keep the way of Yahweh is to do righteous and just things, or to have a good relationship with Yahweh that makes you do what is good, right, and fair.

Yahweh kept thinking to himself, "Then I will do everything I promised for Abraham." Here, Yahweh is thinking to himself, either out loud or silently. Yahweh wants to reveal things about how he acts in the world to Abraham, because Abraham's descendants will become an important nation.

So Yahweh told Abraham, "I have heard a great outcry from Sodom and Gomorrah, because their sin is so much. I am going down to find out if their actions are as bad as the outcry I heard. If not, I will know." Here, "a great outcry" can refer either to a cry someone gives because they are oppressed by harsh treatment or to people crying out for Yahweh to punish sinful people.

So the two other men left and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing with Yahweh. Here, the passage uses the phrase "Abraham remained standing before Yahweh." This sometimes refers to when prophets, Yahweh's messengers, stand before Yahweh and ask Yahweh for something on behalf of other people. Abraham is standing before Yahweh to advocate for someone else.

Abraham approached Yahweh. He said, "Will you really destroy the righteous people along with the wicked people?" Here, Abraham probably meant "good" or "innocent" when he talked about the righteous. "Wicked" is the opposite of righteous. It refers to someone who is not in a right relationship with Yahweh and constantly disobeys Yahweh. Here, Abraham probably means "evil" or "guilty."

Then Abraham asks Yahweh if Yahweh will destroy the city if there are 50 righteous people in the city. Abraham says, "Far be it from you to do such a thing, to kill the righteous along with the wicked, treating them both the same!" When Abraham says "far be it from you," Abraham is strongly rejecting the idea that Yahweh would kill righteous people.

Abraham continued, "Far be it from you! Won't you, the judge of all the earth, do what is right?" Yahweh is the "judge of all the earth"—he has the power to decide who has done right or wrong, and what punishment or reward each person deserves.

And Yahweh replied, "If I find 50 righteous people in Sodom, I will spare the whole place because of them."

Then Abraham asked, "Now that I have so begun to speak to the Lord, or you sir, boldly, even though I am nothing but dust and ashes, let me speak further. What if there are five less than 50 righteous people in the city? Will you destroy the whole city because five people are missing?" Here, Abraham used a polite form of address to make this request. Abraham spoke to Yahweh the way he would speak to kings or important people.

Abraham uses the title "Lord," or "sir," for Yahweh. Here, and throughout the rest of his conversation with Yahweh, Abraham uses very polite and respectful language.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do you speak respectfully to those in authority? How do you make polite and respectful requests in your language? Pause this audio here.

Abraham calls himself "dust and ashes." Abraham is admitting that he is only a human. He is not as important as Yahweh.

Stop here and discuss as a group: What similar phrases to "dust and ashes" do you have in your language to show humility like this? Pause this audio here.

Then Abraham asks Yahweh three times if he will destroy the city if a certain number of righteous people live there. Each time, the number of people Abraham asks about goes down. Each time, Yahweh says he will not destroy the city if there are that number of righteous people there. At the end, Yahweh says he will not destroy the city if he finds 10 righteous people in the city. The passage does not explain why Abraham stopped asking at 10 people.

Here, Yahweh shows Abraham that he cares more about a few righteous people than about many wicked people.

In this story, Yahweh tells Abraham again that Yahweh will bless Abraham's descendants and all nations will be blessed through Abraham's descendants. Then, in this story, Abraham also becomes a blessing for other nations by asking Yahweh not to destroy them.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 18:16–33 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two scenes.

In the first scene: The men got up from their meal and walked towards Sodom. Abraham walked with them to send them on their way. God wondered to himself if he should tell Abraham what he was about to do next.

In the second scene: Then the other two men left and headed toward Sodom. But God stayed with Abraham.

Abraham approached Yahweh. Abraham asked Yahweh if Yahweh would really destroy righteous people along with wicked people. Abraham asked if Yahweh would destroy Sodom if there were 50 righteous people in Sodom, if there were 45 righteous people, if there were 40 righteous people, if there were 30 righteous people, if there were 20 righteous people, and if there were 10 righteous people. Yahweh answered each time that he would not destroy the city.

The characters in this passage are:

- God, or Yahweh
- Abraham
- the other two visitors
- the people in the city who are crying out

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

You may want to change the order of events in the beginning of scene one. After they finish their meal with Abraham by the trees of Mamre, the three men get up and leave. Abraham walks with them to say goodbye to them. At a certain high point in the hills, they all stand and look into the valley toward the city of Sodom.

Stop here and on a map, show the team the great trees of Mamre, the city of Sodom, and the place that Abraham and the men probably paused to look down on Sodom. Pause this audio here.

Then Yahweh asks himself, "Should I hide my plan from Abraham?" This is a question Yahweh does not expect an answer to. Yahweh speaks to himself here. We do not know if Yahweh speaks out loud or just thinks this.

Yahweh continues, "Abraham will be the ancestor of a great and powerful nation, and all the nations on earth will be blessed through him." The way Yahweh says this sentence shows that what he says will definitely happen. Because Abraham will become an important ancestor of a great nation, Yahweh wants to reveal his plans to Abraham.

Yahweh continues to explain why Abraham will be the ancestor of a great nation. Yahweh has chosen Abraham for this important role. As the ancestor of a great nation, Yahweh will teach his children and their families how to live the way Yahweh wants them to live.

Yahweh now speaks directly to Abraham. Yahweh says, "I have heard people cry out against Sodom and Gomorrah, because they do very sinful things. I am going down to see if their actions are as bad as what I have heard. If not, I will know."

Stop here. As a group, look at the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah on a map. Pause this audio here.

The other two men leave and begin to travel towards Sodom. But Abraham stays standing before God. He wants to ask Yahweh for favor for the righteous people in Sodom.

Visualize the conversation in scene two. Abraham comes close to Yahweh. Abraham says, "Will you really destroy the innocent along with the guilty?" The words the passage uses for innocent and guilty refer to people. Abraham asks if Yahweh will really destroy innocent people along with guilty people. Abraham does not expect an answer to this question. Instead, Abraham is trying to say that it would be wrong to destroy innocent people alongside guilty people.

Abraham continues, "What if there are 50 innocent people in the city?" Here, and throughout the rest of his questions, Abraham imagines a possible situation that may or may not exist. There may or may not be innocent people in the city.

Abraham continues, "Will you really destroy the city and not spare it in order to save the 50 innocent people in it? It would be unthinkable for you to do such a thing, destroying the innocent along with the guilty, killing both the innocent and guilty. It would be unthinkable! Won't you, the judge of all the earth, do what is just?" Here, Abraham repeats himself to emphasize his argument. Abraham is telling Yahweh what he knows about who Yahweh is and how Yahweh acts. Abraham is trying to convince Yahweh not to destroy both innocent and guilty people by saying that is not something Yahweh would do.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell about a time when you tried to convince someone that you know they would never do something wrong. How did you say that? What words or phrases do you use to show that you do not believe someone will do something wrong? Pause this audio here.

And Yahweh says, "If I find 50 innocent people in Sodom, I will spare the whole city for them."

Abraham speaks again, and says, "Sir, please allow me to continue to speak to you, even though I am only a human. What if instead of 50 righteous people, there are only 45? Will you destroy the whole city because there are five less people?" Here, Abraham speaks humbly and respectfully. Abraham says that he knows Yahweh is much greater than him.

In the next section of the story, Abraham talks with Yahweh. Abraham asks the "Lord," or "sir," if he will destroy the city if he finds innocent people in the city. Every time Abraham asks Yahweh, he lowers the number he asks Yahweh about. The first two times Abraham lowers the number by five people. The last three times Abraham lowers the number by 10 people. Each time, Yahweh answers that he will not destroy the city if he finds that number of innocent people in the city.

Finally, Abraham says, "Sir, please don't be angry with me if I speak one more time. What if there are only 10 innocent people?" This is the most important part of this passage. This is the lowest number of people Abraham asks about.

Stop here. Discuss as a group: Tell a story from your culture that has a lot of action. When you get to the most important part of the story, pay attention to how you tell that part of the story. What phrases do you use? What does your voice do? How do you show that it is the most important part of the story? Pause this audio here.

And Yahweh replies, "Then I will not destroy the city because of those 10 people."

Visualize the end of the story. When Yahweh finishes speaking with Abraham, he continues on his way. Abraham returns home to his tent.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 18:16–33 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- God, or Yahweh
- Abraham
- and the other two visitors
- the people in the city who are crying out

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the story without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the story. Help each other remember every part of the story.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then restart the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

The three men get up from eating with Abraham and start to travel towards Sodom. Abraham walks with them to say goodbye. Yahweh says to himself, "Should I hide my plan from Abraham? Abraham will definitely have many descendants who will become a strong nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through Abraham. I have chosen Abraham so that he will teach his sons and their families to live the way I want them to, by doing what is right and just. Then I will do what I've promised for Abraham."

So Yahweh tells Abraham, "I have heard a great cry from the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, because they do so much evil. I'm going to see if their actions are as evil as I've heard. If not, I want to know." Then the other two men turn and keep traveling towards Sodom, but Yahweh stays with Abraham.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Yahweh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I want to tell Abraham what I'm about to do," or "I've chosen Abraham to have a relationship with me, so I'm being open and honest about what I'm doing," or "I want to know if I can trust Abraham with my plans," or "I'm inviting Abraham to have a conversation with me." Restart the drama.

Abraham approaches Yahweh. He says, "Sir, will you destroy both the innocent and the guilty people? What if there are 50 innocent people there? Will you still destroy the cities and not spare them because of the innocent

people? Surely you wouldn't do such a thing, destroying the innocent along with the guilty. Then you would be treating the innocent people and the guilty people the same way. Surely you wouldn't do that! Shouldn't the judge of all the earth do what's right?"

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abraham, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I'm approaching God humbly," or "I'm afraid that God will destroy both the innocent and guilty, which isn't what a good judge would do," or "I know God, so I want to plead for mercy for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah," or "I'm afraid my nephew Lot, who lives in Sodom, will be destroyed," or "I want to know I can trust God's judgment." Restart the drama.

Yahweh answers, "If I find 50 righteous people in Sodom, I will not destroy the city for them."

Then Abraham says, "Since I've started speaking, let me speak more, even though I'm only human. Imagine there are only 45 righteous people rather than 50. Will you destroy the whole city because there are five less righteous people?"

Yahweh answers, "I will not destroy the city if I find 45 innocent people there."

Abraham says, "What if only 40 are found there?"

Yahweh answers, "I will not destroy the city if I find 40 innocent people there."

Abraham pleads, "Sir, please don't be angry, and let me speak. What if you only find 30 innocent people?"

Yahweh answers, "I will not destroy the city if I find 30 innocent people there."

Abraham says, "Since I have dared to speak to the Lord, Sir, let me continue. What if there are only 20 innocent people there?"

Yahweh answers, "I will not destroy the city if I find 20 innocent people there."

Finally, Abraham says, "Sir, please don't be angry if I speak one more time. What if there are only 10 innocent people?"

Yahweh answers, "Then I will not destroy it for the sake of those 10 people."

Finish the drama. Ask the person playing Yahweh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I want Abraham to talk with me," or "I won't destroy both the innocent people and the guilty people." Ask the person playing Abraham, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I'm relieved that God didn't get angry with my requests," or "I'm relieved that God won't destroy the innocent and the guilty together," or "I hope there are enough innocent people in Sodom that God won't destroy the city," or "I'm amazed that God let me speak with him about his plan."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 18:16–33 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

The men got up from eating and looked towards Sodom. As they left, Abraham went with them to send them on their way.

God spoke. Here, the story uses God's personal name, **Yahweh**. However, when Abraham speaks with God, he uses the title **Adonai**, another name for God. Adonai is a title that means Lord, master, or sir. However, Abraham most likely knew at this time that he was speaking to God.

Look up Yahweh and Adonai, or Lord, in the Master Glossary and translate the words the same way you translated them in previous stories. Pause this audio here.

Yahweh asked, "Should I hide my plan from Abraham? After all, Abraham's descendants will become a great and mighty **nation**, and all the nations of the earth will be **blessed** through Abraham." A nation here means a group of people who have a specific territory and government. Blessed refers to when God helps, does good to,

or favors someone or something. Look up nation and blessed in the Master Glossary and use the same words that you have used in previous passages.

Yahweh continued, "I have chosen Abraham so that he will teach his sons and family to live the way I want them to by doing what is **righteous** and **just**. Then I will do what I have promised for Abraham." The Old Testament idea of righteousness is based on the relationship between God and people, or between different people. Righteousness refers to holiness, right standing, or innocence. You should describe the concepts of righteousness and justification in the same way throughout your translation. For example, you may describe righteousness as a "right relationship with God." You may also describe it in legal terminology, such as "blameless/innocent." Other ways to describe these concepts are:

- being right in God's sight
- being in right standing with God
- being accepted by God

Your audience may also have figures of speech that describe the concept of righteousness, such as "having a straight heart, being upright, being blameless/innocent, walking on God's path," or things like that. Take these into account as you choose the appropriate wording for your story. Remember that in the Bible people can never be righteous on their own, or by doing enough good things. Your term or phrase for righteousness should not be based on doing good works.

Stop here and discuss what word in your language you will use for righteousness.

Look up the term righteousness in the Master Glossary and use the same word here as you have used in previous stories.

Justice refers to making fair legal decisions or fair and good decisions in general.

So God told Abraham, "I have heard a great cry from Sodom and Gomorrah, because their **sin** is so much." Sin refers to an act of disobedience to God. Be sure that the word you use here does not mean that someone has failed to perform a religious act like ritual prayer or following certain religious rules. Look up sin in the Master Glossary and use the same word here as you used in previous stories.

God continued, "I am going now to see if their actions are as **wicked** as I have heard. If not, I want to know." Wicked refers to something that is very evil or sinful. It is the opposite of righteous. Both words refer to kinds of people in this passage. Use the same words for "righteous" and "wicked" throughout this story. Wickedness is in the Master Glossary.

Abraham continued, "Shouldn't the **judge** of all the earth do what is right?" A judge decides who is innocent or guilty and what punishment the guilty people deserve.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 18:16–33

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (14703281 KB)

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Genesis 19:1–29

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Genesis 19:1–29 and put it in your hearts. Listen to an audio version of Genesis 19:1–29 three times, in three different translations, if possible. Then, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage?
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage?
3. What does this passage tell us about God?
4. What does this passage tell us about people?
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 19:1–29 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

This is the third story in a series of four stories about Abraham and Lot. In previous stories, three men visited and ate with Abraham. Then one of the men, who was Yahweh, or God, talked with Abraham about his plan to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. While Yahweh talked with Abraham, the other two men continued to travel to Sodom. This story describes what happened when those two men reached Sodom. Yahweh destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, but saved Lot and Lot's family for the sake of Abraham.

The two men arrived at Sodom in the evening. They probably arrived at Sodom the evening of the same day they ate with Abraham. This story calls the two men either "two men" or "two angels." An angel is a supernatural, spiritual being who is a messenger from God. Angels often appear to humans in human form. They often come with a specific message for humans or to do a specific task.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do you describe similar spiritual beings in your culture? If you have these kinds of spiritual beings in your culture, what do they do? Pause this audio here.

Lot was sitting by the entrance to the city of Sodom. A wall probably surrounded Sodom to protect it, so the entrance to Sodom was probably a gate in the wall. In that culture, people used the area around a city gate as a meeting place. Community leaders met by city gates to discuss important matters, do business, and administer justice. Even though Lot was an outsider, he was an important man in the town. Lot was the only community leader who greeted the two men.

Stop here. As a group, look at a picture of a city gate.

Stop here and discuss as a group: What do you call similar meeting places in your culture? Describe these meeting places. Pause this audio here.

When Lot saw the angels, he stood up to meet them. Lot welcomed the two angels and bowed with his face to the ground. This gesture was a greeting that showed great respect. Normally, visitors showed this kind of respect to their hosts. Lot was showing more respect to these men than normal because he was the host and they were the guests.

Stop here and discuss as a group: What gestures show respect in your culture? Pause this audio here.

Lot said, "My lords, please come to your servant's house." Here, Lot spoke very politely and respectfully by saying "my lords," or "my sirs," and calling himself the angels' servant. Lot probably did not realize the men were angels at this point.

Lot continued, "Wash your feet and spend the night. Then you can get up early in the morning and continue your journey." In Lot's culture it was polite to offer a guest water for them to wash their feet with. The angels probably wore sandals and had traveled on a dusty road.

The two angels replied, "No, we'll just spend the night here, in the city square." In that culture, it was polite to refuse an invitation the first time someone invited you to their house. The city square, where the angels said they would spend the night, refers to a wide open space that may have been used for meeting, by the city gate where Lot was sitting.

But Lot insisted so strongly that finally the two angels did go to his home with him. Lot prepared a meal for them. Lot probably ordered servants to make the meal. The meal included bread made without yeast. Bread made without yeast was probably flat bread that could be made quickly for unexpected guests. This bread is different than the bread Sarah made for these guests when they were at her house. This bread is flat, hard, and crispy. Here, Lot treated the two angels as honored guests.

Stop here and show a photo of the flat, hard bread Lot made for his guests. Discuss as a group: How do you honor guests in your culture? Pause this audio here.

Before Lot and the two angels went to bed for the night, all the men of Sodom, from the young men to the old men, came from all over the city and surrounded Lot's house. The crowd of men shouted to Lot, "Where are the

men who are staying with you tonight? Bring them out to us, so we can know them!" The phrase "so we can know them" meant "so we can have sexual relations with them."

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do you talk about people having sexual relations with each other? What phrases do you use when you are talking about sexual relations in a large group with both men and women? Pause this audio here.

Lot went out to talk with the men of Sodom. He closed the door to his house behind him. Lot said, "Please, my friends, don't do such a terrible thing. Listen, I have two daughters who have never been with a man." This meant that Lot's daughters had never had sexual relations with men.

Lot continued, "Let me bring my two daughters out to you, and you can do whatever you want with them. But please, leave these men alone. They are my guests and under the protection of my roof." The phrase "under the protection of my roof" meant that the men were under Lot's protection. In Lot's culture a host was in charge of keeping his guests safe.

But the men of Sodom shouted, "Get out of our way! This man, Lot, came to town as an outsider, and now he's acting like our judge! Lot, we'll treat you much worse than those other men!" And they pushed hard against Lot and moved towards Lot to break down his door.

But the two angels staying with Lot reached out, pulled Lot back into the house, and shut the door. Then they suddenly blinded all the men of Sodom who were at the door, both the young men and the old men, so that the men exhausted themselves looking for the door. The angels may have blinded the men with a bright flash of light, or they may have just made the men so confused that they were unable to find the door to Lot's house.

Then the two angels warned Lot. They told Lot to gather everyone in his family and household and get them out of the city. They said, "We are about to destroy this city, because the cry against it is so serious that God has sent us to destroy it." The "cry" against the city was the sound someone would make if they were oppressed or in distress or very, very sad.

So Lot rushed to tell the men his daughters were going to marry, "Quick! Leave the city! God is about to destroy it." But the young men thought Lot was joking—they thought Lot was deceiving them.

Right before the sun began to rise, the angels said to Lot, "Hurry! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be destroyed when this city is punished." But Lot hesitated. So the angels grabbed Lot's hand, and the hands of his wife and two daughters. The angels led them safely out of the city, because God had mercy on Lot.

When the angels brought them out of the city, one of the angels said, "Escape for your life! Do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley. Escape to the hills so you will not be destroyed."

Stop here and, as a group, look at Sodom and the hills the angel told Lot to escape to on the map. Pause this audio here.

Lot asked if the angels could send him to a small village nearby. One of the angels said, "All right, I will also grant your request. I will not destroy that little village. Hurry! Escape to it, because I can't do anything until you get there." That's why the village was later known as Zoar, which meant "little place."

Stop here and look at Zoar on the map as a group. Pause this audio here.

Lot reached the village of Zoar as the sun rose and it began to be light. Then Yahweh rained burning sulfur out of the sky onto Sodom and Gomorrah. Sulfur is a smelly yellow rock that easily burns and makes a fire that is hard to put out. Yahweh made the flaming sulfur and fire fall from the sky.

Stop here. As a group, look at a picture of sulfur. Pause this audio here.

So Yahweh completely destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, along with the other cities and villages in the same valley. God destroyed all the people who lived in the cities and villages and every plant that grew in the valley.

Stop here and, as a group, look at Sodom, Gomorrah, and the area of the valley on the map. Pause this audio here.

But Lot's wife looked back at Sodom as Lot and his family escaped. She turned into a pillar of salt.

Abraham got up early that morning and hurried to the place where he had stood and talked with Yahweh.

Stop here and, as a group, look at the place in the hills that Abraham hurried to on the map. Pause this audio here.

Abraham looked out across the valley towards Sodom and Gomorrah. He watched as columns of smoke rose up from the cities like smoke from a furnace. Here, "furnace" refers to furnaces used to make pottery. These furnaces created huge fires with a lot of smoke.

Stop here. As a group, look at a picture of what a furnace might have looked like. Pause this audio here.

When Yahweh destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, he remembered what Abraham had asked and kept Lot safe. God took Lot away from the disaster that took over the place Lot had lived.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 19:1-29 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has six scenes.

In the first scene: That evening, the two angels arrived in Sodom. Lot greeted them and brought them to his house.

In the second scene: But before they went to bed for the night, all the men of Sodom, both young men and old men, came from all over the city and surrounded the house. They demanded that Lot give them the two angels, but Lot refused. The angels rescued Lot from the townspeople.

In the third scene: The angels told Lot to gather his family together and leave Sodom because they were going to destroy Sodom. Lot tries to convince his daughter's future husbands to come with them but they refuse.

In the fourth scene: When the sun was rising in the morning, Lot hesitated to leave the city, so the angels grabbed the hands of Lot, his wife, and his daughters and led them out of the city. They tell Lot to flee to the hills, but Lot asked if they could send his family to a small village nearby, and the angels agreed.

In the fifth scene: Lot reached the village just as the sun rose and the sky became light. Then Yahweh rained fire from the sky on Sodom and Gomorrah. He totally destroyed them, along with the other cities and villages in the valley, wiping out all the people and plants. But Lot's wife looked back as she followed Lot, and she turned into a pile or statue of salt.

In the sixth scene: Abraham got up early in the morning and hurried to the place where he had stood with Yahweh. He looked out across the valley toward Sodom and Gomorrah. He watched as columns of smoke rose from the cities like smoke from a furnace. But Yahweh had listened to Abraham's request and kept Lot safe. Yahweh took Lot away from the disaster that destroyed the cities in the valley.

The characters in this passage are:

- Two angels
- Lot
- Young men and old men in the city of Sodom
- Lot's two daughters
- Lot's future sons-in-law
- Lot's wife
- Abraham
- Yahweh

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

Pay attention to the timeline in this story. The two angels enter the city the evening of the same day that they eat with Abraham. That evening, the two angels eat dinner with Lot. The men of Sodom surround Lot's house later that same night. The angels urge Lot to leave right before the sun starts to rise the next morning. Lot and his two daughters enter Zoar as the sun rises, and God destroys Sodom and Gomorrah. Meanwhile, that same morning, Abraham rushes to look toward Sodom and Gomorrah and sees smoke.

Visualize the action in scene one. The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening. Lot is sitting at the city gate. When Lot sees them, he gets up to meet them. No one else gets up to meet them. Lot bows with his face to the ground, and says, "Sirs, come to my home to wash your feet and be my guests for the night. You can continue your trip in the morning." Here, Lot was being very polite and hospitable.

The angels answer, "Oh no, we'll just spend the night here in the city square." But Lot insists so strongly that they go to his home with him. Lot makes them a meal, or orders servants to make them a meal that includes bread made without yeast, and they eat together.

Visualize the conversation between Lot and the men of Sodom in scene two. Before the two angels and Lot go to bed, all the men of Sodom, both the young and the old, surround Lot's house. By saying that the men are both young and old, the story emphasizes how many men from all over Sodom come to Lot's house.

The men shout to Lot, "Where are the men who came to spend the night with you? Bring them out to us so that we can sleep with them."

Lot steps out to speak with the men, closing the door behind him. He says, "Friends, or brothers, please don't do such a terrible thing." Lot addresses the men as friends, hoping to calm them down. Then Lot goes on to say, "Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with men. Let me bring them to you, and you can do whatever you want with them. But please leave these men alone, because they are my guests and under my protection."

You may want to make it clear who the men speak to as they shout at Lot. The men shout at Lot, "Get out of the way!" Then the men say to each other, "This man, Lot, came to town as a foreigner, and now he's judging us." Then the men shout at Lot again, "We'll treat you much worse than those other men in your house!" Then they lunge towards Lot to break down Lot's door.

But the angels open the door, pull Lot inside, and close the door behind them. Then they make the men of Sodom blind so that the men can't find the door. The men become tired trying to find the door and give up.

Visualize the movement in scene three. While the men of Sodom are looking for the door to Lot's house, the angels say to Lot, "Yahweh has heard many terrible things about the people of Sodom and he has sent us here to destroy the city. Take your family and leave. Take every relative you have in the city, as well as the men your daughters are going to marry."

So Lot rushes to the young men who are going to marry his daughters. He says, "Quick, get out of this city, because Yahweh is about to destroy it!" But the young men think he is joking.

Visualize the movement in scene four. Right before the sun started to rise, the angels urge Lot to hurry. They say, "Take your wife and your two daughters. Get out of the city right now, or you will be destroyed along with

the city!" When Lot still hesitates, the angels grab his hand and the hands of his wife and two daughters and rush them safely out of the city. Then one of the angels orders, "Run for your lives! Don't look back or stop anywhere in the valley! Run to the hills or you will be destroyed!"

But Lot replies, "Oh no, sir! You have been so kind to me and saved my life. But I can't go up to the hills. The destruction of the cities would catch up with me there, and I would quickly die. Look, there's a small village nearby. Please let me go there instead. See how small the village is? Then my life will be saved." Lot tries to negotiate with the angels so he does not have to run very far away. We do not know why Lot does not want to run as far away as the hills.

Stop here. As a group, look at Sodom, Gomorrah, Zoar, the hills the angel tells Lot to run to, and the area of the valley on a map. Pause this audio here.

The angel says, "All right, I will grant your request. I won't destroy that little village. But hurry and escape to it, because I can't do anything until you get there." That's why the little village is later called Zoar, which means "little place."

Stop here. Discuss as a group: How do you name towns in your culture? Pause this audio here.

Scene five is the climax of the story, or the most important part of the story. You might want to change the order of the information in this scene so that it is more clear. As they escape, Lot's wife looks back at Sodom. She becomes a pillar of salt. This probably means that she turns into an upright rock formation made of salt, perhaps like a statue of a person made of salt. Lot reaches the village of Zoar as the sun rises. Then God makes burning sulfur and fire fall on Sodom and Gomorrah like rain, and it completely destroys Sodom, Gomorrah, and the other cities and villages in the valley. All the people and plants die.

In scene six, the story goes back to Abraham, who is still living by the trees of Mamre. Early that morning, Abraham gets up and rushes to the high point in the hills where he spoke with God about Sodom. Abraham looks down towards Sodom and Gomorrah and sees columns of smoke rising. The author compares the columns of smoke to the columns of smoke that come up from a furnace.

But God listens to what Abraham asked him and keeps Lot safe.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 19:1-29 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has six scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Two angels
- Lot
- Young men and old men in the city of Sodom
- Lot's two daughters
- Lot's future sons-in-law
- Lot's wife
- Abraham
- Yahweh

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the story without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the story. Help each other remember every part of the story.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then restart the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

That evening, the angels reach the entrance to the city of Sodom. Lot is sitting at the entrance to the city, and when he sees the men he gets up to greet them. He bows facedown and says, "Sirs, please come to my house. Wash your feet, spend the night. Then you can get up early in the morning and continue your journey."

The angels answer, "No, we'll just spend the night in the city square, or the open area in the city."

But Lot insists they stay with him, and they finally agree.

Pause the drama. Ask the person who plays Lot, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I'm worried that these men won't be safe spending the night in the city square," or "I don't recognize that these men are angels, but I'm determined to be a good host and I recognize these are important men." Restart the drama.

Lot feeds the angels a feast that includes bread made without yeast. But before they go to sleep that night, all the men of Sodom, including both old men and young men, surround Lot's house. They shout to Lot, "Where are the two men who are spending the night at your house? Bring them out so that we can sleep with them!" Lot comes out of his house to talk to the crowd, closing the door behind him. Lot says, "Friends, please don't do such a terrible thing. Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with men. I'll bring them out and you can do whatever you want with them, but leave the two men alone. They are my guests, and under my protection."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Lot, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person may answer things like, "I am desperate to protect my guests," or "I will do anything to protect my guests because I know they are important, even if it means doing something bad and sacrificing my daughters." Restart the drama.

But the men shout to Lot, "Get out of our way! You've come here as a foreigner, but now you want to judge us! We'll treat you worse than the men." Then they began to push against Lot and move towards Lot's door to break it down.

Pause the drama. Ask the people playing the men, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people may answer things like, "We're very angry and offended that Lot isn't giving us what we want," or "We're ready to hurt Lot and his guests." Ask the person playing Lot, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I'm very afraid of what these men might do to me and my guests," or "I'm so afraid of what these men might do—that's why I've offered them my daughters," or "I desperately want to protect my guests since they're under my protection." Restart the drama.

The two angels open the door, pull Lot inside, and close the door. The angels make the men of Sodom blind so that they can't find the door. They became tired looking for the door. Then the angels ask Lot, "Do you have any other relatives in the city? Sons-in-law, sons, daughters or anyone else? Get them out of here! The outcry against this city is so great that God has heard it and has sent us to destroy the city."

So Lot goes to his daughters' fiancés and says, "Get out of this city, because God is about to destroy it!" But the young men think he is joking.

Right before the sun rises, the angels urge Lot to escape. They say, "Hurry! Take your wife and two daughters and escape, or you will be destroyed along with the city." Lot hesitates. The angels grab the hands of Lot, his wife, and his two daughters, and they lead them safely out of the city. One of the angels says, "Run for your lives! Don't look back or stop anywhere in the valley! Run to the hills or you will be destroyed!"

But Lot says, "Oh no, sirs, please! You have been so kind to me by saving my life. But I can't run to the mountains, or this destruction will catch up to me and I will die. See, there's a small village nearby. Please let me go there—see how small it is? Then my life will be saved."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Lot, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I don't want to leave my home," or "I'm overwhelmed," or "I'm unsure if I should follow these two men—no one else seems to think that the city is about to be destroyed," or "I don't want to leave everything behind in the city," or "I don't think I'll make it to the hills in time." Restart the drama.

The angel answers, "All right, I will grant your request. I won't destroy the little village. But go quickly! I can't do anything until you get there." That's why the little village is later called Zoar, which means "little place."

Lot reaches Zoar just as the sun starts to rise. But Lot's wife looks back as they escape, and she turns into a pillar or statue of salt.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Lot's wife, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I didn't want to leave everything behind," or "I wanted to go back to my home." Restart the drama.

Then God makes fire and burning sulfur fall on Sodom and Gomorrah like rain. He completely destroys them and all the other cities in the valley, killing all the people and plants.

Early that morning, Abraham gets up and hurries to a high place in the hills. He looks in the direction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and sees columns of smoke rise from the two cities like smoke from a furnace.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abraham, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I'm scared my nephew Lot and his family have been destroyed," or "I'm very sad to see Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed," or "I'm remembering my conversation with God. I realize that there must not have been even 10 innocent people in Sodom." Restart the drama.

But God listened to Abraham's request and kept Lot safe, taking him away from the disaster that engulfed the cities in the valley.

Finish the drama. Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I made sure I saved Lot because of my relationship with Abraham," or "I'm sad I had to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 19:1-29 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Most of this story uses the personal name for God, **Yahweh**. Use the same word for Yahweh that you have used in previous stories and see the Master Glossary for more information about Yahweh.

The two **angels** reached the entrance to Sodom. An angel is a supernatural, spiritual being who is a messenger from God. Angels often appear to humans in human form and they often come with a specific message for humans or to do a specific task. Some translations say "men" or "messengers" instead of "angels" in this story, although the word "angels" is used to describe these men in the original language. If you use angels, look up angel in the Master Glossary and translate the word the same way here as you did in previous stories.

Lot was sitting at the entrance to the city. When he saw the angels, he got up and greeted them. Lot bowed facedown to the ground and said, "**My lords**, please come to my house. Wash your feet and rest at my house, and you can continue on your way early in the morning." Here, **my lords** or **my sirs** was a polite way to address someone with a high social status. See the word lord in the Master Glossary for more information, and translate this in the same way you have in previous stories.

The angels told Lot, "The **outcry** against this place is so great that it has reached God, and he has sent us to destroy the city." The word "outcry" here is the same word used in the previous story. It refers to the cry someone makes when they are oppressed.

So Lot rushed out to tell the men his daughters were going to marry, "Quick, leave the city! Yahweh is about to destroy it." But the young men thought he was joking.

Stop here and discuss as a team: What word do you use for young men who are promised to marry your daughters? Pause the audio here.

The angels urged Lot to leave immediately, and when Lot still hesitated, the angels grabbed his hand and the hands of his wife and two daughters and rushed them safely out of the city, because God was **merciful**. When someone shows mercy, it means they are concerned about the welfare of other people. Look up mercy in the Master Glossary and translate it in the same way you have in previous passages.

So when **God** destroyed the cities in the valley, he remembered Abraham and rescued Lot from the cities he was about to destroy. At the very end of the story, the story uses the name **Elohim** for God, which was a common word for a god. The rest of the story uses God's personal name, **Yahweh**. Look up Yahweh and Elohim, or God, in the Master Glossary and use the same words here as you used in previous stories.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 19:1-29

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (17521787 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 19:30–38

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Genesis 19:30–38 and put it in your hearts. Listen to an audio version of Genesis 19:30–38 three times, in three different translations, if possible. Then, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage?
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage?
3. What does this passage tell us about God?
4. What does this passage tell us about people?
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 19:30–38 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

This the fourth story in a series of four connected stories about Abraham and Lot. This story describes what happened to Lot and his daughters after God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

Later, after God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot and his two daughters left Zoar and went to live in the hills because Lot was afraid to stay in Zoar. Lot may have been afraid because he thought that God might destroy Zoar like he destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. He might have gone to live in the hills because the angels originally told him to go to the hills. Lot lived in a cave with his two daughters. This is very different from living in a village with other people.

Stop here. As a group, look at Zoar and the hills Lot and his daughters lived in on a map. As a group, look at a photo of what caves might have looked like in that area. Pause this audio here.

One day the older daughter, who was the first-born daughter, said to the younger daughter, "Our father is old, and there is not a man on the earth to come in to us, like people everywhere do." The phrase "on the earth" probably referred to just "in the area." The daughters had just been in Zoar, and would have known that other men existed. The phrase "come in to us" meant to sleep with a man in order to have children.

The older daughter suggested that they get their father drunk on wine that night. Then they could "lie down with him," or have sexual relations with him in order to have children. It was probably important to the daughters to have children so that their family could continue.

Stop here. Discuss as a group: How do you appropriately talk about having sexual relations with someone in your language? Pause this audio here.

So that night they got their father to drink wine, and the older daughter went and lay with her father. Lot didn't know when she lay down with him or when she got up.

The next night the older daughter said to the younger daughter, "Last night I slept with our father. Let's get him drunk again tonight, and you go in and lie with him so that our family continues through our father." So they got their father to drink wine that night too, and the younger daughter went in and lay down with her father. And again, he didn't know when she lay down with him or when she got up.

Stop here. Discuss as a group: How important is it to continue a family line in your culture? What happens if someone does not have children? How do people treat them? How do people feel when they do not have children? Pause this audio here.

As a result, both of Lot's daughters became pregnant by their father. The older daughter had a son, and she named him Moab. Moab probably means "from my father," or "child of the father." Moab became the father, or ancestor, of the people group or nation called Moab.

The younger daughter also had a son, and she named him Ben Ammi. Ben Ammi probably means "son of my relative." Ben Ammi became the father, or ancestor, of the people group or nation called Ammon. These different nations would become neighbors of Abraham's descendants.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 19:30–38 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four scenes.

In the first scene: After Lot and his two daughters fled Sodom, they left Zoar to live in the hills because Lot was afraid to stay in Zoar. Lot and his two daughters went to live in a cave.

In the second scene: One day, Lot's daughters decided to continue their family through Lot.

That night they got Lot drunk. The first born daughter went and slept with her father.

In the third scene: The next day they got Lot drunk again. That night the younger daughter went and slept with her father, just like her older sister had the night before.

In the fourth scene: So both of Lot's daughters got pregnant by their father. The older daughter had a son, and she named him Moab. Moab was the ancestor of the people called the Moabites. The younger daughter had a son, and she named him Ben Ammi. Ben Ammi is the ancestor of the people called the Ammonites.

The characters in this passage are:

- Lot
- Lot's older daughter
- Lot's younger daughter
- Moab
- Ben Ammi
- and the descendants of Moab and Ben Ammi

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

Visualize the movement in scene one. The passage begins with a word that shows that a new story is starting in this passage. Lot and his two daughters leave Zoar and go live in the hills because Lot is afraid to stay in Zoar. They live in a cave. The word the passage uses for "live" here shows that they have lived in the cave for a long time.

Stop here. As a group, look at Zoar and the nearby hills on a map. Pause this audio here.

In scene two, visualize the flow of conversation and action between the older and younger daughter. One day, the older daughter speaks to the younger daughter. Here, the phrase "one day" shows that new action is about to start in the story.

Stop here. Discuss as a group: How do you show that new action is about to start in stories in your culture? Try telling each other a story from your culture with a lot of action. Pay attention to the words you use as you introduce new action in the story. Pause this audio here.

The older daughter says to the younger daughter, "Our father is old, and there is no man in the area who will sleep with us, as people everywhere do. Let's get our father drunk on wine tonight and then sleep with him so that our family continues through our father."

So that night, they get Lot drunk on wine. The older daughter goes and sleeps with Lot, and Lot doesn't notice when she lays down with him and when she gets up. By describing that Lot didn't notice when she lay down and when she got up, the story emphasizes that Lot didn't know what his daughter did.

Scene three happens the next day. The older daughter says to the younger daughter, "Last night I slept with our father. Tonight, let's get him drunk on wine again, and then you go and sleep with him. That way we will continue our family through our father." In this passage, there is a lot of repetition as the daughters speak to each other and do the same thing with their father.

So that night, they get Lot drunk on wine again, and the younger daughter goes in and sleeps with him. Just like before, Lot doesn't notice when she lays down or when she gets up.

Visualize scene four. As a result, both daughters become pregnant by their own father. When the older daughter gives birth to her son, she names him Moab, which means "from my father." Moab becomes the ancestor of the people of Moab of today.

When the younger daughter gave birth to a son, she named him Ben Ammi, which means "son of my relative." The passage says that Ben Ammi becomes the ancestor of the people of Ammonites "of today." "Of today" refers to the time that the passage was written down.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 19:30–38 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Lot
- Lot's older daughter
- Lot's younger daughter
- Moab
- Ben Ammi
- and the descendants of Moab and Ben Ammi

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the story without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the story. Help each other remember every part of the story.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then restart the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Lot and his two daughters left Zoar to live in a cave in the hills because Lot was afraid to stay in Zoar.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Lot, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I'm afraid that I won't be safe in Zoar," or "I miss my old life," or "I'm afraid of the people in Zoar and what they might do to me or how they might feel about me." Ask the people playing Lot's daughters, "What are you feeling or thinking?" They might answer things like, "We're very lonely," or "We miss our mother and the men we were going to marry who were killed in Sodom," or "We miss our old life," or "We're angry that our father made us live in the hills far away from everyone." Restart the drama.

One day, Lot's older daughter said to Lot's younger daughter, "Our father is old. Not a single man in the area will sleep with us, like everyone sleeps with each other throughout the world. Let's get our father drunk on wine, and sleep with him, so that we can continue our families through him."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the older daughter, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person may answer things like, "I'm desperate to make sure our family continues and we have descendants," or "I've lost everything, and I want children," or "I'm frustrated that no one in the area will sleep with us so we can have children," or "I'm afraid that if we don't sleep with Lot now he'll become too old to have children and we will miss our only chance to have children." Restart the drama.

That night they gave Lot wine. And the oldest daughter went and slept with Lot. Lot didn't notice when she lay down or when she got up.

The next day, the oldest daughter said to the younger daughter, "Last night I slept with our father. Let's make him drink wine tonight too. And then you go and sleep with him, so that we can continue our families through him." So they made Lot drink wine that night too. Then the younger daughter went and slept with Lot, and he did not know when she lay down or when she got up.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the younger daughter, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person may answer things like, "I'm doing what my sister told me to do," or "I'm also desperate to have a family and have descendants." Restart the drama.

Lot's daughters had sons, and those sons had lots of children who lived in the hills. Finish the drama.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 19:30–38 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Lot and his two daughters went to live in the hills because Lot was afraid to stay in Zoar. They lived in a **cave**. A cave is a hollow place in a hill made of rock that is often found in hills. It is not made by people.

One day, the older daughter said to the younger daughter, "Our father is old, and there is not a man in the area to sleep with us like everyone does. Let's make our father drink **wine**, and we will sleep with him so that we can continue our families through our father." Wine is an alcoholic drink made from the fruit of grapes. Then they could "lie down with him," or have sexual relations with him in order to have children.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you talk about having sexual relations with someone in an appropriate way? Pause the audio here.

Both daughters became pregnant by their father. The oldest daughter had a son and named him **Moab**. Moab means "from my father" or "child of the father." He became the ancestor of the Moabite people.

The younger daughter had a son and named him **Ben Ammi**. Ben Ammi means "son of my relative." He became the ancestor of the Ammonite people.

The passage says that the sons become the ancestors of the people of Moabites and Ammonites "of today." "Of today" refers to the time that the passage was written down. That means that when this story was written, the Moabites and Ammonites still lived in the land.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 19:30–38

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (8897085 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 20:1–18

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Genesis 20:1–18 and put it in your hearts. Listen to an audio version of Genesis 20:1–18 three times, in three different translations, if possible. Then, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage?
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage?
3. What does this passage tell us about God?
4. What does this passage tell us about people?
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 20:1–18 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

This passage has similar themes to the previous passages about Lot. In these passages, men use women to protect themselves. In previous passages, Lot offered his daughters to the men of Sodom, and in this passage Abraham lies about Sarah to protect himself. Also in both passages, God protects innocent people. In previous passages, God protected Lot and his family when God destroyed Sodom, and in this passage God protects King Abimelech.

In this passage the general word for God is used until the very end of the passage. Abraham left and traveled toward the Negev desert area and lived between Kadesh and Shur for a while. Abraham probably left from where he lived by Mamre. Then he temporarily lived in Gerar.

Stop here. As a group, look at the Negev desert, Kadesh, Shur, and Gerar on a map. Pause this audio here.

While he lived in Gerar, Abraham introduced his wife Sarah to people by saying, "She is my sister." So King Abimelech of Gerar sent for Sarah. Abimelech probably wanted Sarah to become one of his wives. In that culture, it was a sign of wealth and power to have many wives and children.

But one night God appeared to Abimelech in a dream. God said, "You are going to die, because that woman you have taken is already married!" In that culture, people probably thought that anyone who took someone else's wife should be punished by death.

But Abimelech hadn't approached Sarah yet. This means that Abimelech had not had sexual relations with Sarah.

So Abimelech said, "Lord, or Sir, will you destroy an innocent nation? Didn't Abraham say, 'She is my sister'? And Sarah herself told me Abraham is her brother. I have done this with a complete heart and clean hands." Abimelech uses the word master or sir to address God in a respectful way. The phrase a "complete heart" means to have a good conscience and act with good motives. The phrase "clean hands" means that Abimelech acted without doing anything wrong.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about a time when someone tried to explain that their motives were good, even when something bad happened at the end. What kinds of words do you use to describe having a good conscience or good motivations? Pause this audio here.

But God already knew that Abimelech was innocent. In fact, God himself prevented Abimelech from doing something wrong or evil by not allowing Abimelech to touch Sarah, or to have sexual relations with Sarah. So God answered in the dream, "Yes, I know that you have done this with a good conscience. I kept you from sinning against me, and did not let you touch her." The phrase "to sin against God" means to offend God by doing something wrong or evil. "Touch her" refers to having sexual relations with Sarah.

God continued, "Return Abraham's wife to him, because he is a prophet." This is the first time the word "prophet" has been used in these stories. Prophets were God's messengers. They told people what God had to say. But here God uses the word prophet to refer to Abraham's close relationship with God. God tells Abimelech to have Abraham speak to God for Abimelech.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What do you call prophets in your culture, and what do they do? Pause this audio here.

God continued, "Abraham will pray for you, and you will live. But if you do not return Sarah, you and all your people will definitely die."

So early the next morning Abimelech quickly gathered together all his officials and told them what had happened. They were terrified.

Then Abimelech summoned Abraham. He asked Abraham, "What have you done to us? What have I done wrong that deserves treatment like this, making me and my people guilty of great sin? No one should ever do what you have done to me! Now tell me, why did you do this?"

Abraham explained why he told Abimelech that Sarah was his sister. Abraham realized that no one in Gerar feared God. To "fear God" means to respect and honor God. Abraham was afraid that people would take Sarah by force and kill Abraham to get her. Also, Sarah really was Abraham's half-sister. They have the same father but different mothers.

God asked Abraham to move from his father's area and wander from place to place. Because of that, Abraham asked Sarah to tell everyone in the new places that she was his sister so that Abraham's life would be safe in each new place.

Then Abimelech took some of his sheep, cows, and men and women servants, and gave them to Abraham. These were very valuable and signs of great wealth. Here, Abimelech might have been following local custom for what to do if you unknowingly took someone else's wife.

Abimelech also returned Sarah to Abraham. Then Abimelech said to Abraham, "Listen, look over my land and live wherever you want."

Then Abimelech said to Sarah, "Listen, I am giving your 'brother' 1,000 pieces of silver. This is to cover the offense against you so that everyone will know you have done nothing wrong." The phrase "to cover the offense against you" means that Abimelech wanted to give Abraham a gift to show that Abimelech had not had any sexual relations with Sarah. Or it might have been Abimelech's payment to Abraham for taking Sarah from Abraham.

Stop here and discuss this question as a team: What happens in your culture when a man takes another man's wife? Pause this audio here.

Yahweh had kept Abimelech's wife and female servants from having children because of Abraham's wife, Sarah. So Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and all his female slaves so they could have children again.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 20:1-18 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has five scenes.

In the first scene: Later, Abraham moved south. While he lived in Gerar as a foreigner, he introduced Sarah as his sister, so King Abimelech sent for Sarah and brought her to where he lived.

In the second scene: God appeared to Abimelech in a dream and told him that Sarah was already married. Abimelech said that he was innocent, and God told Abimelech to return Sarah to Abraham.

In the third scene: The next morning, Abimelech called for and spoke with Abraham. Abimelech was angry that Abraham had lied to him. Abraham explained why he told Abimelech that Sarah was his sister.

In the fourth scene: Then Abimelech took some of his sheep, cows, and men and women slaves and gave them to Abraham. Abimelech also gave Sarah back to Abraham.

In the fifth scene: Because of what had happened to Sarah, God had made it so that King Abimelech and his household couldn't have children. But Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech and his household.

The characters in this passage are:

- Abraham
- Sarah
- King Abimelech
- God
- Abimelech's officials
- and Abimelech's household, including his wife and female slaves

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

Visualize the movement in scene one. Abraham travels toward the Negev. He lives between Kadesh and Shur. Then he stays in Gerar for a while. Abraham has a large household and large flocks of animals. Abraham's household lives in tents.

Stop here. As a group, look at Negev, Kadesh, Shur, and Gerar on a map. Pause this audio here.

While he lives in Gerar, Abraham tells people that his wife Sarah is his sister. So King Abimelech of Gerar sends for Sarah and has her brought to his palace, but he did not have sexual relations with her yet. We know from later in this story that Abraham explains that he has two reasons for saying that Sarah is his sister. He is afraid that people, like King Abimelech, will kill him to take Sarah as their wife. Also, Sarah really is his half-sister. Abraham and Sarah have the same father.

In scene two, visualize the conversation between King Abimelech and God. This conversation takes place in a dream. That night God comes to Abimelech while he is sleeping in a dream and tells him, "You're a dead man, because that woman you have taken is already married!"

But Abimelech hasn't slept with Sarah yet, so he says, "Lord, or Sir, will you destroy innocent people? Didn't Abraham say, 'She's my sister'? Sarah herself said, 'Yes, he is my brother.'" Here, Abimelech asks a question he doesn't expect an answer to. He asks these questions to emphasize what Abraham and Sarah had said. Abimelech is saying, "Please don't destroy me, I'm innocent! Abraham told me that Sarah is only his sister, and even Sarah agreed!" Abimelech shows shock and surprise because he did not know that Sarah was Abraham's wife.

Abimelech continues, "I have done this with good motives and innocently."

Still in the dream, God answers, "Yes, I know you did this with good motives and innocently. That's why I kept you from sinning against me, and why I did not let you touch her. Now give her back to her husband, Abraham, and he will pray for you, because he is a prophet. Then you'll live. But if you don't return her to him, you and all your people will definitely die."

Scene three happens the next morning. Abimelech gets up early in the morning and quickly calls all his officials together. When he tells them what happened, his officials are terrified. Then Abimelech sent for Abraham. The officials might have stayed while Abimelech speaks with Abraham. Abimelech's public apology and discussion with Abraham contrasts with Abraham's secrets. Visualize the conversation between Abimelech and Abraham. Abimelech asks Abraham, "What have you done to us? What have I done wrong that deserves this kind of treatment, making me and my people guilty of this great sin? No one should ever do what you've done!" Abimelech asks these questions without expecting an answer. Then Abimelech asks Abraham a question he does want an answer to. "Why did you do that?"

Abraham answers, "I thought, 'The people in this place do not respect God. They'll want my wife and will kill me to get her.' And she really is my sister, because we both have the same father, but different mothers. I married her. When God called me to leave my ancestors' home and travel from place to place, I asked her to do me a favor and tell people I'm her brother wherever we go."

In scene four, visualize Abimelech's response. Abimelech gives sheep, cows, and men and women slaves to Abraham.

Show the team a picture of sheep and cows. Pause this audio here.

Then Abimelech says to Abraham, "Listen, look over my land and live wherever you want."

Then Abimelech says to Sarah, "Listen, I am giving your brother 1,000 pieces of silver. This is to prove that you are innocent to all your people here. No one should suspect you of doing anything wrong." Here, Abimelech begins with the word "Listen!" that emphasizes he is about to say something important.

You may want to rearrange the order of scene five to make it more clear. Because of what happened to Sarah, Abraham's wife, Yahweh had made it impossible for any woman in Abimelech's household to have children. So Abraham prayed for Abimelech, and God healed Abimelech, Abimelech's wife, and Abimelech's female slaves so that they could have children.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 20:1-18 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has five scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Abraham
- Sarah
- King Abimelech
- God
- Abimelech's officials
- and Abimelech's household, including his wife and female slaves

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the story without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the story. Help each other remember every part of the story.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then restart the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Later, Abraham moves from where he lives. He moves towards the Negev area and lives between Kadesh and Shur. For a while he lives in Gerar, and while he lives there he tells people that his wife Sarah is his sister. So King Abimelech of Gerar sends for Sarah and takes her.

But God comes to Abimelech in a dream one night. God says, "You are going to die, because the woman you took is already married."

Now Abimelech has not slept with Sarah, so he answers, "Lord, or sir, will you destroy a nation that hasn't done anything wrong? Didn't Abraham tell me she is his sister, and didn't Sarah also say Abraham is her brother? I have done this innocently and with a good conscience."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abimelech, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I'm terrified and shocked!" or "I'm pleading with God not to kill me and my people because I've accidentally taken a married woman." Restart the drama.

Then God says to Abimelech in the dream, "Yes, I know you did this innocently and with a good conscience, so I kept you from offending me. That's why I didn't let you touch her. Now return Abraham's wife, because he is a prophet. He will pray for you, and you will live. But if you don't return her, you and your people will die."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I want to give Abimelech a chance to do what's right," or "I want to warn Abimelech to not to sleep with Sarah and to return her to Abraham." Restart the drama.

Abimelech gets up early the next morning and summons all his officials. When he tells them what has happened, they are terrified. Then Abimelech summons Abraham. He says to Abraham, "What have you done to us? What

wrong have I done to you that you made me and my people do such a terrible thing? You have done things to me that should never be done. Now tell me, why did you do this?"

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abimelech, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I'm terrified," or "I am very angry that Abraham has put me in this situation," or "I don't want to do anything in secret, and I want to make sure I fix this problem in public." Restart the drama.

Abraham answers, "I told myself that there is no fear of God here and that people would want my wife and kill me to get her. And she really is my sister. We have the same father but different mothers, and she became my wife. When God told me to leave my father's home and travel from place to place, I asked Sarah to show her loyalty to me by telling people that I am her brother."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abraham, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I'm trying to make excuses," or "I'm trying to explain what happened," or "I'm afraid of what Abimelech will do next." Restart the drama.

Then Abimelech gives Abraham some sheep, goats, cows, and male and female servants. He also returned Sarah to Abraham. Then Abimelech said, "Look over my land and choose any place where you would like to live." And Abimelech says to Sarah, "Look, I'm giving your brother 1,000 pieces of silver to show everyone who is with you that you haven't done anything wrong."

Finish the drama. Ask the person playing Abimelech, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I want to make sure Sarah is not embarrassed or ashamed," or "This is what I should do to make up for taking Sarah, a married woman."

Yahweh had kept all the women in Abimelech's household from having children because of Abraham's wife Sarah. So Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female slaves so they could have children again.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 20:1-18 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

The general word for **God, Elohim**, is used throughout this passage until the end. Use the same word you have used in previous stories for God, and remember that God is in the Master Glossary.

Later, Abraham moved south towards the Negev. He lived for a while between Shur and Kadesh. Then he lived in Gerar for some time. While he lived there, Abraham introduced his wife, Sarah, by telling people that she was his sister. So **King** Abimelech sent for Sarah and took her. A king was someone who ruled over a city or territory. Use the same word for king as you used in previous stories. King is in the Master Glossary.

One night, God came to Abimelech in a **dream**. God said, "You are going to die, because the woman you took is already married." A dream usually happens when someone is asleep. For more information on dream, look up dream in the Master Glossary.

Abimelech hadn't slept with Sarah, so he answered, "**Adonai, Lord, or sir**, would you destroy an innocent **nation?**" Here, Abimelech uses the word Adonai to refer to God. Adonai was a term of respect that meant master, lord, or sir. Look up Adonai or Lord in the Master Glossary and use the same word here that you used in previous stories.

Nation refers to a group of people who have a specific territory and government. For more information on nation, look up nation in the Master Glossary.

God replied, "I know you have done this with a good conscience and innocently. I kept you from **sinning** against me, and did not let you touch her." Sin refers to an act of disobedience to God. Look up sin in the Master Glossary and use the same word here that you used in previous stories.

God continued, "Return Abraham's wife to him, because he is a **prophet**." A prophet refers to someone who receives a call and message from God, takes God's message to people, and knows that his most important job is to bring the message of God to people. Here, prophet refers to someone who has a close relationship with God and talks with God.

Stop here and discuss as a group: What word will you use for prophet? For more information on the word prophet, look up prophet in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

God continued, "Abraham will **pray** for you, and you will live. But if you don't return Sarah, you and your people will definitely die." Here, the word "pray" means to make an urgent request to God for someone else. For more information on the word "pray," look up pray in the Master Glossary.

Abraham explained his lie. He said, "There is definitely no **fear of God** in this place. They will kill me to take my wife." Fear of God means to have reverence, honor and respect for God. This shows either holy reverence or the dread of punishment. Fear can be expressed as positive obedience caused by reverence for God or negative obedience caused by the threat of punishment from God. Fear of God is an important part of faith in God.

Stop here and discuss as a group. How will you talk about "fear of God"? For more information on the phrase "fear of God," look up fear of God in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Abraham continued, "Besides, she really is my sister. We have the same father but different mothers, and I married her. When God had me travel from place to place, away from my father's **household**, I said to Sarah, 'This is how you can show your **love** to me. Everywhere we go, say, 'He is my brother.'" Household refers to all the people living with Abraham's father, including family members, servants, and slaves. For more information on the word household, look up household in the Master Glossary and translate it in the same way you have in previous passages. Here, "love" means loyalty or kindness.

Abimelech gave Abraham many gifts. Abimelech gives Abraham **sheep**, which includes both sheep and goats.

Then Abraham prayed to God, and God **healed** Abimelech, his wife, and his female servants so that they could have children. Here, "heal" means to restore someone or something to well-being.

God had prevented them from having children because of what happened with Abraham's wife, Sarah. This last part of the story uses the personal name **Yahweh** for God. For more information on the word Yahweh, look up Yahweh in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for Yahweh as you used in previous passages.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 20:1–18

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (14006457 KB)

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Genesis 21:1–21

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Genesis 21:1–21 and put it in your hearts. Listen to an audio version of Genesis 21:1–21 three times, in three different translations, if possible. Then, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage?
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage?
3. What does this passage tell us about God?
4. What does this passage tell us about people?
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 21:1–21 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this story, God keeps the promise he made to Sarah and Abraham and blesses Sarah with a son. This story also describes what happened to Abraham's first son, Ishmael, and Hagar, the slave who gave birth to Ishmael. This story uses the general word for God, except for the beginning of the story when Yahweh visited Sarah and did for her what he had promised.

Yahweh visited Sarah just like he said he would. When God visited someone, it usually meant that something special was about to happen. When God visited women without children, it usually meant that God would give them the gift of a child. Here, it means that God blessed Sarah with the child he had promised her.

And Yahweh did for Sarah what he had promised. Sarah became pregnant and gave birth to a son for Abraham when Abraham was old. Sarah gave birth exactly when God said she would, when the three visitors visited Abraham and Sarah and said that she would have a baby. Abraham named the son Sarah gave him Isaac.

Abraham circumcised Isaac when Isaac was eight days old, just like God had told him to. Remember that circumcision is the custom of cutting off the loose skin at the end of a boy's penis. This fulfilled part of the covenant God had made with Abraham. Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born.

And Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter. Everyone who hears about this will laugh with me." Laughter refers to the previous passage, when God told Sarah he would give her a child. When Sarah heard God, she laughed in disbelief, so God told Abraham to name the baby Isaac. But now Sarah is laughing with joy.

Sarah continues, "Who would have told Abraham that I would nurse a child? But I have given birth to a son for Abraham when he is old." Sarah will "nurse" a child, or feed Isaac her milk. This means that Sarah will be the one to give birth to the baby.

After some time, Sarah no longer fed Isaac with her milk. This meant that Isaac was about three years old. On that day, Abraham prepared a huge feast. In Abraham's culture, people had feasts to celebrate each stage of life. Here, Abraham throws a huge feast to celebrate Isaac growing up.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What kinds of celebrations do you have in your culture to show each stage of life? Pause this audio here.

But Sarah saw Ishmael, the son of Sarah's Egyptian slave, Hagar, mocking Isaac. In a previous passage, Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham as a second wife, and Ishmael was Abraham's son. So Sarah turned to Abraham and demanded, "Get rid of that slave and her son! That slave's son must never share the inheritance with my son, Isaac." Even though she had a son with Abraham, Hagar was still a slave and did not have the rights of a full wife. That meant that Ishmael, Hagar's son, did not have as high a status as Isaac, Sarah's son. In that culture, because Abraham had accepted Ishmael as his son, Ishmael could inherit a part of everything Abraham owned after Abraham died. Here, Sarah demands that Abraham send Ishmael and Hagar away so that Ishmael does not inherit anything from Abraham.

Stop here and discuss as a group: In your culture, who inherits the possessions of someone when they die? Which children inherit more than the others? Pause this audio here.

Sarah's demand greatly upset Abraham, because Ishmael was also his son. But God told Abraham, "Don't be upset over the boy and your slave. Do whatever Sarah tells you, because Isaac will be the son through whom I give you many descendants. But I will also give many children to the son of the slave woman Hagar. Ishmael's descendants will also become a nation, or a huge people group, because he is also your son."

So early the next morning Abraham got up and prepared food and a container of water. He put the food and a container of water on Hagar's shoulders, gave her the child Ishmael, and sent her away. The container of water was probably a container made of dried leather used for carrying water.

Stop here and look at a picture of what this container of water might have looked like. Pause this audio here.

Hagar left and wandered around the desert of Beersheba. She did not know where to go and traveled aimlessly.

Stop here. As a group, look at a map of the area of Beersheba that Hagar probably wandered around in. Pause this audio here.

When all the water was gone, Hagar left Ishmael under a bush and sat down as far away as someone could shoot an arrow. The phrase "as far as someone could shoot an arrow" means Hagar sat about 100 yards or 90 meters away.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell us about a time when you had to describe how far away one thing was from another. What kinds of words and phrases did you use? Pause this audio here.

Stop here. As a group, look at a picture of a bow and arrow. Pause this audio here.

Hagar said to herself, "I can't watch my child die." As she sat there, she began to cry.

God heard Ishmael's crying. The angel of God called to Hagar. "Angel of God" often refers to God himself speaking in the form of a man. Here, "angel of God" means that God himself was speaking to Hagar. But God speaks from heaven, which is where God and his angels live.

God said, "Hagar, what's wrong? Do not be afraid! I, God, have heard the boy crying as he lies there. Get up and comfort him, because I will make a nation, or large people group, from his descendants."

Then God opened Hagar's eyes. In other words, God made Hagar notice something she had not noticed before. Hagar saw a well full of water nearby, so she quickly filled her water container and gave Ishmael a drink of water. The well was probably a deep hole in the ground. People lowered containers into wells to gather water from them.

Stop here. As a group, look at a picture of a well. Pause this audio here.

As Ishmael grew up in the wilderness, God was with Ishmael. This means that God helped, protected, and blessed Ishmael. Ishmael became a skillful archer. Archers used bows and arrows to hunt or fight with.

Ishmael lived in the desert of Paran, and his mother arranged for him to marry a woman from the country of Egypt. In Hagar's culture, a parent arranged the marriage of their child.

Stop here. As a group, look at Paran and Egypt on a map. Pause this audio here.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 21:1-21 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has five scenes.

In the first scene: Yahweh blessed Sarah, just like he promised. Sarah became pregnant and had a son named Isaac for Abraham when Abraham was old. Sarah said that God had brought her laughter, and everyone would laugh for joy with her.

In the second scene: When Isaac grew old enough to eat food, Abraham prepared a huge feast to celebrate. But Sarah saw Ishmael, the son that the slave Hagar had for Abraham, making fun of Isaac. So Sarah told Abraham to get rid of Ishmael.

Abraham was very upset because Ishmael was his son. But God told Abraham not to be upset, and to do what Sarah said because Isaac would have God's special blessing.

In the third scene: So Abraham got up early the next morning and gave Hagar some food, a container full of water, and sent Hagar away.

Hagar left and wandered aimlessly around the desert of Beersheba. When all her water was gone, she put Ishmael under a bush and sat away from him. She said to herself, "I refuse to watch my son die." As Hagar sat there, she began to cry.

In the fourth scene: Later, God heard Ishmael crying. The angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said, "Hagar, what's wrong? I have heard the boy crying as he lies there. Do not be afraid. Stand up, go and help the

boy up and comfort him. I will make his descendants into a great nation." Then God showed Hagar a well of water. Hagar went to the well, quickly filled her water container, and gave Ishmael a drink.

In the fifth scene: As Ishmael grew up in the desert, God was with him and helped him. Ishmael became a skilled archer who lived in the desert of Paran. Hagar arranged for him to marry someone from her own country of Egypt.

The characters in this passage are:

- Abraham
- Sarah
- Isaac
- God, or angel of God speaking from heaven
- Hagar
- and Ishmael

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

The team might want to put the information in order in scene one. First, God promised that Sarah would have a son at a certain time. God visited Sarah and did for her what he promised. When Abraham was 100 years old, at the time God said it would happen, Sarah becomes pregnant and gave birth to a son for Abraham.

Here, the passage repeats itself by saying the same thing in several different ways. The author wants to emphasize that God did what he had promised he would do. The passage repeats itself by saying: God had said that Sarah would have a son. When Abraham was 100 years old, God visited Sarah like he said he would, and God did exactly what he had promised. Sarah became pregnant at the time God had said she would, and Sarah gave birth to a son for Abraham when he was old.

Abraham named the baby Isaac. Again, the passage repeats itself to emphasize that Sarah gave birth to Isaac. The passage says: named the baby, the baby Sarah gave birth to, Isaac.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you show emphasis when you tell stories in your language? How do you show that certain information is important? How do you say the information in such a way that people remember it? Tell an important history from your culture and pay attention to how you emphasize certain information so that people will remember it. Pause this audio here.

Abraham circumcised Isaac when he was eight days old, just like God had commanded Abraham.

Sarah said, "God has made me laugh with joy. Everyone who hears I have given birth will laugh for joy with me." Here, Sarah speaks in poetry to show that she is giving praise and thanks to God. Poetry was a special way of speaking that people considered beautiful. Sarah wanted to show that Isaac's birth was beautiful and important.

Then Sarah added, "Who would have told Abraham that I would have children?" This is a question that Sarah does not expect an answer to. Sarah is saying that it is wonderful that she has given birth to a son. Sarah finishes by answering her own question, "But I have given birth to a son for Abraham when he is old!"

Scene two takes place years later. It probably happened about three years later. Isaac grew old enough to eat food. On that day, Abraham celebrated with a big party. But Sarah noticed Ishmael making fun of her son, Isaac. Ishmael was the son of Abraham and Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian slave.

So Sarah turned to Abraham and said, "Send away that slave and her son! I don't want him to inherit anything. It should all go to my son, Isaac."

Sarah's demand made Abraham feel very bad because it would mean sending away his own son. But God said to Abraham, "Don't feel bad about the boy and your slave. Do whatever Sarah tells you. It is through Isaac that you will have the descendants I promised. But I will also give Hagar's son many descendants because he is your son too."

Visualize the action in scene three. Abraham got up early the next morning and prepared food and a container of water.

Abraham put the food and water on Hagar's shoulders and gave Ishmael to her. Then he sent her away. Hagar wandered aimlessly through the desert near Beersheba.

Stop here. As a group, look at Beersheba on a map. Pause this audio here.

Sometime later, when the water ran out, Hagar put her son under a bush and sat a short distance away. She thought, "I don't want to watch my son die." And then she began to cry.

Visualize the conversation between God and Hagar in scene four. God heard Ishmael crying. The angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and asked, "Hagar, what's wrong?" The angel of God probably did not expect an answer to this question.

The angel, or God, continued, "Do not be afraid that your child is about to die. I have heard the boy crying. Get up now, go to him and comfort him. I will make him the ancestor of a great nation."

The story uses special language to say that God showed Hagar that there was a well of water near them. The story says, "God opened her eyes." Hagar went to the well and filled her water container, and gave the boy a drink of water. The well was probably a deep hole in the ground. People lowered containers into wells to gather water from them.

Visualize scene five. As time passed, Ishmael grew up and God protected him. Ishmael became an expert archer, and lived in the desert called Paran. Archers used bows and arrows to hunt or fight with.

While he lived in Paran, Hagar chose a wife for Ishmael from Egypt.

Stop here. As a group, look at Paran and Egypt on a map. Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 21:1–21 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has five scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Abraham
- Sarah
- Isaac
- God, and the angel of God
- Hagar
- and Ishmael

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the story without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the story. Help each other remember every part of the story.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then restart the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

When Abraham is 100 years old, Yahweh answers his promise to Sarah. Sarah becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son for Abraham just like God promised. Abraham names the baby Isaac. When Isaac is eight days old Abraham circumcises Isaac like God told him to.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abraham, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I'm very, very happy that I finally have a son after waiting so long," or "I'm amazed that I have son when I'm so old," or "I want to make sure I keep my part of my covenant with God by circumcising my son, especially since God kept his promise and gave me a son with Sarah." Restart the drama.

Sarah says, "God has brought me joy and laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me. No one would have predicted that I would have a baby for Abraham. But now I have given Abraham a son, even though he is an old man."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Sarah, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I'm laughing with joy that God has kept his promise," or "I'm sharing my joy at having a baby with everyone." Restart the drama.

Later, when Isaac is old enough to eat food, Abraham gives a big party to celebrate. But Sarah sees Ishmael, the son her Egyptian slave Hagar gave birth to for Abraham, mocking Isaac. So Sarah turns to Abraham and says, "Send away that slave and her son! I do not want him to get any of your wealth when you die. It must all go to my son Isaac."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Sarah, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I'm jealous of Hagar and Ishmael," or "I feel threatened by Hagar and Ishmael," or "I'm determined that only my son gets Abraham's possessions after he dies." Restart the drama.

This upsets Abraham very much, because Ishmael is also his son. But God says to Abraham, "Don't be so upset about sending away the boy and your slave. Do what Sarah asks, because it will be through Isaac that you have the descendants I promised. I will make Hagar's son the ancestor of a nation, because he is your son too."

So Abraham gets up early the next morning. He prepares food and a container of water for Hagar, puts them on her shoulders, gives her Ishmael, and sends her away.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abraham, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I'm very upset about sending away Hagar and Ishmael, because I probably won't see Ishmael again," or "I'm afraid that Ishmael will be in danger," or "I don't want to send my son away," or "I'm giving my son to Hagar to take care of." Restart the drama.

Hagar wanders in the desert. When she runs out of water, she puts Ishmael in the shade of a bush and sits at a distance, because she thinks to herself, "I don't want to watch the boy die." Hagar begins to cry.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Hagar, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I'm overcome with grief," or "I can't watch my son die, it hurts too much." Restart the drama.

God hears the boy crying. The angel of God calls to Hagar from heaven, "Hagar, what is the matter? Don't be afraid. I have heard the boy crying as he lies there. Go help the boy get up, and comfort him. I will make him the ancestor of a great nation." Then God helped Hagar notice a well of water nearby. So Hagar went and filled her container with water, and gave the boy a drink.

Ask the person who plays Hagar, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I'm grateful that God heard my son and saved my son's life," or "I'm amazed that God heard me again, like he did the last time I wandered in the desert," or "I'm not afraid that my son will die anymore." Finish the drama.

God was with Ishmael. Ishmael grew up and became an archer. Hagar found a wife for Ishmael from Egypt.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 21:1-21 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Yahweh visited Sarah like he said he would, and Yahweh did exactly what he had promised for Sarah. Here, the story uses Yahweh, God's personal name. This is the only time in this story that this name is used for God. The other references to God use the general term for God. Look up Yahweh and God in the Master Glossary for more information. Use the same words for Yahweh and God as you used in previous passages.

Sarah became pregnant and gave birth to a son for Abraham when Abraham was old. She gave birth at the exact time God said she would. Abraham named the baby **Isaac**. Isaac means "he laughs."

Just like God had commanded him, Abraham **circumcised** Isaac when he was eight days old. Use the same word for circumcision that you did in previous passages, and remember that circumcision is in the Master Glossary.

Isaac grew. When he was **weaned**, Abraham gave a big party to celebrate. "Weaned" means that Isaac stopped drinking Sarah's milk and started to eat solid food.

But Sarah saw Ishmael, the son of Hagar, making fun of Isaac. So Sarah said to Abraham, "Send away this slave and her son, because the son of this slave will not be an **heir** with my son Isaac." An heir was a child who received an **inheritance**, a part of their father's possessions, after their father died.

This upset Abraham because Ishmael was his son. But God said to Abraham, "Don't be upset because of the boy and your slave. Do whatever Sarah tells you to do, because I will give you the **descendants** I promised through Isaac." Descendants refers to Isaac's children, their children, and everyone who would consider Isaac their ancestor.

God continued, "And I will also give your slave's son many descendants who will make a great **nation**, because he is your son too." "Nation" refers to a group of people with the same language and government. Look up nation in the Master Glossary for more information. Use the same word for nation as you used in previous passages.

So Abraham got up early the next morning. He prepared food and water, gave them to Hagar, and sent her away. Hagar wandered in the desert. When she ran out of water, Hagar put her son under a bush and began to cry.

God heard the boy crying out, and the **angel of God** called to Hagar from **heaven**. In other places this angel is called angel of Yahweh, angel of the Lord, and it refers to the same thing. **Angel of God** or **angel of Yahweh** often refers to God appearing to someone in human form. Here, it probably refers to God himself speaking to Hagar. Heaven is the place where God and his angels live. Look up heaven and angel of the Lord or angel of Yahweh in the Master Glossary for more information. Use the same words for heaven and angel of Yahweh as you used in previous passages. You may choose to substitute the name of **Yahweh** for the general word for **God** in this passage.

Hagar filled her water container with water and gave the boy a drink. And God protected Ishmael as he grew up. Ishmael lived in the desert and became an expert **archer**. "Archer" refers to someone who can shoot a bow and arrow to hunt or fight.

Ishmael lived in the desert of Paran, and Hagar chose a wife for him from Egypt.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 21:1-21

Audio Content

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- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 21:22-34

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Genesis 21:22-34 and put it in your hearts. Listen to an audio version of Genesis 21:22-34 three times, in three different translations, if possible. Then, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage?
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage?
3. What does this passage tell us about God?
4. What does this passage tell us about people?
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 21:22–34 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this story Abraham made a peace treaty with Abimelech, the king of Gerar, the area where Abraham lived. In a previous story, Abraham lied to Abimelech and said Sarah was his sister, not his wife. Abimelech took Sarah, so God appeared to Abimelech and kept him and those in his house from having children until Abraham prayed for him. In this story, Abimelech makes a peace treaty with Abraham, and Abraham lives in peace in Abimelech's land. This is one way that God begins to keep his promise to give Abraham land.

One day the king of Gerar, Abimelech, and the commander of Abimelech's army, Phicol, visited Abraham. Phicol might have traveled with Abimelech as Abimelech's guard, or he might have been an official witness to the covenant between Abraham and Abimelech.

Abimelech said to Abraham, "God is with you in everything you do." The phrase "God is with you" refers to God helping, protecting, and blessing Abraham.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you describe blessings in your culture? In your culture, what do people think happens to someone when God blesses them or is with them? Pause this audio here.

Abimelech continued, "I want you to promise me, in front of God, that you will never break a covenant with me, my children, or any of my descendants." The phrase "in front of God" means that Abimelech wanted Abraham to make a promise in the presence of God. If Abraham did not keep his part of the promise, God would punish Abraham.

Abimelech finished, "I have been loyal to you, so swear to me that you will be loyal to me and this country where you now live as a foreigner." Abimelech seems to have more power than Abraham because Abimelech is a king. However, what Abimelech says shows that Abimelech sees that Abraham has power because God is with him.

Abraham answered, "Yes, I swear it!" Oaths were important promises between people. People were obligated to keep the oaths they swore.

Then Abraham complained to Abimelech about a well of water that Abimelech's servants had forcefully taken from Abraham's servants. Abimelech's servants had taken the well some time before. Abimelech answered, "This is the first time I've heard of this. I have no idea who's responsible for this. You never complained about this before."

Then Abraham gave Abimelech some sheep and cows, and they made a covenant together. Abraham's gifts to Abimelech, the sheep and cows, probably showed that they had made a covenant together. This was a gift of friendship between Abraham and Abimelech. A covenant is a permanent agreement made between two people or groups that establishes peace or friendship. Both people agree to be faithful to this agreement and to remain in good relationship with each other. Covenants are deeper than legal contracts because covenants require loyalty by both parties. This covenant shows an agreement of friendship between Abimelech and Abraham.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How and when do people make similar agreements in your culture? Tell a story about a time when someone made a covenant or agreement like the one Abraham and Abimelech made. Pause this audio here.

But Abraham also took seven other female lambs, which were young female sheep, and set them off to the side. Abimelech asked, "Why have you set these seven apart from the others?"

Abraham replied, "Please accept these seven lambs to show that you agree I dug this well." By accepting the lambs, Abimelech showed to everyone around them that he agreed that Abraham owned the well.

Then Abraham named the area Beersheba, which means "well of the oath" or "well of seven." This could refer to the oath they swore there or it could refer to the seven lambs Abraham gave as a gift. An "oath" is added to a promise so that people know they must keep their agreement and it cannot be changed. The person who speaks the oath asks God to punish them if they do not keep their promise.

Stop here. As a group, look at the area where Beersheba and the well might have been on a map. Pause this audio here.

After they made the covenant, Abimelech and Phicol returned to their home, the land of the Philistine people. Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and worshiped Yahweh, the Eternal God who lives forever, there. Abraham probably planted the tree to remind him how God had blessed him and to show that he had worshiped God there. Abraham did not worship the tree.

Stop here: As a group, look at a picture of a tamarisk tree. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What kinds of things do you or people in your community do when you want to remind yourself of how God has blessed you? Pause this audio here.

Abraham lived as a foreigner in the land of the Philistines for a long time. This is the first time these passages call the land Abraham lived in the land of the Philistines.

Stop here. As a group, look at the area the Philistines people lived on a map, including Beersheba. Pause this audio here.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 21:22–34 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four scenes.

In the first scene: About that time Abimelech and his army commander, Phicol, visited Abraham. Abimelech said, "God is obviously with you, helping you in everything you do. Swear to me in God's name that you won't lie to me, my children, or any of my descendants. I have been kind to you, so swear that you will be kind to me and to this country where you live as a foreigner."

Abraham replied, "Yes, I swear it!"

In the second scene: Then Abraham complained to Abimelech about a well of water that Abimelech's servants had taken from Abraham's servants by force.

Abimelech said, "I don't know who did that. You didn't tell me about it, and this is the first time I have heard about it."

In the third scene: So Abraham gave Abimelech some sheep and cows and they made a treaty. But Abraham took seven young female sheep and set them apart. Abimelech asked, "Why did you set these seven young female sheep apart from the others?"

Abraham answered, "Please accept these seven sheep to show that you agree I dug this well." Then Abraham named the place Beersheba, because they swore an oath there.

In the fourth scene: After they made the covenant at Beersheba, Abimelech left with Phicol, the commander of his army, and they returned home to the land where the Philistine people lived.

Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba, and he worshiped Yahweh, the Eternal God, there. And Abraham lived as a foreigner in the country of the Philistine people for a long time.

The characters in this passage are:

- Abraham
- Abimelech
- and Phicol

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

Visualize the movement and conversation in the first scene. The first scene starts with a word that means "about that time" or "shortly after." This story happened shortly after Abraham sent Hagar and Ishmael away. Abimelech and the commander of his fighting men, Phicol, visit Abraham.

Abimelech says to Abraham, "I have noticed that God is with you in everything you do. I want you to swear to me in the presence of God that you will never break a covenant with me, my children, or any of my descendants. I have been kind to you, so be kind to me and the people of this country where you now live as a foreigner." Here Abimelech uses language that shows he is politely asking Abraham for something.

Abraham answers, "I promise."

In scene two, you might want to change the order of the action in this scene to the order in which it happened. Sometime before Abimelech's visit, Abimelech's servants violently took one of Abraham's wells of water from Abraham's servants. After Abraham makes the promise with Abimelech, he complains about the well of water to Abimelech.

But Abimelech answers, "I don't know who took over your well. Why haven't you said something before? This is the first time I heard about this."

Visualize the action in scene three. Abraham gives Abimelech some sheep and cows, and the two men make a treaty together. But Abraham takes seven young female sheep and sets them aside.

Stop here. As a group, look at pictures of sheep, cows, and young female sheep. Pause this audio here.

Abimelech asks, "Why did you put these seven young female sheep to the side?"

Abraham answers, "Accept these seven young female sheep from me as proof for everyone that this well of water belongs to me." Abimelech agrees and accepts the lambs.

Visualize the action in scene four. Abimelech and Phicol return to the area where the people called the Philistines live.

Abraham names the area Beersheba, which means "well of oath," because Abraham and Abimelech swore an oath there.

Stop here. As a group, look at where the area of Beersheba might have been on a map. Pause this audio here.

Abraham plants a tamarisk tree and calls on the name of Yahweh, the God who lives forever. This passage uses special language to talk about Abraham worshiping God. If someone called on the name of someone, they believed that the person had power and authority.

Stop here. As a group, look at a picture of a tamarisk tree. Pause this audio here.

And Abraham lives as a foreigner in the area of the people called the Philistines for many more years.

Stop here. As a group, look at the area the people called the Philistines lived in on a map. This includes Beersheba. Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 21:22–34 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Abraham
- Abimelech
- and Phicol

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the story without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the story. Help each other remember every part of the story.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then restart the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

One day Abimelech visits Abraham with Phicol, the commander of Abimelech's army. Abimelech says to Abraham, "God is obviously with you, helping you in everything you do. Swear to me in God's name that you will never lie to me, my children, or any of my descendants. I have been loyal to you, so swear to me that you will be loyal to me and to this country, where you live as a foreigner."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abimelech, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I want to make sure that Abraham doesn't lie to me again, like he did when he said Sarah was his sister," or "I can see that God is with Abraham, so I want to make sure Abraham and I have an alliance," or "I have been loyal to Abraham, so I think Abraham should promise to be loyal to me." Restart the drama.

Abraham answers, "Yes, I will swear to do that!" Then Abraham complains to Abimelech about a well that Abimelech's servants had taken by force from Abraham's servants.

Abimelech says, "This is the first time I've heard about this. I have no idea who did that. You've never complained about this before."

Abraham then gives Abimelech some of his sheep and cows, and they make a treaty. Abraham sets aside seven female lambs. Abimelech asks why Abraham set aside the seven lambs. Abraham answers, "Please accept these seven lambs to show that you agree I dug this well."

Pause the drama. Ask the person who plays Abraham, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I want to make sure there are no misunderstandings between us," or "I want to establish this covenant between us," or "I want to show that I am dedicated to this treaty through the gifts I give." Restart the drama.

Then Abraham names the place Beersheba, which means "well of the oath."

After they make their covenant at Beersheba, Abimelech leaves with Phicol and returns home. Then Abraham plants a tree at Beersheba, and he worships Yahweh, the Eternal God.

Finish the drama. Ask the person who plays Abraham, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I'm thankful that God has given me a place to live in peace with the people around me."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 21:22-34 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

One day Abimelech and his **army** commander Phicol visited Abraham. Army refers to a group of men who fought for Abimelech.

Abimelech said to Abraham, "**God** is obviously with you, helping you in everything you do." Here Abimelech uses the name **Elohim** to refer to God. This is the general name for God. Look up Elohim or God in the Master Glossary and use the same word here as you used in previous stories.

Abimelech continued, "Swear to me that you won't **deceive** me, my children, or any of my **descendants**." The word for "deceive" that Abimelech uses here refers to someone lying or breaking a covenant with someone else. "Descendants" refers to all of Abimelech's children and their children and anyone who would consider Abimelech their ancestor.

Abimelech continues, "I have been **loyal** to you, so swear that you will be loyal to me and to this country where you now live as a foreigner." Here, the word loyal can mean "loyal," "kind," or "faithful."

Abraham replied, "Yes, I promise to do that!" Then Abraham complained to Abimelech about a well of water that Abimelech's servants had violently taken from Abraham's servants.

Abraham gave some of his sheep and cows to Abimelech, and they made a **covenant**. A covenant is a permanent agreement made between two people or groups that establishes peace or friendship. Both people agree to be faithful to this agreement and to remain in good relationship with each other. Covenants are deeper than legal contracts because covenants require loyalty by both parties. This covenant is a peace treaty between Abraham and Abimelech. Look up covenant in the Master Glossary and use the same word here as you did in previous stories.

Then Abraham named the place **Beersheba**. Beersheba means "well of the **oath**" or "well of the seven." An oath is added to a promise so that people know they must keep their agreement and that it cannot be changed. The person who speaks the oath asks God to punish them if they do not keep their promise. Use the same word for oath as you have in previous passages and remember that oath is in the Master Glossary.

And Abraham worshipped **Yahweh**, the **Eternal God**. The word for God here is God's personal name, Yahweh. Eternal God is a name for God that means that God has existed forever and will continue to exist for ever. Look up Yahweh in the Master Glossary and use the same word here as you used in previous stories. You may say that Abraham called on the name of Yahweh, but if you say Abraham **worshipped** Yahweh instead, be sure to use the same word for worship that you have used in previous passages, and see the Master Glossary for more information about worship.

Then Abraham lived as a foreigner in that country for a long time.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 21:22–34

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (10749870 KB)

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Genesis 22:1–19

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Genesis 22:1–19 and put it in your hearts. Listen to an audio version of Genesis 22:1–19 three times, in three different translations, if possible. Then, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage?
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage?

3. What does this passage tell us about God?
4. What does this passage tell us about people?
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 22:1-19 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

This story is the most important of all the stories about Abraham. In this story, God tests Abraham by asking him to sacrifice Isaac, Abraham's only son. Abraham shows how much he trusts God and God's promises by being willing to sacrifice Isaac. God once again promises to bless Abraham and also to bless all of mankind through Abraham's descendants.

Some time after the last story, God tests Abraham. To test Abraham means that God took action to see if Abraham trusted God.

God said to Abraham, "Abraham! Abraham."

Abraham replied, "Here I am."

God said, "Take your only son, the son you love, Isaac, and go to the area of Moriah." We know from previous passages that Abraham had another son, Ishmael. In this story, God considers Isaac Abraham's only son because he is the only son who will share in the covenant that God has made with Abraham. Abraham loved Isaac very much as a father would love his son. When people loved a family member like this, they showed them kindness and had affection for them. It was probably difficult for Abraham to obey this command from God because he loved his son very much.

Stop here. As a group, look at a picture of where the area of Moriah might have been on a map. Pause this audio here.

God continued, "Offer your son there as a whole burnt offering on one of the mountains that I will show you." People often sacrificed animals to God during this time. A sacrifice is something offered to God to thank him or ask forgiveness from him. Worshippers would kill and burn animals as a gift to God to show that they were fully dedicated to God. When someone made a burnt offering, they killed it and burned it completely as a sacrifice to God. In some of the cultures around Abraham, some people worshiped their gods by sacrificing their children to their gods. God only asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac as a test—God did not ask people to sacrifice other humans to him.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you worship in your culture? How do you offer things to God? What do you offer to God? Pause this audio here.

So Abraham got up early in the morning and loaded his donkey.

Stop here. As a group, look at a picture of a donkey. Pause this audio here.

Abraham took Isaac and two of his servants with him. Abraham cut wood for the burnt offering and began to travel to the place where God had told him to go.

On the third day, Abraham saw the place from far away. Then Abraham said to his two servants, "Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will travel a little further. We will go over there to worship, and then we will come back to you." Here, Abraham might have been lying to his servants to keep from them what was about to happen, or he might have been confident that God would provide a sacrifice other than Isaac himself.

Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and put it on Isaac's shoulders to carry. Abraham carried the fire and the knife needed to make the sacrifice. Here, Abraham probably carried a container with hot coals from their campfire to make a new fire for the sacrifice, or he carried things to make fire with.

Stop here. As a group look at a picture of a container to carry hot coals. Look at a picture of the kind of knife Abraham may have used. Pause this audio here.

Abraham and Isaac went together. Isaac said to Abraham, "Father?"

Abraham answered, "Here I am, my son."

Isaac said, "The fire and the wood are here, but where is the young sheep for the burnt offering?" Young sheep were animals often used for sacrifice.

Stop here. As a group, look at a picture of a young sheep. Pause this audio here.

Abraham answered, "My son, God himself will provide a sheep for the burnt offering."

So they traveled together.

When they came to the place where God had told Abraham to go, Abraham built an altar. An altar is a place where animals are killed and burned as an offering to God. People often build altars of stone and shape them like a table or small platform.

Stop here. As a group, look at a picture of an altar. Pause this audio here.

Abraham laid the wood on the altar. He tied up his son Isaac and laid him on top of the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand. The phrase "reached out his hand" emphasizes Abraham's action and shows that what happens next is important. Abraham took his knife to kill Isaac. But the angel of Yahweh called to Abraham from heaven. Angel of Yahweh often refers to God appearing to someone in human form. Here, it probably refers to God himself speaking to Abraham.

The angel of Yahweh said, "Abraham, Abraham!"

Abraham answered, "Here I am."

God said, "Do not harm the boy or do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God." The fear of God means to have reverence, honor, and respect for God. It shows either holy reverence or the fear of punishment. Here, it probably means that Abraham showed that he would obey God because he respects God so much. This is what makes Abraham's faith in God so strong.

God continued, "I see that you have not kept your son, your only son, from me."

Abraham looked up, and behind him was a ram, or a male sheep, caught in a bush by the horns.

Stop here. As a group, look at a picture of a ram. Pause this audio here.

Abraham took the ram and sacrificed it instead of his son. So Abraham named that place, "Yahweh will provide" or "Yahweh sees."

That is why a later proverb said, "On the mountain of Yahweh it will be provided." This phrase might also mean, "On the mountain of Yahweh it is seen," but that meaning is less likely. Proverbs are short statements used to give people advice in specific cultures. The author of Genesis is giving an explanation of why people say this proverb.

The angel of Yahweh called to Abraham a second time from heaven. The angel of Yahweh said, "This is what God says. Because you obeyed me and did not keep from me even your son, your only son, I swear by my own name that I will definitely bless you." This is the only time in Genesis that God introduces a promise by swearing by his own name. This shows the importance of what God said here.

God continues, "I will give you so many descendants you cannot count them, like you cannot count the stars in the sky or the sand on the seashore." A seashore is a large sandy area beside a sea, which is a large body of water.

Stop here. As a group, look at a picture of sand by a sea. Pause this audio here.

God continues, "Your descendants will conquer the cities of their enemies. And because you have obeyed me, through your descendants I will bless, or do good for, all the nations, all of the people groups."

Then Abraham and Isaac returned to Abraham's servants and traveled back to Beersheba, where Abraham continued living.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 22:1-19 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has five scenes.

In the first scene: Some time later, God wanted to examine Abraham to see if he would obey God. So God told Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac, on a mountain.

In the second scene: So early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took two of his servants and his son Isaac with him. After they had been traveling almost three days, Abraham saw the place where God had told him to go. Abraham told his two servants to stay behind, and he and Isaac continued traveling.

In the third scene: As they walked together, Isaac asked Abraham why they had not brought a sheep to sacrifice. Abraham told Isaac that God would provide a sheep.

In the fourth scene: When they came to the place where God had told Abraham to go, Abraham built an altar and put the wood for the fire on top of it. Then he laid Isaac on the wood. Then Abraham picked up the knife to kill his son. Suddenly the angel of Yahweh, who was in heaven, spoke in a loud voice and told Abraham not to kill Isaac.

Then Abraham looked behind him and saw a ram, whose horns were caught in a bush. Abraham sacrificed the ram instead of Isaac.

In the fifth scene: The angel of Yahweh called from heaven a second time and promised to bless Abraham.

The characters in this passage are:

- Abraham
- Isaac
- God, and the angel of Yahweh
- and two of Abraham's servants

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In scene one, the story begins with a word that shows that a new event is about to happen. Visualize the conversation between God and Abraham. In this conversation, God calls to Abraham and Abraham responds. This shows that something important is about to happen.

God tests Abraham. He says to Abraham, "Abraham! Abraham!" He calls to Abraham two times to show how urgent it is that Abraham listen to him.

Abraham answers, "Here I am." This answer might be Abraham's way of saying that he is waiting and ready to hear more from God.

God says, "Take your son, your only son, who you love, and go to the land of Moriah." Here, God describes Isaac by saying "your son, your only son, who you love," to emphasize that God is talking about Isaac and that Isaac is Abraham's only son who will receive the promises of the covenant from God.

Stop here. As a group, look at the area of Moriah on a map. Pause this audio here.

God continues, "Offer Isaac as a burnt offering on the mountains I tell you about."

In the second scene, you might want to re-order the events to show the order in which they really happened. Abraham gets up, cuts some wood to use for the sacrifice, and loads the wood on his donkey. Abraham may have cut the wood first. He might have cut the wood to keep the real reason for the journey from Isaac and the servants, or he might have spent time cutting the wood because he was hesitant to start the journey. Then Abraham gathers two of his servants and his son, Isaac, and they begin to travel to the place God told Abraham to go.

They travel for three days. When Abraham sees the place God told him about in the distance, Abraham says to the servants traveling with him, "Stay here with the donkey. I'll go over there with Isaac and worship, and then return to you." Abraham takes the wood for the burnt offering and puts it on Isaac's shoulders to carry. Isaac carries the wood, and Abraham carries the coals for the fire and the knife for killing the sacrifice.

Scene three takes place as Abraham and Isaac walk together. In this scene and the next, the passage creates suspense by making the action longer and adding in a lot of dialogue. This helps show the most important part of the story. Visualize their conversation. Isaac asks, "Father?" Here, Isaac uses respectful language when he speaks to Abraham.

Abraham answers, "Here I am, my son."

Isaac says, "Look, here's the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"

Abraham answers, "God will provide the lamb for a burnt offering for himself, my son." And they keep walking together.

Scene four takes place when Abraham and Isaac come to the place God told Abraham about. Abraham builds an altar there, arranges the wood on top of the altar, ties up Isaac, and puts Isaac on top of the wood. Then Abraham reaches for the knife to kill Isaac with. But the angel of Yahweh calls to Abraham from heaven. The angel calls, "Abraham, Abraham!" The angel calls Abraham's name twice to show how urgently the angel of Yahweh is speaking to Abraham.

The angel of Yahweh says, "Do not kill Isaac or do anything to him! Now I know that you fear Yahweh, because you have not kept your son, your only son, from me." Abraham looks up and suddenly sees a ram caught by the horns in the bushes behind him.

Abraham goes to the ram, kills it, and burns it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham names that place "Yahweh will provide." A proverb says, "On the mountain of Yahweh it will be provided," or "On the mountain of Yahweh, Yahweh provides what we need."

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Proverbs are short sayings that teach something or give some kind of wisdom. Give examples of your favorite proverbs. Where did they come from? How did they start? What kind of language do you use in proverbs? How do people know when you're saying a proverb? Pause the audio here.

Scene five is the climax of this story and all the stories about Abraham. The angel of Yahweh calls to Abraham a second time. He says, "This is what Yahweh says. I swear this by myself." Here, God says, "this is what Yahweh says" and "I swear this by myself" to emphasize the importance of what he is about to say.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you show that something is the most important part of a story when you tell stories in your culture? Pause this audio here.

The angel of Yahweh continues, "I will definitely bless you, and you will have so many descendants they will be as many as the stars in the sky and the sand by the sea."

Yahweh continues, "Your descendants will defeat their enemies and conquer their cities. I will bless all the people on earth through your descendants, because you obeyed me."

Then Abraham and Isaac return to the servants and travel back to Beersheba, where Abraham lives.

Stop here. As a group, look at Beersheba on a map. Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 22:1-19 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has five scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Abraham
- God, and the angel of Yahweh
- Isaac
- and two servants

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the story without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the story. Help each other remember every part of the story.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then restart the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

God tests Abraham's faith. God calls, "Abraham! Abraham!"

And Abraham answers, "Yes, here I am!"

Then God says, "Take your son Isaac, your only son, who you love, and go to the area called Moriah. Kill and burn Isaac as a burnt sacrifice on the mountain I show you there."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I want to see if Abraham trusts me," or "I know how hard it will be for Abraham to trust me when I ask this," or "I'm giving Abraham a test to see if he really has faith in me." Restart the drama.

The next morning Abraham gets up early. He chops wood for a burnt offering and loads a donkey. Abraham, two of his servants, and Isaac begin to travel to the mountain God told Abraham to travel to. After three days of traveling, Abraham sees the mountain. He tells the two servants, "Stay here with the donkey. Isaac and I will travel a little further. We will worship over there, and then we will come back."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abraham, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I'm incredibly sad, because I want to obey God but I love my son Isaac very much," or "I don't understand how God will give me many descendants if the son he has given me is dead," or "I just lost Ishmael, and now I'm about to lose Isaac too," or "I'm hesitant to do this." Restart the drama.

So Abraham puts the wood for the burnt offering on Isaac's shoulders to carry. Abraham carries the coals of fire and a knife. As they walk together, Isaac asks, "Father?"

Abraham answers, "Yes, my son?"

Isaac asks, "We have fire and wood, but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?"

Abraham answers, "God will provide a sheep for the burnt offering." And they keep walking.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Isaac, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I'm confused," or "I know what's involved in a sacrifice, and I don't see everything here," or "I don't know what's going on, but I trust my father." Restart the drama.

When they get to the place where God told Abraham to go, Abraham builds an altar and arranges the wood on top of the altar. Then he ties up Isaac and puts Isaac on top of the wood. Abraham picks up the knife to kill Isaac as a sacrifice, when suddenly the angel of Yahweh calls to him from heaven and says, "Abraham! Abraham!"

Abraham answers, "Yes, here I am!"

The angel says, "Don't kill the boy! Don't hurt him in any way! Now I know that you really have respect for me, Yahweh, because you have not refused to sacrifice your only son as a burnt offering to me."

Then Abraham looks up and sees a ram caught by its horns in the bushes nearby. So Abraham takes the ram and sacrifices it instead of Isaac. Abraham names the place "Yahweh will provide," and even to this day people say, "On the mountain of Yahweh it will be provided."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abraham, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I'm incredibly relieved," or "I am so happy that I don't have to kill my son," or "I knew I could trust God." Ask the actor playing Isaac, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You may hear things like, "I was willing to let my father kill me," or "I'm so happy to be alive," or "I'm so glad God saved me from dying" or "My heart is beating fast and I want to cry." Restart the drama.

Then the angel of Yahweh calls from heaven again and says, "This is what Yahweh says. Because you have obeyed me and did not refuse to sacrifice your son, your only son, I swear by my own name that I will give you many descendants. I will give you so many descendants you cannot count them, like the stars in the sky or the sand by the sea. And because you have obeyed me, through your descendants all the nations on earth will be blessed."

Finish the drama. Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I knew that Abraham would trust me," or "I'm happy to see that Abraham will do whatever I ask, even killing his son," or "I was never going to let Abraham kill his son," or "Now I will promise that every nation on earth will be blessed because of Abraham's trust in me."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 22:1-19 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Later, **God tested** Abraham. "Test" means that God did something to see if Abraham had faith and trusted him. It does not mean that God expected Abraham to fail. Here, the story uses the general word for God. Use the same word for God that you have used in previous passages.

God called to Abraham, "Abraham!"

Abraham answered, "Yes, here I am!"

God said, "Take your son Isaac, your only son, the son you love, and go to the area called Moriah, and offer Isaac as a burnt **sacrifice** on the mountain I tell you to." A sacrifice is something offered to God to thank him or ask forgiveness from him. This was a burnt sacrifice, which included killing and burning an animal. Animal sacrifice was a common practice in the Old Testament. The worshipper would kill and burn an animal as a gift to God to show that he was fully dedicated to God. Look up sacrifice in the Master Glossary and use the same word here that you used in previous stories.

Abraham **loves** his son Isaac like a good father loves his son. Use a word for love that shows the affection and kindness a father feels towards his son.

They began to travel to the place God had told Abraham about. Three days later, Abraham looked up and saw the mountain God had told him to go to. Then Abraham said to his two servants, "Stay here with the donkey.

The boy, Isaac, and I will go over there, **worship**, and come back to you." Worship means to show awe and wonder about God. Different cultures and languages have different words for worship, some of which refer only to certain ceremonies or rituals one must do. In many stories where the word worship is used, it implies more than just performing rituals—it includes the heart of love, awe, and wonder of God. Be sure that the word or combination of words you choose for worship includes this idea. Look up worship in the Master Glossary and use the same word here that you used in previous stories.

When they got to the place God had told Abraham about, Abraham built an **altar**. Here, "altar" refers to a place where people kill and burn animals as an offering to God. People often build altars of stones and shape them like a table or small platform. Look up altar in the Master Glossary and use the same word here that you used in previous stories.

Abraham arranged the wood on top of the altar, tied up Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. Then Abraham took the knife to kill his son. But the **angel of Yahweh** called out to Abraham from **heaven**. Heaven here refers to the place where God lives. Use the same word for heaven as you have in previous passages, and remember that heaven is in the Master Glossary.

The **angel of the Lord**, or **angel of Yahweh**, probably referred to God's presence appearing in human form. It might have referred to an angel who represented God. Look up angel of the Lord or angel of Yahweh in the Master Glossary and use the same word or phrase for angel of Yahweh as you used in previous stories.

The angel of Yahweh said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And Abraham answered, "Yes, here I am." The angel said, "Don't kill the boy or do anything to him, because now I know that you **fear God**." This is the first time this phrase is used in the Old Testament. Fear of God means to have reverence, honor, and respect for God. Here, "fear" refers to positive obedience caused by reverence for God. Fear of God is an essential part of faith in God.

Stop here and look up fear of God in the Master Glossary. Use the same phrase for fear of God in continuing stories. Pause this audio here.

So Abraham took the **ram**, killed it, and sacrificed it to God instead of his son. So Abraham named that place **Yahweh Yireh**. Yahweh Yireh means "God will provide" or "God will see." Later, people used that name in a proverb that said, "On the mountain of God it will be provided."

The angel of Yahweh told Abraham that he will **bless** him because he was willing to sacrifice Isaac. "Bless" refers to when God helps, does good to, or favors someone or something. Look up bless in the Master Glossary and use the same word here that you used in previous stories.

The angel of Yahweh continued, "I will give you so many **descendants** they will be like the stars in the sky or the sand by the sea." Descendants refers to all of Abraham's children, their children, and anyone who would consider Abraham an ancestor.

The angel of Yahweh continued, "Your descendants will defeat their enemies. Through your descendants all **nations** on **earth** will be blessed, because you obeyed me." **Nation** refers to a group of people who have a specific territory and government. **Earth** refers to all the nations in the world. Use the same word for nation as you have in previous stories, and remember that nation is in the Master Glossary.

So Abraham returned to his servants, and they went to Beersheba together, and Abraham continued to live in Beersheba.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 22:1-19

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (16193676 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 22:20-24

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Genesis 22:20-24 and put it in your hearts. Listen to an audio version of Genesis 22:20-24 three times, in three different translations, if possible. Then, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage?
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage?

3. What does this passage tell us about God?
4. What does this passage tell us about people?
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 22:20–24 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

This is a genealogy, or list, of the descendants of Abraham's brother. This passage also introduces people who will appear in later stories when Abraham sends someone to his family to find a wife for his son.

Sometime later, someone told Abraham that Milkah, his brother Nahor's wife, had given birth to sons. Nahor and his family probably still lived far away in Haran. Remember that Haran is where Abraham lived when he left his father's household many years before and followed God into the land God had promised him. This would have been good news to Abraham to hear that his brother had many children.

Stop and discuss this question as a group: How do you give people news that has come from far away in your culture? Pause this audio here.

Nahor's first born son was named Uz. The next oldest was named Buz, followed by Kemuel, who was the father of Aram. Aram probably referred to a group of people, and Kemuel was their ancestor.

The rest of the sons were named Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel. Bethuel became the father of Rebekah. In other words, Rebekah was Bethuel's daughter. Although the passage does not tell us this yet, we know that later, Rebekah married Abraham's son Isaac. These were the eight sons of Nahor, Abraham's brother.

Nahor's concubine, who was named Reumah, also had sons. A "concubine" refers to a second wife who did not have all the same rights as the first wife. Concubines were sometimes captured in war or bought as slaves.

Reumah's sons were named Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maakah.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you describe genealogies in your language and culture? Have someone in the group describe their family line. Pay attention to the words and language they use. Pause this audio here.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 22:20–24 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has one scene.

In this first scene: Sometime later, someone told Abraham that his brother Nahor's wife, Milkah, had given birth to eight sons. This passage names those sons.

The characters in this passage are:

- Abraham
- Nahor
- Milkah
- Milkah's eight sons: Uz, Buz, Kemuel, Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, Bethuel
- Kemuel's son Aram
- Bethuel's daughter Rebekah
- Reumah
- and Reumah's four sons: Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, Maakah

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

This scene begins with the words "sometime later," which means that this happened some time after Abraham goes to Moriah to sacrifice Isaac. We don't know how much later, but someone comes to tell Abraham about the sons of Abraham's brother, Nahor.

Stop here. As a group, look at Haran, where Nahor and his family probably lived, on a map. Pause this audio here.

Milkah, Nahor's wife, had given birth to eight sons. You may want to rearrange the information about Milkah's sons for clarity. The first son was named Uz. The second son was Buz. His brother was named Kemuel. Then there were Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel. Kemuel later had a son named Aram. Bethuel later had a daughter named Rebekah.

Also, Nahor's second wife, or concubine, who was named Reumah, had given birth to Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maakah.

Stop here. As a group, find a way to remember the names in this genealogy. You might make up a song or rhyme to remember the names. Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 22:20–24 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has one scene.

The characters in this passage are:

- Abraham
- Nahor
- Milkah
- Milkah's eight sons: Uz, Buz, Kemuel, Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, Bethuel
- Kemuel's son Aram
- Bethuel's daughter Rebekah
- Reumah
- and Reumah's four sons: Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, Maakah

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the story without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the story. Help each other remember every part of the story.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then restart the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Sometime later someone told Abraham that his brother Nahor's wife Milkah was also a mother to eight sons. Her sons were named Uz, Buz, Kemuel, Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel. Kemuel was the father of Aram and Bethuel became the father of Rebekah. Nahor's concubine, Reumah, also had sons, who were named Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maakah.

Finish the drama. Ask the person who plays Abraham, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I'm happy to hear that my brother has also been given children and descendants," or "I'm happy to hear that God has blessed Nahor with children," or "I'm excited to hear news of my family, who I haven't heard about in a long time."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 22:20–24 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Sometime later, someone told Abraham, "Listen, Milkah, your brother Nahor's wife, has also had sons. The first born is named Uz. The next was named Buz, then Kemuel, who was the father of Aram, then Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel."

Bethuel became the father of Rebekah. Milkah gave birth to these eight sons for Abraham's brother Nahor.

Nahor's **concubine**, who was named Reumah, also had sons. A concubine refers to a second wife who did not have all the same rights as the first wife. Sometimes concubines were captured in war or bought as slaves.

Reumah's sons were named Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maakah.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 22:20-24

Audio Content

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- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 23:1-20

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Genesis 23:1-20 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 23:1-20 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Pause this audio here.

In the last stories, Abraham and Isaac returned from the place where they sacrificed the burnt offering back to their home in Beersheba. Abraham received news about his brother's family. Some time after the previous story, Abraham moved to Hebron. This story happens years later in Hebron. This story is one of the last stories of Abraham's life.

The storyteller mentions Sarah's death and burial at the beginning and end of this story. The storyteller also tells how Abraham bought a plot of land in Hebron for the family burial plot. Abraham bought the land legally in front of the local leaders. The plot of land was near the place where God told Abraham that his wife Sarah, who was 89 years old at that time, would give birth to their son.

Abraham does not return to his father's home to bury his wife. He buys the family burial plot on the land God promised him. People will bury many members of the family—Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, and Leah—there as well. This piece of land is important in the history of the descendants of Abraham. God promised the land to Abraham and made it possible for him to buy the land legally.

Stop here and look at a map that shows how close Hebron is to Jerusalem. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and look at a map that includes Abraham's journey from the Ur of the Chaldeans through Haran to Hebron. Pause this audio here.

Abraham mourned the death of his wife Sarah.

Stop here and discuss the following question: How do people in your culture show that they are mourning when a beloved relative dies? Pause this audio here.

Sarah had died after Abraham lived in the land for 62 years. Abraham was not a native, but a stranger and sojourner, or a person from another country who lived on the land but did not own it. During the time of Abraham, a people group called the Hittites lived in this area of Canaan. The Hittites seemed to respect Abraham; they even called Abraham a prince as a title of respect. Abraham respected the customs of the local landowners and used a polite way to ask to buy land. Abraham did not want to borrow a tomb—Abraham

wanted to own the tomb. Abraham went to the Hittite leaders and stood up so Abraham could bow to the Hittites as he began to try to buy the burial plot. In Hittite culture, men sat in a casual sitting position to discuss business matters.

Stop here and discuss the following question: How do people buy and sell land in your culture? How do foreigners buy and sell land in your culture? Tell each other of a time when someone bought or sold land to someone else. Pause this audio here.

In those days, people buried people who had died inside a cave or a hole that they cut out of rock. People did not usually bury a dead body in a hole in the ground. The family placed the dead body on a rock shelf in the cave where it would naturally break down. Sometime later, the family gathered the bones and put the bones in a rock container to make room for the next dead relative's body. Abraham bought the land to make sure his family would always be able to use the caves on that land for burial.

Stop here and show a picture of a cave tomb. Pause this audio here.

Abraham bowed and was humble in front of the elders and men of the community at the city gate. There was a wall around the city to protect the people in the city and the wall had entry and exit gates. The closed gates protect the city at night or during attacks. In those days, people gathered at the city gate to do business, have conversations, sell goods, and share news.

Abraham negotiated for the burial tomb site he wanted. Ephron, the owner of the land Abraham wanted, addressed Abraham politely as "lord" or "sir." Ephron said, "The land is worth only 400 pieces of silver." Then Ephron used a common phrase, "but what is that between friends?" Even today, people say this phrase in this region of the world. It appears that Ephron tried to make Abraham think that 400 shekels was not a lot of money by stating that the value was "only 400 pieces or shekels of silver." 400 pieces of silver is a lot of money, because the average wage was 10 shekels per year. Abraham accepted this price and publicly paid the owner's full price without asking the owner to make it less.

Stop here and discuss: Talk about times in your culture when people do not negotiate land deals, but instead pay full asking price. Pause this audio here.

Because Abraham publicly negotiated the price of the land and paid for it in front of the elders and community, Abraham showed that he officially bought the land so he could use it to bury Sarah. Abraham also showed that he trusted God to fulfill God's covenant agreement or promise that the land would belong to Abraham's descendants in the future.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 5 scenes.

First scene: Sarah died at the age of 127 in Hebron. Abraham mourns her death.

Second scene: Abraham leaves Sarah's body so he could try to buy a family burial plot from the land's residents, the Hittites, at Hebron's city gate.

Third scene: Abraham asks to buy Ephron's cave, and Ephron agrees. Abraham accepts the price Ephron suggests without negotiation.

Fourth scene: Abraham counts the shekels to pay for the land in front of everyone at the city gate. Abraham legally buys the plot of land.

Fifth scene: The storyteller briefly explains the land purchase. The storyteller describes the land where Abraham buried Sarah.

The characters in this story include:

- Abraham
- Sarah
- Hittites
- Ephron the Hittite
- The storyteller

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Walk through the story in the order that the events happened and talk about the things that would be important to describe or act out in each scene in order to fully understand what is happening in the story.

The storyteller mentions Sarah's death and burial at both the beginning and end of this story.

In scene one, we learn that Abraham's wife, Sarah, died in the city that we now call Hebron in the land of Canaan. Canaan is the land God had promised Abraham that Abraham's descendants would own. Abraham probably goes into Sarah's tent. Abraham mourns for Sarah, which means that Abraham probably loudly cries for some time for his wife Sarah.

In scene two, Abraham wants to buy a piece of land to bury Sarah's body in. Abraham goes to the city gate, where the leaders of the community usually do their business. Abraham follows all the correct customs of the land when Abraham speaks to the leaders. Abraham identifies his legal status as a stranger and sojourner. A stranger and sojourner are similar ideas. A stranger lives in a place that he was not born in, and a sojourner has traveled from place to place and does not live in one place permanently. Abraham, his family, and servants were not born in the area, but they have lived in the area for years. They did not own any property. Abraham greeted the Hittite elders as well as other men of the community there at the city gate.

The storyteller repeats the phrase "bury the dead" several times throughout the story because it is an important theme in this story.

In scene three, it is important to see that Abraham lived in an honorable way among the Hittites. The Hittite leaders say to Abraham, "You are an honored prince among us. Choose the finest tomb among ours and bury her there. No one here will refuse to help you in this way." Abraham stands up and bows and asks, "Since you are willing to help me, please be so kind as to ask Ephron, son of Zohar, to let me buy his cave at Machpelah, down at the end of his field. I will pay full price in the presence of witnesses, so I will have a permanent burial place for my family." The way that Abraham asks the elders gives the elders the responsibility to help make a deal between Abraham and Ephron. In this passage, Abraham has discussions about the land deal at three different times. This is the storyteller's way to help us remember the importance of what happened when Abraham bought the land.

Ephron is there sitting with the elders at the city gate. Ephron answers Abraham publicly. Ephron says, "Please, listen to me, I will give you the field and the cave. Here in front of my people, I give it to you, Abraham. Go and bury your dead."

Abraham again bows low in front of the Hittites and says, "No, listen to me, I will buy it from you. Let me pay the full price, so I can bury my dead there." Ephron answers Abraham, "My lord, or master, please listen, the land is worth only 400 pieces of silver, but what is that between us? Bury your wife there." Even though this sounds like Ephron is asking a question, we can tell that he does not really expect Abraham to answer the question. Ephron is saying that 400 shekels, or pieces of silver, should not be a lot of money for people as wealthy as Ephron and Abraham. Ephron wants Abraham to pay the full amount, so he tries to make Abraham feel like Abraham should show his wealth and pay the full amount.

In scene 4, Abraham agrees to Ephron's price and counts out the 400 silver pieces for payment in the presence of the Hittites.

In scene 5, Abraham buys the plot of land that belongs to Ephron at Machpelah near Mamre, now called Hebron. This includes the field, the cave that was in it and all the surrounding trees. Ephron gives ownership of the land to Abraham as Abraham's permanent possession in front of the Hittite elders at the city gate. Abraham buries his wife, Sarah, in the cave there. The Hittite people transfer the field and cave from the Hittites to Abraham for use as a permanent burial place. Abraham now officially owns land in Canaan, just like God promised Abraham would.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 5 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Abraham
- Sarah
- Hittites
- Ephron the Hittite
- The storyteller

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

In the first scene, Abraham's wife, Sarah, lived to be one hundred twenty-seven years old. Sarah died in what is now called Hebron in the land of Canaan. There Abraham mourns and weeps for Sarah.

Pause the drama.

Ask Abraham, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Upset, grieving, sad—my wife has died."
- "Responsible. I must decide where to bury her and our family."
- "Determined. I trust God to give this land to my descendants."

In scene two, Abraham leaves Sarah's body to speak to the Hittite elders sitting at the Hittites' city gate. Abraham says, "Here I am a stranger, a foreigner in your land. Sell me property for a burial place for my wife."

Pause the drama.

Ask Abraham, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Vulnerable. These guys are going to take advantage of me."
- "Sad, anxious."
- "Humbled, I have no land of my own."

Ask the Hittites, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Sympathetic to Abraham's situation."
- "Eager to make extra money on the foreigner!"
- "Curious. Confused. Why does he not just go home?"

The Hittites respond to Abraham and say, "You are an honored prince among us. Choose the finest tomb among ours and bury your dead there. No one here will refuse to help you in this way." Abraham stood up to ask properly by bowing and said, "Since you are willing to help me, please be so kind as to ask Ephron, son of Zohar, to let me buy his cave at Machpelah, at the end of his field. I will pay full price in the presence of witnesses so I will have a permanent burial place for my family."

Pause the drama.

Ask Abraham, "How are you feeling now?" You may hear things like:

- "Still sad, buying the place to bury our first dead, Sarah, and for the rest of our family."
- "Concerned. How will these negotiations go?"
- "Humbled. I feel pressure from the Hittites. I own no land so I must carefully negotiate this deal."
- "Determined. This is the land God promised. He will provide."

In scene three, Ephron is there sitting with the elders at the gate. Ephron answers Abraham publicly and says, "Please, listen to me, I will give you the field and the cave. Here in front of my people, I give it to you, Abraham. Go and bury your dead." Abraham again bowed low in front of the Hittites and said, "No, listen to me, I will buy it from you. Let me pay the full price so I can bury my dead there." Ephron answered Abraham, "My lord, please listen, the land is worth only 400 pieces of silver, what is that between us? Bury your wife there."

In scene four, Abraham agrees to Ephron's price and counts out the 400 pieces of silver for payment in the presence of the Hittites.

Pause the drama.

Abraham, "How are you feeling now?" You may hear things like:

- "Relieved, Glad."
- "Sad. This is our family burial plot. My family will bury me here one day."
- "Thankful. Yahweh provided."

Ask Ephron, "How do you feel?" You may hear something like this:

- "Happy! I didn't expect Abraham to pay that full price!"
- "Regretful. Was it right to take so much from Abraham?"

In scene five, Abraham bought the plot of land belonging to Ephron at Machpelah near Mamre, which is now called Hebron. This included the field, the cave that was in it, and all the surrounding trees. Ephron gives ownership of the land to Abraham as Abraham's permanent possession in the presence of the Hittite elders at

the city gate. Abraham buried his wife, Sarah, in the cave there. The Hittites transferred ownership of the field and cave from the Hittites to Abraham for use as a permanent burial place.

Pause the drama.

Ask Abraham, "How are you feeling now?" You may hear things like:

- "Relieved, happy. I have honored my wife."
- "Happy that I have land in Canaan now."
- "Sad, my wife is dead."

Ask the Hittites, "How do you feel?" You may hear something like this:

- "Happy to have made money off the rich foreigner."
- "I'm not sure that I like that Abraham has a permanent place living among us, but there's nothing we can do. He did everything legally in front of witnesses."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Pause this audio here.

Abraham's wife, Sarah, lived to be one hundred twenty-seven years old. Sarah died in Kiriath-arba, what people now call **Hebron**. Use the same word for Hebron as you have used previously, and see Hebron in the Master Glossary for more information. There Abraham **mourned and wept** for Sarah. People mourn to show that they are sad when a family member dies. People may weep, or cry a lot, very loudly. Abraham wept because his wife Sarah had died. Abraham would have been beside Sarah's dead body.

Abraham left Sarah's body to speak to the **Hittite** elders sitting at their **city gate**. The Hittites lived in Canaan before Abraham. The city gate is where elders or community leaders sat to conduct business, exchange news, and buy and sell market items. Abraham said to the elders, "Here I am a **stranger**, a **sojourner**, in your land." A stranger is a person who was born in another country than the one he lives in. A sojourner is a person who is a temporary resident in a different country than one's birth, and they may move around from one country to another.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **stranger** and **sojourner**. Refer to sojourner in the Master Glossary for more information. Pause this audio here.

Then Abraham asked, "Sell me property for a **burial place** for my wife." This is a general phrase for a place to bury a body. In that time, a burial place would have been a cave or rock that people could cut a cave into so that they could place the dead body inside. They would then roll a large stone in front of the entrance to keep out thieves or wild animals. After the body naturally broke down, the family would gather the bones and store them in a smaller stone container.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **tomb**, or **burial place**. For more information about the kinds of places that people used to bury bodies, refer to tomb in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

The Hittites responded to Abraham, "**Lord**, or master, you are an honored **prince**, or important person, among us." The Hittites recognized Abraham was not a common foreigner but one who had a blessing from God. Use the same word or phrase for lord, when it means master, as you have previously. For more information about lord, refer to lord in the Master Glossary.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **prince**, or important person. Pause this audio here.

Abraham said, "Since you are willing to help me, please be so kind as to ask Ephron, son of Zohar, to let me **buy** his cave at Machpelah, down at the end of his field. Some translations may say "give" instead of "buy," which means to "give for a price," or "sell."

Abraham gave 400 pieces of silver, or 400 **shekels**, to Ephron for Ephron's land. A shekel is a unit of measurement, usually to weigh pieces of silver. Use the same word or phrase for shekel as you have used previously, and refer to shekel in the Master Glossary for more information.

Ephron gave Abraham ownership of the land. Abraham offered to pay the full price.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 23:1-20

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (13833482 KB)

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Genesis 24:1-14

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Genesis 24:1-14 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 24:1-14 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Pause this audio here.

In the last story, Abraham's wife Sarah died. Abraham did not take Sarah's body back to their homeland to bury her. Abraham bought land in Hebron to bury Sarah's body in a cave.

Abraham was a very old man. Yahweh blessed Abraham in everything. Blessing is an important theme throughout this chapter. To bless means "to help, to do good to, or to favor." God had blessed Abraham with both physical wellbeing and a lot of money and property.

Stop here and discuss the following question: God blessed Abraham. What happens when God blesses people in your culture? How do you know these good things are from God? Pause this audio here.

Abraham decided it was time for Abraham's son Isaac to marry. The local women living in Canaan were not good for Isaac to marry. The local people worshiped idols. Abraham wanted his descendants to worship only God.

Abraham asked his oldest, and most trusted, chief servant in Abraham's household to go back to Abraham's homeland in Haran to look for a wife for Isaac among Abraham's relatives. We do not know who this servant is.

Abraham asked the servant to swear an oath, or make a strong promise, with Yahweh God as the witness. Abraham called Yahweh God "the God of heaven and earth." Abraham is not talking about 2 different gods, just one God over both heaven and earth. Abraham asked Abraham's servant to show his oath by placing the servant's hand under Abraham's thigh. "Under Abraham's thigh" was a polite way of saying this was under Abraham's genital area. Placing the servant's hand in this area represented the future generations of Abraham's family. This oath put a heavy responsibility on the servant. The servant accepted the responsibility to bring back a woman to be Isaac's wife. If the servant broke the oath, then God would punish the servant. The servant was concerned that the woman would refuse to go with him. However, if the woman that the servant found was not willing to go with the servant, then Abraham would not punish the servant for failing to keep the oath.

Stop and discuss: Talk about how people in your culture make solemn oaths. What do they make these oaths about? Who participates in making the oaths? What is a polite way to refer to a man's genitals in your culture? Pause this audio here.

The servant even asked if Isaac could go with the servant to Abraham's homeland if the woman refused to come back with the servant. Abraham refused to allow Isaac to go. Abraham insisted that "Yahweh, God of Heaven promised this land to Abraham's descendants." Abraham is still talking about the one and only God, the God that Abraham served. Abraham promised the servant that God would send God's angel in front of the servant to find the right woman. God's angel shows what God is like, but the angel is not God Himself. God was so holy that no one could see God Himself and live. The servant would not be able to see God and live.

After the servant made the oath, the servant loaded up 10 camels with many gifts. A camel is a very large, valuable beast of burden that can carry a lot of weight for long distances. A camel does not require a lot of water during a journey.

Stop and look at a picture of a camel and a picture of a camel caravan. Pause this audio here.

Later in the story we hear that the servant was not travelling alone—he had other servants with him. If the servant traveled alone it would have been very difficult to handle the 10 camels. If the servant travelled alone, he also would have been an easy target for thieves.

The servant would give the camels and the gifts to the bride's family to arrange the marriage. These gifts are part of the "bride price." The servant was not buying the woman like a slave. When a family arranges a marriage, the groom's family must provide a bride price, while the bride's family provides a dowry. A dowry is money, gifts or property that the bride's family gives to the couple when they marry.

Stop and discuss this question as a group: How do people in your culture arrange marriages? Which family provides what things when a man and woman get married? Pause this audio here.

The journey would have taken at least a month on the 800-kilometer trip to Abraham's homeland. The servant arrived outside the city where Abraham's brother, Nahor, lived. The city was probably Haran, which is in today's northern Iraq. People called this area "the land of 2 rivers."

Stop and look at a map that includes Haran as well as Tigris and Euphrates rivers. People call this area northern Iraq today. Pause this audio here.

The servant stopped beside the water source, and he made the camels kneel in order to rest and to give them water. The water source was both a spring and a well. When the water was plentiful and near the surface, people called it a spring. In the drier months, people drew the water from below the surface from a well. This water source was outside the city so herds of animals could have easy access. The servant and the camels stopped here in the evening. Evening is also the time when young women would come from the city to get water. Water is a rare, important thing in the dry Middle East. It would have been normal for the well to be a meeting place for travelers and local people.

Stop and look at a picture of a well and a picture of a spring.

Stop and discuss: Are wells natural meeting places in your culture? Would it be odd for people to gather at such a place? What are important water sources in your region? Pause this audio here.

The servant prayed, saying "Yahweh, the God of my master," and asked for success in finding Isaac's future bride that very day. The servant prayed in a very personal way to Yahweh. The servant asked Yahweh to show

steadfast love. Steadfast love is the faithfulness and love that God has for Abraham and for his people. The servant asked God for two clear signs to show the servant which woman was Isaac's future wife. First, the servant asked God to show him a woman who offered the servant a drink of water. Next, the servant asked God to show him that this was the right woman because she would then do even more and also volunteer to give water to the 10 camels as well.

Stop and discuss as a group: Describe what happens when someone in your culture prays for something they really want. Pause this audio here.

The servant arrived at the well in the late afternoon. This was the time of day the young women would usually go to the well. In that culture, young unmarried women were responsible for getting water for their household and for the animal herds. The young women carried jars that people made of clay to hold the water. Those jars held no more than 11 liters of water.

Stop here and look at a picture of a water jar.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Abraham is a very old man. Abraham decided it was time for his son Isaac to marry. The local Canaanite women were not good for Isaac to marry because these women did not worship Yahweh. Abraham asks his most trusted servant to return to Abraham's homeland to find a wife for Isaac. Abraham asks the servant to swear an oath with Yahweh God as the witness. The servant accepts and swears the oath.

Second scene: The servant prepares for the journey. On behalf of Abraham, the servant prepares 10 camels, each loaded with gifts for the future bride's family. The servant travels over a month and 800 kilometers to get to the homeland of Abraham.

Third scene: The servant arrives just outside of the city where Abraham's brother, Nahor, lives. The servant stops at the community well to rest and water the camels. At the well, the servant prays for 2 specific signs from God in order to know which woman God had chosen for Isaac.

The characters in this story include:

- Abraham
- The servant
- The other servants traveling with him, although the storyteller does not mention them yet
- Isaac

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Walk through the story in the order that the events happened and talk about the things that would be important to describe or act out in each scene in order to fully understand what is happening in the story.

It is important to remember that this story begins when Abraham is a very old man. God has blessed Abraham in every way. The scene may be more clear if you share some background information at the beginning that appears later in the story. Abraham wants to make sure that Abraham's descendants stay in the land of Canaan, which God had promised to Abraham. Abraham decided it was time for Abraham's son Isaac to marry. The local women worshipped idols and were not good for Isaac to marry. Abraham instructed the servant Abraham

trusted most about going to Abraham's homeland in search of a good wife for Isaac. It is important to remember that the storyteller does not give the name of this servant.

Abraham had the servant make a very serious promise, swearing an oath that Yahweh witnessed, to bring a wife for Isaac back from Abraham's homeland. In the oath ceremony, the servant placed his hand on Abraham's genital area, or "under Abraham's thigh." This gesture represented Abraham's future descendants. The team should choose a polite term or indirect way to say Abraham's genital area for the oath. If the servant broke the oath, then God would punish the servant. If the woman that the servant found was not willing to return with the servant, then the servant would no longer need to keep the oath. The servant even asked if Isaac could go back with the servant if the woman refused to come back with the servant. Abraham refused to allow Isaac to go back to Abraham's homeland. Abraham said, "Yahweh God brought me out of that land to this land and swore He would give this land to my descendants. Yahweh will send an angel to go before you and you will find a wife for my son there." Abraham wanted Isaac to stay on the land that God had promised.

It is important to remember that the servant prepared the camels and other gifts that made up the bride price. It was a long journey back to Abraham's homeland, and it required a lot of preparation.

The servant, the camel drivers and caravan traveled to the city where Nahor, Abraham's brother, lived. The servant stopped just before he entered the city, at the water source right outside of the city. The servant made the camels kneel down to rest beside the water source. The servant began to pray that God would show him the woman who would be Isaac's wife that very day. It is important that the servant did not choose the woman. The servant prayed that Yahweh would show the servant which woman God had chosen for Isaac. The servant asked for 2 signs. The first was that the young woman, a virgin, would offer the servant a drink, as is the custom among their people. The servant would ask for a drink of water. The young woman would respond yes and offer to water the camels as well. It is important to remember this is the prayer conversation the servant had with God. The answer to this specific prayer would reflect God's steadfast love for Abraham.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Abraham
- The servant
- The other servants traveling with him, although the storyteller does not mention them yet
- Isaac

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

God blessed Abraham in every way and now Abraham was a very old man. Abraham decided it was time for Abraham's son Isaac to get married. Abraham spoke to the servant Abraham trusted most in Abraham's household. Abraham explained the situation to the servant. Abraham said to his servant, "I want you to swear an oath, that you will find a wife for Isaac back among relatives in my homeland. Perform the oath before Yahweh God of putting your hand under my thigh. Do not choose a wife among these idol worshippers."

Pause the drama.

Ask Abraham, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "I am happy because God has blessed me in every way!"
- "Thankful to have the son, Isaac, God promised me."
- "Thoughtful. Isaac needs a wife."
- "Concerned, I hope my trusted servant will carry out this request correctly."
- "At peace. God will keep His promise to me and my descendants."

Ask the servant, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Happy. Yes, it is time that Isaac marries and starts a family."
- "Stressed, wow, this is a lot of responsibility."
- "Yahweh help me, lead me to the right girl."
- "Awkward. My master asked me to touch him there?"

The servant said to Abraham, "What if the woman does not want to go with me? Should I then take Isaac back there?" Abraham answered, "No, do not take my son back to my homeland. Yahweh, the God of heaven, spoke to me and said He promised this land to my descendants. Yahweh will send his angel in front of you and help you find the right woman. If the woman is unwilling to return with you, you are free from the oath. Do not take my son there." The servant then took the ten camels and other gifts for the bride price.

Pause the drama.

Ask Abraham, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "I am happy that my servant asked that question. He now knows what I expect."
- "Thankful to have a trustworthy servant."
- "Grateful because I can provide such a big bride price for Isaac's future wife."
- "At peace. God will keep His promise to me and my descendants."

Ask the servant, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Stressed, this is an important task. Help me, Yahweh!"
- "Happy, yes, for the opportunity to serve my master Abraham like this."
- "Confident. God's angel is going in front of me. I have nothing to worry about."

The servant traveled on the long journey. The servant arrived just outside of the town where Abraham's brother, Nahor, lived. The servant stopped his camels at the well so the camels could rest and drink water. Here, the servant prayed to God and asked God for 2 specific things. First the servant asked God, "Oh God, may the woman that you chose for Isaac offer me water. Then, may the woman offer to give water to my 10 camels. If this happens, I will know that you are continuing your love for Abraham."

Pause the drama.

Ask the servant, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Tired. That was a long, hard trip on a camel."
- "Happy. It is good to be here to see what God will do."
- "Stressed! Wow, this is a lot of responsibility."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Pause this audio here.

Abraham was very old. **Yahweh blessed** Abraham in every way. Use the same words for Yahweh and bless as you have used previously, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information about Yahweh and bless.

Abraham spoke to the **servant** that Abraham trusted most in Abraham's **house**, or **household**. Abraham told the servant to go back to Abraham's homeland to find a wife for Abraham's son, Isaac, from Abraham's relatives, or other family members. Use the same word for household and servant as you have used previously, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information about household and servant.

Abraham asked the servant to take a solemn **oath** before Yahweh God by putting the servant's hand under Abraham's thigh. This symbolic gesture, touching Abraham's genital area, was an old custom that meant Abraham trusted his descendants to the important servant. If the servant broke the oath, then God would punish the servant. Use the same word for oath as you have used previously, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information about oath.

The servant said to Abraham, "What if the woman does not want to go with me? Should I then take Isaac back there?" Abraham answered, "No, do not take my son back to my homeland. Yahweh, God of **heaven**, spoke to me and said He promised this land to my **descendants**, or **seed**. Yahweh will send the **angel of Yahweh** in front of you and help you find the right woman." In this case, the word for a plant seed means all the children and grandchildren, or descendants, of Abraham. Use the same words for seed or descendants, heaven, and angel as you have used previously, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information about seed, descendants, heaven, and angel. This use of angel is not a messenger angel that serves God. It is an appearance of God.

The servant took 10 of Abraham's **camels** and loaded them with **nice gifts**. The camels are large beasts of burden and are valuable. Use the same word for camel as you have used previously, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information about camel.

Along with the gifts, the servant would give the camels to the young woman's family as a bride price. This custom is not buying a woman. She is not a slave. It is a gift of respect to the family to demonstrate the ability to provide for the woman in the future.

Just outside of this city, the servant stopped at the **community well** and made the camels kneel down. It was evening time when the young women from the city would come and draw water. The servant made the camels rest by the water source. This is a dry land with limited water sources. The water source was both a spring where the water was on the surface, but also a well when the spring went dry. Use the same word or phrase for well as you have used in previous passages.

The servant then **prayed**. Use the same word or phrase for prayer as you have used in previous passages. You can find more information about prayer in the Master Glossary.

The servant said, "Oh Yahweh, God of my master Abraham, grant me success today and show your **steadfast love** to Abraham." Steadfast love, or kindness, describes the special relationship between Yahweh and Abraham and between Yahweh and Yahweh's people. Yahweh will never break the relationship.

You have translated this word for **steadfast love** previously in Genesis 21:23, but stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for steadfast love. Refer to steadfast love in the Master Glossary for more information.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 24:1-14

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (14014536 KB)

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Genesis 24:15–28

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Genesis 24:15–28 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 24:15–28 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Pause this audio here.

In the last passage, Abraham asked his most trusted servant to find a wife for Abraham's son Isaac. The servant, the camels loaded with gifts, and the other servants arrived at the well outside the city where Abraham's relatives lived. The servant prayed to Yahweh, the God of his master Abraham, that God's chosen woman would offer the servant a drink of water and then offer to water the camels the servant brought. The servant prayed to God in a personal, conversational kind of way.

Before the servant finished praying, Rebekah came to the well-spring outside of the city. The storyteller now uses the word spring to describe the word for well. A spring would have been a place where people could get water easily. A person did not have to scoop water up from the bottom of the well with a rope. The storyteller interrupts the action to introduce Rebekah and to give her family history. The listeners learn that Rebekah is from Abraham's family even before the servant does. Rebekah carried a clay water jar on her shoulder. She used this jug to scoop and carry water to the animals.

Stop here and look at a picture of a clay water jar or jug. Pause this audio here.

The storyteller then gives details about what is important for a potential bride. Rebekah was beautiful and old enough to marry and to have children. Rebekah was still a virgin. Rebekah had not had sex with any man.

Stop and discuss the following question as a group: What are important traits for a potential bride in your culture? How do you get and carry water from a well or a spring? Who goes to get water? Pause this audio here.

Abraham's servant ran over to Rebekah. This story is full of action words and images. Before the servant finished praying, God answered the servant's prayer. The servant ran to ask for water. Rebekah moved quickly to water the camels and ran to tell her family. The servant asked for a little drink of the water. In their culture, it was polite to ask for a "little" of something. It did not mean the servant was not thirsty. The servant was polite. Rebekah responded exactly like the servant prayed. Rebekah treated the servant respectfully when Rebekah said, "yes, Lord." Lord was a title of respect, like "sir," that people used to address an elder. Rebekah gave the servant water to drink. Rebekah said, "I'll get water for your camels, too, until they have enough to drink." Rebekah responded exactly how the servant had prayed. She ran down to the water and began filling up the water holder, or trough. A trough is a long narrow container, like a stone box. People used it to hold water or food for animals. If camels did not have water for a few days, this would be a lot of water for each camel. Each camel could possibly need 95 liters each! Rebekah's jug only held 11 liters at the most. This was a lot of extra work. Water is heavy!

Stop and look at a picture of a water trough. Pause this audio here.

Stop and discuss as a group: How did Rebekah show good qualities of a young woman who was ready to get married? In your culture, what does a young woman do to show that she is the kind of woman a man would want to marry? Pause this audio here.

As Rebekah worked to give water to all the camels, the servant watched Rebekah closely. The servant was studying the young woman to decide if this was the woman God had chosen for Isaac. The servant was not watching her from sexual motivation, even though Rebekah was beautiful and polite. When the camels finished drinking, Abraham's servant gave Rebekah a gold nose ring and 2 large gold bracelets for Rebekah's wrist. In their culture, the people measure gold by "shekels." The nose ring weighed about 6 grams of gold. The bracelets for Rebekah's wrist or arms each weighed about 120 grams. These were valuable gifts. These are common pieces of jewelry for women who lived in the Middle East. The nose ring was a sign of beauty and wealth. A woman's nose was a body feature that people valued for elegance or class.

Stop and look at a picture of what the jewelry the servant gave to Rebekah might have looked like. Pause this audio here.

Then Abraham's servant asked the important question, "Please tell me, whose daughter are you? Would your father have a room where we could sleep for the night?" In that culture, this was the polite way to ask these questions. Rebekah explained that she was the daughter of Bethuel, and that Bethuel was the son of his mother Milcah and his father Nahor. This means that Bethuel was the nephew of Abraham. This made Isaac and Rebekah cousins. People did not consider marriage between cousins to be bad in that culture.

Stop and discuss as a group: would marrying your cousin be considered incest? In your culture, which family members are not allowed to get married, and why not? Pause this audio here.

Rebekah answered, "We have plenty of straw and food for the camels as well as room for guests." Abraham's servant then bowed and worshiped Yahweh. When someone bows, they kneel with their face to the ground with arms stretched out. Worship in this context can also mean to lie face down on the ground. This was an act of deep, sincere humility to thank God. The servant said, "Bless, or praise, Yahweh, the God of my master, Abraham. Yahweh has shown steadfast love and faithfulness to my master." Yahweh answered the prayer of the servant perfectly. Rebekah ran home to tell her mother's household what had happened. Rebekah probably ran to the women's part of the house. In that culture, women often had their own tent, or their own area in the house that was just for them.

Stop and discuss as a group: How does someone in your culture show that they are humbly worshipping God? Discuss a time in your life when you humbly worshipped God.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

First scene: The servant and the camels are resting beside the well outside of Haran. The servant prays for God's direction to find a wife for Isaac. Rebekah walks up with her water jar as the servant finishes praying.

Second scene: Rebekah goes and gets water. The servant asks for a little water from her jar. Rebekah gives water to the servant, and Rebekah offers to give water to all of the servant's camels also.

Third scene: When Rebekah is finished watering the animals, the servant gives Rebekah beautiful jewelry. The servant asks who Rebekah's parents are and if Rebekah's father had space for the servant's group to sleep. Rebekah tells the servant her father's and grandparent's names. The servant stops and praises Yahweh that Yahweh answered the servant's prayers. Rebekah explains they have room and food for the animals.

Fourth scene: Rebekah runs home to tell her family all that happened.

The characters in this story include:

- Abraham's servant
- Rebekah
- The other servants

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Walk through the story in the order that the events happened, and talk about the things that would be important to describe or act out in each scene in order to fully understand what is happening in the story.

In the previous story, Abraham sent his most trusted servant to Abraham's homeland to find Isaac a wife. Remember, the storyteller does not give us the servant's name. The servant even took a solemn oath. The servant has other servants to help him with the camels and gifts. The servant arrived outside the city, and he and the 10 camels rested by the well. It was in the evening. It was the time when the young women from the village would come to get water. The servant begins to pray to Yahweh. The servant asked Yahweh to show the servant the woman that God chose for Isaac. The servant asked Yahweh that the woman would offer the servant a drink of water and offer to give water to all the camels as well.

As this story starts, Abraham's servant is sitting by the well and praying. Before the servant finished his prayer, a beautiful young woman came to the well carrying her water jar on her shoulder. It was Rebekah. The storyteller interrupts the action to introduce Rebekah and to give her family history. The listeners learn that Rebekah is from Abraham's family even before the servant does. We learn that Rebekah is a virgin and no man has ever "lain with her." This is a way to say that no man has had sexual relations with Rebekah.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do you start a story, and then stop the action to give some information about one of the characters in the story? Pause this audio here.

Rebekah went down to the spring and got some water. Rebekah came back, probably carrying the water jar on her shoulder. The servant asked Rebekah for a little water. The servant was polite. Rebekah said "Yes, my lord, have water. I will water your camels as well." Rebekah lowered the jar from her shoulder to her hands so the servant could drink. Rebekah then began giving water to the 10 camels. Remember, this was a lot of work. Rebekah did more than people would expect someone to do to be nice in this culture. Rebekah worked hard, making many trips down to the spring to get water for thirsty camels.

As Rebekah gave the camels the water, the servant watched her, and he wondered, "Is this the woman Yahweh has chosen?" When Rebekah finished watering the camels, the servant gave Rebekah a gold ring for her nose and 2 gold bracelets for her wrists or arms. Remember, these were very valuable. Rebekah probably was pleasantly surprised with such nice gifts. The servant then asked, "Whose daughter are you? Would your father have a place for us to spend the night?"

Rebekah responded, "My father is Bethuel and my grandparents are Nahor and Milcah. Yes, we have straw and feed for your animals, and plenty of room for guests." When the servant heard these names, the names of his master Abraham's family, the servant bowed low in prayer and worshiped God! Remember the servant was in a humble position, on his knees with hands uplifted to heaven. The servant prayed, "Oh Yahweh, God of my master Abraham. Yahweh has shown steadfast love to my master Abraham. Yahweh, you have led me straight to my master's relatives!"

Rebekah ran home to tell her mother's household everything that happened. Rebekah probably ran to the women's area in her house. Remember Rebekah is in a hurry to show off her new jewelry to her family and to tell them about the visitors.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Abraham's servant
- Rebekah
- The other servants

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Abraham's servant is next to a well, praying. Before the servant finished his prayer, a beautiful young woman came to the well carrying her water jar on her shoulder. It was Rebekah. Rebekah went down to the spring and got some water. The servant ran over to her and politely asked her for a little water. Rebekah said "Yes, my lord, have water. I will water your camels as well." Rebekah got busy and began giving water to the 10 camels.

Pause the drama.

Ask the servant, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Curious. Look at this pretty girl. Is she the one?" or
- "Happy. Has God answered this prayer already?" or
- "Confident, but I know I should be patient. The God of my master Abraham will show me the woman for Isaac."

Ask Rebekah, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Good. It is time to get water for my family and the animals." or
- "Curious. Oh look, there are strangers with lots of camels at the well. Where did they come from? Where are they going?"

Ask the other servants, "How are you feeling?"

- "Curious. The servant prays a lot." or
- "Happy. Look, here comes a pretty girl." or
- "Happy. We are glad this girl is giving the camels the water and we do not have to."

As Rebekah gave the camels the water, the servant watched her, and wondered, "Is this the woman Yahweh has chosen?" When Rebekah finished watering the camels, the servant gave Rebekah a gold ring for her nose and 2 gold bracelets for her wrists or arms. Remember, these were very valuable. The servant then asked, "Whose daughter, are you? Would your father have a place for us to spend the night?"

Pause the drama.

Ask the servant, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Happy. Well done, young woman, for doing this hard work and being polite," and
- "Thoughtful. Has God answered my prayer already?" and
- "Glad, to give this young woman these nice gifts of the ring and bracelets," and
- "Hopeful. Who is her father?"

Ask Rebekah, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "What beautiful presents for watering these camels!" and
- "Curious. What do these nice presents really mean?"
- "Cautious. I should be careful with these men."

Rebekah responded, "My father is Bethuel and my grandparents are Nahor and Milcah. Yes, we have straw and feed for your animals, and plenty of room for guests." When the servant heard these names, the names of his master Abraham's family, he bowed low in prayer and worshiped Yahweh! The servant prayed, "Oh Yahweh God of my master Abraham. Yahweh has shown steadfast love to my master Abraham. You have led me straight to my master's relatives!" Rebekah ran home to tell her family everything that happened.

Pause the drama.

Ask the servant, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Happy. Praise God! He has led me to Abraham's family." and
- "Thoughtful. Yahweh has answered my prayers exactly!" and
- "Thoughtful. Now I must prepare for the discussions with her father and family."

Ask Rebekah, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Happy! I cannot wait to show my mother and family these gifts."
- "Excited. I must hurry to go tell my family to prepare for guests."
- "Curious. The man praised God? What is happening?" and

Ask the other servants, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Happy that this girl is from our master Abraham's family."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Pause this audio here.

Abraham's servant is sitting by a well and **praying**. Before the servant finished praying, the servant saw **Rebekah** coming to the well with a jar that people made from clay. These jars held water and people carried the jars on their shoulders. Use the same word or phrase for praying as you did previously, and refer to the glossary for more information about prayer.

Stop and look at a picture of a clay water jar or jug. Pause this audio here.

Rebekah was the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Abraham's brother Haran and Milcah. Rebekah was Haran and Milcah's granddaughter. Rebekah was beautiful. Rebekah was old enough to marry and have children but Rebekah was still a **virgin**, meaning that Rebekah had not had sex with any man. Rebekah went down into the **spring** and came out again with water. The spring was near the well and provided water that was easy to get to without having to pull the water all the way up from the depth of the well. Although this water was still in a low area of the land, the water would have been closer to the surface. Use the same word or phrase for spring as you have used in previous passages.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **virgin**. Pause this audio here.

When Rebekah came back up, Abraham's **servant** ran over to her and asked for a *little* drink of the water. Throughout most of this story the storyteller calls the servant "the man." But here, the storyteller calls him the servant. Use the same word for servant as you have used previously, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information about servant. Rebekah said, "Yes **my lord**, have a drink." **Lord** is a polite term for "sir" or "master." Use the same word for lord that you have used previously, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information about lord. Rebekah lowered the jar and gave the servant water to drink. Rebekah said, "I'll get water for your **camels**, too, until they have enough to drink." Rebekah emptied her jar into the **animal trough**. A trough is a long narrow container, like a stone box. People use it to hold water or food for animals. Giving this many camels water was a lot of extra work. Use the same word for camels as you have previously, and remember that camel is in the Master Glossary.

Stop here and look at a picture of a water trough. Pause this audio here.

As Rebekah worked to give water to all the camels, the servant watched her closely. The servant was studying the young woman to determine if this was the woman **Yahweh** had chosen for Isaac. Use the same word for Yahweh as you have used previously. For more information about Yahweh, refer to the Master Glossary. The servant was not looking at Rebekah in a sexual way. When the camels finished drinking, the servant gave Rebekah a gold nose ring that weighed one half **shekel**, or 6 grams, of gold and 2 large gold bracelets for her wrist that each weighed 10 shekels. Ten shekels was 120 grams of gold. These were valuable gifts. Use the same word for shekel as you have used in previous passages, and remember that shekel is in the Master Glossary.

Stop and look at pictures of the jewelry like Rebekah may have received. Pause this audio here.

Rebekah said, "We have plenty of straw and fodder for the camels as well as room for guests to lodge." The servant then **bowed** and **worshiped the Lord**. Use the same words or phrases for bow down and worship as you have used previously. Refer to bow and worship in the Master Glossary for more information.

The servant says, "**Praise**, or **bless**, Yahweh, the God of my master, Abraham. Yahweh has shown **steadfast love** and faithfulness to my master. He has led me straight to my master's relatives." Use the same words for praise, or bless, and steadfast love as you have used previously. Refer to praise, bless, and steadfast love in the Master Glossary for more information.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 24:15-28

Audio Content

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Genesis 24:29–49

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear Genesis 24:29–49 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of Genesis 24:29–49 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Pause this audio here.

Abraham sent his most trusted servant back to Abraham's homeland to find a wife for Isaac among Abraham's relatives. When the servant arrived at the city well outside of town, the servant prayed to Yahweh to direct the servant to the young woman Yahweh had chosen for Isaac. Rebekah, Abraham's niece, came to the well and offered the servant water to drink and to give water to his camels. This was a direct answer to the servant's prayer.

Now the story of Rebekah and Isaac continues. The storyteller repeats much of this story from the previous passage. This repetition helps build interest and drama.

Rebekah ran back to her house to tell her mother and family about Abraham's servant. After Rebekah tells her family about meeting Abraham's servant, the storyteller introduces Rebekah's brother Laban. Laban ran back to meet the servant. The family has probably had very little news of Abraham since Abraham left Haran, and Laban saw Rebekah's expensive gifts. These were not normal gifts for a stranger to give someone he did not know. Perhaps Laban is being greedy in wanting to meet this rich man. Although the storyteller mentions Bethuel, Rebekah's father, later in the story, Laban acts as host rather than Bethuel. Laban gives the invitation

to the servant to come stay at their house. Bethuel may have been old or not physically able to receive these guests, and so Bethuel may have turned over the daily responsibilities of the household to Laban.

Laban invited the servant to come to their house. The greeting "Yahweh blesses you" was a way to greet a rich visitor. Laban says "Yahweh," the personal covenant name of God. In that culture, people believed that if someone was rich, God was blessing them.

Laban invited the servant to come inside their home. Laban prepared a place for the servant and the camels. It is most likely that Laban's servants made the preparations for the guests and animals. When the servant came into the house, Laban, or Laban's servants, tended to the basic needs of the camels first. The servants gave them food and straw for bedding in an outside area for animals.

Laban also gave the servant and the men with the servant "water for their feet." In that culture, a good host always offers water to wash off the dirt from their guests' feet from their travels across dry, dusty roads. Most people only wore sandals on their feet, so their feet became very dirty.

Spend some time discussing the following questions:

- How do people in your culture receive unexpected visitors?
- Who is responsible for welcoming them?
- How do you change what you do depending on the status of the visitor?
- What items do people expect a host to provide?
- Does the guest have any responsibilities? Pause this audio here.

People served food to all the men. The servant said he would not eat until they discussed the business that brought the servant there. Laban agreed.

The servant explained how Yahweh guided the servant to Rebekah, in much the same way we heard the story in earlier passages. The marriage negotiations began. As we heard in previous passages, in those days, people expected that the bride's family would provide a dowry, and the groom's family would provide a bride price. The servant explained how God had blessed Abraham in all ways, including financially. Abraham is now a great or a wealthy man who had many flocks and herds. "Flocks" include both "goats" and "sheep," and "herds" refer to cattle. The blessing also included camels, donkeys, and male and female servants. Yahweh also blessed Abraham with a son with his wife Sarah, who was elderly and past child-bearing age.

Stop and discuss: What kinds of things do you talk about when you talk about God blessing you in your culture? Pause this audio here.

Stop and show pictures of the animals: sheep, goat, donkey, camel. Pause this audio here.

The servant then tells Laban the story of the servant's trip to find Isaac a wife. The wording is very similar to the first conversation between the servant and Rebekah. Abraham has told the servant that Yahweh would send his angel to guide the servant. Abraham says that Abraham has walked before Yahweh. Earlier when Yahweh appeared to Abraham, Yahweh said, "Walk before me and be blameless." "Walk before me" means "Live in agreement with my will," "Do as I ask you," or "Obey me." Abraham is reminding his servant that Abraham has indeed obeyed and followed Yahweh.

The servant began telling Laban about what happened that day by the well. The wording is very similar to how the storyteller told this story in the previous passage. The servant says that he was "praying in my heart" which means that the servant prayed to God silently at the well.

As the servant retells the story to Laban, he did not mention that Rebekah called him "lord" or about his question about a place to stay for the night.

Now the servant begins to formally talk about the possible marriage. The proper practice was to ask the elders of the family first before asking for the young woman's opinion. The servant asked the men to show the same steadfast love and faithful kindness to Abraham that Yahweh showed to the servant. In this way, the servant was asking the men of Rebekah's family to give Rebekah to Abraham's son as a wife.

Stop and discuss: how do you arrange marriages in your culture? How do the women act in these decisions and processes? Which relatives manage the negotiations? How do these relatives make the final decision? Are there any interesting ways of speaking in your language that are related to marriage customs?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

First scene: Rebekah returned to the village and showed her family and her brother Laban the jewelry and told them about the man she met at the well.

Second scene: Laban ran to the well to greet the stranger and invite the servant and his caravan including the camels and camel drivers back to their home.

Third scene: The servant and the camel drivers get the animals ready for the night with food and straw for beds.

Fourth scene: The servant tells Laban and Bethuel the series of events that led the servant to their home. The servant asked for Laban's and Bethuel's decision on the proposed marriage of Isaac and Rebekah.

The characters in this story include:

- The servant
- Laban
- Bethuel
- Rebekah
- The other servants with Abraham's servant
- Other servants in Laban and Bethuel's household

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Abraham sent his most trusted servant back to Abraham's homeland to find a wife for Abraham's son, Isaac. The servant arrived just outside the town at the local well. There the servant met Rebekah, Abraham's niece and a potential bride for Isaac. After Rebekah gave the servant and his camels water, the servant gave Rebekah a gold nose ring and 2 gold bracelets. Rebekah ran home to tell her family everything that had happened.

At the beginning of this story, the storyteller says, "Now Rebekah had a brother." The storyteller lets us know that an important change in the story is happening. The storyteller introduces Rebekah's brother, Laban. Use a natural way to introduce a new person in the story.

Like Rebekah had run home, Laban now runs back to meet the servant. Now the storyteller interrupts the action of the story to say that Rebekah's family and brother, Laban, heard Rebekah's story about what had happened at the well. Remember that Laban is the central character of this story. In future stories we will see that money appears to motivate Laban. Perhaps this is why when Laban saw the gifts, Laban rushed out to the well immediately to invite the servant to their house to stay. Laban saw the servant and said, "Come and stay with us, you whom Yahweh has blessed! Why are you standing outside of town, when I have a room all ready for you, and a place for the camels?" Laban does not expect the servant to answer this question. Laban is inviting

the servant to come stay at their house. If it is not natural to ask a question and not expect an answer in your language, then you can say this in a different way.

Stop here and discuss what is the most natural way in your language to say that Laban was asking the servant to stay at their house. Pause this audio here.

So the servant went home with Laban and Laban provided food and a place to stay for the camels and other men with the servant. Laban also gave water to the men who came with the servant for them to wash their feet. Then Laban's servants served the food. All of these things were what a good host in that culture did. But the servant wanted to show that he had important business, so he said, "I don't want to eat until I have told you why I have come." Laban answered, "Tell us." Remember "us" refers to both Laban and Bethuel, Rebekah's father.

The servant explained that Yahweh had greatly blessed his master, Abraham. Abraham had become a wealthy man. Yahweh has given Abraham flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, much silver and gold, donkeys, and men and women servants.

Stop here and discuss as a group: What is the best way to list these blessings? Practice listing the things that the servant says that Yahweh has blessed his master Abraham with. Pause this audio here.

The servant tells about his conversation with Abraham to the family. The servant explained the requirements of the oath the servant made to Abraham and how Abraham could release the servant from the oath. The servant also talks about the angel of Yahweh who will come with the servant to guide him. Remember that this is a special angel who is representing Yahweh himself.

Remember that the conversation the servant had with Abraham was in the past back at Abraham's house. Now the conversation shifts to the day's events. Remember that throughout this conversation, the servant repeats nearly every word of the conversation as it happened in previous passages.

The story changes slightly here. The servant says that Rebekah told the servant who her father is, and the servant immediately put the jewelry on Rebekah and praised Yahweh, the God of his master Abraham. The servant does not talk about the part of the story when the servant asked Rebekah about a place to stay the night.

Speaking to Laban and Bethuel, the servant says, "Now, please tell me, will you or will you not show steadfast love and faithfulness to my master?"

Stop here and discuss as a group: The servant makes it clear that he is beginning his formal request about Rebekah becoming Isaac's wife. How will you show that the servant is beginning his formal request? Pause this audio here.

Although the servant has not said directly that he is asking Rebekah to be the wife of Abraham's son, the servant's story makes it clear, and Laban and Bethuel know exactly what the servant is talking about. So the servant asks: "Please tell me yes or no, so I will know what to do next—whether to turn to the right or to the left."

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you talk about the servant's question about which way to turn? The servant wants to know if Laban and Bethuel will agree to Rebekah going with the servant to become the wife of Isaac.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- The servant
- Laban
- Bethuel
- Rebekah
- Camel drivers
- Other servants in Laban and Bethuel's household

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

At the end of the previous story, Rebekah ran home to tell her family everything that had happened. As this story begins, Rebekah's family and brother, Laban, heard her story. When he saw the gifts, Laban rushed out to the well immediately to invite the servant to their house to stay. He saw the man and said, "Come and stay with us, you who Yahweh has blessed! Why are you standing outside of town, when I have a room all ready for you, and a place for the camels?"

Pause the drama.

Ask the actor playing Rebekah, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Excited! Wow, beautiful jewelry!" and
- "Curious, why was this man so generous?" and
- "In a hurry to show my Mother and tell the family about the visitor from Abraham's house."

Ask the actor playing Laban, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Surprised! Where did Rebekah get that gold jewelry?"
- "Happy! This man is rich and gives away expensive gifts," and
- "Nervous. I will be in charge of getting everything prepared for my father. I hope I do ok."

So the man went home with Laban, and Laban's servants unloaded the camels, gave them straw for bedding, and food. He also gave water to the camel drivers who came with the servant for them to wash their feet. Then the servants served the food. But Abraham's servant said, "I don't want to eat until I have told you why I have come." Laban answered, "Tell us."

Pause the drama.

Ask the actor playing the servant, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Happy. Rebekah's brother has come to greet me and invite me to their home,"
- "Thankful, God answered my prayers immediately."

Ask the actor playing Laban, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Tired, hosting is hard work!" and
- "Happy, looking forward to the discussion."

The servant explained, Yahweh has greatly blessed my master, Abraham. He has become a wealthy man. Yahweh has given him flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, much silver and gold, donkeys, and men and women servants. Sarah, the wife of my master Abraham, was very old when she gave birth to my master's son, Isaac, and my master has given him everything he owns. My master made me take an oath. He said, "Do not allow my son to marry one of these local Canaanite women. Go to my father's house, to my relatives and find a wife there for my son." But I said to my master, "What if I can't find a young woman who is willing to go back with me?" My master said, "Yahweh, in whose presence I have lived, will send His angel with you and make your mission successful. Yes, you must find a wife for my son from among my people, my father's family. Then you will have fulfilled your oath. But if you go to my relatives and they refuse to let her go with you, you will be free from my oath."

Pause the drama.

Ask the actor playing the servant, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Thoughtful. I must explain thoroughly what has brought me here." and
- "Excited. Look how God has blessed my master."

Ask the actor playing Laban, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Excited. My uncle Abraham is rich!" and
- "Mixed feelings, I am happy for Rebekah but I will miss my sister. She will go very far away."

Ask the actor playing Rebekah, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Curious. Why is this stranger here today?" and
- "Glad. Wow, I am really glad I treated this man with respect by giving him water and water to his camels."
- "Satisfied. I did not understand why the young man himself did not come."

Today, I came to the spring just outside of town, I began to pray "Yahweh, God of my master Abraham, please make my trip successful. I am standing by this spring, I will wait for a young woman to come out to get water, and I will say, 'Please give me water from your jar to drink,' Then let her say back to me, 'Drink this water and I will get water for your camels.' If she says this, I will know Yahweh has chosen her for my master's son."

Pause the drama.

Ask the actor playing the servant, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Cautious. I must carefully explain today's events." and
- "Happy. Yahweh has arranged all this."

Ask the actor playing Laban, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Interested. I want to hear from this man what happened." and
- "Cautious. How much money will we get in this deal? She is beautiful and works hard."

Ask the actor playing Rebekah, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Shy. All this discussion is about me." and
- "Happy but sad. I know I have to marry someone, so it is good he is rich, but sad to leave my family and live so far away."

Before I finished my silent prayer, Rebekah came out of the city with her water jar on her shoulder. She went down to the spring and got water. I said to her, "Please give me a drink." She quickly lowered her jar from her shoulder and said, "Drink this. I will also get water for your camels." So, I drank, and she gave water to my camels too. When I asked her, "Who is your father?" she answered, "My father is Bethuel, son of Milcah and Nahor." Then I put the ring in her nose and the bracelets on her arms, and I bowed my head and thanked Yahweh. I praised Yahweh, the God of my master Abraham, because he led me straight to my master's niece to be his son's wife.

Pause the drama.

Ask the actor playing the servant, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Grateful. Yahweh has led me to this girl it seems as I asked." and
- "Worried. Is she available? Will this family cooperate?"

Ask the actor playing Laban, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Happy. My sister did well by respecting the man." And
- "Interested. My uncle Abraham has finally sent news."

Ask the actor playing Rebekah, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Embarrassed. All this discussion about me!"
- "This is all very interesting that the stranger appeared." and
- "Glad. Wow, I am really glad I treated this man with respect by giving him water and water to his camels."

Speaking to Laban and Bethuel, the servant asks, "Please tell me, will you or won't you show steadfast love and faithfulness to my master? Please tell me yes or no, and I will know what to do next."

Pause the drama.

Ask the actor playing the servant, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Anxious. I have presented the whole story. What will be their answer?" and
- "Confident. Why would anyone turn down this proposal led by God and His blessing?"

Ask the actor playing Laban, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Heavy. This is a big decision." And
- "Glad that my father is here too to help with this decision."
- "Greedy. How much will I get?"

Ask the actor playing Rebekah, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Nervous. What will my father and brother say? This is my future they are discussing."
- "Excited, I will marry a rich man!"

Ask the actor playing Bethuel, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- "Sad. I knew this day would come for my baby girl." and
- "Happy, This is a generous offer from my brother Abraham's family." and
- "Amazed. Abram left years ago. Now he is rich, with a son with his wife Sarai."
- "Impressed. Abram is determined to follow God and stay in that land God promised him."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Pause this audio here.

The servant met Rebekah, Abraham's niece and a potential bride for Isaac by the well. Rebekah gave the servant and his camels water to drink. The servant gave Rebekah a gold nose ring and 2 gold bracelets. There is a lot of repetition in this section from Gen 24:1-28. This builds drama in the story.

You may want to pause here and listen again to your translation of Genesis 24:1-28. Pause this audio here.

Now, Rebekah had a brother, Laban. Laban heard her story. When Laban saw the nose ring and bracelets, Laban ran out to the spring, or well, immediately to invite the servant to their house to stay. When Laban arrived, Laban saw the servant standing by the camels at the spring. Use the same words or phrases for **camels**, nose ring, bracelets, and spring as you have used in previous passages. Camels is in the Master Glossary.

It seems that Laban has taken over the day-to-day responsibility for his father, Bethuel. Laban saw the servant and said "Come and stay with us, you who **Yahweh** has **blessed!**" This was probably a way to greet a wealthy visitor. Here blessed means "to help, to do good to, to favor." There is also a sense of general well-being and material prosperity. Use the same word or phrase for bless as you have previously. Bless is in the Master Glossary.

The name for God in this passage is **Yahweh**. Use the same word for Yahweh as you have previously. Yahweh is in the Master Glossary.

When the servant tells his story he calls himself Abraham's **servant**. Use the same word or phrase for servant as you have previously. Servant is in the Master Glossary. Later the servant says that Yahweh has given Abraham both men and women servants. Use the same word or phrase that you have used previously for women servants.

The servant explained that Yahweh, the **God** of Israel, has greatly blessed his **master**, Abraham, with flocks of sheep and cattle, donkeys, and camels. Use the same words for God, master, flocks, sheep, cattle, and donkeys as you have used in previous passages, and remember that God and master are in the Master Glossary.

The servant says that his master made him take an **oath** to go to Abraham's father's **clan**, or family group, to find a wife. An oath is a strong promise that people must keep their agreement and cannot change it. The person who speaks the oath asks God to punish them if they do not keep their promise. Use the same words for clan and for oath as you have previously. Oath is in the Master Glossary.

The servant tells Rebekah's family that Abraham told him that an **angel** would go with him. Bible scholars agree that this is the special angel of Yahweh. You can refer to angel of Yahweh in the Master Glossary for more information, but you will just call this an angel.

When Rebekah told the servant who her father was, the servant **bowed** down and **worshipped** Yahweh. Use the same words for bowed down and worshipped as you have used in previous passages, and remember that bow and worship are in the Master Glossary.

The servant asks Rebekah's family to show Abraham **steadfast love** and **faithfulness**. Use the same words for steadfast love and faithfulness as you have previously. Steadfast love is in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 24:29–49

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (16187147 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 24:50–61

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 24:50–61 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

- What do you like in this story?
- What do you not like or not understand?
- What does this story tell us about God?
- What does this story tell us about people?
- How does this story affect our daily life?
- Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Abraham's servant told Laban and Bethuel a full retelling of the events of why he came to their house. The LORD, Yahweh, led the servant to meet Rebekah, a potential wife for Abraham's son, Isaac.

Laban as the older brother played an important role in arranging Rebekah's marriage. It was not unusual in that culture for the older brother to lead the discussions instead of the father. The elder men first had to decide if the young woman would be allowed to accept the offer of marriage. Both men agreed that Yahweh brought about this marriage match, so they did not want to argue or talk about it in a good way or in a bad way. "Take her and go," does not mean they should leave immediately, rather that the men grant their permission for Rebekah to marry Isaac.

The servant does not thank the men but again bows his head and kneels to worship and thank the LORD. This is similar to his action found earlier in the story. The story moves to a new series of events with transition words like "and" or "then." The servant brought out gifts. The servant gave more gifts to Rebekah. In their culture the man's family must provide a bride price. The woman's family provided a dowry. These gifts consisted not only of jewelry but also other useful items for her household made of gold and silver. The gifts he gave to Laban and their mother were "expensive" and meant to show Abraham would take good care of Rebekah.

Stop and discuss: Who arranges marriage in your culture? Is there a bride price in your culture? What is the woman's family responsible to pay for? What is the man's family responsible for? How is this decided? Do the families involved exchange gifts? What kind of gifts are given to the bride and the groom by their families?

The story shifts again with the words "and" or "then." Only after the discussions and the giving of the gifts, the servant and all the camel drivers eat the meal given to them by their hosts. The next morning, the servant asked permission to return to Abraham and Isaac with Rebekah. Although it was unusual for the men to ask a young woman's opinion, the men asked her if she was ready to go *immediately*. The men asked if she was ready to go and sent her nurse and servants with her to help guard the safety of Rebekah. The 10 extra days would have been used to be sure the arrangement was proper, and she would be safe to go. The men asked Rebekah because it required risk on her part.

Rebekah's childhood nurse accompanied her. In this context, nurse means the woman servant who helped raise her from childhood. In a future story, the nurse's name, Deborah, will be mentioned. The nurse, Deborah, served as personal servant. She was a loyal servant and the last connection to Rebekah's birth family. Rebekah also had servant girls to go with her to her new life and home mentioned later in the story.

The family sent Rebekah and her nurse with the servant back to Isaac and Abraham. Before she left, Rebekah's family spoke formal, poetic blessings over her. When a family member blessed another member, the blessing was believed to have great power. They thought the Lord listened and fulfilled their blessing. The word blessing here is not the material, financial blessing. The first blessing is that of being able to give birth to many children who will then have children until there are a "great number" of descendants. In their language the words in their greeting made a rhyme and was poetic. This is like the blessing God gave Adam and Eve in the garden to have many descendants.

The second verbal blessing Rebekah's family gave to her was "may your offspring possess the gate." This meant that future generations would conquer the cities of their enemies. It was a blessing to have power and victory over their enemies.

Discuss: Does your culture give verbal blessings? When do these verbal blessings occur? Are some blessings more important than others? Why? What are some examples of verbal blessings? What verbal blessings are important in your culture? What is involved in the departure ceremony of a woman leaving her father's house to go to her husband's house?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

First scene: Abraham's servant recounted to Rebekah's brother and father of how the servant met her. This meeting was an answer to the servant's prayer. The brother and father see this is from the Lord. They do not object to the marriage proposal.

Second scene: The servant brings out gifts for the bride and family. The servant and the camel drivers eat the meal provided by the family.

Third scene: The next morning, the servant asks permission to return to Isaac with Rebekah. Laban calls for Rebekah to ask her. They asked Rebekah and she agreed to go immediately.

Fourth scene: The servant and caravan leaves with Rebekah accompanied by her servants and is blessed by her family.

The characters in this story include:

- The servant
- Laban
- Bethuel
- Rebekah's mother
- Rebekah
- Camel drivers
- Rebekah's nurse
- Rebekah's servant girls
- The family household

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Abraham's servant told Laban and Bethuel the whole story of how he found Rebekah. Laban and Bethuel said, "The Lord has obviously brought you here, so there is nothing we can say. Here is Rebekah." Remember, this was a polite and nice conversation. The visiting men were offered food to eat. "Here is" shows that Rebekah was there for the conversation of the men. They said, "Take her and go. Yes, let her be the wife of your master's son, as the Lord has directed." When the servant heard their answer, he bowed down to the ground and worshiped the Lord. Remember, the servant should be on his knees bowing down in a posture of humility to worship God.

The servant brought out silver and gold jewelry and clothing and presented them to Rebekah. Remember to have objects that are laying around (no need to buy anything) to represent the gifts. The servant should hand these objects to Rebekah, Laban, and the mother. He also gave expensive presents to her brother and mother.

Then they ate their meal, and the servant and the men with him stayed there overnight. Remember, these men were no doubt tired and hungry for a home-cooked meal.

Early the next morning, the servant said, "Let me go back now to my master with your Rebekah." Laban and the mother said, "We want Rebekah to stay with us at least ten days. Then she can go." The servant said, "Don't delay me. The Lord has made my mission successful; now send me back so I can return to my master." Remember, this is a friendly conversation that was likely out of concern for Rebekah's safety. They would probably not see her again. Laban and her mother said, "We'll call Rebekah and ask her what she thinks." Remember Rebekah was not present for this conversation. Rebekah agreed to go with the servant.

The family said good-bye to Rebekah and sent her away with Abraham's servant and his men. Remember there were many mixed emotions—like happiness and even some sadness in saying goodbye to Rebekah and the servants. The woman who had been Rebekah's childhood nurse went along with her. Remember, the nurse is an older lady. The family gave Rebekah their special blessing as she parted: Remember, this was not a casual thing. Such blessings from the family were thought to be answered by God. "Our sister, may you become the mother of millions of descendants! May your descendants be strong and conquer the cities of their enemies."

Then Rebekah and her servants mounted the camels and followed the man. The family spoke blessings to Rebekah to have many children and these children would be strong and defeat future enemies. Rebekah and her servants got on their camels. The family should wave goodbye to the whole group leaving. Abraham's servant took Rebekah, her servants and went on his way. Rebekah and the servant women should wave goodbye or whatever is appropriate in your culture to Rebekah's family.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- The servant
- Laban
- Bethuel
- Rebekah's mother
- Rebekah
- Camel drivers
- Rebekah's nurse
- Rebekah's servant girls
- The family household
- Camels

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

In the first scene, Abraham's servant told Laban and Bethuel the whole story of how he found Rebekah. They said, "The Lord has obviously brought you here, so there is nothing we can say. Here is Rebekah." They said, "Take her and go. Yes, let her be the wife of your master's son, as the Lord has directed." When the servant heard their answer, he bowed down to the ground and worshiped the Lord.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing the servant, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like: "Wonderful! An amazing answer to my prayer!" And "Humbled, wow, God is good." Ask the actor playing Laban, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like: "Amazed. God has arranged all of this." And "Happy, I am glad my sister has made such a good match for a husband." Restart the action.

In the second scene, the servant brought out silver and gold jewelry and clothing and presented them to Rebekah. Remember to have objects that are laying around (no need to buy anything) to represent the gifts. The servant should hand these objects to Rebekah, Laban, and the mother. He also gave expensive presents to her brother and mother. Then they ate their meal, and the servant and the men with him stayed there overnight.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing the servant, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like: "Happy! So glad this day is here. Excited. Isaac will be so happy with beautiful Rebekah. An amazing answer to my prayer!" Ask the actor playing Rebekah, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "Excited! Wow, I am getting married!" And, "Will he be nice?" And, "Sad. I will now leave my family. I may not see them again." Restart the action.

In the third scene, the next morning, the servant asked to return to his master. Laban and the mother asked for Rebekah to stay another ten days. Then she can go. The servant said, "Don't delay me." Laban and the mother said, "We'll call Rebekah and ask her what she thinks." Remember Rebekah was not present for this conversation the next morning. The actor playing Rebekah should enter the area. They asked, "Are you willing to go with this man?" Rebekah said, "Yes, I will go."

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Laban "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like: "Concerned. That was very quick. I hope we did not rush this." And, "Happy. My sister will have a good husband." Ask the actor

playing Bethuel, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like: "Sad. My little girl is leaving. Will I see her again?" And, "Glad. My daughter has a good match with Abraham's son. We are family. He will keep her safe." Restart the action.

In the fourth scene, the family said good-bye to Rebekah and sent her away with Abraham's servant and his men. The woman who had been Rebekah's childhood nurse went along with her. The family gave Rebekah their special blessing as she parted: "Our sister, may you become the mother of millions of descendants! May your descendants be strong and conquer the cities of their enemies." Then Rebekah and her servants mounted the camels and followed the man.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Rebekah, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "Thankful. I am glad my nurse and servants are coming too. It will make my new life easier." And, "Sad. I will miss my mother and my family," and, "Happiness. I have dreamed of this day my whole life."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Abraham's servant told Laban and Bethuel the whole story of how he found Rebekah. They said, "The **Lord** has obviously brought you here, so there is nothing we can say." Everyone recognized Yahweh God arranging this meeting and submitted to His will. The word for **God** in this passage is **Yahweh**. Translate Yahweh in the same way you have in previous passages. Yahweh can be found in the Master Glossary. They said, "Take her and go. Yes, let her be the wife of your master's son, as the Lord has directed." When the servant heard their answer, he bowed down to the ground and **worshipped** the Lord. Worship can be found in the Master Glossary. The servant did not thank the men, he stopped and thanked God immediately. He was in a low, humble position.

The servant brought out **gifts** that consisted not only of clothing and jewelry but also other useful items for Rebekah's household made of gold and silver. He also gave expensive gifts to her brother and mother. This was part of the marriage contract in their family. The servant did not buy Rebekah. She was not a slave.

Early the next morning, the servant asked permission to leave immediately because "The Lord has made my mission successful." Although the family wanted more time, they called Rebekah and asked her, "Are you willing to go with this man?" Rebekah said, "Yes, I will go."

The family said good-bye to Rebekah. The family gave her this **blessing** as she parted. This blessing was for many strong children that would defeat their enemies. Blessing can be found in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 24:50–61

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (12774744 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 24:62–67

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 24:62–67 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

- What do you like in this story?
- What do you not like or not understand?
- What does this story tell us about God?
- What does this story tell us about people?
- How does this story affect our daily life?
- Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Abraham's servant, Rebekah, and her servants left Rebekah's home and traveled to meet Isaac to become his wife.

They traveled on the camels to Isaac's home in the Negev desert. The Negev is the southern desert region of the land of Canaan. There is little rainfall with not many water sources. In the wet season, animals graze there. It seems that Isaac or Isaac and Abraham moved south from Hebron where Abraham originally settled. Isaac returned from Beer Lahai Roi. The name means "well of the Living One who sees me." It is the place where Hagar met the angel of the LORD years before Isaac was born.

See the map that shows Hebron, southern Canaan, the Negev desert, Beer Lahai Roi.

One evening, Isaac was out walking in the countryside where people did not farm just to think. Isaac looked up and saw camels coming toward him. At the same time Rebekah looked up and saw Isaac. Rebekah quickly got down from her camel. She did not stop to make the camel kneel in order to get off of his high back.

The servant called Isaac my master. The text does not say if Abraham died but the historic narrative now shifts the focus to Isaac. So, Rebekah quickly put on a veil. A veil is a piece of cloth that is wrapped around the head, shoulders, and sometimes the face. It was a custom in that culture for a bride to wear a veil over her face in the marriage ceremony. Rebekah put on a veil to show respect to her future husband and to show modesty.

Stop and discuss: What are the special pieces of clothing worn by the bride and groom during the marriage celebration in your culture? Are there any special pieces of clothing that show respect?

The author omits details in the story. The servant, Rebekah, and the entourage stop their journey, and the servant meets with Isaac. The servant explained all that happened to Isaac during the journey to find Rebekah.

The marriage ceremony is not described in the text. The wording in the text is a symbolic gesture that takes place. Isaac brought Rebekah into the tent that belonged to his mother, Sarah. In their culture, this symbol meant that now Rebekah would be the head woman of the family. Rebekah became his wife; they were now married.

Stop and discuss: What are the symbolic gestures that happen when people get married in your culture? Describe the marriage ceremony in your culture. Is the position of head woman or man in your culture important?

The text says that Isaac loved Rebekah. This is not loved in a sexual meaning but genuine affection for Rebekah. Sarah died about 3 years before they were married. Rebekah was a special comfort to Isaac in his grief over the death of his mother Sarah.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 2 scenes.

First scene: Isaac is now living in southern Canaan. He sees the camel caravan approaching at the same time Rebekah sees him.

Second scene: The servant tells Isaac the story of how he found Rebekah. Isaac marries Rebekah.

The characters in this story include:

- Isaac
- Rebekah
- The servant
- Camels
- The rest of the people who accompanied the servant and Rebekah

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In the first scene, the narrative is focused on Isaac. He has moved to southern Canaan. He is out walking in the countryside thinking. In the distance, he saw the camel caravan coming toward him. At the same time, Rebekah saw Isaac and quickly got off the camel she was riding. Rebekah asked who he was, and the servant said it was his master Isaac. So, Rebekah then covered her face with her veil. "So" tells us the reason why Rebekah put on her face veil. She prepared herself to meet the groom and the wedding.

The second scene begins with the word "then" and introduces the next scene. The servant explained to Isaac about everything that happened during the journey to find Rebekah. He brought Rebekah into the tent of his mother Sarah. Isaac married Rebekah. Isaac loved Rebekah and she was a comfort to him in his sadness after the death of his mother.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 2 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Isaac
- The servant
- Rebekah
- Camels
- The rest of the people who accompanied the servant and Rebekah

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

In the first scene, Isaac lived in southern Canaan in the Negev desert. One day, while Isaac was out walking to think, Isaac saw camels coming in the distance. At the same time Rebekah saw Isaac walking in the field. She immediately got off her camel and asked who he was. The servant confirmed it was Isaac.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing the role of Isaac, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "Curious, who could this be?" Or, "Excited, is this my father's servant returning with my bride?" Or, "Sad, I miss my mother, I am still sad after her death." Ask the actor playing the role of Rebekah, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "Happy, we are finally here!" Or, "Nervous. I hope he loves me." Restart the action.

In the second scene, the servant explained all that happened since he left Abraham's house until now. Isaac and Rebekah were officially married. Isaac took Rebekah to his mother's old tent. Rebekah is now the head woman of the family. Isaac loved Rebekah and she comforted him during his time of sadness after his mother died.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing the role of Isaac, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "Content. I now have a beautiful wife. She makes me happy." Ask the actor playing the role of Rebekah, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "Content. I have a good husband who gave me the important tent of his mother. He treats me special already."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the first scene, Isaac moved to the southern part of Canaan near a water source. Before Isaac was born, this water source was where Hagar encountered the angel of the LORD. The name of the well in their language, **Beer-lahai-roi**, means the well of **the God who sees me**. Isaac was out walking in the **countryside**, fields that were not farmed. Isaac was **meditating** or **thinking**. Isaac and Rebekah saw each other at the same time. In the passage, the servant uses the word, **master**, for Isaac. This form of master is a respectful title for someone in a high position or status. This is a lesser status than "lord." Master can be found in the Master Glossary. Rebekah responded by putting her **face veil** on to prepare for the wedding.

In the second scene, the **servant** told Isaac everything that had happened during the servant's journey. The word servant can be found in the Master Glossary. The text does not mention the marriage ceremony. Instead, it states the symbol of Isaac taking Rebekah to his mother Sarah's tent and becoming the head woman of the family. Rebekah became Isaac's **wife**. Isaac **loved**—in a friendship way, not just sexual—Rebekah. She was a comfort to him.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 24:62–67

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (8292519 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (9635608 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 6](#)

Genesis 25:1–11

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 25:1–11 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?

6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The previous story was about Abraham's servant who went to find a wife for Abraham's son, Isaac. As Abraham instructed, his servant found a woman from Abraham's relatives. This woman was Rebekah. The servant brought Rebekah home with him, and Isaac married Rebekah.

The present story comes back to Abraham, but it closes his story and the story of Ishmael. This section begins to shift the focus to Isaac and his descendants. Abraham's first wife, Sarah, has died. In this story, Abraham marries another woman named Keturah. She was called a wife, but later, she will be identified as a concubine. A concubine is a wife with a lower status and rights.

Stop and discuss the following question: In your culture, do men have more than one wife? How do you describe women who have fewer rights than other women that are married to the same man?

Nothing much is known about Keturah except that she gave birth to six sons for Abraham: Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shua. This means that, in addition to Ishmael and Isaac, Abraham had six more sons. The total number of Abraham's sons were eight. Two of the sons that Abraham had with Keturah had children of their own. Midian had five sons: Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah. Midian's family will become a people group and will be called Midianites. They are a people group that will be important in some stories later. Abraham's other son, Jokshan, had two children: Sheba and Dedan. In one of the previous stories, the names Sheba and Dedan appeared already. Two of Noah's grandchildren had the same names. Be sure to translate these names the same way you have translated these names before. Jokshan's son, Dedan had three children that would later become people groups. They were known as the Asshurites, the Letushites, and Leummites. All these people were said to be children of Keturah. But this list has Keturah's sons, grandsons, and other descendants. Therefore, the word "children" here means that they were descendants of Abraham and Keturah.

Then Abram "gave all he had to Isaac." Abraham realized he was going to die soon, so he gave everything that he owned as inheritance to Isaac. This means that Isaac will receive the land, servants, animals, and other valuable objects after Abraham dies. Meanwhile, Abraham gave gifts to "the sons of his concubines." These sons referred to the children who were born through Hagar and Keturah. While he was still alive, Abraham commanded his other sons to live somewhere in the east, far away from his son, Isaac. Abraham did this so that his other sons will not take Isaac's inheritance from him. Abraham also didn't want them to threaten Isaac's position as head of the clan. It is important to remember that when his other sons left, they were with their wives and their children.

Stop and discuss the following questions:

1. How does a person in your culture make sure that his heir will receive the inheritance that he wants to leave with him?
2. How does he make sure that nobody will take the inheritance of his heir?

All this means that Abraham had one wife, Sarah. And his son and rightful heir was Isaac. Hagar and Keturah were concubines, or wives of lower status. Abraham's sons with his concubines were still considered Abraham's children, but they also have lower status compared to Isaac, because their mothers were concubines. Because they have lower status, they cannot inherit their father Abraham's inheritance. Only Isaac was the rightful heir of Abraham's inheritance.

The next part of the story tells of Abraham's death. Abraham "breathed his last" and "died in a good old age, an old man full of years." This means Abraham died at a very old age. He died at age 175. He also died content with how he lived his life following God. Abraham was "gathered to his people," which means that like his ancestors, he died. The repeated ideas that describe Abraham's death shows that his death is an important event.

Abraham's sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him "in the cave of Machpelah." A cave is a hole that is usually on the side of a hill, cliff, or mountain. This cave is located in a field called Machpelah. This field was owned by Ephron, the son of Zohar the Hittite. Hittites are the name of a group of people who are descended from a man named Het. In a previous story, Abraham bought this field from Ephron so that he could bury his wife Sarah. This field is in the east of Mamre. Mamre was a place near Hebron. Abraham was buried in the same cave as his wife Sarah.

After Abraham died, God blessed Abraham's son, Isaac. God's blessing is important because it is when God gives favor or good things to a person. In this story, it means God promised to protect Isaac, grant him success, and give him great wealth. Isaac lived at Beer Lahai Roi. Beer Lahai Roi is the place where God spoke to Abraham's concubine, Hagar.

Stop and show where Beer Lahai Roi is located on the map. It should show that it is between Kadesh and Bered. It is important to remember that Isaac's wife Rebekah was with him when he settled in Beer Lahai Roi.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has four scenes.

First scene: Abraham is with his new concubine, Keturah. They are with their six children: Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. They are also with Midian's five children: Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah, and Jokshan's two children, Sheba, and Dedan. They are also with Dedan's descendants, the Asshurites, the Letushites, and the Leummites.

Second scene: Abraham gives all he had as inheritance to Isaac. Then, Abraham gives gifts to his other sons, and orders them to live somewhere in the east.

Third scene: Isaac and Ishmael bury Abraham in the cave of Machpelah where Sarah was buried.

Fourth scene: God blesses Isaac. Isaac lives at Beer Lahai Roi.

The characters in this story include:

- Abraham
- Keturah
- Zimran
- Jokshan
- Medan
- Midian
- Ishbak
- Shuah
- Ephah
- Epher
- Hanoch
- Abida
- Eladaah
- Sheba
- Dedan
- Asshurites
- Letushites
- Leummites
- Ishmael

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives to visualize the story and the action in it.

In scene one, Abraham's family with Keturah are in one scene. Because this single scene will have many characters, you may have each character wear something that shows the name of the character they are portraying. Or, you may use a stone or a rock for each person, and put their stones together by family. This will help you remember the names of each person in the genealogy. Then, all of them can be doing something together such as eating. Eating was an activity that the whole family did together during Abraham's time.

In scene two, Abraham is showing Isaac everything he owns: land, animals, servants, and other valuable objects. Abraham tells Isaac that Isaac is his rightful heir. So, everything he owns Isaac will inherit once he dies. After this, Abraham will give some gifts to his other sons. These gifts include silver, gold, and some animals. If there are objects like silver, gold, or animals that are not available for this scene, you may use any object that may represent them. Then, Abraham will instruct his other sons to live in a country in the east. The scene ends with Abraham's other sons traveling to the east. It is important to remember that when Abraham's sons with Keturah left, they were with their wives and children.

In scene three, Isaac and Ishmael come back together from the different places they live to bury their father together. They are in the field of Machpelah. Remember that Abraham was 175 years old and was content with his life. He died and was gathered to his people, or he went to be with all those who had died before him. It is important to remember that Isaac and Ishmael bury Abraham in the same cave Abraham bought and buried his wife Sarah in.

In scene four, God blesses Isaac and promises to protect him, give him wealth and many children. It is unclear how God does this, but an actor may portray God saying these blessings to Isaac. Then, Isaac and his wife, Rebekah, will pitch their tent at Beer Lahai Roi.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has four scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Abraham
- Keturah
- Zimran
- Jokshan
- Medan
- Midian
- Ishbak
- Shuah
- Ephah
- Epher
- Hanoch
- Abida
- Elداah
- Sheba
- Dedan
- Asshurites
- Letushites
- Leummites
- Ishmael

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

In scene one, Abraham marries Keturah. After some time, they have six children. Their children will also have children so that Abraham's descendants will increase.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Abraham, "How do you feel?" You may hear things like, "Praise God for he has given me more descendants," or "With these new descendants, God has again fulfilled his promise!" Restart the action.

In scene two, Abraham shows Isaac everything that he owns, and tells him that Isaac will inherit everything.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Isaac, "How do you feel?" You may hear things like, "God has truly blessed my father just as he promised!" or "With this much property, I'm sure that our family will be well." Restart the action.

Abraham will also give gifts to his other sons. But after this, Abraham will instruct them to live in a country in the east. Remember that when his other sons left, they are with their wives and children.

In scene three, Isaac and Ishmael bury Abraham. They place Abraham's body in the cave next to his wife, Sarah.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Isaac, "How do you feel?" You may hear things like, "I'm sad that my father, Abraham, has now died," or "I wish to follow my father Abraham who followed God." Restart the action.

In scene four, God blesses Isaac.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Isaac, "How do you feel?" You may hear things like, "I thank God for blessing me, just as God blessed my father, Abraham." or "God's blessing for my family means that God fulfills his promise to my father, Abraham."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story is about Abraham's new wife and descendants. It is also about Abraham's death, and how God blesses Isaac as Abraham's heir.

After Sarah died, Abraham took another woman as his **wife**. The woman's name is Keturah. The Hebrew word for "wife" can be translated as woman, wife, or concubine depending on the context. Keturah was called a wife, but later, she was identified as a concubine. A concubine is a wife with a lower status and rights. So, in this story, it can be translated either as a wife or a concubine. Keturah gave birth to six sons. Two of the sons that Abraham had with Keturah had children of their own. Midian had five sons. Abraham's other son, Jokshan, had two children. Jokshan's son, Dedan had three children that will later become people groups. They were known as the Asshurites, the Letushites, and Leummites. All these people were said to be **children** of Keturah. The word for children here can be literally translated as sons. But this list has Keturah's sons, grandsons, and other descendants. This means that the word children here does not refer only to Abraham and Keturah's six sons. Rather, it refers to their children, their grandchildren, and great grandchildren. In other words, it refers to the descendants of Abraham and Keturah.

Then, Abraham gave everything that he owns to Isaac as his inheritance. Abraham then sent his other sons and their families away.

Then Abraham died. Abraham lived enough days that he was 175 years old when he died. Then Isaac and Ishmael bury Abraham in a cave that Abraham had bought years before to bury Sarah in.

After Abraham died, God **blessed** Isaac. Blessing is when a person gives favor to another person. In the Bible, God is the source of all blessings. When God blesses a person, it means that he is pleased with that person. Therefore, he promises and grants children, success, protection, even wealth to that person. In this story, it means God will protect Isaac, grant him success, and give him great wealth. For more information on the word, bless, you may refer to the Master Glossary. Isaac lived at **Beer Lahai Roi**. Beer Lahai Roi is the place where God spoke to Abraham's concubine, Hagar.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 25:1-11

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (11667346 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
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- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (8898988 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 25:12–18

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 25:12–18 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The previous story tells about Abraham's new family. Before Abraham died, he gave everything he owned to Isaac as his inheritance. Abraham also gave gifts to his sons from his concubines, or lesser wives, and told them to migrate to a country in the east. Then, Abraham died. Isaac and Ishmael buried Abraham in the cave where Abraham buried his wife, Sarah. After Abraham died, God blessed Isaac, and Isaac lived in Beer Lahai Roi.

The present story starts with the introduction, "These are the generations of Ishmael." The Hebrew word for "generations" is a term that refers to a story or a record of a person's ancestry. It is also often translated as "genealogy" or "family history." This record shows which family a person belongs to. This information is important because a person's social status, rights, and obligations are based on his genealogy, or family history. Ishmael was Abraham's son. Ishmael's mother was Abraham's concubine, Hagar. Hagar was an Egyptian woman who was the servant of Abraham's wife, Sarah. A servant is a man or a woman who lives in the same household as his master to serve the needs of his master's family.

After the introduction, the sons of Ishmael were listed beginning from the eldest to the youngest. Ishmael's firstborn and eldest son was Nebaioth. After him were Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. This means Ishmael had twelve sons. These twelve sons became princes or rulers of their tribes. A tribe is a small group of people that usually have one ancestor. The members of the tribe, therefore, are typically blood relatives. The head of a tribe was called a prince or a ruler. This means that Ishmael's sons had their own descendants. Since they are the rulers and common ancestors of their tribes, their tribes were probably named after them too. In addition, their names became the place names of the places where their tribes settled. They camped in their tents so that they could move from one place to another. These places were called "encampments." But they also lived in certain places more permanently. These places were called "villages."

Stop and discuss the following question:

1. How are tribes or people groups named in your culture? Are they also named after a common ancestor?
2. How are places named in your culture? Are they also named after a certain person?

Ishmael's sons and descendants fulfill God's promise to his mother, Hagar. Recall that God promised Hagar that Ishmael will be the father of twelve rulers. God also promised that Ishmael will have descendants that will be so many that it will be impossible to count them. His descendants will be a great nation.

Then, Ishmael "breathed his last and died and was gathered to his people." This means that like Ishmael's ancestors Ishmael has also died. He died at the age of 137.

Ishmael's descendants lived from Havilah to Shur. Havilah and Shur are two different places. The words, "from Havilah to Shur" describe the size of the land where the descendants of Ishmael lived. The exact location of Havilah is uncertain. But it is said to be near the place where the garden of Eden was. The exact location of Shur is also uncertain. But it is said to be located between the southern part of Canaan, and the northern part of Egypt. This is why the entire land area that covers from Havila to Shur is described as the opposite of Egypt. It is also in the direction of Assyria. During this time, Assyria was a small country in northern Mesopotamia.

Stop and show where Havilah, Shur, Egypt, and Assyria are located on the map.

Then, the descendants of Ishmael lived far away from all their relatives. The original Hebrew of this section is unclear. Some people think that they simply lived far from their relatives, while some people think they were hostile to their relatives. In this story, their relatives refer to the other descendants of Abraham.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has three scenes.

First scene: Ishmael introduces his twelve sons Nebaioth, Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah.

Second scene: Ishmael dies and is buried somewhere.

Third scene: Ishmael's descendants live from Havilah to Shur, away from their relatives.

The characters in this story include:

- Ishmael
- Nebaioth
- Kedar
- Adbeel
- Mibsam
- Mishma
- Dumah
- Massa
- Hadad
- Tema
- Jetur
- Naphish
- Kedemah

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives to visualize the story and the action in it.

In scene one, Ishmael may be portrayed as introducing himself. He is Abraham's son. His mother is Hagar the Egyptian, the servant of Abraham's wife, Sarah. Then, Ishmael lists his sons from the eldest to the youngest.

Stop and discuss the following question: how do people in your culture list their family members?

Remember that Ishmael's sons will become rulers of their own tribes, and the places where they lived will also be named after them.

In scene two, Ishmael dies at the age of 137. This passage says that he "breathed his last and went to be with his ancestors."

Stop and discuss this question: How does your culture talk about someone dying at an old age?

In scene three, his twelve sons will pitch their tent from Havilah to Shur, away from their relatives.

Stop and show where Havilah, Shur, Egypt, and Assyria are located on the map.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has three scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Ishmael
- Nebaioth
- Kedar
- Adbeel
- Mibsam
- Mishma
- Dumah
- Massa
- Hadad
- Tema
- Jetur
- Naphish
- Kedemah

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

In scene one, Ishmael introduces himself as Abraham's son. His mother is Hagar the Egyptian, the servant of Abraham's wife, Sarah. Then Ishmael will introduce his sons from the eldest to the youngest, beginning with Nebaioth to Kedemah. Ishmael will also mention that his sons will have their own descendants and they will become rulers of their own tribes. The places where they will live will be named after them.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Ishmael, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "Praise God for he has fulfilled his promise to my mother, Hagar," or "My sons and descendants show that God is faithful to his promise." Restart the action.

In scene two, Ishmael's sons will bury him somewhere.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Ishmael's sons, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "We will miss our father, Ishmael," or "We will lead our own families and clans just like our father, Ishamel." Restart the action.

In scene three, Ishmael's sons will pitch their tent from Havilah to Shur.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Nebaioth, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "We need to live only from Havilah to Shur," or "We should live far away from our relatives, especially from Isaac. This is what our grandfather, Abraham, wanted."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

This story is about Ishmael's genealogy. The story starts with the introduction, "These are the **generations** of Ishmael." The Hebrew word for "generations" refers to a story or record of a person's ancestry. It is also translated as genealogy or history. A person's ancestry was important because that was the basis of a person's social status, rights, and obligations. Translate this word the same way you have translated this word before. You may refer to the Master Glossary for more information on genealogies and generations.

Ishmael was Abraham's son. His mother was Abraham's concubine, Hagar the Egyptian. Hagar was the servant of Abraham's wife Sarah. A servant is someone who lives in the same household as his master to serve the needs of his master's family. A servant could be male or female. Remember to translate servant the way you have translated it before. You may also look up this word in the Master Glossary for more information.

Ishmael's sons are listed **in the order of their birth**. The words "in the order of their birth" mean from eldest to youngest. Ishmael had twelve sons. His firstborn son is Nebaioth. His youngest son was Kedemah. Ishmael's sons will have their own descendants. As a result, they will be the rulers of their tribes. Their tribes will be named after them. A tribe is a small group of people that usually have one ancestor. The members of the tribe, therefore, are typically blood relatives. The head of a tribe was called a **prince** or a **ruler**. Their **villages** and **encampments** where they live will also be named after them. Villages and encampments refer to places where they lived. When people encamped, they lived in tents so that they could move from one place to another. Encampments, therefore, meant groups of tents. On the other hand, villages referred to places that people built when they wanted to stay in a certain place permanently.

Ishmael's sons will live from **Havilah to Shur**. This land area was opposite of Egypt and was in the direction of Assyria. The exact location of Havilah is uncertain. But it is said to be near the place where the garden of Eden was. The exact location of Shur is also uncertain. But it is said to be located between the southern part of Canaan, and the northern part of Egypt. **Egypt** was a country south of Canaan. Throughout the book of Genesis, Egypt will be a place of refuge for the main characters whenever they are in danger. In Hebrew, the word **Assyria** was Asshur. People who study this story disagree about whether Asshur was a city of Assyria, or it was another place name for Assyria. Most Bible translations translate this word as Assyria instead of Asshur.

Stop and show where Havilah, Shur, Egypt, and Assyria are located on the map.

Then "**he settled** over against all his **kinsmen**." The word "he" in some Bible translations most likely refers to Ishmael. Ishmael was already dead by this time. The word for "settle" in Hebrew literally means "to fall." The meaning in Hebrew is difficult to understand. As a result, people who study this story disagree about its meaning. But most Bible translations understand this to mean that Ishmael's descendants lived far away from

their kinsmen. In Hebrew, the word for kinsman is the same word for brother. It can also be translated as relatives. In this story, it refers to the other descendants of Abraham. Ishmael's sons decided to live far from their relatives.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 25:12-18

Audio Content

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Genesis 25:19–34

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 25:19–34 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The previous story was about the genealogy of Ishmael and Ishmael's death. The present story is another genealogy but this time it is about Isaac and his two sons, Esau and Jacob. In this story we begin to see their struggles and desires to become the most important person in Isaac's life.

The story begins with the introduction, "These are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son." The Hebrew word for "generations" is a term that typically refers to a story or a record of a person's ancestry. It is also often translated as "genealogy."

Abraham was the father of Isaac. Isaac married Rebekah. Rebekah's father Bethuel lived in the region of Paddan-aram. Both his father and brother Laban were from the Aramean people group. Laban is mentioned here because he will play an important role in the next stories.

Stop and show where Paddan-aram is located on the map. The map should also show the surrounding places such as Mesopotamia, Syria, Haran, and Canaan.

Isaac talked with God and asked him for help for Rebekah because she could not have children—she was barren. Isaac prayed to God because, during that time, people thought that when a woman was barren, it meant that God cursed her. It is unclear if God was the reason that Rebekah could not have children. Nevertheless, God granted what Isaac prayed for. As a result, Rebekah became pregnant.

The children struggled within Rebekah. It means that the children were fighting each other inside their mother's womb. Because of this, Rebekah thought to herself, "Why is this happening to me?" Rebekah's

question may have been due to the intense pain caused by the struggling children in her womb. So, she asked God.

God said two things to Rebekah. First, God said, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided." Then, God said that "the one shall be stronger than the other, the older shall serve the younger."

God was saying that there were two sons in Rebekah's womb. These two sons will have many descendants who will become their own nations. The two nations will oppose each other. The descendants of the older brother will actually be weaker than the descendants of the younger brother. The descendants of the younger brother will be stronger, meaning that they will have more people and become more powerful. The descendants of the older one will serve the descendants of the weaker one. This begins the struggles we see between people groups and descendants in the coming stories.

When it was finally time for Rebekah to have the children, she really did have two sons! They were twins—two babies born at the same time. The first and the older child that came out of Rebekah was described as "red" and "all his body like a hairy garment." The words "hairy garment" means that the child had hair all over his body. The color red probably refers to the color of the hair that covered his body. Because of this, his parents Isaac and Rebekah named him Esau.

Then the younger child was born. He came out "with his hand holding Esau's heel." The heel refers to the bottom of a person's foot. So, Isaac and Rebekah named the younger child, Jacob. Jacob's name in Hebrew sounds like the Hebrew word for a heel. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to Esau and Jacob.

The two boys grew up. Esau became skilled in hunting animals for food. Esau was also "a man of the field." This means that he liked to live in the fields close to where the animals lived so he could easily hunt them. On the other hand, Jacob preferred to stay close to his home. Isaac loved Esau because he ate his game. In this story, the word love means that Isaac favored Esau, so he gave more attention to Esau than to Jacob. Game refers to the meat of wild animals. Isaac loved Esau because Isaac enjoyed eating the meat of the wild animals that Esau hunted. We don't know why, but Rebekah loved Jacob, so she gave more attention to Jacob than to Esau. Isaac's love for Esau, and Rebekah's love for Jacob will be important information for later stories. We are beginning to see the struggles for importance within the family even now.

One day, Jacob was boiling food, called stew. While Jacob was cooking, Esau returned home very tired and hungry from hunting animals in the field. Esau asked Jacob if he could eat some of the red stew that Jacob was cooking. Esau described the stew as color red perhaps because the ingredients mixed in it turned the stew into color red. Because Esau wanted to eat the red stew, and perhaps also because his entire body was covered in red hair, people began calling him Edom. In Hebrew, Edom sounds like the Hebrew word for "red." In later stories, Esau's descendants will be called Edomites.

In response to Esau's request, Jacob said, "First, sell me your birthright." Here, sell means "give me something in exchange for what you want." In this case, Jacob was asking Esau for his birthright in exchange for the red stew that Esau was asking for. Birthright refers to Esau's rights as firstborn. The firstborn son had special rights and privileges. He often inherits almost everything that his father will leave behind as an inheritance when his father dies. Jacob may have asked for Esau's birthright so that instead of his brother, he will be the one receiving the inheritance from his father Isaac.

Esau's response emphasizes his hunger. Then Esau asked a question, "What good is birthright to me?" He does not expect an answer to this question. Esau is saying that his status as firstborn is meaningless. Because if he dies because of hunger, he will not receive his inheritance.

Jacob asked Esau to promise before God that he will give his birthright to Jacob.

Stop and discuss the following question: In your culture, how does a person make a promise to another person?

So, Esau swore to Jacob. Then, Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew. The bread refers to bread made without yeast or leaven. Lentil stew is a soup that is mixed with beans.

Stop and show a picture of a bread and a lentil stew.

Esau ate the bread, drank the lentil soup, and went on his way. It is unclear where Esau went, but we know he hurried as he ate. This story shows us that Esau despised his birthright, or did not think that it was a valuable thing.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has six scenes.

First scene: Isaac introduces his genealogy. He mentions his father, Abraham, and his wife, Rebekah. He also mentions Rebekah's father Bethuel and his brother, Laban.

Second scene: Isaac prays to God to help Rebekah get pregnant because she was barren. God grants Isaac's request. After some time, Rebekah becomes pregnant.

Third scene: Rebekah feels the children fighting in her womb. Then, she thinks to herself why the children are fighting. Rebekah asks God why this is happening. God responds to Rebekah and tells her about the two children in her womb, as well as their destiny.

Fourth scene: Jacob and Esau are born. Esau is born first with his body covered with red hair. Jacob is born immediately after Esau came out of Rebekah. Jacob grabs Esau's heel. Isaac and Rebekah named their sons.

Fifth scene: Jacob and Esau grow up. Esau is in the field hunting, while Jacob is in their tent. Esau will bring home a game for his father Isaac. Isaac will enjoy the game that Esau brought. Rebekah is with Jacob inside their tent.

Sixth scene: Jacob is cooking stew. Esau returns from the field very tired and hungry. Esau asks Jacob for stew. But Jacob says that Esau should sell his birthright first. Esau tells Jacob that he is very hungry, and his birthright is worthless if he will die anyway. Jacob asks Esau to swear before God that he is giving his birthright to Jacob. Esau swears before God that Jacob will now take his birthright. So, Jacob gave bread and lentil soup to Esau. Esau eats, drinks, and goes away immediately. Esau also despised his birthright.

The characters in this story include:

- Isaac
- Rebekah
- God
- Esau
- Jacob

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives to visualize the story and the action in it.

In scene one, Isaac introduces himself as Abraham's son. Then he mentions his age, and then introduces his wife, Rebekah, as well as her father and brother.

Stop and show where Paddan-Aram is located on the map. The map should also show the surrounding places such as Mesopotamia, Syria, Haran, and Canaan.

In scene two, Isaac prays to God because Rebekah was barren.

Stop and discuss the following question: How do people pray in your culture? Answering this question will help you think about how to embody Isaac's prayer.

He asks God to help Rebekah become pregnant. God grants Isaac's prayer and Rebekah becomes pregnant. It is unclear how God helped Rebekah. Remember, that some time will pass before Rebekah conceives. When Rebekah becomes pregnant, Isaac thanks God for granting what he prayed for. It is unclear where this scene happened.

In scene three, Rebekah may have shown some pain and discomfort because she feels that the children in her womb are struggling. She says, "Why is this happening to me?" Then, she asks God. It is unclear how Rebekah asked God.

In scene four, the time came for Rebekah to give birth. It said, "Behold, there were twins in her womb." The word behold is an expression that is typically said before a very important statement. In this case, the important statement is that Rebekah had twins in her womb. Twins refer to two children who were born at the same time. Isaac takes the young Esau from Rebekah's womb. As soon as he sees Esau, Isaac describes Esau as full of red hair over his body. Then, before Isaac successfully takes Esau from Rebekah, the young Jacob grabs Esau's heel. So, from Rebekah's womb, Isaac takes Esau, and then Jacob afterward. Isaac and Rebekah named the firstborn Esau because he was covered in red hair. Isaac named the younger child Jacob because he grabbed his brother's heel.

In scene five, Esau and Jacob grow up to be young adults. It is unclear how old the twins were at this time. But in this scene, it is important to show how Esau and Jacob are different from each other. Esau is out in the field hunting an animal because he was "a skillful hunter, a man of the field." While Esau hunts, Isaac is inside their tent. Meanwhile, Isaac describes Jacob as "content to stay inside the tent." The scene ends with Esau serving the game of the animal he hunted, and Isaac enjoys eating it. Isaac loved Esau. Meanwhile, Rebekah loved Jacob.

Stop and discuss the following questions: How do fathers and mothers show their love for their children in your culture? Answering this question will help you embody Isaac's love for Esau and Rebekah's love for Jacob in this scene.

In scene six, Jacob is cooking red stew. Then, Esau returns home from the field. He looks very tired and hungry, so he asks Jacob for some red stew. The Hebrew words for the red stew literally translates, "red, red." Esau repeated the Hebrew word for the color red to say to Jacob that he wants to eat the stew immediately. He explains that it is because he was exhausted.

Stop and discuss the following question: How does a person say that he is extremely hungry?

Because Esau really wanted to eat the red stew, people began calling him Edom. Then, Jacob asks Esau to sell his birthright first. Esau's response to Jacob started with "Look," which means that he wanted Jacob to listen carefully to what he is about to say next. This Hebrew word for "Look" is the same Hebrew word for "Behold." He said, "Look, I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?" Here, Esau was saying that solving his hunger is more important than this birthright. Jacob insists that Esau should sell his birthright first. So, Esau promised to give his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave food and drink to Esau. The scene ends with Esau going out of the tent to go somewhere after he ate the bread and drank the lentil soup. As he walks out, he despises his birthright.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has six scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Isaac
- Rebekah
- God
- Esau
- Jacob

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

In scene one, Isaac will introduce his family, beginning from his father Abraham, and then Rebekah his wife. Isaac will mention his age when he took Rebekah as his wife. He will also introduce Rebekah's father and brother who are both Arameans.

In scene two, Isaac prays for God to help Rebekah become pregnant because she was barren.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Isaac, "How do you feel?" You may hear things like, "God promised my father Abraham that our family will have many descendants. Surely God will help us have children," or "I don't know why Rebekah is barren, but God will surely help her become pregnant." Restart the action.

God grants Isaac's prayer and Rebekah becomes pregnant. Be sure to show that God will do something, perhaps an action, to show that he was the one that helped Rebekah become pregnant.

In the third scene, Rebekah shows pain and discomfort because the children in her womb are struggling. Because of her pain, she says, "Why is this happening to me?"

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Rebekah, "How do you feel?" You may hear things like, "Carrying these children in my womb is difficult. Now they are even fighting!" or "The children fighting in my womb are causing me so much pain! Why is this happening?" Restart the action.

Rebekah asks God, perhaps through prayer. Then, God will respond to Rebekah. Be sure to portray God speaking directly when he tells Rebekah about the destiny of her children.

In the fourth scene, Esau and Jacob are born. Young Esau comes out first, and Isaac describes him as full of red hair over his body. As the young Esau is coming out of Rebekah's womb, the young Jacob grabs his brother's heel. After the twins are born, Isaac and Rebekah name their children. Isaac was sixty years old when Esau and Jacob were born. Be sure to show that Isaac looks old in this scene.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Isaac, "How do you feel?" You may hear things like, "Praise God because he keeps his promise that we'll always have descendants in our family!" or "I thank God because even though I'm already old, and Rebekah was barren, God gave us our own children!" Restart the action.

In the fifth scene, Esau and Jacob grow up from being young boys to young adult males. This scene shows the difference between Esau and Jacob. Esau loved to be in the field to hunt for animals. He becomes a skilled hunter. Meanwhile Jacob likes to stay inside the tent.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Isaac, "How do you feel?" You may hear things like, "I loved Esau because he always hunts animals and prepares game for me to eat." You may also ask the actor playing Rebekah, "How do you feel?" You may hear things like, "I loved Jacob because he is quiet and prefers to stay inside our tent." Restart the action.

In the sixth scene, while Jacob cooks stew, Esau returns home from the field. He was tired and hungry. He asks Jacob for some red stew. Because of this, people will also call him Edom. From here, Jacob and Esau have a

conversation about Esau's birthright. Be sure to portray Esau and Jacob speaking the direct speeches that they used in this scene. After Jacob asked Esau to sell his birthright,

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Jacob, "How do you feel?" You may hear things like, "It is unfair that Esau will be my father's heir just because he was born first," or "I want Esau's birthright so I will inherit everything that my father Isaac owned."

As Jacob asked, Esau sold or gave his birthright to Jacob so he could have some stew. Jacob gave bread and lentil stew to Esau to eat. Esau ate the bread, drank the stew, and went off immediately.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Esau, "How do you feel?" You may hear things like, "I don't care about my birthright because it is worthless if I die of hunger anyway," or "Jacob can have my birthright. What matters is that I'm no longer hungry."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

This story is about the **generations** of Isaac. It tells about Isaac's sons, Esau and Jacob. The Hebrew word for generations is a term that typically refers to a story or a record of a person's ancestry. It is also often translated as **genealogy**. In the book of Genesis, this word has two main functions. First, it functions to signal a new section or story. Second, it functions to show which family a person belongs to. This information is important because a person's social status, rights, and obligations are based on his ancestry. Be sure to use the same word for generations that you have used in the earlier genealogies. You may refer to the Master Glossary for more information on generations or genealogies.

Because Rebekah was barren, she could not be pregnant. **Barrenness** refers to a woman's inability to conceive a child. Because God commanded humans to multiply and fill the earth, bearing children was considered a great blessing that fulfills God's will. On the other hand, inability to bear a child was considered a great dishonor. People thought that women who were unable to have children were cursed by God. So, people often treated them with ridicule and disgrace. Rebekah's barrenness is especially a problem because God promised Abraham that his descendants will be many. Because Isaac is Abraham's son, Isaac was supposed to have children. So, Isaac **prayed** to God to help Rebekah become pregnant. Praying refers to the act of communicating with God. Be sure to translate the word pray the same way you have translated it in the earlier stories. You may refer to the Master Glossary for more information on prayer. God grants Isaac's prayer, and Rebekah becomes pregnant after some time. Remember also that the name of God used in this story is **Yahweh**, the personal name for God. Your team should translate this name in the same way you have in other stories and remember that Yahweh is in the Master Glossary.

Rebekah asked God why the babies were struggling or fighting within her. The word that many translations translate as children means sons.

God said to Rebekah that "Two **nations** are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided." The word nation refers to a place or territory that is governed by a group of people. Be sure to use the same word for nation that you have used in the earlier stories. You may refer to the Master Glossary for more information about the word nation. The Hebrew word for **divide** means separate. In this story, the idea is that the two children and their descendants will live separately because they will become enemies. Then God also said, "The one shall be **stronger** than the other, the older shall **serve** the younger." The word for strong refers to power in terms of numbers and military strength. It means the descendants of one child will overpower and defeat the descendants of the other child. The word serve describes the work of a servant. It involves different kinds of work. For example, male servants may serve as herders, taking care of their master's livestock. Female servants, like Hagar, may serve as helper to the wife. In this story, it means that the descendants of the older child will serve under the rulership of the descendants of the younger child. Be sure to use the same word for serve that you have used in the earlier stories.

The important statement in this context is that the children in Rebekah's womb were **twins**. "Twins" refer to two children that are born at the same time. The firstborn came out with red **hairy garment**. Hairy garment meant that hair covered all his body. The younger child came out grabbing the **heel** of his brother. The heel

refers to the bottom of a person's foot. Isaac and Rebekah named the firstborn, Esau, and the younger one they named **Jacob**. Jacob in Hebrew sounds like the Hebrew word for a heel.

Esau was a hunter and a **man of the field**. Here, "man of the field" means that Esau was always out in the field, living with wild animals so he could hunt them for food. Jacob grew up too. But he preferred to stay inside their **tents**. A tent was a temporary shelter made of woven cloth or animal skin. Be sure to use the same word for tent that you have used in the earlier stories. Isaac **loved** Esau because he enjoyed eating Esau's **game**. Esau's "game" refers to the meat of the wild animal that Esau killed and then cooked. Meanwhile, Rebekah loved Jacob. The word love refers to the voluntary act of showing favor to a person.

One day, when Jacob was cooking **stew**, Esau returned from the field. A stew is a food that is boiled. In this story, Jacob was cooking red stew with lentils. Because Esau was very tired and hungry when he came home, Esau asked Jacob for some stew. Because Esau wanted to eat the red stew that Jacob was cooking, and perhaps because of the red hair that covered his body, people also called him **Edom**. In Hebrew, "Edom" sounds like the word for the color red. But Jacob said that Esau should **sell** his **birthright** first before he gives him some stew. "Selling" is the act of giving a valuable object to a person in exchange for another valuable object. "Birthright" refers to Esau's rights as firstborn. The firstborn son had special rights and privileges. He often inherits almost everything that his father will leave behind as an inheritance when he dies. Jacob asked Esau to swear an oath, or make a promise before God, to give him his birthright. God has a right to punish the person if he does not keep the promise. Many times people would do a ceremony to make the promise binding, or they simply make a statement. So Esau swore to give his birthright to Jacob. In this story, it is unclear how Esau swore before God. What is certain is that for both Esau and Jacob, the oath that Esau swore was binding. So, Esau **despised** his birthright. Here, "despise" means that Esau regarded his birthright as worthless.

Speaking the Word

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Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 25:19–34

Audio Content

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Genesis 26:1-33

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 26:1-33 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The passage is continuing the narrative story of Isaac and his family. Isaac was 60 years old when his twin sons Esau and Jacob were born. They are not mentioned in this passage. Because they are not mentioned, we don't know when the events in this passage take place. This passage could have happened sometime after the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah but before the twins were born. This passage interrupts the narrative of the life of Jacob and gives us additional information about Isaac.

The passage presents three different events in Isaac's life that parallel events in the life of his father, Abraham. The three events in the life of Abraham happened before Isaac was born.

The first event that occurs is a famine such as occurred during Abraham's time. Abraham went to Egypt during the famine. A famine is a time when there is not enough food for the people and animals to eat. This famine was severe. Abraham went to Egypt during the famine, but Isaac moved his family to a town called Gerar in the south, near the Negev desert. A tribe of people named the Philistines lived in this area. Abraham had also lived in this town before Isaac was born. At the time that Abraham went there, the king's name was Abimelech. That king has died. There is another king with the same name at the time that Isaac goes to Gerar.

Show a map indicating the location of the Philistine towns, including Gerar. The map should include all the promised land so that Isaac's journey can be tracked.

God spoke to Isaac. In this passage, the word for God is Yahweh. Isaac may have been on his way to Egypt just as his father Abraham had done during a famine. However, God tells Isaac not to go to Egypt. God tells Isaac to remain in Gerar. God specifically tells Isaac to live as a foreigner or stranger or alien in the land of Gerar. God is telling Isaac to stay apart or not join in with the culture of those who lived in the area. God reminds Isaac that Abraham obeyed God. Isaac obeyed God and remained in Gerar.

Stop and discuss as a group: Have you ever moved to another village or country? How did you manage to live with your new neighbors? Why do you think God is telling Isaac to remain separated from his neighbors?

God also repeats the promise to Isaac that God gave to Abraham. This means that God confirms the covenant with Isaac that God had made with Abraham. God tells Isaac that God is renewing this agreement because Abraham listened and obeyed everything that God had said. God wants Isaac to understand that the covenant is for Isaac's family also.

Discuss as a group: Why does God repeat the covenant with Isaac that God had made with Abraham? What does your people group do with important agreements after someone dies?

When Isaac moved to Gerar, he was afraid that the local men might kill him if they knew that Rebekah was his wife. Rebekah was beautiful, so Isaac told everyone she was his sister. You will remember that Abraham did the same thing with Sarah when they went to Gerar. Then one day, the king looked out his window and saw Isaac caressing Rebekah. This means that Isaac was embracing Rebekah or really showing affection towards her. This was not a sexual act.

Stop and discuss as a team: How would men in your culture feel if a visiting man lied about his wife as Isaac did? What are some polite words or phrases you would use to describe what Isaac and Rebekah were doing?

The king realized that Rebekah was Isaac's wife and was angry with Isaac. The king said that Isaac had deceived the people. Because of this, there had been the danger that one of the local men might have tried to sleep with Rebekah. This would have been a serious sin. So, the king told all the people that no one was to harm Isaac or Rebekah.

The passage moves to the second event in Isaac's life. This is a conflict about water rights. Abraham also had a conflict about water rights with the Philistines of Gerar. While living in Gerar, Isaac plants a crop and has a tremendous harvest of grain. This means that Isaac remained in Gerar long enough to prepare the ground and plant the seed. God blesses Isaac. Isaac reaped a hundredfold more than he planted. He becomes richer and richer with many servants and many animals. The Philistines become jealous of Isaac and his wealth.

Discuss as a group: How do you count wealth in your culture? Tell a story about a time when jealousy about wealth affected relationships in your community.

You may want to do this activity as a group to illustrate what 100 times looks like. Have the group put a spoon full of grain in a small bowl. Then using the same spoon, put 100 spoonfuls in a bucket or large bowl. You can also use dirt, stones or even sticks for the same visual.

Isaac used wells as a water source for the flocks and herds because it seldom rains in the area of Gerar. The Philistines used dirt to fill the wells that Isaac's herds used, but Isaac needed the water to take care of his family, servants, and animals.

Show a picture of a dug well—this might be a drawing to show the ancient well.

Discuss as a group: what would your people do if someone took away the water source or damaged the wells?

The king noticed the conflict that was developing. The king ordered Isaac to leave Gerar. A similar thing happened with Abraham. Isaac agreed to move. Isaac moved away from the town to the Gerar valley. This would be the area where the water would run in a stream after a rain or if it rained further out in the desert. After a rain, the water soaks into the ground. It's easier to dig a well in an area such as this one. Isaac found the wells that Abraham had dug and re-opened them. Isaac also used the same names for the wells that Abraham had used. Isaac dug new wells in the valley of Gerar and gave each one a name. One well was named Esek, which means "argument," and the other well was named Sitna, which means "hostility." After Isaac dug the well, the Philistines then claimed that each well belonged to them. The first well was valuable because it had a spring in it. This means that the well would keep flowing with water.

Stop and discuss as a group: Why do you think Isaac named the wells? How would you identify public water sources?

When Isaac moved to the Gerar Valley, Isaac set up his tents. We don't know what he lived in while he was in the town. The tents were usually cloth made from goat hair or other animal hair. Living in a tent made it easy for Isaac to move his family from place to place. Isaac moved from place to place in the valley of Gerar. He finally dug a well that no one disputed or claimed.

Show a picture of a tent.

Discuss as a group: Isaac did not fight the Philistines over the wells. How do people in your area resolve water problems?

Isaac named that well Rehoboth which means open space. Eventually Isaac moved to the town of Beersheba, a town in southern Israel that is near the Negev Desert. Beersheba is also a town that Abraham had lived in. The night that Isaac arrived there, God spoke to him. God repeats the promises that God has already made to Abraham and to Isaac. This is not a new promise. God said, "I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid." God said he was "God" or the creator God who made the covenant with Abraham to bless him and make his descendants a great nation. God does not use his name Yahweh here. Isaac hears this promise again and builds an altar to worship God. Isaac remained in Beersheba. His servants dug another well.

Show a picture of an altar.

Stop and discuss as a group: Why do you think God repeats the promises so many times? Why is this repetition important? Isaac worshiped God by burning an animal on an altar as his response to the promise. How would your people respond to a promise from God?

While Isaac is in Beersheba, the third event takes place. King Abimelech comes from Gerar to see Isaac. This also parallels what happened with Abraham. The first King Abimelech came to Beersheba to make a treaty with Abraham. In this passage, the king brings his advisor and army commander with him. The advisor and army commander have the same names as the army commander and advisor who came with the first King Abimelech. However, these are not the same men. The king wants to make a covenant or treaty with Isaac. King Abimelech is not demanding. The king wants no trouble between Isaac and the Philistines. The king says, "We have seen that the Lord, or Yahweh, is with you."

Stop and discuss: In your culture, how do people know that God is with someone?

At first Isaac responds with hostility towards the king. The king reminds Isaac of how well they treated him when he was in Gerar. After listening to the king, Isaac agrees to a peace treaty and prepares a special feast to celebrate the treaty. Then the next day the king and Isaac make a solemn promise to keep the treaty or covenant. Both the feast and the solemn promise are cultural events that show that a treaty is important and official.

Stop and discuss: What would your people do to make a treaty official?

Isaac's servants dug a new well in Beersheba and were excited to find water. Isaac named the well Shibah which means "solemn promise" because of the treaty that he had made with King Abimelech of Gerar. The town of Beersheba grew up around the well. The name Beersheba means "well of the solemn promise."

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 6 scenes.

First scene: During a famine, Isaac moves to Gerar. God repeats the covenant that God made with Abraham.

Second scene: Because Isaac is afraid of the Philistines, he says that Rebekah is his sister. The king discovers the lie.

Third scene: Isaac becomes so rich and powerful that the king asks him to leave Gerar.

Fourth scene: There is conflict between Isaac's servants and the Philistines over water.

Fifth scene: Isaac moves to Beersheba where God again repeats the promises made to Abraham.

Sixth scene: The king of Gerar comes to Isaac and requests a treaty. After the treaty ceremony, Isaac's men dig a new well in Beersheba.

The characters in this story include:

- God
- Isaac
- Rebekah
- King Abimelech
- Isaac's servants
- Philistines
- The king's advisor
- The king's army commander
- Abraham is referred to several times

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In the first scene, a severe famine starts in the land. Isaac moves to Gerar which is a Philistine town in the southern area of the country. It is important to remember that it seems that Isaac is on his way to Egypt just as his father Abraham went to Egypt during a famine. However, while he is in Gerar, God appears to Isaac and tells him not to go to Egypt. God tells Isaac to remain in Gerar but to live as a foreigner or alien or stranger among the people. Then God repeats the same promises that God had made to Abraham. God tells Isaac that the promises are also for Isaac because Abraham listened to God and obeyed all that God said to do. Isaac remained in Gerar.

The promise that God makes to Isaac has several parts.

1. Isaac is to live as a stranger or foreigner in Gerar.
2. I will be with you and bless you.
3. I will give all these lands to you and your descendants just as I promised Abraham.
4. I will cause your descendants to be as numerous as the stars and I will give them these lands.

5. Through your descendants, all the nations or peoples of the earth will be blessed.
6. I will do this because Abraham listened to me and obeyed me.

In the second scene, Isaac lies about Rebekah because he was afraid that the men would kill him because Rebekah was very beautiful. This deception lasted for some time. Then King Abimelech happened to look out the window and see Isaac caressing Rebekah. The king was angry with Isaac. The king called for Isaac to come into the presence of the king. It is important to remember that King Abimelech was angry. He asked a question to show his anger, "Why did you do this to us?" Abimelech did not want his people to sleep with Rebekah and sin greatly. King Abimelech then issued an order that no one was to harm Isaac or Rebekah.

In the third scene, Isaac plants crops while still in Gerar. God blessed Isaac. Isaac's flocks of sheep and goats and herds of cows increased again and again. The Philistines became jealous and filled the wells with dirt. The jealousy and problems between the Philistines and Isaac grew until the king told Isaac to leave.

In the fourth scene, Isaac moves to a valley near the city. Isaac re-opened some of his father Abraham's wells. Isaac gave the wells the same names that Abraham had given them. Isaac's servants dug a new well and found a spring which means that the water will flow continuously. The Philistines claimed that this well belonged to them. Isaac named this well Esek which means "argument." Isaac's servants dug another well and again the Philistines claimed it. Isaac named this second well Sitnah which means "hostility." Isaac moved on to another place and again dug a well. This time there was no dispute over the well. Isaac named it Rehoboth which means "open space."

In the fifth scene, Isaac moves to Beersheba. This is a town in the south of Israel and it is near the desert. Abraham had lived in Beersheba. God appeared to Isaac again in Beersheba and repeated the promises that he made to Abraham. After hearing the promises, Isaac built an altar and worshiped God, probably by burning an animal on the altar. Isaac remained in Beersheba and his servants dug another well.

In the sixth scene, King Abimelech comes to Beersheba to meet with Isaac. The king brings his army commander and his advisor with him. It is important to remember that they want to make a treaty with Isaac because they realize he is more powerful than they are. At first Isaac reacts with hostility. Then Isaac listens to them and agrees to the treaty. Isaac prepares a feast to celebrate the treaty. They each solemnly promise to keep the treaty. The king and his advisors depart and leave Isaac in peace. The same day, Isaac's servants dig a new well and Isaac names it Shibah which means "oath." This gave the meaning of the name Beersheba which means well of the solemn promise.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 6 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- God
- Isaac
- Rebekah
- King Abimelech
- Isaac's servants
- Philistines
- The king's advisor
- The king's army commander
- Abraham is referred to several times

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points. You will hear "Stop the action" followed by some questions with suggestions of what you might hear as answers. You will then be asked to restart the action.

In scene one, a severe famine occurs. Isaac moves his family to the town of Gerar. God appears to Isaac and tells Isaac to remain in Gerar as a foreigner. Then God repeats the promises that God had made to Abraham.

Stop the action: Ask God, "Why do you want Isaac to live as a foreigner in Gerar?" You may hear, "I don't want Isaac to adopt the local customs and start worshiping their gods." Ask Isaac, "What does it mean to you that you are to live as a foreigner?" You may hear, "It means that I'm to stay separate from the Philistines." Or, "It means that I shouldn't eat their food or worship their gods." Ask Isaac, "How do you feel when you hear God repeat the same promises that were made to your father, Abraham?" You may hear, "It makes me glad to know for sure that these promises are for me also." Or, "I feel humble to have the relationship with God." Or, "My father Abraham obeyed God. I hope I can obey God also." Restart the action.

In scene 2, Isaac is afraid of the Philistine men. Isaac lies about his wife Rebekah and says Rebekah is his sister. The king discovers that Isaac and Rebekah are married. The king is really angry with Isaac.

Stop the action: Ask Isaac, "Why did you lie about Rebekah?" You may hear, "I was afraid that the men here would kill me." Or, "I didn't trust God to protect me." Ask Rebekah, "How did you feel when you heard that Isaac had lied about your relationship?" You may hear, "I was sad." Or, "I was worried for him and for me." Or, "I was afraid of the Philistine men." Ask the king, "How did you feel when you realized that Isaac had lied about Rebekah?" You may hear, "I was really angry with him. It could have caused any of us to commit a sin." Or, "I was really disappointed in him. He should have trusted me to take care of him." Restart the action.

In scene 3, Isaac becomes a very rich man while living in Gerar. The Philistines are jealous of his wealth. They fill in the wells with dirt. Finally the king tells Isaac to leave the city.

Stop the action: Ask the Philistine men, "Why did you fill the wells with dirt?" You may hear, "We wanted Isaac to leave our area." Or, "He is taking all our wealth for himself." Or, "He is becoming too rich and powerful for us." Ask the king, "Why did you tell Isaac to leave?" You may hear, "I didn't want war between his servants and my people." Ask Isaac, "How did you feel when the problems occurred?" You may hear, "I tried to live in peace with them. I don't understand why they were so angry with me." Restart the action.

In scene 4, the conflict continues. Isaac moves to a nearby valley and digs some wells. The Philistines claim these wells as their own. Isaac keeps moving and finally is able to dig a well that the Philistines don't claim as theirs.

In scene 5, Isaac moves to Beersheba. The very night he arrives in Beersheba, God appears to him. God identifies himself as the God of Abraham. Then God repeats the promises that were made to Abraham. After hearing these promises, Isaac built an altar and worshiped God.

Stop the action: Ask Isaac, "God just repeated these promises again. How do you feel about hearing them now?" You may hear, "I am so happy that God is continuing the promises through me and my family." Or, "It makes me feel humble. I don't deserve all this." Ask Isaac, "Why did you build an altar and worship God?" You may hear, "I must worship God. God just made me an incredible promise. My only response can be worship and thanksgiving." Restart the action.

In scene 6, King Abimelech along with 2 advisors comes to Beersheba to make a covenant or treaty with Isaac. At first Isaac is hostile. But the king explains what they want and Isaac agrees to the treaty. Isaac prepares a feast to celebrate the treaty. Then the next day they make solemn promises to keep the treaty. The king and his advisors leave. Isaac has another well dug and remains in Beersheba.

Stop the action: Ask the king, "Why is it important for you to make this agreement with Isaac?" You may hear, "He is getting more rich and powerful every day. I want to be sure he doesn't attack us." Or, "I've seen how God is with him. I need to make sure he stays friendly to us." Ask Isaac, "How did you feel when the king said, he had seen that God is with you?" You may hear, "I'm glad that others can see that I have a special relationship with God," or "I'm humbled by this."

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

When a severe **famine** occurred in the land, Isaac moved his family south. A famine is a time where there isn't enough food for the people and animals. The cause can be natural such as not enough water or too much water. The cause can be man-made, such as war. We don't know the cause of this famine. However, it was severe enough that Isaac moved his family and animals to another place.

The city of Gerar was a **Philistine** city. The Philistines were a people who came from across the sea. They settled in the coastal towns in the south of Israel and also some towns inland. At this time, they were friendly to Isaac and his family. King Abimelech is the king of Gerar. Although this is a different king Abimelech, use the same name. Use the same name you used for the first king Abimelech.

God appeared to Isaac. The word for God in this entire passage, except one time, is **Yahweh**. Use the same word for Yahweh that you have used in other stories, and remember that Yahweh is in the Master Glossary. God tells Isaac to live as a **foreigner** in the land. A foreigner is someone who does not belong in the land—they do not fully follow the culture. God repeated the **covenant** that God had made with Abraham, Isaac's father. Covenant is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for covenant that you used with Abraham. God promised that all the peoples, or **nations**, of the earth will be **blessed** through the descendants of Isaac. The words bless and nations are discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for bless and nation that you have used in previous passages.

God told Isaac that he would bless him and that all the nations of the earth would be blessed because Isaac's father Abraham obeyed all of God's requirements, commands, decrees, and instructions. These four types of rules, when used together, mean that Abraham completely obeyed God. Requirements refers to everything God told him to do. Commands refer to God's teachings. Decrees refer to the things that God spoke and told Abraham to do. And instructions refer to the actual teaching and law God gave people. You may use a more active way to say this. You may say something like, "God said, 'Abraham did what I told him to do. He followed my instructions, the words I spoke, and what I taught him.'" These four kinds of rules are very similar in meaning. If you do not have different words for each of these rules, you may just explain that Abraham completely followed everything God commanded him.

When Isaac was in Gerar, one day the king saw Isaac **caressing** Rebekah. This was a type of embracing or hugging that would occur between married couples. It was not a sexual act. When the king saw them together, the king realized that Isaac had lied to the king about Rebekah being his sister. The king was angry. The king said that this lie could have caused someone to commit a great **sin**. Sin is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for sin here that you have used in other passages.

Isaac moved his family to the Gerar valley after some conflict about wells. They dug a well and discovered a **flowing spring**. This kind of well means that the water would flow all the time. It would not dry up during the dry season. This made the well valuable. The Philistines claimed that the well was theirs. Isaac named this well **Esek**, which means "argument." The next well was also disputed. Isaac named that well **Sitnah** which means "hostility." Isaac kept moving until he dug a well that no one disputed. Isaac named this well **Rehoboth** which means "open space."

Then Isaac moved to Beersheba and God repeated the promises to Isaac. Then Isaac built an **altar** and worshipped God. Altar is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word you used before for altar.

King Abimelech with two of his advisors came to Beersheba to make a **covenant** or treaty with Isaac. The word covenant is discussed in the Master Glossary. Here the covenant is between two people. Earlier in this passage, God is reminding Isaac of the covenant between God and Isaac. The same word is used for both types of covenants. When two people establish a covenant, there is usually some sort of feast to celebrate. Isaac prepared a feast for the king and his advisors. Then the next day, they swore a solemn **oath**, or a solemn promise. Oath is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word you have used before for oath. After the covenant was finished, the king and his advisors returned to Gerar. There was peace between Isaac and the Philistines.

Isaac's servants dug a well at Beersheba. Isaac named the well **Shibah**, which means "oath." Thus Beersheba became known as the well of the oath. The word Beer means "well."

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 26:1–33

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (25744321 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
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Genesis 26:34–27:17

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 26:34–27:17 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The story of Isaac and Rebekah interrupted the story of Isaac's two sons. Now we start the story of Isaac's family again. This is a narrative account of Isaac, Rebekah, and their twin sons, Esau and Jacob. Isaac was 60

years old when his sons were born. Now at the age of 40, Esau gets married. This means that Isaac is now more than 100 years old as this story starts.

Previously we learned that Esau is the oldest of the twins. As the firstborn son, he should become head of the family when Isaac dies. As the firstborn son, he has rights and responsibilities, called the birthright. However, Esau has already sold this birthright to his brother Jacob. Esau did not value this birthright.

Stop and discuss: What are the responsibilities of the oldest son in your culture? What are the rights of the oldest son in your culture? What happens when the oldest son doesn't accept his responsibilities or doesn't value his rights?

Now, Esau has married 2 foreign women. These two women were Hittite women. The Hittites were descendants of Canaan, who was the son of Ham. Noah had cursed Canaan and his descendants. The Hittites worshiped idols, whereas Isaac and his family worshiped God. Abraham was so afraid that Isaac would marry a foreign woman that he sent his servant to find a wife for Isaac from their relatives. Abraham would not have been pleased with Esau's choice of wives. Esau probably married these two women without the permission of his parents. According to the culture, his parents should have been involved in choosing Esau's wife. Esau's actions brought shame to the family. Other descriptions of these marriages say that the marriages brought grief or made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah.

Stop and discuss: Who arranges marriages in your culture? What happens if a son marries someone who brings grief to the son's parents? How could a marriage of a son cause grief to his parents in your culture?

This story is the third time there has been conflict between Esau and Jacob. The first was in the womb—they struggled to see who would be born first. The second was over the birthright for the oldest son—Esau sold his birthright to Jacob. Now we have the third battle over the blessing that fathers gave to the oldest son.

Isaac was at least over 100 years old. We don't know why but Isaac was nearly blind. This means that Isaac could not see well enough to recognize the face of a person known to him.

Isaac knew that he was nearing the end of his life. It was the custom for a father near the end of his life to give a blessing to his son. This blessing was a serious event. Blessings like this gave the father's property rights and authority to the son. This blessing also gave Isaac's son the promise from God that God would give him and his descendants this land. Once Isaac gives this blessing, it is binding, which means that no one can change it.

When we first learned about Esau and Jacob, we discovered that each parent had a favorite child. Isaac favored Esau while Rebekah loved Jacob. Now, in this passage, we see the consequences of this favoritism. Isaac plans to give the blessing to the eldest son or firstborn son. That blessing is part of his birthright, or the rights as the oldest son. Esau has sold that birthright to Jacob. We don't know if Isaac knew about Esau selling his birthright. Rebekah helps trick Isaac into giving the blessing for the oldest son to Jacob.

Stop and discuss as a group: What happens to a family when a parent has favorites among the children? Discuss also: In your culture, do fathers give a birthright blessing to the oldest son?

Isaac asks Esau to go hunting and to prepare a delicious stew with some of the game he kills. Isaac wants to have a special meal first and pronounce the blessing for the oldest son after the meal. Having a meal was not an essential part of the blessing. However, in the culture, eating together was an important part of a happy time together. Esau takes his bow and arrows and goes off to hunt for some wild game.

Show a picture of a bow and a quiver of arrows.

Rebekah has overheard what Isaac said to Esau. Before the twins were born, God had told Rebekah that the older son would serve the younger son. Now, Rebekah makes a plan to ensure that Jacob receives the blessing. There is no indication that Rebekah asks God what to do. Rebekah tells Jacob everything that Isaac had said to Esau. Then Rebekah tells Jacob to listen to her and do what she says. She plans to cook a meal using young goats and have Jacob serve it to Isaac and then receive the blessing. Jacob knows that physically he is not like Esau. Jacob knows that his father will recognize that Jacob isn't Esau. Jacob questions Rebekah's plan. However, Rebekah has a plan to take care of this problem. Rebekah dresses Jacob in Esau's clothes and puts goat hair over his arms and neck. Then Rebekah gives Jacob the meal to take to his father, Isaac.

Show a picture of a tent. Show a picture of goat skin with the hair on it. Show a picture of baby goats.

Discuss as a group: Jacob agreed to do everything that his mother said to do. Jacob entered into the plot to take the blessing. What would happen to someone in your family who tried to deceive his father to gain something?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Esau marries foreign women.

Second scene: Isaac tells Esau it is time for him to have his blessing as firstborn son.

Third scene: Rebekah prepares a way for Jacob to receive the blessing for the firstborn son.

The characters in this story include:

- Isaac
- Rebekah
- Esau
- Jacob
- Judith, Esau's wife
- Basemath, Esau's wife

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In scene one, Esau, who is 40 years old, the same age that Isaac was when he got married, decides to take wives. Esau marries Judith and Basemath. They are both Hittite women. These two women make life miserable for Isaac and Rebekah.

In scene two, Isaac is old and losing his eyesight. We know Isaac is over 100 years old because he was 60 when Esau and Jacob were born. Since Esau was 40 when he got married, Isaac is now over 100. We don't know Isaac's exact age. Isaac doesn't know when he will die but knows that he is now old and nearly blind. Isaac calls Esau to come to him. Esau replies by saying, "Here I am." This is a normal way to reply to someone who is close to you. Isaac tells Esau to go and get some wild game and prepare a special meal. This is actually Isaac's favorite meal. Isaac says that after they eat this special meal, Isaac will give Esau the blessing for the firstborn son. Esau does as his father says and goes off to hunt the wild game.

In scene three, Rebekah was listening to Isaac and Esau. Rebekah has a plan for the blessing to go to Jacob. First Rebekah repeats Isaac's instructions that he gave to Esau. Jacob now knows what Esau was to prepare. Rebekah's plan has several steps and Jacob must do each one.

1. Get 2 young goats from the flocks.
2. Rebekah will prepare a special meal that Isaac loves.
3. Jacob is to take the meal to Isaac and then receive the blessing.

There is an urgency to the way she is speaking. She needs to get this done before Esau returns.

Jacob knows that he isn't like Esau in physical appearance. Jacob questions Rebekah on this plan. Jacob is afraid he will be cursed but Rebekah says the curse should be given to her.

Then Rebekah continued her plan.

1. Rebekah prepared a delicious meal just the way Isaac liked it.
2. Rebekah got Esau's favorite clothes and had Jacob put them on.
3. Rebekah used the skin of the young goats to cover Jacob's arms, hands, and the back of his neck.
4. Then she gave Jacob the meal along with freshly baked bread to take to Isaac.

Jacob went to Isaac wearing Esau's clothes, with his hands and arms covered in goat hair so he would be hairy like Esau, and Jacob carried Isaac's favorite meal for Isaac to eat.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Isaac
- Rebekah
- Esau
- Jacob
- Judith, Esau's wife
- Basemath, Esau's wife

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Stop the action. Ask the actor playing one of the roles, "How are you feeling?" You may hear different responses. Restart the action.

In the first scene, no one speaks. We learn that Esau is now 40 years old and has married 2 wives. These women are foreign women, or women from another tribe. They are Hittites who are descended from Canaan who was the cursed son of Ham, Noah's son. They make life miserable for Isaac and Rebekah.

Stop the action: Ask Esau, "Why did you marry these foreign women?" You may hear, "Because I wanted to," or "They are beautiful and I wanted to get married," or "I can marry anyone I want." Ask Isaac and Rebekah, "How do you feel about this marriage?" You may hear, "I hate this. They have brought idol worship to our family," or "They have such different customs and they don't respect me at all," or "They caused shame because Esau didn't respect our customs." Restart the action.

In the second scene, Isaac is over 100 years old and nearly blind. Isaac decides it is time to give Esau his blessing. Isaac calls Esau to him. When Esau arrives, Isaac says, "My son." Esau says, "Here I am." Then Isaac says to Esau, "Go and hunt some wild game and prepare my favorite dish and bring it to me here so I can eat it. Then I will give you the blessing that belongs to you, the firstborn son." So, Esau takes his bow and his arrows and he goes out to the open country to hunt for a wild animal.

In the third scene, Rebekah overhears Isaac telling Esau to prepare a meal and be ready to receive the firstborn blessing. Rebekah goes to Jacob and repeats most of what she has heard. Rebekah changes some of the wording. Rebekah adds that Isaac wants to give the blessing in God's presence. Then Rebekah starts giving Jacob instructions on what to do. Rebekah explains that Jacob is to kill 2 baby goats. Rebekah will prepare them just as Isaac likes them. Jacob will serve the meal to Isaac and receive the blessing from Isaac.

Stop the action: Ask Rebekah, "How do you feel about deceiving Isaac like this?" You may hear, "I know the blessing goes to Jacob. I just want to make sure it does," or "I'm not pleased with Esau and how he is living. I would rather Jacob have this blessing." Ask Jacob, "How do you feel about deceiving your father like this?" You may hear, "I'm afraid that he will discover this deception and curse me," or "I'm ready to do this because the birthright is mine. Esau sold it to me," or "I'm not afraid. My mother knows how to manage this." Restart the action.

Jacob sees the problems with this plan. Esau is hairy. Jacob has smooth skin. When Isaac understands the deception, he will curse Jacob instead of blessing him. Rebekah says that the curse will be on her instead of on Jacob.

Stop the action: Ask Rebekah, "Are you afraid of being cursed?" You may hear, "No, Isaac would never curse me." Restart the action.

Rebekah again gives Jacob instructions. Jacob is to get 2 baby goats and kill them. Rebekah prepares the food. Rebekah gets Esau's favorite clothes and puts them on Jacob. Rebekah covers Jacob's arms and hands with hairy goat skin. Rebekah also puts the hairy goatskin on Jacob's neck. Then Rebekah gives Jacob the prepared meal including some freshly baked bread. Jacob is to take this to his father.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I'm scared. I know my mother told me to do this but I'm scared it won't work," or "I'm fine. No problem. Mother thought of everything," or "Esau deserves this. He sold me his birthright. He knows the blessing goes to me. He was trying to get it anyway." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Esau marries 2 **Hittite** women. You have used the name Hittites before. Use the same word for this translation.

Isaac was becoming **blind**. He is not yet completely blind but his vision has decreased to the point that he can't recognize faces. The text implies that this decrease in eyesight was a normal part of ageing at that time.

Jacob told Esau to take his **bow** and **quiver** to hunt for wild animals in an open or uncultivated place. A quiver is the container for the arrows that the hunter would take with him. **Game** or wild game would be wild animals, not domestic animals.

Show the picture of the bow and quiver of arrows.

Isaac tells Esau that he wants to give him the **blessing** due to the firstborn son. The blessing was considered binding. No one else could have it and it could not be changed or withdrawn. Blessing is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word you have used before for blessing.

Rebekah hears and tells Jacob that Isaac wants to bless Esau in **Yahweh's** presence. Use the same name for Yahweh you have used in other passages. Rebekah does not quote exactly what Isaac has said. Rebekah tells Jacob to go and get 2 choice or good or fine young goats. These would be among the finest. They would not be weak or sickly. They would taste delicious when cooked in the right way.

Jacob is afraid that Isaac will discover the plot and **curse** him. Rebekah tells Jacob to let the curse fall on her. Curse is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for curse that you have used in previous stories.

Rebekah uses the skin of the goats that she just cooked to cover the arms, hands, and neck of Jacob. The goat hair has been left on the goat skin.

Show the picture of the goat skin.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 26:34-27:17

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (16162734 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 27:18-29

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 27:18-29 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

SETTING THE STAGE

Genesis 27:18-29

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

The narrative story of how Jacob steals Esau's blessing continues. In the previous passage, Isaac told Esau to prepare a meal of wild game. After eating the meal, Isaac will give Esau the blessing for the firstborn son. However, Rebekah overhears this plan and then plots to have Jacob receive the blessing instead. Before the twins were born, Rebekah was told that the younger son would rule over the older son. Also, before this story happens, Esau sold his birthright as oldest son to Jacob for a bowl of stew.

Stop and review: What has Jacob done up until now to show that he is agreeing with his mother and wants to steal the blessing for himself?

Rebekah has prepared a meal that she believes will make Isaac think it was prepared by Esau. Rebekah has had Jacob to put on Esau's clothes. Rebekah has put goatskin covered with hair on Jacob's hands, arms and neck. Rebekah sends Jacob with the meal to Isaac. Isaac is nearly blind. Isaac can't see well enough to recognize his son's face.

Jacob is dressed in Esau's clothes with the goat hair on his hands, arms and neck. He goes to serve the meal to Isaac. At first Isaac is suspicious. Jacob speaks and Isaac hears Jacob's voice. Isaac asks who is in the room. Isaac asks this because he is not sure which son is in the room. Jacob lies and says that he is Esau.

Stop and discuss: What do people in your culture think about lying? How would they see Jacob's lies?

Jacob gives Isaac the meal that Rebekah has prepared. Isaac is surprised because the meal has been prepared so quickly. Normally it would take much longer to find the wild game and prepare the meal. Isaac questions again. As a part of his lie, Jacob lies and says, "Yahweh, your God, helped me."

Stop and discuss: Why does Jacob mention God at this point? Jacob is lying to Isaac about how he prepared the stew so quickly.

Isaac still has doubts and asks Jacob to come closer. Isaac touches Jacob's hands which are hairy because of the goatskin. Isaac is confused. The voice is Jacob's but the hands feel like Esau's hands. Isaac asks again who is in the room. Jacob again lies and says that he is Esau. Isaac eats the meal that Jacob has given him. Then Isaac asks Jacob to come closer and to kiss him. Kissing is a normal form of greeting between close relatives in this culture. When Jacob bends over to kiss Isaac, Isaac smells the clothes. The clothes smell like Esau. Isaac is finally convinced that this is Esau.

Stop and review: Look at all that Jacob and Rebekah have done in order to get the blessing for Jacob. Why did they do all this? Discuss the importance in your culture to have the blessing of your father? How does your culture view the role of the firstborn son? What would a family do to a son who tricks his father into a blessing as Jacob has done?

Isaac gives Jacob the blessing that the firstborn son would receive. The blessing is broad and complete. The blessing sounds like poetry and like a prayer. The blessing includes stating who Esau is, what Esau should receive and Esau's relationship with others. The blessing covers what is needed for survival and prosperity: plenty of water, abundant harvests, and leadership over others including family. Finally, Isaac asks that those who bless Esau will be blessed and those who curse Esau will be cursed. This is a father blessing the firstborn son. This is not the covenant promise that God has made. Isaac thought he was blessing Esau but instead he blessed Jacob.

Stop and discuss: How is this blessing different from a covenant promise?

According to the culture, once Isaac pronounces this blessing, he cannot take it back. It has been given. Isaac cannot give the same blessing to another son or to anyone else. The blessing is considered permanent and cannot be changed or taken back.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 1 scene.

First scene: Jacob takes the meal that Rebekah prepared to Isaac. Jacob tells Isaac that he is Esau. After eating the meal, Isaac blesses Jacob thinking he is blessing Esau.

The characters in this story include:

- Isaac
- Jacob
- Esau is mentioned

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

This is one long scene. Esau is not present in this story. Esau is away from home looking for wild game to kill. There is urgency in Jacob's encounter with Isaac. Jacob knows that Esau could return at any moment. Jacob wants the blessing before Esau returns.

Jacob has dressed in Esau's clothes. Jacob has goatskin on his hands, arms and neck so that if Isaac touches him, he will feel hairy skin like Esau. Rebekah has prepared a meal using 2 small goats. She has prepared it so that it will taste just like the stew with wild game that Esau usually made. Rebekah and Jacob have done all they can to convince Isaac, who can't see well, that this is Esau standing in front of him.

Isaac cannot see well enough to recognize the face of Jacob. Jacob says, "My father" as a respectful greeting. Isaac is confused by the voice. Isaac says, "Who are you—Esau or Jacob?" Jacob lies and says, "It's Esau. Here is the stew. Sit up and eat it so you can give me your blessing." Isaac is still confused. Isaac asks, "How did you find it so quickly?" Jacob lies and says that God helped him find the wild game so quickly. Jacob again lies and says that he is Esau. Isaac is not convinced until he smells Esau's clothes, which Jacob is wearing.

There is a sense of urgency in the conversation that Jacob has with Isaac. Jacob knows that Esau is out looking for game. It won't be long before Esau returns. Jacob wants the blessing before Esau returns. Jacob doesn't say this but we see the urgency in the way Jacob talks to Isaac.

Stop and discuss: where do you see urgency in what Jacob says and does while he is with Isaac?

Since Isaac can't see, he must rely on his other senses to determine who is with him. Isaac asked questions and each time Jacob lied with his answer. Isaac used his sense of smell and discovered that the clothes smelled like the outdoors or like the clothes Esau usually wore. Isaac used his sense of touch and touched Jacob's hands. These hands were hairy like Esau's hands. Isaac used his sense of taste and ate the delicious stew which tasted like the wild game stew Esau usually made. Isaac could not use his sense of sight. His sense of hearing confused him because he heard Jacob's voice while his taste, smell and touch were telling him that Esau was with him.

With 3 of the senses confirming that this was Esau, Isaac went ahead and blessed his son thinking he was blessing Esau.

The blessing has 3 parts.

1. Isaac smells Esau's clothes and talks about who Esau is. Isaac says, "the smell of my son is like the smell of a field that Yahweh has blessed."
2. Then Isaac asks for things for Esau. He asks for plenty of water, or that God would send dew on the ground to supply water for the plants. Isaac asks God to give abundant harvest for grain and wine.

Isaac asks God for the people groups of the world to serve his son and for his son to be master over his brothers.

1. Isaac asks God to curse anyone who curses his son. Then he asks God to bless anyone who blesses his son.

This blessing is expressed in a poetic form.

The blessing was considered binding. Once Isaac gave it, he could not take it back and he could not give the same blessing to someone else.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 1 scene.

The characters in this story include:

- Isaac
- Jacob
- Esau is mentioned

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

As the story starts, Jacob enters Isaac's tent carrying the stew that Rebekah has made. Jacob is dressed in Esau's clothes and has goat skin on his hands, arms and neck.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I'm really nervous. Suppose my father recognizes me," or "I'm afraid Esau will return before I get the blessing" or "I'm afraid this won't deceive my father." Restart the action.

When Jacob speaks, Isaac is confused. Isaac can't see which son is in the room. Isaac asks who is present. Jacob lies. Jacob says he is Esau. Jacob says he has done all that Isaac has asked. Jacob encourages Isaac to eat and then give the blessing.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "What are you feeling as you lie to your father?" You may hear, "I had to lie to him in order to get the blessing. Esau doesn't deserve this blessing. It's for me. Lying is ok if I have to do that to get the blessing." Restart the action.

Isaac isn't sure which son is in the room. Isaac says, "Who are you—Esau or Jacob?" Jacob replies and says, "I'm Esau, your firstborn son." Then Esau asks, "How did you find the game so quickly?" Jacob says, "The Lord your God put it in my path."

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "Why did you bring the name of God into this conversation?" You may hear, "I want to stop him talking and get him to eat so he will give me the blessing" or "My father believes that God helps him like this so this was easy to say." Ask Isaac, "How did you feel when your son said that God had helped him?" You may hear, "That sounds right. God always helps me. I'm glad my son recognizes that God is willing to help him." Restart the action.

Isaac is confused. He can't see. He hears the voice of Jacob. He touches Jacob's hands and they are hairy like Esau's hands. Isaac asks again. "Are you my son, Esau?" Jacob lies and says that he is Esau.

Stop the action: Say to Jacob, "This is the third lie you have told your father. How are you feeling at this moment?" You may hear, "I find it shameful to lie but I have to do this to get the blessing which should be mine" or "It's ok to lie in order to get what is mine anyway. Esau sold me his birthright. That means I get the blessing." Restart the action.

Isaac is ready to eat. After eating the stew, Isaac asks Jacob to come close so that Jacob can kiss Isaac. When Jacob bends down to kiss Isaac, Isaac smells the clothes. They have the odor of Esau on them. Isaac is finally convinced that this is Esau and pronounces the blessing. The blessing is a poetic expression and a sort of prayer asking God to give good things to Jacob. Isaac asks for plenty of rain, abundant harvests, that the nations would serve Jacob and that Jacob would rule over the family. Isaac finishes by cursing those who curse his son and blessing those who bless his son.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "What did you feel when Isaac gave you this good blessing?" You may hear, "I felt good. At last, I have what is already mine" or "I regret having to trick my father but I had to do it to get this blessing." Restart the action.

*Filling the Gaps**Filling the Gaps*

FILLING THE GAPS

Genesis 27: 18-29

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jacob goes to Isaac to get the **blessing** of the **firstborn** son. **Blessing** is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for blessing that you have used in earlier stories. The firstborn son had rights and responsibilities that other sons did not have. In this case, the firstborn son was expected to take over and rule the family when Isaac is dead. All the family would need to accept the leadership of the firstborn son.

Jacob is carrying a dish that Isaac thinks is made from **wild game**. Wild game would be any animal or bird that lives out in the wilderness or not in settled areas. This is not a domesticated animal. In this case, Rebekah has made it with 2 baby goats but it tastes like the stew that Esau usually made from wild animals.

Isaac asks how Esau was able to get the stew prepared so quickly. Jacob replies by saying, "The **Lord** your **God** put it in my path." These two names for God are the same ones you have used in previous passages. Lord refers to **Yahweh** and **God** is the general name for God that you have been using. The name Yahweh and the name God appear several times in this passage. Always use the same names you have used in other passages.

Jacob also took **wine** to Isaac for him to drink with the stew. Wine is made from fermented grape juice. Use the same word for wine that you have used in previous stories.

Isaac pronounces the blessing. As a part of the blessing, Isaac asks that there be dew from **heaven**. The word **heaven** is in the master glossary. You would use the same word you have used before for heaven. Dew from heaven is the water that God sends over the ground and plants each night.

Then Isaac finishes his blessing to his son by cursing those who **curse** his son and blessing those who **bless** him. Use the same word for curse that you have used before. Use the same word for bless that you have used before. Both **curse** and **bless** are in the master glossary.

*Speaking the Word**Speaking the Word*

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 27:18–29

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (11158361 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
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- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 27:30–40

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 27:30–40 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This passage is the next event in the story of Jacob and Esau and the blessing that Isaac gave for the firstborn son. In the previous passages, Isaac told Esau that he wanted to give Esau the blessing. Then Rebekah worked quickly and with urgency to prepare a meal and give it to Jacob to take to Isaac. Rebekah wanted Jacob to receive the blessing for the firstborn. While Jacob was with Isaac, Jacob showed urgency in getting Isaac to eat the meal

and pronounce the blessing. Even with this urgency, Jacob barely finished getting the blessing before Esau returned. This is a narrative account of Esau's reaction to the loss of his blessing.

Esau arrived back at the camp just after Jacob left Isaac. Esau had no knowledge of what Rebekah and Jacob did while Esau was hunting. Esau prepared his wild game into a delicious dish and took it to his father, Isaac. When Esau entered the tent and told Isaac to sit up and eat the meal, Isaac was astonished. He even asked, "Who are you?" Esau replied, "It is your son, Esau." When Isaac heard this he began to tremble or shake violently. Isaac's reaction could be due to the shock he has just received or even fear at the news he has just received. Isaac is realizing that he was tricked into giving the blessing to Jacob. Isaac told Esau that he had already eaten a meal and had blessed the person who brought it to him. Isaac says that the blessing must stay as it has been given. Isaac can't take the blessing back.

Show a picture of a camp with several tents, open fires for cooking, and some animals around.

When Esau hears this news, Esau lets out a loud and bitter cry. This is expressing strong emotions such as anguish and could even be like groans. Esau is angry and bitter. Then Esau asks Isaac for a blessing for him also. But Isaac says that even though he was tricked into blessing Jacob, Isaac cannot take the blessing back. Jacob has the blessing.

Stop and discuss: How would an adult man react to a great disappointment or loss in your culture?

Esau complains about Jacob. Esau asks a rhetorical question. "Isn't he rightly named Jacob?" This is a statement in the form of a question. This type of question does not require an answer. You can state instead of asking: "He is rightly named Jacob."

Stop and discuss: How does your language express ideas such as this question? Tell a brief story about someone who does something dishonest. Have people suggest that he is dishonest because of his name. How did they say that idea?

Esau is talking about the meaning of Jacob's name. When the twins were born, Jacob was born grasping the heel of Esau. Esau was born first. The name Jacob sounds like 2 different words in Hebrew. One word means "the heel of the foot" and the other word means "deceiver." There is an expression in Hebrew that means "to grab the heel" and this is an expression used to describe someone who cheats or deceives someone. This expression sounds very much like the name Jacob.

Stop and discuss: Tell a short story about someone who deceived or committed fraud. Pay attention to the names or words used to describe the person who deceived. Do any of these words sound like names of people in your language?

Esau goes on to say that Jacob had deceived Esau in order to steal his birthright. In fact, Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of lentil stew. Esau says that Jacob stole his birthright and now has stolen his blessing. It doesn't seem that Isaac knew that Esau had sold his birthright for a bowl of stew. This may be the first time that he hears about this event. Esau begs Isaac for a blessing also.

Stop and discuss: What important rituals does your culture have regarding the passing of power and authority from father to son?

Isaac tells Esau that Jacob has the blessing. Isaac has even said in the blessing that all Esau's relatives will now be Jacob's servants. Isaac also gave Jacob an abundance of grain and wine. Jacob will be rich. Jacob will be powerful. There is nothing left to give Esau.

Esau begs again for a blessing. Esau begins to sob or cry. Finally, Isaac blesses Esau. The blessing is expressed as poetry. The blessing for Esau presents a difficult life for him and his descendants. Esau will not have dew from heaven, which means good rain, nor abundant crops. This means that Esau will not be rich. Esau will "live by the sword," meaning that Esau will be a warrior. Esau will also serve Jacob. Esau will eventually "break free from the yoke on his neck." A yoke is the wooden collar used to put two oxen together so that they pull a plow or some vehicle together. Here Isaac is using this image as a word picture to help Esau understand that he will serve Jacob until he can break free.

Stop and discuss as a group: Compare the two blessings. What does Jacob receive? What does Esau receive? In your culture, how would the firstborn son react after receiving this blessing?

Show a picture of oxen with a yoke pulling a plow or cart.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 2 scenes.

First scene: Esau returns to the tent and prepares the stew for his father.

Second scene: Esau takes the stew to his father and both learn that Jacob has deceived Isaac and taken the blessing. Esau is angry. Finally, Isaac finds a short blessing for Esau.

The characters in this story include:

- Esau
- Isaac
- Jacob

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In scene one, Isaac has just given Jacob the blessing and Jacob has left his father Isaac's room. Esau returns to the camp just as Jacob leaves Isaac. The brothers do not meet. However, the time is close. They almost met each other. Be sure to show by action how Jacob leaves Isaac's tent and Esau comes into the camp without meeting but in a near miss. Esau doesn't know what Jacob has done. Esau prepares the wild game and makes a delicious stew. Esau takes this stew to his father, Isaac.

In scene two, Esau enters the tent with the stew and speaks to Isaac. Esau says, "Sit up, my father, and eat this stew." Esau is speaking very politely to his father. Isaac hears the voice and says, "Who are you?" Esau replies by saying, "I'm your firstborn son, Esau."

Hearing this, Isaac begins to tremble or shake violently. This is a reaction of someone who hears very bad news or an unpleasant surprise. The news is so bad that a person can feel terror or panic when hearing this news. This reaction can also be from anger. Isaac realizes that he has been tricked into giving the blessing for the firstborn son to Jacob. Isaac says, "Jacob was here and he has taken your blessing."

When Esau hears this, he lets out a loud and bitter cry. This is a loud noise. This is not crying as with tears. This is an expression of anguish. Another way to say it might be that Esau let out loud groans of anguish.

Esau then accuses Jacob of more deceit. Esau says that Jacob had tricked him out of his birthright. This is not a true statement. In a previous passage, you saw that Esau sold his birthright to Jacob because he was hungry and wanted to eat some stew that Jacob had made. It is true that Jacob has stolen the blessing from Esau. Esau is using Jacob's name which sounds like a word meaning deceiver to further explain what has happened. Esau is really saying that Jacob is a deceiver just like his name because he has taken something from me twice. Jacob's name doesn't mean deceiver. It sounds like a word that means deceiver.

Esau begs Isaac for a blessing. Finally, Esau breaks down and begins to sob. Sobbing is crying with tears. Then Isaac gives Esau a blessing. This blessing which is expressed in poetry says that Esau will be a warrior. Esau will not be rich. Esau will serve Jacob but eventually will be able to break free. Isaac uses the image of oxen tied with a yoke to show how Esau will be tied to Jacob until Esau is able to get the yoke off his neck.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 2 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Esau
- Isaac
- Jacob

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing one of the roles "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like different responses. Restart the action.

In scene one, no one speaks. Jacob has received the blessing for the firstborn and leaves Isaac. He barely gets out of Isaac's tent before Esau arrives. Show by the action that the brothers almost see each other but don't. Esau has the wild game that he has killed. Esau prepares this into a delicious stew and takes it to Isaac.

In scene two, Esau arrives in Isaac's tent. Esau says, "Sit up and eat this stew so you can give me my blessing." When Isaac hears this voice, Isaac asks, "Who are you?" Esau replies, "I am your firstborn son, Esau." When Isaac hears this reply, he realizes he has been tricked, and he starts to tremble or shake violently. Then Isaac tells Esau that someone else has been with a stew which Isaac ate and then gave that person the blessing for the firstborn son. Isaac does not mention Jacob's name. Isaac says, "That blessing must stand." This means that Isaac can't take back the blessing he has given.

Stop the action: Ask Isaac, "Why are you trembling?" You may hear, "I know now I was tricked," or "I'm really angry about what Jacob has done," or "I don't know what I can do now. The blessing was given and I can't take it back." Restart the action.

When Esau hears that the blessing has been given, he lets out a loud and bitter cry. Esau begs Isaac to give him a blessing also.

Stop the action: Ask Esau, "How are you feeling at this moment?" You may hear, "I can't believe that there is no blessing for me," or "What have I done to deserve this?" or "I'm so angry right now, I can't think," or "How dare Jacob do this to me!" Restart the action.

Isaac explains to Esau that Jacob has received the blessing. Jacob has tricked Isaac. Jacob has taken the blessing that was for Esau.

Esau starts complaining about Jacob. Esau accuses Jacob of stealing his birthright. This is not a true statement.

Stop the action: Ask Esau, "Why are you falsely accusing Jacob of stealing your birthright?" You may hear, "Well, he did trick me. He knew I was so hungry, I would do anything for food. It's not my fault. He tricked me." Restart the action.

Then Esau accuses Jacob of stealing his blessing. Esau says that the name Jacob means "deceiver" or "someone who cheats." Esau finishes by begging Isaac again for a blessing. He says, "Don't you have even one blessing for me?"

Stop the action: Ask Isaac, "How do you feel when you hear your firstborn begging for a blessing?" You may hear, "I feel really sad that I can't give him the blessing. I can only give it once. I'm angry that Jacob tricked me like this." Restart the action.

Isaac tells Esau what he has given to Jacob as a blessing. Jacob will be master over the family. Jacob will be rich. Then Isaac says, "There is nothing left for you." Esau begs for a blessing. Esau begins to sob.

Stop the action: Ask Isaac, "What are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I feel so sad but there is nothing I can do." Ask Esau, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I can't believe that there is no blessing for me. I thought my father loved me." Or, "I'm so angry with Jacob and this whole mess, I can't even think." Restart the action.

Finally, Isaac gives Esau a blessing. This blessing is nearly opposite the blessing for the firstborn. Isaac tells Esau that he will live in a poor area that doesn't receive the dew from heaven. Esau will live by the sword. Esau will serve Jacob. When Esau decides to break free, he will break the yoke that ties him to his brother.

Show the picture of the yoke.

Stop the action: Ask Isaac, "How are you feeling about this blessing for your firstborn?" You may hear, "I feel really bad about it. I wish I could give him something good also," or "I don't understand why all this is happening like this. It's very upsetting." Ask Esau, "How do you feel about this blessing?" You may hear, "I don't understand why my father can't give me a good blessing. This one is awful. It's all Jacob's fault. I hate Jacob." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Isaac has finished **blessing** Jacob. Blessing is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word you have used before for blessing.

When Isaac realized he was tricked, he begins to **tremble** or shake violently. This is expressing panic or fear like when you hear bad news or have a really bad surprise. Tremble or shake are physical reactions to the feeling of panic or fear.

Esau reacted to the news with a **loud and bitter cry**. This could even be like a groan. It is expressing deep emotion of anguish from Esau.

Esau talks about Jacob's name. Esau says, "Isn't he rightly named Jacob? For now he has cheated me twice." Esau is saying that Jacob's name means deceiver. The name Jacob does not mean this. Jacob sounds like the Hebrew word for deceiver. The way Esau talks about this is in the form of a question that doesn't require an answer. This can also be expressed as a direct statement. "Isn't he rightly named Jacob?" Or, "He is rightly named Jacob."

The firstborn son had rights, responsibilities, and privileges called a **birthright**. The blessing that Isaac gave was the blessing for the firstborn son. This blessing gave things to the firstborn son that couldn't be given to anyone else.

Isaac gives Esau a blessing. This blessing is nearly the opposite of the blessing given to Jacob.

To "live far from the riches of the earth" means that you will live in an area with poor soil that won't grow good crops or grass for the animals. "Away from the dew of heaven," means that there won't be much water. Here the word "heaven" means sky, and "dew" is the water that covers the ground each night. For Esau, the dew will not cover the ground at night. Esau will "live by the sword," meaning that Esau will be a warrior. Esau will serve Jacob until Esau decides to break the **yoke** from his neck. A yoke is the wooden collar that ties two oxen together so that they walk together to pull a plough or a vehicle. See the Master Glossary for a discussion of yoke.

Show the picture of a yoke.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 27:30–40

Audio Content

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Genesis 27:41-28:9

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 27:41-28:9 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This passage continues the story of when Jacob steals the blessing for the firstborn son. This passage tells what happens after Isaac and Esau realize that they have been tricked. The story of Jacob stealing Esau's blessing as the firstborn son has consequences. This passage is a narrative description of what happened after Isaac gave Esau a blessing that promised Esau poverty, war, and serving his brother, Jacob.

Esau hated Jacob from the time that Jacob stole the blessing. Esau plotted how to kill Jacob but decided he would wait until after the death of Isaac. Esau thought that Isaac would die soon. Esau says, "I will wait until after the days of mourning for my father when he dies." Esau was saying these things to himself. He was not telling others his plans.

Stop and discuss as a group: How and when do people seek revenge in your culture? Tell a story of someone who is planning revenge but not talking about it to others. How do you describe what this person is thinking of doing?

Stop and discuss as a group: What are the mourning customs of your culture? What do you do when a father dies?

Somehow, Rebekah heard about Esau's plan. We don't know how she found out. Rebekah sent for Jacob and told Jacob that Esau was plotting to kill him. Rebekah told Jacob to get ready and flee or run away. The words Rebekah uses makes it sound like Rebekah wants Jacob to leave immediately. Jacob does not leave immediately.

Rebekah wants Jacob to go to her brother. Rebekah's brother lives in Haran. Haran is the city located in southern Turkey where Abraham was living when God told Abraham to go to the land that God would show him. This is also the town where Rebekah lived with her family before she married Isaac. Rebekah's brother still lives in this town.

Show a map that includes all of Israel up to Southern Turkey where Haran is located. Haran should be marked on the map. Use this map to follow Jacob's journey.

Rebekah tells Jacob to remain with her brother in Haran until Esau has calmed down. She says, "Why should I lose both of you in one day?" This is a question that doesn't require an answer. It can be stated in a different way such as, "I don't want to lose both of you in one day."

Stop and discuss: Tell a brief story about a mother who is concerned about her children. She is afraid of losing them somehow. How does she tell about her fear and concern that her children will die? Here, Rebekah asks a question. How does the mother in your story talk about her fear?

Tell a brief story of a son who is extremely angry with a brother. Pay attention to the words used to express both the anger and when the person stops being angry. Do they use any word pictures like "hot with anger" and "cool-down?"

If Esau were to kill Jacob, then Rebekah would lose both sons. Jacob would be dead. People would kill Esau because he murdered his brother, according to the law God gave Noah after the flood. Rebekah is willing to send Jacob, her favorite son, away in order to save the lives of both her sons.

Rebekah then goes to Isaac. Rebekah doesn't mention that Esau wants to kill Jacob. Instead, Rebekah complains about Esau's wives. Esau has married 2 Hittite women. They would be considered foreign wives although they lived in the same area. The Hittites were descendants of Canaan, the grandson that Noah cursed. Their customs would be different from those of Rebekah. Rebekah and Isaac do not like their daughters-in-law. By talking about the daughters-in-law, Rebekah convinces Isaac that Jacob should go to Rebekah's brother to look for a good wife so he does not marry foreigners like Esau did.

Discuss as a group: Describe the usual or normal relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law in your culture. What happens if there is conflict between them?

Isaac agrees with Rebekah that Jacob should not marry a local foreign woman. Rebekah's father, Bethuel, is still living. Isaac tells Jacob to go to his grandfather Bethuel's house. Rebekah's brother, Laban, is living with his father. Isaac tells Jacob to marry one of his Uncle Laban's daughters. Jacob's Uncle Laban is his maternal uncle or his mother's brother. Laban's daughter would be Jacob's maternal first cousin. Haran is the name of the city where they live. Paddan-aram is the name of the surrounding area.

Show the map with Paddan-Aram and Haran marked.

Discuss as a team: Have someone tell a story about his family including relatives on his mother's side and relatives on his father's side—uncles, aunts, cousins, grandparents. Pay attention to the way each relative is described and who you can marry in this family.

Then Isaac gives Jacob another blessing. This blessing used many of the same blessings that God had promised Abraham. Isaac asks for many children for Jacob. Isaac asks that the descendants of Jacob form many different nations. Isaac asks God to give Jacob the same blessings that were given to Abraham. Finally, Isaac asks that Jacob own the land that was promised to Abraham, which is where Isaac and his family are still living as foreigners.

Stop and discuss as a group: What happens between a father and son when the son leaves home for an extended period of time? What kinds of things does the father say to the son before he leaves?

Jacob departed for Paddan-aram after receiving this blessing.

Esau knew that Isaac had given Jacob another blessing and that Isaac had sent Jacob to Paddan-aram to find a wife. Esau knew that Isaac had said to Jacob, "Do not marry a Canaanite woman." Esau knew that Jacob had obeyed Isaac and gone to Paddan-aram. Esau finally understood that Isaac and Rebekah did not like his Canaanite wives. So, Esau went to his uncle Ishmael's family and chose a wife. Ishmael is the older son of

Abraham and his mother was Sarah's servant Hagar. Esau married his cousin. Esau now has 3 wives. There is no indication that Esau asked Isaac or Rebekah before marrying his cousin.

Show a family tree drawing. Start the family tree with Abraham's father, Terah. This tree would show Terah's descendants. The team should be able to see the relationship of Abraham and Sarah, the relationship of Isaac and Rebekah, the relationship of Esau and the daughter of Ishmael, and the relationship of Jacob and his wives. If a drawing doesn't work, you can use objects to represent the people or have members of the team stand to represent each of the persons. Stop and draw or act out a family tree showing all the descendants of Terah, Abraham's father through Jacob and Esau. Either use objects to represent the people or have team members stand in their places. You can then see how Abraham and Sarah were related, how Isaac and Rebekah were related, how Jacob will be related to his wife and the relationship of Esau to Ishmael's daughter. Use the appropriate titles in your language for grandfather, uncle, and cousin.

Discuss as a team: How do you teach your children about family relationships?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 5 scenes.

First scene: Esau plots when to kill Jacob.

Second scene: Rebekah learns about Esau's plot and tells Jacob to flee to her brother's house.

Third scene: Rebekah talks to Isaac about sending Jacob to find a wife from her family.

Fourth scene: Isaac calls for Jacob to come. Isaac blesses Jacob and sends him north to Rebekah's family to find a wife.

Fifth scene: Esau hears about Isaac telling Jacob to go to his uncle to find a wife. Esau finally realizes his parents don't like his wives. Esau goes to his Uncle Ishmael and takes one of his cousins as a wife.

The characters in this story include:

- Isaac
- Rebekah
- Jacob
- Esau
- Esau's Hittite wives
- Rebekah's father, Bethuel, and Rebekah's brother, Laban, are mentioned.
- Esau's new wife, Mahalath, daughter of Ishmael.

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Before beginning to act out the story, make sure that you have the right order of events.

Esau hates Jacob and is planning to kill Jacob. Rebekah finds out what Esau is planning to do and tells Jacob to get up and flee immediately to Rebekah's family in Haran. Jacob does not go immediately. Jacob remains while Rebekah goes and talks with Isaac. Then Isaac calls Jacob in and tells Jacob to go to Rebekah's family and marry a cousin. Isaac blesses Jacob and Jacob departs. Esau learns that Jacob has gone. Esau finally realizes that

Rebekah and Isaac don't like his Hittite wives. Esau goes to his uncle Ishmael and marries one of Ishmael's daughters.

In scene one, Esau hated Jacob because Jacob stole the blessing for the firstborn son. Esau plots to kill Jacob after Isaac dies and the time of mourning is finished. Esau doesn't tell anyone of these plans. Esau is thinking of doing this or talking to himself. No one speaks in this scene.

In scene two, Rebekah somehow learns of what Esau is planning to do. We don't know how she learned about this plot. Rebekah sends for Jacob and tells him the plot. Rebekah tells Jacob to get ready and flee to the city of Haran. Rebekah's brother Laban lives in Haran. Rebekah wants Jacob to stay with Laban until Esau cools down or is no longer angry enough to kill. Rebekah doesn't intend for Jacob to be gone for a long time. Rebekah plans to send for Jacob when it is safe for Jacob to return. Rebekah is sending Jacob away to save the lives of both her sons. If Esau kills Jacob, Esau must also die.

In the third scene, Rebekah goes to Isaac. Rebekah doesn't tell Isaac about Esau's plans to kill Jacob. Instead, Rebekah complains about Esau's Hittite wives. Rebekah says, "I would rather die than have Jacob marry one of them." Rebekah is talking about local or Hittite women. Rebekah seems to convince Isaac to do something about Jacob's marriage.

In the fourth scene, Isaac calls for Jacob. When Jacob comes into the tent, Isaac gives Jacob another blessing. Isaac tells Jacob not to marry a local Canaanite woman. Instead, Isaac says for Jacob to go to Rebekah's family. Rebekah's father Bethuel is still alive. Jacob should live with Bethuel. Laban, Rebekah's brother lives there and has daughters. Isaac wants Jacob to marry one of these daughters. This would be his maternal first cousin—the daughter of his mother's brother. Bethuel is Jacob's maternal grandfather and Laban is Jacob's maternal uncle. After these instructions about marriage, Isaac again blesses Jacob. This time, the blessing includes much of the blessing that God had given to Abraham. Then Isaac sends Jacob away and Jacob departs.

Review the family tree picture. Talk about the relatives and the correct title for each uncle and each grandparent. This should help you decide the correct family terms for Bethuel, Laban, and Laban's daughters, as well as for Ishmael and Ishmael's daughter.

In the fifth scene, Esau knows that Isaac has sent Jacob to find a wife from Rebekah's family. Esau knows that Isaac has given Jacob another blessing. Esau knows that Isaac specifically told Jacob not to marry a Canaanite woman. Esau's Hittite wives were Canaanites. Esau finally understands that Isaac and Rebekah are not pleased with Esau's wives. Esau goes to his uncle Ishmael and marries one of Ishmael's daughters. Ishmael is the first son of Abraham and Ishmael's mother is Hagar, the servant of Sarah, Isaac's mother. Esau does not tell Isaac and Rebekah that he is going to marry this cousin. Esau now has 3 wives. Two of them are Hittite women and the third is the daughter of Ishmael.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 5 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Isaac
- Rebekah
- Jacob
- Esau
- Esau's Hittite wives
- Rebekah's father, Bethuel, and Rebekah's brother, Laban, are mentioned.
- Esau's new wife, Mahalath, daughter of Ishmael.

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing one of the roles, "How are you feeling?" You may hear different responses. Restart the action.

In scene one, Esau hates Jacob because Jacob has stolen the blessing for the firstborn son. Esau plots to kill Jacob. However, Esau plans to wait until after Isaac dies and the time of mourning is finished.

Stop the action: Ask Esau, "Why do you want to kill Jacob?" You may hear, "Because he is a cheat. He stole my birthright and now he has stolen my blessing. He doesn't deserve to live." Ask Esau, "How will killing Jacob make you feel better?" You may hear, "I won't have to see him everyday and be reminded that he has what is mine. If he is dead, I get my birthright and my blessing back. They will have to respect me then." Restart the action.

In scene two, Rebekah learns what Esau is planning to do. Rebekah goes to Jacob and tells him. Rebekah tells Jacob to get up and leave immediately and go to Rebekah's brother in Haran. Jacob is to stay there until Esau no longer wants to kill Jacob. Rebekah will send for Jacob when it is safe to return. Rebekah says this is to save the lives of both her sons.

Stop the action: Ask Rebekah, "How do you feel about Jacob going so far away?" You may hear, "I don't want him to go so far away but it's better than losing him. I don't want my son Esau to kill him and then Esau would have to die also. This is better." Ask Jacob, "How do you feel now that you have the blessing but you have to leave your family?" You may hear, "It's better to have the blessing. Esau doesn't deserve the blessing or the birthright. I should have them. If this is what I have to do in order to have the blessing, then I'll do it." Restart the action.

In scene three, Rebekah goes to Isaac and complains about Esau's wives. She brings up the possibility of Jacob marrying one of the Hittite women.

Stop the action: Ask Rebekah, "Why are you talking about wives now?" You may hear, "This is the best way to convince Isaac to send Jacob away. I want Isaac to send Jacob away rather than have Jacob run away." Ask Isaac, "How did you feel when Rebekah mentioned the possibility of Jacob marrying a Hittite woman?" You may hear, "I felt afraid for my son. I don't want him to marry one of these foreign women and bring idol worship and other foreign ways into the family. I want Jacob to lead this family as my father Abraham would want." Restart the action.

In scene four, Isaac sends for Jacob. When Jacob arrives, Isaac blesses him and then tells Jacob not to marry a Canaanite woman. Instead, Jacob is to go to Haran to live with Bethuel, Rebekah's father. Rebekah's brother, Laban, has some daughters. Jacob is to marry from these daughters. Then Isaac blesses Jacob again. This time

the blessing contains many of the elements that God used when God blessed Abraham. After the blessing, Jacob left to go to Rebekah's family.

Stop the action: Ask Isaac, "How did you feel when you were blessing Jacob?" You may hear, "I felt good. I knew I was blessing Jacob and I knew that Jacob would lead the family after I'm gone. I'm glad I was able to bless Jacob like this." Ask Jacob, "How did it feel to receive this blessing that was intended for you, Jacob?" You may hear, "It felt so good. I know that this blessing was intended for me. I know the blessing that my grandfather, Abraham, received from God. I'm so glad my father said the same thing to me." Restart the action.

In scene five, Esau knows that Isaac has blessed Jacob and sent him to find a wife among Rebekah's family.

Stop the action: Ask Esau, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I'm still so angry! How dare Jacob steal from me like this. Now he's been blessed again and sent off to find a wife. Why do they love him more than me?" Restart the action.

Esau realizes finally that Rebekah and Isaac don't like his Hittite wives. Esau goes to Ishmael, Abraham's older son and marries one of his daughters. Esau does not tell Rebekah and Isaac that he is going to marry one of his cousins.

Stop the action: Ask Esau, "Why have you married one of Ishmael's daughters?" You may hear, "My parents don't like my wives. I wanted to please them by choosing a relative. They will be pleased because her grandfather is Abraham." Ask Rebekah, "How do you feel about your new daughter-in-law?" You may hear, "I know Esau was trying to please us. Why didn't he ask my opinion?" Or, "At least, she believes in God. That's something to be thankful for." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Esau hates Jacob because Jacob stole the **blessing**. Use the same word for blessing that you have used in other passages. Blessing is discussed in the Master Glossary. Esau plans to wait until Isaac dies and then after the time of **mourning**, Esau will kill Jacob. Mourning refers to a specific time after the death of someone and the activities that those who grieve the death usually do. A culture has specific mourning customs and in ancient times, these included weeping, tearing one's clothes and putting on a special material called sackcloth. Mourning lasted for a specific time, such as 7 days. Esau is planning to wait until this time has finished before killing Jacob.

Esau was plotting all this to himself, or in his mind. He was thinking about it. He was not talking about it to others. This is not something impulsive or done without thinking. Esau is making a plan for something to do in the future.

Rebekah tells Jacob to stay there until Esau has **cooled off**. Esau is very angry or **hot with anger**. To "cool off" means that Esau would no longer be so angry. Esau would be in a reasonable frame of mind. Esau would calm down. Esau might still be angry or hate Jacob but Esau would no longer be planning to seek revenge or kill Jacob. At that time, it would be safe for Jacob to return.

Esau's wives were **Hittite** women. The Hittites were part of the **Canaanites**. Use the same words you have used in previous passages for these people groups.

Jacob is going to his maternal grandfather and maternal uncle. Jacob is to marry a maternal first cousin. Some languages have specific terms for relatives from the mother's side of the family or the father's side of the family. Use the appropriate titles for these relatives.

Review the family tree picture.

Isaac blesses Jacob using some of the same blessings that God spoke in blessing Abraham. Isaac says, "May **God Almighty** bless you." God Almighty is one of the names of God. The Hebrew word is **El-Shaddai**. El refers to God. Shaddai probably means all-powerful or more powerful than anyone else. By putting both words together, you have a name for God. El-Shaddai is the name that God used when God spoke to Abraham. God said, "I am

El-Shaddai, God Almighty." Use the same name here. El-Shaddai is the Hebrew name. You do not need to use the Hebrew name also.

Part of the blessing was asking that Jacob have many children who would multiply and become **nations**, or **people groups**. Nations is in the Master Glossary. Use the same words you used in previous passages. Isaac prays that Jacob will own the land where he now lives as a **foreigner**. At this time, Isaac does not own the land. This land was promised to Abraham. Isaac is praying that one day, the family will own this land and no longer be foreigners in the land.

After Jacob leaves, Esau goes to his uncle Ishmael and marries his first cousin, the daughter of Ishmael. Ishmael is Isaac's half-brother. Some languages use specific words for a father's relatives. Use the appropriate titles to express the relationship.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 27:41–28:9

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (20861634 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 28:10-22

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 28:10-22 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

After Isaac blessed Jacob, Isaac told Jacob to go to Haran and stay with Jacob's uncle Laban, Rebekah's brother. Rebekah and Isaac are cousins who married. Now Isaac wants Jacob to marry one of his cousins. Isaac lived with his family in Beersheba which is in the south of Israel. It is about 550 miles, or 885 kilometers, from Beersheba to Haran. It would take Jacob at least a month to make that trip. This is a narrative account of the beginning of this trip.

After Isaac told Jacob to go to Haran, Jacob started his trip. We don't have the details of how Jacob traveled. Because of where Jacob spent the night, it seems that Jacob took a route across the mountains going north from Beersheba towards Haran.

Show the map of Israel with Beersheba all the way to Haran marked on the map. The map should have the location of Bethel which is north of Jerusalem.

The passage says that at sundown, Jacob stopped for the night. The place where Jacob stopped for the night was about 60 miles, or 96 kilometers, from Beersheba. This is too far to travel in one day. Therefore, this is not the first day of the trip. At sunset, it becomes dark quickly. There is a short twilight time in that part of the world. Jacob stopped and set up his camp or where he was going to sleep before it got too dark to see. The place where Jacob stopped to spend the night doesn't have a name. However, it is mentioned as "that place" multiple times. This makes it seem like a significant place even without a name. For Jacob, it is just a place to stop and make camp since it is getting dark.

Stop and discuss: Describe the way the sun sets and it gets dark in your area. How long does it stay light after the sun sets?

Discuss: Describe what someone in your area would do to set up a camp for the night.

When Jacob was ready to sleep, he found a stone and used it as a pillow. This means that Jacob lay down and went to sleep with his head on a rock or a rock under his head. Sometime after Jacob went to sleep, he had a dream. This was a dream because Jacob was asleep.

Stop and discuss as a team: Each person should talk about a dream that he or she has had. Listen to the way the person talks about what he saw in the dream. Is there a different way to talk about natural dreams and dreams caused by drugs or spirits? Jacob's dream was not caused by drugs or spirits.

Jacob dreamed that he saw a wide stairway going from heaven to earth. This means that one end of the stairway was on the earth and the other end reached to the place where God lives. Angels of God were going up and down the stairway. Angels are the good spirit beings who carry messages for God. Jacob saw God. We do not know if God was standing beside Jacob himself, or if he was standing beside the top of the stairway.

Show a picture of a stairway.

God spoke to Jacob. God said, "I am the Lord, your God, the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac." God was introducing himself to Jacob so that Jacob would understand exactly who God is. Jacob knew that God had appeared before to Abraham and Isaac. God repeats the same promises to Jacob that God has given to Abraham and Isaac. God is giving the land where Jacob is sleeping to Jacob and his descendants. God says that Jacob's descendants will be numerous like the dust of the earth. God said to Jacob, your descendants will spread in all directions from here. Everyone on earth will be blessed through you and your descendants. Then God said, I will be with you and protect you and bring you back to this land.

Stop and discuss as a group: How would you feel if you had received such a promise? Why do you think God identified himself to Jacob as the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac?

Discuss: Talk about your extended family. Listen to how each describes the large number of relatives or large number of people in the tribe or clan. This might be the description you would use for numerous as the dust of the earth.

Jacob woke up from his dream. Jacob realized that Yahweh was in the place where Jacob was sleeping. Jacob had not realized before that God was there also. Jacob was afraid. This is a reverent fear of God. Jacob realized that he was in the presence of God. Then Jacob says that "This is an awesome place." Jacob means that this place is worthy of wonder and reverence. Jacob calls this place the house of God, the gateway to heaven. Jacob is saying that God lives here and this is the way to enter into God's house. Heaven is where God lives. The stairway represents the connections between God and the earth. The angels are the messengers for God.

In the morning, or when it was light enough to see, Jacob took the rock that he had used as a pillow and stood it on one end. Jacob wanted this rock to be a memorial pillar. This means that when Jacob would see the rock, Jacob would remember what had happened there. Jacob poured some olive oil over the top of the stone as a way of dedicating that stone to God. Jacob was worshiping God there.

Stop and discuss as a team: How do you remember significant encounters with God?

Show a picture of olive oil.

Jacob named the place where Jacob had the dream "Bethel," which means "house of God." There was a town nearby called Luz. However, after this time, the town became known as Bethel also.

After worshiping God in this way, Jacob made a vow. A vow is a solemn promise that someone makes to God, but he usually wants something from God. Jacob expresses three things that Jacob wants from God:

- 1.** Be with me and protect me on this journey.
- 2.** Provide me with food and clothing.
- 3.** Return me safely to my father Isaac's house.

Then Jacob promises three things:

1. Yahweh will be my God. Jacob is serious about following God.
2. This memorial pillar will become a place to worship God.
3. I will give God one of every ten animals that God gives me. This shows that Jacob knows that everything comes from God.

Discuss as a group: How do people make vows in your culture?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

First scene: Jacob starts his trip to Harran. Jacob stops and makes camp when it gets dark.

Second scene: Jacob has a dream.

Third scene: Jacob wakes from his dream. Jacob realizes that God is in this place.

Fourth scene: The next morning, Jacob dedicates a stone as a memorial. Jacob makes a vow to God.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- God
- Angels

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In the first scene, after Isaac told Jacob to go to Harran, Jacob left Beersheba and started towards Harran. At sundown, Jacob stopped for the night. This is not the first night or first sundown since Jacob left home. Jacob is now at least 60 miles, or 96 kilometers, from Beersheba. Jacob probably took a route that goes over the mountains to get from Beersheba to this place. Jacob has been traveling for more than one day.

Show the map.

Jacob stopped at a certain place. The place has no name at this time but the place is close to a town called Luz. Jacob does not know anything significant about this place. Because the sun was setting, Jacob needed to stop traveling and set up his camp before it became too dark to see. There is a short twilight in that part of the world. Jacob could not continue traveling after sunset.

In the second scene, Jacob lay down with his head on a stone. Jacob used this stone as a pillow. After going to sleep, Jacob had a dream. In his dream, Jacob saw a wide staircase going from earth to heaven. Jacob saw angels going up and down the staircase. Jacob saw God standing at the top of the staircase. God was not on the staircase. God was above or beside the staircase. God spoke to Jacob.

Show the picture of the staircase.

God tells Jacob: "I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac." Then God makes the same promises to Jacob that God has previously made to Abraham and to Isaac. God adds a promise for Jacob. God says, "I am with you and I will protect you wherever you go. I will bring you back to this land; I will not leave you until I have given you everything I have promised you."

In the third scene, Jacob wakes up and realizes that God is in this very place where Jacob is sleeping. Jacob did not know that God was present there. The dream is what made Jacob realize that God was in that place. Jacob was afraid. This is a particular kind of fear. Jacob was feeling a reverence or awe or respect for God. Jacob called the place the "house of God," the gateway to heaven.

In the fourth scene which occurs the next morning, Jacob wakes up early. Jacob took the rock that had been a pillow and stood it on end. This implies that it was a long rock. By standing the rock on end, Jacob is creating a memorial pillar. Jacob then pours olive oil over the upper end of the rock. This is a way of dedicating the rock. Jacob then gives the place a name. Jacob calls it Bethel, which means "house of God."

Then Jacob makes a vow to God. This vow is a solemn promise. As a part of the vow, Jacob asks God for three things: protection on the journey, food and clothing, and to return home safely. Then Jacob promises to do three things: accept the Lord God as his God, worship God at Bethel, and give God 10 percent of all that God has given Jacob.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- God
- Angels

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Stop the action. Ask the actor playing one of the roles, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like different responses. Restart the action.

In the first scene, no one speaks. Jacob leaves Beersheba and his family. Jacob travels towards Haran. Jacob travels about 60 miles, or 96 kilometers. At sundown, Jacob stops for the night. Jacob prepares his camp. Jacob finds a rock to rest his head on. Jacob lays down and goes to sleep.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I'm lonely. I miss my family," or "I'm very content. The night sky is beautiful," or "This is an adventure. I've never been here before." Restart the action.

In the second scene, while he is sleeping Jacob has a dream. Jacob sees a stairway going from earth to heaven. Jacob sees angels walking up and down the stairway. Jacob sees God at the top of the stairway. Jacob hears God say, "I'm the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac." Jacob hears God repeat the same promises that were given to Abraham and Isaac. Jacob hears God say, "I will be with you and protect you and bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have given you everything I have promised."

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How does it feel to meet God in this place?" You may hear, "I'm afraid. I've never met God before. God is awesome," which means God is worthy of reverence or wonder. Ask God, "Why are you

speaking to Jacob here?" You may hear, "I want Jacob to know who I am before he goes to Haran. I want Jacob to know that what I have promised to Abraham and to Isaac is also for Jacob and his descendants." Restart the action.

In the third scene, Jacob wakes up. Jacob says, "Yahweh was here and I didn't even know it." Jacob is afraid. Jacob says that this place is the "house of God" and the "gateway to heaven" where God lives.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "Why are you afraid?" You may hear, "I never met God before. This is awesome!" or "I am so honored that God has chosen to speak to me and make me these promises," or "I feel such a sense of awe and respect for God. I didn't know I could feel like this." Restart the action.

In the fourth scene, Jacob wakes up very early in the morning. The first thing Jacob did was to take the stone that he had used as a pillow and stand it on end. Jacob had to fix the stone so that it would remain standing. Then Jacob poured olive oil over the top of the standing stone. Jacob wanted this stone to be a memorial stone. Jacob named the place Bethel, which means "house of God."

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How are you feeling this morning?" You may hear, "I am still in awe with what I saw last night in my dream. I don't want to forget what happened here. This is why I'm setting up this stone so that when I see it, I will remember what happened. I want to remember how God appeared to me and spoke to me." Restart the action.

After dedicating the stone, Jacob made a vow to God. Jacob asked God to do three things for Jacob: be with Jacob and protect him, give Jacob food and clothing, and bring Jacob safely back to Isaac's home. Then Jacob promised three things: God will be Jacob's God, Jacob will worship God at Bethel, and Jacob will give God 10 percent of all that God has given Jacob.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "Why have you made this vow?" You may hear, "God has blessed me. I want to make sure that I thank God and worship God as I should. I want to give back to God because God has given me so much." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

As Jacob travelled, he came to a **certain place** to stop for the night. This certain place didn't have a name or Jacob didn't know a name for it. However, the place is given a definite article which seems to mean that it is significant. To call it a certain place is one way to indicate that this place is important.

While Jacob was sleeping, he had a **dream**. Dreams occur during sleep. Visions occur when a person is awake. Dreams are discussed in the Master Glossary. This dream was a natural dream. The dream was not caused by drugs or spirits.

Jacob saw a wide **staircase**. This was a set of stairs going from **earth** to **heaven**. Heaven is the place where God lives. Use the same words for earth and heaven that you have used before. The staircase was wide enough for **angels** to walk up and down at the same time. Angels are spirit beings created by God to carry messages for God. Angels are discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for angel that you have used before.

Yahweh was standing at the top of the staircase. This passage uses both names for God throughout the passage. Use the same word for Yahweh and the same word for God that you have used before. God says, "I'm the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac." God repeats the promises given to Abraham and Isaac and says these are promises for Jacob. God also promises to bring Jacob back to this land. This land is the land that God promised to Abraham and to Isaac. Now God says that Jacob is the owner of the land.

When Jacob woke up from his dream, Jacob was **afraid**. The fear of God is explained in the Master Glossary. Jacob was feeling reverence, honor, and respect for God. Jacob says that this place is the "house of God," the "gateway to **heaven**." Heaven is where God lives. The "house of God" means where God lives or dwells. It is not a physical house.

In the morning, Jacob stood the rock that he had used as a pillow on its end. Jacob poured olive oil over the top end of the rock. This was to dedicate the rock. The rock was to be a memorial pillar, which means that it was to remind anyone who saw it that something special had happened in this place. Jacob named the place **Bethel**, which means "house of God." Jacob did not change the name of the town of Luz. He only changed the name of the place. However, later people began to call the nearby town of Luz by the name of Bethel also.

Jacob made a **vow**. A vow refers to a solemn promise to give to God some service in exchange for certain prayers or wishes being granted. The Master Glossary has a discussion of vow.

As a part of the vow, Jacob promised to give a **tithe** of everything he has. A tithe is 10 percent. This means that Jacob promises to give back to God 1 animal from every 10 that God gives Jacob.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 28:10-22

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (18799478 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
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[mp3 zip](#) (12838372 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 6](#)

Genesis 29:1-14

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 29:1-14 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jacob continued his journey to Haran. The passage starts with Jacob's arrival. Jacob has been traveling at least a month and maybe longer. It is over 500 miles, or 885 kilometers, between Beersheba where Isaac lives to Haran. This story is a narrative account of Jacob's arrival at Haran.

The passage starts with a time word that says that after dedicating the memorial stone at Bethel and making a vow, Jacob hurried on towards Haran. Jacob did not delay along the route. Jacob arrived in the land of the east. This is land that is east or northeast of Israel. From Israel, it is in the direction of the rising sun.

When Jacob arrived in Haran, Jacob didn't know just where he was. Jacob saw a well with 3 flocks of sheep around the well. It was still early in the day. These sheep had been brought in early to be watered. To "water sheep" means to draw water from a source such as a well and put it where the sheep can drink it. The sheep can't access the water unless someone does this for them.

Stop and discuss: Describe the process for providing water for a flock of sheep.

Each flock of sheep had a shepherd. The shepherd would keep his flock separate from the other flocks.

The passage says that it was the custom in that place to wait until all the flocks had gathered before watering the animals. This would help ensure that each flock had water and that no shepherd took more water than was allowed. The shepherds covered the well with a large stone. This stone kept objects from falling into the well. The stone was also large enough and heavy enough that a normal shepherd could not move it alone. It would

take several shepherds to move the stone so that water could be drawn from the well. After watering all the animals, the shepherds would put the stone back over the opening of the well.

Show a picture of a well that is covered with a large flat stone. Show a picture of a flock of sheep with a shepherd.

Jacob approached the flocks and shepherds and greeted them by calling them brothers. They are not Jacob's brothers. This was an appropriate friendly greeting between strangers.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story of a man who goes to a new place he has never been before. He sees some men he has never met there. How does this man politely greet these other men?

Jacob asks the shepherds where they are from. Jacob does not know the name of this area. Jacob does not know where he is at this moment in his journey. The shepherds tell Jacob that this is Haran. Jacob then asks the shepherds if they know Laban, the son of Nahor. In this context, the word son means descendant. Laban is the grandson of Nahor. Nahor was Abraham's brother. Laban is the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's mother.

Jacob starts talking with the shepherds about the time to water the sheep. Jacob wants to know why they have rounded up the sheep so early in the day. "Broad daylight" is a figure of speech that means that it is still early in the day. The sun won't set for several hours yet. Jacob thinks that they still have several hours for the sheep to graze or eat before being brought in for water and the night. The shepherds don't answer Jacob's question about the time. The shepherds explain that all the flocks of sheep have to be brought to the well before the stone can be removed and the sheep watered.

While Jacob is talking with the shepherds, a young woman comes up with a flock of sheep. She is Rachel, a daughter of Laban. Rachel is working as a shepherd. Usually a girl would take care of the flocks only if there were no son. Laban has sons. We don't know why Rachel was doing this work. Working as a shepherd would have put Rachel at risk of being attacked because she is a girl.

Stop and discuss: What is the role of girls in your culture? What work would a young, unmarried woman be assigned to do for the family?

Jacob understands that Rachel is his cousin. Rachel is the daughter of Laban. Laban is Rebekah's brother. Rachel is Jacob's first cousin on his mother's side of the family. Jacob goes over to the well and removes the stone that covers the top of the well. This requires great strength. It normally took several shepherds to move this stone. Jacob waters the flock for Rachel. Then Jacob kisses Rachel. The normal kiss of greeting is to kiss someone on each cheek. Jacob begins to cry with joy. This is a normal way of expressing joy in Jacob's culture.

Stop and discuss: What is the normal way to greet a visitor in your culture? Tell a story of a visitor coming to your village. How do people greet this man? What emotions does he show?

Jacob tells Rachel that Jacob is the son of Rebekah, her aunt. Rachel left the flock of sheep at the well and ran to tell her father Laban that Jacob had arrived.

Laban immediately gets up and runs out to meet Jacob. Laban greets Jacob with a kiss on the cheek and hugs Jacob. Laban then takes Jacob to Laban's home. Jacob tells Laban why Jacob has come to Haran. Then Laban says, "You are my flesh and blood." This means that Laban accepts that Jacob is Laban's nephew, the son of Rebekah, Laban's sister. Jacob stayed with Laban for a month.

Stop and discuss as a team: Tell a story about an unknown relative who comes to visit. How do people greet this person? What does the family do to make this relative feel welcome? What words do you say that indicate that this person really is a member of the family?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

First scene: Jacob continues his journey to Haran.

Second scene: Jacob sees a well with flocks of sheep around it. Jacob greets the shepherds and discovers that this is Haran. The shepherds know Laban.

Third scene: Rachel arrives with a flock of sheep. Jacob tells her that he is Jacob, her cousin. Rachel goes to Laban.

Fourth scene: Laban comes out to greet Jacob and takes Jacob to his home. Jacob stays there for a month.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- The shepherds
- Rachel
- Laban

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

This passage has a number of greetings between Jacob and strangers. It is important to note the differences between the greetings.

1. Jacob meets the other shepherds and calls them brothers.
2. Jacob meets Rachel, his cousin, and kisses Rachel on each cheek and cries with joy.
3. Jacob meets Laban, his uncle. Laban kisses Jacob and hugs Jacob and takes Jacob to Laban's home.

Stop and discuss as a group: The greetings are similar but different. How does each greeting explain a relationship? In your culture, how would you greet each of these people?

In scene one, Jacob finishes his vow at Bethel and travels on to Haran. It takes him about a month to make this journey. The passage starts with a time word that indicates that traveling on was the next thing Jacob did after he completed his vow at Bethel.

Show the map and review Jacob's route.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story with a sequence of events. Notice the words that you use to tell what happens next.

In the second scene, Jacob arrives in Haran. Jacob has been traveling about a month. Jacob sees a well at a distance. The well opening is covered with a large heavy stone. Even though the sun is still high in the sky, three flocks of sheep have come to the well to be watered. Jacob greets the shepherds. Jacob asks the shepherds where they are from. The shepherds say that they are from Haran. Jacob then asks if they know a man named Laban. The shepherds do know Laban. Jacob asks how Laban is doing. While Jacob is talking with the shepherds, they see Rachel, Laban's daughter, coming towards the well with a flock of sheep. Then Jacob asks why they have the sheep waiting for water so early in the day. Jacob is a shepherd also. Jacob knows the custom is to keep the sheep grazing all day and water them in the evening near sundown.

This passage is about watering the flocks. Everyone would understand that it included all these actions:

1. Bringing the flocks of sheep to the well or water source.
2. Removing the stone from the opening of the well.
3. Drawing water from the well.
4. Putting it into a container that the sheep would drink from.
5. Allowing the sheep to drink the water.

6. Replacing the stone covering over the mouth of the well.

Stop and discuss: What action words would you need to use so that people would understand how to water the sheep?

In scene three Rachel arrives with a flock of sheep. Rachel is one of Laban's daughters. This means that Rachel is Jacob's first cousin. Because Rachel is his cousin and the flock belongs to her father Laban, Jacob goes to the well and takes the stone off. It takes amazing strength to remove the stone alone. Normally the shepherds work together to move the stone. Here, Jacob removes it alone. The custom is to wait until all the flocks are at the well and then water all the flocks at the same time. Jacob does not follow the custom. Jacob waters the flock that belongs to Laban. Then Jacob greets Rachel with a kiss on the cheek and weeps with joy. Jacob explains that he is Rachel's cousin. Rachel leaves the sheep at the well and runs home to tell her father Laban that Jacob has come. We don't know the distance between the well and Laban's home.

In scene four, Laban runs out to the well and greets Jacob by hugging and kissing Jacob on his cheek. Then Laban takes Jacob to his house. Jacob explains to Laban why he has come to Haran. Laban declares that Jacob is really a member of the family. Jacob remains with Laban for a month.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- Shepherds
- Rachel
- Laban

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Stop the action. Ask the actor playing one of the roles, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like different responses. Restart the action.

In the first scene, Jacob continues his journey from Bethel towards Haran. Jacob has been traveling about a month.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How was this trip?" You may hear, "It was long. I'm very tired and ready to be in Haran," or "It was amazing! I have seen wonderful things on the way," or "It's been good, but I miss my parents." Restart the action.

In the second scene, Jacob sees a well and approaches it. There are shepherds with 3 flocks of sheep near the well. The sun is still high in the sky but they have come to the well to water the sheep. Jacob approaches the shepherds and greets them politely. Jacob asks where the shepherds are from. They reply that they are from Haran. Jacob learns that they know Laban. They all see a young woman approaching. The shepherds say that

this woman is Rachel, a daughter of Laban. Jacob asks the shepherds why they are at the well so early in the day.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I'm so relieved and happy to finally be at Haran. I'm so glad to know that my uncle Laban is here and doing well," or "I don't understand why they are watering the sheep so early in the day but I'm glad to be here. I'm glad I have found my mother's family." Restart the action.

In the third scene, Rachel arrives at the well with a flock of sheep. Jacob removes the stone from the well opening and waters Rachel's flock of sheep. Then Jacob greets Rachel with a kiss on the cheek. Jacob begins to weep with joy. When Rachel learns that this man is her cousin Jacob, she runs home to tell Laban.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "Why are you weeping?" You may hear, "I'm so happy. I've found my mother's family. Rachel is beautiful. Rachel will be a wonderful wife for me." Ask Rachel, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I'm happy to meet my cousin. I wonder why he has come to Haran. He is really strong. He moved that stone by himself." Ask Laban, "How did you feel when Rachel told you that Jacob has arrived in Haran?" You may hear, "I'm happy to have my nephew here. He is my sister Rebekah's son. I'm glad to meet him. He is welcome to visit me." Restart the action.

In the fourth scene, Laban runs out to the well and greets Jacob with a kiss on the cheek and hugs Jacob. Laban then brings Jacob to his home. Jacob tells Laban his story. When he finishes telling the story, Laban exclaims, "You really are my own flesh and blood." This is an expression meaning, "you really are related to me" or "you really are my sister's son."

Stop the action: Ask Laban, "Why are you so happy to have Jacob with you?" You may hear, "Jacob is my sister's son. I haven't seen her since she left over 40 years ago. This is wonderful to have her son here to tell me about her." Ask Jacob, "How does it feel to have such a welcome from your uncle?" You may hear, "This is wonderful. He is being so kind to me. He is making me feel really welcome like he really wants me here. I'm glad I get to choose a wife here." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Start this passage with a word or phrase that indicates that Jacob continued his trip as the next thing after finishing the vow at Bethel.

A heavy **stone** covered the **mouth** of the well. The mouth of the well is the opening at the top of the well. The stone would be a large flat stone that covered the mouth or opening of the well. This stone served several purposes. It protected the well and water from objects falling into the well and making it dirty. It kept people from accidentally falling in. Because the stone was so large and heavy, it usually took several men to remove it. Thus, all the shepherds gathered with their flocks before removing the stone. This ensured that each flock received the right amount of water.

Show the photo of the well.

They **watered** the flocks. Watering the flocks is a phrase that includes a number of actions. If you don't have one word that everyone will understand, you may have to explain this process.

Jacob greeted the shepherds as **brothers**. Brothers would be a polite form of greeting. Jacob could have said friends. These men were strangers. Using these terms would be polite with strangers.

Laban is the **son** of Nahor. Here the word son means descendant of Nahor. Nahor was the brother of Abraham. Laban is Nahor's grandson. You may use the term grandson.

It is **broad daylight**. This is a figure of speech which means that the sun is still high in the sky. It can be any time from noon until late afternoon. Jacob is wondering why the shepherds have brought the sheep to be watered when there is still so much time for grazing. The usual custom is to water the sheep near sunset, but with enough light to get everyone home before it gets dark.

Rachel is Jacob's cousin. Rachel is the daughter of Laban who is the brother of Rebekah. Use the appropriate kinship words in describing Rachel. Use the appropriate kinship terms for all the relationships. For example, Rebekah is Rachel's paternal aunt while Laban is Jacob's maternal uncle. Refer to the family tree used in the last passage as necessary to understand the family relationships.

Jacob greeted Rachel with a kiss on the cheek. This is a normal greeting between relatives, even those who are strangers.

Jacob wept. These are tears of joy. It was normal for a man at this time to cry or shed tears of joy.

Laban ran to meet Jacob. Laban embraced or hugged Jacob. This means that Laban put his arms around Jacob. Laban kissed Jacob on the cheek. These are normal greetings for a relative, even one who is a stranger. These action words—run, hug, kiss—show how eager Laban was to welcome Jacob as a visitor.

Laban said to Jacob, "You are my **flesh and blood**." Another way of saying this is, "You are my bone and my flesh." These are figures of speech that say the same thing. Laban is saying that Jacob is part of Laban's family. They share the same blood. They have the same ancestors. Laban is accepting Jacob into Laban's family.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 29:1-14

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (17706496 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 29:15-30

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 29:15-30 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

After Jacob arrived in Haran, Jacob went to live with his uncle Laban. Laban is the brother of Jacob's mother Rebekah. Jacob stays with Laban about a month. Then Jacob asks to marry Rachel. This is a narrative account of Jacob and who Jacob marries and how the weddings occur.

Apparently Jacob started working for Laban sometime after Jacob arrived in Haran. Laban has not paid Jacob any money for this work. We don't know what work Jacob might have done for Laban during this month. At the end of the month, Laban says to Jacob, "You are my relative, or my kinsman. Should you work without pay?"

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about a relative who comes from a distance and stays a long time with relatives. What are the expectations for this relative? Should he work? Should he receive pay for his work? What kinds of things would the relative do while staying with the family?

Laban asks Jacob what Jacob wants for wages or a salary. Laban is saying that it is not good for Jacob to work without pay. Laban should pay Jacob something for the work that Jacob is doing. Laban is giving Jacob the opportunity to say what Jacob wants as a salary.

Stop and discuss: What would you ask for as wages?

Then the passage introduces Laban's daughters. Leah is the oldest daughter. The passage only gives a description of Leah's eyes. Leah's eyes were dull or uninteresting. Leah's eyes gave Leah a dull expression. The passage describes Rachel as beautiful to look at. Rachel has a beautiful face and a beautiful figure. Jacob was in love with Rachel. Jacob said to Laban, "I will work for you for 7 years if I can marry Rachel." Laban agrees to this bargain. Jacob begins to work for Laban. The 7 years pass quickly for Jacob. Jacob's love for Rachel is so strong that the 7 years seem like a few days.

Jacob agreed to work for 7 years to have Rachel as his wife. The bride price is the amount of money or goods, such as animals, that the husband pays the bride's family. Seven years is a higher bride price than normal. Based on the average bride price and wages of a shepherd, Jacob should work 3 or 4 years for Rachel. Jacob agrees to work much longer. In some cultures, the groom pays an agreed price to the bride's family. In some cultures the bride's family gives an agreed price to the groom. Some cultures do neither. The price can be money or animals or land or a combination of these things.

Stop and discuss: In your culture, explain the marriage customs. Who are you allowed to marry? Who chooses the husband for a daughter? What kinds of negotiations are necessary before the couple can marry?

Discuss: describe a beautiful woman. Talk about a woman who isn't beautiful. How do you describe her?

At the end of the 7 years, Jacob demands his wife. Jacob says to Laban, "Give me my wife so that I can marry her." Jacob and Rachel are already legally married according to the culture. At the time that Laban agreed to the marriage, Jacob and Rachel were married or bound together as husband and wife. However, Jacob has not yet slept with Rachel. The marriage actually starts in most people's minds when the couple sleep together. Then Jacob and Rachel would be able to live together as husband and wife. The family decides when the couple can start sleeping together and usually celebrates this occasion with a wedding feast. Until that time, the bride remains a virgin and lives with her family.

Stop and discuss: Describe an engagement time in your culture. What words do the man and woman use when talking about the other? In this story, Jacob referred to Rachel as his wife even though they had not yet slept together. How is your culture similar to or different from the culture of Jacob and Rachel?

Laban arranges for the marriage feast. Laban invited everyone in the neighborhood—that is everyone who lived near Laban. Laban prepared a wedding feast. The feast would include wine for drinking.

Stop and discuss: describe a wedding in your culture. How does your wedding story differ from this wedding story? Who prepares the feast? Where does the bride go? What is the role of the bride's parents? What is the role of the groom's parents?

The day of the wedding feast when it was dark, Laban took Leah to Jacob in the tent where Jacob was and Jacob slept with Leah. The bride would normally wear a heavy veil all during the feasting time. Jacob would not have seen Leah's face during the wedding feast. Laban also gave Leah a servant named Zilpah as a maid. Giving a servant to the daughter at the time of her marriage was a common practice in that time. In the morning, Jacob woke up and discovered that Leah was sleeping beside him. Jacob was very angry. Jacob said to Laban, "What have you done? I worked for 7 years for Rachel. Why have you tricked me?"

Stop and discuss: What would happen in your culture if the father of the bride tricked the bridegroom like Laban tricked Jacob?

Discuss: How could Jacob sleep with the wrong woman? Why didn't Jacob recognize that the bride was not Rachel?

Laban told Jacob that the custom in that area was to marry the oldest girl first. Leah is the oldest daughter. Laban makes a suggestion. Jacob should finish the bridal week of celebrations with Leah. Then at the end of the 7 days, Laban will allow Jacob to take Rachel as a wife also. But Jacob must agree to work another 7 years for Rachel.

Stop and discuss: Jacob is negotiating for his preferred wife while he is upset and angry. How do emotions affect your judgment for making decisions about your life?

Discuss: In your culture, explain the rules about which daughter marries first. What happens in the family if these rules are not followed?

Jacob agrees to work 7 more years. At the end of the bridal week with Leah, Jacob consummates a marriage with Rachel. This means that Jacob takes Rachel as his wife and sleeps with Rachel. Laban gave Rachel a servant named Bilhah to be Rachel's maid. Jacob loved Rachel more than Jacob loved Leah. Jacob remained another 7 years with Laban and Jacob worked for Laban as payment for Rachel as Jacob's wife.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Jacob asks to marry Rachel. Jacob agrees to work 7 years for Laban in order to marry Rachel.

Second scene: Laban tricks Jacob and gives Leah as the bride. Jacob agrees to work another 7 years in order to marry Rachel.

Third scene: A week after Jacob marries Leah, Jacob takes Rachel as his wife also.

The characters in this story include:

- Laban
- Jacob
- Leah
- Rachel
- Zilpah, Leah's servant
- Bilhah, Rachel's servant
- Wedding feast guests

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In the first scene, Jacob stays with Laban in Haran for a month. Jacob begins to work for Laban during that month. Laban offers to pay Jacob wages for Jacob's work.

Then the passage introduces Laban's daughters. The passage uses the word *now* as the first word of this introduction. *Now* is usually a time word indicating the time. In this passage, *now* is a word that introduces a change in the topic.

Stop and discuss: Tell a short story that changes the subject or introduces a new subject in the middle of the story. What words do you use when you introduce the change in subject?

The information about Laban's daughters can come before Laban asks Jacob what Jacob wants for wages. This information is necessary to understand why Jacob asks for the wages in this way.

Laban has 2 daughters. Leah is the older daughter. Leah is not pretty. Leah's eyes are dull. Rachel is the younger daughter. Rachel has a beautiful face and figure. Jacob asks to marry Rachel. Jacob offers to work for Laban for 7 years if Laban will allow Jacob to marry Rachel. Laban agrees to this proposal. Jacob works for 7 years. 7 years is a high bride price. Normally a shepherd would work 3 or 4 years for a wife. Jacob is paying more than most people for his wife. Because Jacob loves Rachel, the time passes quickly.

In the second scene, Jacob goes to Laban and says that the 7 years are finished. Jacob asks for his wife. Jacob wants to sleep with his wife. Jacob doesn't mention her name. Although Jacob and Rachel have been legally bound together since Laban agreed to the marriage, the marriage starts when the couple sleeps together. Laban agrees and prepares a wedding feast. Laban invites everyone who lives nearby to come to the wedding celebrations.

The wedding feast would be a grand party. There would be lots of food and wine served. People would celebrate for some hours. The festivities would normally last most of the day. The bride would normally wear a heavy veil during the public festivities. Jacob would not be able to see the bride's face. Thus, after dark, when Jacob went to the tent to receive his bride, he was probably full of good food and wine. Jacob was expecting Rachel to arrive.

It is after dark when Laban takes Leah, the older daughter, into the tent to sleep with Jacob. Laban has changed the bride without telling Jacob. Jacob thought he was marrying Rachel or going to sleep with Rachel. Leah has never been mentioned as a bride for Jacob. Jacob does not realize that the bride has been changed. Jacob sleeps with Leah. In the morning, Jacob wakes up and discovers that Laban has tricked him. Laban gave Jacob Leah as a wife instead of Rachel. Jacob goes to Laban and demands an answer. Jacob demands, "Why have you done this to me?" Laban explains that the custom in Haran is for the older daughter to be married first. In fact, to skip the older daughter would cause the older daughter to be shamed. Laban asks Jacob to finish the bridal week with Leah. Then if Jacob will work another 7 years, Laban will give Jacob Rachel as a wife also.

In scene four, Jacob agrees to this proposal. After spending a week with Leah, Jacob married Rachel. Jacob loved Rachel much more than Jacob loved Leah. The passage does not mention another wedding feast for Rachel.

Stop and discuss: To sleep with his wife is a polite way of saying that Jacob had sexual relations with his wife. Talk about a marriage in your culture. How do you politely describe what has happened between the husband and wife when they go to bed together?

Laban gave each daughter a servant. Leah's servant is named Zilpah. Rachel's servant is named Bilhah. By giving each daughter a servant, Laban is helping the daughter to set up her own household. It was normal for a father to give his daughter a servant when she married. The mention of the gift of a servant for each daughter is a way of slowing the action and setting up suspense in the story.

Stop and discuss: Why is each daughter's servant named? Why would the writer mention the servant and her name in this passage? What do you think might be coming in the story?

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Laban
- Jacob
- Leah
- Rachel
- Zilpah, Leah's servant
- Bilhah, Rachel's servant
- Wedding feast guests

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Stop the action. Ask the actor playing one of the roles, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like different responses. Restart the action.

In scene one, Jacob stays with Laban about a month. Jacob begins to work for Laban. Laban does not pay Jacob for this work. At the end of the month, Laban calls Jacob and says, "You should receive wages for your work. You shouldn't work for free as my relative. How much do you want?"

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How do you feel when Laban offers to pay you for your work?" You may hear, "It doesn't matter. I don't mind the work for my food and a place to stay." Or, "I'm so glad he asked me. Now I can ask for Rachel to be my wife." Restart the action.

Laban has 2 daughters. Leah is the oldest daughter. Leah is not pretty but people notice Leah's eyes. Rachel is the youngest daughter. Rachel is beautiful. Jacob says to Laban, "I want to marry Rachel." Jacob offers to work for Laban for 7 years in order to have Rachel as a wife.

Stop the action: Ask Leah, "How do you feel when you hear that Rachel is to be married before you are married?" You may hear, "I'm not surprised. She is beautiful." Or, "I wish that Jacob would see me. I'm not beautiful but I would be a good wife." Ask Rachel, "How are you feeling about marrying Jacob?" You may hear, "I am so excited. Jacob is handsome and so strong. Did you see how Jacob moved the stone on the well so my sheep could have water? I'm glad to be married to someone like my cousin Jacob." Restart the action.

Laban agrees that Rachel can marry Jacob. Laban says, "I would rather have her marry you than someone else." Jacob works for 7 years. For Jacob the time seems to pass quickly. Jacob's love for Rachel is very strong.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How did you feel during these 7 years?" You may hear, "The years have flown by. Rachel is so beautiful that it has been worth the time in order to marry her." Or, "I didn't mind at all. Rachel is worth all this effort." Restart the action.

In Scene 2, Jacob goes to Laban and says, "I want to marry my wife." Jacob says, "I have fulfilled my agreement. Laban agrees to the marriage. Laban invites all the neighbors or everyone who lives in that area. Laban prepares a wedding feast. The wedding feast would include good food and wine. When it was dark, Laban took the bride to the tent and gave her to Jacob. However, Leah, the older sister, was the bride. Laban gave Leah a marriage gift—a servant named Zilpah as Leah's special servant. Jacob did not know that Laban had changed the bride. Jacob thought that the bride was Rachel. Jacob slept with his bride. In the morning, Jacob saw that Leah was sleeping beside Jacob. Jacob had slept with Leah.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I am so angry I can't think correctly! How dare Laban trick me like this? I worked for 7 years for Rachel. This is wrong." Ask Leah, "How are you

feeling right now?" You may hear, "I feel good for me because it is my right to be married first. Now I have a husband. I don't have any shame." Or, "I'm sorry that Jacob is angry and disappointed but I'm supposed to marry first." Ask Rachel, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I'm so angry with my father and my sister. I'm supposed to be Jacob's wife. Jacob has worked for me. It is my right to be the bride. Why did my father treat me like this?" Ask Laban, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I'm happy. I have my first daughter married and probably Jacob will work for Rachel also. Jacob is angry but he will get over it. Leah is a good girl and will be a good wife." Restart the action.

Jacob goes to Laban and demands to know why Laban has tricked Jacob like this. Laban explains that it is the custom for the older girl to marry first. Laban asks Jacob to finish the bridal week with Leah. Then Laban promises to give Rachel to Jacob as a wife also. However, Jacob must work another 7 years for Rachel. Jacob agrees to work another 7 years.

In Scene three, after spending the bridal week with Leah, Jacob also takes Rachel as a wife. Laban gives Rachel a marriage gift—a servant named Bilhah as Rachel's special servant. Jacob sleeps with Rachel. Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How are you feeling now?" You may hear, "I'm still very angry. Laban should not have tricked me like this. Rachel is the wife I wanted to marry. I will work the 7 years for Rachel. Rachel is worth the extra work. Rachel is beautiful." Ask Leah, "How are you feeling now?" You may hear, "I'm happy. I have a husband. I'm the first wife." Ask Rachel, "How are you feeling now?" You may hear, "I'm glad to be married to Jacob. But I should be the first wife, not Leah. Jacob loves me." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jacob has been with Laban about a month. Some translations choose to put this information at the beginning of this passage. Other translations choose to put it at the end of the previous passage. You may choose where to put this information.

Laban begins to talk about paying Jacob for the work that Jacob has been doing. Laban talks about a **salary** or **wages**. Wages or a salary is the money that is paid when someone does a job for someone else. Laban is asking Jacob a question, but this is the kind of question that doesn't require an answer. You can state this without a question. "You are my relative. You should be paid for your work." Or you can ask it as a question that doesn't require an answer.

The passage uses the word **relative** or **kinsman**. Jacob is Laban's nephew, the son of Laban's sister. A relative or kinsman is someone who shares a common ancestor with you. Thus, you share family history. In this case, Laban is the brother of Jacob's mother. Jacob's grandfather is Laban's father. Laban is Jacob's uncle. They are related.

Leah is the older daughter. The only description of Leah refers to Leah's eyes. The meaning of the word used to describe Leah's eyes isn't clear. Many think the description of Leah is that Leah is not pretty but has nice eyes or lovely eyes. Some think the description is that Leah's eyes are weak or dull or lack sparkle. Regardless, everyone notices Leah's eyes. People talk about Leah's eyes but talk about how beautiful Rachel is. Rachel is described as beautiful in both face and figure.

Laban prepared the feast and invited the neighbors. Laban invited everyone who lived near him or near enough to be called a neighbor.

Laban says it is the **custom** for the older daughter to marry first. Custom means usual practice. Or this is what we always do here. Because it is the custom, Laban can't allow the younger daughter to marry first. This would cause shame for the older daughter.

Laban asks Jacob to finish the **bridal week** with Leah. The bridal week would be a set of parties and festivities that would last for 7 days. The bride would receive visitors during the week. Also the bride and group would spend a great deal of time together during that week. The groom would not be going off to do normal work.

Laban suggests that Jacob work another 7 years for Rachel. However, Laban will allow Jacob to begin the marriage with Rachel right after Jacob finishes the bridal week with Leah. Jacob agrees to this arrangement. After the 7 days, Jacob takes Rachel as a bride also.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 29:15-30

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (21333371 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 3](#)
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Genesis 29:31–30:24

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 29:31–30:24 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

After Laban tricked Jacob by changing the bride and giving Leah to Jacob as his bride, Jacob married both Leah and Rachel. Then Jacob began the second 7 years of working for Laban as a bride price for Rachel. This is a narrative account of the first few years of marriage and the birth of the children.

Yahweh sees what has been going on with Jacob's family. Yahweh sees that Jacob does not love Leah. Yahweh intervenes and allows Leah to have children. Yahweh opens Leah's womb or allows Leah to conceive a child or become pregnant. To open the womb so that the woman can conceive a child is a figure of speech. This means that Yahweh allowed Leah to have a child but did not allow Rachel to have a child. Yahweh does not open Rachel's womb. Rachel is not able to have children. Leah conceived or became pregnant and gave birth to a son. Leah named this son Reuben. Leah said, "Yahweh has observed my misery. Now my husband will love me." The name Reuben sounded like a word that means "He has seen my misery."

Stop and discuss: Each team member tell a story about someone who became pregnant and delivered a child. Notice the polite terms used to describe what is happening.

Stop and discuss: Describe the process of naming babies in your culture. How is the name decided? Who decides on the name? When is the name given? How important is the meaning of the name?

Leah continued to have children. The second son was named Simeon, which sounds like a word that means "He who hears." The third son was named Levi, which sounds like a word that means to have affection. The fourth son was named Juda, which sounds like a word that means praise. Each name sounded like a word that has

meaning in the language that Leah spoke. After having 4 sons, Leah stopped having children. In naming 3 of her children, Leah gave credit to God. Leah said, "Yahweh has noticed my misery, Yahweh has heard that I was unloved," and for the fourth child, Leah said, "Now I will praise Yahweh."

During all this time, Rachel has not had a child. Rachel became jealous of Leah. Rachel begged Jacob to give her a child. Jacob became very angry with Rachel. Jacob said, "Am I God? God is the one who keeps you from having children." Rachel had a solution. Rachel asks Jacob to take Rachel's servant Bilhah as a wife. Then any children that Bilhah has will be Rachel's children.

This was a common practice. A wife would give her maid to the wife's husband so that the maid would have a child for the wife. The servant has the child but everyone says that the barren wife is the mother. The wife claims the child as hers. Sarah did this with Hagar when Sarah was unable to have a child.

Stop and discuss: What happens in your culture when a woman is unable to have a child? What are some of the ways that a woman can have a child of her own if she is unable to conceive a child?

Bilhah had sons and Rachel named the sons. The first son was named Dan which sounds like a word meaning vindicated. *Vindicate* is a word that means that a person is now cleared from criticism or blame or guilt or suspicion. Rachel said that God had vindicated her or judged her and found that she was free from blame or guilt for not having a child of her own. Rachel named Bilhah's second son Naphtali. Naphtali sounds like a word that means struggle.

Leah realized that Rachel is now having sons through Rachel's servant Bilhah while Leah has stopped having children. Leah asks Jacob to take Leah's servant Zilpah as a wife and have children with Zilpah. Any children from Zilpah will be Leah's children. Jacob took Zilpah as a wife and soon Zilpah had a son. Leah named this son Gad which sounds like a word that means good fortune. Then Zilpah had another son and Leah named this son Asher which sounds like a word that means reward.

Stop and discuss: Bilhah and Zilpah did not have a choice about becoming wives for Jacob. They did not have a choice about having children for Rachel and Leah. In your culture, what happens to women like Bilhah and Zilpah?

All the women stop having children for a time. One day Reuben, Leah's oldest son, finds a plant in the field. This plant is called a mandrake or love flower. People used mandrakes or love flowers to increase fertility or the ability to conceive children. The mandrake is a root vegetable from the potato family. The fruit was a small yellow berry about the size of a small tomato and people could eat this fruit. People believed that eating this fruit would make women fertile or able to conceive. Mandrakes are not usually found in the area of Harran. Reuben gathered these mandrakes and took them to Leah. Rachel saw Reuben with the mandrakes and asked Leah to give her some. Leah and Rachel quarreled and then Rachel offered to let Jacob sleep with Leah if Leah would give Rachel some of the mandrakes.

Stop and discuss: What do women do in your culture when there is a difficulty with becoming pregnant or having a child? What do people believe about these practices?

Show a picture of mandrakes.

In the evening, Leah met Jacob as Jacob came back from the fields. Leah told Jacob that Jacob was to sleep with Leah that night. Leah said, "I bought you with some mandrakes that my son found." Jacob went to Leah's tent and slept with Leah. God allowed Leah to conceive or become pregnant again. Leah had a fifth son and named him Issachar which sounds like a word that means reward. Then Leah had a sixth son. Leah named this son Zebulun which sounds like a word meaning honor. Later, Leah also had a daughter. Leah named her daughter, Dinah.

Finally, after the birth of all these children, God remembered Rachel. God opened Rachel's womb and Rachel conceived and had a son. Rachel named her son Joseph. Joseph sounds like a word that means may God add more children. Rachel was asking God to give her another son. Joseph was Jacob's eleventh son. At the end of this passage Jacob has 11 sons and one daughter.

Stop and discuss: Have people representing Leah, Rachel, Zilpah and Bilhah stand. As each child is born, have that child join the mother. Zilpah should stand next to Leah. Bilhah should stand next to Rachel. If the team isn't large enough, use stones, sticks, or toys to represent the children.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 6 scenes.

First scene: Yahweh helps Leah and Leah has 4 sons.

Second scene: Rachel has no children. Rachel gives her servant Bilhah to Jacob as a wife. Bilhah has 2 sons who become Rachel's sons.

Third scene: Leah has stopped having children. Leah gives her servant Zilpah to Jacob as a wife and Zilpah has 2 sons. These sons become Leah's sons.

Fourth scene: Reuben finds mandrakes or love flowers. Leah and Rachel quarrel over Jacob. Leah agrees to give Rachel some of the mandrakes and Rachel agrees that Jacob can sleep with Leah.

Fifth scene: Leah tells Jacob that Jacob is to sleep with Leah. Leah has 2 more sons and a daughter.

Sixth scene: God remembers Rachel. Rachel has a son.

The characters in this story include:

- Yahweh/God
- Jacob
- Leah
- Rachel
- Zilpah
- Bilhah
- Reuben, Leah's oldest son
- Simeon
- Levi
- Judah
- Dan
- Naphtali
- Gad
- Asher
- Issachar
- Zebulun
- Dinah
- Joseph

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In the first scene, Jacob has married both Leah and Rachel. Jacob loves Rachel. Jacob does not love Leah. Yahweh sees that Jacob does not love Leah. Yahweh allows Leah to have a child. Leah has a boy and names him Reuben. Quickly, Leah has 3 more sons. During this time, Rachel does not have a child.

In the second scene, Rachel becomes jealous of Leah because Leah is having sons and Rachel does not have a baby. Rachel pleads with Jacob. Rachel says, "Give me children or I will die." Jacob becomes very angry with Rachel. Jacob knows that Jacob does not control having children—God is the one who controls when a woman becomes pregnant. Jacob says, "I am not God." Rachel asks Jacob to take Bilhah, Rachel's servant as a wife. Any children that Bilhah has will be Rachel's children. Jacob agrees. Bilhah has two sons. Rachel takes the sons as her own. Rachel names the sons.

In the third scene, Leah realizes that she isn't having more children. Rachel is having children through her servant Bilhah. Leah decides to use her servant Zilpah in the same way. Leah asks Jacob to marry Zilpah. Zilpah has 2 sons. Leah names these two sons. These are Leah's sons.

In the fourth scene, Reuben, Leah's oldest son is old enough to go out into the fields. Reuben finds some mandrakes, or love flowers, and gathers some to take to Leah. This happens during the wheat harvest which is late spring. Rachel saw Reuben with the mandrakes. Rachel asks Leah for some of the mandrakes. Leah quarrels with Rachel. Then Rachel offers to let Jacob sleep with Leah, providing Leah gives Rachel some of the mandrakes. Leah agrees.

In the fifth scene, when Jacob returns from the fields, Leah tells Jacob that Jacob is to sleep with Leah that night. Leah says, "I bought you with some mandrakes that Reuben found for me." Leah has 2 more sons and a daughter.

In the sixth scene, God remembers Rachel. God allows Rachel to become pregnant. Rachel has a son.

It is important to get the order of the birth of the children.

First Leah had Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah. Then Rachel's servant Bilhah had Dan and Naphtali. Then Leah's servant Zilpah had Gad and Asher. Then again, Leah had Issachar, Zebulun, and Dinah. And finally, Rachel had Joseph.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 6 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Yahweh/God
- Jacob
- Leah
- Rachel
- Zilpah
- Bilhah
- Reuben, Leah's oldest son
- Simeon
- Levi
- Judah
- Dan
- Naphtali
- Gad
- Asher
- Issachar
- Zebulun
- Dinah
- Joseph

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing one of the roles, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like different responses. Restart the action.

In scene one, Jacob has married Leah and Rachel. Yahweh sees that Jacob does not love Leah. Yahweh opens Leah's womb. Leah has 4 boys, one after the other. Leah names each son. The name sounds like a word in their language that has a particular meaning. Reuben's name sounds like "God has seen my misery." Simeon sounds like "one who hears." Levi sounds like "having affection for someone." Judah sounds like "praise." After having these 4 sons, Leah stops having children.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How do you feel about Leah now that she has given you 4 sons?" You may hear, "She has done well. They are fine boys. I'm grateful but I don't love her. I love Rachel." Ask Leah, "How are you feeling now that you have 4 sons?" You may hear, "I love my sons. I'm thankful that God has given them to me. I know Jacob doesn't love me but Jacob loves my sons." Ask Rachel, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I'm so angry. Why does Leah have children and not me? It's not fair. I want to be a mother!" Restart the action.

In Scene two, Rachel can't conceive and have children. Rachel becomes jealous of Leah. Rachel tells Jacob to take Bilhah, Rachel's servant as a wife. Any children Bilhah has will be Rachel's children. Bilhah has 2 sons. Rachel names the sons and claims them as her own.

Stop the action: Ask Bilhah, "How do you feel about being married to Jacob and having children for Rachel?" You may hear, "I love Rachel and I'm happy to do this for her. Everyone knows they are my sons." Or, "I don't have a choice." Restart the action.

In Scene three, Leah has stopped having children. Leah tells Jacob to marry Zilpah, Leah's maid. Leah says the children will be Leah's children. Zilpah has 2 sons. Leah names the sons and claims these as Leah's sons.

Stop the action: Ask Zilpah, "How do you feel about having children for Leah?" You may hear, "I am happy to help Leah. She is my mistress and is kind to me. I want her to be first in Jacob's eyes." Or, "I don't have a choice." Restart the action.

In scene four, during wheat harvest, Reuben, Leah's oldest son finds some mandrakes, or love flowers. Reuben harvests these mandrakes and takes them to Leah. Rachel begs Leah, "Let me have some of the mandrakes." Leah becomes angry. Leah accuses Rachel of stealing Leah's husband and now wanting to steal Reuben's mandrakes. Rachel offers to let Jacob sleep with Leah that night providing Leah will give Rachel some of the mandrakes.

Stop the action: Ask Rachel, "Why do you want these mandrakes?" You may hear, "I want to have a child. Maybe these mandrakes will make me fertile. I must keep Jacob's love for me." Ask Leah, "Why did you get so angry with Rachel?" You may hear, "She has everything she needs. She has Jacob's love. She has 2 sons from her maid. She doesn't need my mandrakes." Restart the action.

In scene 5 when Jacob returns from the fields, Leah meets Jacob and tells Jacob he is to sleep with her that night. Jacob sleeps with Leah. Leah has 2 more sons and a daughter.

In scene 6, God remembers Rachel and Rachel becomes pregnant and has a son. His name is Joseph. Joseph is the eleventh son for Jacob. Rachel was asking God to give her another son.

Stop the action: Ask Rachel, "Why are you asking God for another son right as this son is born? Isn't one son enough for you?" You might hear, "I must have more sons. Leah has 6 sons and a daughter plus the 2 sons from Zilpah. I only have this son and the two from Bilhah. I must have more sons so that Jacob will continue to love me." Ask Jacob, "How do you feel now that Rachel has a son?" You may hear, "I'm very happy for her. He is a fine boy. He will be a good son. God has blessed me with 11 sons. I hope the women will stop quarreling now." Ask Leah, "How do you feel now that Rachel has a son?" You may hear, "I'm glad for her. Maybe now she won't be so jealous. I have 6 sons and a daughter plus my 2 sons from Zillpah. I am not jealous of Rachel. God has been good to me." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The names of Jacob's sons become the names of the 12 tribes of Israel in the future. These names will be referred to throughout the rest of the scriptures. As you say the names, make sure that they don't have a particular meaning in your culture. The names should be easy to pronounce in your language. Each son's name had a specific meaning. The name sounded like a word in the language that had a particular meaning.

In this story Leah names her children and Rachel names her children. Jacob does not seem to be a part of the naming of the child.

Leah talks about **Yahweh**. Yahweh has heard Leah's prayers. Yahweh has noticed Leah's misery. Use the same word for Yahweh that you have used in previous translations. Yahweh is discussed in the Master Glossary.

This passage talks about a woman's **womb**, **conceiving** a child, being **pregnant**, **bearing** a child, **giving birth** to a child. One way the passage describes having a child is to refer to the child as the fruit of the womb. The womb is the place in the woman's body where the unborn child lives. You have already told stories about

women having children. Choose words that describe this process that are good for public use and in groups with both men and women present.

Jacob asks, "Am I **God**?" Use the same name for God that you have in other passages. The name God is used several more times in the passage. God is discussed in the Master Glossary.

Reuben finds some **mandrakes** growing during wheat harvest. Mandrakes are sometimes referred to as a love flower. The fruit is a yellow berry about the size of a small tomato. Women who wanted to have a baby would eat the mandrake fruit. They believed that the mandrake fruit increased fertility in a woman. Sometimes the fruit is called love apple. Rachel seems to think that the mandrake will make it possible for Rachel to have a child. However, the passage is clear. The mandrakes had nothing to do with Rachel having a child. God remembered Rachel's situation and God answered Rachel's prayers. God allowed Rachel to become pregnant and have a son. Rachel recognizes this when Rachel says, "God has removed my disgrace." Rachel asks Yahweh to give her another son.

Show the picture of the mandrake again.

Jacob married Bilhah and had 2 sons with Bilhah. These two sons became Rachel's sons. Jacob married Zilpah and had 2 sons with Zilpah. These 2 sons became Leah's sons. The two servants were married to Jacob. These two women were wives. Jacob had 4 wives in total: Leah, Rachel, Bilhah and Zilpah.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 29:31–30:24

Audio Content

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Genesis 30:25–43

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 30:25–43 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This passage continues the story of Jacob and his family. Jacob has worked for Laban, Rachel's father, for 14 years. Jacob worked for 7 years and then married Leah and Rachel, Laban's daughters. Because Laban tricked Jacob and gave Jacob Leah as his wife first, Jacob had to work a second 7 years to pay the additional bride price for Rachel. Jacob now has 4 wives—Leah, Rachel, and their servants Zilpah and Bilhah—and 11 sons plus a daughter. This is a narrative account of what happened after Rachel gave birth to Joseph. Joseph is the eleventh son of Jacob.

During these 14 years of working for Laban, Jacob has been taking care of Laban's flocks. Jacob decides that it is time to leave Harran and return home. Jacob goes to Laban and asks to be released from working for Laban. Jacob wants to return to his own country. This means that Jacob wants to go back to Beersheba and the land around Beersheba. This is the land that God gave Abraham and Isaac. God also told Jacob at Bethel that this land would be Jacob's. At Bethel, God had said to Jacob, "One day, I will bring you back to this land."

Stop and discuss: Talk about someone who has been away from his family for a number of years. How does that person feel about his own home, the place where his parents and other family members live?

Laban acknowledges that he has become wealthy because of Jacob's work. People were wealthy when they had large flocks of sheep and goats. Before Jacob started working for Laban, Laban had just a few flocks of sheep and goats. Jacob has worked with the flocks and Laban's wealth has greatly increased. Yahweh revealed to Laban that the wealth has come from Jacob's work. The passage doesn't clearly state how Yahweh has revealed this to Laban. Some translators say that Laban discovered that Jacob made Laban wealthy through divination. People learn facts by divination when they read certain signs in everyday objects to discover what they mean. Other translations say that Yahweh has revealed this truth to Laban.

Jacob also knows that Yahweh has blessed Laban and increased Laban's wealth through Jacob's good work. However, Jacob wants to provide for Jacob's own family at this point.

Laban speaks politely to Jacob. Laban says, "If I have found favor in your sight" or "If you are really my friend." This would not be a normal way for Laban to speak to Jacob. Laban owns the sheep and goats. By speaking like this, Laban is flattering Jacob. Jacob should be using this kind of language to talk with Laban. Laban deceived Jacob when Laban gave Leah to Jacob as Jacob's bride. By speaking in this way, Laban starts to deceive Jacob again.

Stop and discuss: tell a story about someone who is trying to convince someone else to do something. Pay attention to the kinds of nice words or phrases the first person uses.

Laban offers to pay Jacob some wages so that Jacob will continue to work for Laban. Jacob suggests a different plan. Jacob wants flocks of sheep and goats for Jacob's own family. These animals would belong to Jacob not Laban. Most sheep at this time were white. Most goats at this time were dark colored. Jacob suggested that he take all sheep and goats with more than one color on them and all dark colored sheep. This would have been about 10 animals of every hundred animals that Laban had. Laban's flock would contain all the animals of normal color—white for the sheep and dark for the goats. All of Laban's animals would be a solid color. This would make it easy to look at the flock at any time and see where an animal belonged. Laban could look at Jacob's flocks and see if Jacob was stealing any animals. Jacob proposed separating the animals that very day with Jacob taking his flocks. Jacob promised to continue to look after Laban's flocks also. Laban agreed to the plan. But that very day, Laban separated all the multicolored animals and dark sheep and sent them with Laban's sons to an area 3 days walk away from where Jacob was working. Laban kept only the solid-colored animals for Jacob to take care of.

Show a picture of white sheep. Show a picture of a black sheep. Show a picture of a goat with just one color. Show a picture of a multicolored goat. Show a picture of a multicolored sheep.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about someone in your culture who cheats like Laban has done.

Jacob was watching over Laban's flocks. All the sheep were white and all the goats were dark colored. Jacob has been working as a shepherd all his life. Jacob knows when the sheep and goats would be ready for mating. Jacob would not have known the scientific basis for mating the animals so that solid colors became multicolored. Jacob took branches from 3 different kinds of trees and peeled the bark back so that strips of white appeared in the branch. These trees were poplar, almond, and plane trees. These three trees have white wood under the bark. Jacob set these branches in the watering troughs where the animals would see the branches when the animals came to drink water at the well.

Show a picture of a branch from an almond tree, a plane tree, and a poplar tree. These should have strips peeled off so that there are white streaks on the branches.

Stop and discuss: Talk about how shepherds or farmers in your area breed their animals. Notice what words are used for when the female is in season or during the period of becoming pregnant when mating with a male animal. How do the farmers make sure that the female mates with an appropriate male?

During the fertile time for the females, the animals would mate while they were at the well to drink. Jacob made sure that the animals could see the tree branches during the mating time. The females gave birth to animals that had spots or stripes. Each time a spotted or striped animal was born, Jacob separated it from the solid colored animals. Jacob made sure that the spotted or striped animals mated with the solid colored animals, producing more spotted animals. Jacob made sure that the strong males mated with the strong females. During mating time, Jacob made sure that the tree branches were in front of the strong animals. Jacob did not place the tree branches in front of the weak animals. In this way, Jacob quickly increased the number of strong multicolored goats and dark colored sheep. Jacob's flocks grew in number quickly. Jacob became very wealthy with many flocks of sheep, goats, camels and donkeys. Jacob also had many servants, both male and female.

Stop and discuss: How do you think Laban and Laban's sons were feeling as they saw Jacob's wealth increase? What would a man in your culture do if he saw his son-in-law getting so wealthy?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Jacob wants to take his family and go back to his home country. Laban offers to pay Jacob wages to stay and keep working with the flocks. Jacob makes a bargain with Laban.

Second scene: Laban takes the animals that should belong to Jacob and moves them to another place 3 days walk away. Laban sends his sons there to look after those flocks.

Third scene: Jacob works with the flocks to get multicolored sheep and goats. Jacob's wealth increases rapidly.

The characters in this story include:

- Laban
- Jacob
- Laban's sons
- Rachel is mentioned.
- Jacob's wives and children are mentioned.
- Male and female servants are mentioned.

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In scene one, after Rachel has a son named Joseph, Jacob asks Laban to release him so that Jacob can take his family back to his home country. Jacob says, "I have earned my wives and my children through the work I've done for you for 14 years." Laban talks about how well Jacob has worked and helped Laban become wealthy. Laban says, "Yahweh has blessed me because of you." Or Laban says, "I have learned through divination how Yahweh has blessed me." Laban offers to pay Jacob a wage. Jacob doesn't want a wage. Laban does not reply to Jacob's request for freedom to leave with Jacob's wives and children. Laban appears to feel that if Laban pays Jacob a wage, Jacob will remain with Laban. Laban is using flattering language that a father-in-law would not normally use when talking with a son-in-law. Laban says, "If you will allow me to say so," or "If it pleases you," or "If I have found favor in your eyes." This is not a normal way for a father-in-law to talk with a son-in-law.

Laban is trying to flatter Jacob. You might have figures of speech that illustrate this. Laban didn't want Jacob to leave Harran. By speaking in this way, Laban was flattering Jacob and trying to convince Jacob to remain in Harran.

Jacob does not accept a wage or salary. Jacob wants flocks of sheep and goats of his own. Jacob wants to build or increase his own wealth through flocks and herds. Jacob proposes that Laban give all the animals who have more than one color or are not the usual color to Jacob. In this way, Laban can just look at the flocks and see if Jacob has taken an animal that Jacob shouldn't have. Jacob asks to separate the animals that very day.

In scene two, Laban agrees to give the multi-colored animals and dark colored sheep to Jacob. But Laban goes immediately and takes these animals from his flocks and sends them with his sons to another place 3 days walk away. Laban keeps the white sheep and goats of one color at Harran. Laban gives these flocks to Jacob to take care of. In this way, Laban cheats Jacob again. Laban seems to think that Jacob won't be able to use these solid-colored animals to build herds for Jacob's family.

In scene three, Jacob begins tending Laban's flocks. Laban's sons are away with the other flocks. Laban's sons are not seeing what Jacob does with the sheep and goats during mating season. Jacob knows when it is mating season for the sheep and the goats. Jacob takes a branch from 3 different kinds of trees: a poplar, an almond, and a plane tree. Jacob peels bark back from the branch to reveal white streaks on the branch. When the animals come to drink water at the well, Jacob puts one of the branches in the watering trough where the strong animals are drinking and mating. The animals who mated in front of the branches gave birth to young animals that were striped or spotted or speckled. They were multi-colored. Jacob separated the multi-colored animals from those of one color. Jacob also had the mating animals face any of Laban's animals who were streaked or black in color. In this way, Jacob grew his own flocks of sheep and goats. The flocks of Laban did not increase in number. Jacob let the weak animals mate without seeing the tree branches. Jacob kept the weak animals for Laban but the strong animals produced spotted or striped or speckled young and Jacob put these into his own flocks. Jacob grew very rich with many flocks of sheep and goats. Jacob also had donkeys and camels. Jacob had many male and female servants working for him.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Laban
- Jacob
- Laban's sons
- Rachel is mentioned.
- Jacob's wives and children are mentioned.
- Male and female servants are mentioned.

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Stop the action. Ask the actor playing one of the roles, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like different responses. Restart the action.

In scene one, after Rachel gives birth to Joseph, Jacob approaches Laban to ask for freedom for Jacob's wives and children. Jacob wants to return to Beersheba. Jacob reminds Laban how hard Jacob has worked for Laban.

Stop the action: Ask Laban, "How are you feeling right now? Do you want Jacob to go back to Beersheba?" You may hear, "I want Jacob to stay here and work for me. Jacob has made me wealthy." Or, "I don't want to see my daughters and grand-children leave here. I'll never see them again." Ask Jacob, "Why do you want to go back to Beersheba?" You may hear, "I've been away 14 years. That's long enough. I need to return to see my father and my mother. That is the land that God gave my grandfather and my father. It belongs to me. I need to be independent of Laban." Restart the action.

Laban agrees that Jacob has worked hard. Laban says, "I have become wealthy because of you. Yahweh has blessed me or I have learned through divination that Yahweh has blessed me." Laban offers to pay Jacob a salary or a wage. Laban says, "Tell me how much you want." Jacob doesn't want a salary. Jacob wants to build his own flocks of animals. Laban again offers to pay Jacob a salary.

Stop the action: Ask Laban, "Why do you want to pay Jacob a salary?" You may hear, "With a salary, I can keep him here. He won't get rich on a salary." Ask Jacob, "Why don't you accept a salary from Laban?" You may hear, "The only way to have independence and to build wealth is to own the herds and flocks myself. I want to take my herds home with me." Restart the action.

Jacob has a plan. Jacob suggests that Laban allow Jacob to have all the black or dark colored sheep and all the speckled goats. This would be about 1 animal out of 10. Jacob would get 10 animals from 100 to start his own herds. Jacob says that by putting only dark sheep and speckled or multicolored goats with Jacob, Laban can see at any time if Jacob has an animal that belongs to Laban. Jacob wants to separate the flocks that very day.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "Why do you want to separate the herds today?" You may hear, "I need to do this quickly or Laban will find a way to cheat me." Restart the action.

In scene two, Laban agrees to Jacob's proposal. But Laban goes instantly and takes all the black or dark colored sheep and all the speckled goats and separates them from the other animals. Laban immediately sends these animals away and sends Laban's two sons to take care of these flocks. They go 3 days walk away from Harran. Laban gave the rest of the flocks to Jacob to take care of. Jacob was still working for Laban. Jacob had no animals of his own.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How do you feel right now?" You may hear, "I'm angry with Laban for cheating me again." Or, "I knew Laban would cheat me. I have a plan to get around this." Or, "This is why I need to leave. I can never trust Laban again." Ask Laban, "Why did you cheat Jacob?" You may hear, "I don't want Jacob to leave. His work has made me rich beyond my dreams. I want Jacob to remain in Harran with my daughters and grandchildren." Restart the action.

In the third scene, Jacob takes branches from 3 different trees. These are the plane tree, the poplar tree, and the almond tree. Jacob peels the bark back from the branches so that streaks of white show. Jacob knows when it is time for the animals to mate. Jacob puts these branches in the watering troughs in front of the animals during mating season and the animals mate while looking at these branches. Then the females gave birth to young that were streaked or spotted or speckled. Jacob separated these streaked, spotted and speckled animals from the herds. These became Jacob's animals. Jacob also noticed which animals were strong and placed the branches in the watering trough when the strong animals mated. If the animals were weak, Jacob did not put the branches in front of them. In this way, Jacob built herds of strong sheep and goats who were all multi-colored. Jacob became very wealthy. Laban's wealth did not increase during this time. Jacob had many flocks of sheep and goats. Jacob had many male and female servants. Jacob also had many donkeys and camels.

Stop the action: Ask Laban, "What are you feeling about Jacob right now?" You may hear, "He has won. I don't know how he did it but he has huge herds and has become very rich. I should never have agreed to this bargain. I'm sure he will leave now." Ask Laban's sons, "How are you feeling about Jacob right now?" You may hear,

"Somehow Jacob has cheated us. How is it that Jacob is now so rich? Jacob must have stolen from our father, Laban. We should punish him." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Laban learned by **divination** that **Yahweh** had caused Laban to become wealthy through Jacob's work. This means that Laban had read the signs or that Yahweh had revealed this to Laban. People learn facts by divination when they read certain signs in everyday objects to discover what they mean. Divination is discussed in the Master Glossary. Divination is not magic. Yahweh is the name for God in this passage. Use the same word you have used in other passages for Yahweh. Yahweh is discussed in the Master Glossary.

Jacob says that Yahweh has **blessed** Laban through all of Jacob's work. Use the same word for Yahweh you have used in other passages. Yahweh is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for bless that you have used in previous passages. Bless is discussed in the Master Glossary.

Laban offers to pay Jacob a **wage** or a salary. Wages are the money or goods given to someone for services or work that person has done. It can be a one-time payment or a regular payment.

Sheep at the time of this story were usually white. Goats were usually black. The animals usually had only one color. Usually a flock might have one animal in 10 to be a different color or multi-colored. Jacob is asking to have 1 animal in 10 for Jacob. This would leave 9 out of 10 for Laban. A black sheep would stand out in a flock of white sheep. A multi-colored goat would stand out in a flock of black goats. Jacob is making it easy to determine if anyone steals an animal.

Jacob uses three different kinds of trees as part of his scheme to get multi-colored animals. These trees were a poplar tree, an almond tree, and a plane tree. These trees may not exist in your area. The important point is that, where these branches have the bark peeled, the exposed area is white. Jacob believed that showing the mating animals these branches caused the animals to produce young animals who had stripes or different colors on their bodies. One way of explaining this is to say that Jacob used "branches of three kinds of trees that had white wood." Jacob peeled the bark so that some of the white wood was exposed.

Jacob becomes very rich. Laban's wealth does not increase during this time. The story tells us how Jacob increased the flocks of sheep and goats. Jacob also gets camels and donkeys. Jacob also acquires many male and female servants.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 30:25–43

Audio Content

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Genesis 31:1–21

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 31:1–21 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This passage is a narrative description of what happens between Jacob and Laban after Jacob works for Laban for a number of years and becomes rich. Jacob worked 14 years to pay the bride price for Rachel and Leah. Now, Jacob has worked to earn money for Jacob's family. In the previous passage, Jacob made an agreement with Laban that Jacob would take all the dark sheep and all the multi-colored sheep and goats as payment for the work that Jacob did for Laban. The multi-colored animals multiplied so that Jacob became very rich with the number of flocks of sheep and goats who were multi-colored.

Laban's sons notice how rich Jacob has become. Laban's sons begin to complain about Jacob. Laban's sons begin to say that Jacob has stolen the flocks from Laban. Jacob learned that Laban's sons were thinking these things. Jacob also noticed a change in Laban's attitude towards Jacob.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story of a man who gets rich while those around do not. How do the local people feel about this man? What are some of the things they might say about this man? What would be their attitude towards this man?

Then Yahweh said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your father and grandfather and I will be with you." Jacob called Rachel and Leah to come out to the field or away from other people who might hear. Jacob explained how Laban's attitude had changed towards Jacob. Jacob reminds Rachel and Leah of how hard Jacob has worked for Laban. According to Jacob's explanation, Laban has changed the agreement for Jacob's wages 10 times. One time Laban said that Jacob would have all the speckled animals. But when all the young being born were speckled, then Laban said Jacob would have the striped animals. Then all the young animals being born were striped. Laban has tried to cheat Jacob many times. Each time God has protected Jacob's wealth. God did not allow Laban to harm Jacob in any way.

Jacob told Rachel and Leah about a dream that Jacob has had. In this dream, Jacob saw that the goats mating with Jacob's female goats were all speckled or striped or spotted. The angel of God was there in the dream and spoke to Jacob. The angel of God explains that God has caused the speckled and striped males to mate with Jacob's female animals. The angel of God reminded Jacob that he sees what Laban does. God tells Jacob that he is the God who appeared to Jacob years ago in Bethel. "You will remember that Bethel is the place where you anointed the memorial stone and made your vow. Get ready and leave here and go back to the land where you were born."

Stop and discuss: Have team members talk about dreams they have had. What words are they using to describe the dream? Is there a difference in words used to describe dreams of warning or giving instructions?

In this passage the Angel of God speaks as if this angel is God Himself. This angel is God's representative and sent by God to deal with someone as God's personal spokesman. Sometimes this angel speaks in the first person as if God Himself is speaking. The angel is not God but is representing God.

Rachel and Leah agreed to go to Jacob's homeland with Jacob. Rachel and Leah explained that Laban would not provide any inheritance for them and their children. Normally a father would put part of the bride price apart and keep it for the daughter to have in case the husband died or divorced her. Apparently Laban has not done this for Rachel and Leah. If Jacob were to die, the women would have nothing. Rachel and Leah are saying that they are being treated as foreign women rather than as daughters of Laban. The only wealth Rachel and Leah will have is the wealth that Jacob has earned by working for Laban. Because of this, Rachel and Leah are willing to go with Jacob.

Stop and discuss: How do fathers provide for married daughters in your culture? What is the usual practice with the bride price?

After Rachel and Leah agreed to go with Jacob, Jacob acted quickly. Laban was away at another place because it was the time to shear the sheep or cut the wool off the sheep. This event happens every year and is important for the welfare of the sheep. Shearing usually occurred in the spring before time for the lambs to be born. If the flocks were large, then shearing would take several days. After the shearing is finished, there would usually be

a celebration or a big party for all the workers. Jacob knows that Laban will be away for several days. Jacob has several days to get ready and leave Harran.

Show a picture of a sheep heavy with wool before shearing. Show a picture of shearing taking place. Show a picture of a sheep after being sheared.

Jacob put Rachel, Leah, Zilpah, and Bilhah and all the children, 11 sons and a daughter, on camels. Jacob drove all the livestock in front of him. This means that Jacob sent the herds and flocks first. Jacob packed up everything that he had gotten while he was in Paddan-aram. Paddan-aram is the name of the region around Harran. After preparing all these things, Jacob set off for the land of Canaan. Jacob's father, Isaac, lives in Canaan. Beersheba is in the southern part of Canaan. Before leaving, Rachel stole Laban's household gods and took them with her. Jacob does not know that Rachel has taken these household gods or idols that belong to Laban. These idols were made by human hands and might represent ancestors. They were small enough to hide in Rachel's saddle cushion.

Show a picture of some small household gods.

Jacob set off secretly. This means that Jacob tricked or deceived Laban. Laban did not know that Jacob was leaving. Jacob did not tell Laban that Jacob was taking his family and possessions and going back to Canaan. Jacob crossed the Euphrates River and headed towards the hill country of Gilead.

Show a map that includes Harran to Beersheba.

Stop and discuss as a group: What would be the reaction and actions of a father or family members in your culture if someone left secretly as Jacob has done?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

First scene: Jacob hears that Laban's sons are complaining about Jacob's wealth. Jacob also notices a change in Laban's attitude towards Jacob.

Second scene: Yahweh tells Jacob to go back to the land of Jacob's father and grandfather.

Third scene: Jacob calls Rachel and Leah to come out to a field. Jacob explains what has happened with Laban and Laban's sons. Jacob describes a dream in which God told Jacob to return to Canaan. Rachel and Leah explain that Laban has not treated them as daughters but as foreigners. Rachel and Leah agree to go to Canaan with Jacob.

Fourth scene: Jacob prepares everything and departs while Laban is away shearing sheep. Laban does not know that Jacob has left Harran.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- God
- Angel of God
- Laban
- Laban's sons
- Rachel
- Leah
- Jacob's children are mentioned.

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In scene one, Jacob hears that Laban's sons are complaining about Jacob's wealth. We don't know how Jacob heard this information. Laban's sons are saying that Jacob has stolen from Laban. Jacob also notices that Laban's attitude towards Jacob has changed.

In scene two, Yahweh tells Jacob to return to the land of Jacob's grandfather and father. Yahweh tells Jacob, "I will be with you."

In scene three, Jacob calls Rachel and Leah to come out to a field where Jacob is watching over the sheep. No one can hear them talk while they are out in the field. Jacob explains to them how Laban's attitude has begun to change towards Jacob. Jacob explains how Laban has changed the agreement regarding Jacob's wages many times. Jacob tells Rachel and Leah how God has protected Jacob from Laban.

The passage uses the names Rachel and Leah several times. Normally the oldest is mentioned first. However, here each time, Rachel is mentioned first. Rachel is the younger daughter and the second daughter to be married. Jacob loved Rachel.

Then Jacob tells Rachel and Leah about a dream Jacob has had in the past. Jacob is describing this dream to Rachel and Leah. In this dream, the angel of God appeared to Jacob. The angel of God explained how God has protected Jacob and caused the numbers of speckled, striped and spotted animals to increase. The angel of God told Jacob, "I am the God who appeared to you at Bethel."

Stop and discuss: Review the dream that Jacob had at Bethel.

Bethel is the place where Jacob saw the stairway going between earth and heaven. Jacob anointed a stone at Bethel and made a vow to God there. The angel of God told Jacob to get ready and leave Harran and return to Canaan.

Then Rachel and Leah explain to Jacob how Laban has treated them as foreign women and not as daughters. Laban has spent the money that Jacob has earned for Laban. Laban was supposed to put some of this money aside so that Rachel and Leah would be taken care of if Jacob dies or divorces them. Laban has not done this. Rachel and Leah will have no inheritance from Laban. Therefore, Rachel and Leah will go with Jacob.

In scene 4, Jacob prepares everything quickly and departs Harran while Laban is away shearing the sheep. Jacob does things in this order:

1. Laban is away shearing sheep.
2. Jacob decides to leave Harran.
3. Jacob does not tell Laban that Jacob and his family are leaving Harran.
4. Jacob packs everything that he has acquired in Paddan-aram, the region around Harran.
5. Rachel steals Laban's household gods.
6. Jacob sends the flocks and herds ahead.

7. Jacob puts Rachel, Leah, Zilpah, and Bilhah and the 11 sons and one daughter on camels.
8. Jacob with his family departs Harran and heads towards Canaan.
9. Jacob crosses the Euphrates River and goes towards the hill country of Gilead.

By leaving Harran in this way, Jacob tricks Laban. Jacob takes all his possessions, everything Jacob has, and departs. Laban does not know that Jacob has taken his family and possessions including all the animals and left Harran.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- God
- Angel of God
- Laban
- Laban's sons
- Rachel
- Leah
- Jacob's children are mentioned.

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing one of the roles "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like different responses. Restart the action.

In scene one, Laban's sons complain about Jacob. They say that Jacob has become wealthy because Jacob stole from Laban. The only reason Jacob has wealth is because Jacob took what belongs to Laban. Jacob learned or discovered what Laban's sons were saying. Then Jacob noticed that Laban's attitude towards Jacob was changing.

Stop the action: Ask the sons, "Why are you saying that Jacob stole from your father?" You may hear, "There is no other way Jacob could be so wealthy. Everything we have belongs to our father. Jacob has tricked our father." Ask Jacob, "How do you feel when you hear their accusations?" You may hear, "I feel sad that they are misunderstanding what has happened. They don't know how Laban has tried to cheat me. They love their father which is right." Restart the action.

In scene two, Yahweh tells Jacob to return to the land of Jacob's grandfather and father.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How did you feel when you heard God tell you to go home?" You may hear, "I'm so happy. I want to go home. I've been gone a long time. I want to see my father again. I'm glad God hasn't forgotten that I'm here in Harran." Restart the action.

In scene 3, Jacob calls Rachel and Leah to come out to the field where Jacob is watching sheep. Jacob begins to explain to Rachel and Leah how Laban has tried to cheat Jacob by changing the conditions of Jacob's wages 10 different times. Jacob explains that God has protected Jacob. God has caused the animals to produce young animals exactly like Laban said Jacob could have. If Laban said the animals for Jacob would be striped then the flock produced striped young. God caused this to happen.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How do you feel having to explain how Laban has tried to cheat you to Laban's daughters?" You may hear, "I regret having to tell them but with Laban's change in attitude and the sons accusing me, they have to know. It's hard to tell them what kind of man their father is." Ask Rachel and Leah, "How do you feel as you hear what Jacob is telling you about your father and brothers?" You may hear, "I'm not surprised. Father has always been like this. He has cheated us also." Restart the action.

Then Jacob told Rachel and Leah about a dream in which the angel of God came to Jacob and spoke with Jacob. The angel told Jacob that God is the one who caused the goats and sheep to reproduce only striped, speckled or spotted young. The angel said, "I'm the God who spoke to you at Bethel, the place where you anointed the pillar of stone and made your vow to me. Get ready and leave this country and return to where you were born."

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How did you feel when you realized that the angel of God was speaking to you?" You may hear, "I was so happy. I thought God had forgotten that I was here. I'm so glad to know that God is the one who has made me wealthy. I'm glad that God wants me to go home now." Restart the action.

After Jacob had explained these things, Rachel and Leah began to talk. They explained to Jacob how Laban was also mistreating them. Laban had not put aside some of the money from the bride price so that they would be taken care of. They would not receive any inheritance from Laban. Laban was treating them as foreign women rather than as daughters. Then Rachel and Leah told Jacob, "Go ahead and do what God has told you."

In Scene four, Jacob knows that Laban is away shearing the sheep. It will take some days for this to be done. While Laban is gone, Jacob prepares to leave. Jacob gathers all his possessions. While this is happening, Rachel steals Laban's family idols. Jacob sends the herds and flocks on ahead. Jacob gets the camels ready and puts Rachel, Leah, Zilpah, and Bilhah on the camels along with the 11 sons and one daughter. Then Jacob leaves Harran without telling Laban that they are leaving. Jacob and his family cross the Euphrates River and head towards the hill country of Gilead.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "Why are you leaving without telling Laban?" You may hear, "I think Laban will try to stop me from going" or "Laban will try to keep some of my animals. Laban may try to keep some of my family. We need to escape while Laban is away." Ask Rachel, "Why did you take your father's family idols?" You may hear, "I want us to be safe and protected. I know Jacob believes in God but I need our family idols with me also. Jacob will be angry if he discovers what I've done." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This passage talks about mating season for the sheep and goats. Use the same terminology you used in the previous passage to describe this process. In this passage Jacob acknowledges that God is who made the sheep and goats produce striped or speckled or spotted young.

Rachel and Leah tell Jacob that Laban is treating them as foreign women and not as daughters. A foreign woman would not have inheritance rights. A father was supposed to set aside part of the money paid for the bride as a bride price and keep it for the daughter to have in the future. Laban has not done this. Laban has spent all the money.

The angel of the Lord appeared to Jacob in a **dream**. Because this was a dream, Jacob was asleep when it occurred. Use the same word for dream that you have used previously. The term angel of the Lord is described

in the Master Glossary. Sometimes this angel is referred to as the angel of God. This angel is a heavenly being sent by God to deal with men as his personal agent and spokesman. In many passages the angel of God is virtually identified with God. The angel of God sometimes speaks not merely in the name of God but as God in the first person singular. The angel of God appeared to Abraham when Abraham was ready to sacrifice Isaac. Use the same words you used in that passage.

The angel of God reminds Jacob of Bethel, the anointed standing stone and Jacob's vow. Use the same words to describe this event that you used with the passage when you translated it.

The passage refers to God as **Yahweh** and as **God**. Use the same names you have in other passages.

Rachel stole her father's household **idols** or gods. Idols is discussed in the Master Glossary. Idols are images made by human hands and then worshipped as a god. Household gods would be small figures that might look like humans and might represent ancestors. In this story, they are small enough to hide in Rachel's cushion Rachel was sitting on.

This passage uses several names to refer to the same place. The land of your grandfather and your father, the land of your birth, the land of Canaan, are all referring to the same place. This is the land that God promised Abraham, Isaac and then Jacob. When Jacob had the dream of the staircase at Bethel, God confirmed with Jacob that Jacob was to inherit this land.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 31:1-21

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (19698375 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 31:22–35

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 31:22–35 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This is a narrative account of Jacob's trip back to Canaan and his father, Isaac. In the previous passage, Jacob learned that Laban's sons thought Jacob was stealing from their father, Laban. Laban's attitude had changed towards Jacob. Jacob decided it was time to go home. In addition, God spoke to Jacob in a dream telling Jacob to return to his father, Isaac. Jacob secretly packed everything and left without telling Laban. Jacob took all his animals, all his belongings and all his family—wives and children—and left Harran to return to Canaan and his father, Isaac.

Laban was some distance away from home shearing sheep when Jacob left. Three days after Jacob left, someone told Laban that Jacob was gone. Jacob was traveling with flocks and herds as well as Jacob's wives and children. As soon as Laban learned that Jacob had left, Laban gathered a group of relatives and set out in hot pursuit. Hot pursuit means that Laban traveled as fast as Laban and his relatives could travel. Still, it took them 7 days to catch up with Jacob. This means that Jacob had been traveling 10 days and Laban was able to cover the same distance in 7 days. Laban did not have flocks nor women and children with him to slow him down. Jacob had reached the hill country of Gilead. This is the northernmost part of Gilead. This place is about 350 miles, or 560 kilometers, from Harran.

Show a map of Canaan from Beersheba to Harran. Mark where the hill country of Gilead would be located.

Stop and discuss: Jacob was traveling about 50 kilometers per day. With the animals and children, this was a fast pace. Why do you think Jacob was traveling that fast?

Before Laban reached Jacob, Laban had a dream. God appeared to Laban in a dream and said, "Leave Jacob alone." Because this was a dream, it happened at night. Laban caught up with Jacob and made his camp near Jacob's camp. Then Laban went to Jacob and started verbally attacking Jacob. The words used suggest that Laban is very angry and shouting at Jacob. Laban talks to Jacob by using a series of questions that don't require an answer. Laban wasn't asking for information. Laban was expressing his anger. Laban accused Jacob of sneaking away, of dragging Rachel and Leah away like prisoners of war, and of leaving secretly. Laban assures Jacob that Laban would have given Jacob a feast of farewell with music and dancing.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story of a father chasing after his children who have run away from home. What would the father's reactions be when he catches up with the children? How would the father talk to his children? Listen carefully to how the father expresses his anger at his children.

Laban specifically mentions using the instruments tambourine and harp. These are two common instruments used for music. A tambourine is a sort of small hand drum. A harp would have strings that would be pulled or strummed. These would be common musical instruments at that time and used in festive situations.

Stop and show a picture of a tambourine and a harp. The tambourine is a type of hand drum and does not have the metal ringlets that tambourines have today.

Laban tells Jacob that Laban could destroy Jacob. Laban says this in a way that means, "I could do this, but I won't." Then, Laban tells Jacob about the dream in which God appeared to Laban and said to Laban, "Leave Jacob alone." Laban says, "The God of your father spoke to me." This implies that Laban doesn't know or worship God as Isaac and Jacob do. This dream might explain why Laban does not physically touch Jacob. Laban says that he understands Jacob's desire to return to Isaac. Then Laban accuses Jacob of stealing Laban's household gods.

Show a picture of some household gods.

Jacob explains that he was afraid that Laban would have kept Rachel and Leah with Laban by force. Then Jacob says, "I didn't steal anything. Look for the gods. If someone has them that person should die. If you find anything of yours, I will give it back to you." Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen Laban's household gods. Jacob wants the relatives to be witnesses during the search of the camp. Jacob refers to them as "our relatives."

Laban then begins a search of Jacob's camp. Laban searches Jacob's tent. Then Laban searches the tents of Leah, Zilpah and Bilhah. Finally, Laban goes to Rachel's tent. Rachel was in her tent. Rachel had put the household gods in the cushion Rachel used for her camel saddle. Rachel was sitting on the cushion of her camel saddle.

Show a picture of a woman sitting on a camel. You should have the cushion showing in the picture.

Show a picture of an encampment of tents.

Rachel did not get up when Laban came into the tent. Normally a daughter would stand to show respect to her father. Rachel used a very polite form of address in speaking to her father. Rachel said, "My Lord" or "Sir." The word *lord* is not the same as the word *LORD* which means Yahweh. This is a term of respect used to talk with older men. Rachel said, "I can't get up because this is the time of my monthly period." In the ancient world, menstrual blood was considered a very bad thing. People believed that demons or evil spirits lived in the menstrual blood. By sitting on the household gods, Rachel makes them unclean. Laban didn't make Rachel get

up. Laban did not examine the cushion that Rachel was sitting on. Laban continued to search the tents and the camp but Laban did not find his household gods.

Stop and discuss: Talk about a woman who is having her monthly menstrual period. What words do you use to describe this event? How do people in your culture talk about this politely in mixed groups? How would you tell your grandmother or grandfather about what was happening to Rachel?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Laban learns that Jacob has fled taking all his possessions and family. Laban gathers his relatives and goes after Jacob. On the way, Laban has a dream in which God tells Laban not to harm Jacob.

Second scene: Laban catches up with Jacob. Laban comes to Jacob and becomes very angry, making all sorts of accusations. Laban accuses Jacob of having stolen the family gods. Jacob denies having stolen anything and tells Laban to search the camp for anything that might belong to Laban.

Third scene: Laban searches the tents and comes to Rachel's tent. Rachel has hidden the household gods in her camel cushion. Rachel is sitting on the cushion and tells Laban that it is her monthly time, which means she can't stand up. Laban does not find the gods.

The characters in this story include:

- Laban
- Messenger who told Laban about Jacob
- God
- Jacob
- Rachel
- Leah
- Zilpah
- Bilhah
- Laban's relatives
- Jacob's children and servants are mentioned.

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In scene one, three days after Jacob departs Harran, someone tells Laban that Jacob has left taking all his family and belongings with him. Laban was in a place distant from Harran working with the sheep shearing. Immediately, Laban gathers a group of relatives and follows Jacob in hot pursuit. This means that Laban was traveling as fast as he could go. Jacob and his family traveled about 560 kilometers, or 350 miles, in 10 days. That is about 50 kilometers per day. With all the animals and children, this would have been a very fast pace. Laban travels faster because Laban catches Jacob after 7 days. Laban is traveling about 80 kilometers per day. The night before Laban reaches Jacob, Laban has a dream. God appears to Laban in the dream and tells Laban not to harm Jacob.

In scene two, Laban goes to Jacob's camp and begins to verbally attack Jacob. The words used makes it seem that Laban is yelling at Jacob. Laban asks questions that don't require an answer. Laban is just expressing Laban's anger and frustration by using this form of speech. Laban makes a number of accusations. Some of the accusations are false. Laban assures Jacob that if Jacob had said he was leaving, Laban would have given a feast of celebration with singing and dancing. Laban tells Jacob about the dream in which God told Laban not to harm Jacob. Laban says, "I could destroy you but the God of your father appeared to me and told me not to harm you." Finally, Laban finishes shouting and says that he understands why Jacob would want to return to Jacob's father, Isaac. Then Laban asks why Jacob has stolen the family gods.

Jacob replies by giving an explanation as to why Jacob left secretly taking his family and animals with him. Jacob was afraid that Laban would not allow the women to leave Harran. Jacob denies stealing the family gods. Jacob tells Laban to search the camp and keep anything that Laban finds that belongs to Laban. Jacob wants the relatives to be the witnesses to the search. These relatives will see if Laban finds anything that belongs to Laban. Jacob refers to these relatives as our relatives, meaning that they are relatives of Jacob also. Jacob even says that the person who stole the gods should be put to death. Jacob does not know that Rachel stole Laban's family gods.

In Scene three, Laban begins searching the tents. Laban starts with Jacob's tent and then moves to Leah's tent. Then Laban searches the tents of Zilpah and Bilhah. Laban found nothing in any of the tents. Laban felt or rummaged through everything in the tent. Finally, Laban goes to Rachel's tent to search. Rachel was in the tent. Rachel had taken the family gods and put them into her camel saddle cushion. Rachel was sitting on this cushion. Rachel spoke very politely to Laban saying, "My lord" or "Sir." Rachel did not stand when Laban entered the tent. Rachel said, "I can't stand because I'm having my monthly period." Laban did not make Rachel stand or move. Laban did not search where Rachel was sitting. Laban went through everything else in the tent. Laban did not find anything that belonged to him. Laban did not find the household gods.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Laban
- Messenger who told Laban about Jacob
- God
- Jacob
- Rachel
- Leah
- Zilpah
- Bilhah
- Laban's relatives
- Jacob's children and servants are mentioned.

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing one of the roles "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like different responses. Restart the action.

In scene one, 3 days after Jacob has left Harran, someone tells Laban that Jacob has departed taking Jacob's wives, children and animals with him. Laban gathers some of his relatives and sets off after Jacob. They travel fast trying to catch Jacob. It takes 7 days to catch Jacob. The night before Laban catches Jacob, Laban has a dream. God says to Laban in the dream, "Do not harm Jacob."

Stop the action: Ask Laban, "Why are you trying to catch Jacob?" You may hear, "How dare Jacob leave in secret like this! Jacob has taken my daughters and my grandchildren away from me! Jacob must pay for this. Those animals belong to me. Jacob is a thief!" Restart the action.

In scene two, Laban catches up with Jacob. Laban pitches his camp near Jacob's camp. Laban goes to Jacob and begins asking a series of questions that don't require an answer. Laban says, "What do you mean by stealing away like this? How dare you drag my daughters away like prisoners of war?" Laban assures Jacob that Laban would have had a celebration feast with music and dancing before Jacob left Harran. Laban tells Jacob about the dream Laban had the previous evening. Laban says, "The God of your father appeared to me and told me to leave Jacob alone." Laban finishes by saying to Jacob, "I understand why you want to go to your father but why did you have to steal my household gods?"

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How are you feeling as you listen to Laban accuse you like this?" You may hear, "He is angry. He will run out of anger soon and it will be okay. He is saying he would have given us a feast before we left, but I don't trust him. He is always trying to trick and cheat me." Ask Rachel and Leah, "How do you feel hearing your father talk to Jacob like this?" You may hear, "Father is angry. But Father has not treated us as a father should. I don't believe him when he says he would have given us a feast. A feast costs money. Father won't spend money on us." Restart the action.

Jacob waits for Laban to finish talking. Then Jacob explains that Jacob was afraid that Laban would not allow Rachel and Leah to leave Harran. Jacob was afraid that Laban would take Rachel and Leah by force. Then Jacob denied having the household gods. Jacob insists that Laban search the camp. Jacob wants the relatives to be witnesses to anything found in the camp. Jacob reminds Laban that these relatives are also Jacob's relatives. Jacob even says that if someone has stolen the gods, that person should die. Jacob does not know that Rachel has stolen the gods.

Stop the action: Ask Laban, "How did you feel when you heard Jacob say he was afraid you would take your daughters by force?" You may hear, "I would never do such a thing. Jacob is like a son to me. My daughters belong to Jacob now. I can't take them back." Ask the relatives, "How do you feel about being witnesses to this?" You may hear, "I don't like being a part of this quarrel. I think Laban has behaved in a wrong way. Jacob has the right to go back to his father." Ask Rachel, "How do you feel when you hear Jacob say that the person who stole the gods should die?" You may hear, "I'm not afraid. My father won't find them. No one will know that I have them." Restart the action.

In scene three, Laban begins to search the camp. Laban starts in Jacob's tent. Then Laban goes to Leah's tent, Zillpah's tent, and Bilhah's tent. Laban feels everything but doesn't find the gods. Then Laban goes to Rachel's tent. Rachel is in the tent sitting on the cushion that goes with the camel saddle. Rachel does not get up. Rachel speaks politely to Laban and says, "I can't stand because it is my monthly time." Laban searches the tent but doesn't touch Rachel nor the cushion where Rachel is sitting. Laban does not find the gods.

Stop the action: Ask Rachel, "How did you feel when you were lying to your father?" You may hear, "I had to lie but I don't mind. I need these gods with me. I know Jacob worships God but I need our family gods also." Ask Laban, "Now that you have searched everywhere, how do you feel about Jacob and the household gods?" You may hear, "I don't understand it. He has to have them hidden somewhere. Someone took them when Jacob left Harran. Jacob has tricked me." Ask Jacob, "How are you feeling now that Laban didn't find the gods?" You may

hear, "Of course he didn't find them. I worship God. I don't need idols. This family worships God." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

It took 3 days for the news that Jacob had left to reach Laban. Someone told Laban that Jacob had gone.

Laban gathered some of his relatives and together, they set off after Jacob. The words used to describe this journey indicate that Laban and the relatives were traveling as fast as possible. They were pursuing or chasing Jacob trying to catch Jacob.

Before Laban caught up with Jacob, Laban had a **dream**. This occurred at night. Use the same word for dream that you have used in other passages. **God** appeared to Laban in the dream. When Laban tells Jacob about the dream, Laban says, "the God of your father appeared to me." Use the same word for God that you have in other passages. **Father** in this dream means Jacob's father, Isaac.

When Laban met Jacob, Laban began asking a series of questions. Laban said, "What have you done?" This is a type of question that doesn't require an answer. Laban asks a series of these kinds of questions. Laban wasn't asking for information. Laban didn't expect Jacob to answer. Laban was expressing his anger. If your language doesn't use questions in this way, you can make each question as a positive statement such as "You should not have done this." By asking questions in this way, Laban was expressing anger. The words used sound like Laban was even shouting at Jacob. During this time of expressing anger, Laban even makes false accusations. Laban accuses Jacob of things Jacob did not do. Jacob does not reply to any of these accusations or questions.

Laban talks about giving a feast of celebration with music and dancing. Laban refers to two musical instruments: the tambourine and the harp. Tambourines were a type of small hand drum. The harp would be small, held in the hands and have strings to pluck or pull. If no one knows these instruments, you may need to say that there would be musical instruments to accompany the singing and dancing.

Show again the picture of the tambourine and harp.

When Laban finishes talking, Jacob does not reply to the accusations. Jacob gives a simple explanation for leaving Harran secretly. Jacob denies having the **household gods**. Use the same words to describe the household gods that you used in the previous passage. The word **idols** is discussed in the Master Glossary.

When Laban goes to search the tents, Jacob wants the relatives to serve as witnesses. Jacob refers to these men as "our relatives." The relatives were related to Jacob also.

Rachel is sitting on a cushion in her tent. When Rachel speaks to Laban, Rachel says, "My Lord" or "Sir." Here the word **lord** is a term of respect that a daughter would use talking to her father or someone would use when speaking to an older person. This word does not refer to Yahweh.

Rachel apologises for not standing. Rachel says, "It is the way of women with me." Rachel is saying that she is having her monthly period. Laban would not touch Rachel nor the cushion where Rachel was sitting during Rachel's monthly period. People thought demons lived in menstrual blood. Use a polite form of talking about the woman's monthly period.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 31:22–35

Audio Content

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Genesis 31:36–55

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 31:36–55 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This passage is a narrative description that continues the encounter between Jacob and Laban in the hill country of Gilead after Laban caught up with Jacob. Laban is so angry with Jacob that Laban seems to shout with anger when Laban catches up with Jacob. Jacob replies to Laban with anger. Jacob also asks some questions that don't require an answer. Jacob asks, "What have I done to offend you?" Jacob could have expressed this in a positive way by saying, "I have done nothing to offend you." These questions are Jacob's way of expressing anger.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story of a quarrel between two men. Pay attention to the way each man talks. How does each man express his anger? What words does he use?

Show the map of the journey between Harran and Beersheba. This is to remind the team of where Jacob and Laban are meeting.

Jacob reminds Laban that Jacob has worked for Laban for 20 years. Jacob worked 14 years to earn Rachel and Leah as wives. Then Jacob worked 6 years to earn wages in the form of flocks of sheep and goats. Jacob describes his care of Laban's flocks. Jacob says that not one ewe or female goat has miscarried. To miscarry means that the mother loses the baby before time for it to be born. This word refers to any lost pregnancy whether human or animal.

Stop and discuss: How do you talk about the loss of babies that are born before their due time?

Jacob describes what he has done for Laban which is the usual work of a shepherd at that time. The shepherd was expected to pay from his wages if a wild animal killed one of the sheep. The shepherd was to protect the flocks from wild animals. The shepherd could only eat sheep or goats that died. Shepherds were not allowed to kill sheep or goats for food. The shepherd was responsible for any losses from the flock, even for those animals that were stolen. Jacob tells Laban that Jacob has followed these rules and never asked Laban to repay the loss.

Jacob continues talking and the way Jacob is talking shows that Jacob is still really angry. Jacob worked when it was hot during the day and when it was cold at night. In a desert area, the temperature normally changes greatly between day and night. In most places, it is hotter during the day when the sun is shining and colder at night after the heat of the sun goes away.

Jacob repeats that Jacob has worked for Laban for 20 years. Jacob says that Laban has changed the wages, or what Laban agreed to give to Jacob, 10 different times during these years. Then Jacob says that it is God who has watched over and protected Jacob. Jacob refers to God three times but Jacob is talking about the same God. Then Jacob says that God even appeared to Laban the night before this encounter and warned Laban not to harm Jacob.

Laban begins to talk again but the tone of Laban's voice is different. Laban claims that everything that Jacob has still belongs to Laban. Laban is making a false claim. Jacob has earned the flocks through Jacob's work and Laban's wages which Laban agreed to pay. Laban again asks a question that doesn't require an answer. Laban seems to be seeking a compromise or a way to end the argument. Laban proposes a covenant. A covenant is a permanent agreement between two people that establishes peace or friendship. Both people promise to be

faithful to the agreement and to remain in good relationship with each other. Both parties make a sacrifice or ritual celebration to seal the agreement.

Jacob seems to agree with Laban because Jacob sets up a stone as a monument. Jacob also tells Jacob's relatives to gather stones and place the stones in a pile. These are 2 different things. There is the memorial pillar and the pile of stones. After making the pile of stones, Jacob and Laban sat down to eat a covenant meal. Laban named the pile Jegar-sahadutha in Laban's language of Aramean. Jacob named the pile Galeed in Hebrew. In both languages the name for the pile means witness pile. Then they gave the pile of stones another name. The new name Mizpah means watchtower. Laban called on Yahweh to keep watch over both Laban and Jacob to make sure that both Laban and Jacob keep the covenant even when out of sight of the other. Laban also tells Jacob that God will see if Jacob mistreats his wives in any way. Laban declares that God is a witness to the covenant.

Then Laban declared the pile of stones to be the boundary line between Laban and Jacob. Laban declared that Laban was the one who put up the pillar and pile of stones. Jacob is the one who did this. Laban will never pass the boundary line to harm Jacob. Jacob will never pass the boundary line to harm Laban. Laban says the pile of stones and the pillar will be witnesses of the covenant and vows that Laban and Jacob have made. Laban then calls on God to be the judge between Laban and Jacob. Laban calls on the God of Jacob's grandfather Abraham and the God of Laban's grandfather, Nahor. Laban also calls on the God of Abraham and Nahor's ancestor who would be Terah, the father of Abraham and Nahor. Laban wants God to be a judge between them. Nahor is the brother of Abraham. Laban worshiped more than one God. Laban thought of the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor as different gods.

Stop and discuss: Review the family tree showing the descendants of Terah. You may do this by having team members show the descendants or by using stones or sticks to represent the descendants.

Jacob took an oath before the fearsome God of Isaac to respect the boundary line. This can also be said as Jacob took an oath before the God of Isaac who inspires dread or fear. An oath is like a promise or a vow but is stronger. An oath cannot be changed. The person who makes an oath asks God to punish him if he breaks the oath. Jacob only took the oath before the God of Isaac. Jacob did not mention the God of Nahor when taking the oath. After taking the oath, Jacob offered a sacrifice and then invited everyone to a covenant feast. This is the first time the word sacrifice is used in Genesis. In a sacrifice, the animal is ritually killed. A sacrifice is different from a burnt offering. The burnt offering burns the entire animal. A sacrifice burns part of the animal and the rest of the animal is used for eating. Jacob served some of the animal that had been killed as a sacrifice for the covenant meal. After they ate the meal, they remained on the mountain all night.

The next day, Laban kissed and blessed his daughters, Rachel and Leah, and all his grandchildren. Then Laban returned home.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Jacob answers Laban's accusations. Jacob is really angry and expresses his anger as Jacob replies to Laban.

Second scene: Laban proposes a covenant. Jacob agrees. Jacob sets up a pillar and a pile of stones. They eat a meal to seal the covenant. Laban and Jacob continue to make promises to each other and celebrate with a second meal.

Third scene: Laban blesses his daughters and grandchildren and returns to Harran.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- Laban
- Relatives of Laban and Jacob
- God
- Jacob's wives and children are mentioned.

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In the first scene, the encounter between Laban and Jacob in the hill country of Gilead continues. Laban made his accusations in the last passage. Now Jacob replies to Laban. Jacob is really angry. The words Jacob uses make it seem like Jacob is shouting at Laban. Jacob asks a series of questions but Jacob doesn't expect an answer to these questions. These questions can be expressed in positive statements if that seems better in the language. For example, Jacob says, "What have I done to make you chase me like a criminal?" You can turn the question into a statement such as, "Jacob says, "I have not done anything to make you chase me like a criminal." Jacob tells Laban how Jacob has worked in an honest way for 20 years for Laban. Jacob worked 14 years to pay for Rachel and Leah. Then Jacob worked 6 years to earn the flocks of sheep and goats. Jacob did the usual work of a shepherd in this time. Laban changed the wages agreement 10 different times. But God was with Jacob and protected Jacob and Jacob succeeded.

In scene two, Laban begins to speak and again declares falsely that everything Jacob has belongs to Laban. Jacob has earned all that Jacob has through the agreed-on wages paid by Laban. After making this false statement, Laban seems to want to reconcile with Jacob. Laban proposes a covenant between Laban and Jacob. Jacob agrees. Jacob sets up a stone pillar as a memorial pillar. People would see this pillar and know that something particular had happened in that place. Jacob also had the relatives bring stones and build a pile of stones near the pillar. Then to celebrate or seal this covenant, Laban and Jacob ate a special meal. After eating, Jacob and Laban gave the place a name. Laban named it in Aramean. Jacob named it in Hebrew. The word in each language means "witness pile." Then Laban added that this pile of rocks would be a watchtower or Mizpah to watch and make sure that neither Laban nor Jacob broke the covenant. Laban ask Yahweh to watch over both of them to make sure that each kept the agreement. Laban said that God would be the witness to their keeping the covenant.

Then Laban suggested a different kind of covenant. This is more of a treaty. Laban wanted the pile of stones to be a boundary between Jacob and Laban. Neither Laban nor Jacob must ever pass the pile of stones and go into the territory of the other to harm the other. This is an agreement to keep peace between people and is more like a treaty than a covenant. Laban called on God to serve as a judge between Laban and Jacob. Laban believes in multiple gods. Laban talks about the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor. Abraham and Nahor were brothers but Laban seems to believe that they worshiped different gods. Abraham is Jacob's grandfather and Nahor is Laban's grandfather. Laban is Jacob's uncle.

Jacob took an oath to respect this boundary line or treaty with Laban. Jacob only used the name of the fearsome God of Isaac when making his oath. *Fear* is a name for God that is used in this passage. Jacob took the oath in the name of the *Fear of Isaac* or in the name of the fearsome God of Isaac. Jacob worshiped God only and not multiple gods.

After finishing with these oaths, Jacob made a sacrifice. Jacob killed an animal in a ritual way and offered part of the animal to God as a thanksgiving for this peace between Jacob and Laban. Then Jacob cooked the rest of the animal and served it to all the relatives gathered in that place. This was a covenant feast for everyone to celebrate. They stayed out on the mountain all night.

In Scene three, Laban gets up early the next morning. Laban goes to his daughters, Rachel and Leah and kisses them. Laban gathers all his grandchildren and kisses each one of them. Then Laban departs to return to Harran.

Because this passage has two covenant meals, it's good to think of the sequencing.

1. Jacob puts up the memorial pillar and the pile of stones.

2. Jacob and Laban have a meal as a part of the covenant.
3. Laban proposed a second covenant or peace treaty. The pile of stones would also be a boundary between Laban and Jacob. Jacob agreed.
4. Laban swears an oath in the name of the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor. Jacob swears an oath in the name of the fearsome God of Isaac.
5. Jacob makes a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God.
6. They eat a second covenant meal and all the relatives participate.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- Laban
- Relatives of Laban and Jacob
- God
- Jacob's wives and children are mentioned.

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing one of the roles, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like different responses. Restart the action.

In scene one, Jacob responds to Laban's accusations. Jacob is angry. Jacob demands that Laban show evidence of Jacob's wrongdoing. Jacob recounts how Jacob has worked for Laban as a shepherd for 20 years. Jacob worked 14 years to pay for Rachel and Leah. Jacob worked 6 years to get the flocks of sheep and goats as wages for his work. Laban changed the conditions of Jacob's wages 10 times, but Jacob says that God protected Jacob from Laban.

Stop the action: Ask Laban, "How are you feeling as you listen to Jacob?" You may hear, "Jacob is wrong. I've been just. I have paid Jacob what Jacob deserves." Or, "These are my animals and children. Regardless of what Jacob says, he has no right to take them from me." Ask Jacob, "How do you feel now that you have told Laban what you have done?" You may hear, "It felt good to say all that—to tell him how he has wronged me." Or, "I don't like talking to my uncle like this but he won't listen to me." Or, "He has tried to cheat me. He needs to know that I won't allow it anymore." Restart the action.

In scene two, Laban makes another false claim regarding his daughters and grandchildren. Then Laban proposes a covenant between Jacob and Laban. Jacob agrees. Jacob puts up a stone as a memorial pillar. Then

Jacob has the relatives bring stones and put them in a pile. After this, Laban and Jacob sat together to eat a covenant meal.

Stop the action: Ask Laban, "Why are you still claiming that all the animals and children belong to you?" You may hear, "They do belong to me. Jacob has no right to take them from me. But I should live in peace with my daughters' husband and my grandchildren's father so I will forget this." Ask Jacob, "How are you feeling as you eat this covenant meal with Laban?" You may hear, "I want peace between us and I want to go home. I don't trust Laban but I will go through this act with him as if I do. Maybe, this way, we can go forward in peace for now and I can get us safely on the road." Restart the action.

After eating the covenant meal, Laban and Jacob give the memorial pile of stones the same name in Aramean and Hebrew. The name means witness pile. Then Laban asked that Yahweh keep watch over Laban and Jacob while they are apart from each other. Because of this, the pile was also called Mizpah which means watchtower.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How do you feel about this watchtower idea?" You may hear, "I think it is good. I don't trust Laban so asking God to keep watch over both of us is a great idea. I won't mistreat my wives nor my children so it's not a problem for me." Restart the action.

Laban has another proposal. Laban wants Jacob to agree that the pile of stones will also serve as a boundary between Laban and Jacob. Laban wants Jacob to agree that neither Jacob nor Laban will go past the pile of stones into the territory of the other to do harm. Jacob agrees. This is called a covenant also but is more like a peace treaty. Laban calls on the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor to serve as a judge between Laban and Jacob. Jacob swears just by the name of the God of Isaac. Jacob uses the term, *Fear of Isaac* as a name for God. Then Jacob offers a sacrifice to thank God and everyone sits down to eat the covenant feast.

Stop the action: Ask Laban, "How do you feel now that you have made this agreement of peace with Jacob?" You may hear, "I'm happy with this. I would like to have my daughters with me and my grandchildren. I hate losing all those animals. But at least this way, I can be sure that Jacob won't come and attack me and my sons and take more." Ask Jacob, "How do you feel now that you have made this peace agreement with Laban?" You may hear, "I'm pleased. Now I can go forward in peace. Laban won't come chasing after me anymore trying to take my flocks and my children away from me. I would rather be in peace with him." Restart the action.

In Scene 3 after the feast is finished, the next day, Laban decides to go back to Harran. Laban kisses his daughters and blesses them. Laban kisses his grandchildren and blesses them. Then Laban departs for Harran.

Stop the action: Ask Rachel and Leah, "How do you feel now that you see your father leave and return to Harran?" You may hear, "It makes me sad in one way because I probably will never see him again. But he didn't treat us right. He didn't love us as a father should. I'm glad I'm going with Jacob to a new life." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The passage tells us that Jacob was angry. The words used make it sound like Jacob was shouting. Jacob asks what is my offense or what is my crime? What is my sin? Sin does not refer to disobeying God; instead, Jacob is asking Laban to tell Jacob how or in what way Jacob has offended Laban. What has Jacob done to wrong Laban or harm Laban? Jacob does not expect an answer to these questions. Then Jacob begins to list out all the work that Jacob has done for Laban for 20 years.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story of two men in a quarrel. One man has accused the second man of doing wrong. How does the second man reply?

Jacob talks about the kinsmen who are with them. These are the relatives that Laban gathered and they have traveled with Laban. Laban is Jacob's uncle. Therefore, these are Jacob's relatives also.

Laban has said that the animals Jacob has taken belong to Laban. Jacob says that the animals are Jacob's animals because Jacob worked 6 years for them. They are Jacob's wages for Jacob's care of all of Laban's flocks. Laban changed the agreement or the wages 10 times. We had examples in the previous passage of Laban changing the wages for Jacob. Jacob refers to God three times. Jacob tells Laban how God has protected and helped Jacob.

Jacob says the God of my father which means the God of Isaac. Then Jacob says the God of Abraham. Abraham is Jacob's grandfather. Then Jacob says the *Fear of Isaac*. This is a title for God that only appears in this passage. It means that Isaac felt fear or awe for God. With these different titles for God, Jacob is referring to one God. Jacob worships one God, the same God Isaac and Abraham worshiped.

Laban suggests a solution to the problem. Laban suggests they make a **covenant**. A covenant is a permanent agreement between two people that establishes peace or friendship. Both people promise to be faithful to the agreement and to remain in good relationship with each other. Both parties make a sacrifice or ritual celebration to seal the agreement. Use the same word for covenant you have used in previous passages. Covenant is discussed in the Master Glossary.

Jacob agrees to the covenant. Jacob sets up a stone as a memorial pillar. Then Jacob has family members gather stones and make a pile of stones. These are two separate things. The pillar and the pile of stones are near each other. Laban and Jacob ate a covenant meal together. This ritual of eating a meal together helps seal the covenant.

Laban named the pile of stones in Laban's language of Aramean. Jacob also gave the pile of stones a name in Hebrew. The two names have the same meaning which is "witness pile." Then Laban said, "May **Yahweh** keep watch between us while we are away from each other." Because of that statement, they also named the pile of stones or the place where they were Mizpah, which means watchtower. A watchtower would be a tall structure where someone would stand to look out and see if any stranger or enemy is approaching.

Laban falsely says that Laban has put up the pillar and the pile of stones. Then Laban proposes another covenant. This covenant is like a treaty between two people to keep the peace. Laban suggests using the pile of stones as a boundary line. Neither Laban nor Jacob will cross this line to attack the other. Jacob agreed and took an **oath** to respect this agreement. Oath is stronger than a vow or promise. By making it an oath, the agreement cannot be broken. Use the same word for oath you used in previous passages. Oath is discussed in the Master Glossary.

Laban calls on the **God** of their ancestors, the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor to judge between Laban and Jacob. Laban worshiped more than one god. By using the names in this way, Laban is calling on two different gods. When Jacob makes his oath, Jacob only uses the name of the God of Isaac. The God of Isaac and the God of Abraham are the same God. Jacob uses the name, *Fear of Isaac* or the fearsome God of Isaac. This is a name for God that we only find here. Jacob stood in awe or fear of the God of Isaac. Jacob respected the God of Isaac.

After making this second covenant or treaty with Laban, Jacob made a **sacrifice** to God. This is the first time the word sacrifice is used. A sacrifice is something offered to God to thank God or to ask for forgiveness of sins. Sacrifice is discussed in the Master Glossary. Jacob made the sacrifice to thank God. Jacob would have killed an animal in a ritual way. Some of the animal would be burned as the offering to God. Jacob used the remainder of the animal for the covenant feast which everyone ate.

Before Laban left in the morning, Laban kissed and then **blessed** his daughters and grandchildren. Bless is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word you have used in previous passages.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 31:36-55

Audio Content

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Genesis 32:1-21

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 32:1-21 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?

4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the previous passage after making 2 covenants with Jacob, Laban returned to Harran. Now, Jacob has started on his way for the remainder of his journey back to Canaan or Beersheba where Isaac lived. This is a narrative description of that journey.

As Jacob started, Jacob met some angels of God. Angels usually act as God's messengers but there is no indication here that the angels gave Jacob any message. The word for angels is plural. There were enough angels for a camp like a military camp. Jacob declared that the place where Jacob saw the angels was God's camp. Jacob named the place Mahanaim. When Jacob left Beersheba to go to Harran, Jacob saw angels ascending and descending a staircase. On Jacob's return, Jacob again sees angels sent by God. Thus, there are angels at the beginning and the end of Jacob's journey.

Stop and discuss: Tell stories about different kinds of persons or groups about traveling and setting up camp for the night. What word is used for camp in each of the stories?

It has been 20 years since Jacob left home and went to Harran to escape his twin brother Esau. Esau had sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of stew. Jacob had tricked Isaac, their father, into giving the blessing for Esau, the first-born son, to Jacob. Jacob had stolen Esau's blessing. Esau was so angry that Esau threatened to kill Jacob. Rebekah, their mother, told Jacob to go to Laban at Harran. Jacob has been gone for 20 years.

Now Jacob is returning. Jacob does not know how Esau feels about Jacob after 20 years. Jacob learned that Esau had moved to the region of Seir in the land of Edom. This area is some distance away from Beersheba.

Stop and show a map of the land of Israel including the land of Edom. Seir should be marked on the map as well as other places in Jacob's journey.

We don't know why Esau moved so far away from Isaac. Esau had married 2 Hittite women and Isaac and Rebekah both disliked Esau's wives. After Jacob left Beersheba, Esau married a daughter of Ishmael. The story doesn't tell us what Isaac and Rebekah thought about this wife.

Jacob sent messengers to Esau with a message from Jacob. Jacob called himself a servant of Esau. By using the word servant, Jacob is trying to honor Esau. Jacob told Esau that Jacob has been with Laban the whole time since Jacob left Beersheba. Jacob now has many animals and servants. Jacob hopes that Esau will be friendly. The messengers went to Esau and then returned to tell Jacob that Esau was coming to meet Jacob. Esau has already started towards Jacob. Esau has an army of 400 men traveling with Esau. When Jacob heard this news, Jacob was terrified. Jacob decided to divide all his possessions into 2 camps. In this way, if Esau attacks one camp, the other camp could possibly escape. Jacob would possibly lose half of his possessions but not everything.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about a man who has cheated a relative of something important and then left the area. That man is returning after a long absence. What would the man do to ensure a good welcome by his family? How would the cheated man welcome the person returning? What would each person be feeling?

After making this division of everything Jacob has into the two camps, Jacob began to pray. Jacob prayed to the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac. Jacob calls God by the name of Yahweh. All these names refer to the same God. Jacob reminded God that God had told Jacob to go home. God had promised to treat Jacob kindly. Jacob reminded God of the blessings that God had given to Jacob. One blessing God gave Jacob was to say that Jacob would have descendants too many to count—like sand on the seashore. Jacob asked God to protect Jacob from being attacked by Esau. Jacob reminded God of the promises God had made to Jacob about Jacob's future descendants.

Stop and discuss: Listen to Jacob's prayer again. What would someone in your village say in a prayer if that person was afraid like Jacob was afraid? How would this prayer differ from the prayer Jacob prayed?

Jacob stayed where he was all night. The next morning, Jacob decided to send Esau some gifts.

Jacob selected goats, sheep, camels, cows and donkeys. With each group of animals Jacob selected female and male animals so that the animals would reproduce. Jacob divided these animals into herds and assigned servants to be with each herd. Jacob sent each herd off towards the direction of Esau. Jacob told the servants to keep the herds separated with some distance between the herds.

Show a picture of each type of animal Jacob sent as a gift. Show the male and the female: Sheep, goat, camel, cow, bull, donkey.

Jacob gave instructions to each group of servants. When the servants met Esau, the servants were to tell Esau that the animals belonged to Jacob. Jacob is sending these animals as a gift to his master, Esau. Jacob tells the servants to say that Jacob is the servant of Esau. Jacob is trying to show that Jacob has a lower status than Esau. Jacob is obligated to obey Esau. Jacob is showing respect and honor to Esau. By giving the gifts, Jacob is trying to take away the anger of Esau.

Stop and discuss: Talk about someone who has cheated someone else. In your culture, what would the person do to make peace with that other person he cheated? What kinds of things would the person say? What kinds of things would that person do?

The servants were to tell Esau that the animals were a gift from Jacob. They were to say that Jacob was coming to meet Esau. Each group of servants was given the same set of instructions. Jacob was trying to calm Esau or satisfy Esau in a way that would keep Esau from attacking Jacob. Jacob was hoping that the gifts would make Esau friendly towards Jacob. After sending the gifts, Jacob remained where Jacob was camped for the night.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 5 scenes.

First scene: Laban has left to return home and angels of God come to visit Jacob. Jacob continues on his way towards Beersheba.

Second scene: Jacob sends messengers to Esau to tell Esau that Jacob is coming.

Third scene: The messengers return telling Jacob that Esau is following with an army of 400 men. Jacob divides his camp into 2 camps.

Fourth scene: Jacob prays.

Fifth scene: Jacob decides to send gifts to Esau. Jacob sends the gifts with specific instructions for the servants to follow. Jacob was hoping that these gifts would take away Esau's anger.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- Angels of God
- God
- Servants
- Esau and his army of 400 men

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In scene one, Laban has departed to return to Harran. Jacob starts on his way towards Beersheba. Angels of God come to meet Jacob. Jacob declares that this place is God's camp. Jacob names the place Mahanaim.

In scene two, Jacob learns that Esau lives in the area of Seir which is in Edom. This is in the mountains and much further south than Beersheba. Jacob decides to send messengers to tell Esau that Jacob is coming. Jacob sends a friendly greeting that should make Esau feel that Jacob wants a good relationship with Esau. Jacob uses words like humble greetings and your servant Jacob. Jacob tells Esau what Jacob has been doing for 20 years in Harran with their Uncle Laban. Jacob hopes Esau will be friendly to Jacob.

In scene three, the messengers return from visiting with Esau. The messengers tell Jacob that Esau is coming to meet Jacob and is already on the way. Esau has an army of 400 men with him. This news terrifies Jacob. Jacob divides everything Jacob has into 2 camps. Jacob thinks that by doing this, Jacob will be able to keep half his possessions if Esau attacks.

In scene four, Jacob prays. Jacob reminds God that God has told Jacob to return home. Jacob reminds God of God's promise to treat Jacob kindly. Jacob recalls the blessings that God has given to an undeserving Jacob. Jacob asks God to rescue Jacob from Esau. Jacob reminds God again of the promises God has made to Jacob. Then Jacob remains there all night.

In scene five, Jacob selects animals to send as gifts to Esau. Jacob separates these animals into herds and assigns servants to each herd. Jacob tells the servants to keep a distance between each herd. When the servants meet Esau, they are to say that the herd belongs to Jacob who is sending the herd as a gift to Esau. The servants are to say that Jacob is the servant of Esau and that Esau is the master of Jacob. By using language like this, Jacob is trying to honor Esau. Jacob is trying to soothe any anger that Esau might still have towards Jacob. Jacob wants Esau to be friendly to Jacob. Jacob sent the herds ahead while Jacob remained in the camp another night.

Jacob did not send the same number of each kind of the animals. Jacob sent 5 different herds:

- 200 female goats and 20 male goats
- 200 female sheep and 20 male sheep
- 30 female camels with their young
- 40 cows and 10 bulls
- 20 female donkeys and 10 male donkeys

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 5 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- Angels of God
- God
- Servants
- Esau and his army of 400 men

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing one of the roles, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like different responses. Restart the action.

In scene one, Laban has already departed to return to Harran. Jacob starts on his way back to Beersheba. Angels of God come to meet Jacob. When Jacob sees these angels, Jacob declares that this is God's camp. Jacob names the place Mahanaim.

In the second scene, Jacob sends messengers ahead to Esau, Jacob's older twin brother. Jacob tells the messengers to say that Jacob is coming. Jacob uses language that would honor Esau and make Esau feel friendly to Jacob. Jacob tells Esau what Jacob has been doing for the last 20 years.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How do you feel about meeting Esau again?" You might hear, "I'm looking forward to seeing my brother after such a long time." Or, "I'm afraid. I don't know how Esau feels now. Esau wanted to kill me when I left home." Ask Esau, "How did you feel when the messengers told you that Jacob is coming home?" You may hear, "I'm glad to see him again. It's been a long time. I don't hate him anymore but I don't know if we can be at peace together. I don't know if I can trust him." Restart the action.

In scene three, the messengers return and tell Jacob that Esau is coming to meet Jacob. Esau has an army of 400 men traveling with him. When Jacob hears this news, Jacob is terrified. Jacob takes everything Jacob has and puts it into 2 camps. Jacob thinks that if Esau attacks, maybe one camp will escape and Jacob won't lose everything.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "Why are you afraid?" You may hear, "Esau wanted to kill me 20 years ago. Maybe Esau still wants to kill me. Why would Esau bring such an army?" Restart the action.

In scene four, Jacob prays. Jacob uses both names for God—God and Yahweh. Jacob says to God, "You told me to return home. You promised to treat me kindly." Jacob reminds God of how unworthy Jacob is to receive the blessings of God. Jacob knows that everything Jacob now has is from God. Then Jacob asks God, "Rescue me from my brother, Esau." Jacob reminds God that God has promised descendants too many to count to Jacob. Then Jacob remains where he is all night.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How do you feel now that you have prayed?" You may hear, "I am at peace. I feel that God has heard me. I feel that God will take care of this situation. I am not worried anymore." Restart the action.

In scene five, Jacob decides to send some gifts to Esau. Jacob takes some of each kind of animal that Jacob has and puts these animals into herds. Then Jacob selects some servants to go with the herds. Jacob tells the servants to keep a distance between each herd. They are to go ahead of Jacob. When the herd reaches Esau, the servants are to tell Esau that the animals are a gift from Esau's servant Jacob and are for Jacob's master, Esau. By using language like this, Jacob is trying to calm Esau or satisfy a lingering anger that Esau might have. Jacob is also trying to honor Esau. Each group of servants had the same message to give to Esau. Jacob sent all the gift herds on ahead. Jacob remained in the camp another night.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How do you feel now that you have sent these gifts on ahead?" You may hear, "I think this is a good idea. Esau will respond well to my flattery—my using those polite words and calling him master. I have done all I can do to make peace. It is up to Esau now." Ask the servants, "How do you feel about going ahead with the herds and this message?" You may hear, "I'm afraid but I have to obey my master. Esau has an army of 400 men. He may not accept these gifts or our messages." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Angels of God come to meet Jacob. The word for angels is plural. Angels are supernatural spiritual beings who usually carry messages from God. However, here the angels don't give Jacob a message. Use the same word for angels you have used before. Angels are discussed in the Master Glossary.

Jacob said there are enough angels to be God's **camp**. Here the word camp is like a military camp. Jacob sees these angels as God's army.

Jacob's household fills two large camps. These are not military camps. This camp is a place where a person or a group of people would stop for a limited amount of time. Jacob's family would set up camp each night as they travelled.

Jacob learns that Esau lives in the region of **Seir** in the land of **Edom**. These place names will be used repeatedly in the scriptures. Refer to the map for the location of this area.

Show the map of Israel that has Edom and Seir marked on it.

Jacob prays. In the prayer Jacob uses both **God** and **Yahweh** as Jacob talks to God. Use the same words for God and Yahweh you have used in other passages. Yahweh and God are both discussed in the Master Glossary. In the prayer, Jacob says, God of my grandfather Abraham and God of my father Isaac. These names refer to the same God that Jacob is worshipping and praying to at this moment.

Jacob refers to himself as a **servant** of Esau. Jacob refers to himself as a servant of God. Jacob has a number of servants. Servant is discussed in the Master Glossary. In each case, the word servant means that the person will obey and serve his master. Use the same word for servant that you have used before.

By sending gifts to Esau, Jacob was trying to **appease** Esau. Appear means to calm or satisfy a person by supplying what is needed. By sending the gifts, Jacob was hoping that Esau's anger would go away and Jacob and Esau could meet in peace.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 32:1–21

Audio Content

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Genesis 32:22–32

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 32:22–32 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the previous passage, Jacob learned that Esau is on his way to meet Jacob. Esau is bringing an army of 400 men. Jacob sent Esau gifts of herds of animals. This passage is a narrative description of what happened as Jacob prepared to meet Esau when Esau arrives.

Jacob sent the herds of animals off as gifts for Esau. Jacob then spent the night in the camp. During the night, Jacob got up. Jacob took the 4 women: Leah and Leah's servant Zilpah, Rachel and Rachel's servant Bilhah and took them across the ford of the Jabbok River. Jacob also took his 11 sons across the river. They were all now on the south side of the river. The Jabbok River is in the country of Jordan. The Jabbok River has places where the water is shallow making it easy to cross the river. This is called a ford. Jacob was camped next to a ford in the Jabbok River. After taking the women and children across the Jabbok to a new camp, Jacob also sent over everything Jacob had—all his possessions. Everyone and everything was across the river except Jacob. The story doesn't tell us why Jacob took everyone across the river during the night. It is more dangerous to cross at night. There are two interpretations as to where Jacob was during the night. One interpretation says that Jacob remained in the original camp on the north side of the river. Another interpretation says that Jacob was on the same side of the river as his family but not in the camp with them.

Show the map of Jacob's trip with the Jabbok River marked on the map.

Show a picture of people walking across a shallow part of a river.

Discuss as a group: Imagine that someone is coming home like Jacob who left after stealing Esau's blessing. Family members are going out to meet the person and his family. How would the person coming home be feeling? What kinds of actions might that person take to prepare to meet the greeting party?

Jacob was alone in the camp. It was still night. A man came and began wrestling with Jacob. Wrestling is a hand-to-hand struggle with an opponent in an attempt to throw the opponent to the ground. Neither person strikes nor hits the other. Jacob does not know this man. The man does not identify himself and does not speak to Jacob.

Show a short video of 2 men or boys wrestling.

Stop and discuss: describe what the two boys are doing in the video. What do you call this type of activity in your culture?

Jacob and the man wrestled or struggled until daybreak. Daybreak is the time when light begins to appear in the sky. Another word for daybreak is dawn. The sun has not yet risen. With the light beginning, people can begin to see things more clearly.

The man realized that he could not throw Jacob to the ground. The man could not win the combat or struggle. At daybreak, the man touched Jacob's hip and pulled the hip out of its socket. This means that the man dislocated Jacob's hip. Once the hip is dislocated, a person cannot walk normally. Because Jacob's hip was dislocated, Jacob walked with a limp.

When Jacob and the man started wrestling or struggling together, Jacob did not know who the man was. Jacob finally realizes that this man is someone special.

After dislocating Jacob's hip, the man speaks for the first time. The man said, "Let me go because the daylight is starting to appear." It would soon be light enough to see people clearly. This means that Jacob should stop holding onto the man and stop trying to throw the man to the ground. Jacob refused to let the man go. Jacob demanded that the man bless Jacob before Jacob would release the man or stop holding onto the man.

The man asked Jacob, "What is your name?" The man already knew Jacob's name. By answering Jacob was telling the man about Jacob's character. Jacob said, "My name is Jacob." Jacob's name means deceiver or cheater. The man told Jacob that Jacob would from now on be called Israel. The man told Jacob, "You have fought with God and with man and you have not given up." When God changed a man's name, it usually meant that there was a change in the person's character. Jacob is no longer the deceiver but one who has struggled with God and

with men and has not given up. In earlier passages, God changed Abram's name to Abraham and Sarai's name to Sarah.

Stop and discuss: When and why would someone change a person's name in your culture?

Jacob asked the man for the man's name. The man asked Jacob, "Why do you want to know my name?" When Jacob asks the man's name, it means that Jacob still doesn't know who this man is. Then the man blessed Jacob and left. Jacob finally realizes that Jacob has been with God. Jacob has had a direct encounter with God.

Jacob named the place where this encounter took place Peniel. Peniel means *the Face of God*. Jacob said, "I have seen the face of God and I have survived." By the time Jacob left Peniel, the sun was rising. Jacob was limping because of the injury to Jacob's hip.

Stop and discuss: Normally this type of injury would be very painful. It would also be difficult to walk. Jacob doesn't complain of pain. He limps when he walks. How would your culture treat someone who limps after an injury to his leg or hip?

Then the writer interrupts the story to give an explanation of how this event influenced people later. Because God dislocated Jacob's hip, the descendants of Jacob did not eat meat from the hip of any animal. The text refers to the descendants of Jacob as the sons of Israel or Israelites. Israel is Jacob's new name. Rather than saying descendants of Jacob, they start referring to these descendants as sons of Israel or descendants of Israel. From now on in the scriptures, they will be called descendants of Israel. Jacob's new name Israel is the same as the name of the country of Israel.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Jacob sends his family and possessions across the Jabbok River.

Second scene: Jacob wrestles with a man.

Third scene: Jacob names the place Peniel

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- The Man
- Jacob's 2 wives, 2 servant wives, and children are mentioned. The text specifically mentions 11 sons. The daughter is not mentioned by name in this story, but she is there.

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In the first scene, it is night after Jacob has sent off the gifts to Esau. Jacob and his family go to bed. Then sometime during the night, Jacob gets up and takes his two wives, Rachel and Leah, his two servant wives, Zilpah and Bilhah and all his children and moves them across the Jabbok River from the north side to the south side of the river. Jacob is camped near a ford of the river. After moving his family, Jacob then sends all his possessions across the ford of the river. We don't know where Jacob spent the night. The story isn't clear. Jacob could have remained on the northside of the river. Or Jacob could have crossed the river to the southside but went to a separate place apart from his family. Whichever side of the river Jacob was on, Jacob was alone during the night.

We don't know why Jacob chose to cross the ford of the river during the night. Because it is dark, crossing the ford of the river is more dangerous for people and for animals. They can't see the rocks in the river or the stones at the bottom. Someone is more likely to slip and fall during a night crossing. Apparently, everyone made the crossing without injury.

In the second scene in some translations of the Bible it is unclear as to who did which action. Here's what happened: a man comes and begins to wrestle with Jacob. The passage doesn't give a description of this man. He just appeared and started to wrestle with Jacob. Jacob does not seem to be frightened by the man nor by the man's appearance. Jacob doesn't ask the man why he wants to wrestle with Jacob. Neither Jacob nor the man speaks as they wrestle.

They wrestled the rest of the night. When daylight started to appear, the man saw that he couldn't win the wrestling match, and he touched Jacob's hip and it fell out of joint. Use strong words to describe this action: wrench the hip out of joint or throw the hip out of joint. The man said to Jacob, "Let me go." Even with his hip out of joint, Jacob did not let go of the man. Jacob demanded a blessing before letting the man go. At that point, the man said to Jacob, "What is your name?" The man asks Jacob this question in a way that makes it clear that the man is in a higher position than Jacob is. Jacob told the man that he was named Jacob. The man then told Jacob that from that time on Jacob would be known as Israel. The man said to Jacob, "You have fought with God and with men and have won." Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." Jacob was speaking politely because Jacob realizes that the man is of a higher status than Jacob is. The man didn't tell Jacob his name. The man blessed Jacob.

In the third scene, Jacob named the place Peniel. Jacob said, "I've seen the face of God and my life has been spared." Jacob was limping because of the injury to his hip. When the sun started rising, Jacob left Peniel and started going towards the direction that Esau was coming from.

The passage finishes with an explanation as to why descendants of Jacob refused to eat meat from the hip joint of any animal. This refusal was a way of remembering when Jacob wrestled with the man and the man dislocated Jacob's hip.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story from the past that explains one of your customs that you follow today. Notice how you end the story.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- The Man
- Jacob's 2 wives, 2 servant wives and children are mentioned.

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing one of the roles "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like different responses. Restart the action.

In scene one, after going to bed, Jacob gets up during the night and moves his wives and his children across the Jabbok River. He also sends all his possessions across the river. Jacob is alone in his camp.

Stop the action: Ask Rachel and Leah, "How do you feel about crossing the river during the night and having Jacob remain on the other side?" You may hear, "I don't understand why we had to do this at night. Why did we have to wake the children and move them during the night? I don't know why Jacob isn't with us. This is making me really uncomfortable and sort of afraid of tomorrow. Is Jacob going to run away from Esau?" Restart the action.

In the second scene, a man comes and starts to wrestle with Jacob.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How do you feel about this man? Who is this man?" You may hear, "I don't know who this man is. I never saw him before. But he wants to wrestle so I'll wrestle. I'm not going to let him win this match. I will show him how strong I am." Restart the action.

Jacob and the man wrestle the rest of the night until dawn begins to break. The man sees that he can't win so he wrenches Jacob's hip out of joint. Then the man told Jacob, "Let me go because dawn is breaking." Jacob, even with his hip out of joint, refused to let go of the man until the man blessed Jacob.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How are you feeling about this wrestling match now?" You may hear, "I'm good at this. See he can't win. He has dislocated my hip and he still can't win. My hip hurts but I feel good about what I'm able to do this night." Ask Jacob, "Why do you want a blessing?" You may hear, "Esau is coming with an army. I need a blessing to tell me that everything will be ok. I don't know how Esau feels about me now. I've tried to send gifts and speak in a way but I don't know if Esau is holding a grudge against me. I need more blessing to make sure it goes well." Restart the action.

Jacob asks for a blessing but the man changes Jacob's name to Israel.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How do you feel about this name change?" You may hear, "It means that I have been with God tonight. I've seen God. I've wrestled with God. I'm still alive. This is amazing! I feel really good right now. Nothing bad is going to happen. God is with me. God was here and spoke to me and I'm still alive." Restart the action.

Jacob asks the man for his name. The man doesn't answer Jacob. The man blesses Jacob and leaves.

In scene three, After the man leaves, Jacob changes the name of the place. Jacob names it Peniel because Jacob has seen the face of God and lived. The word *Peniel* means *face of God*. The sun was coming up so Jacob left that place Jacob was limping.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How do you feel this morning?" You may hear, "I didn't sleep all night. I wrestled with that man. My leg hurts. I can't walk normally. I'm limping. But I was with God last night and I'm so ready for today. I know God is with me." Ask Rachel and Leah, "How do you feel when you see Jacob coming?" You may hear, "I'm so relieved to see Jacob. I didn't know what was happening last night. Why is Jacob limping? What has Jacob done to himself? I hope Jacob is ok. What will happen if Esau attacks and Jacob is injured? I'm sort of afraid this morning." Restart the action.

The writer then explains that Jacob's descendants, the people or sons of Israel, refuse to eat meat from the hip joint of any animal because of what happened the night that Jacob wrestled with the man.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jacob **wrestled** all night with a man. Wrestling is a struggle between two persons. Each person is trying to throw the other person to the ground. Neither person strikes the other person. If wrestling isn't a sport or isn't known in the culture, it's possible to say that Jacob struggled with a man during the night. Another way to

describe wrestling is to say that the two men each tried to throw the other man on the ground. The two men struggled like this all night.

The man dislocated Jacob's hip. This means that the leg bone is pulled out from the hip bone so that the joint no longer works as it is supposed to work. Jacob walked with a limp after this dislocation. A limp means that Jacob could not walk normally.

The man **blessed** Jacob. Use the same word for bless that you have used in previous passages. Bless is discussed in the Master Glossary.

Jacob's name was changed to **Israel**. See the discussion of Israel in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 32:22–32

Audio Content

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Genesis 33:1-20

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 33:1-20 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

After wrestling all night, Jacob left Peniel, the place where he wrestled the man, and joined his family. The sun was coming up. Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming with an army of 400 men. Esau is Jacob's twin brother. Esau had sold his birthright to Jacob. Jacob stole Esau's blessing as the oldest son. Because Esau threatened to kill Jacob, Jacob went to Haran. They have not seen each other for 20 years. Now Esau is approaching Jacob. This passage is a narrative account of Jacob's meeting with Esau.

Jacob arranged the wives and children before Esau arrived. Jacob put Bilhah with her 2 sons and Zilpah with her 2 sons in front. Then Jacob put Leah with her 6 sons and daughter behind Zilpah and Bilhah. Then in the very back, Jacob put Rachel and her son. Jacob arranged the family according to their importance to Jacob. Jacob placed Rachel and her son as the last to be presented to Esau. Jacob went in front of the wives and children. This is the first time we see Jacob taking the lead position. As Jacob approached Esau, Jacob bowed to the ground 7 times to show respect to Esau. This means that Jacob put his face all the way to the ground. Bowing 7 times was one way to increase the honor being shown to the person approaching. Esau ran to Jacob and hugged and kissed Jacob on the cheek. Both Jacob and Esau wept.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about someone who has been gone a long time returning home. How does the family at home receive this person? What is the behavior of the person returning home?

Esau and his army of 400 have come from Seir. Jacob has come from Harran. They are meeting at the Jabbok River.

Show a map that has Harran, Seir, the Jabbok River, and Beersheba marked.

Esau looked up and noticed the women and children behind Jacob. Esau asked who these people were. Jacob introduced his family by saying, "These are the children that God has graciously given me." Each woman with her children came forward and bowed to Esau. Zilpah and Bilhah walked together followed by Leah and finally Rachel.

Esau asked about the flocks and herds that Esau had encountered on the way. Jacob explained that these were gifts from Jacob to Esau. Jacob wants Esau's friendship. Jacob speaks in a very flattering way to Esau. Jacob says that seeing Esau's face is like seeing the face of God. Another way of saying this is to say, "Meeting you is like meeting God" or "Seeing you is like seeing God." At first Esau does the culturally acceptable thing and refuses the gifts, but Jacob keeps insisting and finally Esau accepts the gifts of the herds and flocks of animals that Jacob had sent.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about a man who has done something against another man. When they meet, the first man uses very flattering language to the other man. The first man doesn't say, "I'm sorry for what I did." But the man keeps saying very flattering things to the second man. Notice the language being used. How does the second man react to this type of flattering words? Talk about why the first man uses these flattering words to the second man.

Esau invites Jacob to come to Seir with Esau. Esau asks Jacob to travel that day with Esau. Jacob speaks again in a very flattering way to Esau. As Jacob and Esau talk together, Esau calls Jacob "brother" while Jacob calls himself a servant of Esau. Jacob uses terms like servant or calls Esau "My Lord" or "master" every time Jacob speaks to Esau. Jacob says that the animals and children need to travel slowly. Jacob insists that Esau return home and Jacob will follow at a slow pace. Jacob promises to go to Esau at Seir.

Esau accepts that Jacob needs to follow at a slower pace. Esau offers to leave some of the army with Jacob for protection and to guide Jacob to Seir. Jacob continues to speak in a very flattering way, calling Esau, "My Lord." To say "My Lord" or "Master" in this way is to show respect and to say that Esau should receive this honor and respect from Jacob. Jacob refuses the offer of the men to accompany Jacob and his family.

Esau leaves that same day to return to Seir. Esau takes the army of 400 men back with him to Seir. The passage does not say that Jacob and Esau shared a meal together.

Stop and discuss: Do you think Jacob trusts Esau? What do you see in this story that shows mistrust? What do you see that shows trust?

Jacob did not go to Seir. Jacob went to a place called Succoth. This is located in the Jordan Valley near where the Jabbok River enters the Jordan River. The name Succoth means shelters. While at Succoth, Jacob built a house and made shelters for the animals. Jacob remained there for a time and then crossed the Jordan River.

Show the map with Peniel and Succoth marked.

Jacob arrived at Shechem in the land of Canaan. Shechem is located in the mountains north of Jerusalem. Abraham's first stop in Canaan was at Shechem. Shechem is where God spoke to Abraham and said, "I will give this land to your descendants." Abraham built an altar there and dedicated it to God. Jacob came to Shechem and set up his camp outside the town. Jacob purchased a plot of land from the family of a man named Hamor who was the father of a man named Shechem. Jacob paid 100 pieces of silver for this plot of land. No one knows the exact value of the silver pieces.

Show the map again. It should have the location of Shechem marked. Notice that Shechem is across from Succoth and north of Beersheba.

Jacob built an altar on the piece of land that Jacob had purchased. Jacob named this altar *El-Elohe-Israel* which means God is the God of Israel. Jacob's name was changed to Israel when Jacob wrestled with the man all night at Peniel beside the Jabbok River.

Show the map again with Peniel marked as well as Shechem where Jacob is now located.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Jacob and Esau meet. Esau invites Jacob to come to Seir. Jacob promises to come later. Esau accepts Jacob's gifts and leaves.

Second scene: Jacob goes to Succoth and stays for some time.

Third scene: Jacob moves to Shechem, purchases land, and builds an altar.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- Bilhah
- Zilpah
- Leah
- Rachel
- Jacob's children
- Esau
- Esau's army of 400 men
- The family of Hamor

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In scene 1, the night of wrestling is over. Jacob is limping because of the injury to his hip. The sun has risen. Jacob looks up and sees that Esau with an army of 400 men is approaching. Jacob puts the two servant wives, Zilpah and Bilhah, in the front and each woman had her 2 sons with her. Then Jacob put Leah with her 6 sons and daughter. Finally, behind the others, Jacob placed Rachel with her son. Then Jacob went forward towards Esau. Jacob stopped to bow with his face to the ground 7 times as Jacob approached Esau. After the seventh time for Jacob to bow with his face to the ground, Esau ran to meet Jacob. Esau hugged Jacob or Esau threw his arms around Jacob's neck. Esau kissed Jacob. Both men began to cry tears of joy. Jacob and Esau have not seen each other for 20 years. When Jacob left for Harran, Esau was so angry that Esau wanted to kill Jacob.

First Esau sees the women and children and asks Jacob who these people are. Jacob explains that they are his wives and children. Each woman comes forward to bow before Esau. Zilpah and Bilhah walked together. Each woman had her 2 sons with her. Then Leah came forward to bow. Leah has her 6 sons and one daughter. Then Rachel with her son comes forward.

Then Esau asks about the herds and flocks he has seen on the way. Jacob explains that they are gifts. Jacob uses very flattering language when talking to Esau. Jacob calls Esau "My Lord" or "Master" and says other flattering phrases like, "Seeing your face is like seeing the face of God." Jacob asks Esau to accept the gifts. At first Esau refuses, but Jacob keeps insisting and finally Esau accepts the gifts. People in that culture normally refused gifts the first few times they were offered.

Esau invites Jacob to come to Seir with Esau. Jacob says he will come but has to travel more slowly than Esau. Jacob explains that the trip has to be slow because of the young children and young animals. Esau accepts this explanation.

Esau offers to leave some of the men from the army to protect Jacob and to serve as guides. Jacob again refuses. Finally Esau takes his army and departs to return to Seir. Esau leaves the same day he arrived.

In scene two, Esau goes to Seir but Jacob goes to Succoth which is a completely different direction. Jacob had promised to follow Esau but Jacob turns west and goes down into the Jordan valley near where the Jabbok River enters the Jordan River. Jacob builds himself a house there. Jacob makes shelters for the animals. The place where Jacob stays is named Succoth which means shelters.

Show the map with Peniel and Succoth marked.

In scene three, Jacob leaves Succoth and crosses the Jordan River. Jacob travels west into the mountains and comes to a place named Shechem. Shechem is where Abraham made his first stop on his way to Canaan. Abraham built an altar there and worshiped God. When Jacob arrived at Shechem, Jacob set up his camp outside the town. Jacob purchased a plot of land from a man named Hamor who is the father of a man named Shechem. Jacob paid 100 pieces of silver for this land. Jacob built an altar and named the altar "El-Elohe-Israel." This name means God, the God of Israel. Jacob's other name is Israel.

Show the map with Jacob's journey marked that includes Peniel, Succoth, and Shechem. This map should show the entire area from Harran to Beersheba and include Seir.

Show a photo of an altar.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- Bilhah
- Zilpah
- Leah
- Rachel
- Jacob's children
- Esau
- Esau's army of 400 men
- The family of Hamor

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing one of the roles, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like different responses. Restart the action.

In scene one, Jacob sees Esau approaching. Jacob arranges his family to meet Esau. Bilhah and Zilpah are in front with their sons. Leah with her sons and daughter is next. Then Rachel with her son. Jacob walks with a limp after his night of wrestling. Jacob goes to meet Esau stooping to bow face to the ground 7 times.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "Why are you bowing to Esau like this?" You may hear, "He is my older brother whom I've not seen for 20 years. I want to show my respect." Or, "I need to flatter my brother. He wanted to kill me because I took his blessing. I'm hoping to make him forget this." Or, "I don't know what Esau is thinking now. I'm hoping he won't be violent towards me." Restart the action.

After Jacob bows 7 times, Esau runs forward and throws his arms around Jacob's neck and kissed Jacob. Both men begin to cry.

Stop the action: Ask Esau, "Why are you crying?" You may hear, "I'm glad to see my brother again. It's been 20 years. We parted in anger. I'm not angry now because I'm doing well. I have plenty of wealth. Jacob did not really harm me when Jacob took my blessing." Ask Jacob, "Why are you crying?" You may hear, "I'm so relieved that Esau isn't attacking me. I didn't know how he would receive me. I'm glad to see my brother. Even though we are different, I've missed him." Restart the action.

Esau notices the women and children and asks who they are. Jacob says they are his family and has each of them come forward. Bilhah and Zilpah come forward together with their sons and bow. Leah comes forward with her children and bows. Rachel comes forward with her son and bows.

Stop the action: Ask each woman, "What are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I was scared when I saw the army but Esau seems like a nice man. It's good to meet someone from Jacob's family. Esau was friendly to us. I'm glad because with Jacob limping, he couldn't protect us if Esau attacked." Restart the action.

Esau asks about the herds and flocks he met on the way. Jacob says these are gifts for Esau. Jacob uses very flattering language when talking to Esau. Jacob uses words like "My Lord" or "Master" or "Your Servant." Jacob says that seeing the face of Esau is like seeing the face of God. Esau finally accepts the gifts.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "Why are you speaking to Esau like this?" You may hear, "I need to make sure that my brother thinks I see him as my superior. I need to make sure that he doesn't get angry and attack us. I want him to go in peace from here." Ask Esau, "What are you feeling about Jacob right now?" You may hear, "This time away has been good for Jacob. He sees me as he should see me now. I'm the oldest one and I should be respected." Restart the action.

Esau invites Jacob to travel with Esau back to Seir. Jacob refuses but promises to come later. Esau leaves that same day to go back to Seir.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "Why didn't you go with Esau?" You may hear, "Esau seems friendly but I don't trust him. I have to protect my family and that means I stay away from him." Ask Esau, "How are you feeling about Jacob right now?" You may hear, "I wish Jacob had come with me. But I will see him later. He will see that I have done well." Or, "I don't know why he didn't prepare a meal for me." Or, "It's better that I leave now because if I stay we might quarrel again." Restart the action.

In scene 2, Jacob goes to Succoth and remains for some time. Jacob builds himself a house and some shelters for the animals.

In scene 3 Jacob goes to Shechem. Jacob purchases a plot of ground for 100 pieces of silver from a man named Hamor who is the father of a man named Shechem. Jacob builds an altar on his land. Jacob names this altar "El-Elohe-Israel" which means God, the God of Israel.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How does it feel to be here where your grandfather Abraham stopped on his journey?" You may hear, "I want to be here for a time. It makes me feel close to my grandfather. I want to worship God here. God has given me this land. Now I own a piece of it so no one can send me away. God is present here." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

When Jacob approached Esau, Jacob stopped 7 times and bowed to the ground. This means that Jacob stopped, knelt on the ground with both knees and then put his forehead to the ground. This was not bowing just the head or bending from the waist. Jacob did this 7 times to greatly increase the honor Jacob was giving to Esau.

Show the picture of the man bowing with his face to the ground.

Esau threw his arms around Jacob's neck and hugged him. Esau kissed Jacob on Jacob's cheeks. Both men wept with happiness or cried tears of joy. This was an appropriate way of showing emotion between two men in that culture.

Jacob uses very flattering language when talking to Esau. Every time Jacob speaks to Esau, Jacob starts by calling Esau by a title that indicates that Esau is superior to Jacob. Jacob uses titles like "Master" or "My Lord." He asks Esau to accept his gift, or his **blessing**. Remember that bless is in the Master Glossary. These titles would normally be used by a servant talking to his master. Jacob refers to Esau's friendly smile and says it is like seeing the face of God. By using words like this, Jacob is trying to make Esau feel good about Jacob.

Esau leaves to return to Seir the same day he arrived. Jacob promises to follow later. However, Jacob does not follow Esau.

Jacob turns west and goes to a place on the east side of the Jordan River. This is where the Jabbok flows into the Jordan. Jacob stays there for some time. Jacob builds a house for himself and some shelters for the animals. The shelters would have been made of woven boughs or twigs from trees. The shelters are temporary but would provide shade from the sun and shelter from the rain. Because of these shelters, the name of the place is Succoth which means shelters in Hebrew.

Show the map marking the place of Succoth.

Then Jacob decides to cross the Jordan River and go into the mountains to a place named Shechem. This is the same place where Abraham stopped on his journey to Canaan. Jacob made a **camp** outside the town. Use the same word for camp that you have used in previous stories.

Show the map marking the place of Shechem.

Jacob purchased a plot of land for 100 pieces of silver. No one knows the exact value of these pieces of silver. Jacob purchased the land from a man named Hamor who is the father of a man named Shechem. The son is named Shechem. The town is named Shechem. The word is the same word.

Jacob built an **altar**. An altar is a structure or platform usually built of stones where an animal would be ritually killed and offered to God as a sacrifice. The word altar is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word you have used in previous passages for altar.

Show a photo of an altar.

Jacob gave the altar a name: El-Elohe-Israel. This means, **God**, the God of Israel. God is same word you have used before for God. God is discussed in the Master Glossary. **Israel** is the name of the country Israel. It is also the name given to Jacob when his name was changed after wrestling all night. Here the word Israel is referring to Jacob, not the country of Israel.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 33:1-20

Audio Content

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Genesis 34:1-17

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 34:1-17 and put it in your hearts.

This two-part story has many details about sexual violence, which may be difficult to hear about if you or someone you know has experienced sexual violence or rape.

Before you have any group discussions about this passage, stop and decide as a group how you prefer to talk about it. In your culture, what is the best way to talk about these things? Would it be good to divide into groups of men and women for this conversation? Do you want to work in a different way than you do in other sections? Pause this audio here.

Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this story tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this story tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this story affect our daily life? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

This two-part story has many details about sexual violence, which may be difficult to hear about if you or someone you know has experienced sexual violence or rape.

Before you have any group discussions about this passage, stop and decide as a group how you prefer to talk about it. In your culture, what is the best way to talk about these things? Would it be good to divide into groups of men and women for this conversation? Do you want to work in a different way than you did in other sections? Pause this audio here.

This passage is a narrative account of an event with Dinah who is the daughter of Jacob and Leah. Jacob is living on the piece of land near the town of Shechem which Jacob purchased from Hamor, the Hivite. The Hivites are descendants of Canaan, the son of Ham, the son of Noah. Noah cursed Canaan. Canaan's descendants have developed into large groups of people who live in different areas of the land God gave to Abraham. The Hivites occupy the land around the town of Shechem. Enough time has passed since Jacob and Esau parted for Dinah to be old enough to marry. Jacob's sons are old enough to work out in the fields with the animals. In this story, Shechem is the name of a young man, the son of Hamor, and also the name of the town.

Show the map which has the town of Shechem marked on it.

Normally mothers are not mentioned when giving the lineage of someone. In this story, we know that Leah is Dinah's mother. Dinah apparently has the freedom to leave home and go visit other homes. Dinah goes to visit some of the young women who live in the area. Shechem, the son of Hamor, the Hivite seems to be an important young man in the town who is respected as a leader. Shechem is referred to as a prince although his father Hamor is not a king. Hamor seems to be a leader in the town. Shechem sees Dinah, grabs Dinah, and forces Dinah to sleep with Shechem in a violent way against the will of Dinah. Shechem has not married Dinah. This violent sexual act is called rape. After Shechem forced Dinah to sleep with or have sexual relations with

Shechem, Shechem fell in love with Dinah. Shechem tried to speak tender words or loving words to Dinah so that Dinah would accept Shechem as a husband. Shechem wanted to marry Dinah and told his father to get Dinah as a wife for him.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story of someone in your culture who was raped. What words do you use to describe what happened? When you tell this story in a mixed group, do you use the same words? What does the father of the girl do? What do the brothers do? What happens to the man who did this? What happens to the girl?

Jacob learned of what happened to Dinah but did not act until his sons came in from the fields where they had been working with the livestock, or herds of animals. The sons who are Dinah's brothers heard what had happened and came home as soon as they heard. Jacob's sons were shocked and very angry that Shechem had violated their sister Dinah. The text uses strong words of anger to describe the reactions of Dinah's brothers but does not record any reaction by Jacob.

Tell a story of someone raped in your culture. What do the men of the woman's family do? How do they act? What words are used to describe their feelings?

The story repeats the phrase that Shechem had "defiled Dinah" several times. Defile means to make something unclean so that it is unacceptable to God. By forcing Dinah to sleep with him, Shechem defiled Dinah, or made Dinah unclean.

First Jacob hears that Shechem had defiled his daughter. Jacob does nothing.

Hamor, Shechem's father, comes to speak to Jacob and Jacob's sons. Hamor tries to make a deal with Jacob. Hamor suggests that Jacob allow Shechem to marry Dinah. In addition, Hamor suggests that Jacob's sons marry Hamor's daughters and that Hamor's sons marry Jacob's daughters. This is called intermarriage, which means that people from one culture or tribe marry someone from another culture or tribe. In this way, Jacob and his family would be accepted in the area, they would trade together and all would prosper. This proposal of intermarriage was against the wishes of Abraham and Isaac. Abraham had sent back to Harran for a bride for Isaac to avoid marriage with the Canaanites. Isaac sent Jacob to Harran to find a bride rather than marry from the Canaanites. Isaac and Rebekah hated Esau's Hittite wives because they were Canaanites. Abraham and Isaac both wanted to keep foreign women like the Canaanites out of their family.

Shechem also spoke to Jacob and Jacob's sons. Shechem wanted to marry Dinah so much that Shechem was begging the brothers to agree to the marriage. Shechem offered to pay any bride price that Jacob would ask. The bride price is the amount of money that a man pays to the girl's family in order to marry the girl. Jacob had paid a bride price of 7 years of work for Leah and 7 years of work for Rachel.

Jacob's sons replied in a deceitful way to Shechem and Hamor. Jacob's sons were angry because Shechem had defiled or dishonored their sister. Jacob's sons demanded that Shechem and all the men of the town of Shechem be circumcised. Circumcision is cutting the foreskin or loose skin off the end of a boy's penis. Usually this is done 8 days after a boy is born. This procedure is very painful for an older boy or a man and would cause the man to be so sore he would be unable to fight for several days. Many ancient cultures circumcised the men in preparation for marriage. The men in the town knew that circumcision was normal and agreed to the request. God selected circumcision as the sign of the covenant or promise between God and Abraham. God had told Abraham to circumcise himself and all the men of his house. All of Abraham's descendants would be circumcised. Here, in this story, Jacob's sons are demanding that Shechem and the men of the town be circumcised. This is not a sign of the covenant. The men of Shechem are not planning to give up their idols and worship God. In suggesting circumcision like this, Jacob's sons plan for the men to be unable to fight for some days. Their suggestion was deceitful because they had no intention of marrying daughters of Hamor or allowing Shechem marry Dinah.

The sons promise that they will intermarry and be as one people. The sons promise that Shechem will be able to marry Dinah. They are making this promise so that Shechem and Hamor will convince all the men of the town to agree to circumcision. The sons have no intention of keeping this promise.

Stop and discuss: The brothers were being deceitful. When is it acceptable in your culture for someone to be deceitful? Tell some stories about someone who has been deceitful or made promises he did not intend to keep. What happened in that situation?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

First scene: Shechem takes Dinah by force and then wants to marry Dinah.

Second scene: Jacob and his sons learn of what has happened to Dinah

Third scene: Hamor asks Jacob to allow Shechem to marry Dinah and then proposes intermarriage for all their children.

Fourth scene: Shechem begs to marry Dinah. The brothers answer deceitfully and tell Shechem that all the men must be circumcised.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- Dinah
- Shechem
- Hamor
- Jacob's sons

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Remember that this story is violent and may be difficult for people who have experienced sexual violence or rape. Remember also this story is the first one in a two-part story.

This story takes place at the town of Shechem. Shechem, the son of Hamor is one of the main characters in the story. The name of the town and the name of the young man are the same. Most translations seem to avoid any confusion by referring to Shechem the town as "the town" without mentioning the name.

In scene 1, Dinah visits some young women in the area. Shechem sees Dinah, attacks Dinah, and sleeps with Dinah by force, or forces Dinah to have sexual relations with Shechem. This is called rape. We learn later that Shechem keeps Dinah in his home. Shechem does not allow Dinah to return to her family. Shechem falls in love with Dinah and wants to marry Dinah. Shechem tries to win Dinah's love by talking in a loving way to Dinah.

In scene 2, Jacob learns that Dinah has been defiled but does nothing about it until his sons return home from the fields. Hamor, Shechem's father, along with Shechem come to visit Jacob to discuss the situation. The brothers hear what has happened to Dinah and return home while Hamor is talking to Jacob. Hamor visiting Jacob and the brothers returning home happen at the same time. The brothers are angry. The story says that Shechem had done a disgraceful thing against Dinah, something that should never have been done. This repetition of Dinah's shame and defilement shows how seriously Jacob's family took the rape of Dinah.

In scene 3, Hamor speaks to Jacob and Jacob's sons. Hamor tells them that Shechem truly loves Dinah and wants to marry Dinah. Hamor proposes that the families intermarry so that Jacob can remain in the area. The story seems to indicate that the daughters would not have a choice in whom they married. The fathers would give them as brides to men from the other group.

In scene 4, Shechem speaks to Jacob and Jacob's sons. Shechem came to see Jacob with Hamor but has not spoken until now. Shechem offers to pay any price they want so that Shechem can marry Dinah. Because Shechem has defiled Dinah, the brothers answer deceitfully. They tell Shechem that Shechem and all the men of the town must be circumcised before any marriage can take place. This circumcision will not make Shechem

and the Hivites part of the covenant promise made to Abraham. They have not decided to worship God and turn away from their idol worship. The sons promise deceitfully that if the men of the town will all be circumcised, Jacob's sons will agree to intermarry with them. Shechem will be allowed to marry Dinah. Then they give the opposite scenario—if the men do not agree to be circumcised, they will take Dinah back.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

The story in this passage is very violent, so the group will not dramatize the passage in this step. The group will remember the story and discuss what each character might be feeling.

This story has 4 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- Dinah
- Shechem
- Hamor
- Jacob's sons

In scene 1, Dinah, Leah's daughter, goes to visit some of the young women in the area. Shechem, son of Hamor sees Dinah, attacks Dinah, and forces Dinah to sleep with him. Then Shechem falls in love with Dinah and wants to marry Dinah.

Stop the action.

Ask Shechem, "Do you think you can talk Dinah into marrying you?" You may hear, "Of course I can. I'm a prince in this area. My family is powerful. Any woman would be glad to have me as a husband."

Ask Dinah, "What do you think of Shechem? You may hear, "He attacked me and took me by force. He defiled me! I will never accept to be his wife."

In scene 2, Jacob learns that Shechem has defiled Dinah but does nothing. Hamor comes to discuss the matter with Jacob. Jacob's sons hear what has happened and return home. They are shocked and furious that such a thing has happened.

Stop the action.

Ask Jacob, "Why are you doing nothing for your daughter?" You may hear, "I need to wait until my sons come. I'm just one man. They may kill me if I go and demand my daughter back or if I try to punish Shechem on my own."

Ask Hamor, "Why are you trying to discuss this with Jacob?" You may hear, "My son acted foolishly but he genuinely loves the girl. We fathers should find a way to keep the peace over this. I know my son did wrong, but I don't want him punished or anything bad to happen to him. Besides, Jacob is really rich with lots of flocks and herds. It would be good to keep that wealth here for the people of the town."

In scene 3, Hamor begins to talk with Jacob and his sons. Hamor tells them that Shechem truly loves Dinah. Then Hamor proposes that the fathers give their daughters to the sons of the other for marriage. By intermarrying, they will have peace and Jacob can stay in the area.

Stop the action.

Ask Jacob, "What do you think about intermarriage like this?" You may hear, "I am opposed. We cannot marry the daughters of these foreigners. My grandfather Abraham and my father Isaac would not allow this. I'm not sure what we are going to do but I won't allow these marriages to take place."

In scene 4, Shechem asks Jacob and the brothers to let him marry Dinah. Shechem promises to pay any bride price that the brothers might ask. Because Shechem has defiled Dinah, the brothers reply deceitfully. They demand that all the adult men of the town be circumcised before any marriage can take place.

Stop the action.

Ask the brothers, "Why are you demanding circumcision? Are you really going to give your sister in marriage to Shechem?" You may hear, "We will never allow Shechem to marry Dinah. We have a plan. We will get our revenge when all the men are circumcised and sore."

Ask Shechem, "What do you think about this proposal of circumcision? You may hear, "It's a small price to pay to have Dinah as a wife. I thought they would demand lots of money or animals. This is nothing but a few days of soreness."

Stop here and discuss as a group how this story makes you feel and think. Do you need some time to think or talk about this story with someone in your team or another person? What can you do to take care of yourself as you think about a story like this?

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jacob is living on a piece of property Jacob bought outside the town of Shechem. The son of Hamor the Hivite is named Shechem. The words are the same. You need to avoid confusion between the town and the man. In this passage most translations refer to the man by the name of Shechem. Most translations just refer to the town as the town without mentioning the name.

See the map with Shechem marked.

Shechem is described as a **prince** among the Hivites. A prince would be a man of some importance. A prince is usually the son of a king. Hamor, Shechem's father, is never called a king. Shechem sees Dinah who is visiting some of the women in the area. Shechem **rapes** Dinah. Rape is a violent word. It means that a man takes a woman and sleeps with her by force or against her will. Find a socially accepted way to describe what happened to Dinah.

Dinah was **defiled**. To defile something is to make it unclean or unacceptable to God. Dinah was now considered ritually unclean or socially unacceptable. Dinah is impure. You can say Dinah has been disgraced or dishonored. In addition, Dinah would feel shamed. To be taken by force in this way and have others know that it happened would cause Dinah to feel shame for the rest of her life.

Dinah's brothers were shocked and furious when they heard what had happened. These are strong words indicating really strong emotions. They were filled with grief and they burned with fury. These are word pictures that describe their anger. You need strong words to describe their feelings.

Stop and discuss: Talk about a situation in which a woman was attacked by a stranger. How do the men of her family react? Listen to the words used. Are they word pictures? What verbs or pictures are being used to describe the strong feelings of anger?

Hamor proposed intermarriage. Daughters of each side would be given to the men of the other side as brides. The daughters would have no choice in the matter. In this way, the families would be mingled and eventually Jacob's family would be absorbed into the Hivite culture.

The brothers speak **deceitfully** to Shechem when they demand that all the men be circumcised. Deceitful means that they spoke one way but meant something else. They seem to indicate to Shechem that he will be allowed to marry Dinah. The brothers do not intend to allow Shechem to marry Dinah. In order to get Shechem and Hamor to agree to the circumcision, the brothers say that they will be disgraced or shamed if Dinah marries an uncircumcised man. Dinah will be disgraced or shamed and so will all Dinah's family.

Jacob and his sons would have been **circumcised** as new born babies according to the instructions that God gave to Abraham when God made the covenant with Abraham. Circumcision is discussed in the Master Glossary. Here the brothers are demanding that Shechem and all the men of the city be circumcised.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 34:1-17

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (16793049 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
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- [FIA Step 4](#)
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Genesis 34:18-31

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 34:18–31 and put it in your heart.

This second part of the two part story also has details about sexual violence, which may be difficult to hear about if you or someone you know has experienced sexual violence or rape.

Before you have any group discussions about this passage, stop and decide as a group how you prefer to talk about it. In your culture, what is the best way to talk about these things? Would it be good to divide into groups of men and women for this conversation? Do you want to work in a different way than you do in other sections? Pause this audio here.

Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this story tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this story tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this story affect our daily life? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Remember that this part of the two part story also has details about sexual violence, which may be difficult to hear about if you or someone you know has experienced sexual violence or rape.

This passage continues the narrative account of an event with Dinah, who is the daughter of Jacob and Leah. Jacob is living on the piece of land near the town of Shechem which Jacob purchased from Hamor, the Hivite. Jacob and his sons are living on the piece of land that Jacob bought. This passage talks about Dinah's brothers. Some of her brothers are from Dinah's mother, Leah, and other brothers are from different mothers.

Show the map which has the town of Shechem marked on it.

Stop and discuss: Retell the events of the previous passage.

Stop and discuss: Tell about a family with multiple mothers but one father. What words do you use to describe all the siblings from one mother? What words do you use to describe the siblings from the other mothers?

In the previous passage, Shechem raped Dinah when she went out to visit some of the young women in the area. Jacob's sons who are Dinah's brothers were very angry. Shechem decided that he was in love with Dinah and wanted to marry Dinah. Shechem's father, Hamor, suggested that they intermarry between Jacob's family and the people of the town. The brothers demanded that every man in the town be circumcised in order to marry any one from Jacob's family. The brothers were being deceitful. The brothers did not intend to allow Dinah to marry Shechem.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about a woman who was attacked and raped. What happened to the person who did this to her? What was the response of the woman's family?

Shechem wanted to marry Dinah very badly. Shechem went back to the town and convinced all the men to agree to circumcision. Shechem spoke to the leaders at the town gate. The town gate is the place where business usually took place as well as any important discussions with leaders. Many cities had high walls built around them for protection during an attack. In the walls was a large gate where people entered the city. There was a sheltered place inside the gate, where leaders of the city sat and discussed important matters.

Show a picture of an ancient city gate.

Shechem told the men of the town that eventually everything that Jacob had would become theirs through the intermarriage with Jacob's family. Shechem didn't mention to the men that Shechem wanted to marry Dinah. Shechem didn't tell the men that circumcision of all the men was the price demanded so that Shechem could marry Dinah. Shechem made it seem that circumcision was the price for the men to intermarry with Jacob's family. In this way Shechem was also deceitful. All the adult men agreed with Shechem's suggestion and went through circumcision. They agreed because they were thinking of economic gain.

The worst pain would be at about 3 days after the circumcision. The men would be unable to fight. That's when two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, attacked and killed every man in the town. These two sons were the full brothers of Dinah—they were also sons of Leah. They also took Dinah from Shechem's house. Shechem had kept Dinah in his house since the time he raped her. Then the rest of Jacob's sons came and took all the flocks and herds. They took all the wealth and plunder they could find. Plunder is everything of value taken by soldiers when they win a battle. Here, the brothers have won the battle with the town so they take everything of value with them. They also took the wives and children as captives. Hamor and Shechem had planned to take Jacob's wealth. Now Jacob has all the wealth of the whole town.

When Jacob learned what had happened, Jacob was angry with Simeon and Levi. Jacob said, "Now I stink among all the people of the land." To stink or have a bad odor is a figure of speech that means that all the people will hate Jacob and try to remove him from the area. Jacob thought that all the people surrounding this area would seek revenge and crush or kill Jacob's family. Jacob seems more concerned with Jacob's reputation among others than with what happened to his daughter, Dinah.

Simeon and Levi replied, "Why should we let him treat our sister like a prostitute?"

A prostitute is a woman who gives sexual favors for money and usually has a bad reputation. This last question is a question that doesn't require an answer and can be stated in a positive way, like, "We couldn't let him treat our sister like a prostitute." Simeon and Levi said this in an angry way to Jacob. The words show anger and not politeness as a son would usually speak to a father.

Stop and discuss: When and why do people seek revenge? What kinds of things do they do to get revenge?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

First scene: Shechem presents the idea of circumcision and intermarriage to the town leaders at the town gate. Shechem talks only about the economic advantages for the men of Shechem.

Second scene: The men of Shechem are circumcised and on the third day when they were the sorest, Simeon and Levi attack and kill all the men.

Third scene: The other sons arrive and loot the town. They take all the women and children as captives.

Fourth scene: Jacob tells Simeon and Levi that they have ruined the family.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- Dinah
- Shechem
- Hamor
- Simeon
- Levi
- The rest of Jacob's sons
- The men of Shechem
- The women and children of Shechem

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Remember that this story is violent and may be difficult for people who have experienced sexual violence or rape. Remember also this story is the second one in a two-part story.

This story takes place at the town of Shechem. Shechem, the son of Hamor, is one of the main characters in the story. The name of the town and the name of the young man are the same. Most translations seem to avoid any confusion by referring to Shechem the town as "the town" without mentioning the name.

In the previous passage, Shechem raped Dinah. The word used is Shechem "defiled" Dinah. In that culture, this was a very shameful thing. Dinah's brothers were very angry.

First Jacob hears that Shechem had defiled his daughter. Jacob does nothing.

Then because Shechem had defiled their sister, Dinah, the brothers answered deceitfully.

Then because Dinah had been defiled, the brothers looted the town after killing all the men.

This passage continues the story of Dinah. Hamor and Shechem have been to talk with Jacob and Jacob's sons. The sons have appeared to accept the idea of marriage between the two groups. The sons have demanded that all the men be circumcised before any marriage can take place.

In scene 1, Shechem and Hamor agree to the proposal that all the men be circumcised. Shechem and Hamor go to the city gate to meet the leaders of the town. Shechem and Hamor present the idea of circumcision and intermarriage purely from economic terms. If the men will agree to circumcision, they will eventually have Jacob's wealth through the intermarriage. Jacob and his family will be absorbed into the local culture. Shechem does not mention that he wants to marry Dinah.

In scene 2, the leaders of the town agree with the proposal and every male in the town is circumcised. The third day after the circumcision is the day when the men were the most sore and probably had fever. On that day, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's full brothers, using swords attacked the city. They killed all the adult males in the

town. This is a violent scene. The men of the town would not have been able to defend themselves. The two brothers took Dinah who was being kept in Shechem's house and returned to Jacob.

In scene 3, after Simeon and Levi have killed all the men, the rest of Jacob's sons came to the town. The other sons see that all the men are dead. The sons looted the town. They took everything of value including all the animals in the fields and then took the women and children as captives. They did this because Dinah had been defiled in the town.

In scene 4, Jacob was angry with Simeon and Levi. Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have ruined me!" Jacob said that the sons had made Jacob be a bad odor or bad smell to those around them. This is a word picture that means that all the neighboring towns and people would hate Jacob. Jacob was afraid that their enemies would hear and attack Jacob and kill everyone. Jacob was afraid for his entire family. Simeon and Levi said that they would not allow their sister to be treated as a prostitute. When Simeon and Levi spoke, they answered Jacob in an impolite way.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- Dinah
- Shechem
- Hamor
- Simeon
- Levi
- The rest of Jacob's sons
- The men of Shechem
- The women and children of Shechem

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping.

Remember that this story includes many details about sexual violence. Please be sensitive as you choose members of your translation team to act out the different characters in this story. If you or someone you know has experienced sexual violence or rape, you may want to observe the team while they act out the passage instead of being one of the characters yourself.

The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Stop the action.

Ask the actor playing one of the roles, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like different responses.

Before beginning the action for this passage, briefly review what happened in the previous passage. The previous passage ends with the proposal that every man be circumcised so that intermarriage can happen. This passage starts with Shechem and Hamor agreeing to the idea of circumcision so that everyone can intermarry.

In scene 1, Shechem and Hamor go to the city gate and talk with the leaders of the town. They present the idea of intermarriage purely from economic terms. They promise the men that they will be able to obtain Jacob's wealth by intermarrying like this. They do not tell the city leaders that Shechem wants to marry Dinah.

Stop the action.

Ask Shechem, "Why don't you tell the men you want to marry Dinah and that circumcision is the price?" You may hear, "They will not agree if I tell them that. I have to convince them that this is good for their economy. I have to convince them that this is the way to get Jacob's wealth for us and get richer."

Ask Hamor, "Why are you supporting your son like this? You may hear, "My son has problems and faults but I love him. He wants to marry Dinah. I will do all I can to make sure he gets what he wants. I want to avoid more trouble."

In scene 2, the town leaders agree to the proposal and every man in the town is circumcised. Simeon and Levi who are Dinah's full brothers wait until the third day after the circumcision. This is when the circumcised men were at their most sore, or unable to function or fight. They probably had some fever. Simeon and Levi went with swords and attacked the men, killing every adult male in the town. This is a violent scene. They went to Shechem's house and took Dinah from the house and took her back to their camp.

Stop the action.

Ask Simeon and Levi, "How are you feeling now that you have had revenge?" You may hear, "It feels good. They defiled our sister. Those men of the town did nothing to stop Shechem or to help Dinah. They want to take our women for themselves. They deserved to die."

Ask Dinah, "How are you feeling now?" You may hear, "I am so glad that my brothers rescued me. I was afraid I would be there forever. I have felt so dirty. It will be a long time before I feel normal again. It's good to know my brothers love me and want me home."

In scene 3, the rest of Jacob's sons go to the town. The sons learn what Simeon and Levi have done. The sons discover that all the men of the town are dead. The other sons then take everything from the town. They take all the animals. They take everything of value from the houses. And then they take all the women and children as captives.

In scene 4, Jacob tells Simeon and Levi, "You have ruined me! I'm now like a bad odor to everyone in this area." Jacob was afraid that other people would join together to come and attack Jacob and his family. Jacob was afraid the whole family would be killed. The brothers answered by saying, "We couldn't let him treat our sister as a prostitute."

Stop the action.

Ask the brothers, "How are you feeling about your father right now?" You may hear, "I don't understand how he can be like this. We had to rescue and avenge our sister. It seems like he doesn't care about her."

Ask Jacob, "How are you feeling right now? You may hear, "I am really afraid for the lives of all my family. I know they mistreated and defiled Dinah but I have to think of the whole family."

Stop here and discuss as a group how this story makes you feel and think. Do you need some time to think or talk about this story with someone in your team or another person? What can you do to take care of yourself as you think about a story like this?

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jacob is living on a piece of property Jacob bought outside the town of Shechem. The son of Hamor the Hivite is named Shechem. The words are the same. In this passage most translations refer to Shechem as the town without using the name and then refer to the man by the name of Shechem. The Hivites are descendants of Canaan the son of Ham. Noah cursed Canaan, the son of Ham. The Hivites are one tribe descended from Canaan who live in the area around Shechem. See the map with Shechem marked.

Dinah was **defiled**. To defile something is to make it unclean or unacceptable to God. Dinah was now considered ritually unclean or socially unacceptable. Dinah is impure. You can say Dinah has been disgraced or dishonored. Use the same expressions to describe how Dinah was defiled that you used in the previous passage.

Hamor and Shechem meet the men of the city at the **city gate**. All the men who went out of the city gate is a figure of speech that means all the adult men. The city gate in ancient times was where men met to discuss important business.

See the picture of the city gate.

Use the same words for **circumcision** that you used in the previous passage.

Leah is Dinah's mother. Leah is also the mother of Simeon and Levi. Simeon and Levi are full brothers of Dinah. Dinah has 6 full brothers who are sons of Leah. Dinah has 5 half brothers or brothers with different mothers but the same father.

Simeon and Levi used **swords**. The sword had a point and was most likely 2 edged or had a sharp edge on each side. It was worn in a sheath or casing that hung from the waist. Jacob's sons **looted** the town. This means that they took anything and everything of any value. Another word is **plunder**. To plunder something is to take anything of value. Plunder usually refers to taking things of value during a war situation. Both plunder and loot are violent actions.

Jacob said that Simeon and Levi had caused Jacob to be a **noxious odor** among the people in the area. Another word is **stink**. Jacob said, "You have made me stink." To smell bad, have a noxious odor or stink are all word pictures. Jacob is saying that now he has a bad reputation among the people.

Stop and discuss: Tell a short story where someone acts in a deceitful way to others. How are you describing this person in your story? Do you use word pictures, or do you say bad reputation?

The brothers reply to Jacob by asking a question that doesn't require an answer. This type of question can be expressed in a positive way. They said that Shechem was treating Dinah like a **prostitute**. A prostitute is a woman who receives money for sexual acts. A prostitute usually has a bad reputation in her culture.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 34:18–31

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (8612932 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (6758827 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Genesis 35:1–15

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 35:1–15 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

As this passage starts, Jacob and his family are still living in Shechem. Jacob's household is much bigger now because all the women and children that were captured from the town are living with Jacob. This is a narrative account of how God moves Jacob from Shechem to Bethel, the place where Jacob stopped on Jacob's journey

towards Harran. Many years before, Jacob went to Harran to stay with his mother Rebekah's brother. On the way, Jacob stopped at Bethel. Bethel is the place Jacob had the dream of the staircase that reached to heaven and God reconfirmed the covenant God had made with Abraham and Isaac. Bethel is where God told Jacob that the land would belong to Jacob and Jacob's descendants. God told Jacob that all the families on earth would be blessed through the descendants of Jacob.

Now, God speaks to Jacob and tells Jacob to go up to Bethel. Bethel is about 30 kilometers, or 20 miles, south of Shechem but is about 300 meters, or 1000 feet, higher elevation. The command "go up" can also refer to going on a pilgrimage to a holy place or a place of worship even if that place isn't at a higher elevation. A pilgrimage is a special trip to a place of worship.

Show the map that has Shechem and Bethel marked.

God tells Jacob to move to Bethel and settle there. That means that God wants Jacob to remain at Bethel for some time. God tells Jacob to build an altar to God at Bethel. God tells Jacob that God is the same God who appeared to Jacob when Jacob stopped at Bethel on the way to Harran.

Show a picture of an altar.

Before leaving Shechem, Jacob told everyone in his household to get rid of all the pagan idols they got from other places. Household means any person living with Jacob, which would include family and servants. All the women and children of Shechem who worshiped idols were now living with Jacob as captives. Previous passages told us that Jacob left Harran with many servants. Even Rachel had brought the family idols with her. Everyone brought their idols and their earrings to Jacob and Jacob buried them under a tree. We don't know exactly what kind of tree this was. Some translations say an oak tree. We don't know why Jacob took their earrings. Some think that these earrings were not jewelry but amulets or magic charms.

Show a picture of small household gods—small objects that might represent people or ancestors.

Jacob told all the people in the household to purify themselves. Purification usually involved taking a bath or washing and changing clothes to remove anything impure. Jacob's household did this before leaving Shechem. It means that they didn't arrive at Bethel with clean clothes but left to go on this journey having bathed and putting on clean clothes before starting. By purifying and by getting rid of the foreign gods, the people were preparing to worship God. These other objects would have interfered in their worship of God.

Stop and discuss: Describe what people in your culture do to prepare for worship.

As Jacob and his household including all his animals traveled to Bethel, a terror from God spread over the people in the surrounding towns. This is a word picture that means that God caused the people to be very frightened when Jacob came near. No one attacked Jacob or any of his possessions. Jacob was able to move to Bethel in peace. Jacob had been afraid that the local people would attack Jacob and his family after Simeon and Levi killed all the men of Shechem. God shows Jacob that God will protect Jacob's household.

Jacob arrived at Luz which is the old name of the town Bethel. When Jacob arrived at Bethel, Jacob built an altar and named it El-Bethel, which means God of Bethel. Bethel means house of God. So, the new name means God of the House of God. Jacob remembered that God had appeared to Jacob at this place when Jacob was fleeing Esau and going to Harran.

Soon after this Rebekah's nurse Deborah died. When Rebekah left Harran to marry Isaac, Rebekah took her nurse or the woman who had cared for Rebekah as a child with her. She was not named in that passage. In this passage, we learn that her name is Deborah. Deborah was buried under an oak tree in the valley near Bethel. The tree was named the oak of weeping. The passage doesn't tell us anything about Rebekah, Jacob's mother.

The passage refers to Paddan-aram, the name of the area around Harran. When Jacob reaches Bethel, Jacob has arrived from Paddan-aram. This journey from the time Jacob left Paddan-aram and his Uncle Laban, has taken many years. Finally, Jacob's long journey is over. God appeared to Jacob again at Bethel and blessed Jacob. God's speech is a form of poetry. You can express it as poetry or keep it narrative. God renamed Jacob. God said, "Your name is Jacob but you won't be called Jacob anymore. From now on, your name will be Israel." This is the same name that the man who wrestled with Jacob at Peniel gave Jacob. When God changed someone's name, it usually meant that something important had happened. Jacob's name means deceiver. God is saying that Jacob is no

longer a deceiver. The new name means that there is a change in the person's character or destiny. Israel will also be the name of the people and nation descended from Jacob.

Show the map of Jacob's long journey, over several years, from Paddan-aram to Bethel.

Then God said, "I am El-Shaddai, God Almighty." This is another name for God. *El* is the name for God. *Shaddai* is a word that means all powerful. Putting the two words together gives the meaning of God Almighty. God used this name when giving a promise of blessing to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

God told Jacob to be fruitful and multiply. This is a poetic expression that God has used since talking with Adam and Eve. Here this statement is a blessing, not a command. Jacob already has many children. Jacob's children will have many more children. Then God continues the blessing for Jacob. God tells Jacob that Jacob's descendants will become a great nation. There will even be kings among the descendants. God also told Jacob that the land God gave to Abraham and Isaac now belongs to Jacob. Then God left that place.

Jacob set up a stone pillar to mark the place where God had spoken to Jacob. Jacob also set up a stone pillar and poured olive oil over it the first time God spoke to Jacob many years before. This time, Jacob poured wine over the pillar as an offering to God. Then Jacob used olive oil to anoint the pillar. Anointing, or pouring olive oil over the pillar was to show that something was holy or set apart for God. Jacob named this place Bethel which means house of God. Jacob used this name because God spoke to Jacob in this place.

Stop and discuss: How does your culture remember a special place?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 6 scenes.

First scene: God tells Jacob to leave Shechem and go to Bethel.

Second scene: Jacob tells everyone in Jacob's household to purify themselves before going to Bethel. Jacob also demands that they turn over all foreign gods and earrings.

Third scene: Jacob and his family arrive in Bethel. Jacob builds an altar.

Fourth scene: Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, dies.

Fifth scene: God appears to Jacob, blesses Jacob and renames Jacob. Jacob's new name is Israel.

Sixth scene: Jacob sets up and anoints a stone pillar.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- God
- Jacob's household
- The people in neighboring towns
- Deborah, Rebekah's nurse

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In scene 1, Jacob is still living in Shechem. God tells Jacob to leave there and go to Bethel and settle there. God tells Jacob to build an altar to God there. This altar is for worshiping God. God identifies Himself to Jacob as the God who appeared to Jacob when Jacob ran away from Esau.

In scene 2, Jacob tells everyone in his household to prepare for this move to Bethel. This will be like a pilgrimage or a special trip to a holy place. The people in Jacob's household include family members, servants and all the women and children taken from Shechem. Jacob explains that they are going to the place where Jacob encountered God before going to Harran. Jacob tells them that God has been with Jacob wherever Jacob has gone. The people are to get rid of all symbols of pagan worship—idols, foreign gods, anything that takes them away from the worship of God. They are to purify themselves, which means that they are to wash or take a bath. This would symbolically make them pure or untouched by anything that isn't holy because the bath removes all that is dirty. They are to put on clean clothes. They are to do this before leaving Shechem, which means they won't be physically clean when they arrive at Bethel. What they are doing is washing off or getting rid of anything that takes them away from the worship of God. By doing this before the departure, the whole journey of 30 kilometers is like a pilgrimage or a trip to a holy place. The people gave Jacob their idols and their earrings. These earrings were probably special amulets or things used in pagan worship. Jacob buried these objects under a large tree. As they begin the journey, the towns around are afraid and do nothing to stop Jacob leaving with his huge household and many animals.

In scene 3, after several days of travel, Jacob and his household arrive in Bethel. Jacob built an altar there to remember that God had appeared to Jacob when Jacob was running away from Esau a long time ago.

Scene 4 is extra information. We don't know when this happens, but the author thinks it is important information for us to know. In scene 4, Deborah dies. Deborah is the woman who took care of Rebekah, Jacob's mother, when Rebekah was a child. Deborah came with Rebekah when Rebekah came to marry Isaac. Someone from Jacob's household buried Deborah under a large tree outside Bethel.

In scene 5, the passage says that Jacob has returned from Paddan-aram. Paddan-aram is the name of the country around Harran. This is where Jacob went and lived for 20 years with his Uncle Laban. Jacob married his wives there and had his children there. Jacob has been on a journey home for many years. When Jacob arrives at Bethel, Jacob is back to the place where Jacob encountered God as Jacob started on this trip more than 20 years ago. The passage is saying that Jacob's trip is finished. Jacob has returned home. God appears to Jacob at Bethel. God blessed Jacob. God speaks in short sentences that are poetic. God changes Jacob's name to Israel. God uses an expression that God used with Adam and Eve and with Noah. God said, "Be fruitful and multiply." This is a word picture in which God tells Jacob to have many children who will have many children. It sounds like a command but is a blessing. God promises that Jacob's descendants will become a great nation and even have kings among their descendants. Other nations will also form. God promises that the land God gave to Abraham and Isaac now will belong to Jacob and Jacob's descendants. After speaking to Jacob, God went up from that place. This means that God left Jacob, but the passage doesn't tell us how God left.

In scene 6, Jacob sets up a stone pillar to mark this place. Jacob wanted to remember exactly where God had spoken to Jacob. Jacob poured wine over the pillar as an offering to God. Then Jacob poured olive oil over the pillar as a way of anointing the pillar or setting the pillar aside as holy and dedicated to God. Jacob names the place Bethel. This is the second time Jacob has named this place Bethel. Bethel means House of God. The text repeats 3 times that God spoke to Jacob at Bethel. This repeating of what happened is a way to emphasize how important the event was to Jacob.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 6 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- God
- Jacob's household
- The people in neighboring towns
- Deborah, Rebekah's nurse

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing one of the roles, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like different responses. Restart the action.

In scene 1, God tells Jacob to move to Bethel and build an altar to the God who appeared to Jacob when Jacob fled from Esau.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How do you feel about going back to Bethel?" You may hear, "I'm excited to be going to Bethel. I remember meeting God there many years ago on my way to Harran. It will be good to worship God there again."

In scene 2, Jacob tells everyone in his household to prepare. This means they are to get rid of all idols or foreign gods. They are to purify themselves by washing or taking a bath. They are to put on clean clothes. Jacob tells them that they are going to Bethel so Jacob can build an altar to God. Jacob says God is the one who answered Jacob's prayers when Jacob was in distress. God has been with Jacob everywhere Jacob has gone.

Stop the action: Ask the people how they feel about getting rid of their idols. You may hear, "I don't understand why I can't take my god with me." Or, "Jacob's God is powerful. I think we should worship Jacob's God." Or, "I'm frightened. I always have my household gods with me." Restart the action.

The people gave Jacob all their idols and their earrings. Jacob buried these objects under a tree. Then they all left for Bethel. God caused the people in the surrounding towns to be afraid of Jacob. No one attacked Jacob and his family as they traveled to Bethel.

In scene 3, Jacob and his household arrive in Luz, the town next to Bethel. Jacob builds an altar and named the place El-Bethel which means God, the house of God. This place was where God appeared to Jacob as Jacob fled from Esau.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I'm excited to be here again. God spoke to me here and promised me many things. It's good to remember those promises." Ask Jacob's children, "How do you feel about being at this place?" You may hear, "I'm glad to see this place. Father told us how God appeared to him here." Restart the action.

Scene 4, Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, the woman who looked after Rebekah as a child died and was buried near Bethel. Deborah traveled with Rebekah when Rebekah came to marry Isaac.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How do you feel about Deborah's death?" You may hear, "I'm sad. Deborah was always with my mother. She took good care of Esau and me. She was loved by all the family. We will miss her." Restart the action.

In scene 5, God speaks to Jacob. God blessed Jacob. God said to Jacob, "Your name is no longer Jacob. Your name is Israel."

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How does it feel to hear God tell you your name is now Israel? You will no longer be called Jacob which means deceiver." You may hear, "I am so honored that God would speak to me. I know that the man I wrestled with all night at Peniel told me my name was changed to Israel. But God saying it like this makes it real. I'm glad I won't be known as the deceiver any more." Restart the action.

God said, "I am El-Shaddai—God Almighty." Then God told Jacob to have children who would have children. God said, "Your descendants will become a great nation with kings among your descendants. I will give you this land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac. This land is for you and for your descendants." Then God left that place.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "God is an awesome God! God has told me again what God told me before. This land is for me and my descendants. I can hardly take it all in. I feel so humbled by this." Restart the action.

In scene 6, Jacob sets up a stone pillar as a memorial or to remind Jacob what took place there. Jacob poured wine over the pillar as an offering. Jacob poured olive oil over the pillar to anoint the pillar. This means that Jacob was setting this pillar apart and declaring it to be for God. Jacob again named the place Bethel which means House of God.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "Why did you set up a pillar and anoint it?" You may hear, "I want to remember what God said here. I want my children to remember and my grandchildren. This land is for all of them. They will be a great nation. I want them to remember what God promised here." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

God told Jacob to go up to Bethel and build an **altar** there. Altar is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for Bethel that you used in previous passages. Use the same word for altar that you used in previous passages. The expression *go up* in this case could mean that Bethel is a higher elevation than Shechem. It could also be the expression used when going to a place of worship. People would say *go up* to a place even if the place was not higher in elevation.

Stop and discuss: Talk about going to a particular place for worship or a celebration. How do you describe the process of going?

Jacob told everyone in his household to prepare. **Household** refers to every person who lives with Jacob. This includes Jacob's wives and children. It also includes Jacob's servants and all the women and children taken as captives from Shechem. Household is discussed in the Master Glossary.

Jacob told them to get rid of all their pagan **idols** and purify themselves and put on clean clothing. Pagan idols would be anything man made but used as an object of worship. This would include the family household gods that Rachel took from Laban. Idols are discussed in the Master Glossary. To **purify** themselves means to go through a ritual bath or washing that would be a symbol of removing anything that makes them unclean or unfit to worship God. They were to put on clean clothing for the same reason—a ritual preparation for worshipping God. Purify is in the Master Glossary. By preparing before departing, the whole trip was a pilgrimage or part of the worship experience.

The people gave Jacob their idols and their earrings. The earrings were probably amulets or objects used in the worship of the idols or used as protection from evil. These took away from the worship of God. They had to get rid of everything like this.

God **blessed** Jacob. Use the same word for blessing you have used in previous passages. Blessing is discussed in the Master Glossary.

God said, "I am **El-Shaddai**." El-Shaddai is another name for God. *El* means God. *Shaddai* means all powerful or almighty. God used this name on several other occasions. El-Shaddai is in the Master Glossary.

Jacob set up a stone pillar. This is usually a memorial pillar or something that reminds all who see it that something important happened there. Jacob poured wine over the pillar. This wine was an offering or gift to

God. Then Jacob **anointed** the pillar by pouring olive oil over it. Anoint is in the Master Glossary. To anoint the pillar means setting the pillar aside as a holy place. Jacob used both the wine and the oil to dedicate the stone. This set the stone apart as a place to worship God.

Jacob again gave the place the same name Jacob had used before: Bethel or House of God.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 35:1-15

Audio Content

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Genesis 35:16-20

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 35:16–20 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

After Jacob's encounter with God at Bethel, Jacob left Bethel and headed south towards Ephrath. This was a journey of about 17 miles or 27 kilometers. It is a mountainous area. Bethel is at the top of a mountain and Ephrath is at the top of a mountain. Ephrath is the ancient name of Bethlehem. Thus the journey while not long would be difficult especially for someone very young or someone pregnant. This is a narrative account of this journey.

We don't know how long Jacob remained at Bethel. However, when Jacob and his family left Bethel, Jacob's wife Rachel was pregnant and it was nearly time for her to have the child. As they traveled towards Ephrath which is south of Bethel, Rachel started into labor.

Show a map which has Bethel and Ephrath marked. Ephrath is the ancient name of Bethlehem.

Stop and discuss: Tell stories of women going through labor and delivery of a child in your culture. Notice the words and phrases you use to describe this process. Who helps the mother? You are looking for the terms you would use to talk about this with anyone.

The passage says that Rachel's labor was difficult. The descriptions vary. Some say she had hard labor. Others say the pain was intense. Others say she had a difficult or rough time. Regardless, this labor seems to have been very difficult or not normal. Rachel had a son. The midwife told Rachel that she had a son. The midwife is the person who helps the mother who is in labor to have the child. The midwife attends the mother during the child birthing process. The labor had been so difficult that after the birth, Rachel was about to die.

Stop and discuss: Talk about someone who is dying. Notice how you describe what is happening to the person.

After the baby was born, Rachel was about to die. Some translations say her soul was departing. Others say she was breathing her last or taking her last breath. Others say she was about to die. Rachel used her last breath to name her son. She called her son Ben-oni which means son of my sorrow. After naming her son, Rachel died.

Stop and discuss: talk about a woman who dies in childbirth. What happens to the child? Who names the child?

Jacob changed the boy's name to Benjamin which means son of my right hand. In this ancient culture the right hand was the good hand or favored hand. The right hand was also a place of protection. By naming him Benjamin, Jacob is bringing up images of fortune, goodness and strength. This is the only son of the 12 that Jacob named. The mothers named all the other sons.

Rachel died before they arrived at Ephrath. Jacob buried Rachel on the way to Ephrath, the present-day town of Bethlehem. Jacob set up a stone monument over the tomb. The purpose of this stone marker is to remember where the tomb or burial site of Rachel is located. It is not a place of worship as the stone pillar Jacob set up at Bethel was. This stone marker can be seen today. This means that when this passage was written down, the marker could still be seen.

Show a picture of a stone pillar that would be used to mark an important place.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Jacob and his household are traveling from Bethel towards Ephrath. Rachel has a son and dies.

Second scene: Jacob names the son.

Third scene: Jacob buried Rachel and set up a stone pillar over the grave.

The characters in this story include:

- Rachel
- Midwife
- Jacob
- Benjamin

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In scene 1, Jacob and his household depart Bethel and head south over the mountains towards Ephrath. Ephrath is a town that is also in the mountains. Ephrath is the ancient name of Bethlehem. The distance between Bethel and Ephrath is about 27 kilometers.

Rachel, Jacob's most loved wife, goes into labor while on this trip. Rachel's labor is unusually hard. Finally, after a very difficult labor, Rachel has a son. The midwife tries to encourage Rachel by announcing that a son has been born. But Rachel is dying. With her last breath, Rachel names her son Ben-oni which means son of my sorrow.

Stop and discuss: talk about the way you will describe the birthing process so that this passage will be acceptable in your culture. Work out the best way to describe the labor. Then work out the best way to say that Rachel named her son just as she died.

In scene 2, Jacob changes the name of the baby boy. Jacob names him Benjamin which means son of my right hand.

In scene 3, Jacob buries Rachel near the road on the way to Ephrath (which is also named Bethlehem). This means that all these events happened while they were still on the way, before they arrived at the town. Jacob put up a stone pillar to mark Rachel's grave. This pillar was not intended to be a place of worship. Rather, the pillar was to mark the site of Rachel's grave.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Rachel
- Midwife
- Jacob
- Benjamin

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points and stop the action.

In scene 1, Jacob and his household are traveling from Bethel to Ephrath. The route is over the mountains making it a difficult walk for the young or aged or those who might be pregnant. The journey is about 27 kilometers.

On the way to Ephrath, Rachel goes into labor. Rachel's labor is very difficult—it seems like it was unusually difficult. One translation says the pain was intense. Others use words like difficult or rough or severe. The delivery of the baby was hard. Rachel had a boy. The midwife tried to encourage Rachel by telling Rachel that the baby is a boy.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "Why did you start on this trip with it nearly time for Rachel to have her baby?" You may hear, "This is women's business. I don't know anything about it." Or, "I didn't know it was so close to time for her." Or, "The women usually have the babies without difficulty. I had no idea this would happen." Ask Rachel, "How are you feeling?" You might hear, "I'm so tired. I'm happy I could give Jacob another son but I'm so tired. This was really hard." Ask the midwife, "How are you feeling right now?" You might hear, "I'm afraid for Rachel. This was a hard labor and a difficult birth. She is in danger here." Restart the action.

After the birth, Rachel is dying. She names her son with her last breath. Rachel names her son Ben-oni which means son of my sorrow. After naming the baby, Rachel dies.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I'm so sad. I loved Rachel so much. I wanted to marry Rachel from the first time I saw her. Rachel is so beautiful. I can't believe I have lost Rachel." Restart the action.

In scene 2, Jacob renames the baby. Jacob names the baby Benjamin which means son of my right hand.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "Why did you rename the baby?" You may hear, "This is my youngest son. I want him to have a good name. I loved Rachel but I don't want this baby's name to be a name of sorrow." Restart the action.

In scene 3 Jacob buries Rachel near the road. This is the road between Bethel and Ephrath or Bethlehem. After the burial, Jacob set up a stone pillar over the grave. This pillar remained over the grave as a marker to tell anyone who passed that someone was buried there. When the narrator wrote this story down, the pillar was still standing.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "Why did you put a stone pillar there? What is its purpose?" You may hear, "I want to remember where her grave is. I want her sons to know where she is buried. I loved Rachel. I don't want anyone to forget. This stone pillar is a mark of where the grave is. We will remember but this isn't a place of worship." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Ephrath is the ancient name for **Bethlehem**. Ephrath will be used in the future as the name for the tribe of people who live in Bethlehem.

While on the trip, Rachel went into **labor** and had a baby. Labor is the word used to describe the work that a mother does to expel the baby from her body. A **midwife** is the woman who supports and helps the mother through the birthing process. You may have figures of speech that you normally use to describe the process of labor and birth as well as the role of the midwife.

Rachel's labor was difficult. The birth of the baby was difficult. As a result, Rachel was dying. There are different ways to express her dying moment. One translation says, "as her soul was leaving her body." Another translation says, "with her last breath" or "as she took her last breath." At the point of death, Rachel named her baby. Rachel named the baby Ben-oni which means son of my sorrow. After Rachel died, Jacob gave the baby a different name. Jacob named the baby Benjamin which means son of my right hand.

Jacob buried Rachel beside the road before they got to Ephrath or Bethlehem. It was the custom to bury the dead person immediately after death. Jacob set up a stone pillar over the grave as a marker. This stone pillar would be similar to the pillar Jacob set up at Bethel. The pillar at Bethel was for worship. Here, the pillar is to mark Rachel's grave so that it could be found in the future. This pillar was not for worship.

The stone pillar can be seen to this day. This means that at the time the narrator wrote this story down, the stone pillar could still be seen. This is not talking about today.

Show a map which has Bethel and Ephrath marked. The map should show that this is a mountainous area. Ephrath is the ancient name of Bethlehem.

Show a picture of a stone pillar that would be used to mark an important place.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 35:16–20

Audio Content

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Genesis 35:21–29

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 35:21–29 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?

3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

After Rachel died, Jacob continued to travel south across the mountains. This is a narrative account of Jacob's return to Isaac.

Jacob who is now called Israel moved on. Some translations just use the name Israel. Others use Jacob who is now called Israel. God changed Jacob's name to Israel in a previous passage. This passage switches between Israel and Jacob for names for Jacob.

Israel stopped to camp just beyond a place called Migdal-eder. No one knows the exact location of this place but it is between Bethlehem and Hebron.

Show the map with Bethlehem and Hebron marked.

Migdal-eder means Tower of the Flock. This would be a watch tower built so that the shepherd could climb up to look out over the land to make sure that no person and no wild animal was coming to harm the flocks of sheep.

Show a picture of a watch tower.

Israel and his household remained at this camp for some time. While there, Ruben who is the oldest son went to Rachel's servant Bilhah and had sexual relations with her. Bilhah is the mother of 2 of Ruben's half-brothers. Bilhah was one of the servant-wives of Jacob. There is no indication that this was rape or a violent act. In many cultures when the oldest son goes to sleep with a wife of his father, the son is making a declaration that the son wants to take over leadership of the family from the father. Jacob heard about what Ruben had done. Jacob does not do anything against Ruben or Bilhah.

Stop and discuss: Talk about a similar situation in your culture. Why would an older son try to have sexual relations with another wife of the son's father? What would happen to that son? How would the father feel about what his son had done?

The passage lists all 12 of Jacob's sons with their mothers. The passage does not mention Dinah who was Leah's daughter. The passage says that all these sons were born to Jacob in Paddan-aram, the area around Harran. From the previous passage, we know that Benjamin was born near Bethlehem. The narrator of the story includes Benjamin in the list as being born in Paddan-aram. The narrator of the story is providing the list of the names of the sons and their mothers. The narrator doesn't present them in birth order. Instead, the narrator presents them according to their mothers, starting with Leah, Jacob's first wife.

Show the map of Jacob's journey with Paddan-aram marked on the map.

Leah's sons are Ruben, the oldest son of Jacob, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun.

Rachel's sons are Joseph and Benjamin.

Bilhah, Rachel's servant, has 2 sons, Dan and Naphtali.

Zilpah, Leah's servant has 2 sons, Gad and Asher.

Jacob moves his household further south and comes to Hebron. Hebron is 24 kilometers south of Bethlehem.

Show the map with Bethlehem and Hebron marked.

At some point, Isaac has moved from Beersheba to Hebron. Hebron is where Abraham bought a field and used a cave that was in the field to bury Sarah. Hebron has 2 other names. Hebron can be called Mamre or Kiriath-arba. All three names refer to the same place. Abraham and Isaac have both lived at Hebron as strangers or foreigners. This means that they did not become part of the local culture. When Jacob arrived at Hebron, Jacob saw his father Isaac again. Jacob has returned home. The story doesn't tell us how old Isaac is when Jacob gets to Hebron.

Isaac lived to be 180 years old. Isaac was 100 years old when Esau married the Hittite women. Isaac thought he was old and might die at any time when Isaac gave the blessing to Jacob. Isaac has lived a much longer time.

The passage uses poetic word pictures to describe Isaac's death. Some translations say that Isaac breathed his last. Other translations say that Isaac died. Other translations put both phrases together and say Isaac breathed his last and died. Isaac joined his ancestors in death or Isaac was gathered to his people. Isaac was old and full of days or Isaac was of ripe age. These word pictures all mean that Isaac was an old man and Isaac died. The use of word pictures helps the listener to understand that Isaac had lived a very long time.

Stop and discuss: Tell the story of a very old person who dies. How do you describe his life and his death? What words or phrases are you using to describe this?

When Isaac died, Esau came and Jacob and Esau together buried their father. This is similar to when Abraham died and Isaac and Ishmael came together to bury Abraham.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Jacob moves to Migdal-eder. Ruben sleeps with Bilhah

Second scene: Jacob's wives are listed by name with the sons of each mother.

Third scene: Jacob moves to Hebron and meets Isaac again. Isaac dies at the age of 180. Jacob and Esau come together to bury Isaac.

The characters in this story include:

- Israel or Jacob
- Ruben
- Bilhah
- Isaac
- Leah and her sons: Ruben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun
- Rachel and her sons: Joseph and Benjamin
- Bilhah and her sons: Dan and Naphtali
- Zilpah and her sons: Gad and Asher
- Esau

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In scene 1, Israel moves his household further south and stops to make camp just beyond Migdal-eder. This refers to the direction they are traveling. Jacob left Ephrath or Bethlehem and headed south towards Hebron passing Migdal-eder. Then just after passing this tower, Jacob stopped to make camp. Jacob remained living at this place for some time. The tower was a known landmark when Jacob went past it. We do not know where this tower was located.

While living at the camp near Migdal-eder, Ruben, who is Jacob's first born son, slept with Bilhah, who was Rachel's servant and Jacob's wife. Bilhah was the mother of 2 of Jacob's sons. These sons are half-brothers to Ruben. The words used don't indicate any force or violence. Jacob learned what Ruben had done but Jacob did not punish Ruben or Bilhah.

In scene 2, Jacob's wives and 12 sons are listed. In this scene, you may want to use some objects to represent each son so that you can see which son belongs to which mother.

Leah's sons were Ruben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun.

Rachel's sons were Joseph and Benjamin.

Bilhah, Rachel's servant, has 2 sons: Dan and Naphtali.

Zilpah, Leah's servant has 2 sons: Gad and Asher.

The sons are not listed in birth order.

In scene 3, Jacob moves his household to Hebron. Other names for Hebron are Mamre and Kiriath-arba. When Jacob gets to Hebron, Jacob is reunited with Isaac. Isaac is now very old. At the age of 180, Isaac died.

Practice using word pictures to describe the following: Isaac breathed his last. Isaac died at a ripe old age. Isaac was full of years. Isaac joined his ancestors in death. Isaac was gathered to his people. Isaac was old and full of days.

Tell your culture story about an old man who died.

Decide which of these word pictures to use with your language to help people understand that Isaac died.

Esau came to Hebron and Jacob and Esau together buried Jacob.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Israel or Jacob
- Ruben
- Bilhah
- Isaac
- Leah and her sons: Ruben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun
- Rachel and her sons: Joseph and Benjamin
- Bilhah and her sons: Dan and Naphtali
- Zilpah and her sons: Gad and Asher
- Esau

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points and stop the action.

In scene 1, Israel moves his family south and stops to make camp just after passing a tower named Midgal-eder. They remain at this camp for a while. Then Ruben who is Jacob's oldest son sleeps with Bilhah, one of Jacob's servant wives. Jacob learns about this sometime later.

Stop the action: Ask Ruben, "Why have you done such a thing?" You may hear, "My father is getting old and unable to direct the family. He did nothing about Dinah when she was attacked. We need younger leadership. It's time for me to take over as head of the family. Father should give me the leadership. This is my way of taking over." Ask Bilhah, "How do you feel about sleeping with Ruben?" You may hear, "I don't think I had a choice. I know I shouldn't have done this but how can I refuse Ruben. He is Jacob's oldest son. I'm just a concubine." Ask Jacob, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I am angry and disappointed. Ruben shouldn't have done this. I don't blame Bilhah. Ruben is wrong. But I will wait until later to punish Ruben. I don't want to upset the whole family now." Restart the action.

In scene 2, Jacob's 12 sons are listed with their mothers. The list doesn't keep the birth order correct.

- Leah's sons: Ruben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulon
- Rachel's sons: Joseph, Benjamin
- Bilhah's sons: Dan, Naphtali
- Zilpah's sons, Gad, Asher

In scene 3, Jacob arrives in Hebron. Isaac has moved to Hebron. Jacob and Isaac are reunited.

Then Isaac breathes his last breath and having lived to a very old age, is gathered to be with his ancestors. Isaac died.

Esau comes to Hebron and Jacob and Esau bury their father Isaac.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I'm sad. I missed many years with my father. My father was a good man. I will miss him very much. My father taught me about God and I'm so glad. I wish that I had more time with him." Ask Esau, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I'm sad. I will miss my father. I have lived away from him for many years but I always knew he was here. Now that he

has died, it leaves a hole in my heart. I'm glad Jacob and I could be together for his burial. We can mourn together." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Israel and **Jacob** are both used in this passage. Make sure that your listeners know that Israel and Jacob are the same person.

Jacob camped beyond **Migdal-eder**. This was a watch tower. The name means *Watch Tower of the Flock*. Some translations use the full name of Migdal-eder. Other translations call it the Tower of Eder. You may choose which way you want to translate this.

Ruben had sexual relations with Bilhah who was Jacob's **concubine**. A concubine is a secondary wife. The concubine was married but not of the same standing as a wife. Bilhah was Rachel's maid servant and Rachel gave Bilhah to Jacob as a wife but she was a concubine. Some cultures would say that Ruben slept with Bilhah. Others might say that Ruben lay with Bilhah. Ruben had sexual relations with Bilhah. Choose your words or expressions for this sexual act so that it is appropriate for everyone in your culture to hear.

Isaac was 180 years old when Isaac died. The passage uses poetic word pictures to describe Isaac's death. What word pictures do you have in your language that you would use to describe someone who has lived a long life?

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 35:21-29

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (12917341 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 36:1-19

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 36:1-19 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This passage tells us about the generations of Esau. As in previous passages, the word generations refers to Esau's descendants. This account of Esau's descendants occurs right after the death of Isaac. Just like the account of Ishmael's descendants occurs right after the death of his father Abraham, this account of Esau's descendants occurs right after the death of his father Isaac.

When Rebekah was pregnant with twins, Esau and Jacob, God told Rebekah that each son would become a nation. God's promise to Abraham has transferred to Jacob and Jacob's descendants. However, God is also

making a great nation of Esau's descendants as God promised Rebekah, Esau's mother. This passage lists the names of Esau's descendants who became clan leaders.

Esau was given the name of Edom as a second name. Edom means red. There are two reasons why Esau might also be named Edom. At birth, Esau was very red. Also, Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of red stew. Edom is also the name of a region that has a lot of red stone. Esau's descendants will be called Edomites.

Show a map that has the southern part of Israel including the area of the Sinai and Jordan. Edom and Seir, Amalekites and Beersheba should be marked on the map.

Esau married two Canaanite wives. Rebekah and Isaac hated Esau's wives. Then Esau married a daughter of Ishmael, the first son of Abraham. The names of Esau's wives are different in this passage from the previous passage where they are mentioned. We do not know why the names are different. While Esau was still living in Beersheba, his wives began to have children. Each wife has her sons listed. The sons were all born before Esau moved his family away from Beersheba. At some point, Esau took his wives and children along with all his livestock or flocks and herds and moved to Seir. The passage says Esau moved because the land would not support all of Esau's animals and all of Jacob's animals. In a previous passage, Esau moved to Seir while Jacob was in Harran. We don't know exactly when Esau moved to Seir.

Refer to the map. Esau was living in Beersheba with Isaac. Esau moved to Seir.

The passage again uses the phrase, "These are the generations of Esau." Some translations say these are the descendants of Esau. One translation says that this is Esau's family line.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about the ancestors or origins of your family. Notice what words you use to describe the relationship to the first person you can remember.

Each wife has her sons listed. Two of the wives have their grandsons listed. According to the passage each son and each grandson became a clan leader. A clan is a division within a tribe. The clan would have several families with a common ancestor. The members of a clan would follow the same chief or leader.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about your tribal origins. How important are the names of your ancestors in this story? How many generations of ancestors can you name? What is the role of your ancestors in your culture today?

Esau's son Eliphaz took a concubine whose name was Timna. A concubine is lower in status or less important than a wife. Timna had a son named Amalek. Amalek's descendants formed a large clan that fought against the descendants of Jacob for generations. Amalek's name will be used in many other passages.

Show the map with the territory of the Amaleks marked.

All of Esau's sons and grandsons formed clans but were part of the same tribe. They all lived in the land called Edom. Edom is the territory just north of Seir. They became known as Edomites. Amalek is the only descendant with a specific territory with the name Amalek.

Refer to the map with Seir, Edom and Amalek marked.

Some translations refer to each descendant as a chief. The chief would be a clan leader. Some translations say that these are the sons of Esau. They were not all Esau's sons. Some were grandsons. Here the word son would mean descendant of someone.

Stop and discuss: Tell your family story again, beginning with the most ancient ancestor you can remember. As you go through the generations, pay attention to the words you use to describe the relationships with that first ancestor.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 2 scenes.

First scene: Esau marries 3 wives and has sons. Esau moves from Beersheba to Seir.

Second scene: This is a list of all of Esau's wives and the children of each wife.

The characters in this story include:

- Esau
- Adah, daughter of Elon the Hittite
- Oholibamah, daughter of Anah, granddaughter of Zibeon, the Hivite.
- Basemath, daughter of Ishmael and sister of Nebaioth
- Adah's son, Eliphez
- Basemath's son, Reuel
- Oholibamah's sons Jerush, Jalam, and Korah
- Eliphaz has sons named Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz. Eliphaz takes a concubine named Timna and has a son named Amalek.
- Reuel has sons named Nahath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah.
- Oholibamah's grandsons are not mentioned.

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In scene 1, Esau marries the two Canaanite women and has sons with them. Then Esau marries Basemath who is the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's first son. In a previous passage, we know that Esau marries Basemath because Isaac and Rebekah hate his two Canaanite wives. After Esau's sons are born, Esau moves his family to Seir. Jacob was away in Harran when Esau moved his family. The passage says Esau moved because there was not enough land to support all the livestock or herds and flocks that Esau and Jacob had.

In scene 2, each wife is listed with her sons. Two of the wives have grandsons listed. In order to sort out the names of these people, you can play some games or use people or objects to represent each name.

Adah, daughter of Elon the Hittite has a son named Eliphaz. Eliphaz has sons named Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam and Kenaz. Eliphaz takes a concubine and has a son named Amalek.

Oholibamah, daughter of Anah and granddaughter of Zibeon, the Hivite has sons named Jeush, Jalam and Korah. The passage does not list grandsons for Oholibamah.

Basemath, daughter of Ishmael and sister of Nebaioth has a son named Reuel. Reuel has sons named Nahath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah.

The passage continues by naming the clans that come from each of the sons. At this point an additional descendant is named for Eliphaz. The name Korah is put into the list. The clan list says that all 7 are descended from Esau's wife, Adah. However, Amalek is descended from the concubine.

Korah is also the name for one of the sons of Oholibamah. This is a different man named Korah.

Stop and help the group work out which mother has which sons. Have a person to stand to represent each wife. Then as each son is named, have someone representing that son rise and join his mother. If you don't have enough people, use some sort of object such as toys or rocks or sticks to represent each son. You would also have someone represent Timna, the concubine of Eliphaz who is the mother of Amalek. Each person can learn his name. Repeat this until each person can come in order to stand beside his mother.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 2 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Esau
- Adah, daughter of Elon the Hittite
- Oholibamah, daughter of Anah, granddaughter of Zibeon, the Hivite.
- Basemath, daughter of Ishmael and sister of Nebaioth
- Adah's son, Eliphez
- Basemath's son, Reuel
- Oholibamah's sons Jerush, Jalam, and Korah
- Eliphaz has sons named Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz. Eliphaz takes a concubine named Timna and has a son named Amalek.
- Reuel has sons named Nahath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah.
- Oholibamah's grandsons are not mentioned.

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

In scene 1, Esau marries 2 Canaanite women and has sons with them. Then Esau marries Basemath who was the daughter of Ishmael and the sister of Nebaioth. Basemath has a son.

Stop the action: Ask Esau, "How are you feeling about your family?" You may hear, "I have healthy boys. I'm happy." Or, "I don't know why my parents are unhappy with my family. The wives are good women and my sons are healthy." Ask Esau, "Why did you marry Basemath?" You may hear, "My parents don't like my Canaanite wives. I thought they would like my cousin who is my uncle Ishmael's daughter but they don't like her either. I just can't please them." Restart the action.

Esau takes his 3 wives and his children and moves away from Beersheba to a place called Seir. Seir is in the hill country and some days travel from Beersheba where Isaac and Rebekah live.

Stop the action: Ask Esau, "Why did you move to Seir?" You may hear, "My family is too large and I have too many flocks of sheep and goats to remain here at Beersheba. There isn't enough water and grass to support my family and Jacob's family. It's better for me to move so that there won't be conflict between us. My grandfather separated from his nephew Lot like this so I know it's a good thing to do." Restart the action.

Scene 2 has the list of the wives and their descendants. For this scene, continue to have people or objects represent each son and grandson. As each name is listed, have the person or object representing that name step next to his mother or grandmother. Keep doing this until the team has the relationships clear.

Adah has a son named Eliphaz. Eliphaz has sons named Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz and Gatam. Eliphaz took a concubine named Temma and had a son named Amalek.

Basemath had a son named Reuel. Ruel had sons named Nahath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah.

Oholibamah had sons named Jeush, Jalam and Korah. Oholibamah's grandsons are not listed.

The passage lists the clans that formed from Esau's descendants.

The descendants from Esau's wife Adah are: Eliphaz who has these descendants: Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz, Korah, Gatam and Amalek. In this second listing, Korah is added and Amalek's mother is not mentioned.

Stop the action: Ask Amalek, "How do you feel hearing that your mother's name has been left off the list?" You may hear, "Doesn't bother me at all. These are my brothers. We are all from my father. I should be their equal and this listing makes me their equal in everyone's eyes."

The descendants of Basemath are: Reuel who had these sons: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah.

The descendants of Oholibamah are Jeush, Jalam and Korah.

All of these descendants formed clans who used this ancestral name as the name of their clan.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Use the names of Esau's wives as they are used in this story. Adah, the daughter of Elon the Hittite, Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah, and Basemath, the daughter of Ishmael. The names are not the same as in a previous passage. However, commentators believe these are the same women.

The passage talks about the **generations** of Esau. The word generations is discussed in the Master Glossary. Here the word is talking about descendants of Esau. Use the same word you have used in previous passages.

Esau now has a second name. This name was not given to Esau from God. It seems to be a nickname or second name or familiar name. The name Edom means red. The area of Edom has a lot of red stone. When Esau was born, they noticed that he looked red. Esau sold his birth right for a bowl of red stew. Calling Esau "Edom" or "red" could be a way of remembering these previous events. Esau's descendants eventually became Edomites.

The listing of Esau's descendants calls each son and grandson a **clan** leader. Some translations use the phrase **Clan Chief**. This means that each son or grandson had descendants and these descendants formed clans or family groupings that looked back to one ancestor as their founder. The clans formed a tribe called the Edomites.

The name Korah is listed among the descendants of two people. This means that there were two different men named Korah who are descended from Esau.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 36:1–19

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (13677217 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 36:20–30

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 36:20–30 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?

6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the previous passage we learned about Esau's descendants. The story continues with a list of the people who lived in Seir before Esau moved his family to that region. Seir is the mountainous part of Edom.

Refer to the map that shows Edom and Seir marked.

The first person to live in the region was named Seir. The area took his name and became the region of Seir. The man named Seir was from the Horite tribe. Seir had descendants who formed clans. Some translations use the word sons. Here the word son does not mean that each named person was the son of Seir. It means that these are descendants of Seir. A clan is a group of people with a common ancestor. Several clans will join together to become a tribe. Several tribes will become a nation.

Lotan has a sister named Timna. Some think that this is the woman who became the concubine of Eliphaz and the mother of Amalek. Other people think that this Timna was a different person.

The first listing of names makes it seem as if these are brothers. The passage says they are the sons of Seir. This means that they were all descended from Seir but we don't know if they were actual brothers or from the same generation. They were clan leaders but might even be different generations.

Some names in the list of descendants are repeated. For example, there are two men named Anah. Zibeon and Anah are both in the first list of clan leaders who are descendants of Seir. We don't know their exact relationship. They were all descended from Seir. Zibeon also has a son or descendant named Anah. This second Anah, Zibeon's direct descendant, is the one who discovered the hot springs in the wilderness. This second Anah is also the father or ancestor of Oholibamah. Some translators think this Oholibamah is the wife of Esau but others think she is someone else. We can't know for sure.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story of the origins of your family. Listen for when names are repeated. How do you distinguish between people with the same name? What additional information do you add to avoid confusion between the people with the same name?

The name Dishon also appears twice. Dishon is one of the direct descendants of Seir or a clan leader. Dishon is the name of a descendant of Anah and brother of Oholibamah.

When Esau moved his family to Seir, all these clans were living there. Eventually Esau's family took the land from the descendants of Seir or the Horite tribe. The region became a part of Edom and the tribe living there became the Edomites named after Esau.

This passage starts with the list of clan leaders and finishes with the same list of clan leaders. The first listing says they lived in the land of Edom. The second listing at the end of the passage says they lived in the land of Seir. Seir is a part of Edom.

Look at the map again.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 1 scene.

First scene: This is a listing of the clans and their descendants who lived in Seir.

The characters in this story include:

- Seir, first ancestor
- Lotan
- Shobal
- Zibeon
- Anah
- Dishon
- Ezer
- Dishan
- Descendants of each person listed.

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

This passage is a list of names of people who formed clans. All of them are descended from Seir, the Horite. Play a game using people or objects to represent each name. As each clan leader is mentioned, have the people representing his descendants come and stand with the clan Ancestor. You could do this like a tree. Put Seir at the bottom to become the root or trunk of the tree. The largest branches are the 7 people listed as clan leaders. Then small branches or leaves become the next descendants of each leader. Use this visual to show how a large tribe comes from one man. If you use rocks, the large rock would be Seir. Seven medium size rocks would be placed in a line so that each rock is of equal importance but directly related to Seir. Then use small rocks coming from each medium sized rock to represent each of the clan leaders who come from their ancestor. In this way, the group can see that everyone is descended from Seir as the common ancestor.

Repeat this as often as needed to get the relationships worked out.

Two women are mentioned specifically. Some think Timna was the concubine of Eliphaz, son of Esau. She was the mother of Amalek. Some think Oholibamah became one of Esau's wives. We do not know if these are the same women or different women with the same name.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 1 scene.

The characters in this story include:

- Seir, first ancestor
- Lotan
- Shobal
- Zibeon
- Anah
- Dishon
- Ezer
- Dishan
- Descendants of each person listed

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Stop the action. Ask the actor playing a role "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like different responses. Restart the action.

In this passage Seir, the Horite has 7 descendants who become clan leaders.

Stop the action: Ask Seir, "How does it make you feel to see this many adult men who have become clan leaders?" You may hear, "I'm proud of them. They are all good men and good leaders. It's good to know that my family has become so strong and such a large group." Restart the action.

As each descendant is named, that person joins his direct ancestor.

Stop the action: Ask different ones of the descendants: "How do you feel now that you have a clan named after you?" You may hear, "I'm proud of my family. My sons have done well. We are becoming strong and wealthy." Restart the action. Assume that Timna and Oholibamah are the same women who marry into Esau's family. Ask Timna and Oholibamah, "How do you feel now that you have married a foreigner?" You may hear, "My husband is a good man. He brings much wealth to our family." Or, "My husband worships another God. I can't see the God he worships. I need to know more about that God." Or, "My husband keeps apart from my family. He seems to want to be separate." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The passage starts by saying that these are the **sons** of Seir, the Horite. Horite refers to the tribe that Seir, the man, was a member of before going to live in Seir, the area. The word sons can have different meanings depending on the context. Here, the word son means descendant or clan leader whose ancestor is Seir. The word son does not mean that the men listed are all sons of Seir and therefore brothers. They could be cousins or some other relation. Most translations use the word sons. Some translations use the word clan leaders.

Seir is the name of the first man who lived in the region. It became the name of the region. Seir eventually became part of Edom. Esau went to live in Edom. All of the people in this passage lived in Edom before Esau went there to live.

Some names are repeated. Notice that the writer provides information about one of these persons so that they can be distinguished from each other and not confused as being the same person.

One man named Anah is the one who discovered the **hot springs** in the desert while he was grazing his donkeys. Many translations say hot springs. This means that the water that comes up from the earth is warm, not cold. Some translations just say springs and one translation uses the word oasis. An **oasis** is a place where you can find water in the desert. The desert is usually a dry place without water, but occasionally there will be an oasis where there are natural springs of water.

Timna and Oholibamah are the same names as women in Esau's family. These may be the same women but they may be different women.

Each man listed became a **clan** leader. This means that his descendants looked back to him as their founding **ancestor**. All these clans formed the Horite tribe of people who lived in the region of Seir.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 36:20–30

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (9168032 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 4](#)
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- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (6932536 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 6](#)

Genesis 36:31-43

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 36:31-43 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This passage finishes the section on Edom and the descendants of Esau. This passage lists the kings or rulers of Edom. The kings ruled over Edom before the descendants of Jacob who are called the Israelites had kings to rule over them.

This is a list of eight kings of Edom. Each king followed the previous king in orderly succession.

Apparently the kings of Edom were elected. Each king is listed, his father is listed, and his place of birth or where he came from is listed. The king is not the son of the previous king. Usually when there are kings, the kingship passes from father to son. In this passage, each king is from a different place with a different father.

This implies that the kings were chosen or elected. Once a king was chosen, he would usually reign until he died. It seems that each king ruled from the area where that king was born.

Stop and discuss: When a ruler dies in your culture, how is the next ruler selected? How does leadership pass to the next generation?

King Jobab was from Bozrah. Bozrah was an important city in Edom.

Show the map with the city of Bozrah marked. You will refer to this map several times to locate the place names mentioned as you work through the passage.

King Husham was from the land of the Timanites. The Temanites lived in the south of Edom.

Show the map with Edom and Seir marked.

There are two kings named Hadad. These are different men from different cities but with the same name.

The first King Hadad was the king who defeated the Midianites in the land of Moab. Midian was one of the sons of Abraham, born after Sarah died and Abraham married Keturah. This means that the Midianites and Edomites were cousins. From this passage, it would appear that the Midianites went to Moab to attack the people there. King Hadad traveled from Edom to fight the Midianites in the land of Moab.

Show the map with the areas of Moab, Edom, and Midian marked.

King Shaul was from the city of Rehoboth-on-the-river. We don't know which river this was. Some have thought it might be the Euphrates River, which is in the present country of Iraq. This is too far from Edom for the king to rule over Edom. Therefore, this town and river are located somewhere in the land of Edom.

Only one wife or queen is mentioned. She is the wife of the second King Hadad. Her father and grandfather are listed with her.

Stop and discuss: When would a woman's father and grandfather be listed with her name in your culture? What would the significance be?

The other kings ruled from their cities. We don't know the exact location of these cities today.

At the end of this passage, the writer returns to Esau and lists the clan leaders who are descended from Esau. They lived in places that were named for them. The clan was also named after the first chief. Some translations use chief and some use clan leader. This is the same person. It's interesting that the list includes the names of Timna, who was a concubine of Esau's son Eliphaz, and Oholibama, who was Esau's wife. Only 4 of the names on this list were on the previous list of Esau's descendants. These names could refer to clan chiefs who came after those in the first list.

Stop and discuss: Talk about how your area was settled by your tribe. Go back to your common ancestor. How did the people develop clans? Where did the names of the villages and districts in your area come from?

The first part of this passage talks about the kings. This last part talks about clan leaders. Kings would rule over the entire area. The clan leader would rule over his clan. A clan is a group of families with a common ancestor. The clan leaders were all descended from Esau. We don't know if the kings were also Esau's descendants.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 2 scenes.

First scene: The list of the 8 kings of Edom.

Second scene: The final listing of the clans and their chiefs who are descended from Esau.

The characters in this story include:

- Esau
- The list of 8 kings
- The list of 11 clan leaders from the Edomites. Edomites are descended from Esau.

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In scene one, you have the orderly transfer of power from one king to the next king. There are 8 kings in the list.

The first King Hadad defeated the Midianites in Moab

The second King Hadad also includes his wife and the name of her father and grandfather.

The timeline for these kings is not provided. We don't know when the first king started ruling. We do know that these kings ruled over Edom before the Israelites had a king. The kings were elected or chosen rather than inheriting the throne from their father.

In scene two, Esau's descendants who became clan leaders are listed. We have 11 names including two women.

The clan leaders or descendants of Esau are listed. These are not the same names as in the first list. Of the 11 names, 4 are from the first list. Two wives are included in the list. The area where these people lived was named after them. The clan took their name. All these clans formed the tribe of Edomites.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 2 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Esau
- The list of 8 kings
- The list of 11 clan leaders from the Edomites

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

In scene one, each king is selected and rules from his city.

Stop the action: ask each king, "How do you feel about being king of the Edomites?" You may hear, "I'm honored to be chosen. I will try to rule wisely." Or, "it's the turn of my village to have a king. I think we will do well." Or, "I wish my son could follow me. But our way is to elect a new king from another village." Restart the action.

The first King Hadad goes to Moab to fight the Midianites.

Stop the action: Ask King Hadad, "Why are you in Moab? Why did you leave Edom to fight the Midianites? How do you feel about fighting your cousins?" You may hear, "The Midianites are my enemies also. They traveled

through my land to get to Moab. I have to stop them here or they will attack us also. They aren't acting like cousins. They will attack us. We must defend ourselves." Restart the action.

The second King Hadad comes to rule with his wife Mehetabel.

Stop the action: Ask Mehetabel, "How are your father and grandfather feeling now that you are queen?" You may hear, "They are happy. I will be a good queen. I will help my husband rule over this area." Restart the action.

Scene 2 lists the 11 clan leaders descended from Esau. Have someone to stand to represent each clan leader. Or you may use toys or objects to represent each leader. Draw a map of Edom and place each leader in a different place. This is to demonstrate how the clans grew and occupied the land of Edom.

Stop the action: Ask different clan leaders, "How do you feel about this area for your clan?" You may hear, "I like this area. There is enough grass for the animals and enough water. We can prosper here. I'm glad we have this area." Or, "This is good and my relatives are close enough to help if anyone attacks us." Ask the clan leaders, "What do you think of your ancestor, Esau?" You may hear, "Esau was a great man. He came here and took this land for us. Esau taught us many things. Esau was a good man." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This is the list of kings of Edom. A **king** ruled over the whole land. It seems that these kings were chosen and did not inherit from the father as happens in most places with kings. Each king has his father named and the name of the city where he ruled. The king lived in that city but ruled all of Edom.

The first king Hadad fought and defeated the Midianites in the land of Moab. The Midianites are descendants of Abraham and thus relatives of the Edomites. The passage does not mention this relationship. The Midianites will appear again in the scriptures. Moab is the name of a region like Edom is the name of a region. Moab will appear again many times in the scriptures.

The second king Hadad's wife Mehetabel has her father and grandfather listed. The grandfather would probably be her father's father. Use the appropriate kinship titles to describe this relationship.

Esau's descendants who became **clan** leaders are listed. The passage does not explain why the names are different from the first list. 4 of the names are repeated. Timna is the concubine of Eliphaz, son of Esau. Oholibama is one of Esau's wives. The names of these clan leaders also became the name of the area where the clan was located. A clan is a collection of families with a common ancestor. Several clans would form a tribe. Several tribes would form a nation.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 36:31-43

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (9996882 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
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[mp3 zip](#) (7462768 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 6](#)

Genesis 37:1-11

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 37:1-11 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?

6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This passage begins the account of the generations of Jacob. As we have seen before, the word generations has different meanings. Here the word generations means the story of Jacob's family. The word generations in this passage does not refer to ancestors or lists of descendants.

The scripture passage changes the story from Esau back to Jacob. This passage begins a narrative story of Jacob and his sons. Jacob settled in the land of Canaan. This means that Jacob did not intend to move again to another place. Isaac, Jacob's father, had sojourned in the land of Canaan. This means that Isaac did not settle there but moved about and lived as an alien or foreigner in the land. The story begins by contrasting Jacob and Isaac.

The passage uses two names for Jacob. Sometimes, the passage calls him Jacob. Other times, the passage calls him Israel. Both the names, Jacob and Israel, refer to the same man.

As the story starts, we learn that Joseph, the son of Rachel, the wife that Jacob loved, is 17 years old. Joseph is the eleventh son born to Jacob. He is next to the youngest son. This means that Jacob's other 10 sons are all adults as this story begins. Only Benjamin, the youngest son, is younger than Joseph. Joseph was working as a shepherd. This means that Joseph was out in the fields taking care of the flocks of sheep and goats. Joseph worked with his four half-brothers, the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's servant and Zilpah, Leah's servant. Bilhah's sons were Dan and Naphtali. Zilpah's sons were Gad and Asher. These sons were also doing some things that were considered bad and Joseph reported these things to his father, Jacob.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about children misbehaving or doing something that might cause shame to the family if discovered. One child goes to the parents and tells what the other children are doing. As a result, the parents punish the other children for their misbehavior. How do those children feel about the one child who went and told the parents what happened?

Jacob, also named Israel, loved Joseph more than the other sons. Joseph was born in Jacob's old age. We don't know exactly how old Jacob was when Joseph was born, but Joseph was the eleventh son born. Joseph was born while Jacob lived in Harran. Jacob loved Rachel who was Joseph's mother. It was a long time after Joseph was born before Rachel had her second child, Benjamin. This means that Joseph was the youngest child or baby of the family for a number of years.

Stop and discuss: In your culture, how is the baby of the family or the youngest child treated? What do the older brothers and sisters think about this youngest child?

Stop and discuss: When a couple has a child after a long time of waiting for a child, what happens to that child? How is that child treated?

Stop and discuss: What happens in a family when the parents love one child more than the other children?

Jacob gave Joseph a special robe or tunic that probably had long sleeves. It probably was like a tunic that came to the knees. It probably had special embroidery or decorations on the robe. This robe could be described as ornate or fancy or beautiful or magnificent. The robe might have had different colors woven into the material. Some think this might be a robe like a king would wear. Wearing this robe would set Joseph apart as someone special. No other son had a robe like this one. The brothers hated or very strongly disliked Joseph because Jacob loved Joseph more than the rest of them. The brothers could not speak a kind word to Joseph. They could not speak nicely to Joseph. This means they were speaking to Joseph in an unkind or unfriendly way.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about a family where the parents love one child more than the others. How do the other children speak to the one who is the favorite of the father?

Show a picture of a specially decorated or embroidered tunic or coat such as a chief or leader might have worn in ancient times.

Joseph had a dream and told his brothers about the dream. Joseph was asleep when he had the dream. This is the first time a dream is mentioned without God speaking. In ancient times, most people believed that dreams were information from God and should be taken very seriously even if God didn't speak. Dreams were often filled with symbolism and required someone to interpret or explain what the dream means. Joseph didn't ask for interpretation but simply told his brothers about his dream. The symbols in the dream were the bundles of wheat. When harvesting the wheat, people would cut the stalks and put many stalks together to make a bundle that could be carried. In this dream, ten bundles of wheat bow to one bundle of wheat. The brothers immediately interpreted the dream as meaning that Joseph would one day rule over the family. The brothers hated Joseph even more or with stronger hate after hearing about the dreams.

Stop and discuss: tell a story about a son who is the favorite child. Listen to how the others describe this son and his behavior. What do they want to do with this favorite son? How do they want to treat him?

Show a picture of sheaves of wheat or wheat in bundles.

Joseph had a second dream and this time Joseph told Jacob about the dream as well as his brothers. Even Jacob was angry with Joseph about the dream. Jacob spoke harshly to Joseph when Joseph told Jacob about the dream. Jacob assumed that the sun and moon represented Jacob and Rachel, while the 11 stars represented the other sons. Jacob thought the second dream meant that Joseph would one day rule over the entire family, including Jacob. The brothers were jealous when they heard about the second dream. Then Jacob was not sure about the meaning because Jacob wondered what the dreams meant.

Stop and discuss: Talk about dreams in your culture. How do the people feel about dreams? What do they say about their dreams? Who interprets the dreams?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

First scene: This scene begins the story of Joseph. Joseph is 17 years old and works for his half-brothers who are the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah. Joseph reports their activities to Jacob.

Second scene: Jacob gives Joseph a special tunic or coat that tells everyone that Joseph is the favorite. The brothers are jealous.

Third scene: Joseph has a dream in which it seems that Joseph will rule over his brothers. Joseph tells them about the dream. They are angry.

Fourth scene: Joseph has another dream that this time makes it seem like Joseph will rule over his parents as well as his brothers. Everyone including Jacob is angry.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob also called Israel
- Joseph
- The sons of Bilhah and Zilpah
- The other brothers or sons of Leah

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

As you work through the scenes in this story, notice that the feelings of hate and jealousy that the brothers feel towards Joseph appear to increase in intensity with each incident. The brothers hated Joseph. The brothers

were jealous of Joseph. The brothers hated Joseph even more. The brothers were jealous of Joseph. Jacob does not seem to be aware of how the brothers were feeling towards Joseph. Jacob does nothing to decrease the hatred or feelings of jealousy. Keep in mind that the 10 older half-brothers are all adults. Joseph is 17 at the start of the story which means that his half-brothers are all over the age of 17 or adults.

In scene one, Jacob settles in the land of Canaan. This is in contrast to his father Isaac who never settled in Canaan. Isaac remained a foreigner or alien all the time that Isaac lived in Canaan. The passage says that this is an account of Jacob and his family but moves quickly into the story of Joseph. Joseph is the main character in this passage.

Joseph was 17 years old at the beginning of this story. This means that Joseph is old enough to work as a shepherd or tend the flocks. Joseph worked primarily with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah. Bilhah and Zilpah were concubines. Each had 2 sons. Joseph worked with these sons who are Joseph's half-brothers and reported what they were doing to Jacob. Apparently, these sons were doing bad things or things that could bring shame to Jacob and the rest of the family. We don't know if the reports that Joseph was giving to Jacob were true or not. We don't know why Joseph worked with these particular sons. We don't know what Jacob did with the information that Joseph reported about his 4 half-brothers.

In scene two, Jacob loves Joseph more than the other sons. Joseph is the favorite son. Joseph was born in Jacob's old age. We are not sure of Jacob's age when Joseph was born. Joseph is son number 11 and Rachel's first son. Jacob loved Rachel. Joseph was born while Jacob still lived in Harran. Jacob had a special robe or tunic made for Joseph. When Joseph wore this robe, everyone knew that Joseph was special and that Jacob loved Joseph the most. None of the other sons had anything like this robe to wear. The brothers were all jealous. The brothers could not speak to Joseph in a nice or kind way.

In scene three, Joseph has a dream. This is a dream in which God doesn't speak. Ancient people believed that dreams were messages from God and should be taken very seriously. Usually someone would have to interpret the symbolism of a dream. Joseph told his dream to his brothers and they understood its meaning immediately. They did not need someone to interpret the dream. The brothers thought that Joseph was saying that one day Joseph would be the ruler of the family. Joseph was son number 11. Usually, the first-born son took over the leadership of the family when the father died. The brothers became very angry when they heard about this dream. The brothers started asking questions that don't require an answer. If your language doesn't use these kinds of questions, you may put their questions as positive statements. The brothers hated Joseph. Hate is a strong emotion. The story says that the brothers hated Joseph even more because of the way Joseph talked about the dreams.

In scene four, Joseph has another dream. The dream involved additional objects that seemed to represent Joseph's parents as well as his brothers. This time Joseph told the dream to Jacob as well as to the brothers. When Joseph told them about the dream, Joseph started by saying "Listen" or "behold." Using a word like this means that Joseph is planning to say something surprising or unexpected. Joseph wants their attention before speaking. Once again, the brothers and Jacob were able to interpret the meaning of the symbols without having someone to interpret the dream. Jacob and the brothers believed that Joseph was saying that one day Joseph would rule over the family. Even Jacob was angry with Joseph about this dream. The brothers were jealous of Joseph. Jacob wondered about the meaning of the dreams.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob also called Israel
- Joseph
- The sons of Bilhah and Zilpah
- The other brothers or sons of Leah.

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

In scene one, Jacob has settled in Canaan. Joseph is 17 years old and has begun working as a shepherd tending flocks of sheep and goats. Joseph works for his half-brothers who are the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah. Joseph sees his brothers doing bad things and reports these things to Jacob.

Stop the action: Ask the brothers, "How are you feeling about Joseph when he tells your father what you are doing?" You may hear, "He is a teller of tales. He shouldn't be reporting on us like this. He is a spoiled brat. He does this so Father will love him more." Ask Jacob, "How do you feel when Joseph tells you what your sons are doing?" You may hear, "I'm glad he tells me what they are doing. I have to know so I can stop them from bringing shame on the family with their actions. They are not good boys." Ask Joseph, "Why are you reporting on your brothers to your father?" You may hear, "I have to tell my father what they are doing. He has to know. They should behave better. They are going to shame us all." Restart the action.

In scene 2, Jacob has a special robe or tunic made and gives it to Joseph. This is the kind of robe that a leader or ruler would wear and it sets Joseph apart from the others. The brothers hate Joseph when they see it. They hate Joseph because Jacob loves Joseph the most. They can't speak in a nice way to Joseph.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "Why did you give Joseph this special robe?" You may hear, "Joseph is a good boy. He tells me what is going on. I wanted to give him something special." Ask some of the brothers: "How do you feel when you see Joseph wearing that special robe?" You may hear, "It makes me so mad! He's a spoiled brat, a daddy's boy. Why does our father love him the most? He doesn't deserve this. He is not better than we are. He just hides what he does from Father." Restart the action.

In scene 3, Joseph has a special dream. Joseph tells his brothers about the dream and they hate him for this. The brothers hate Joseph because of the dream and because of the way Joseph talked about the dream.

Stop the action: Ask the brothers, "Why do you hate Joseph so much?" You may hear, "He thinks he is going to be head of the family someday. That will never happen. He is not the oldest son. He should be serving me not expecting me to serve him. He is impossible! I can't even stand to look at him." Restart the action.

In scene 4, Jacob has another dream. This time the symbols seem to indicate that Joseph will also rule over his parents at some point in the future. Joseph tells Jacob and his brothers about the dream. Even Jacob is angry with Joseph.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How are you feeling about Joseph right now?" You may hear, "I love Joseph but I don't like this dream and the way he is talking about it. This isn't right. Joseph needs to be more careful in the way he talks to me and his brothers." Ask Joseph, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "Why is everyone angry with me? I'm just telling them my dream. I can't control my dreams. It seems like this is a message and I should tell them about it. It's too bad they are so hateful." Ask the brothers, "How do you feel about Joseph right now?" You may hear, "He is too much. Even our father sees that this is too much. We need to do something about Joseph to put him back in his place. There is no way we will ever allow him to rule over the rest of us. I wish Father would discipline him." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This passage uses Jacob and Israel when talking about Jacob. Make sure that it is clear that this is the same person.

Jacob settles in Canaan. Isaac, who is Jacob's father, sojourned in the land or lived in the land of Canaan as a **foreigner** or an **alien**. Use the same words for foreigner or alien that you have used in previous passages. Foreigner is discussed in the Master Glossary.

These are the **generations** of Jacob. Generations is discussed in the Master Glossary. Here the word generations means account of or story of Jacob's family. This is not a listing of genealogy.

Joseph tended the flocks or worked as a shepherd. Joseph is taking on responsibility for the animals just as Jacob did and as his brothers have done. Joseph works for his **half-brothers**. Use the same words you have in previous passages to describe these family relationships. Half-brothers means that the brothers have the same father but different mothers.

Jacob gave Joseph a beautiful coat or tunic. The description of the garment is not clear. This could be a robe or tunic that fell to the knees. It may have had long sleeves. It might have been embroidered or had decorations sewn on. It might have been more than one color. The robe was ornate or magnificent or beautiful. A ruler or leader would have worn such a garment. This garment set Joseph apart from the others. When the brothers saw this garment on Joseph, they reacted with hate towards Joseph.

Show the picture of the coat again.

The brothers **hated** Joseph and were jealous of Joseph. Hate is a strong emotion. Other words that might express the emotion include despise or detest. The emotions seem to increase in intensity through this passage. The brothers hate Joseph. They can't speak nice or kind words to Joseph. They hated Joseph even more. They were Jealous of Joseph. You may have words in your language that show the increasing feelings. Or you may have ways of talking about the hatred that shows how this hatred was increasing in intensity.

Joseph has **dreams**. This means that Joseph was asleep when he had the dream. The dream had symbols that represented people. No one interpreted the dream for Joseph and his family. When they heard about the dream, they knew that the symbols represented the brothers and the parents. God didn't speak in this dream. Ancient peoples believed that dreams were messages from God. They took dreams seriously. Use the same word for dream that you have used in previous passages. Dreams are discussed in the Master Glossary.

Joseph's first dream involved bundles or sheaves of wheat. People cut the wheat stalks and bound them together to make a large bundle that could be carried to a place where the wheat would be taken from the stalk. Joseph said that in the dream 10 bundles bowed to one bundle. The brothers interpreted this dream as each bundle representing one of the brothers with the one bundle that stood alone representing Joseph.

Show the picture of the bundle of wheat again.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 37:1–11

Audio Content

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- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 37:12–36

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 37:12–36 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?

3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The previous passage started the story of Joseph who was Jacob's favorite son. Joseph had special dreams that made it seem as if Joseph would rule over the family in the future. Jacob gave Joseph a special coat to wear. Joseph's 10 older brothers became more and more angry and jealous throughout the story. This passage is a narrative story that continues the Joseph story.

Jacob was still living in the area of Hebron. The older brothers took the flocks and went to Shechem to find grass and water. After some time had passed Jacob wanted news of the herds and of his sons. Jacob told Joseph to go to Shechem to find his brothers and bring back their news. Joseph apparently went on this journey by himself. Shechem is about 50 miles, or 80 kilometers, from Hebron. Joseph arrived in Shechem to learn that his brothers had moved to Dothan. Dothan is about 15 miles, or 24 kilometers, further north. Joseph continued on his way to search for his brothers. The brothers were putting their flocks of sheep and goats in the open grasslands outside these towns.

Show a map of Israel that has Hebron, Shechem, and Dothan marked.

When the brothers saw Joseph coming, they thought to kill Joseph. They called Joseph the dreamer because of the dreams that Joseph had had about ruling over his family. Reuben, who is Jacob's first-born son, didn't want them to kill Joseph. Reuben suggested that Joseph be put in an empty cistern. A cistern is an underground container used to collect and store rainwater. A cistern is shaped like a round bottle with a narrow neck or top at the ground level. Usually a stone would be put over the opening. Other translations call the cistern a dry well or pit.

Show a picture of a cistern.

Joseph would not have been able to get out of the cistern or dry well by himself. If the brothers left him there, he would die. The cistern or well was dry, which means that Joseph would not have water to drink. Reuben planned to rescue Joseph and send Joseph back to Jacob.

The brothers were eating the noon meal when they saw a caravan of Ishmaelite traders. A caravan is a group of people traveling together. Ishmaelite traders means that these traders were descended from Ishmael who was Abraham's first son. Ishmaelite is also a general name for all traders in this area. This group of traders had been in Gilead which is on the east side of the Jordan River. Jacob had met with Laban in Gilead.

Show the map with Gilead marked on it. This is the same map you have been using for this passage.

One of the normal caravan routes between Egypt and the Eastern countries or areas came near Dothan and Shechem. The traders were loaded with gum, balm, and aromatic resin that give off pleasant smells. The Egyptian people loved these smells. The Egyptians would use these products to make perfumes and as medicines. All three of these products come from trees.

Show a picture of a tree with resin coming from it.

Judah proposed selling Joseph as a slave to the traders. Judah was Reuben's younger brother and their mother was Leah. Judah asked a question that doesn't require an answer. Judah asked, "What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood?" Judah does not want to kill Joseph. Judah believes that it would be difficult to hide their guilt in killing Joseph. Then Judah gives a word picture for guilt. Judah said that if they killed Joseph, his blood would be on their conscience. Judah means they would have a guilty conscience.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story of someone killing someone. Listen to the words and phrases used to describe how the killer feels afterwards. What words or pictures are used to describe his feelings of remorse or guilt?

Judah tells the brothers that Joseph is their own flesh and blood. This is a word picture that means that Joseph shares the same father with them. They are physically related.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about your family. What word pictures do you use to describe relationships in this story?

The brothers sold Joseph for 20 pieces of silver. This would be about $\frac{1}{2}$ pound or 230 grams. This was the normal price for a slave at this time. The traders took Joseph to Egypt. Joseph was now a slave. The traders owned Joseph. Joseph did not have the freedom to leave.

The passage uses two names for the traders. Ishmaelites were descendants of Ishmael. Midianites were descendants of Abraham from his second wife, Keturah. Most people believe that the Ishmaelites was a more general name and Midianites a more specific name for the same people. There was just one caravan of traders that passed.

Reuben was not with the group of brothers when they sold Joseph to the Midianite traders. We don't know where Reuben was but he might have been out checking the sheep in the fields. Reuben had been planning to rescue Joseph and send him back to Jacob. When Reuben found Joseph gone, Reuben was very sad and tore his clothes. In this time people who grieved the death or loss of someone usually tore their clothes to symbolize their grief.

The brothers decided to kill a young goat and dip Joseph's special coat in the blood and send the coat to Jacob. When Jacob saw the coat, Jacob recognized instantly that this was Joseph's special coat, the coat that Jacob had given Joseph. Jacob did all the usual mourning practices of that time. Jacob tore his clothes. Jacob wept. Jacob wore sackcloth. Sackcloth is a material made from goat or camel hair and was very uncomfortable to wear. People in mourning usually dressed in sackcloth for many days.

Show a picture of sackcloth.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about someone in the family who died. Tell what the various family members did to show their sorrow at this death. How long does mourning usually last?

Jacob believed that a wild animal had killed and eaten Joseph. Jacob mourned for a long time. All Jacob's sons and daughters tried to comfort Jacob, but Jacob refused to be comforted. This means that the brothers who sold Joseph tried to comfort Jacob. Jacob said, "I will go to Sheol" or "I will go to my grave mourning Joseph." This means that Jacob will mourn for the rest of his life. Sheol is the name of the place where people went after death.

The traders took Joseph to Egypt and sold Joseph to a man named Potiphar. Potiphar was an officer of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Potiphar was captain of the palace guard.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 6 scenes.

First scene: The brothers take the flocks and go to find grass and water. After some time, Jacob sends Joseph to get their news. Joseph travels to Shechem and then to Dothan to find the brothers.

Second scene: The brothers see Joseph coming and plan to kill Joseph. Reuben convinces the brothers to put Joseph in a dry cistern instead.

Third scene: Joseph arrives, the brothers take his coat off and put Joseph into the dry cistern. The brothers sit down to eat. They see a caravan of traders coming and decide to sell Joseph to the traders who are going to Egypt. Joseph is taken to Egypt.

Fourth scene: Reuben finds that Joseph is gone and grieves. Then the brothers kill a young goat, dip the coat in the blood and send the coat to Jacob.

Fifth scene: Jacob recognizes the coat as Joseph's coat. Jacob believes a wild animal has killed and eaten Joseph. Jacob mourns a long time.

Sixth scene: Joseph arrives in Egypt. A man named Potiphar purchases Joseph.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- Joseph
- Unknown man
- Reuben
- Judah
- The other 8 brothers
- Ishmaelite/Midianite traders
- Potiphar

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

At the beginning of the story in the previous passage, Joseph is 17 years old. We don't know his exact age when he arrives in Egypt. Ten of Joseph's brothers are older than Joseph. This means that all ten of them would be adults. These adult men plotted to kill their brother. These adult men sent Joseph's coat dipped in blood back to Jacob. These adult men watched their father, Jacob, mourn the death of Joseph. These adult men knew that Joseph was probably still alive and in Egypt.

The brothers went to Shechem to pasture the sheep. Shechem is where Abraham first stopped when Abraham arrived in Canaan. Shechem is where Jacob camped and bought a field. Dinah was raped in Shechem. After the brothers killed all the men of Shechem and took captive all the women and children, Jacob left Shechem and went eventually to Hebron. We don't know how many years have passed between the event of Dinah's rape and the brothers taking their sheep to Shechem to find grass and water.

In scene 1, Jacob's 10 older sons leave Jacob and Joseph at Hebron. Benjamin isn't mentioned. They take the flocks and go to find better pasture or grass and water. First they go to Shechem and then to Dothan. Jacob sends Joseph to find out how they are all doing. Jacob wants their news. Apparently, Joseph goes on this journey of 50 miles or 80 kilometers alone. Dothan is another 15 miles or 24 kilometers further north. We don't know how many days it took for Joseph to find his brothers. At Shechem, a man found Joseph wandering around and told Joseph where the brothers had gone. Joseph went on to Dothan.

In scene 2, the brothers see Joseph coming towards them and plot to kill Joseph. Reuben convinces the brothers to put Joseph into a dry cistern instead. Reuben plans to rescue Joseph and send Joseph back to Jacob.

In scene 3, Joseph arrives at their camp. The brothers grab Joseph, take his beautiful coat off him, and throw him into the dry cistern.

Stop and discuss: As you work out the action for this part of the story, describe it and notice the violent words you use. In English, we can put something, toss something, or throw something. To throw is much stronger than toss and to toss is much stronger than to put.

The brothers sit down to eat. Apparently Reuben is somewhere else when this occurs. The brothers see a caravan approaching. Judah convinces the brothers that it is better to sell Joseph to these traders than to kill Joseph. They sell Joseph for 20 pieces of silver, the usual price for a slave. The brothers take Joseph out of the cistern and the traders take Joseph to Egypt.

In scene 4, Reuben returns and finds Joseph gone. Reuben tears his clothes to show his grief. Then the brothers kill a young goat and put Joseph's robe in the blood. They sent this coat back to Jacob. They sent a message with the coat: Look what we found. This coat belongs to Joseph, doesn't it? Their question is one of those questions that don't require an answer. You can make it as a positive statement without the question.

In scene 5, Jacob believes that a wild animal has killed and eaten Joseph. Jacob goes into mourning. Jacob weeps. Jacob tears his clothes. Jacob puts on sackcloth. Jacob's sons and daughters tried to comfort Jacob, but Jacob would not be comforted. The only daughter mentioned by name was Dinah in a previous passage but Jacob had other daughters and daughters-in-law. The brothers never told Jacob what they had done to Joseph. Jacob says, "I will mourn until I die." Jacob uses a word picture to say this. Jacob says I will mourn until I go to my grave. Some translations use the word Sheol which is the name for the place of the dead.

In scene 6, Joseph arrives in Egypt. A man named Potiphar purchases Joseph. Potiphar is an important man in the service of the king of Egypt. Potiphar is commander of the palace guard.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 6 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- Joseph
- Unknown man
- Reuben
- Judah
- The other 8 brothers
- Ishmaelite/Midianite traders
- Potiphar

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Stop the action. Ask the actor playing a role, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like different responses. Restart the action.

In scene 1, Jacob's 10 older sons have taken the sheep to find pasture for them. After some time, Jacob sends Joseph to find the brothers, get their news and come back to tell Jacob.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "Are you concerned about sending Joseph off by himself?" You may hear, "No one will bother Joseph. They will all know Joseph is my son. That coat will protect him. Nothing will happen to him." Ask Joseph, "How do you feel about going to find your brothers?" You may hear, "I'm excited. I get to go do something for my father. He keeps me at home. I want to have responsibilities like my brothers." Ask the brothers, "How do you feel about going back to Shechem?" You may hear, "I'm not worried. They won't bother us. The people there know to leave us alone." Restart the action.

In scene 2, the brothers see Joseph coming and plot to kill Joseph. Reuben convinces them to put Joseph into a dry cistern instead. Reuben plans to return later and take Joseph out of the cistern and send him back to Jacob.

In scene 3, the brothers grab Joseph, strip the robe off Joseph, and throw Joseph into the dry cistern.

Stop the action: Ask Joseph, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I'm mad. Why are they treating me like this? I'm their brother. I'm hungry and thirsty. They have no right to do this. I'm going to tell my father when I get home what they have done." Ask the brothers, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "Great! We put that spoiled kid in his place. He'll learn not to ask like he is king over us." Restart the action.

The traders arrive and Judah convinces the other brothers to sell Joseph as a slave. They pull Joseph out of the dry cistern and sell Joseph. The traders take Joseph to Egypt.

Stop the action: Ask Joseph, "How are you feeling now?" You may hear, "I'm scared. I don't know where they are taking me. I want to go home. I want to be with my father." Restart the action.

In scene 4, Reuben arrives and finds that Joseph has been sold. Reuben tears his clothes as a sign of grief.

Stop the action: Ask Reuben, "Why are you in grief about this?" You may hear, "I was going to rescue Joseph from the cistern and send him home. Now, what will we do about our father? What is going to happen to us? This is a terrible thing we've done. Joseph is our brother." Or, "I'm the oldest son. It's my responsibility to take care of the family. I should also take care of Joseph." Restart the action.

In scene 5, the brothers kill a small goat, dip Joseph's coat in the blood, and send the coat to Jacob. Jacob thinks that a wild animal has eaten Joseph. Jacob mourns. Jacob's sons and daughters try to comfort Jacob. No one is able to comfort Jacob.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I'm so sad. My son, Rachel's son, my favorite son is dead. Why did I let him go on that trip? Why did I send him to find his brothers? If I had kept him home, he would still be with me. Oh, my son! I will never stop grieving over you." Ask the brothers, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "It makes me sad to see my father like this. I wish we hadn't done this to Joseph." Or, "Joseph got what he deserved. Father should realize he still has all of us and be content." Or "I wanted to punish Joseph, but I didn't think about how this would make our father grieve. I'm afraid for him. He is really grieving hard." Restart the action.

In scene 6, Joseph arrives in Egypt. The traders sell Joseph. An important man named Potiphar buys Joseph.

Stop the action: Ask Joseph, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I'm frightened. I don't know what to do. I'm in this foreign place. I don't speak their language. I've never eaten food like this. I don't like living in a house. There are so many bad smells around. There is too much noise. I miss my home. I miss my family. I want to go home." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jacob's sons go to Shechem to **pasture** the **flocks**. This means that they went to find enough grass and water for the sheep. A pasture is a field where animals can eat the grass. Flocks are groups of animals like sheep and goats.

Stop and show a picture of sheep in a pasture.

The brothers took Joseph and removed his special coat that Jacob had given Joseph. Use the same word for coat that you used in the previous passage. Then they put Joseph in a **dry cistern** or dry well. Some translations use cistern. Some translations say dry well. Some translations say a pit. This was underground or down in the ground. A cistern was made to collect rainwater so that there would be water for the sheep during dry season. This cistern was dry. There was no way Joseph could get out of the cistern by himself. Someone had to pull Joseph out. There was no water in the well or cistern. Without water, Joseph would have died in 3 days. The writer describes the process of grabbing Joseph, stripping the coat off Joseph, and throwing Joseph into the dry well or dry cistern. The writer uses violent words and strong words. This was not a gentle action. They grabbed Joseph, stripped Joseph, and threw Joseph into the dry cistern. Choose words that describe the violent actions of the brothers.

Stop and discuss: Describe to each other the scene. Listen to the word choices you use to describe the violence. Show the picture of Joseph's special coat.

The caravan was taking **gum**, **balm**, and **myrrh** to Egypt. A gum or resin is the sticky substance that comes from a tree or bush. Some translations list these products. Other translations say that the caravan was loaded with different kinds of spices. These products were not the kind of spices that people add to food. Rather these were used in incense, perfumes, and medicines.

Judah asks his brothers a question that doesn't require an answer. Judah asks, "Why should we shed any blood?" You could state this in a positive way, "We don't need to shed any blood. We will gain nothing from killing our brother."

When the brothers first saw the caravan, they said that these were Ishmaelite traders. Ishmaelite was a term used to refer to all traders who used caravans and went back and forth along the trade routes. Midianites were one group of people who worked as traders like this. Ishmaelites is a general term and Midianites would be a specific group name. The writer uses the word Ishmaelites until the traders arrive. One way to say this is, "Then the brothers see the Ishmaelites who were Midianite traders." There is only one caravan of traders in this story.

When Reuben discovers that Joseph has been sold, Reuben asks a question that doesn't expect an answer. You can translate this as a question or change it to a positive statement. "What shall I do now?" Or "I don't know what to do."

Reuben tears his robe in grief when he finds Joseph gone. Jacob tears his robe in grief when Jacob thinks that Joseph is dead. Common expressions of grief at this time included tearing of clothes, wearing of sackcloth, weeping and putting dust or ashes over the head. The passage does not say that Jacob threw dust or ashes over himself. Sackcloth is a type of material made from goat's hair and very uncomfortable to wear.

Sheol is the name of the place where dead people go. Jacob says, "I will mourn until I go to Sheol." Other translations say, "I will mourn until I die" or "until I go to my grave." Sheol is discussed in the Master Glossary.

Potiphar is an officer of **Pharaoh**, the king of Egypt. Pharaoh is the title given to Egyptian Kings.

The **palace** is where the king lives. The palace guard would be a group of soldiers with the task of guarding the king and his home or where he lives. Since Potiphar is captain of this guard, Potiphar is a very important man.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 37:12–36

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (20429859 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 38:1–30

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 38:1–30 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?

3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This passage interrupts the Joseph story to give a narrative account of Judah's family. Judah is the fourth son of Jacob. Leah is Judah's mother. Judah saved Joseph's life by suggesting to his brothers that they sell Joseph as a slave to the Midianite traders going past. This story takes place sometime after Joseph has left for Egypt.

Judah went down from Hebron to live at Abdullam. Abdullam is located northwest of Hebron at a lower elevation than Hebron. Jacob was living at Hebron. After Judah moved to Abdullam, Judah married a Canaanite woman. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had been careful not to marry Canaanite women. Canaanites engaged in idol worship. Judah and his Canaanite wife had 3 sons. The wife named all three sons. The first was named Er. The second was named Onan. The third was named Shelah.

Stop and discuss: Who names the children in your family? Who chooses the bride for the sons? Show a map with Hebron, Abdullam, and Timnah marked.

Judah arranged for his oldest son, Er, to marry a Canaanite woman named Tamar. This means that Judah chose the bride for his son. Er was a wicked man. Because Er was evil, Yahweh caused Er to die. Er died without having any children. This made Tamar a widow with no children, which was a difficult position for a woman in the ancient Middle East. Widows did not inherit from their husbands. They had no way to earn money. The widow's husband's family was supposed to find another husband for the widow from the husband's family. The purpose was for the widow to have a child that would belong to the dead husband and inherit his portion. The widow did not normally return to her parents.

Judah told his second son, Onan, to marry Tamar and have a son with Tamar. This son would inherit Er's portion. This is called a Levirate marriage, which is a particular kind of marriage. In a levirate marriage, the brother of the dead husband would sleep with the widow. Any son born would be declared the son of the dead man and would inherit the dead man's share. Once Tamar had a son, Onan's responsibility towards Tamar as a husband would be finished. This type of marriage was a common practice throughout the ancient Middle East. Onan did not want to father a son who would not be his own heir. If Er had no heir, Onan's share of his father's inheritance would be larger. Onan practiced the form of birth control known at this time. Onan went to sleep with Tamar but withdrew during the process of having sex so that his seed or sperm fell on the ground. This made it impossible for Tamar to become pregnant. Onan was disobeying Judah. Onan was also breaking the Levirate law of that time. Yahweh considered Onan's disobedience to be evil and caused Onan to die.

Stop and discuss: how is inheritance distributed in your family? What happens when a son dies without heirs?

Judah's third son Shelah was too young to marry Tamar. Judah sent Tamar back to her parents. Judah told Tamar to remain a widow. Judah promised Tamar that when Shelah was of age, Judah would send for Tamar. Judah did not intend to keep his promise. Judah was afraid that Shelah would die also. Then Judah's wife died.

Now Judah had to go through a time of mourning. This is a specific time when someone grieves the death of a family member. Judah had to wear specific clothes, weep, throw dust or ashes on his head, and tear his clothes to show his grief. When Judah's time of mourning was over, he went to Timnah to shear his sheep.

Show the map with Adullam and Timnah marked.

Tamar was aware that Shelah was old enough to be married and that Judah had not kept his promise. Widows wore special clothes that told everyone they were widows. Tamar took off her widow's clothes and covered herself with a veil so that Judah would not recognize that this was Tamar. Tamar went out to the side of the

road and waited for Judah to pass. Judah thought Tamar was a prostitute. A prostitute is someone who offers sex for money. In the ancient Middle East, the Canaanites had temple prostitutes. The temple or shrine was a place of worship of the Canaanite gods. Men would visit these temple or shrine prostitutes before important times in the farming season such as planting, shearing, and lambing. They believed that having sex with the temple prostitute would ensure fertile crops or fertile sheep. We don't know if Judah believed this or just wanted to have sex with a prostitute.

Judah offered to pay Tamar a young goat if Tamar would have sex with Judah. Tamar demanded that Judah give her 3 personal things that would only belong to Judah. Tamar demanded the seal, cord and staff that Judah had. Men carried a cylinder seal on a cord around their necks and used this to sign documents by pressing it into clay. This seal was unique to each person who had one. Judah's staff or walking stick would have markings carved in it to identify it as belonging to Judah. Tamar said she would keep these items until Judah sent the goat. However, when Judah sent the goat, no one could find the prostitute. Judah did not know that the prostitute was Tamar. Judah did not look for the prostitute a second time.

Show a picture of a cylinder seal.

Three months later someone told Judah that Tamar was pregnant. Judah ordered that Tamar be killed by burning. Judah thought that Tamar had acted like a prostitute. As they were taking Tamar out to kill her, Tamar was able to send the seal, cord and stick that belonged to Judah back to Judah. Tamar told Judah that the person who owned these items was the father of her baby. Judah recognized that the items were his. Judah understood that Judah was the father of Tamar's baby. Judah said, "Tamar is more righteous than I am." Here righteous means being blameless or without guilt or innocent. Judah was saying that Tamar had done the right thing by getting a baby to inherit for Er. Judah had done the wrong thing because Judah had not given Tamar his son Shelah in order to provide for a baby for Er's inheritance.

Tamar had twins. One twin's hand came out the birth canal. The midwife tied a red string around the wrist because the midwife thought this one was being born first. It was important to make sure which child is born first for inheritance laws. But the hand went back up the birth canal and the second baby was actually born first. This baby was named Perez because he broke out and was born first. They named the second baby Zerah.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 7 scenes.

First scene: Judah moves from Hebron to Adullam, marries a Canaanite woman and has 3 sons.

Second scene: Judah arranges the marriage of his first son to Tamar. The first son dies. Judah tells the second son to marry Tamar. He refuses to father a child with Tamar and dies. Judah sends Tamar back to her parents.

Third scene: Some years later, Judah's wife dies. Judah goes to supervise the shearing of his sheep.

Fourth scene: Tamar knows that Judah has not sent his third son to Tamar. Tamar takes off her widow's clothes, disguises herself as a prostitute, and sleeps with Judah.

Fifth scene: Judah tries to pay the prostitute but no one can find her.

Sixth scene: Judah learns that Tamar is pregnant. Judah discovers he is the father of Tamar's baby.

Seventh scene: Tamar gives birth to twins.

The characters in this story include:

- Judah
- Judah's wife, daughter of Shua
- Er
- Onan
- Shelah
- Tamar
- Hirah, the Adullamite
- Men who lived in Enaim
- midwife

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

This narrative story takes place after Joseph was sold as a slave and taken to Egypt. We don't know when exactly this story occurred.

Judah goes down to Adullam and up to Timnah. This direction refers to mountain elevation. Hebron was higher elevation than Adullam so Judah went down. It is about 15 miles, or 24 kilometers, between Hebron and Adullam. Timnah would be higher than Adullam so Judah went up to Timnah. It is about 4 miles, or 7 kilometers, between Adullam and Timnah. Shelah was born at Kezib. Kezib is about 3 miles, or 5 kilometers, from Adullam.

Look at the map showing Hebron, Adullam and Timnah.

In Scene one, Judah moved to a town northwest of Hebron but at a lower elevation. Judah stayed with a man named Hirah. Judah saw the daughter of Shua and married her. She was a Canaanite woman. They had 3 sons: Er, Onan, and Shelah.

In scene two, Judah's son Er is old enough to marry and Judah selects Tamar, a Canaanite woman, to be his wife. Yahweh saw that Er was wicked and took Er's life. We don't know in what way Er was wicked. Er had no son to inherit. Judah told Onan to marry Tamar so that Tamar would have a son who would be Er's heir. Onan used a method of birth control to make sure that Tamar didn't get pregnant. Onan did this multiple times. Yahweh was displeased with Onan's disobedience and took Onan's life. Judah sent Tamar home to her parents to wait until Shelah was old enough to marry. But Judah did not intend for Shelah to marry Tamar. This is extra information for the audience. No one told Tamar of Judah's intentions regarding Judah's son Shelah.

In scene three, Judah's wife dies. This happens some years later because Shelah is now old enough to marry but Judah has not sent for Tamar. After a time of mourning, Judah and his friend Hirah go to Timnah to supervise the shearing of his sheep.

In scene four, Tamar knows that Shelah is old enough to marry and that Judah has not sent for Tamar. Tamar takes off her widow's clothes, covers her face with a veil, and sits beside the road where Judah will see her. Judah thinks Tamar is a prostitute and offers to pay a young goat if Tamar will have sex with Judah. Tamar demands that Judah leave his seal, cord, and walking stick as a guarantee that the goat will come. Then Tamar sleeps with Judah.

In scene five, Judah sends Hirah, the Adullamite, with the small goat to pay the woman and regain Judah's seal, cord, and stick. Hirah can't find the prostitute. The men of Enaim tell Hirah that there is no prostitute there. Judah decided to let the woman keep the seal, cord, and stick. Judah thought everyone would laugh at him if he went again to look for the prostitute.

In Scene six, three months later, Judah hears that Tamar is pregnant. Judah demands that Tamar be killed by burning. Tamar sent the seal, cord, and stick to Judah. Tamar said, "The father of my baby is the owner of these items." Judah realizes that Judah is the father of Tamar's baby. Judah says that Tamar has done the right thing

in getting pregnant so her husband would have an heir. Judah had done the wrong thing in not making sure that Tamar had a baby. Judah did not sleep with Tamar again.

In scene seven, Tamar has twins. One baby's arm comes out and the midwife thinks this will be the first-born and ties a red string around the wrist of the baby. But the arm goes back up the birth canal and the other baby is born first. The first-born is named Perez and the second-born is named Zerah.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 7 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Judah
- Judah's wife, daughter of Shua
- Er
- Onan
- Shelah
- Tamar
- Hirah, the Adullamite
- Men who lived in Enaim
- midwife

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

In the first scene, Judah moves to Adullam and marries a Canaanite woman.

Stop the action: Ask Judah, "How do you think your father will feel about your marrying a Canaanite woman?" You may hear, "He won't be happy. My father wants us to stay separated from the Canaanites. But she is beautiful and will make me a good wife." Restart the action.

Judah and his wife have 3 sons. The wife names them Er, Onan and Shelah.

In scene 2, Judah arranges for Er to marry a Canaanite woman named Tamar. Yahweh saw that Er was a wicked man. Yahweh took Er's life. Tamar was a widow without a child. Judah told Onan, the second son, to sleep with Tamar and give Tamar a son.

Stop the action: Ask Judah, "Why do you want an heir for Er?" You may hear, "Er should have an heir. This way Tamar will have someone to take care of her. We have to provide for the widow." Restart the action.

The son would be considered Er's heir. Onan refused to father a child that would be considered his brother Er's child. Onan practiced birth control to avoid giving Tamar a child.

Stop the action: Ask Onan, "Why don't you want to provide a son for your brother, Er?" You may hear, "Er is dead. If I give a son to Tamar, that son will inherit Er's portion. My portion will be less. I don't want to father a child who will be someone else's heir." Restart the action.

Because Onan was disobedient, Yahweh caused Onan to die. Shelah, the third son, was too young to marry Tamar. Judah sent Tamar back to her parents. Judah promised Tamar that Shelah would marry Tamar when Shelah was old enough. Judah did not intend to keep this promise.

In scene 3, Judah's wife dies. Judah observed the usual time of mourning. Then Judah goes to supervise the shearing of the sheep.

In scene 4, Tamar realizes that Judah does not intend for Shelah to marry Tamar. Tamar knows that Judah is going to pass near Tamar's home to go to the sheep shearing. Tamar takes off her widow's clothes. Tamar covers herself with a veil. Tamar sits on the side of the road so that Judah will think that Tamar is a prostitute.

Stop the action: Ask Tamar, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I'm angry and disappointed. My father-in-law promised me and he has not kept his promise. I don't like behaving like a prostitute but I have no choice. I must get a son." Restart the action.

When Judah stops and proposes to have paid sex with the prostitute beside the road, Judah does not know that this woman is Tamar. Judah offers to pay a small goat. Tamar demands a pledge or objects to keep until the small goat arrives. Tamar demands items that identify Judah.

Stop the action: Ask Tamar, "Why are you demanding items that identify Judah?" You may hear, "I hope I get pregnant from this encounter. Judah will judge me if I do. I need these items to prove who the father is. When Judah realizes he is the father, Judah won't hurt me." Restart the action.

Judah agreed to give the woman the three items and then had sex with the prostitute. Judah left and went on to the shearing of the sheep. Tamar went home and put her widow's clothes back on. Judah did not know that he had had sex with Tamar.

In scene 5, Judah sends Hirah to give the prostitute the small goat and get Judah's personal items back. The men of the town tell Hirah that there is no prostitute in that area. Judah decides to let the woman keep the items. Judah thinks people will laugh at Judah if he goes again to look for the woman.

In scene 6, Tamar becomes pregnant and people know about the pregnancy. Someone tells Judah that Tamar is pregnant. Judah thinks that Tamar has been acting like a prostitute and says that Tamar should be burned. At that point, Tamar sends the three personal items that belong to Judah back to Judah. Judah realizes that Judah is the father of Tamar's baby. Judah then says that Tamar is blameless. Judah is the one who has done wrong.

Stop the action: Ask Judah, "How are you feeling now?" You may hear, "I regret that I didn't do for Tamar as I should. Tamar has done the right thing. I was wrong in my actions." Restart the action.

In scene 7, Tamar has twins. The first-born is named Perez.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The text refers twice to **Yahweh**. Use the same word for Yahweh you have used in previous passages. Yahweh is discussed in the Master Glossary.

There are a number of sexual relationship words in this text. Different translations use phrases such as lay with or slept with meaning that he had sex with the woman. You will need to use the socially accepted words for your culture.

Stop and discuss: Tell stories of sexual encounters such as these in the story. Listen to the words and phrases you use to make it okay to talk about these things in public.

Judah refers to a law that requires that a brother sleep with a widow of his brother in order to provide an heir. The baby born would be the heir of the dead brother not the heir of the man who actually fathered the baby. Judah does not give the name of this law. This was the Levirate law and was common practice in the ancient Middle East.

Onan does not want to have a baby with Tamar that would be considered Er's heir. Onan practices a form of birth control. This means that Onan withdrew during the process of sexual intercourse and spilled his seed or sperm on the ground. This made it impossible for Tamar to become pregnant. For a baby to be formed, the man's sperm has to enter the woman's body. Most cultures find ways to describe this process that are acceptable to say in every group.

Stop and discuss: Talk about a similar situation in your culture. Notice the words you use to describe the action. How do you say this so that your grandmother will accept hearing it?

Onan's sin was that Onan refused to provide an heir for his dead brother. Onan disobeyed his father. Yahweh took Onan's life because Onan refused to provide an heir for his brother. Yahweh said that what Onan did was wicked or **evil**. Evil is discussed in the Master Glossary.

When Judah met Tamar beside the road, Judah did not recognize Tamar. Tamar had taken off her widow's clothes and wore other clothes to entice Judah to have sex with her. Tamar also covered her face with a veil. Judah thought Tamar was a **prostitute**. A prostitute is a person who sells her body for sex. Some translations use the word harlot. A **harlot** was a woman who was devoted to prostitution as a part of worship at a fertility shrine or temple. The Canaanites have many of these temples or shrines. A prostitute would be any woman selling herself for sex. A harlot was a prostitute with the added meaning of using prostitution to serve a specific pagan or false god. You need to find words to use that you can use with all people. Judah thought that the prostitute worked for a local pagan fertility temple.

When Tamar met Judah beside the road, Judah thought Tamar was a prostitute and offered to pay for sex with her. Tamar demanded a guarantee or **pledge**. A guarantee or pledge would be an item of value left to ensure that the payment promised was actually paid. Judah promised to pay a young goat as the price. Tamar wanted Judah to leave something with Tamar that would be of value. In this way, if Judah did not send the goat, Tamar would still have something of value. Tamar asked for Judah's seal, cord and stick. The **seal** was a cylinder that had an engraving on it that represented Judah. Judah wore this on a cord around his neck. When Judah needed to sign something, he would press this cylinder into clay. Everyone would recognize that this signature belonged to Judah. The walking stick would have carvings on the stick that everyone would recognize. By asking for these items, Tamar was able to identify the person who came and had sex with her.

Show the picture of the cylinder seal again.

Judah learns that Tamar slept with Judah in order to have a baby as an heir for Er. Judah says that Tamar's actions are **righteous**. Righteousness is discussed in the Master Glossary. In this case, Judah is saying that Tamar was blameless in her actions. Tamar was innocent. Tamar acted for the right reasons. Judah says that Tamar is more righteous meaning more innocent or more blameless than Judah. Judah failed in his task to provide a husband for Tamar and an heir for Er. Tamar had acted on her own to make this happen.

When Tamar's baby was born, they discovered she was having twins. When a hand came out the birth canal, the midwife thought that this was the first baby and tied a red string around the wrist to identify the first-born. In that culture, first-born sons had rights and privileges as well as responsibilities. It was important to know which twin was first-born for inheritance rights. The other baby was actually the first born. The red string helped make sure which child was the firstborn child.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 38:1-30

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (21155100 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 4](#)
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[mp3 zip](#) (15119716 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 39:1-23

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 39:1-23 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This passage returns to the story of Joseph. This is a narrative account of what happened to Joseph when he arrived in Egypt and the first few years that Joseph lived in Egypt.

Show a map of Canaan and Egypt.

The passage uses the general name for the traders, Ishmaelites. In the previous Joseph passage, the writer called the traders Ishmaelites and Midianites. Ishmaelites is a general term for all traders. When they arrived in Egypt, the Ishmaelites sold Joseph to a man named Potiphar who was captain of the guard for Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. This means that Potiphar was responsible for the safety of the palace and all who lived in the palace. The kings of Egypt used the title of Pharaoh.

Yahweh was with Joseph. This phrase is repeated 4 times in the passage. Each time, the phrase tells us that Yahweh caused something good to happen to Joseph. Yahweh caused Joseph to succeed or be successful in everything that Joseph did. Joseph started as a general slave. Then Potiphar made Joseph Potiphar's personal assistant. Then Potiphar put Joseph in charge of Potiphar's household and everything that Potiphar owned. As soon as Potiphar put Joseph in charge of Potiphar's household, Yahweh also caused Potiphar to prosper. Yahweh blessed Potiphar's household for Joseph's sake. This means that everything in Potiphar's home and in his business ran smoothly and flourished. Potiphar recognized that Yahweh was blessing Potiphar because of Joseph. Potiphar put Joseph in charge of everything Potiphar owned. Joseph took care of everything for Potiphar so that Potiphar only had to worry about what he wanted to eat. Egyptians would not allow foreigners to cook their food.

Joseph was a handsome and well-built man. Potiphar's wife looked at Joseph and wanted to sleep with Joseph. Potiphar's wife said, "Come and sleep with me." Or "Come and lie with me."

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about a woman trying to get a young man to come and have sex with her. What words and phrases do you use to describe what she wants? How do you talk about this politely so that all understand but no one is upset by the language used?

Joseph refused to sleep with Potiphar's wife. Joseph explained how Potiphar had trusted Joseph with the whole household. Potiphar gave Joseph control of everything except Potiphar's wife. Joseph says that to sleep with Potiphar's wife would be wicked and a great sin against God. Sin is an act of disobedience to God. According to the passage, Potiphar's wife did not accept Joseph's refusal. Potiphar's wife persisted day after day trying to get Joseph to sleep with her. Joseph refused every time Potiphar's wife asked.

Then one day, Joseph was alone in the house doing some work. Potiphar's wife grabbed Joseph by the shirt or tunic. This was a loose outer garment worn by men. The tunic was large enough and loose enough that Joseph was able to pull out of the tunic and run away leaving the tunic in Potiphar's wife's hands. The tunic would be a simple garment worn by slaves. The tunic was not special like Joseph's coat that Jacob gave Joseph. Potiphar's wife told her servants that Joseph had tried to rape her and used the tunic as evidence. Potiphar's wife kept the tunic and showed it to Potiphar and repeated the accusation of attempted rape. Potiphar's wife also accused or blamed Potiphar in the way she spoke. Potiphar's wife said, "That Hebrew slave you've brought into the house..." Hebrew is another word for the Israelites or descendants of Jacob. Potiphar's wife is saying that Potiphar is responsible because Potiphar is the one who brought Joseph to work in the house.

When Potiphar's wife talked about Joseph being a Hebrew slave, she is being negative or talking about Joseph in a very bad way or negative way. Potiphar's wife is saying that Joseph is a foreigner, a low-class person. Joseph is uncivilized.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about an immigrant or a stranger who came to the village. What words do you use to describe this person? If you want to make people think he is a bad person, how do you describe him?

Potiphar's wife lied to the servants and to Potiphar. Potiphar's wife said that Joseph left his shirt or garment beside her when Joseph ran out of the room. This is not a true statement. Potiphar's wife had hold of the shirt or garment and Joseph pulled out of it and ran away leaving the garment in her hands. To leave the garment beside Potiphar's wife would mean that Joseph took the garment off and put it to one side before attacking Potiphar's wife. Joseph did not take his tunic or garment off. Potiphar's wife pulled it off as Joseph tried to break free from her and run away.

Potiphar heard the story from his wife and was furious. Furious is a strong word for a strong emotion.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about someone who is angry. Use different words to describe the anger the individual is feeling. Can you rank the words in order from just mad to very angry to extremely angry? You will want to use your strongest word for angry when you talk about how Potiphar reacts.

Potiphar threw Joseph in prison. Notice that Potiphar did not give Joseph a chance to defend himself. Potiphar did not ask Joseph what happened. Joseph was not given a trial. Joseph was put in prison even though Joseph had not done anything wrong. Some people think that Potiphar did not totally believe his wife. If Potiphar had believed his wife completely, Potiphar would have executed Joseph. Execution was the usual punishment for rape or attempted rape. Instead, Potiphar put Joseph in prison.

Potiphar put Joseph in the prison where the king's prisoners were placed. Potiphar threw Joseph into prison. To throw someone is a strong or violent action. Potiphar was feeling strong emotions when Potiphar put Joseph into prison. Potiphar put Joseph in a prison where the conditions would be slightly better than a regular prison. While in this prison, Joseph met people who served the king.

Yahweh was with Joseph in prison. This is a repeat of this phrase. Yahweh was with Joseph in Potiphar's house and caused Joseph to succeed. In this passage, there is the added sentence that says, Yahweh showed Joseph Yahweh's unfailing love. Yahweh caused Joseph to become a favorite of the jailor. The jailor or prison warden put Joseph in charge of the other prisoners. The jailor put Joseph in charge of everything in the prison. Joseph took care of everything. Yahweh was with Joseph and caused Joseph to succeed in everything Joseph did.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 6 scenes.

First scene: Joseph arrives in Egypt. Potiphar purchases Joseph.

Second scene: Joseph works in Potiphar's house. Yahweh is with Joseph. Potiphar puts Joseph in charge of the entire household and everything Potiphar owns.

Third scene: Potiphar's wife sees that Joseph is handsome and wants to sleep with Joseph. Joseph refuses.

Fourth scene: Potiphar's wife grabs Joseph. Joseph runs leaving his tunic in her hands. Potiphar's wife tells the servants that Joseph tried to rape her.

Fifth scene: When Potiphar arrives in the home, Potiphar's wife accuses Joseph of attempted rape and offers the tunic as evidence. Potiphar reacts by putting Joseph in prison.

Sixth scene: Yahweh is with Joseph in prison. Joseph succeeds in everything he does. The jailor puts Joseph in charge of the other prisoners and everything in the prison.

The characters in this story include:

- Joseph
- Potiphar
- Potiphar's wife
- Other servants
- The jailor
- Other prisoners

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Several translations use the word "now" as the introductory word to this passage. The word "now" is a connecting word that refers back to Joseph being sold as a slave. The story of Judah and Tamar interrupted the story of Joseph. The writer is using this connecting word to bring us back to the story of Joseph.

The Ishmaelites take Joseph down to Egypt. The direction word "down" means that the Ishmaelites are going from the higher elevation of the mountains in Canaan down to sea level in Egypt.

Joseph begins his reply to Potiphar's wife with a word like "behold" or "look." This word draws attention to something important that Joseph is about to say.

Joseph uses a question that doesn't require an answer when Joseph says, "How could I do such a wicked thing?" This can be changed to a positive statement such as "I can't do such a wicked thing."

In scene 1, several translations use the word "now" as the introductory word to this passage. The word "now" is a connecting word that refers back to Joseph being sold as a slave. The story of Judah and Tamar interrupted the story of Joseph. The writer is using this connecting word to bring us back to the story of Joseph.

The Ishmaelites take Joseph down to Egypt. The direction word "down" means that the Ishmaelites are going from the higher elevation of the mountains in Canaan down to sea level in Egypt. Joseph arrives in Egypt. Potiphar, who is an important man, purchases Joseph. Potiphar is captain of the palace guard. Potiphar is responsible for guarding the king and all his household and making sure they are safe.

In scene 2, Joseph begins to work in Potiphar's house. Yahweh is with Joseph. Everything Joseph does succeeds. Potiphar realizes that Yahweh is causing Joseph to succeed. Potiphar puts Joseph in charge of Potiphar's household. Immediately, Yahweh blesses Potiphar also. Everything in the house runs smoothly. Potiphar's crops and livestock flourish. Potiphar makes Joseph completely responsible for everything.

In scene 3, Potiphar's wife notices that Joseph is handsome and well-built. Potiphar's wife asks Joseph to sleep with her. Joseph refuses. Joseph begins his reply to Potiphar's wife with a word like "behold" or "look." This word draws attention to something important that Joseph is about to say. Joseph says this would be a wicked thing to do and a great sin against God. Joseph uses a question that doesn't require an answer when Joseph says, "How could I do such a wicked thing?" This can be changed to a positive statement such as "I can't do such

a wicked thing. Joseph refuses to sleep with Potiphar's wife. Potiphar's wife persists in asking Joseph to sleep with her day after day. Joseph always refuses.

In scene 4, one day, Potiphar's wife catches Joseph in the house alone. Potiphar's wife takes hold of Joseph's tunic or garment. Joseph pulls out of the garment and runs away leaving the garment in her hands. Potiphar's wife calls out to the servants. The servants come and Potiphar's wife accuses Joseph of attempted rape. Potiphar's wife says that Joseph ran away when she screamed and left his tunic behind. The way Potiphar's wife says this makes it seem like Joseph took off his tunic. Joseph did not take the tunic off. The tunic came off when Potiphar's wife held on to it as Joseph ran away.

In scene 5, Potiphar's wife waits until Potiphar arrives home. Then Potiphar's wife accuses Joseph of trying to rape her. Potiphar's wife uses language that implies that Joseph is a foreigner, a low-class person and uncivilized. Potiphar's wife also blames Potiphar because Potiphar is the person who brought Joseph to the house. Potiphar's wife shows Potiphar Joseph's tunic or garment as proof that her accusation is true. When Potiphar hears what Joseph did, Potiphar becomes furious.

In scene 6, Potiphar throws Joseph in prison. To throw someone into prison is a strong action, much stronger than put or send. Joseph, who is completely innocent, is now in prison. This prison is a special prison. The king's prisoners were put in this prison. Yahweh is with Joseph in prison. Yahweh causes everything Joseph does to succeed. Yahweh shows Joseph Yahweh's unfailing love. Yahweh caused the jailor to notice what Joseph was doing. Soon the jailor put Joseph in charge of the prisoners and then in charge of everything that happened in the prison. Yahweh was with Joseph and caused everything Joseph did to succeed.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 6 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Joseph
- Potiphar
- Potiphar's wife
- Other servants
- The jailor
- Other prisoners

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

In scene 1, Joseph arrives in Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian officer, purchases Joseph as a slave to work in Potiphar's house.

In scene 2, Joseph begins to work in Potiphar's house. Yahweh is with Joseph and everything Joseph does succeeds. Potiphar notices, realizes that Yahweh is with Joseph, and puts Joseph in charge of the household. Then Yahweh blesses Potiphar. Potiphar gives Joseph complete responsibility for everything Potiphar owns.

Stop the action: Ask Joseph, "How do you know that God is with you?" You may hear, "Everything I'm doing is succeeding. I'm learning how to manage all these strange things and strange people. I've even learned the language. Everyone seems happy with my work. I know God is helping me with this because I wouldn't know what to do by myself." Ask Potiphar, "How do you know that Yahweh is with Joseph? What have you seen?" You might hear, "I don't know Joseph's God, but I do know that Joseph is doing really well. Everything he does is right. Joseph is honest. Joseph sees what needs to be done and makes sure that it gets done. I've never had a slave like Joseph before." Restart the action.

In scene 3, Potiphar's wife notices Joseph is a handsome young man. Potiphar's wife wants to sleep with Joseph but Joseph refuses to sleep with her. Potiphar's wife persists daily asking Joseph to sleep with her.

Stop the action: Ask Joseph, "What are you feeling right now? Why won't you sleep with Potiphar's wife?" You may hear, "It would be wrong to sleep with her. She is married to my master. He trusts me with everything he has. I can't betray his trust like this. Sleeping with her would mean disobeying God. I wish she would leave me alone. I can't tell anyone about this problem because she is Potiphar's wife." Ask Potiphar's wife, "Why do you want to sleep with Joseph?" You may hear, "I'm lonely and he is so handsome. I'm bored. I have nothing to do. It would amuse me to sleep with Joseph. It would make my husband notice me more." Restart the action.

In scene 4, Joseph is alone working in the house. Potiphar's wife comes in and grabs Joseph's tunic or shirt. Potiphar's wife commands Joseph to sleep with her. Joseph pulls out of the tunic and runs from the house. Joseph leaves the tunic in Potiphar's wife's hands. Potiphar's wife called for the servants to come. When the male servants arrived, Potiphar's wife told them that Joseph had tried to rape her. Potiphar's wife showed them Joseph's tunic as evidence that Joseph had done this.

Stop the action: Ask Joseph, "What are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I am afraid. I did nothing wrong, but she has my tunic. She is accusing me and there are no witnesses to my innocence. I don't know what will happen to me." Ask Potiphar's wife, "Why are you accusing Joseph like this?" You may hear, "Joseph refused my command. Joseph is a slave. Joseph must obey me. Joseph rejected me and refused to sleep with me. I won't forgive Joseph for this. I hope Joseph gets a terrible punishment." Restart the action.

In scene 5, Potiphar returns home. Potiphar's wife told Potiphar that Joseph tried to rape her. Potiphar's wife showed Potiphar Joseph's tunic as evidence. Potiphar's wife referred to Joseph as that Hebrew slave. By using these words, Potiphar's wife is saying that Joseph is a foreigner, low-class, and dishonest. Then Potiphar's wife blames Potiphar by reminding Potiphar that Potiphar brought Joseph into the house and gave Joseph a position of authority. Potiphar reacts with extreme anger and throws Joseph into prison.

Stop the action: Ask Potiphar, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I am very angry. I trusted Joseph with everything. How dare Joseph do this terrible thing!" Or, "I'm angry but I don't know who is right and who is wrong here. I don't know if Joseph did this terrible thing, but Joseph must leave the house regardless. I'm putting Joseph into a prison where Joseph will be well-treated. I don't know what to think of my wife." Ask Potiphar's wife, "What are you feeling now?" You may hear, "I'm glad Joseph has gone to prison. Joseph rejected me." Restart the action.

In scene 6, Joseph goes to the prison where the prisoners of the king were kept. Yahweh was with Joseph and caused Joseph to succeed. Yahweh caused Joseph to become a favorite of the jailor. The jailor put Joseph in charge of the other prisoners and everything in the prison.

Stop the action: Ask the jailor, "Why are you so pleased with Joseph?" You may hear, "Joseph does everything I ask with honesty and good work. I've never seen a prisoner like Joseph before. Joseph's God seems to bless Joseph. With Joseph in charge, I can relax and do nothing." Ask Joseph, "How do you know Yahweh is with you here in prison?" You may hear, "God is showing me how to do things I didn't know how to do. The jailor is pleased with my work. The jailor has given me a high position here so that I'm more comfortable. I believe God has caused this to happen." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The passage uses the name **Yahweh** and the name **God**. When talking about Joseph, the passage uses Yahweh. When Joseph speaks to an Egyptian, the passage uses God. Joseph uses the name God when Joseph speaks to Potiphar's wife. These are two names for the same God. Yahweh and God are discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same names you have in previous passages.

The Ishmaelite traders sold Joseph to Potiphar. Use the same word for the Ishmaelites that you used in the previous passage.

Yahweh **blessed** Potiphar after Potiphar put Joseph in charge of the household. Bless is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for bless that you have used in previous passages. Potiphar's crops and livestock **flourished**. To flourish is to do really well and increase in size or amount. This means that Potiphar had good harvests. His animals all increased in numbers and were healthy animals. Potiphar realised that all these blessings were from Yahweh.

Potiphar did not give Joseph control over the meals that Potiphar ate. Many believe that the Egyptians thought that non-Egyptians could not prepare food properly. Potiphar would not have trusted any non-Egyptian to prepare food to eat.

Potiphar's wife tried to get Joseph to have sex with her. Different translations use different ways to say this politely. "Come lie with me. Come to bed with me. Make love to me. Come and sleep with me." These are all different ways to say politely the same thing. Use a polite way of speaking to describe this that you would use in your culture when talking generally with people.

Joseph says that to sleep with Potiphar's wife would be a wicked or evil thing to do. God had not yet given the law. But Joseph knew that God had set boundaries around marriage. Joseph knew that husbands and wives were to sleep only with each other and not others outside the marriage.

Joseph says that to sleep with Potiphar's wife would be a great **sin** against God. Sin is an act of disobedience against God. Be sure that the word you use isn't a word for one sinful act such as forgetting to follow a religious requirement or recite a prayer. Sin is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for sin that you have used in previous passages.

When Potiphar heard that Joseph had tried to rape Potiphar's wife, Potiphar reacted with **fury**. Potiphar was furious. This is a very strong word for anger. Potiphar threw Joseph into prison. To throw someone into prison is a strong action. You need to use strong action words in this part of the story.

The prison was the king's prison. This was a particular prison for those who were close to the king or served the king in some way. This prison, while still a prison, was probably not as bad as common prisons were.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 39:1-23

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (20980754 KB)

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Genesis 40:1-23

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 40:1-23 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?

4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

As this passage starts Joseph is in prison. Potiphar threw Joseph in prison after Potiphar's wife accused Joseph of trying to rape her. We don't know how long Joseph has been in this prison. We do know that Joseph is now in charge of the prisoners and everything that happens in the prison. This is a narrative story.

Pharaoh is the name given to Egypt's kings. Each king has the title Pharaoh attached to his name. Two of Pharaoh's servants did something that was not pleasing to the king. They offended the king. We don't know what they did. These two men had important positions. One man was the chief cupbearer. This means that this man was responsible to prepare whatever the king drank. The chief cupbearer had to taste the drink before giving it to the king to make sure the drink did not have poison in it. The other man was the chief baker. This man was in charge of baking the bread and cakes that the king ate. These two men were chiefs, meaning that others served under them who also served drinks and worked in baking.

These men were put in the prison of the captain of the guard. The captain of the guard was responsible for the safety of the palace and all who lived in the palace. The prison was in the palace of the captain of the guard. The prison was a part of the palace but not the part where the captain of the guard lived. It was a prison. Joseph was in this same prison. Potiphar had the title of captain of the guard when Potiphar purchased Joseph as a slave. Potiphar was captain of the guard when Potiphar put Joseph into prison. Some think that this current captain of the guard is Potiphar, but we don't have a name for this current captain of the guard. Others think that another man is now the captain of the palace guard. Remember some time has passed since Potiphar put Joseph in prison. Most translations use the title of captain of the guard and don't use Potiphar's name. The captain of the guard assigned Joseph to look after these two prisoners. These two prisoners were important men. Thus, Joseph had an important job in looking after these two men. They remained in prison for some time.

One night the chief cupbearer and the chief baker each had a dream. This means that they were asleep when they had the dream. When Joseph saw the two men the next day, Joseph realized that each man looked disturbed about something. Joseph asked them why they looked so worried. The men explained that they had each had a dream that no one could interpret. Joseph explained that only God could interpret dreams. When speaking to the Egyptians, Joseph uses the general word for God but not Joseph's personal name for God when talking about God. To interpret a dream means to explain what the symbols mean and give the general meaning of the dream. Then Joseph asked each man to describe his dream.

Stop and discuss: Talk about dreams in your culture. What do people believe about dreams? Who explains what the dream means?

As each man tells Joseph his dream, Joseph uses a word picture to begin his explanation. Joseph says, Pharaoh will lift up your head. This is a word picture that means Pharaoh is going to summon you into his presence. Three days later, Pharaoh lifted the heads of the two men. This means that both men were brought into the presence of Pharaoh. Then Pharaoh restored the cupbearer to his position. Pharaoh had the baker killed.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about someone important like a king or chief or clan leader who summons servants to come to him. Does the king or leader use any particular words or phrases for this summons? Are these word pictures? How would you tell what happened so that everyone understands the meaning?

The chief cupbearer saw a grapevine in his dream. Joseph explained what the dream meant. The dream gave good news to the cupbearer. The cupbearer would return to his position serving the king.

Show a picture of a grapevine with several branches coming from it. The vine should have a cluster of ripe grapes hanging from the vine.

Show a picture of someone squeezing a cluster of grapes with his hand. The picture should include a cup with juice flowing from the hand to the cup.

Joseph asked the cupbearer when he goes back to the service of the king to tell the king about Joseph. Joseph says, "I was kidnapped," or "I was stolen," or "I was brought by force." These words are different ways to say the same thing. These words indicate that Joseph did not come to Egypt of his own free will. To kidnap someone is to take a person by force and carry him away. Kidnap usually involves a child but now means anyone who is taken captive and carried away from his home.

Joseph told the cupbearer, "I don't deserve to be here." Joseph means, "I don't deserve to be in prison. I'm innocent. I did nothing wrong." Joseph uses the word *prison* which is a strong word to indicate that Joseph has been wrongly treated. Joseph says, "I am from the land of the Hebrews." This means that Joseph is from the land of Canaan. Hebrew is the language that Jacob and his descendants speak. Hebrews is another name used for the descendants of Jacob. The land of the Hebrews is the land of Canaan where the people who speak Hebrew live. Joseph is telling the cupbearer that Joseph is a foreigner in Egypt. Later, when the cupbearer speaks to the king about Joseph, the cupbearer will remember that Joseph is a foreigner.

The baker then explains his dream. The baker sees three baskets filled with pastries which are small, sweet breads baked with flour, stacked on his head. Birds are flying around to eat the pastries. Joseph explains the meaning of this dream also. The dream means that the baker will die. Joseph says that the king will cut off the head of the baker. Then the baker's body will be impaled on a sharp pole and left there for birds to come and pick off the flesh. To impale someone means to put the sharp end of the pole through the body. The body would then hang from the end of the pole. The birds that would come to eat the flesh would be birds of prey such as vultures that eat dead animals. With the flesh taken off the bones, the Egyptians believed that the person could not achieve immortality. This person could not live forever in the world of the dead. This means that the king was punishing the baker severely.

Show a picture of 3 baskets filled with pastries stacked up.

Pharaoh used his birthday celebration as the time to bring the cupbearer and baker out of prison. The cupbearer returned to his position as chief cupbearer to Pharaoh. However, the cupbearer forgot all about Joseph. The baker was killed. Joseph remained in prison.

Stop and discuss: How does your leader celebrate special occasions like birthdays?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 5 scenes.

First scene: Pharaoh becomes angry with his chief cupbearer and chief baker and puts them in prison. The captain of the guard assigns Joseph to look after the two men.

Second scene: Joseph sees that the two men appear to be disturbed about something. Joseph asks what has happened. Each man has had a dream and no one can explain it.

Third scene: The chief cupbearer explains his dream. Joseph interprets the dream. Joseph asks the cupbearer to tell the king about Joseph.

Fourth scene: The chief baker explains his dream. Joseph interprets the dream.

Fifth scene: Both men leave the prison. Joseph's explanations of each dream come true. The chief cupbearer forgets about Joseph.

The characters in this story include:

- Joseph
- The captain of the guard.
- Pharaoh or the king of Egypt
- Chief Cupbearer
- Chief Baker

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

The passage begins with a time phrase or transition. This indicates that some time has passed. Joseph has been in prison for some time when this story starts. We don't know how long Joseph has been in prison. When the two servants of the king arrive in the prison, they also stay there for some time. We don't know how long the two servants of the king were in prison before this passage starts.

In scene one, Pharaoh becomes angry with two of his servants. The chief cupbearer and the chief baker have each done something to offend the king. The king sends both men to prison and they are put in the same prison with Joseph. The prison is located in the palace of the captain of the guard. The captain of the guard assigned Joseph to look after the two servants of the king. In the previous passage, Potiphar was the captain of the guard. The captain of the guard's name is not mentioned in this passage. We don't know who the captain of the guard is. They remained in the prison for some time.

In scene two, Joseph notices one morning that the two servants seem upset about something. Joseph asked them what has happened. Each man has had a dream, and no one could explain the dream. Joseph explained that only God can interpret dreams. When Joseph says that only God can explain dreams, Joseph asks a question that doesn't require an answer. This can be changed to a positive statement. God is the only one who can interpret dreams. This question or statement shows that Joseph trusts that his God can interpret dreams. Joseph is expressing confidence in God. Joseph asked each man to tell Joseph his dream.

In scene three, the chief cupbearer explains his dream. The chief cupbearer saw a grapevine with three branches. The vine produced clusters of grapes. The chief cupbearer took a cluster of grapes in his hand. The chief cupbearer squeezed the grapes. Juice from the grapes filled the king's wine cup. The chief cupbearer gave the cup full of juice to Pharaoh. Joseph was able to explain the dream. Joseph said that in three days, the cupbearer would return to his service of Pharaoh. Joseph asked the cupbearer to remember Joseph and tell the king about Joseph. Joseph said, "I am innocent." In this passage, Joseph tells the chief cupbearer that Joseph was kidnapped or taken by force from his homeland. We know that the brothers sold Joseph as a slave to the Ishmaelite traders who were passing. We don't know what Joseph knew about how he was taken to Egypt.

In scene four, the chief baker explained his dream to Joseph. The baker saw three baskets full of pastries stacked on the baker's head. Birds were coming to eat the pastries from the top basket. Joseph explained that in three days, Pharaoh will have the baker killed. Pharaoh will have the baker's head cut off and then impale the baker's body on a pole. Birds of prey will come and eat the flesh from the bones.

In scene five, Pharaoh's birthday occurs three days after Joseph explained the dreams. Pharaoh prepared a banquet to celebrate his birthday. Pharaoh invited his officials and staff to the banquet. Then Pharaoh asked that the chief cupbearer and the chief baker come from prison. Everything that Joseph said would happen came true just as Joseph said. The chief cupbearer went back to his position of serving the king. The king had the chief baker beheaded and his body impaled on a pole. The chief cupbearer forgot about Joseph. The chief cupbearer did not tell Pharaoh about Joseph.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 5 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Joseph
- The captain of the guard.
- Pharaoh or the king of Egypt
- Chief Cupbearer
- Chief Baker

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

In scene 1, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker have offended Pharaoh. Pharaoh puts them in prison. These two men are in the prison of the captain of the palace guard. Joseph is in this same prison. The captain of the guard assigns Joseph to look after these two servants of the king.

Stop the action: Ask Joseph, "How are you feeling now that you have been in prison for some time?" You may hear, "I'm sad that I'm still in prison but I know that Yahweh is with me. I have been given much authority over the prison and how it is run. My circumstances are as good as they could be with me still in prison. I'm very thankful that Yahweh has helped me." Restart the action.

In scene 2, Joseph notices that the two servants of the king look worried about something. Joseph stops to ask them why they look worried. The two servants explain that each of them had a dream and no one can explain the dream. Joseph says, "Interpreting dreams is God's work. Go ahead and tell me your dreams."

Stop the action: Ask Joseph, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I am confident that my God will help me. I know that my God is the greatest. My God can interpret dreams. I trust that my God is going to help me." Restart the action.

In scene 3, the chief cupbearer explains his dream to Joseph. Joseph explains that the dream means that the cupbearer is going to return to his position of service to the king. The cupbearer's time in prison is finished. Then Joseph asks the cupbearer to tell the king about Joseph. Joseph says, "I'm in prison but I don't deserve to be here."

Stop the action: Ask the cupbearer, "How do you feel when you hear this news?" You may hear, "I am so happy. I didn't do anything wrong. I don't know why the king put me in prison. I'm glad that I'm going back to the king's service." Ask Joseph, "Why are you asking the cupbearer to tell the king about you? What do you think the king might do?" You may hear, "I hope the king will look at my situation and take me out of this prison. I don't want to be here the rest of my life. I didn't do anything to deserve prison." Ask the baker, "How do you feel after hearing the explanation for the cupbearer's dream?" You may hear, "I hope my explanation is as good. I want to get out of here and return to the king's service." Restart the action.

In scene 4, the chief baker explains his dream. Joseph gives the meaning of the dream. The baker is going to die. The king will have the baker's head cut off and then impale the baker's body on a pole so that birds of prey can eat the flesh.

Stop the action: Ask the baker, "How do you feel when you hear this explanation?" You may hear, "I'm very upset. I don't deserve this. I need to explain to the king what happened. This is not justice. I hope I can change the king's mind on this." Restart the action.

In scene 5, Pharaoh celebrates his birthday with a banquet. This happens 3 days after Joseph explains the dreams. Pharaoh calls for the chief cupbearer and the chief baker to come from prison. Pharaoh restores the

chief cupbearer to his place of service. Pharaoh has the chief baker beheaded and impales his body on a pole. Everything happened just as Joseph said it would. The chief cupbearer forgot all about Joseph. The chief cupbearer did not remember to tell the king about Joseph.

Stop the action: Ask the cupbearer, "Why did you forget Joseph?" You may hear, "I was so happy to get out of that prison that I just forgot everything. I didn't want to do anything to put me in danger again. I forgot everything that Joseph did for me." Ask Joseph, "How are you feeling now?" You may hear, "I think the chief cupbearer must have forgotten to tell the king about me. I'm still here. I've not heard anything from the outside. I must trust Yahweh. I know that Yahweh is with me. Somehow Yahweh will work all this out. I will keep my trust and my hope for the future with Yahweh." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The prison is a part of the palace of the captain of the guard. It is a prison. Those in the prison did not have the freedom to leave. Special prisoners like the servants of the king were put in this prison. This is the prison where Potiphar put Joseph. However, time has passed. We do not know the name of the current captain of the palace guard.

There are two references to time in this passage. At the beginning of the passage, some time has passed since Joseph was put in prison. Then the two servants were in the prison for some time before having their dreams. We don't know the exact amount of time that has passed. It could be weeks or months or years. The term for the passage of time is a general term.

Each servant had a **dream**. Dreams occur at night or when the person is asleep. Use the same word for dream that you have in previous passages. Dreams are discussed in the Master Glossary.

Joseph explains that only **God** can interpret a dream. Use the same word for God that you have used in other passages. God is discussed in the Master Glossary.

When Joseph says that only God can explain dreams, Joseph asks a question that doesn't require an answer. This can be changed to a positive statement. "God is the only one who can interpret dreams."

When Joseph explained to the cupbearer how Joseph had come to the prison, Joseph said, "I was stolen from the land of the Hebrews." One translation uses the word **kidnapped**. Kidnap means to take someone by force. Kidnap also involves paying a sum of money for the release of that person. Joseph is saying that Joseph was made to come to Egypt against Joseph's will.

Hebrew is the language that Jacob and Jacob's family speak. The Hebrew people is another term for the Israelites or descendants of Jacob. The land of the Hebrews is the same as the land of Canaan. You can also say that they took me or kidnapped me from the land of the Hebrews.

Pharaoh will lift up your head is a word picture used three times in this passage. This is an expression that means that you are summoned into the presence of the king. Some translations use the words "lift up your head" without explanation. Other translations use it and add "will summon you to the king." Other translations don't use the word picture but just say, "the king will summon you to his presence." One translation doesn't mention the word picture but tells each man what will happen to him.

When Joseph asks the cupbearer to tell Pharaoh about him, he says that he has done nothing to deserve being in this prison. The word Joseph uses for prison here is a very strong word that means a pit or very uncomfortable place. It is the same word that described where Joseph's brothers put him when they threw him in the dry well. Prison even in the palace of the captain of the guard would be a terrible place. While Joseph's prison might not be as bad as some prisons in Egypt, it is still prison and Joseph feels like it is a dungeon or pit.

Pharaoh used his birthday celebrations as a time to bring the servants out of prison. Pharaoh prepared a **banquet**. A banquet is a very special formal meal similar to a feast. A banquet is usually a celebration of something. Because this was a banquet, there would have been many people present to see what Pharaoh did to the cupbearer and baker.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 40:1-23

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (20174758 KB)

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Genesis 41:1-36

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 41:1-36 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

It has been 2 full years or 730 days since Joseph interpreted the dream of the chief cupbearer and the dream of the chief baker. Joseph is still in prison. The cupbearer forgot about Joseph. This is a narrative story of the next part of Joseph's story.

At the end of the 2 years, the king of Egypt had a dream. We don't remember most of our dreams. These dreams that the king of Egypt had were unusual and startling. The dream was so startling and unusual that the king woke up after the first dream. The king of Egypt remembered the dream with the details when the king woke up. Pharaoh is the title given to all the kings of Egypt. We don't know this Pharaoh's name. Some translations use Pharaoh and some use the king of Egypt. The king of Egypt saw in his dream that he was standing beside the Nile River. The Nile is the main river of Egypt. The Nile flows through from one end to the other of Egypt. The Nile provides most of the water for Egypt. The king of Egypt's dream was strange to the king. The king of Egypt saw 7 healthy cows. Then the king saw 7 sickly cows eat the 7 healthy cows. The sickly cows or thin cows remained thin even after eating the healthy cows. Cows do not normally eat meat. Cows eat grass. The cows came up from the river where they were grazing on the marsh grass. This means that they were at a low point beside the river or possibly standing in the water at the edge of the river and climbed up the bank towards where the king was standing. The king of Egypt could not understand the meaning of his dream.

Show a picture of a fat cow. Show a picture of a starving cow. Show a picture of the marsh grass that grows by the Nile in Egypt. Show a map of Egypt with the Nile River.

After the first dream, the king of Egypt fell asleep again. To fall asleep is a word picture that describes the process of going to sleep. The king did not fall. The king was lying on his bed.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about someone going to sleep. What words or word pictures do you use to describe the process?

During the same night the king had a second dream in which the king saw healthy grain. Then the king saw dry, withered grain swallow the healthy grain. An east wind had dried out the withered grain. In Egypt the east wind would come from the desert. The east wind in Egypt would be a hot, dry wind that takes the water out of anything it blows over.

Show a picture of grain that is healthy and heads full of grain. Show a picture of grain that has been withered by the sun and dryness.

When the king woke up the next morning, the king's spirit or mind was troubled. The king was disturbed in his mind because the king could not understand the meaning of the dreams. The king had a double dream. This is very unusual. Each dream was different in details but carried the same message. The king and those hearing about the dream would all have been disturbed by the dreams. The two dreams make it even more disturbing to them. In Egypt, the king was considered to be a god and didn't need dreams to be interpreted. This king needed someone to interpret his dreams. This was unusual. The king called for his magicians and wise men but none of them could explain the meaning of the dream. Magicians used special powers to control nature. Wise men were Egyptian priests with special knowledge or wisdom. These two groups were the scholars of Egypt and were supposed to answer any questions the king might have. These magicians and wise men often interpreted or gave explanations for dreams. This time, the magicians and wise men could not find an explanation.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about a troubling dream. How did you discover what this dream meant? What do people in your culture do with troubling dreams?

At this point, the chief cupbearer remembered Joseph. The cupbearer told the king what Joseph had said about the cupbearer and baker's dreams in prison. Joseph's explanation of the dreams was true. The cupbearer referred to Joseph as a young Hebrew. Hebrew is the language that Jacob's family spoke. Hebrew is another word for descendant of Jacob. The king sent for Joseph. Joseph was still in prison.

They brought Joseph from the dungeon or prison. Dungeon is another word for prison. Joseph changed his clothes and shaved before coming before the king. Joseph put on clothes that would be acceptable to wear before the king. Joseph shaved his beard and probably shaved his head. Thus, when Joseph came before the king, Joseph looked more Egyptian. The king tells Joseph that Joseph is to interpret the dreams that the king had during the night. Joseph explains to the king that only God can interpret dreams. This is the same message that Joseph gave to the cupbearer and baker in the prison.

The king describes his dreams. Notice that the details are slightly different from the first time we heard them. After hearing about the dreams, Joseph explains the meaning of the dreams. Joseph says that both dreams mean the same thing. There is going to be a severe famine in Egypt. A famine is a time when crops fail and there is no food. One cause of famine is drought or lack of rain. Crops need enough water to grow and produce good fruit. Joseph says that God has revealed to the king of Egypt that the famine is coming so that the king can prepare and have food for the people. Joseph explains that God has decreed that this famine will happen. God has revealed this plan to the king so that the king can prepare the country.

There will be 7 years of abundant harvest or prosperity. Prosperity means that everyone has enough to eat and some left over. Life will be good. People will gain wealth. Seven years of famine will follow the 7 years of prosperity. The famine will be so severe that people will forget the time of prosperity.

Stop and discuss: Have you ever had a time of famine in your country? Describe it. What caused the famine? War or drought or disease? What did the people do?

After explaining the meaning of the dreams, Joseph told the king what the king should do to plan for the famine. Joseph said the king should put an intelligent and wise man in charge of the entire country of Egypt. The king should appoint local supervisors to gather 1/5 of the grain each year and put it in store houses to keep until the famine comes. In this way, there will be food for the people during the famine.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 6 scenes.

First scene: The king has 2 dreams.

Second scene: No one can explain the meaning of the king's dreams.

Third scene: The cupbearer remembers Joseph.

Fourth scene: Joseph changes his clothes, shaves, and comes before the king.

Fifth scene: The king describes his dreams to Joseph.

Sixth scene: Joseph explains the meaning of the king's dreams. Joseph makes a recommendation to the king.

The characters in this story include:

- The king of Egypt
- Magicians and wise men of Egypt
- The chief cupbearer
- Joseph

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In the first scene, 2 full years have passed since the cupbearer left prison. Joseph is still in prison. The king of Egypt has 2 dreams which are startling and unusual. The king wakes up after the first dream. The king falls asleep. The king wakes up after the second dream. The writer uses the third person to report the king's dreams. The writer says, "He saw 7 cows." The writer reports both dreams this way.

With the king's dream, the writer uses a word to introduce each part of the dream that indicates that something startling or unusual is going to happen. In English the word is "behold."

Stop and tell a story about something unusual happening. Listen to how the storyteller introduces or calls attention to the unusual or startling points.

In the second scene, the king wakes up in the morning after the dreams and is very disturbed by the dreams. The king summons his magicians and wise men to explain the dreams. No one can explain the king's dreams.

In the third scene, the chief cupbearer remembers that Joseph was able to interpret the cupbearer's dream when the cupbearer was in prison. Joseph also interpreted the chief baker's dream. Joseph gave the correct meaning of each dream. The cupbearer explains all that happened in the prison with Joseph to the king. The king immediately sent for Joseph.

In the fourth scene, Joseph changes his clothes. Joseph shaves his beard. Joseph probably shaves his head. Joseph comes into the presence of the king. The king tells Joseph that Joseph is to interpret the king's dreams. Joseph explains that God is the only one who can interpret dreams.

In the fifth scene, the king tells Joseph the two dreams. Note the details that are slightly different in this telling. The first time, the writer uses the third person to describe the dream. For example, "He saw 7 healthy cows." When the king reports the dream to Joseph, the speech becomes first person. The king says, "I saw 7 healthy cows." The king adds commentary about what the king thinks. The king adds, "I've never seen such sorry-looking animals in all the land of Egypt." The king adds more commentary as he tells his dream. The king does the same when reporting the second dream about the grain. The king explains that the magicians and wise men of Egypt cannot explain the meaning of the dreams.

In the sixth scene, Joseph explains that the two dreams are actually one dream or that the two dreams have the same meaning. God is going to send a famine to Egypt and God is telling the king about the famine in advance. Joseph explains that God has decreed that this famine will take place. There will be 7 years of great prosperity followed by 7 years of great famine or severe famine. God is telling the king about this in advance so that the king can make plans to store the excess food during the years of prosperity. Joseph tells the king that having the two dreams with the same message means that God has decreed or decided that these events will happen. Then Joseph makes a recommendation to the king. The king should find someone wise and intelligent and put this person in charge of the entire land of Egypt. The king should also appoint supervisors to collect 1/5 of all the grain each year and put that extra grain in storehouses. Then when the famine starts there will be food in Egypt.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 6 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- The king of Egypt
- Magicians and wise men of Egypt
- The chief cupbearer
- Joseph

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

In scene 1, the king has two dreams that are startling and unusual. The king sees 7 healthy cows eaten by 7 skinny cows. Then the king sees 7 healthy stalks of grain eaten by 7 dry and withered stalks of grain.

Stop the action: Ask the king, "How are you feeling about these dreams?" You may hear, "These dreams were disturbing. I've never had such dreams before. I've no idea what they mean. I hope someone can explain them to me." Restart the action.

In scene 2, the king calls for the magicians and wise men to come. The king tells these magicians and wise men about the dreams. No one can explain the dreams to the king.

Stop the action: Ask a wise man or a magician, "Why can't you interpret these dreams?" You may hear, "I've never heard anything so strange. These are symbols for sure, but I don't know what they symbolize. I wonder if the king doesn't remember his dream correctly. No one can explain cows eating cows and grain eating grain." Restart the action.

In scene 3, the chief cupbearer suddenly remembers his time in prison when he and the chief baker had strange dreams. Joseph was able to interpret the dreams and they came true just as Joseph said. The chief cupbearer explained all that had happened to the king. The king sent for Joseph to come before the king.

In scene 4, Joseph prepares himself to come before the king. Joseph changes clothes. Joseph shaves his beard. Joseph probably shaves his head. Joseph comes before the king. The king tells Joseph that the king had a dream and Joseph is to interpret the dream. Joseph explains that only God can interpret dreams.

In scene 5, the king tells Joseph the two dreams. The king gives some additional details or thoughts about the dreams as the king tells them. The king explains that no one has been able to explain the dreams or give the meaning of the dreams.

Stop the action: Ask the king, "Why are you telling Joseph your dreams? Joseph told you that only God can give the meaning." You may hear, "I know but Joseph explained strange and startling dreams to the cupbearer and baker. No one else in all Egypt can help me. Maybe this man can. He seems to be different from the others. At least he was honest with his abilities from the beginning." Ask Joseph, "How do you feel right now?" You may hear, "I am not afraid. God has been with me since I arrived in this country. I think God is with me now. I'm waiting for God to tell me what this all means." Restart the action.

In scene 6, Joseph explains the meaning of the king's dreams. The two dreams have the same meaning. There will be 7 years of prosperity and surplus food followed by 7 years of severe famine. God has decreed the famine. God has sent the dreams to tell the king that the famine is coming so that the king can prepare Egypt and store the extra food for use during the famine.

Then Joseph makes a recommendation to the king. Joseph suggests that the king should find a wise and intelligent man to be in charge of all of Egypt. The king should also appoint supervisors over the land. During the years of prosperity, these men will make sure that 1/5 of all the grain is stored in storehouses for later use. When the famine comes, there will be food in Egypt.

Stop the action: Ask Joseph, "Why did you suggest that the king appoint a wise and intelligent man over Egypt?" You may hear, "God has told the king to prepare for the famine. This is the best way to prepare. I hope the king will choose me. But even if the king chooses someone else, this still needs to be done. I am hoping the king will choose me to help with this food program so that I can leave the prison." Ask the king, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "What Joseph has said makes sense. I don't know where this young man got his wisdom from but he seems very wise. This is a good suggestion. If such a severe famine is coming, we need to prepare and this way makes sense to me. I must look for someone wise and intelligent to take charge of this like Joseph says." Ask the cup bearer, "How do you feel now that you have seen Joseph again after 2 years?" You may hear, "I'm embarrassed that I forgot about Joseph. Joseph helped me and I didn't help Joseph. Still, I'm glad that I remembered today. I hope the king remembers that I'm the one who suggested calling Joseph. This should help me go up in the king's good opinion." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Some translations use **Pharaoh**. Other translations use **King of Egypt**. Some translations use both terms. Pharaoh is a title that the king of Egypt used. We don't know the king's name. You should use the same title for the king that you have used in previous passages.

The king had a **dream**. This means that the king was asleep when he had the dream. Dreams are explained in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for dream that you have used in previous passages.

The king fell asleep. This is a word picture meaning that the king went back to sleep. The king was lying on his bed. The king did not fall anywhere. Use a word picture that is natural to your language to describe the process of going to sleep.

The Nile is the name of the river that supplies water to Egypt. Use the word that your language uses for this river. This is the first mention of the Nile River.

The passage uses a special word to indicate that the next part is unusual or startling. The passage says "**behold**." This indicates that something new or unusual is about to happen.

Stop and tell a story about an unusual dream. Notice the words used to introduce the unusual or startling things that happen.

The king saw healthy, fat cows. These cows had plenty to eat. They had the appearance of good health. The king saw skinny, sick cows. These cows did not have enough to eat. They looked like they were starving. The cows were very thin. The description here should indicate the difference between the healthy, well-fed cows and the thin, sickly cows. Cows do not normally eat meat. That the skinny cows ate the fat cows is part of what is so disturbing about this dream.

Show the pictures again of the healthy and unhealthy cows. Look at the pictures and find ways to describe the animals and grain that provide comparisons, such as one cow was fat, the other was skinny.

The king saw grain that was plump and beautiful growing on a stalk. Then the king saw grain that was dry and withered. The stalks were shrivelled. Wither and shrivelled mean that the water has been taken out of the stalk. The stalk has wilted and cannot stand up. This means that the east wind had taken all the water out of the grain. The east wind in Egypt blows from the desert. This wind is hot and dry. The east wind pulls water from the air

and leaves everyone feeling thirsty. The unhealthy grain ate or swallowed the healthy grain. Grain cannot eat other grain. Be sure to indicate the difference between the healthy grain with the unhealthy grain.

Show the pictures again of the healthy and unhealthy grain. Describe the grain using words of comparison.

The king called for his **magicians** and wise men. Magicians used special powers to control some parts of nature. The magician was to interpret dreams and signs or omens. The magician was to make medicines to treat certain diseases. The passage is not approving the use of magic. The passage is telling us what the king did without success before sending for Joseph. Joseph did not use magic when giving the explanation of the dreams. See the Master Glossary for a discussion about magicians.

The wise men had special knowledge or wisdom. The wise men and magicians were responsible for answering all the king's questions.

The two groups, wise men and magicians, were supposed to answer any questions that the king might have.

Joseph explains that the double dream or 2 dreams mean that God has decreed that the **famine** will come. A famine is a time when there is not enough food for the people. Without food, people and animals starve to death. Some common causes of famine include drought, war, and sickness. Joseph does not say why God has decreed this famine. God is warning the king so that the king can prepare and save Egypt.

Joseph presented a plan to the king. Joseph suggested that the king choose someone wise and intelligent to be over all Egypt. Joseph suggested that the king appoint supervisors to be in charge of gathering and storing the surplus grain during the 7 years of prosperity.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 41:1-36

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (19837771 KB)

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Genesis 41:37–57

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 41:37–57 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the last passage, the king of Egypt had dreams that none of his magicians and wise men could explain. The chief cupbearer remembered that Joseph had correctly interpreted a dream for the cupbearer when he was in prison. The cupbearer told the king about Joseph. The king sent for Joseph to come before the king. Joseph gave the king the meaning of the king's dreams. This passage is a narrative continuation of the story of Joseph.

The king of Egypt is also called Pharaoh. The king liked the food plan that Joseph suggested to manage the coming famine. A famine is an acute shortage of food for a period of time. If there is no food, people and animals will die. The king said that no one had the Spirit of God on him like Joseph. The king means that Joseph has the

power or the ability to do the job and this power comes from God. The king believes that God has given God's wisdom to Joseph.

Stop and discuss: You need to choose a person for a very important job. What kinds of abilities or what characteristics of that person will you look at? How will you know that this one person is the best for the job?

The king notes that God's Spirit gives Joseph special ability or power after Joseph proposes a plan to provide food for Egypt during the famine. The king sees God's Spirit as giving Joseph special ability or knowledge in how to manage a government program. Then the king appoints Joseph in charge of all Egypt. The king is the only person who has more authority than Joseph. Now everyone in Egypt except the king must bow before Joseph.

The king put the king's signet ring on Joseph's finger. The king would use this ring to sign important documents. The king's name would be carved into the stone. Important documents would be on clay and the ring would be pressed into the clay as a signature. Everyone would recognize the king's signature. By giving this ring to Joseph, then anything Joseph signed would be in the king's name. People would obey Joseph because Joseph was speaking in the king's name. The other items the king gave Joseph such as fine linen clothing and a gold chain around his neck showed Joseph's new rank and office. The chain might have been a long chain that hung loosely or it might have been a gold collar. The king gave Joseph a chariot to ride in with people to run in front and tell the locals to kneel as Joseph passed.

Stop and show a picture of pharaoh's ring. Show a picture of a chariot. Show a picture of fine linen cloth or clothes made of fine linen cloth. Show a picture of someone wearing a gold chain around his neck. Show a picture of an Egyptian gold collar worn during the time of Pharaoh.

Stop and discuss: What special garments and jewelry do leaders in your culture wear to show their authority?

Stop and discuss: Describe the process of installing a political leader in a new position in your culture. Describe the symbols of office used in the ceremony.

The king gave Joseph an Egyptian name, Zaphenath-paneah, which probably means "God speaks and lives." Then the king gave Joseph a wife. Joseph's wife was named Asenath. Asenath is the daughter of Potiphera. Potiphera was a priest of On, which was the center of sun worship. Potiphera was one of the most powerful men in Egypt. By marrying Asenath, Joseph was raised to be in the nobility of Egypt.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about a very important person coming to your village. How do people show their respect to this important person?

Joseph was 30 years old when Joseph left prison and took charge of all of Egypt. In a previous passage, Joseph was 17 years old when he was working as a shepherd with his brothers. Thirteen years have passed with Joseph as a slave and then in prison. We don't know how many of those years were in Potiphar's house and how many were in prison.

The first thing Joseph did after leaving the king's presence was to inspect all of Egypt. Then Joseph began the process of storing the excess grain. There was so much grain that it was like the sand on the seashore. This is a word picture. It means that there was so much grain, it was impossible to count or know exactly how much. There was so much grain that Joseph stopped trying to keep records of it. There was so much grain that Joseph couldn't measure it.

Stop and discuss: Talk about excessive amounts of crops such as grain or corn. What word pictures do you use to describe the mountains of grain?

During the 7 years of abundant harvests, Joseph and his wife Asenath had 2 sons. Joseph named the first son Manasseh, which means "causing to forget." Joseph named the second son Ephraim which means "fruitful." Joseph said, "God has made me forget all my troubles and God has made me fruitful in the land of my grief."

Stop and discuss: Who names the children in your culture? How are the names chosen?

After the 7 years of abundant harvest, the famine started. We don't know what caused the famine. In Egypt there would have been enough water for the crops because the Nile River floods each year. The surrounding countries would be more dependent on rainfall. Other causes could be diseased crops or insect invasion. War

can also cause famine but there is no mention of war in this passage. For some reason, the crops failed to produce good grain.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about a time of famine in your culture. What happened to the people? Where did they get food?

Eventually the people had no food. When the people asked the king for food, the king told them to go to Joseph for food. Joseph had the extra grain stored in storehouses all over Egypt. Joseph opened the storehouses and gave the people food. People came from other countries to buy food because the famine was severe in those countries also.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

First scene: The king decides Joseph should manage the food program to prepare for the famine. The king makes Joseph second in command of Egypt. The king gives Joseph symbols of the office. The king gives Joseph a wife.

Second scene: Joseph inspects all of Egypt. Joseph stores all the surplus grain.

Third scene: Joseph has 2 sons. Joseph remembers God as Joseph names each son.

Fourth scene: The famine begins and is severe. There is food in Egypt. People come from surrounding countries to purchase food from Egypt.

The characters in this story include:

- The king of Egypt or Pharaoh
- Joseph
- The king's officials
- Asenath
- Potiphera, priest of On
- Manasseh
- Ephraim

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In scene 1, the king asks a question about Joseph that doesn't require an answer. If needed, you can make this a positive statement. We can't find anyone else as qualified as Joseph because Joseph has the Spirit of God in him.

The king gives Joseph several symbols of his rank and office. As you act this out, imagine it like a ceremony of putting someone into a high position of power. The king hands over the symbols of power one at a time. Joseph may be kneeling or may be standing. Officials stand beside the king and watch. The actions of the king seem like a ceremony to give Joseph the rank and authority of this office. The king gives Joseph the king's signet ring, which is the ring used to sign important documents. The king gives Joseph fine linen garments to wear. The king gives Joseph a gold chain or gold collar to wear. The king gives Joseph a chariot and commands that people are to kneel down when Joseph passes. The king gives Joseph an Egyptian name, Zaphenath-paneah.

The king gave Joseph Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, as a wife. The name Potiphera is very close to the name Potiphar who was captain of the palace guard and purchased Joseph as a slave when Joseph first arrived in Egypt. Potiphera is a very important priest. These are not the same men. It will be important to say the two names in a such a way that there will be no confusion or thinking that these two men are the same person.

Joseph was 30 years old when Joseph left prison and began serving the king. This means that 13 years have passed since Joseph was working with his brothers as a shepherd.

In scene two, as his first action after leaving the king, Joseph goes out to inspect all of Egypt. Then the 7 years of good harvest start. Joseph collects the surplus grain. There is so much grain that Joseph stops measuring it. The grain is like sand on the seashore—too much to count.

In scene three, Joseph and his wife Asenath have 2 sons. Joseph names the first son Manasseh. Joseph says, "God has made me forget my troubles and my father's family." Joseph names the second son Ephraim. Joseph says, "God has made me fruitful in this land of my grief."

In scene four, the seven years of good harvest end and the famine starts. The famine is severe. The famine includes the countries surrounding Egypt. The people have no food because the harvest fails. When the people cry out to the king for help, the king tells them to go to Joseph. Joseph opened the storehouses. There was enough food for all Egypt and for the surrounding countries. Joseph gave grain to the Egyptian people. People came from surrounding countries to purchase grain from Joseph.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- The king of Egypt, or Pharaoh
- Joseph
- The king's officials
- Asenath
- Potiphera, priest of On
- Manasseh
- Ephraim

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

In scene 1, the king asks his officials, "Can we find anyone else filled with the Spirit of God like Joseph?" This can be a positive statement rather than a question. "We can't find anyone else who is filled with the Spirit of God like Joseph is."

Stop the action: Ask the king, "What are you seeing in Joseph that you don't see in others? What makes you think Joseph has the Spirit of God in him?" You may hear, "It is obvious that Joseph has been divinely equipped and gifted. No one comes by these abilities on his own." Ask the king, "You said that Joseph has the Spirit of God

on him after Joseph made the suggestions for harvesting the surplus grain. You didn't say this after Joseph explained the dreams." You may hear, "Many wise men and magicians explain dreams. I've never seen someone with no education or experience have such wisdom. It must come from God." Restart the action.

The king appoints Joseph to be in charge of all of Egypt. Only the king will have more authority than Joseph. Even the king's officers must obey orders from Joseph. The king gives Joseph symbols of Joseph's new authority. The king gives Joseph the king's own signet ring, fine linen clothes to wear, a gold chain or collar to wear around Joseph's neck, and a chariot to ride in.

Stop the action: Ask Joseph, "What are you feeling as you receive these symbols of authority?" You may hear, "I hardly know what to think. I never imagined I would go from prison to this position. I hoped to get out of prison but didn't expect something like this. I'm humbled. I need God to continue to be with me. God is the one who helped me succeed in Potiphar's house and in prison. I need God to help me now." Restart the action.

The king gave Joseph a wife. She is Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, priest of On.

Stop the action: Ask Joseph, "How do you feel about this marriage?" You may hear, "I'm thankful to the king for giving me such a wife. Her family is very powerful and this helps me. She doesn't know God. I must teach her about God. I don't want my children to worship other gods." Restart the action.

In scene 2, Joseph goes out to inspect all of Egypt. Then Joseph begins collecting the excess grain from each harvest. Joseph stores the grain as preparation for the famine. There is so much grain that Joseph can't measure all of it.

In scene 3, Joseph has two sons. Joseph names the first son Manasseh. Joseph says, "God made me forget all my troubles and everyone in my father's family." Joseph named the second son Ephraim and said, "God has made me fruitful in the land of my misfortunes."

Stop the action: Ask Joseph, "How do you see God helping you?" You may hear, "God has helped me forget the bad things that happened both here in Egypt and even when I was at home. God has helped me forget that so I don't dwell on it and let it ruin my life now. God has blessed me. Even here in Egypt where I've suffered, God has blessed me and helped me help others. My helping others and doing my job well is like when a fruit tree produces good fruit to eat. I need to thank God." Restart the action.

In scene 4, the seven years of good harvest finish and the famine starts. Just as God said, the famine is severe. The harvests fail to produce any grain. No one has food. The people cry out to the king for help and the king tells them to go to Joseph. Joseph begins distributing the grain that was stored and the people have food to eat. People from the surrounding countries have no food. These people come to Egypt and buy food.

Stop the action: Ask the king, "How are you feeling about Joseph now?" You may hear, "I am so glad I appointed Joseph to be in charge of this food program. See how smoothly it is going. We have food enough for Egypt and for those around Egypt. God was really with Joseph. Joseph was gifted with wisdom so that Joseph could manage all this. I did the right thing to choose Joseph." Ask Joseph, "How are you feeling now?" You may hear, "I feel good about what is happening. God told us this famine was coming and God helped me prepare for it. I'm glad I am able to help people. I'm so glad God has continued to be with me and help me know what to do." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The **king of Egypt** is also called **Pharaoh**. Some translations use Pharaoh, others use king and some use both terms. Use the title you have been using.

The king said that Joseph had the **Spirit** of God in him. The Holy Spirit is discussed in the Master Glossary. In this passage, the king sees that Joseph has special ability or special wisdom or power that must come from God. Because of this wisdom or power that Joseph has, the king can search all of Egypt but won't find one better qualified than Joseph.

The king gave Joseph several symbols of power or of the office that Joseph would have. The image being described is like that of installing a new chief or new governor or new king or new president. The king gives Joseph each item, one item at a time. The signet ring had the king's name engraved in it. Joseph would use this ring to sign documents by pressing the ring into clay. Everyone would recognize this as the signature of the king. People of high power or position wore fine linen garments. Very important officials would wear a gold chain or gold collar. We don't know exactly what this gold chain or collar looked like. You need to use a general term to describe this. The chariot was a special chariot used only by the second in command of Egypt. Everyone had to kneel when the chariot passed.

Stop and show a picture of Pharaoh's ring. Show a picture of a chariot. Show a picture of fine linen cloth or clothes made of fine linen cloth. Show a picture of someone wearing a gold chain around his neck. Show a picture of an Egyptian gold collar worn during the time of Pharaoh.

The king said that no one in Egypt would lift a hand or a foot without Joseph's approval. This is a word picture. This means that no one would be able to do anything significant in the country without Joseph's permission.

When Joseph names his sons, Joseph calls out the name of **God**. God is explained in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for God that you have been using.

When naming Ephraim, Joseph says, "God has made me fruitful in the land of my grief." Other translations use the word suffering or affliction. These words refer to Egypt. They are describing what Joseph feels about the years Joseph has spent as a slave and in prison.

After the years of abundant harvest, the **famine** started. A famine means that people and animals are starving because there is no food. Some causes of famine include, lack of water for the crops, disease of the crops, insects or war. Use the same word for famine you used in previous passages.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 41:37–57

Audio Content

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Genesis 42:1–26

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 42:1–26 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the previous passage, Joseph stored the surplus grain during the 7 years of abundant harvest. When the famine started, the famine was severe and in surrounding countries. Jacob and Jacob's family were suffering from the famine. This is a narrative account of the next part of the Joseph story.

The famine is severe in Canaan and the food runs out. There is nothing left to eat. Jacob hears that there is grain in Egypt and sends Jacob's 10 older sons to purchase grain for the family. Jacob would not allow Benjamin to go with the others to Egypt. Benjamin was Rachel's second son. Jacob loved Rachel. Jacob believes that Joseph, Benjamin's brother, is dead. Jacob keeps Benjamin in Canaan out of fear that some harm might happen to Benjamin in Egypt.

Show a map of Canaan and Egypt with the route between Hebron and Egypt marked.

When the brothers arrive in Egypt, they meet Joseph. Joseph is the governor of all Egypt and in charge of selling the grain. When the brothers came to Joseph, they bowed before Joseph with their faces to the ground.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about someone meeting the second most powerful man in your country. How does this person greet that powerful man?

When Joseph saw his brothers bow, Joseph remembered the dreams that Joseph had had as a boy. Each dream seemed to predict that the brothers would bow to Joseph someday. Joseph recognized his brothers. The brothers were all adult men when Joseph last saw them. The brothers would be dressed in the same manner and have beards. The brothers did not recognize Joseph. Joseph was dressed as an important Egyptian governor. When the brothers last saw Joseph, Joseph was still a boy of about 17 years of age and was taken as a slave. Now Joseph is about 40 years old.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about a man who ages from a teenager to a middle-aged man. How does his appearance and even his face change?

Joseph speaks harshly to his brothers. Some translations say that Joseph spoke roughly or aggressively to the brothers. Joseph accuses the brothers of being spies. A spy is someone who comes secretly to gather special information for a negative purpose such as to help with war or to steal something. Joseph says the brothers are trying to discover the weaknesses of Egypt or where it would be possible to attack Egypt.

When the brothers speak to Joseph, they use the term, "my lord." My lord is a title that shows respect. Other words of respect might be Sir or Master. These terms mean that Joseph, as governor, had a higher position or status than the brothers.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about someone who goes to the village chief or governor of the province to ask for something. What words of respect does this person use when speaking directly to the chief or governor?

The 10 brothers explain that they are 12 total with the same father. Explaining that they are from one father is a way to explain that they can't be spies. No one would send all his sons as spies and risk losing all his sons. The 10 brothers say that one brother was left at home with their father and the other brother has disappeared or is no more. They mean that Joseph is dead. To say that someone is no more or is no longer with them is a polite way of saying he is dead.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about someone who died some time ago. Listen carefully to how the storyteller says that the person is dead.

When Joseph speaks to the brothers again, Joseph uses an oath. An oath is added to a promise so that people know they must keep their agreement and that it cannot be changed. Joseph swore on the life of the king. In swearing on the king's name like this Joseph is saying that this will really happen. In that culture and time, swearing by the king was a way to emphasize that this vow is serious. Joseph was also giving a legal status to his vow. Joseph was saying that the brothers would be punished if they didn't obey Joseph's command. Joseph repeats the oath as he talks with the brothers.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about someone who makes a very important statement. How did you know that this person intends to do what he said? What words or expressions did he use to help you understand that this is serious?

Joseph puts all 10 of the brothers in prison for 3 days. Then Joseph talks to them again. Joseph says, "I'm a God-fearing man." This means that Joseph respects or honors God. Joseph is telling the brothers that Joseph honors the same God that they worship. Joseph finally demands that one brother remain in prison while the others go and get their younger brother and return. The brothers talk among themselves and in their own language. Joseph understands what they are saying. The brothers do not know that Joseph can understand their language.

Joseph listened to the brothers acknowledge to each other that they had done wrong when they sold Joseph as a slave. Joseph turned aside and began to weep. This means that Joseph went out of their sight and wept. Joseph had heard and understood their confession of doing wrong to Joseph. Joseph did not let them know that he had understood.

Reuben used two word pictures when talking with his brothers. Reuben asked a question that doesn't require an answer. Reuben said, "I told you not to sin against the boy." Here the word *sin* means to harm or do wrong to someone else. Then Reuben says, "We have to answer for his blood." Blood is a word picture for life. The brothers didn't kill Joseph. They did sell Joseph as a slave and watched him depart for Egypt. They are responsible for Joseph's death. The brothers all believe that Joseph is dead. It has been over 20 years since Joseph left Canaan as a slave.

Joseph kept Simeon in prison and sent the others home with sacks of grain. Joseph ordered the servants to put each man's money for the grain at the top of that man's sack of grain. The brothers, now 9 in total, traveled back to Canaan. The tenth brother remained in Egypt as a prisoner.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: The famine is severe in Canaan. Jacob sends his 10 older sons to Egypt to buy grain.

Second scene: The 10 brothers arrive in Egypt and encounter Joseph. Joseph accuses them of being spies. Joseph puts the 10 brothers in prison for 3 days.

Third scene: At the end of the 3 days, Joseph has another encounter with the brothers. Joseph hears the brothers confess their guilt at having mistreated Joseph. Joseph turns aside and weeps. Joseph puts Simeon in prison and sends the other 9 brothers back to Canaan.

The characters in this story include:

- Joseph
- Reuben
- Simeon
- The other brothers
- Jacob
- The translator for Joseph
- Benjamin is mentioned

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Scene 1 begins with the famine reaching Canaan. Jacob hears that there is grain in Egypt. Then Jacob asks a question that doesn't require an answer. This can be a positive statement such as "You are all standing around looking at each other." Jacob sends the 10 older sons to Egypt to purchase grain for the family. Jacob uses an attention-getting word as Jacob begins to speak to his sons. Jacob says "behold." Jacob keeps Benjamin at home. Jacob is afraid something might happen to Benjamin.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about a father talking to his sons. The father has important information to give to the sons. Notice the words the father uses to get their attention.

In scene 2, when the brothers arrive in Egypt, they encounter Joseph, who is the governor of Egypt. The brothers don't recognize Joseph when they see Joseph. Joseph was 17 when the brothers last saw him. Joseph was 30 when Joseph became second in command in Egypt. There were 7 years of abundant harvest. The famine has been going on long enough for the brothers to run out of food. This means that Joseph was still a boy when the brothers last saw Joseph but now Joseph is a middle-aged man in his 40s. Plus, Joseph has an Egyptian name, is dressed like an Egyptian, is speaking Egyptian to them and has the most important position in all of Egypt after the king. The brothers bow with faces to the floor when they meet Joseph.

Joseph recognizes his brothers. They were all adult men when Joseph last saw them. They would be dressed in the same way. They would have beards like they had when Joseph last saw them. Joseph understands their language. The passage tells us at the end that Joseph spoke to them through an interpreter. Everything Joseph says is with an interpreter. The interpreter tells Joseph what the brothers are saying.

When Joseph speaks to his brothers, Joseph speaks in a harsh voice and accuses them of being spies. A harsh voice is unpleasantly sharp or rough. The brothers describe their family using a word picture to indicate that Joseph is dead. Joseph uses an oath or swears by the life of the king when talking with the brothers. Joseph says that 9 of the brothers must remain in Egypt while one brother goes back to Canaan to get the youngest brother. Joseph says this is the only way to know if they are telling the truth. Joseph uses this same oath twice. Joseph accuses the brothers again of being spies and puts them into prison for 3 days.

In scene 3, Joseph brings the 10 brothers out of prison and again accuses them of being spies. Joseph overhears the brothers speaking to each other. They admit that they were wrong in their treatment of Joseph. Reuben uses word pictures to describe what happened. Reuben reminds them that they saw how distressed Joseph was when they sold Joseph as a slave. Then Reuben reminds the brothers that they have harmed Joseph and they are responsible for Joseph's death.

As Joseph listens to the brothers talking, the brothers don't know that Joseph can understand what they are saying. Joseph is overcome with emotion. Joseph turns aside and weeps. This means that the brothers do not see Joseph weeping. Joseph regains his composure and talks to the brothers again. To regain your composure means that you become calm and normal again.

Joseph chose Simeon as the brother to put into prison while the other 9 returned to Canaan. Joseph ordered his servants to fill their grain sacks and put the bags of money each man had paid in his sack. Joseph gave them things they needed for the trip back to Canaan. The 9 brothers went back to Canaan.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Joseph
- Reuben
- Simeon
- The other brothers
- Jacob
- The translator for Joseph
- Benjamin is mentioned

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

In scene 1, the famine is severe in Canaan. Jacob's family runs out of food. Jacob has heard that there is grain in Egypt. Jacob sends his 10 older sons to Egypt to purchase grain. Jacob keeps Benjamin at home.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "Why won't you let Benjamin go with the others?" You may hear, "Benjamin is the only one I have left from Rachel. I must keep Benjamin near me." Ask the brothers, "How do you feel about Benjamin?" You may hear, "He's the youngest. It's okay for our father to spoil him. He is Joseph's brother. We know father loves him the best. After losing Joseph, it's normal that he would love Benjamin." Ask Benjamin, "How do you feel about staying with your father?" You may hear, "I would love to go with the others. I'm grown up now. But my father needs one of us to stay with him. I'll do my duty and stay here." Restart the action.

In scene 2, the 10 brothers arrive in Egypt to purchase grain. They meet the governor who is Joseph. The brothers bow with their faces to the floor. The brothers don't recognize Joseph. Joseph recognized them and spoke harshly to them.

Stop the action: Ask Joseph, "How do you feel seeing your brothers bow to you like this?" You may hear, "I remember my dreams predicted that this would happen some day and now it has. They all look in good health. They don't recognize me so I can find out how things are with them and with our father without their knowing. I also want to know if they are the same or if they have become better people." Ask the brothers, "How do you feel meeting the governor?" You may hear, "He is an important man. It's an honor to meet him. I never thought we would. We are just shepherds and not important at all. I wonder why he came out to talk to us." Restart the action.

Joseph accuses the brothers of being spies. Even after the brothers explain that they all have the same father, Joseph continues to insist that they are spies. Joseph demands that 9 of them go to prison while one goes to get the younger brother. Joseph swears an oath on the life of the king. Joseph sends all 10 of the brothers to prison for 3 days.

Stop the action: Ask the brothers, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I'm terrified. We have our families and our father and all our servants at home. What if this governor does believe we are spies and has us killed. What will happen to our families?" Or, "I'm afraid that this is happening to us because we were so bad with Joseph. God is punishing us for our terrible actions all those years ago." Ask Joseph, "Why have you put them in prison for 3 days?" You may hear, "I need to find out what they are really like now. I need to get them so frightened that they forget to lie and I will see their true characters now." Restart the action.

In scene 3, Joseph brings them out of prison and sends 9 of them back to Canaan. Joseph says, "I'm a God-fearing man." Joseph tells them that one must remain in prison while they go get their younger brother. Joseph can understand when the brothers speak their language. Joseph has been using an interpreter when speaking to the brothers. The brothers don't know that Joseph can understand their language. Joseph hears the brothers

talking and Joseph realizes that the brothers know that they were wrong when they sold Joseph as a slave. Joseph weeps after hearing the brothers talking.

Stop the action: Ask Joseph, "Why are you crying?" You may hear, "They have changed! They recognize what they did to me was wrong. I'm just overwhelmed with emotion as I think of all that has happened to me since. I'm not ready to reveal who I am but I am glad they have changed." Ask the brothers, "Why do you think the governor is doing this to you?" You may hear, "I think we are being punished now for what we did to Joseph. We should never have sold Joseph as a slave. We have watched our father grieve and it's our fault. This is why these things are happening." Restart the action.

Joseph put Simeon in prison. The other 9 brothers departed for Canaan.

Stop the action: Ask Simeon, "How do you feel right now?" You may hear, "I'm afraid. I don't want to be in prison. What if they don't come back? What if I am just left here to die in prison? I don't know how I will manage here. I can't speak this language and I don't like their food. I've always slept in a tent. I'm afraid I will die before they come back." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The **famine** continues. Use the same word for famine that you have used in previous passages.

Jacob uses the word **behold** to get the attention of his sons. Some translations don't use this word but just give Jacob's instructions to go and get grain. Use the appropriate terms for your language.

Joseph is the **governor** of Egypt. A governor is a ruler over an area under the authority of the king. The king appointed Joseph to this position after Joseph interpreted the king's dreams and proposed a food plan.

The brothers address Joseph as "**my lord.**" My lord is a title of respect or honor given to a person of higher status or authority. Other expressions might be sir or master.

Joseph speaks harshly or uses a harsh tone of voice in speaking to his brothers. Joseph remembered the **dreams** that Joseph had as a boy. Use the same word for dream that you have used in previous passages. Dreams are discussed in the Master Glossary.

The 10 brothers tell Joseph that one of the brothers has disappeared or is no longer with them. They mean that this brother is dead. In some languages, to say that a person is dead seems harsh. The language uses an expression that means that the person is dead. Be sure that you translate this to mean that the brother is dead. The 10 brothers believe that Joseph has died. The 10 brothers don't know that Joseph is alive and talking to them.

Joseph says "I am a God-fearing man." Joseph means, "I am a man who fears **God.**" Joseph is talking about God. Use the same name for God you have used in previous passages. God is discussed in the Master Glossary. Fear of God is discussed in the Master Glossary.

Reuben uses two word pictures when talking with the brothers. Reuben says, "We **sinned** against the boy." Reuben asked this as a question that doesn't require an answer. You may use this as a positive statement. Sin is discussed in the Master Glossary. Here Reuben is saying, "I told you not to harm or do wrong to the boy." The harmful act is against Joseph. You would use the word for sin you have used in other passages.

Reuben also said, "We have to answer for his **blood.**" Reuben means that they are being held accountable for Joseph's death, or they are being punished for Joseph's death. Blood is a word picture to illustrate Joseph's life. Blood is frequently used as a word picture for life in the scriptures. The brothers did not kill Joseph. Reuben is saying they are responsible for Joseph's death because they sold Joseph as a slave. Reuben believes Joseph is dead and the actions of the brothers caused Joseph's death. Reuben is saying, "We will suffer for his death" or "We have to pay the price for his death." Blood is discussed in the Master Glossary.

Joseph uses an **oath** when talking with the brothers. Oath is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for oath you have used in other passages. Joseph says by the life of Pharaoh or by the life of the king. **Pharaoh** is a title for the king of Egypt. Use the same word for the king that you have been using.

Joseph put the 10 brothers in prison for 3 days. Then Joseph put Simeon in **prison** until the brothers returned with Benjamin. Use the same word for prison that you have used in previous passages.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 42:1-26

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (19351834 KB)

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Genesis 42:27-38

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 42:27-38 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the previous passage, Joseph kept Simeon in prison and sent the others home with sacks of grain. Joseph told the brothers that they must bring Benjamin to Egypt. Simeon will be in prison until Benjamin comes. Joseph ordered the servants to put each man's money for the grain at the top of that man's sack of grain. The brothers, now 9 in total, traveled back to Canaan. The tenth brother, Simeon, remained in Egypt as a prisoner. This is a narrative account of the next part of the Joseph story.

The 9 brothers traveled back to Canaan. When they stopped for the night, one of the brothers opened his grain sack to feed his donkey. This is the first time that donkeys have been mentioned. The brothers took donkeys with them to Egypt to carry the grain back to Canaan.

The brother found his money in the top of the sack. This is the money he paid for the grain. When the 9 brothers saw this money, their hearts sank. This is a word picture to describe becoming terrified or very afraid. The fear is so great that it feels as if the heart has dropped down to the stomach or the heart has stopped.

Stop and discuss: tell a story about someone who discovered or saw something that caused him to feel terror or become very frightened. What word pictures is this person using to describe the feelings?

Show a photo of a donkey.

The brothers turned to each other and asked a question that doesn't require an answer. They said, "What has God done to us?" The text sounds as if each one is asking his brother this question. They know that they are in

a dangerous situation. They think they are being punished for what they did to Joseph. For some languages, this could be a positive statement, "God has done this to us."

They continued the next day on their trip to return to Canaan. We don't know how many days the trip took.

Stop and show the map of Egypt and Canaan. The probable route should be marked on the map.

When they arrived home, they told Jacob everything that had happened to them in Egypt. When telling Jacob the story, they repeat the phrase that they used in Egypt. One brother is no longer with us. This is one way to say that Joseph is dead. They all believe that Joseph is dead.

After telling Jacob the story of all that happened in Egypt, they open their sacks of grain and find each man's money in his sack. The 9 brothers along with Jacob are all terrified. This is a great fear. The word terrified is one of the strongest words to describe fear.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about someone who experiences great fear. The story should have several different kinds of fear. Notice the word differences or the ways to describe the different levels of fear. What word did the storyteller use to describe the worst fear?

Jacob sees the money in the sacks. Jacob has heard the story of what happened in Egypt. Jacob assumes that Simeon is now dead or will die in prison. Jacob accuses the other 9 of robbing Jacob of all his sons. Jacob says, Joseph is no more. Simeon is no more. This means that Jacob thinks both Joseph and Simeon are now dead. To say that someone is no more is one polite way of saying that someone is dead.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about someone who has died or someone with several family members who have died. What words or phrases does the person use to describe those who have died?

Reuben offers to be responsible for Benjamin. Reuben offers to let Jacob kill Reuben's two sons if Reuben fails to bring Benjamin safely home. This offer is to illustrate how seriously Reuben takes his vow to bring Benjamin safely home. Reuben is willing to risk the life of his own two sons to make sure that Benjamin returns to Jacob.

Jacob refuses to accept Reuben's offer. Jacob says that Benjamin will not go to Egypt. Jacob says that Joseph is dead and Benjamin is all that Jacob has left. Joseph and Benjamin are the sons of Rachel, the wife that Jacob loved. Jacob believes that Joseph is dead. Therefore, Benjamin is the only son of Rachel remaining.

Jacob says, "You would bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol." Jacob refers to his gray hair as a way of saying that Jacob is an old man. Jacob is saying that Jacob will die from sorrow or grief if Benjamin also dies. Sheol is the place where the dead go. Sheol is another word for grave. Jacob is saying, "I will die of sorrow and be buried in my grave."

Stop and discuss: Tell a story of an old man who is nearing death. How does the old man talk about his death and what he expects to happen? Listen carefully to the words the man uses to describe what he thinks will happen.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: The brothers leave Egypt and head for Canaan. They stop the first night and discover the money for the grain in one man's sack. They are terrified.

Second scene: The 9 brothers arrive in Canaan and tell Jacob all that has happened to them.

Third scene: They empty their sacks and discover that each of the 9 has his money in a sack. Jacob and his 9 sons are terrified. Jacob refuses to allow Benjamin to go to Egypt.

The characters in this story include:

- Reuben
- Simeon is mentioned
- The other brothers
- Jacob
- Benjamin is mentioned
- Joseph is mentioned as the governor of Egypt

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In scene 1, the brothers started back to Canaan. The brothers stop for the night. One brother opens his sack of grain and finds the money. The brothers were very afraid. The passage uses the word picture "their hearts sank." This sounds like the heart falls from its place in the chest to the abdomen or lower. It is a word picture for being terrified. We don't know how many days the journey back to Canaan took.

In scene 2, the brothers arrive in Canaan and tell Jacob all that happened. As they talk, they repeat the way they said that Joseph is dead. They said, one brother is no longer with us. They tell Jacob that the governor spoke harshly to them. They tell Jacob that they told the governor that they all had the same father. This is a way of saying that they are not spies. No man would send all 12 sons as spies and risk all his sons being killed or put into prison.

They explain to Jacob that Simeon had to remain in Egypt and in prison until they return to Egypt with Benjamin. They told Jacob that in order to get Simeon out of prison, they would need to take Benjamin to Egypt.

In scene 3, after telling Jacob all that happened, they unloaded the grain and discovered that each man's money had been put in the sacks of grain. Jacob and the 9 brothers were terrified when they saw the money.

Jacob told the others that they wanted to rob Jacob of all his children. Jacob believes Joseph is dead. Jacob believes Simeon will die in prison. Jacob is afraid that if Benjamin goes to Egypt, something bad will happen to Benjamin.

Reuben, the oldest son, offers to take responsibility for Benjamin. Reuben promises to take care of Benjamin and bring Benjamin back to Jacob. Reuben offers his own two sons to Jacob if Reuben fails in this promise.

Jacob uses word pictures to describe his feelings about allowing Benjamin to go to Egypt. Jacob says he is an old man. Jacob says that the 9 sons will cause Jacob to die from grief.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Reuben
- Simeon is mentioned
- The other brothers
- Jacob
- Benjamin is mentioned
- Joseph is mentioned as the governor of Egypt

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

In scene one, the 9 brothers are on their way back to Canaan. They have left Simeon in prison in Egypt. The first night of the journey, when they stop for the night, one brother opens his sack of grain to get food for his donkey. He discovers that his bag of money that he paid for the grain is in the sack of grain. He tells the others. They all feel their hearts sink. They ask each other, "What has God done to us?"

Stop the action: Ask the brother who found the money, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I'm terrified. I paid this money for the grain. How did it get in my sack? They will accuse me of stealing this money. I will be arrested and put in prison and die there. I don't know how this money got here. What is going to happen?" Ask the others, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I am terrified. I don't understand what God is doing here. I know we did wrong with Joseph but it's been over 20 years. Why is all this happening now? I don't know what to do about this." Restart the action.

In scene two, the 9 brothers arrive in Canaan and begin to explain to Jacob what happened in Egypt. Jacob learns that Simeon has been left in Egypt in prison. Jacob learns that Benjamin must go to Egypt in order for Simeon to be released from prison.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "This is terrible. I don't know what to do. If I let Benjamin go, I may lose both sons. If I keep Benjamin here, Simeon will die. I can't let Benjamin go. Benjamin is all I have left of Rachel. I must keep Benjamin with me. How can I let Simeon die? This is a terrible situation." Restart the action.

In scene three, the 9 brothers unload their sacks of grain. As they empty the sacks, they discover that each man's money is in the top of his sack. Jacob and the 9 brothers are all terrified.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "Why are you so afraid right now?" You may hear, "This isn't normal. They will accuse my sons of stealing. They didn't steal. They paid for the grain. I don't know what we will do. How will we be able to go back and get Simeon? This means that Simeon will die in prison in Egypt. I don't understand why this is happening." Restart the action.

Jacob accuses the sons of robbing Jacob of his children. Joseph is dead. Simeon is dead. Now they want to take Benjamin. Jacob is speaking wildly. They don't know what has happened to Simeon.

Reuben is the oldest son. Reuben promises to take care of Benjamin. Reuben offers his two sons to Jacob if Benjamin doesn't return. Jacob refuses to let Benjamin go to Egypt.

Stop the action: Ask the brothers, "How do you feel when you hear your father say that Benjamin will not go to Egypt?" You may hear, "It's normal. He has always loved Rachel's children more than us. He will keep Benjamin and let Simeon die. That is a terrible choice. We are partly at fault. We are the ones who caused him to lose Joseph. This is our fault also. We will be the responsible ones if Simeon dies." Or, "I think we should wait a bit for him to get over his anger and grief and approach him again. Maybe he will see reason and realize we can't leave Simeon to die in prison. Maybe he will trust Reuben." Or, "I wish we could tell him all that we did with

Joseph. It might help him to know. I don't know. It might cause him to die from grief if he knows how bad we really are. I think we can't tell him. We just have to watch him grieve." Restart the action.

Jacob finishes his speech by saying that anything happening to Benjamin will cause Jacob, an old man with gray hair, to die from grief.

Stop the action: Ask the brothers, "How do you feel when you hear your father talk like this?" You may hear, "I feel so guilty. I know I'm partly responsible for this because of what I did to Joseph. I thought our father would die from grief over Joseph. If something happens to Benjamin, he probably will die from grief and it will be partly my fault." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

When the brothers found money in one of the sacks of grain, their hearts sank. This is a word picture to describe extreme fear. If you have such word pictures in your language, you may use one here.

The brothers asked, "What has **God** done to us?" This word for God is the common word for God that you have been using. God is discussed in the Master Glossary. This is a question that doesn't require an answer. The question can be changed into a positive statement.

This passage uses the phrase, Joseph is gone or Joseph is no more several times. This is a way to say that Joseph is dead. Jacob uses the same phrase to talk about Simeon. Use a culturally appropriate way to say that Joseph is dead.

Jacob says that losing Benjamin would cause Jacob, an old man, to die from grief and go to **Sheol** or go to his grave. Sheol is the name of the place where the dead go. Sheol is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for Sheol that you have used in other passages.

Jacob talks about his white hair or his gray hair. This is a way of saying that Jacob is an old man.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 42:27–38

Audio Content

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- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 43:1–34

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 43:1–34 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The famine continued and was severe. We don't know how much time has passed since the previous passage. Jacob and his family have eaten almost all the grain the brothers had brought from Egypt. The land of Canaan had no food. This passage is a narrative account of the next part of the Joseph story.

Most translations use Jacob's other name, Israel, in this passage. God gave Jacob a new name, Israel, when Jacob wrestled with God all night. Jacob and Israel are the same person.

As they discuss going back to Egypt, Judah, Jacob's fourth son by Leah, becomes the spokesman for the brothers. In the previous passage, Reuben, the oldest son, was the spokesman. There is no explanation for this change. As you listen to this passage, it seems as if Jacob is doing everything Jacob can do either to avoid sending Benjamin or delay sending Benjamin to Egypt with the other sons.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about a man who didn't want to do something. Describe the ways this man delayed or caused delay in carrying out the task.

Judah reminds Jacob that Benjamin must go to Egypt with the others because the governor had said that he would not give them more grain unless Benjamin comes to Egypt. The governor had said that there would be no grain unless Benjamin comes to Egypt. Judah says that without more grain, everyone including Benjamin will die of starvation. To starve means to die from lack of food. Jacob must decide whether to risk Benjamin going to Egypt or allow all of the family to die of starvation in Canaan. Judah offers to be responsible for the safety of Benjamin. Judah tells Jacob that they are wasting time with all this delay and discussion. Wasting time is a word picture that means that time is going by without anything being done. Finally, Jacob agrees to allow Benjamin to go to Egypt.

Jacob tells the sons that they must take gifts of the best products of Canaan. These were the most expensive items available to Jacob. The balm, honey and two types of nuts were available in Canaan. The spices and myrrh came from other countries and were very expensive. The gum, balm and aromatic resin gave off good smells. Egyptian people loved these smells. The Egyptians would use these products to make perfumes and as medicines. All three of these products come from trees. Myrrh also comes from trees. Jacob intends these gifts to buy favor from the governor.

Stop and discuss: What products from your country would you take as gifts to impress an important leader?

Stop and show a picture of a tree with resin coming from it. Show a picture of honey. Show a picture of myrrh. Show a picture of pistachio nuts. Show a picture of almonds.

Jacob tells the sons to take double the money for the grain when they go to Egypt. This double amount of money includes two parts. First is the money that was returned to them when they went the first time to buy grain. Second, they are also to take money to purchase more grain. Finally, Jacob says that Benjamin may go with the others to Egypt.

After all these instructions, Jacob pronounces a blessing over his sons. Jacob says, "may God Almighty give you mercy as you go." God Almighty or God All Powerful is the translation of El-Shaddai. Shaddai means power. This is another name for God. Jacob asks El-Shaddai to give them mercy or show compassion on the sons so that Simeon will be released from prison and Benjamin will return to Jacob.

Show the map of Canaan and Egypt with the route from Canaan to Egypt marked.

The brothers take Benjamin and go to Egypt. When they arrive, they present themselves to the governor, Joseph. Joseph says that they will eat with Joseph at noon. The manager of Joseph's house takes the brothers to Joseph's palace. They are terrified by this. They think that they are going to be sold as slaves because of the money for the grain that was returned to them. They believe someone is going to accuse them of theft.

The brothers approached the steward of the house. The steward was head of the household servants and in a position of trust. Joseph trusted this man. The brothers spoke to the steward and used a term of respect. They said, "My lord," which is a term of respect used to speak to someone of a high status. Other ways to speak to such a person would be to say sir or master. The brothers explain to the steward about the money being in their sacks.

The steward tells them, "Your God, the God of your father must have done this." The steward is talking about God, the same God Jacob and his family worshiped. The steward brings their brother Simeon out of prison.

The steward welcomed them to the house with signs of good hospitality. The steward gave them water to wash their feet and food for their donkeys.

Stop and discuss: Tell about visitors who came to your home from a long distance. What was done to make the visitors welcome?

Show a picture of a donkey.

The brothers gave their gifts to Joseph when Joseph arrived at noon. The brothers bowed low to the ground in front of Joseph. Joseph asked the brothers about their father. Then Joseph noticed Benjamin. Joseph pronounced a blessing on Benjamin. Joseph said, "May God be gracious to you, my son." Joseph uses this expression of son because Benjamin is young.

Joseph sees Benjamin, the son of Joseph's own mother and is overcome by his emotions. The son of Joseph's own mother means that Joseph and Benjamin were full brothers. They shared both mother and father. The other brothers shared a father with Joseph and Benjamin but had different mothers.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about a family that has multiple brothers from different mothers but the same father. Describe the relationship between each of the brothers. Notice the terms you are using to describe the brother from the same mother and the brother from a different mother.

Joseph was overcome with emotion. Joseph was unable to control his emotions. After weeping for a time, Joseph regained control of his emotions. Joseph washed his face and returned to the room.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about someone who came home after a long time away. What emotions did the people express? How did close relatives react to this arrival?

When the meal was served, Joseph was served at one table. The Egyptians sat at a different table. The brothers were all seated at one table. Joseph assigned the seating and seated the brothers, all 11 of them, according to their ages. The brothers were astonished by this. Joseph gave Benjamin 5 times as much food as the others received.

The Egyptians did not eat with the brothers. The Egyptians despised the Hebrews and refused to eat with them.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 6 scenes.

First scene: The famine continues. Jacob's family has eaten most of the grain the brothers purchased in Egypt. They need to return to get more grain, but Jacob is reluctant to let Benjamin go. Judah offers to take responsibility for Benjamin. Finally, Jacob allows Benjamin to go to Egypt. The brothers depart for Egypt with gifts and money.

Second scene: The brothers arrive in Egypt and meet Joseph. Joseph turns them over to the chief servant of his house. The servant takes the brothers to Joseph's palace.

Third scene: The brothers explain to the chief steward about the money that they found in their grain sacks. The steward takes them into the palace and gives them water to wash their feet and food for the donkeys. Simeon who has been in prison joins the brothers.

Fourth scene: Joseph comes home. The brothers give Joseph their gifts. Joseph sees Benjamin and is overcome with emotion.

Fifth scene: Joseph rushes from the meeting room and goes to a private room to cry. Joseph regains his composure and returns to the brothers.

Sixth scene: The brothers eat a meal with Joseph but at a different table. Joseph seats them according to age. The Egyptians refuse to eat with the brothers.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob called Israel
- Judah
- Benjamin is mentioned
- Simeon
- The other brothers
- Joseph
- Chief steward of Joseph's house
- Other Egyptians
- Waiters who served the feast

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In scene 1, some time has passed since the brothers returned to Canaan. The famine continues to be severe. The family has eaten almost all the grain that the brothers brought back to Canaan. Jacob tells his sons to go back to Egypt to get more food. Judah begins to speak as the spokesman for the brothers. Judah presents a set of choices with different results. Judah says "If" followed by a statement. If you do this, then this will happen. This is a way of presenting choices. Jacob must choose whether or not to let Benjamin go to Egypt.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story in which someone must choose between two options. Each option has a different result. Notice how the storyteller presents the options and results of each option.

Then Judah reminds Jacob that the governor had said, "You won't see my face again, unless your brother is with you." This is a word picture that means that the governor will not receive the brothers in Egypt. If they go to Egypt without Benjamin, they will not get their grain and their brother Simeon will remain in prison.

Then Judah mentions something that could have happened. Judah says, "If we had not delayed" or "If we had not wasted all this time." Judah is talking about something that might have happened but didn't happen.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about something that might have happened in the past but didn't. Notice how the person talks about the event in the past. How does this person describe this possibility so that everyone knows it didn't happen?

Jacob finally agrees to allow Benjamin to go to Egypt. Jacob insists that the brothers take double the money for the grain and take gifts for the governor.

Jacob pronounces a blessing on the brothers before they leave. Jacob says, "May God Almighty or El-Shaddai give you mercy." Jacob is praying that Simeon will be released from prison and that Benjamin will return safely to Canaan. Jacob accepts that Jacob might lose more of his sons including Benjamin on this trip. Jacob says this in a way that indicates that Jacob has made a really difficult decision. Jacob knows that Jacob might lose more of his sons. Jacob accepts this because they need food for the rest of the family—the women and children.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about someone who must make a really hard decision that may result in the death of one or more people. How does this person talk about this decision? How does the person bring himself to accept this decision he just made?

In scene 2, the brothers arrive in Egypt with their money and their gifts for the governor. When Joseph saw that Benjamin was with them, Joseph told his chief steward that the men would eat the noon meal with Joseph. Joseph told the steward to kill an animal and prepare a big feast. The brothers were terrified when they realized

they were going to the governor's palace. They were afraid that the governor was going to accuse them of stealing and make them slaves.

In scene 3, the brothers talked to the chief steward at the entry to the palace. They explained about finding the money in their sacks after the first trip. The steward told them that this must have been from God because the steward remembered their paying for the grain. The steward had Simeon come from prison. The steward gave them water to wash their feet and food for their donkeys. The brothers prepared their gifts for the governor.

In scene 4, Joseph came home. The brothers gave Joseph their gifts. The brothers bowed low to the ground before Joseph. Joseph asked about their father. Then Joseph asked about Benjamin. Joseph pronounced a blessing on Benjamin. Joseph said, "May God be gracious to you, my son." This could be said as, "May God be gracious to you, young man." Benjamin is Joseph's brother. Here, the word son indicates that Benjamin is much younger than Joseph who is in his forties.

In scene 5, Joseph is overcome with emotion and rapidly leaves the room. Joseph goes to a private room and breaks down and cries. Joseph left the room because Joseph was unable to control his emotions. Joseph hurried from the room or left the room in haste. Other translations use expressions such as rushed out, or ran out in haste. Joseph went to his own room to weep. The writer is saying that Joseph was so overcome by his emotions that he had to leave the room quickly to avoid crying in front of the brothers. Some translations say that Joseph broke down and cried. This is a word picture that means that Joseph lost control of his emotions. After crying, Joseph regains control, washes his face, and returns to the others.

In scene 6, everyone eats the feast. Joseph sits at a table by himself. The Egyptians in the room eat at another table because they despise the Hebrews. The 11 brothers all eat together at one table. Joseph seats them according to age. The brothers were amazed that Joseph, the governor, could seat them by age like this. Joseph filled their plates with food from his own table. The waiters served Joseph at his table and the brothers at their table. Joseph gave Benjamin 5 times as much food as the others. The passage ends with the brothers eating and drinking freely with Joseph until they were happy.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 6 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob called Israel
- Judah
- Benjamin is mentioned
- Simeon
- The other brothers
- Joseph
- Chief steward of Joseph's house
- Other Egyptians
- Waiters who served the feast

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

In scene 1, Jacob and his family are running out of food. The brothers must go back to Egypt to get more food or the family will starve. Jacob delays and delays their departure. Jacob does not want to let Benjamin go to Egypt. Judah offers to take responsibility for Benjamin.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "Why won't you let Benjamin go to Egypt?" You may hear, "I'm afraid he won't come back to me. I have lost Joseph. I can't bear to lose Benjamin. I think Simeon is probably dead. Who can live in an Egyptian prison? I think this governor has something bad planned and I'm afraid." Ask Judah, "Why are you offering to be responsible for Benjamin?" You may hear, "I'm the one who suggested selling Joseph as a slave. It's my fault that Joseph is dead. I should be responsible. Plus, we have to get more food or all our wives and children will die. I can't let that happen. Father must let Benjamin go." Restart the action.

Jacob insisted that the brothers take double the money for the grain. Jacob also insisted that the brothers take expensive gifts for the governor. Jacob gave permission for Benjamin to go with the brothers. Jacob pronounced a blessing on the brothers before they left. Jacob called on El-Shaddai or God Almighty to show mercy on them and to get Simeon out of prison and bring Benjamin back to Canaan.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How are you feeling now?" You may hear, "I'm frightened. I want to trust God to take care of this. But God let Joseph die. I want to believe that it will all be ok. I'm just afraid. It's hard to trust right now." Ask the brothers, "How did you feel hearing the blessing?" You may hear, "I am glad to think that God Almighty is looking after us. God is all-powerful. I need this blessing. I need God's mercy because of the things I've done in the past." Restart the action.

In scene 2, the brothers encounter Joseph. Joseph sees that Benjamin is with the brothers. Joseph sends the brothers to his palace and tells his chief steward to take care of them. Joseph tells the chief steward to prepare a feast for the brothers. The brothers realize that they are going to the palace of the governor. The brothers are afraid that Joseph intends to accuse them of stealing and make slaves of them.

Stop the action: Ask the chief steward, "How are you feeling about this?" You may hear, "I don't know who these men are, but the governor really seems interested in them. They seem like simple men from Canaan. I wonder why the governor is acting like they are important. I had better treat them well. I don't want my master to be angry with me. He says to prepare a feast so I will prepare a feast." Restart the action.

In scene 3, the brothers arrive at the palace. They explain about finding the money they had paid for the grain in their sacks on the way home. They have brought that money back. The steward tells them that the money must have come from God because the steward remembers that they paid for the grain. The steward has Simeon released from prison. Simeon joins the others.

Stop the action: Ask Simeon, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I am so relieved. I thought my father would not allow Benjamin to come and I would die in that prison. I was treated nicely but it was prison. I'm so glad to be free again." Restart the action.

In Scene 4, Joseph comes home for the feast. Joseph meets and talks with the brothers. The brothers give their gifts and bow low before Joseph. Joseph asks about their father. Joseph sees Benjamin and says, "May God be gracious to you, my son."

Stop the action: Ask Benjamin, "How do you feel after hearing that blessing?" You may hear, "I liked what he said. I wonder why he spoke to me like that. It seems strange." Restart the action.

In scene 5, Joseph loses control of his emotions and rushes from the room to cry in a private room. Joseph regains control of himself and returns to the others.

In scene 6, Joseph seats the brothers according to their ages. Joseph has waiters serve the brothers food from Joseph's own table. Joseph gives Benjamin 5 times as much food as the others.

Stop the action: Ask the brothers, "What are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I don't understand this man's actions. He rushes out of the room. He rushes back in. He invites us to a feast. He won't eat at the table

with us. He seems to know our ages. Who is this man? Why is he treating us like this? But I'm going to enjoy this feast." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The famine was severe in the land. Some translations just use the word land and not the name of the country. Other translations include Canaan in the translation. Land refers to Canaan where Jacob and his sons live. Use the same word for **famine** that you have used in previous passages.

The passage uses **Israel** throughout as the name for Jacob. Some translations use the name Israel without mentioning the name Jacob. Some translations choose to say, Jacob who was called Israel. In this way, they make clear that Israel and Jacob are the same man and recall that God gave Jacob this new name. Israel is discussed in the Master Glossary.

Jacob told the sons to take gifts of balm, honey, gum, aromatic resin, pistachio nuts and almonds. Some translations use general terms such as ointments, perfume, and nuts. These were expensive items. The gums and resins were used to make perfumes. The Ishmaelite traders who purchased Joseph as a slave were taking balm and gum and resin to Egypt.

Stop and show a picture of a tree with resin coming from it. Show a picture of honey. Show a picture of myrrh. Show a picture of pistachio nuts. Show a picture of almonds.

Jacob pronounced a **blessing** on his sons before they left. Blessing is discussed in the Master Glossary. Joseph when he saw Benjamin also pronounced a blessing on Benjamin. These blessings are in the form of a prayer.

Jacob says, "May God Almighty give you mercy as you go." God Almighty or God All Powerful is the translation of **El-Shaddai**. Shaddai means power. This is another name for God. Some translations use the name El-Shaddai without translating the meaning. El-Shaddai is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same name you used in previous passages.

Jacob asked El-Shaddai to show **mercy** on the sons. Mercy is discussed in the Master Glossary. Mercy means to have compassion for someone. In this instance, Jacob is asking God to be good to his sons so that all of them can return home.

When the brothers speak to the head steward or the head of Joseph's household servants, they use the title "**my lord**." This is the same title the brothers used when they spoke to the governor on their first trip. This is a title of respect. Other ways to say this would be to say, "sir" or "master." Translate this the same way you did in the previous passage.

The chief steward or head of Joseph's household servants told the brothers that **God**, the God of your father must have done this. Then Joseph asks that God be gracious to Benjamin. This is the common name for God. God is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same name for God that you have in previous passages.

The Egyptian servants despised the Hebrews and refused to eat with them. Hebrew is the language that Jacob and his sons spoke. They were also called Hebrews. Use the same word for Hebrews that you have used before.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 43:1–34

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (21675143 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 3](#)
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Genesis 44:1–13

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 44:1–13 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the previous passage, Joseph gave the brothers a feast at Joseph's palace. The next morning, the brothers were ready to return to Canaan. This passage is a narrative account of the next part of the Joseph story.

Joseph tells his steward, or house manager, to give each man as much grain as the donkey can carry. The steward is to put the money each man has paid in the top of his sack of grain. Each brother had brought back the money for the first grain as well as money to purchase new grain. The steward would have put all this money in each man's sack.

Joseph also tells the steward to put Joseph's personal silver cup in the top of Benjamin's sack. This cup was a divination cup. The Egyptians would pour oil and water in a cup and look to see what the combination formed. The Egyptians would study the formations to tell the future. The passage doesn't say that Joseph actually used the cup to predict the future. Joseph had the cup and could have used it. The steward does everything that Joseph tells him to do.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about a rich man who has many servants. This man has one servant who is in charge of all the other servants and everything that happens in the man's house. What title does the storyteller give this man? Describe the amount of trust the man has in his chief servant. Show a picture of a donkey loaded with a sack of grain. Show a picture of a silver cup used for divination.

The brothers were up at dawn and left with their loaded donkeys. Dawn is when daylight starts in the morning. Dawn is before sunrise. Dawn is as soon as it is light enough to see. As soon as the brothers had left the city, Joseph told his steward to chase after them and ask them why they had stolen the master's silver cup. The silver cup was a valuable object. Egyptians used cups like this to predict the future. Joseph does not explain to his steward or house manager why Joseph is doing all this to these men. Joseph has not told the house manager who these men are.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story of some thieves who ran away with what they had taken. Some local people go after the thieves to try to catch them and get the stolen things back. Pay attention to the words used to describe what happens.

The steward does exactly as Joseph tells him to do. The steward obeys Joseph. The steward does not know that these men are Joseph's brothers. The steward does know that Joseph is treating these men in a special way.

Stop and review: List out all the strange or unusual things Joseph has asked this man to do to Joseph's brothers. Include both the first trip to Egypt and this second trip.

The chief steward caught up with the brothers and accused them just as Joseph had instructed him to do. Joseph wanted the steward to say to the brothers, "Why have you returned evil for good?" Another way to say this is, "The master helped you but you have done something wicked" or "you have repaid the good that we did for you by doing something evil."

Stop and discuss: Act out a story in which someone does an act of kindness for someone else. That second person responds by doing something wrong to the first person. How does this first person talk to the second person? Notice the way he talks to the person who did something wrong.

The brothers are confused. They don't know why the steward is accusing them like this. The brothers refer to themselves as servants when they answer the steward. This is a respectful way of speaking to someone who has more authority. The brothers remind the steward that they had returned the money from the first trip to Egypt. They show their surprise with a series of questions that don't require an answer. They ask, "Why would we do this? Didn't we return the money before? Why would we steal silver or gold from the master?"

Stop and discuss: Tell a story in which someone has been falsely accused of doing something. How does this person defend himself? Does he ask questions that don't require an answer? Does he make a series of statements?

The brothers say that if the steward finds the silver cup in any one of the brothers' possessions, then that brother should die and the others become slaves. This is a way of stating strongly that the brothers have not stolen the cup. The brothers do not believe that the cup will be found among their sacks.

The brothers take their sacks of grain off the donkeys and open the sacks so that the sacks can be searched. At this point, the house manager or steward knows where the silver cup is. He put it in Benjamin's sack. However, the house manager goes through the process of searching each sack from the oldest to the youngest. This adds drama to the whole story.

When the steward finds the silver cup in Benjamin's sack of grain, the brothers tear their clothes in despair. Tearing their clothes was a normal cultural way to express strong emotion or grief. The brothers are expressing grief because finding the cup in Benjamin's sack means that Benjamin must die. Or at least, Benjamin will be in prison in Egypt. The governor will not believe that Benjamin is innocent of theft or that Benjamin did not take the cup. They have no explanation for how the cup got into Benjamin's sack of grain. The brothers are in despair because they know what this news will do to Jacob. All of the brothers reload their donkeys and return to the city. The brothers do not abandon Benjamin.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about someone who was wrongly accused of doing something. Notice the accused person's reactions.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Joseph tells the chief steward to prepare the sacks of grain for the 11 brothers. The steward does as Joseph said.

Second scene: The brothers leave at daybreak. Just as they leave the city, Joseph sends the chief steward after them to accuse them of stealing Joseph's cup.

Third scene: The steward catches the 11 brothers and accuses them of stealing Joseph's silver cup. The brothers protest their innocence. The steward finds the cup in Benjamin's sack. The brothers tear their clothes in despair and return to the city.

The characters in this story include:

- Joseph
- Joseph's chief steward
- Benjamin
- The other brothers

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In scene 1, the action follows the feast at Joseph's house. Joseph tells his chief steward to give the brothers as much grain as they can put on the donkey and the donkey carry. If the load is too heavy, the donkey won't be able to walk with the load on its back. Then Joseph tells the steward to put each man's money in his sack of grain. This should be all the money that the men brought to Egypt. They brought the money that had been returned to them from the first trip as well as money to pay for the grain on this trip. Joseph tells the steward to put Joseph's silver divination cup in Benjamin's sack. Joseph does not explain why Joseph wants these things done. The steward did everything just as Joseph told him to do.

In scene 2, the next morning, the 11 brothers get up and leave at dawn. Joseph waited until they had just left the city and then sent the chief steward after the brothers. Joseph told the chief steward to accuse the brothers of stealing Joseph's silver cup. Joseph told the steward everything to say.

In scene 3, the chief steward catches up with the 11 brothers just outside the city. The donkeys were loaded with heavy sacks of grain which means that the brothers traveled at a slow pace. The steward could move quickly and catch up with the brothers.

The steward said everything that Joseph had told him to say. The brothers denied having stolen anything. The brothers ask a series of questions that don't require an answer. These questions can be put in the form of a statement. For example, "Didn't we return the money we found in our sacks?" This question can be stated positively as, "We returned the money we found in our sacks."

The brothers all say that no one has stolen the cup. The brothers say that if the steward can find the cup in any of their sacks, the thief will die and the others become slaves of the governor. The brothers' actions indicate that they believe that they are all innocent. The house manager or steward says, "That's fair, but only the one who stole the cup will be my slave." By saying this the house manager accepts their offer to be slaves but then says only the guilty one will be a slave. The house manager makes the punishment less.

The brothers willingly and quickly unloaded the sacks of grain. The brothers opened each sack so that the steward could search for the cup. The steward knows where the cup is located. The steward put the cup in Benjamin's sack before the sacks were loaded. However, the steward starts with the oldest son's sack and moves through all 11 of them until he comes to Benjamin's sack. The steward found the cup in Benjamin's sack. The brothers were in despair and tore their clothes. They loaded the sacks back on the donkeys and all the brothers returned to meet with Joseph.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Joseph
- Joseph's chief steward
- Benjamin
- The other brothers

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

In scene 1, Joseph tells the steward to fill the brothers' sacks of grain with as much grain as the donkeys can carry. Joseph tells the steward to put each man's money in the top of his sack of grain. Joseph tells the steward to put Joseph's silver divination cup in Benjamin's sack. The steward did everything that Joseph said to do.

Stop the action: Ask the steward, "How do you feel about these actions?" You may hear, "I don't understand why the governor is doing these things. He is treating these men very differently from any other men. It seems like he must know them somehow, but I don't know when he would have met them. He certainly knows their ages. It's very strange. It seems like he is testing them in some way. He is a good master so I am obeying his instructions." Ask Joseph, "Why are you doing these things?" You may hear, "I need to know more about the character of my brothers now. They seem like they have become good men but I must be sure. I want to know what they will do about Benjamin. I want to know if they really care about their father's grief. I can't trust them until I know these things." Restart the action.

In scene 2, the 11 brothers leave at dawn. Soon after they left, Joseph told the steward to go after the brothers. Joseph said that the steward was to accuse the brothers of stealing Joseph's cup. Joseph told the steward to say, "Why have you repaid my kindness with evil? Why have you stolen my master's divination cup?"

Stop the action: Ask the steward, "How do you feel about this task?" You may hear, "I don't like accusing them like this. I know they didn't steal the cup. I don't know why the governor is trying to frighten them like this. But I will do what the governor tells me to do. I think he has a good reason. I just don't know what it is." Restart the action.

In scene 3, the steward catches up with the brothers just outside the city. The steward said everything that Joseph had told him to say. The brothers didn't understand. The brothers asked several questions that didn't require an answer. Then the brothers said that if the steward could find the cup among their possessions, the person who stole the cup should die and the others become slaves. The steward replied that only the person who stole the cup would be a slave. The others would be free.

Stop the action: Ask the brothers, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I'm confused. I don't know why he is accusing us. No one of us stole anything. We tried to give back the money but they wouldn't take it. What is this cup? I don't remember seeing a cup." Restart the action.

The brothers unloaded the sacks of grain. The steward searched the sacks starting with the sack of the oldest and working to the sack of the youngest. The steward found the cup in Benjamin's sack. The brothers tore their clothes to symbolize their despair. They loaded the donkeys and returned to Joseph.

Stop the action: Ask the steward, "Why did you search all the sacks and save Benjamin's sack until the last?" You may hear, "It seems to me that the governor is testing these men. I decided to act like I was checking all of them. If I had gone directly to Benjamin's sack, it would be suspicious. I don't want them to know that I put the cup in Benjamin's sack." Ask Benjamin, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I'm in shock. I've never seen that cup before. I don't know how it got into my sack. What is going to happen to me? I have to return home or my father will die. I didn't do this. How can I prove I'm innocent? I'm frightened. I hope my brothers believe I didn't take this cup. I need them to support me. I need God to support me too. I don't know why God is letting this happen." Restart the action.

*Filling the Gaps**Filling the Gaps*

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The chief steward is the same man who was the chief steward in the previous passage. Use the same title you used before.

The silver cup was a special cup called a **divination** cup. This type of cup was used in Egypt to tell the future. Joseph had such a cup. We don't know that Joseph actually used the cup. Divination is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word that you have used in previous passages.

Stop here and show the picture of the divination cup.

Joseph says why have you returned **evil** for good? This may be a difficult sentence to understand. Joseph is saying, I did something good for you. I gave you food for your families. I had you in my home and gave you a feast. You turn around and steal my silver cup. I did something good for you and you did something evil or **wicked** for me. The words evil and wickedness are discussed in the Master Glossary.

The brothers offer to be **slaves** of Joseph. Slave is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for slave that you have used in previous passages.

The brothers refer to themselves as **servants** of the steward. Servant is discussed in the Master Glossary. Here Judah is using the word to indicate respect. Judah uses the word servant to indicate that the person Judah is talking to has a higher status or more authority than Judah. Judah sees that the chief steward of Joseph's palace has a higher status than Judah. Use the same word for servant that you have used in previous passages.

*Speaking the Word**Speaking the Word*

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 44:1–13

Audio Content

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Genesis 44:14–34

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 44:14–34 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This passage continues the narrative story of Joseph's silver cup. Joseph had his chief steward or chief house manager put the cup in Benjamin's sack of grain. Then, after the brothers left, Joseph sent the chief steward

after the brothers to accuse them of stealing the cup. When the steward finds the cup in Benjamin's sack of grain, the brothers react with despair. All 11 of the brothers return to talk with Joseph.

The brothers went back to the palace where Joseph was waiting. The brothers throw themselves on the ground before Joseph. This was a strong or violent action. This was not a regular kneeling or bowing. The brothers had strong emotions.

Joseph demands, "What have you done?" Judah speaks for the brothers. Judah is not the oldest brother. Normally the oldest brother, who is Reuben, would speak for the brothers. Judah takes this role of speaking for them.

Stop and discuss: Talk about a large family with many sons. Listen carefully to the roles of each son in the family.

Judah asks a series of questions that don't require an answer. These can be given as positive statements rather than questions. This can be a question such as "What can we say to you?" Or, a positive statement such as, "We don't know what to say. We can't explain this. We can't prove that we are innocent." The brothers don't know how the cup got into Benjamin's sack. Therefore, they don't know how to defend themselves.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about someone falsely accused of doing something. How did this person defend himself?

Show a picture of an Egyptian divination cup.

Judah says God is punishing us for our sins. Judah and the others know that no one has ever punished them for their sin of selling Joseph as a slave. Benjamin was not a part of the group that sold Joseph as a slave. Now the brothers are being accused of something they didn't do. They believe that God is punishing them now for something they did years ago.

Then Judah tells Joseph that all 11 of the brothers will become Joseph's slaves. The brothers want to be treated as one group. The 10 older brothers show their support of Benjamin. Joseph refuses Judah's offer. Joseph tells the brothers that Benjamin will remain as a slave but the others will return to Canaan. Joseph says, "Go to your father in peace."

Judah gives a long speech. This is the longest speech in Genesis. Judah begins by saying flattering words to Joseph. Judah refers to himself as a servant of Joseph. Judah shows by this that Judah knows that Joseph has a higher status than Judah. Judah asks Joseph not to be angry with Judah. Judah is asking this because Judah is going to try to change Joseph's mind or get Joseph to agree to let Benjamin return to Canaan.

Judah explains the family history. Judah explains the importance of Benjamin to Jacob. Benjamin is the youngest son and the only remaining son of his mother. Judah believes that Joseph is dead. Judah says that Benjamin is the child of Jacob's old age. This means that Jacob was an older man when Benjamin was born. In many cultures the youngest child is treated as a special child.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about a father who has many sons. Notice how this father speaks about the youngest son. How does the father describe this youngest son?

Judah explains that the brothers only brought Benjamin to Egypt because Joseph as the governor told them to bring him. You will remember that Joseph had told the brothers not to return to Egypt unless they brought Benjamin.

Judah explains that Jacob believes that Benjamin's older brother was killed by a wild animal.

Judah explains that Jacob will die of grief if anything happens to Benjamin. Jacob had told the sons that if anything bad happened to Benjamin, this would send a grieving, white-haired man to his grave. This means that Jacob, an old man, would die of grief.

Judah explains that the brothers cannot return to Canaan without Benjamin. Judah calls Joseph, "My Lord." This is a polite way of talking to a person in an elevated position. Other polite terms would be "master" or "sir." Judah again refers to himself and his brothers as servants of Joseph. This is a polite way of saying that Joseph has a more powerful position.

Judah explains that Judah has promised to take care of Benjamin. Judah says that Judah will be held responsible if Benjamin doesn't return to Canaan. Judah begs to remain as a slave in the place of Benjamin. Judah begs

Joseph to allow Benjamin to return to Jacob. Judah repeats several times that Jacob will die of grief if anything happens to Benjamin. Judah says that Judah cannot return to Canaan without Benjamin. Therefore, it's better for Judah to remain in Egypt as a slave in Benjamin's place.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 1 scene.

First Scene: Joseph accuses the brothers of returning the good done to them with evil. Joseph says that Benjamin must remain as a slave and the others can return home. Judah gives a long speech in which Judah tells Joseph the family history. Judah explains that Jacob will die of grief if Benjamin comes to harm. Judah offers to take Benjamin's place as a slave.

The characters in this story include:

- Joseph
- Judah
- Benjamin
- The other brothers
- Jacob is mentioned.

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In this scene, Joseph met the brothers at the palace. The brothers fell to the ground before Joseph. The way the brothers fall to the ground is a violent action. This is not simple bowing. Joseph accused the brothers. Joseph said, "You should know that I can predict the future."

Judah speaks for the brothers. Because the brothers didn't steal the cup, the brothers don't know how to offer a defense or prove their innocence. Judah asks a series of questions that don't require an answer.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about someone falsely accused. This person tries to defend himself. Notice particularly the way the person speaks in his defense. Does he ask questions that don't require answers or does he make positive statements?

Judah says that God is punishing them for their sins. Judah means that the brothers did wrong with Joseph earlier and were not punished. Now God is punishing them but for what they did in the past. Judah is talking about the 10 brothers because Benjamin was not part of the group that sold Joseph as a slave. Judah says that all 11 of the brothers will remain to be Joseph's slaves. Joseph speaks using an oath. Joseph says, "Far be it from me to do this." Joseph means that it would be against God's law to punish those who are innocent. The way Joseph speaks makes it sound like this suggestion offends Joseph. Joseph says that only the one with the cup will remain. The other 10 can go home.

Judah begins a long speech. Judah starts this speech by flattering Joseph. Judah says that Joseph has as much power as the king. Judah asks Joseph not to be angry with Judah. Judah says this because Judah is going to try to change Joseph's planned punishment.

Then, Judah explains the family history to Joseph. Judah explains why Benjamin is so important to Jacob. Judah explains that Jacob will die of grief if anything happens to Benjamin. Judah explains that Judah has guaranteed the safety of Benjamin. Judah promised Jacob that Judah would make sure that Benjamin returns to Jacob.

Stop and discuss: To help the group understand Judah's speech, it might be good to play the speech as a scene. Have someone as Jacob and someone as Judah talk to each other with Jacob giving Judah instructions and explanations. Once you have this dialogue worked out, then you can have Judah tell the person playing Joseph what happened in Canaan. The goal here is to understand what happened between Jacob and Judah in Canaan and then be able to tell it to Joseph so that Joseph can understand it.

Judah finishes his speech by offering to take Benjamin's place as a slave. Judah begs Joseph to allow Judah to be a slave and let Benjamin return to Jacob.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 1 scene.

The characters in this story include:

- Joseph
- Judah
- Benjamin
- The other brothers
- Jacob is mentioned.

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

In this scene, the brothers arrive back at Joseph's palace. The brothers fall to the ground before Joseph. Joseph accuses all of the brothers. Judah answers for the brothers. As their defense, Judah asks a series of questions that don't require an answer. Because they didn't steal the cup, the brothers don't know how to defend themselves. Then Judah says, "God is punishing us for our sins."

Stop the action: Ask Joseph, "How are you feeling now as you see their distress?" You may hear, "It is working. I have them so upset that they are revealing their true selves to me. I'm seeing what they are really like now. This is a good plan." Ask the brothers, "Why do you feel you are being punished for your sins?" You may hear, "We should not have sold Joseph. We knew it. We should have gone after Joseph and brought him home. We didn't. Now we are being punished for those bad things we did years ago. God has never punished us. God has helped us become richer and stronger. We see now that God didn't forget what we did. But Benjamin wasn't a part of selling Joseph. I don't understand why Benjamin is being punished. I think it is to punish me by seeing Benjamin suffer." Restart the action.

Judah says that they have all returned together to become Joseph's slaves. Joseph tells them that Benjamin is the only one who will remain in Egypt. The others can return to Canaan.

Stop the action: Ask the brothers, "The governor says you can go home. Why don't you just accept that offer?" You may hear, "I can't do that. My father will die of grief if I do. I must stay here and convince the governor to let Benjamin go. I must convince him to accept me in Benjamin's place." Restart the action.

Judah begins a long speech. Judah explains the family history. Judah explains why Benjamin is the favorite son of Jacob. Judah says that Jacob will die of grief if anything happens to Benjamin. Judah explains that Judah took

responsibility for Benjamin so that Jacob would allow Benjamin to come to Egypt. Judah asks that Benjamin be allowed to return to Jacob and Judah become a slave in Benjamin's place.

Stop the action: Ask Judah, "How are you feeling as you tell the governor all these things?" You may hear, "I am in complete despair. I don't know if I can convince the governor to have mercy or not. I know I was responsible for Joseph being sold as a slave and I did nothing to stop it. I saw my father grieve over Joseph. I can't bear to watch him grieve over Benjamin and probably die. I must stop this if I can. I must try. I am saying everything I can think of to convince the governor to have mercy on us." Ask Joseph, "How are you feeling as you hear Judah's speech?" You may hear, "I am overwhelmed. I can hardly contain myself. He is showing that he really regrets what he did all those years ago. He is showing that he is willing to take Benjamin's place. He doesn't want his father to suffer anymore. He knows that his father loves Benjamin the most but he isn't jealous. This is an amazing change in him. I'm so glad to see this." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The silver cup was a special cup called a **divination** cup. This type of cup was used in Egypt to tell the future. Egyptians would pour water and oil into a cup such as Joseph's cup. They would study the formations as the oil and water separated and predict the future. Joseph had such a cup. We don't know that Joseph actually used the cup. Divination is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word that you have used in previous passages.

Stop here and show again the picture of the divination cup.

Judah calls himself a **servant** or **slave** when Judah speaks to Joseph. Judah uses this word multiple times in his speech to Joseph. Servant and slave are discussed in the Master Glossary. Here Judah is using the word to indicate respect and also to indicate that the person Judah is talking to has a higher status or more authority than Judah. Joseph as governor of Egypt has a higher status than Judah. Use the same word for servant that you have used in previous passages.

Judah says, "**God** is punishing us for our **sins**." The word used for God is the common name for God. God is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word you have used in previous passages. Sin is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for sin that you have used in previous passages.

You will never see my face again is a word picture that means you will not meet with me in person again. We will not meet face to face again.

Judah uses the term "my lord" when speaking to Joseph. This is a term of respect that one person would use when speaking to a person of higher status or authority. Other expressions could be master or sir. Use the same translation for "my lord" that you used in previous passages.

Judah says that if any harm comes to Benjamin, it would send a grieving, white-haired man to his grave. This is a word picture for causing someone to die. Judah is saying that Jacob who is old would die of grief.

Judah offers to be a **slave** of Joseph in the place of Benjamin. Slave is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for slave that you have used in previous passages. This is also the same word that is used for servant earlier in the story. These two words have the same meaning.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 44:14-34

Audio Content

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Genesis 45:1-28

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 45:1-28 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the previous passage, Joseph accused the brothers of stealing Joseph's silver cup. The brothers all came back to see Joseph after the servant found the cup in Benjamin's sack of grain. Joseph has listened to Judah explain the family situation. This passage is a narrative account of the continuation of the Joseph story.

Joseph could stand it no longer. This means that Joseph was no longer able to cover his feelings. Joseph sent all the Egyptian attendants from the room. Joseph told his brothers that he was Joseph. Joseph broke down and wept. This is a word picture to say that Joseph was no longer able to control his emotions. Joseph wept so loudly or with such noise that people outside the room could hear Joseph. The news that Joseph was crying went to the king.

Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" The brothers were unable to answer. They were speechless. Different translations use different words to describe the emotions that the brothers were feeling. The brothers were stunned, terrified, or dismayed. Joseph has sent all the attendants out. There is no mention of an interpreter. Most believe that Joseph starts talking to his brothers in Hebrew.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about meeting someone whom you did something bad to years ago. Now this person is in a position of power. You are meeting this person. Describe the feelings of the person who did the wrong to the other man.

Joseph gets the brothers to move closer. Then Joseph tells the brothers that God is the one who made all these things happen. God brought Joseph to Egypt to save the lives of Joseph's family. Joseph says that the famine will continue for 5 more years and will be severe. Joseph says that the famine will be so bad that there will be no plowing or harvesting. Plowing the ground prepares the ground for the sowing of seeds. Joseph is saying that there will be no point in plowing because nothing planted will grow. There will be no harvest.

Stop and discuss: Describe a famine in your area. When and how did the people prepare their fields?

Show a picture of a plow being used in a field.

Show a picture of a hoe being used in a field.

Joseph says that God is the one who caused Joseph to become governor of Egypt. After explaining all that God has organized, Joseph tells the brothers of Joseph's own position. Joseph says that Joseph is a father to the king, manager of the whole palace and governor of Egypt. When Joseph says that Joseph is a father to the king, Joseph means that Joseph is an important advisor to the king. The king elevated Joseph to the position of governor of Egypt. This is the first mention that Joseph is also manager of the king's palace. Joseph is telling his brothers that Joseph has a position of great power in Egypt. Joseph can take care of them. Joseph explains that God is the one who caused all these things to happen.

Joseph tells the brothers to go home and get their father and their families and everything they own. They are to come to Egypt and live in a particular place called Goshen. Joseph tells the brothers that Joseph will take care of all of them.

Show the map of Egypt and Canaan with the area of Goshen marked on the map.

Joseph refers to Jacob as "my father." Jacob is the father of all 12 of these men.

Stop and tell a story about a man with many sons. How do the sons refer to their father? Notice if the sons say "my father" or "our father" when talking about the father.

Joseph continues talking with the brothers. The brothers have not said anything. Joseph continues to try to convince them that Joseph really is their brother, Joseph. Joseph kissed Benjamin. Joseph kissed each of the other 10 brothers. If kissing to show affection between men is not done in your culture, you can say that they hugged. Joseph wept with joy. Finally, the brothers began talking freely with Joseph.

The king heard that Joseph's brothers had come. The king was delighted to hear this news. The king told Joseph to bring his brothers and their families to live in Egypt. The king promises that Joseph's family will eat fat of the land. This is a word picture meaning that Joseph's family will have the very best that is available in Egypt. The king sends wagons or carts so that the women and children can ride rather than having to walk the whole route to Egypt.

Show a picture of an Egyptian cart.

Joseph gave the brothers supplies for the journey back to Canaan. Joseph gave each brother new clothes. Joseph gave Benjamin 5 sets of clothes and 300 silver coins. Joseph sent gifts of donkeys and supplies to Jacob. Joseph told the brothers not to quarrel about what has happened as they travel. Joseph probably told his brothers not to quarrel because Joseph has seen the brothers quarrel before when they came to Egypt.

Show a picture of a donkey.

When the brothers arrived in Canaan, they told Jacob that Joseph is alive. At first Jacob could not believe what they said. Jacob was stunned or so surprised that Jacob couldn't speak. Someone who is stunned is paralyzed by shock or fear. But then the brothers repeated everything that Joseph had told them. Jacob saw the gifts that Joseph had sent. Finally, Jacob believed that Joseph was alive. Jacob wanted to hurry to get to Egypt. Jacob said, "I want to see Joseph before I die." This is an expression to say that Jacob is an old man. It does not mean that Jacob was sick and about to die. Jacob was able to travel to Egypt. Jacob did not know how much longer he would live. Jacob was eager to see Joseph.

Tell a story about a man who discovers that a beloved family member he thought dead is still alive. How does this man react to the news? What kinds of emotions does he express?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

First scene: This is a continuation of scene 4 in the previous passage. Joseph reveals his identity to the brothers. Joseph explains that God is the one who sent Joseph to Egypt so that Joseph could save the lives of the others.

Second scene: The king of Egypt hears that Joseph's brothers have arrived. The king invites the brothers to live in Egypt. The king sends gifts to Jacob.

Third scene: Joseph prepares the gifts for Jacob. Joseph sends the brothers back to Canaan loaded with everything they might need for the journey and the return to Egypt.

Fourth scene: The brothers arrive in Canaan and tell Jacob that Joseph is alive and governor of Egypt. Jacob is stunned. Then Jacob finally understands that Joseph is alive. Jacob wants to go to Egypt quickly.

The characters in this story include:

- Joseph
- Joseph's servants
- The 11 brothers
- Benjamin is specifically mentioned.
- The king of Egypt
- The king's officials
- Jacob

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Scene 1 is a continuation of scene 4 in the previous passage. Some translations start this passage with a time word such as then to indicate that this scene continues. Joseph listened to all that Judah had to say. Then Joseph couldn't control his emotions any longer.

Joseph commanded the servants or attendants to leave the room. This is strong language, a command, and one that the servants would obey immediately.

Joseph tells the brothers that he is Joseph. Joseph begins to weep so loudly that the servants hear him weeping. The news of Joseph's weeping reaches the king. The brothers are so stunned or shocked that they can't speak. Joseph has them come closer to Joseph. Joseph explains that all that happened was from God. God caused Joseph to go to Egypt so that Joseph could save the lives of the family. God is the one who made Joseph an important advisor to the king, master over the king's palace and governor of all of Egypt. Joseph tells the brothers to go get their families from Canaan and move to Egypt to live in an area provided by Joseph.

Joseph talks about "my father" and refers to his brothers as "your sons." Joseph is keeping an intimate relationship with Jacob but in speaking this way, Joseph puts some distance between himself and his brothers.

Joseph tells them that the famine will last another 5 years. Unless they come to Egypt to live, they will all starve to death. Joseph promises to take care of the brothers and their families. Joseph continues to talk to the brothers to convince them that he really is Joseph. Joseph kisses Benjamin and then kisses all his brothers. Joseph was weeping from joy. Finally, the brothers started talking freely with Joseph.

In scene 2, the king and his officials have heard that Joseph's brothers are in Egypt. The king and his officials were happy to hear this news. The king sent a message to Joseph. The king said that Joseph's brothers should all move to Egypt with their families. The king promises that the brothers will live in the best place in Egypt. The king sends wagons or carts so that the brothers' wives and children won't have to walk the whole distance from Canaan to Egypt.

In scene 3, Joseph provides the wagons or carts as promised by the king. Joseph gave the brothers food and supplies for their journey back to Canaan and then back to Egypt. Joseph prepared gifts of donkeys for Jacob. When all was prepared, Joseph sent the brothers back to Canaan. Joseph told the brothers not to quarrel about what had happened.

In scene 4, the brothers arrive in Canaan and tell Jacob that Joseph is alive. Joseph is the governor of Egypt. Jacob is so stunned by the news that Jacob can't speak. The news paralyzes Jacob for a time. The brothers repeated everything that Joseph had told them. Jacob saw the wagons and gifts that Joseph had sent. Finally, Jacob believes the brothers. Jacob's name switches to Israel at this point. Jacob and Israel are the same person. Jacob becomes very excited. Jacob wants to go immediately to Egypt. Jacob wants to see Joseph.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Joseph
- Joseph's servants
- The 11 brothers
- Benjamin is specifically mentioned.
- The king of Egypt
- The king's officials
- Jacob

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

In scene 1, Joseph commands the servants to leave the room. Once the servants are gone, Joseph breaks down and cries.

Stop the action. Ask Joseph, "Why are you crying?" You may hear, "I'm so happy. These are tears of joy. My brothers really have changed. They regret what they did and they are different now. Look at how they are taking responsibility for Benjamin and don't want our father to suffer." Ask the brothers, "What are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I'm confused. Why is the governor crying? I've never seen a grown man cry like that before. This is strange." Restart the action.

Joseph tells the brothers that he is Joseph, their brother. At first, they are stunned and can't speak. Joseph has them come closer and says again that "I am your brother, the one you sold into slavery." Joseph tells them not to be angry or upset about what they did. Joseph explains that God is the one who brought Joseph to Egypt. God did this so that Joseph would be able to save the lives of all of them and their families. God is the one who put Joseph in the important positions of being a chief advisor to the king, being in charge of the king's palace and being governor of Egypt.

Stop the action: Ask the brothers, "What are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I don't know what to think or feel. How can this be Joseph? How did the one we sold as a slave get to this high position in Egypt? I thought he was dead. Here he is alive and in such an important position. He says we are not to be upset about the past. I don't know what he plans to do with us." Restart the action.

Joseph continues talking to the brothers. Joseph tells them to come to Egypt to live in an area that Joseph will provide. Joseph tells them the famine will last 5 more years. Joseph promises to take care of all of them and their families. Joseph kisses Benjamin and then kisses the other brothers. Joseph continues to weep with joy.

Stop the action: Ask the brothers, "What are you feeling now?" You may hear, "I am feeling shame. I treated Joseph so badly and here Joseph is promising to take care of my family. Joseph isn't blaming me for what I did all those years ago. I'm sure life has not been easy for Joseph. I can't believe that Joseph is forgiving us like this. Joseph says this is from God. I hope so. I'm confused." Restart the action.

In scene 2, the king and his officials hear that Joseph's brothers have arrived. The king and his officials are delighted to hear this news. The king tells Joseph that the brothers must come to live in Egypt. The king will give them the very best land to live on and they will have plenty to eat. The king orders carts or wagons for the wives and children to ride in. The king tells Joseph to bring Jacob to Egypt.

Stop the action: Ask the king, "Why are you being so generous to Joseph's family?" You may hear, "Joseph has saved Egypt. Joseph has worked hard. I've been able to leave everything to Joseph. I trust Joseph to do it correctly. I want Joseph to remain here and be happy. I think Joseph needs his family near him." Restart the action.

In scene 3, Joseph provides the gifts from the king. The brothers have wagons or carts. Joseph gives them clothes. Joseph gives Benjamin 5 new sets of clothes and 300 pieces of silver. Joseph also prepared gifts for Jacob and sent them with the brothers.

Stop the action: Ask the brothers, "How do you feel seeing Joseph give Benjamin more than Joseph is giving you?" You may hear, "It's okay. Benjamin is Joseph's brother. Joseph hasn't seen Benjamin grow up and become a young man. It's normal to love your full brother more. Besides, we are the ones who mistreated Joseph. I'm just grateful for what Joseph is doing for us." Restart the action.

In scene 4, the brothers arrive in Canaan and tell Jacob that Joseph is alive and governor of Egypt. Jacob is so stunned that Jacob can't speak. Jacob can't believe what the sons are saying to him. The brothers repeat again everything they have said about Joseph. They tell Jacob everything that Joseph told them. Finally, Jacob is able to believe and then Jacob is excited. Jacob wants to go to Egypt to see Joseph. Jacob says, "I want to see Joseph again before I die."

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I have no words. I've grieved over Joseph for so many years. They say that God took Joseph to Egypt. I don't understand. How could Joseph be there and governor of Egypt and we didn't know? I don't care. Joseph is alive and I'm going to see Joseph again. Joseph is my beloved son. I get to see Joseph again. Thank you, God." Ask the brothers, "How do you feel?" You may hear, "Relieved that father accepted what we told him. Relieved that father will see Joseph again. Still guilty over what we did. I hope going to Egypt is the right thing to do." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Joseph broke down and wept. To break down and weep means that Joseph was no longer able to control his feelings. The feelings were so strong that Joseph lost control of them. This implies that there was strong emotion. Joseph wept so loudly that the servants who had been sent from the room could hear. This implies that Joseph was sobbing.

The news that Joseph was weeping even reached the king's palace. Later the **king** hears about Joseph's brothers and sends a message to Joseph. Some translations use **Pharaoh** and some use the king. Pharaoh is a title used by the kings of Egypt. Use the same word for the king that you have been using.

Joseph says that it was **God** who sent Joseph to Egypt. Joseph repeats the name of God several times. This is the normal name of God. God is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for God that you have used in other passages.

Joseph explains that the **famine** has been going for 2 years and will continue for 5 more years. Use the same word for famine that you have used in previous passages. To describe how severe the famine will be, Joseph says that there will be no plowing or harvesting. A **plow** is an instrument of agriculture used to turn the ground over to loosen the dirt so that seeds can be planted. Usually, an animal such as a horse or a donkey or an oxen pulls the plow. In some places where they don't use plows, they may use a hoe. A **hoe** would also turn the earth over to loosen the dirt for planting of seeds. The farmer holds the hoe in his hands. The ground or dirt must be broken up and loosened if any seeds are to take root and grow. Choose to use the word plow or hoe based on how your culture prepares the ground for planting.

Show the picture of a plow. Show the picture of a hoe.

Joseph tells the brothers that God has made Joseph a father to the king. Joseph means that Joseph advises the king. Joseph says God has made Joseph manager of the king's palace. This is the first mention of this role for Joseph. It means that Joseph is over all the palace servants and everything that happens in the palace. Joseph

says that God has made Joseph governor of all Egypt. Joseph rules Egypt with only the king having more power than Joseph has. Joseph explains these things to the brothers so that they can understand that Joseph has the power to provide for the brothers and their families in Egypt. The brothers also understand that Joseph has a lot of power.

Joseph tells the brothers that if they don't come to Egypt, they will **starve**. To starve is to suffer or even die from the lack of food.

The king says that Joseph's brothers will eat of the **fat of the land**. This is a word picture to say that they will have the very best of Egypt set aside for Joseph's brothers.

The brothers were **stunned** when Joseph revealed that he was their brother Joseph. The brothers were speechless. They couldn't say anything and didn't say anything while Joseph continued to talk. Jacob was stunned when the brothers told Jacob that Joseph was alive. The Hebrew language says that Jacob's heart grew cold. This means that Jacob did not react. The news took his breath away. It was like he was paralyzed. He couldn't speak. This news was so shocking and unexpected that Jacob was unable to hear and understand what they were saying.

After hearing again everything that the brothers had to say, Jacob's spirit revived. This means that Jacob's mental ability started to become normal again. Jacob pulled himself together or Jacob began to be normal again. Jacob understood that Joseph was alive and in Egypt. Jacob wanted to go to Egypt to see Joseph.

At the end of this passage, Jacob's name goes back to **Israel**. Use the same word for Israel that you have been using. Some translations keep the name Jacob for this end of the passage. Most switch to the name, Israel.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 45:1-28

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (19965034 KB)

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- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 6](#)

Genesis 46:1-27

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 46:1-27 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jacob learned in the last passage that Joseph is alive and governor of Egypt. Joseph wants Jacob and the whole family to come to Egypt. Jacob decides to go. This is a narrative description of Jacob's preparation and trip to Egypt.

Stop and show the map of Canaan and Egypt with the normal route from Hebron to Goshen marked.

This passage starts by using Israel for Jacob's name. Both names are used right in the beginning of the passage. Some translations choose to stay totally with the name Jacob. Others use both Israel and Jacob.

Stop and tell a story about a man with 2 different names. How do people know that this is the same person?

Jacob packed all his possessions. Jacob and his family left. Jacob lived in Hebron for many years and may still be living near Hebron. The story doesn't say where Jacob is living at this time. Jacob stopped in Beersheba. Isaac, Jacob's father had lived in Beersheba and Isaac had built an altar in Beersheba. People offered sacrifices on the altars to worship God. Jacob offered sacrifices to the God of Isaac while in Beersheba. A sacrifice would be to kill an animal and offer the animal by burning as an act of worship of God.

During the night God spoke to Jacob in visions. Visions usually occur when a person is awake and dreams usually occur when the person is asleep. The passage doesn't say if Jacob was awake or asleep. The passage says that these visions occurred during the night. The word visions is plural. This may mean that God spoke the same thing more than once or that God spoke in different visions during the same night. In these visions, God identifies himself as the God of Isaac. In this manner, Jacob knows exactly who Jacob is talking with. God makes a promise to Jacob. God tells Jacob to go to Egypt without fear. God says to Jacob, "I will go with you down to Egypt." God tells Jacob that God will bring Jacob back to Canaan again. This statement seems to mean the descendants of Jacob, those who will be born in Egypt. God is going to make a nation of these descendants. God will bring that nation back to Canaan. God also tells Jacob that Jacob will die in Egypt. Since Jacob will die in Egypt, the passage seems to mean that Jacob's descendants will return to Canaan at some time in the future.

God uses a word picture for death. God tells Jacob that Joseph will close Jacob's eyes. This means that when Jacob dies, Joseph will be beside Jacob and Joseph will reach out to close Jacob's eyes for the final time.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about the peaceful death of an old person with family members surrounding that person. What do the family members do when the person dies? Who has what responsibility? Notice if any word pictures are used to describe what happens.

Jacob and his sons used the wagons that the king of Egypt had sent as gifts to Jacob. Jacob took all his children, both his sons and his daughters and all his grandchildren and all his great grandchildren to Egypt. Jacob took the wives of his sons with them to Egypt. All of Jacob's descendants went to Egypt with Jacob. The word daughters is plural. Dinah is the only daughter mentioned by name in the scriptures. We don't know how many other daughters Jacob had. Other daughters are not used in the count of the total number of family members who went to Egypt.

Show a picture of an Egyptian wagon or cart.

Jacob took all his possessions and all his livestock to Egypt. This means that Jacob was moving to Egypt. This was not just a short trip or a visit. Joseph had invited the whole family to come and live in Egypt. By taking everything with them, we know that they did not plan to come back to Canaan quickly.

The passage interrupts the story line here and gives a list of each of Jacob's wives, their sons and some of the grandsons. At this point, the text switches again to the use of the name Israel.

Leah was Jacob's first wife. Each of Leah's sons had sons. Judah had 5 sons. Two of Judah's sons died. Judah had 2 sons through Tamar. These sons were all mentioned in a previous passage. Use the same names you used in the previous passage. Perez, son of Judah, has 2 sons listed. Hezron was one of the sons of Perez. You will use this name again in future passages. Tamar, the mother of Perez and Zerah, is not mentioned. We don't know if Tamar went to Egypt.

Leah's sons were all born in Paddan-aram. This is the name of the region around Harran where Laban lived. This is where Jacob lived for 20 years. The passage mentions that Zilpah was the servant that Laban gave to Leah when Leah married. This passage does not say where the other sons were born. The passage does tell us that Joseph's sons were born in Egypt.

Rachel had 2 sons. The passage mentions that Bilhah was the servant that Laban gave to Rachel when Rachel married.

The previous passage talked about Benjamin as if Benjamin was still a boy. Here we learn that Benjamin is old enough to have 10 sons. Benjamin has the most sons of all of Jacob's children.

The passage lists all of Jacob's direct descendants by name and counts them as being 66 total who went to Egypt with Jacob. The wives of the sons are not counted in this list. The wives are not named. The passage explains

that Joseph and Joseph's sons were already in Egypt. Their mother was Asenath, daughter of Potiphera, the Priest of On. In total there were 70 members of Jacob's family living in Egypt.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

First scene: Jacob prepares to leave for Egypt.

Second scene: Jacob arrives in Beersheba, offers sacrifices to God. God speaks to Jacob in a vision.

Third scene: Jacob departs from Beersheba and goes to Egypt.

Fourth scene: The descendants of Jacob who go to Egypt with Jacob are all listed.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- God
- King of Egypt is mentioned.
- Joseph is mentioned.
- Each of Jacob's 4 wives are mentioned.
- Laban, Jacob's father-in-law is mentioned.
- The 66 descendants of Jacob are named.

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In scene one, the passage starts with a time word that means that this scene follows immediately after the events of the last passage. In that passage, Jacob said, "I must go to see my son before I die." So, Jacob packed all his possessions and set off for Egypt. It implies that this was done immediately.

In scene 2, Jacob arrives in Beersheba and stops to spend the night. Jacob offers sacrifices to God as an act of worship of God. During the night, God speaks to Jacob in a vision. God tells Jacob not to be afraid to go down to Egypt. It is normal in the scriptures to talk about going up or down when going to a place. Jacob lived in the mountains around Hebron in Canaan. Egypt was at sea level. Therefore, Jacob went down to Egypt. The word "down" refers to elevation or height and not north or south.

God makes a promise to Jacob. When God speaks to Jacob, Jacob answers God in a very polite way. Jacob says, "Here I am." God says, "I will be with you in Egypt." God tells Jacob that Jacob will die in Egypt and Joseph will be with Jacob when Jacob dies. God also tells Jacob that Jacob will return to Canaan. Some translations say that this promise means that Jacob's descendants, or the nation that will come from Jacob, will return to Canaan.

In scene 3, Jacob and his family leave Beersheba and continue on their way to Egypt. They use the carts or wagons that Pharaoh, King of Egypt had sent as gifts. Jacob and the women and children ride in these carts. Jacob takes all his possessions including all Jacob's livestock to Egypt.

In scene 4, there is a list of each of Jacob's 4 wives, the sons each wife had, and the children and grandchildren of these sons. This list interrupts the flow of the story. Jacob had 12 sons and a daughter named Dinah. Jacob had many grandsons and great-grandsons. The passage says that there were daughters but Dinah is the only

daughter listed by name. The sons' wives went to Egypt with their families, but the wives are not counted as part of the 66 people of Jacob's family who went to Egypt.

For scene 4, use objects or toys to represent the sons, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. You would start with Jacob and have the 4 wives represented by a stone or stick. Then have each wife's children coming in lines from her using rocks or sticks. Then have each of the next generation listed coming from those sons. You want to see how large a family 66 people make. Remember that there are wives and servants going on this trip also. This could also be a fun activity with people. Bring in 66 adults and children and arrange them according to family lines as listed in this passage. Give each person his "biblical name" and then let them repeat this name several times as they sort out the relationships.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- God
- King of Egypt is mentioned.
- Joseph is mentioned.
- Each of Jacob's 4 wives are mentioned.
- Laban, Jacob's father-in-law is mentioned.
- The 66 descendants of Jacob are named.

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

In scene 1, Jacob packs his possessions and departs for Egypt. The passage seems to indicate that Jacob does not waste any time or take a long time to prepare before departing. According to the previous passage, Jacob wants to see Joseph again before Jacob dies.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "Joseph is alive. I can't believe it! I'm going to see Joseph again. I must hurry and get there as soon as I can. I do want to see Joseph again. I don't know how Joseph got to Egypt and into such a position of authority. I don't care. I just want to see Joseph again. We must go quickly." Restart the action.

In scene 2, Jacob stops in Beersheba to offer sacrifices to God. During the night God speaks to Jacob in a vision. God calls Jacob by name. Jacob says, "Here I am." Jacob is hearing God's voice.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How do you know this is God speaking to you?" You may hear, "God has spoken to me many times. I recognize God's voice when I hear it. I love to hear God speaking to me. I am not afraid of God. I love God and I know God loves me." Restart the action.

God says to Jacob, "I will be with you in Egypt." God promises to make Jacob's family into a great nation. God tells Jacob that Jacob will die in Egypt with Joseph beside him. Jacob will be brought back to Canaan.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How do you feel when you hear a promise like, 'Your family will become a great nation?'" You may hear, "I know that God promised my grandfather, Abraham, that we would become a great nation. It feels good to have this promise repeated. God keeps His promises. I am sad about leaving Canaan. This is the land that God promised to my descendants. God has promised to bring my descendants back which is good. God has promised to be with me in Egypt. God is wherever I go. That is wonderful. I feel calm and at peace about this trip. Going into the unknown is a bit frightening but Joseph is there to prepare for us. I'm not at all worried about the future. I can trust God." Restart the action.

In scene 3, the sons take Jacob to Egypt. Jacob rides in one of the wagons sent by Pharaoh. The sons put their wives and small children in the carts. The sons take all the livestock and all their possessions with them. Everyone in the family goes to Egypt.

Stop the action: Ask the sons, "How are you feeling now that you are returning to Egypt?" You may hear, "I'm glad we are going. I'm glad that Joseph has promised to take care of us. I know that as long as our father lives, Joseph will be nice to us. I'm worried about what will happen when our father dies. But I can't deal with that now. The important thing is to get food for our families and our animals. We will starve if we stay in Canaan. I have to trust that Joseph is being honest with us." Restart the action.

In scene 4, the passage lists each of Jacob's wives. The wife's sons are listed with their children. Some of the sons have grandchildren listed. A total of 66 descendants of Jacob are moving to Egypt. In addition, the wives of each of the sons and the grandsons who are married also go to Egypt. Joseph is already in Egypt with Joseph's two sons. The total number of Jacob's family is 70 people in Egypt.

Stop the action: Ask one of the wives, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I'm feeling anxious. I've never been to Egypt. I don't like leaving my parents and other family behind. I don't speak that language so I don't know how I will manage. I also don't know how to cook their food. I need to feed my family but I'm not sure how we will do it." Ask one of the children, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I'm so excited. This is an adventure. We are going to see my uncle that they talk about but I've never met. I wonder what Egypt looks like. I wonder what the people look like. My father went but he didn't have much to say about the country." Ask Jacob, "How are you feeling now?" You may hear, "We are on the way. I'm so relieved and excited. I can hardly sleep at night. I want to get there quickly. I want to see Joseph. I'm so glad I get to see Joseph again before I die. I'm glad that God is with me on this trip." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Both the names Israel and Jacob are used in this passage for Jacob. You may choose to use Jacob only or you may choose to use both names. Be sure your audience understands that Israel and Jacob are the same person.

Jacob offered **sacrifices** to the God of his father, Isaac. This was an act of worship. Sacrifice is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for sacrifice that you have used in previous passages.

The sacrifice was to the **God** of Isaac, Jacob's father. This is the usual name for God. God is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for God that you have used in other passages.

During the night, God spoke to Jacob in **visions**. A vision is usually seen when a person is awake and a dream occurs when the person is sleeping. These visions happened during the night. God spoke to Jacob during these visions. We don't know if God repeated the same vision multiple times or spoke differently in different visions. The word is plural in the text. Use the same word for vision that you have used in previous passages. Vision is discussed in the Master Glossary.

God says that Joseph will close Jacob's eyes when Jacob dies. This is a word picture for death. Sometimes people die with the eyes open. Then someone must close the eyes of the dead person. Some translations use the word picture. Other translations just say that Joseph will be with Jacob and will attend to Jacob when Jacob dies. If you have a natural description of this process in your language, you may use it.

Jacob along with the wives and children used the carts or wagons sent by the King of Egypt. The king's title was **Pharaoh**. Some translations use Pharaoh and some use king. Some use both. Pharaoh is not the king's name. This is a title used by all kings of Egypt.

Jacob and his sons took all their possessions and all their **livestock**. Livestock refers to all their animals. This would mean sheep and goats as well as cows, donkeys, and camels.

When the passage starts with the list of Jacob's descendants, the passage uses the name Israel again. Some translations make sure that people know this is the same person by saying, the sons of Israel who is also called Jacob.

Joseph's two sons were the sons of Asenath, daughter of Potiphera, priest of On. Be sure to use the same name and pronunciation for Potiphera that you used in the previous passage. Potiphera should not be confused with Potiphar who was captain of the palace guard.

Judah had a son named Perez. Perez had a son named Hezron. These names will be in future passages. It will be important to use the same names.

Use the same names and pronunciation for each of Jacob's sons that you have used in previous passages.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 46:1-27

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (17675330 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 46:28–47:12

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 46:28–47:12 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jacob's family arrives in Egypt. Jacob brought all his family, all his livestock and all his possessions to Egypt. This is a narrative account of Jacob's arrival in Egypt.

The first part of this passage uses Israel as the name for Jacob. The second half of the passage uses the name Jacob. Some translations choose to use the name Jacob throughout the passage. Israel is the name God gave Jacob when Jacob wrestled all night.

As Jacob and his family came into Egypt and were getting close to the land of Goshen, Jacob sent Judah ahead to tell Joseph that Jacob was arriving. Jacob also asked Judah to ask for directions as to where the whole family

was to go. Judah is the fourth son by Leah. Judah took the leadership in talking with Joseph and then with Jacob in the previous passage. Joseph immediately commanded his servants to harness the horses to his chariot and went to Goshen to meet Jacob. Joseph did not wait for Jacob to come to Joseph. Joseph had a high position in the government of Egypt but Joseph went to see his father Jacob as soon as Jacob arrived in Egypt.

Stop and show the map of Egypt with the area of Goshen marked.

Show a picture of a chariot such as the governor of Egypt would use.

When Joseph saw Jacob, Joseph fell on Jacob's neck and wept. This is a word picture that means that Joseph threw his arms around Jacob and hugged Jacob and then wept with Joseph's face turned to Jacob's neck. To fall on the neck of someone means that the person is really moved and is showing great emotion. This is not a simple hug. Joseph was expressing joy.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story of a family who comes home after many years away. Describe how this family member greets his father. What emotions does this family member show? What word pictures does the storyteller use to describe the scene?

Jacob says, "I am ready to die since I've seen your face again." Jacob is talking to Joseph. Jacob means that all is good with Jacob now. Jacob is at peace. Jacob means that it's okay for Jacob to die because Jacob has seen Joseph and knows that Joseph is alive. Jacob is not asking to die at this point.

Joseph tells the family that Joseph will go to the king and tell the king that Joseph's whole family has arrived and is Goshen. Joseph will tell the king that the men are all shepherds who take care of the livestock they brought with them from Canaan. Livestock means any domestic animals or animals used in farming. For Jacob's family, the livestock would include sheep, goats, cows, donkeys, and probably camels. Joseph tells his brothers that they must all say they are shepherds when the king asks them their occupation. Joseph says that Egyptians despise shepherds. Shepherds generally work out in the pastures to take care specifically of flocks of sheep and goats. Despise is a strong word meaning that the Egyptians consider shepherds loathsome or an abomination or detestable. Because of this strong feeling against shepherds, the Egyptians would not want to be near Joseph's family. Joseph wants the king to allow Joseph's brothers and their families to live in Goshen and be separate from the Egyptians. Joseph also wants his family to have the best land for their flocks of sheep and goats. Goshen is the best Egyptian land for these animals.

Joseph leaves Jacob and the family in Goshen. Joseph takes 5 of the brothers with him to go and meet the king of Egypt. Joseph told the king that Joseph's father and brothers have arrived from Canaan and are in the land of Goshen. Joseph presented the 5 brothers to the king. When the king asked about their occupation, the brothers said, "We are shepherds." The brothers asked for permission to live in Goshen.

The king told Joseph to choose anywhere in all of Egypt for Joseph's family to live. The king told Joseph to choose the best place for Joseph's family. The king said that if Joseph wanted them to live in Goshen, that would be okay. Then the king said that any of the brothers with special skills might look after the king's flocks and herds also.

After this Joseph brought Jacob to meet the king. The passage is not clear if this is the same time that Joseph brought his brothers or if this is another time. Jacob blessed the king. We don't know what Jacob said to the king with this blessing. It may be that Jacob asked God to give the king a long life and many children. Or, Jacob may have used a special and polite way of greeting the king. It may mean that Jacob showed great respect when Jacob greeted the king.

Jacob blessed the king when Jacob arrived before the king. Jacob blessed the king again as Jacob was leaving the king.

The passage tells us that Jacob is now 130 years old. Jacob says that this is a short life compared to some of his ancestors. Both Abraham and Isaac lived longer than Jacob.

Joseph gave Jacob and Joseph's brothers the best land in Egypt. Joseph gave them the area of Rameses which is a part of the land of Goshen. We don't know exactly where Rameses is located but we do know that this was a part of Goshen. This was the best land in Egypt for raising sheep and cows.

Stop and look at the map again to see the area of Goshen.

Joseph gave Jacob and the brothers and their families food so that even the youngest child had the right amount of food to eat.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Jacob and his family arrive in Egypt in the land of Goshen. Joseph comes to meet Jacob. Joseph instructs the brothers in how to talk to the king.

Second scene: Joseph takes 5 of his brothers to meet the king.

Third scene: Joseph brings Jacob to meet the king. Joseph puts his family in Goshen and gives them the food they need.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- Judah
- Joseph
- The king of Egypt
- 5 brothers who go with Joseph to visit the king
- The other brothers and all their families

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In scene 1, Jacob's family arrives in Egypt. Jacob sends Judah ahead to tell Joseph that they are near. Judah is to ask Joseph for directions for where to go. Joseph takes his chariot and goes immediately to Goshen to meet Jacob. Joseph hugs Jacob and weeps a long time. Jacob tells Joseph, "I am ready to die. I've seen your face again. I know you are still alive."

Joseph tells the brothers that Joseph will go to the king and tell the king that Joseph's family has arrived in Egypt. Joseph will tell the king that the brothers are all shepherds. Joseph tells the brothers that they are to tell the king they are shepherds. The Egyptians despise shepherds and don't want to associate with shepherds. In this way, Joseph's family will keep themselves separate from the Egyptians.

In scene 2, Joseph chooses 5 of the brothers to go to the king. As Joseph instructed them, the brothers tell the king that they are shepherds. The brothers refer to themselves as the king's servants. This is a polite way of speaking to the king. The king tells Joseph to give the brothers the best land in all of Egypt.

In scene 3, Joseph takes Jacob to meet the king. Jacob blesses the king. The king asks Jacob his age and Jacob says, "I am 130 years old." Jacob blessed the king again before leaving the king.

Joseph puts the brothers and all their families in an area called Rameses which is a part of the land of Goshen. This is the best land in all of Egypt for raising sheep and cows. Joseph also gives them food for their families. Everyone including the youngest child has enough food to eat.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- Judah
- Joseph
- The king of Egypt
- 5 brothers
- The other brothers and all their families

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

In scene 1, Jacob and all his family arrive in Egypt. As they came near to the area of Goshen, Jacob sent Judah to find Joseph and ask for directions as to where the family was to go. Joseph had the horses put to his chariot and went to see Jacob. When Joseph arrived in Goshen, Joseph hugged Jacob with a strong embrace and wept with joy.

Stop the action: Ask Joseph, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I am overcome with joy. I can't stop crying with joy. I didn't know if I would ever see my father again and here he is. I am so happy right now." Ask the brothers, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I'm glad we were able to get our father here so that father could see Joseph again. I regret what we did when we sold Joseph. I hope Joseph was speaking truth when Joseph said that God meant this for good. I still worry about what will happen to us all when our father dies." Restart the action.

Jacob said to Joseph, "I can die now that I've seen your face again. I know you are still alive so I can die in peace."

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "Why are you talking about dying at this happy time?" You may hear, "I am an old man. I don't have much longer to live. I have grieved Joseph all these years. Now my tears of grief have turned into tears of joy. I'm so happy to see my son, Joseph, again. I am at peace. I have nothing else to worry me. I'm not anxious to die right now but I'm not worried about it because I know where Joseph is now." Restart the action.

Joseph tells the brothers to tell the king that they are shepherds. The Egyptians despise shepherds. Joseph plans for his family to live in Goshen and be separated from the influence of the Egyptian culture and religion.

Stop the action: Ask the brothers, "How are you feeling about this plan of Joseph's?" You may hear, "It's a good plan. We need to remain separated from the Egyptians. They worship idols. We worship God. We don't want our children and grandchildren to turn toward those false gods. Plus, we don't speak their language and we don't know their food. This is better. Joseph has a good plan for us." Restart the action.

In scene 2, Joseph selects 5 of his brothers and takes them to meet the king. The brothers did as Joseph had told them. The brothers told the king they were shepherds. The brothers ask to live in the land of Goshen. The king

tells Joseph to give the brothers the best land in Egypt. The king also tells Joseph that any of the brothers with special skills can also take charge of the king's livestock.

Stop the action: Ask the king, "How are you feeling right now after meeting Joseph's family?" You may hear, "I am astonished. Joseph seems like such a refined and educated man. How can his brothers and father all be shepherds! It's good to put them in Goshen. This way I won't be expected to have them at the palace." Restart the action.

In scene 3, Joseph brings Jacob to meet the king. Jacob blesses the king. Jacob tells the king that Jacob is 130 years old. When Jacob leaves the king, Jacob blesses the king again.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How did you feel meeting the king of Egypt?" You may hear, "I was glad to meet the king. The king has been kind to Joseph. The king has been kind to me and all my sons. I wanted to thank the king." Ask the king, "What did you feel when you met Joseph's father?" You may hear, "Again, I was astonished. He is a strange old man. I don't know how he fathered a wise man like Joseph. Still, he is Joseph's father so I will respect him. He gave me a blessing twice. That was amazing." Restart the action.

Joseph gave the best land in all of Egypt to his family. They settled in one area of the land of Goshen. This area was good land for shepherds to graze their livestock. Joseph provided all the food that the family needed so that even the youngest child had enough to eat.

Stop the action: Ask Joseph, "Why are you being so kind to your brothers? Don't you remember what they did to you?" You may hear, "I know they meant harm when they sold me as a slave. But God was with me and God has helped me and God has turned it all into good. I believe God brought me to Egypt so that I could save the lives of all my family. I'm saving the lives of other people also. They meant this for bad but God planned it so that it is good. I want them to be happy and successful in their lives now. I don't want to get revenge or cause any harm to anyone. I want us to be a good family." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The first part of this passage uses Israel as the name for Jacob and then switches to Jacob in the second part. Some translations use the name Jacob only. The important thing is to make sure that people understand that Israel and Jacob are the same person with 2 names.

Joseph used his **chariot** to go to Goshen to see Jacob. The chariot was a special kind of vehicle that had 2 wheels. The chariot was drawn by a horse or by horses. The chariot was used for quick transportation. Chariots were also used by soldiers during a war. As governor of Egypt, Joseph had a special chariot.

Show the picture of the chariot again.

Joseph fell on Jacob's neck and wept for a long time. This is a word picture to describe Joseph throwing his arms around Jacob and hugging Jacob tightly. Joseph wept with his face turned toward Jacob's neck. If you have special words that describe emotional greetings, you could use it here.

Joseph wants the family to say that the men are **shepherds** looking after their livestock. Shepherd is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same term for shepherd that you have used in other passages. The Egyptians **despise** shepherds. Despise is a strong word that means hate or abominate or loathe or detest. Despise is much stronger than dislike. Choose a strong word to describe this feeling towards shepherds.

Pharaoh is the title of the **king** of Egypt. Some translations call him king and others call him Pharaoh. Some use both king and Pharaoh. Use the same way of describing the king that you have been using.

The 5 brothers meeting the king referred to themselves as **servants** of the king. This is a polite way of speaking to the king. They are not actually the king's servants. Use the same word for servant you have used in other passages. Servant is discussed in the Master Glossary.

When Jacob met the king, Jacob **blessed** the king. We don't know what the blessing was. Bless is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for bless that you have used in previous passages. Jacob blessed the king when Jacob was leaving the king's presence. Use the same word for bless.

Joseph gave Jacob and the brothers the land of Rameses which was a part of the land of Goshen. This was the best land in Egypt for shepherds. Joseph also gave each family the amount of food needed so that even the youngest child had enough to eat.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 46:28–47:12

Audio Content

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- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 47:13-26

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 47:13-26 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jacob and his sons settled in the land of Goshen in Egypt. Joseph continued his work as governor of Egypt. God had said the famine would last 7 years. When Joseph told his brothers to move to Egypt, the famine had already lasted for 2 years. This passage is a narrative account of how Joseph managed the famine over the next 5 years.

As the famine continued, people ran out of food. The famine was severe in Egypt and in Canaan. People had no food left. People began to starve. Joseph sold the grain that Joseph had collected and stored during the 7 years of abundant harvest. People in Egypt and Canaan purchased food to eat. Joseph put all the money in the treasury of the king. The treasury is the storehouse where money or other valuable things would be kept for the king. Eventually the people ran out of money. They had no money left to purchase food.

The people came to Joseph and begged for food. The people asked a question that doesn't require an answer. They said, "Why should we die before your eyes?" This can be a positive statement such as, "We will die before your eyes." Before your eyes is a word picture to say that the people will die right in front of Joseph or die in Joseph's presence.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about a famine or illness that kills many people. How do the people describe the situation? How do they talk about it so that everyone knows that the situation is really difficult with many people dying from hunger? Listen to see if there are any word pictures used in the description.

Apparently, the people still had their livestock. Joseph tells the people to bring their livestock as payment for the food. In this way, Joseph took all the animals, the sheep, goats, horses, donkeys, and cows. The people gave Joseph these animals and Joseph gave them food for a year. The people had no animals left.

The next year, there was still a severe famine. The people had no money and no livestock. The people were starving from lack of food. Again, the people ask a question that doesn't require an answer. They ask, "Why should we die before your eyes?" The people offered their land to Joseph and themselves as slaves in exchange for food. The people tell Joseph that if the people die, there will be no one to work the land. The land will become empty and grow up in weeds.

Joseph used the grain as money and bought all the land in Egypt. The land belonged to the king, not to Joseph. The people became the slaves of the king. Joseph gave them food to eat as payment for their land.

The priests in Egypt did not have to sell their land to get food. The priests had an arrangement with the king. The priests received their food from the king. These priests served many different Egyptian gods.

After purchasing the land, Joseph offered to give the people seed to plant. The requirement was that 20 percent or 1/5 of the harvest would go to the king. The people would keep 80 percent or 4/5 of their harvest for their own families. This harvest was theirs to do with as they wanted.

Stop and discuss: Talk about paying taxes or giving part of what you earn or harvest to someone else. Listen to how the amount owed is explained. Some might use fractions such as 1/5 or some might use percentages such as 20 percent. To say 1/5 or 20 percent are two ways of saying the same amount.

The people were pleased with Joseph's idea. They said, "You have saved our lives!" The people asked to become servants of the king.

Joseph put out a decree or declaration for everyone to know. Joseph said that 1/5 of all the crops would belong to the king. The passage says that this decree is still in effect today. This means that the decree was still in effect when this story was written down.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: The famine is severe. The people have no food and no more money to buy food. Joseph tells the people to bring their livestock or their animals and use the animals to purchase food for the people.

Second scene: The famine continues. The people have no more animals. The people offer to become slaves of the king and sell their land to the king for food.

Third scene: Joseph gives the people seed to plant so that there will be a harvest. Joseph tells the people that they must give 1/5 of the harvest to the king each year.

The characters in this story include:

- Joseph
- The people
- The king or Pharaoh is mentioned.
- The priests are mentioned.

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In scene one, while Joseph's father and brothers were settling in the land of Goshen, the Egyptian people had no food. Some of the translations use a word to start the story that means that both events are occurring at the same time. One translation uses the word "meanwhile." Others use the word "now." The use of this word indicates that Joseph settling his family and the people running out of food occurred at the same time.

Stop and discuss: tell a story that has 2 things happening at the same time. Pay attention to the introductory words. How does the storyteller let the audience know that these events occur at the same time?

The famine has continued to be severe. The people have spent all their money purchasing food from Joseph. Joseph puts the money in the king's treasury. Joseph does not keep the money for Joseph. When the people have no more money, they come to Joseph to ask for more food. Joseph suggests that they use their livestock to buy food. The people give Joseph their animals and Joseph gives the people food. The livestock belonged to the king.

The people ask a question that does not require an answer here and in scene 3. They say, "Why should we die before your eyes?" When they ask the question, they don't expect an answer. They are saying that it's better to give up the animals than to die. In scene 3, it's better to give up their land and freedom than die.

In scene two, the famine continues. The people have no food, no money and no animals. The people come to Joseph again for food. The people offer to sell Joseph their land and themselves as slaves for food. The people tell Joseph that if all the people die, there will be no one left in Egypt. The land will be empty. If the people live, they can continue to farm the land and produce crops when the famine is over. Joseph agrees. The land now belongs to the king. The people are slaves to the king. Joseph gives the people food.

Joseph did not buy the land of the priests. The priests served the different gods of Egypt. The priests had a special relationship with the king. The king gave the priests food to eat. Therefore, the priests did not have to sell their land.

In scene three, the people come to Joseph again. They have nothing to sell for food. Joseph offers to give the people seed to plant so that they can have a harvest. Joseph tells the people that 1/5 or 20 percent of the harvest will belong to the king. The people accept this proposal. This proposal remained the law in Egypt.

Stop and discuss: Some people might have difficulty explaining percentages or fractions of something. You might use piles of stones or sticks. Count the number of pieces in the pile. If there are 5 stones, you can take one stone to one side and leave 4 stones in the pile. You could use 10 stones and put two stones to one side or use 20 stones and put 4 stones to one side. This would be to help your translators be able to explain clearly the decree that Joseph gave to people.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Joseph
- The people
- The king or Pharaoh is mentioned.
- The priests are mentioned.

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

In scene one, Joseph sells the people grain to eat. Eventually the people spend all their money and have no money left to buy more food. The people are starving. The people come to Joseph and ask for food. They tell Joseph, "We will die before your eyes without food." Joseph has a suggestion. Joseph suggests that the people give Joseph their animals or their livestock and Joseph will give the people food. The animals belong to the king. The people accept Joseph's idea and have food for the year.

Stop the action: Ask the people, "How are you feeling about this famine right now?" You may hear, "It feels like we may never have food again. I have never seen anything like this. My family is starving. Joseph says we can sell our animals to Joseph for food. We have to do that because the animals will die anyway without food. They need food just like we do. I don't know what I will do without my donkey or my cow but we must have food for the children." Ask Joseph, "How do you feel taking their animals like this?" You may hear, "I am doing this to keep the animals alive. They will kill the animals and eat them otherwise. We will need our flocks and herds when the famine is over. I will make sure the animals are taken care of." Restart the action.

In scene two, the famine continues. The people are starving. The people have no money and no animals to use for food. The people come to Joseph and offer to sell their land for food. The people offer to become slaves of the king. The people say that if they die, there will be no one left in Egypt to work the land. Joseph bought all the land in Egypt for the king. The people became slaves of the king.

Stop the action: Ask the people, "Why are you offering your freedom for food? If you become a slave, you won't be free." You may hear, "Without food, we will die. It's better to live without freedom than to die. I want my children to live. This is the only way for them to live. We have worked this land for generations. I don't want this land to be abandoned and only weeds grow on it. I want to live here and raise my family here on this land. Selling it to the king so we can eat is the only solution." Restart the action.

Joseph did not buy the land of the priests. The priests served the different gods of Egypt. The king gave the priests food to eat. Since the priests had food, they did not need to sell their land.

In scene three, the famine continues. The people have nothing. The people have no money, no animals, and no land. The land and the animals now belong to the king. The people are now slaves to the king. Joseph offers to give the people seed to plant so that they will have a harvest. Joseph says that the people must give the king 1/5 of any harvest. The people accept Joseph's suggestion. The people are happy to give the king 1/5 of the harvest. The people tell Joseph, "You have saved our lives." Joseph established it as a law that the people had to give 1/5 of the harvest every year to the king.

Stop the action: Ask Joseph, "How are you feeling now?" You may hear, "I am really pleased. Egypt has survived the famine. There will be a harvest again. I have it as a law that the people must give the king 1/5 of every harvest. This lets the king store extra grain and keep in case there is another famine. If a famine comes, there will be food for the people. I have made the king richer. I have tried to do my work in an honest way. I think the king is pleased. I hope God is pleased." Ask the king, "How are you feeling now?" You may hear, "I am very pleased with Joseph and Joseph's work. Joseph has done really well. I don't know Joseph's God but Joseph's God has blessed Joseph. Jacob blessed me too. Maybe this is why I'm blessed also. The people have food and are content with the way Joseph has taken care of them. I'm glad I appointed Joseph to this task." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The **famine** continued to be severe. Use the same word for famine that you have used in other passages.

The **king** of Egypt is also called **Pharaoh**. Pharaoh is a title for the king. Some translations use the king, some use Pharaoh and some use both. Use the same word for the king that you have been using.

The people sold their **livestock** to Joseph for food. Livestock refers to all animals used in farming such as sheep, goats, cows, donkeys, camels and horses. Use the same word for livestock that you have used in previous passages.

The people offered to become **slaves** of the king in order to have food. The words for slave and servant are the same word in the original language. Slave is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for slave that you have used in other passages.

Joseph offered to give the people **seed** to plant in exchange for their land. Seed is discussed in the Master Glossary. Here seed means the small grains that are planted in the ground that grow and produce grain to eat.

The **priests** did not sell their land for food. The priests had an arrangement with the king. The king provided food for the priests. Priest is discussed in the Master Glossary. Here the priest is serving an idol. The priest is not serving God. The word used is the same as you have used in other passages for priest.

The people were required to give a fifth of their harvest each year to the king. A fifth is 20 percent. The people were to keep 4/5 of the harvest or 80 percent for their families. Use the usual way of describing what is owed to the government.

At the end of this passage, the author says that the decree or law regarding the harvest made by Joseph is in effect today. This means that this law continued for a long time. The decree was still in effect when the author wrote this story down. This statement refers to a time in the future several generations after Joseph.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 47:13-26

Audio Content

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Genesis 47:27–31

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 47:27–31 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

While Joseph was taking care of all of Egypt during the famine, Jacob and the rest of Jacob's family settled in the land of Goshen. This is a short narrative account of Jacob's life in Egypt.

The passage starts with the word meanwhile which is a time word. This indicates that the events in this passage have been happening at the same time as events in the previous passage. This passage tells us what happened to Jacob and Jacob's sons as they settled in the land of Goshen.

The passage begins with the name Israel. In this instance, the name Israel refers to all of Jacob's sons and their descendants. Israel is Jacob's other name, the name that God gave Jacob on his return to Canaan. Israel also became the name for all of Jacob's descendants.

Jacob's family settled in Goshen. The sons of Jacob acquired property or became landowners. The descendants of Jacob were fruitful. This is a word picture meaning that they had many children who had many children. Sixty six people came from Canaan to join with Joseph and his sons to make 70 people in Jacob's family. Once they were settled in Goshen, their numbers grew rapidly, which means that they had many children.

Jacob lived in Goshen for 17 years. Joseph was 17 years old when the story began. Jacob had 17 years with Joseph before Joseph was sold as a slave. Jacob now has another 17 years with Joseph at the end of Jacob's life. Jacob was 130 years old when Jacob arrived in Egypt. Now Jacob is 147 years old.

Jacob has now reached the end of Jacob's life. The time of Jacob's death drew near. This means that Jacob is going to die soon. Jacob is 147 years old. Jacob will not live to be 148 years old. Jacob knew that Jacob was going to die soon.

Stop and discuss: There is no indication that Jacob is afraid of his death. Tell a story about someone very old who is nearing death. How does this person feel about dying? Notice the way this person talks about his death.

Jacob called for Joseph to come to see Jacob. Then Jacob asks Joseph to be responsible for Jacob's body after Jacob dies. The way that Jacob talks to Joseph shows that Jacob knows that Joseph has become an important man in Egypt. Jacob is talking to his son but also Jacob is talking to a man with a very important position in Egypt. Jacob shows this by the respectful language Jacob uses. Jacob asks Joseph to promise that Jacob's body will be taken back to Canaan and buried with Jacob's ancestors, which means with Isaac and Abraham. Abraham and Isaac were buried in a cave near Hebron in Canaan. Jacob wants to be placed or buried in the same cave. Jacob asks Joseph to make this promise as a solemn vow or oath.

Show the map which has Egypt and Canaan. The land of Goshen and Hebron should be marked.

This oath was a solemn, symbolic gesture. Jacob asked Joseph to place his hand under Jacob's thigh. This was a polite way that referred to Jacob's genital area. This gesture represented the future generations of Jacob's family. This type of oath put a burden on Joseph. When Joseph takes this oath, Joseph makes himself directly accountable to God. If Joseph does not keep his promise, Joseph places himself under God's wrath. If Joseph breaks the oath, then God will punish Joseph. Joseph is making this promise to God.

Stop and discuss: Describe a situation in which someone takes a solemn oath which is also a promise to God. What does the person do to indicate that this is solemn and sacred? This is an absolute promise to do what the person has vowed to do.

Joseph promised as Jacob had asked Joseph to do. Jacob insisted that Joseph swear. Joseph swore an oath to do as Jacob asked.

After Joseph swore the oath, Jacob bowed at the head of his bed to give thanks. Some translations say that Jacob bowed in worship or worshiped God. Some translators think that Jacob was also thanking Joseph. It's good to say that Jacob bowed humbly without being specific. The passage uses the name Israel as Jacob's name here at the end of the passage. Some translations switch to Israel and others keep the name of Jacob.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 2 scenes.

First scene: Jacob's family live in the land of Goshen for 17 years and prosper.

Second scene: Jacob knows that he will die soon. Jacob asks Joseph to make a solemn oath to take Jacob's body back to Canaan to bury Jacob with his ancestors.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- Joseph
- Jacob's family

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Scene one starts with a time word that indicates that while something else has been happening in another place, something has also been happening with Jacob's family.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story in which two events are happening. Describe one event. Then tell the other event. Notice the words that indicate that both events happened at the same time.

The scene continues with a general description of what happens to Jacob's family in Goshen. The famine ended. The family bought land and prospered. The family had many children so that their numbers increased rapidly. Jacob was 130 when Jacob arrived in Egypt. Seventeen years have passed. Jacob is now 147 years old.

In scene two, Jacob knows that death is coming soon. Jacob wants to be buried with Abraham and Isaac in a cave near Hebron. Jacob calls for Joseph to come. Jacob asks Joseph to promise that Joseph will take Jacob's body back to Canaan and bury Jacob's body in the same cave where Abraham and Isaac are buried. Joseph promises to do this.

Jacob asks Joseph to perform a specific ritual that indicates that this is a solemn vow or oath. With this ritual, Joseph is making this promise before God and would expect punishment if Joseph fails to keep his promise. The ritual is for Joseph to put his hand under Jacob's thigh. Some translations choose to use the words solemn promise rather than describe the action of putting the hand under the thigh.

After Joseph makes this promise, Jacob bows at the head of his bed. The word for bed and the word for staff or the walking stick that Jacob used are very similar words. Some translators think Jacob bowed over his staff. Either way, Jacob bowed his head as he was able. Jacob was very old and very weak.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 2 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- Joseph
- Jacob's family

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

In scene one, Jacob's family establishes themselves in the land of Goshen. They purchase land. They have many children. The family lives in the land of Goshen for 17 years. Jacob is now 147 years old.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "How are you feeling now?" You may hear, "I am an old man but I'm content. Look around me. See all those little children. My family is growing. God promised me many descendants. Look at them. We are prospering here. I'm glad that Joseph found this place for us to live. I have no regrets about coming here. God has been good to me." Ask Jacob's sons, "How are you feeling now?" You may hear, "I feel good. My family is happy here. I have children, grandchildren and even great-grandchildren. We are making money. Everyone is healthy. I do worry about what will happen when father dies. Joseph said it was okay but I'm not sure." Restart the action.

In scene 2, Jacob knows that Jacob will die soon. Jacob calls Joseph to come. Joseph comes to see Jacob. Jacob demands that Joseph swear a solemn oath to take Jacob's body back to Canaan to bury Jacob in the cave where Abraham and Isaac are buried. Joseph makes this vow. Jacob bows at the head of his bed.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "Why do you want to be buried in Canaan?" You may hear, "That is the land God promised to my grandfather, Abraham, and my father, Isaac. God also promised it to me for my descendants. I want my sons to know that I'm buried there. This will help tie us all together. I don't want them to forget that they must go back to the land God promised us. This time in Egypt is temporary." Ask Joseph, "How do you feel about making this solemn promise?" You may hear, "I am glad to do this for my father. I want to ease his mind. I want his last days to be happy and without any worries. If this promise helps my father to die in peace, I'm happy to make it. I don't see any problem with it. I'm sure the king will allow me to take his body back. I understand why he wants to be buried there. It will be a good thing for all our family. It will help for the children all to know that we must all go back to Canaan someday." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The passage begins by using the name **Israel** to mean all of Jacob's descendants who are living in Egypt. Israel is discussed in the Master Glossary.

Jacob's family was fruitful and multiplied. This is a common phrase in scripture which means to have many children who will have many children. God told Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply.

Jacob asked Joseph to make a solemn vow or **oath** that Joseph would take Jacob's body back to Canaan to bury Jacob with Abraham and Isaac who are Jacob's ancestors. To bury someone with his ancestors could mean to be in the same area or could mean to be in the same grave. Abraham had purchased a cave for burial. Isaac was buried in that cave. Jacob wanted to be buried in the same cave.

Some translations use the words swear a solemn vow. Others translate the exact action of the vow that Jacob demanded. Jacob asked Joseph to put Joseph's hand under Jacob's thigh and swear. By swearing in this way, Joseph was agreeing to God's punishment if Joseph did not do as Joseph has promised. Oath is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for oath that you have used in other passages.

The passage ends with the name **Israel** but this time it means Jacob.

Jacob bowed at the head of his bed. This could mean that Jacob worshipped God. This could also mean that Jacob bowed to thank Joseph. The meaning is unclear. Many translations leave the meaning unclear by saying that Jacob bowed at the head of his bed.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 47:27-31

Audio Content

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Genesis 48:1-22

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 48:1-22 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

We are now starting the final passages of the book of Genesis or the conclusion of the book. The main part of the story with the climax of the story has happened. These passages finish and bring together the final details of the story. In this first passage of the conclusion, Jacob is nearing death. Joseph goes to see Jacob. Joseph takes his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, to see Jacob. This is a narrative account of this visit.

Jacob is failing rapidly. This is a word picture to indicate that Jacob is nearing death. Jacob is losing his strength and his force. Some translations say that Jacob is sick. This sort of sickness comes when a person is near death and everything in the body stops working.

Someone tells Joseph that Jacob is nearing death. Joseph went to visit Jacob. Joseph took his sons Manasseh and Ephraim to see Jacob. These two young men would be around 20 years old. Jacob has lived in Egypt 17 years. These two boys were born before Jacob came to Egypt. This visit required Joseph to travel from where Joseph worked as governor to the land of Goshen where Jacob was living. When Joseph arrived, Jacob summoned his strength, or gathered his strength, and sat up in bed. This is a word picture to describe how difficult it was for Jacob to sit up. Jacob was very old and weak.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about someone who was very tired and had no strength or energy left. However, this person needs to do something. Listen to how the storyteller describes how the tired person prepares himself to act.

Jacob told Joseph the story of when God Almighty or El-Shaddai appeared to Jacob at Luz. Jacob was leaving Canaan to visit Jacob's uncle Laban. Luz is the ancient name of the town near Bethel. Jacob was near Luz and named the place where God Almighty appeared Bethel. Jacob's vision of God at the head of a stairway happened at Bethel. God promised Jacob that Jacob's descendants would be many. When Jacob returned to Canaan, Jacob stopped at Bethel and worshiped God. God as El-Shaddai appeared to Jacob, blessed Jacob, and repeated that Jacob's name would be Israel. Jacob reviews this history when Jacob tells Joseph that El-Shaddai appeared to Jacob at Luz. Jacob also used the expression, "Be fruitful and multiply." As in other passages, this means that Jacob should have many children who would have many children so that the descendants greatly increased in numbers. God promised Jacob that the land of Canaan would be an everlasting or unending possession for the descendants of Jacob.

Stop and show the map which has Luz, Bethel, Bethlehem/Ephrath marked.

Jacob told Joseph that Jacob was going to adopt Joseph's two sons as Jacob's own sons. Jacob explains that Joseph's mother Rachel died. Rachel was not able to have more children. Jacob does not mention Benjamin at

this point. Therefore, Jacob is taking Joseph's two sons to be equal with Jacob's other sons. Jacob tells Joseph that any future sons born to Joseph will be Joseph's sons but Manasseh and Ephraim will be Jacob's sons.

Jacob then adopted Joseph's two sons as Jacob's own sons. To adopt someone is to take that person into the family with the same rights as privileges as if that person had been born into the family. Jacob says that Joseph's two sons will have the same relationship to Jacob that Reuben and Simeon, two of Jacob's sons have. In this way, each of Joseph's sons would have a full share of inheritance from Jacob, the same as Joseph's brothers. Normally the two sons would divide Joseph's inheritance between themselves. Jacob's adoption of the two sons gave each son 1/12th of Jacob's possessions or a full share of the inheritance. Many years later, when Jacob's sons' descendants formed large tribes and departed from Egypt, God decided that Levi's descendants would be priests for all the other tribes and not inherit part of the land. Manasseh and Ephraim took Joseph's share and Levi's share of the inheritance.

Jacob decided to bless Joseph's sons. Jacob was nearly blind because of old age. Joseph brought his two sons close to Jacob. Jacob hugged and kissed each son. Each son was at Jacob's knees but probably not sitting on Jacob's knees. The sons being at Jacob's knees along with the kiss and embrace were part of the adoption ceremony. Jacob is going through a ritual to adopt Joseph's two sons as Jacob's own sons. Joseph bowed with his face to the ground. This is a way of showing honor and respect. In this way Joseph is saying that Joseph accepts Jacob's adoption of Joseph's 2 sons.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about someone adopting a son or sons in your village or community. What are the rituals and process used so that everyone knows that the adopted child is now the same as a naturally born child of the father?

Joseph positioned his two sons to receive Jacob's blessing. Joseph put Manasseh, the oldest son, where Jacob's right hand would be on Manasseh's head for the blessing. Joseph placed Ephraim where Jacob's left hand would be on Ephraim's head for the blessing. The blessing from the right hand is the more important blessing. Joseph is making sure that the oldest son gets the most important blessing as was the custom. However, Jacob crossed his arms so that his right hand went to Ephraim, the younger son's head and Jacob's left hand went to Manasseh, the older son's head.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story of a father blessing his sons or an elder blessing younger people. Notice the position of each person. Notice what the father does as he pronounces the blessing. Notice the language of the blessing. Notice any poetry or song in the blessing.

Jacob used poetry to pronounce the blessing. Jacob blessed Joseph. Jacob had his hands on the two sons' heads. When Jacob blessed the two boys, Jacob was also blessing Joseph. Jacob talked about God as the God of Abraham and Isaac. Jacob referred to God as a shepherd. A shepherd is someone who takes care of a flock of sheep or goats. To take care of these animals means that the shepherd finds them grass and water and protects them from harm. Jacob says that God did this for Jacob.

Jacob also refers to God as an Angel. Angels are heavenly beings who carry messages for God. At times, God took the form of an angel. Jacob is talking about God when Jacob says that the Angel saved Jacob from all harm and blessed Jacob. Jacob asks the Angel to bless the two boys.

Joseph was upset when Joseph saw that Jacob had crossed his arms and Jacob's left hand was on Manasseh's head. Joseph tried to get Jacob to put the hands correctly. Jacob refused. Jacob gave each son a blessing but the greater blessing went to the younger son, Ephraim.

Jacob finishes by reminding Joseph that Jacob is going to die soon. Jacob reminds Joseph that God will be with Joseph and God will take Joseph back to the land of your ancestors or Canaan. The land of your ancestors is a word picture to describe a specific place. Jacob is referring to Canaan.

Jacob promises Joseph an extra inheritance that the other brothers won't have. Jacob is giving Joseph the land that Jacob conquered by force. Jacob used a sword and a bow with arrows to conquer this piece of land. The Amorites is a general name for the people who live in Canaan. We know that Joseph's inheritance is in Canaan but we don't know the exact location.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Someone tells Joseph that Jacob is near death. Joseph collects his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, and goes to see Jacob.

Second scene: Jacob tells Joseph of how God has helped Jacob. Then Jacob adopts Joseph's sons.

Third scene: After the ceremony of adoption, Jacob blesses Manasseh and Ephraim.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- Joseph
- Manasseh
- Ephraim
- Someone who tells Joseph that Jacob is near death.

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In scene one, Jacob is in Goshen and is coming closer to death. This takes place soon after the previous passage. The text uses time words to indicate that not much time has passed since the previous passage.

Joseph is in the capital city or some other place in Egypt. Someone goes to Joseph to tell Joseph that Jacob is near death. Joseph must travel to see Jacob. Joseph takes his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, with him to see Jacob. These two sons are adults. They are around 20 years old. They were born before Jacob came to Egypt. Jacob has been in Egypt for 17 years.

In scene two, Joseph and the two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim visit Jacob. Jacob tells Joseph the story of when God appeared to Jacob at Bethel. God appeared to Jacob twice at this place. The first time was when Jacob was leaving Canaan to go to Harran to visit Jacob's uncle Laban. The second time was when Jacob went to Bethel to worship God as Jacob was returning to Canaan. Jacob reminded Joseph of the promises that God gave in those visions.

Jacob tells Joseph that Jacob is adopting Joseph's sons. Joseph's sons are now Jacob's sons. Jacob goes through a ritual of adoption. From now on, these two sons have the same rights and the same inheritance as Jacob's other sons. Jacob mentions by name Jacob's sons, Reuben and Levi. Jacob does not take the inheritance away from Reuben and Levi. They will have their inheritance. Jacob is adding Manasseh and Ephraim as full sons to Jacob's family.

Jacob reminds Joseph of his mother Rachel's death. Because Rachel died, Jacob is adding Joseph's children as Jacob's children by adoption. Jacob looks at the two sons and asks who they are. It's possible that Jacob couldn't see them clearly because Jacob's eyesight was failing. Most likely, Jacob asked who the boys were as a part of the adoption ceremony. Joseph identifies formally that these are Joseph's two sons, born to Joseph in Egypt. At the end of the adoption ceremony, Joseph bows with his face to the floor in front of Jacob. Joseph is showing that Joseph honors Jacob and accepts this adoption.

In scene three, Jacob moves from adopting the two sons to giving the two sons a blessing. The two sons were at Jacob's knees. Joseph moves the sons closer to Jacob. Joseph placed Manasseh where Jacob's right hand would

rest on Manasseh's head. Joseph moved Ephraim where Jacob's left hand would rest on Ephraim's head. Jacob crossed his arms and placed Jacob's right hand on Ephraim's head and Jacob's left hand on Manasseh's head.

Jacob first spoke a blessing for Joseph. Jacob was not touching Joseph. After blessing Joseph, Jacob spoke a blessing for the two sons.

Stop and work out the positions. Work through this movement until the team can easily describe the action. Show a picture of a man sitting with his arms crossed so that his right hand is on the head of the son sitting to the left and this left hand is on the head of the son sitting to the right.

Jacob spoke the blessing in a poetic form. Jacob also spoke the blessing in the form of a prayer. Jacob said, "May the God." Jacob listed several things that God had done for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jacob asked God who had done these things to also bless the two boys.

Joseph saw that Jacob had crossed his arms and had Jacob's right hand on Ephraim and Jacob's left hand on Manasseh. Joseph thought that Jacob had made a mistake because of Jacob's poor eyesight. Joseph tried to put Jacob's right hand on Manasseh. Joseph reminded Jacob that Manasseh is the first born. Joseph tried to get Jacob to change this and put Jacob's right hand on Manasseh. Jacob refused to change. Jacob said that Manasseh was the first born but Ephraim would be the greater. Jacob gave a good blessing to each son but gave the greater blessing to Ephraim, the younger son. Jacob pronounced Ephraim's name first and Manasseh's name second. Jacob told them that in the future, people would use the names of Ephraim and Manasseh when they wanted to bless others.

Jacob finished this time of blessing by telling Joseph that Joseph would inherit an extra portion of land. Jacob gives Joseph a piece of land that Jacob won in battle.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- Joseph
- Manasseh
- Ephraim
- Someone who tells Joseph that Jacob is near death

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

In scene one, someone goes to Joseph and tells Joseph that Jacob will die soon. Joseph goes to see Jacob. Joseph takes his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim with him to see Jacob.

In scene two, Jacob struggles to sit up in bed and receive Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim. Jacob tells Joseph of the two times that God appeared to Jacob in a vision at Luz or Bethel. Jacob tells Joseph about God's promises to Jacob.

Stop the action: Ask Manasseh and Ephraim, "How do you feel hearing these promises that God has made to your grandfather?" You may hear, "I like hearing him tell this. I have heard these promises before. Our father has taught us about God. It is good to hear it from our grandfather and to hear it in his own words. God has promised our family great things. God is all-powerful." Restart the action.

Jacob tells Joseph that Jacob is adopting Manasseh and Ephraim as Jacob's own sons. Manasseh and Ephraim will inherit the same as Jacob's other sons. Joseph brought the two boys to Jacob. Jacob kissed and hugged each son. This is part of the adoption ritual. The two sons were at Joseph's knees.

Stop the action: Ask Joseph, "How do you feel about your father adopting your two sons?" You may hear, "This is a wonderful thing. My two sons will each inherit a son's share of the inheritance. This is wonderful for their future. I'm so glad my father is doing this. This shows me that my father continues to love me. I love him." Ask Jacob, "Why do you want to adopt Joseph's sons?" You may hear, "Rachel was my beloved wife. Rachel was only able to have 2 sons and died having the second one. By taking Joseph's two sons as my own, it's like I have more sons with Rachel." Restart the action.

In scene 3, Jacob decides to give the two sons a blessing. The two sons had been at the knees of their grandfather. They were not sitting on his knees but at his knees. Joseph moved them closer to Jacob's hands. Joseph placed Manasseh where Jacob's right hand would be on Manasseh's head. Joseph placed Ephraim where Jacob's left hand would be on Ephraim's head. But Jacob crossed his arms. Jacob placed his right hand on Ephraim's head and Jacob's left hand on Manasseh's head. Then Jacob spoke the blessing which was a prayer and spoken in the form of poetry.

Joseph saw Jacob's hands and tried to stop Jacob. Jacob was almost blind. Joseph thought Jacob had mixed up the boys since Jacob could not see clearly. Joseph tried to move Jacob's hands so that Jacob's right hand would be on Manasseh's head. Jacob refused. Jacob said, "I know," which means that Jacob knew which son was under Jacob's right hand and which son was under Jacob's left hand. Jacob said that Ephraim would be greater than Manasseh. Jacob gave each son a good blessing. Jacob said that Ephraim would become a greater tribe of people than Manasseh.

Stop the action: Ask Manasseh, "How are you feeling about this blessing?" You may hear, "I'm okay with this. My grandfather said I would become a great people with many descendants and that people would use my name in blessing their children in the future. This is a good blessing. I see no reason to be unhappy." Ask Ephraim, "How are you feeling about this blessing?" You may hear, "I am happy. I don't know why my grandfather did this but he gave both of us good blessings. I love my brother. I don't want to fight over this. I think we are both good with it." Ask Joseph, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I'm sad that my father is going to leave us soon. I wish we could keep him here longer. I will miss him when he is gone. I'm glad he loves my two sons. He gave them a good blessing. I don't understand why he blessed Ephraim with the older son's blessing. I'm very thankful that he has adopted them as his sons so they will inherit a good inheritance. God has been good to us." Restart the action.

Jacob repeated that God would be with Joseph and would take Joseph back to Canaan. Canaan is the land of their ancestors. Jacob also gave Joseph a piece of land that Jacob had conquered in a battle. This was an extra inheritance for Joseph.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

El-Shaddai is a name for God that means all powerful or almighty. El-Shaddai is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same name for El-Shaddai that you have used in previous passages.

Luz is the name of the town which is next to Bethel. Bethel is where Jacob had his vision of the stairway to heaven as Jacob was leaving Canaan to go to his uncle Laban. Bethel is also where Jacob worshipped God on Jacob's return to Canaan. God repeated that Jacob's new name is Israel at Bethel.

The text does not use the word adopt. However, Jacob says that Jacob is claiming Manasseh and Ephraim as his own sons. They will receive the same inheritance as Jacob's other sons. They will be the same to Jacob as other

sons are. Jacob goes through a ritual of adoption. You won't use the word adopt but you need to make clear that these two boys are now Jacob's sons.

Jacob **blessed** Joseph's two sons. Bless is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for blessing you have used in previous passages.

As in previous passages, the author switches between the names **Israel** and Jacob. Some translations use only Jacob. Other translations use the name Israel when it appears in the text. Jacob and Israel are the same person. Use the same way of naming Jacob you have been using.

Jacob was nearly blind from old age. There are several conditions that could cause this blindness. We don't know what the problem was. We just know that Jacob can't see clearly. You should describe this in the same way you described Isaac's blindness.

When Jacob pronounces the blessing, Jacob talks about the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac. Use the same word for **God** that you have used in previous passages. God is discussed in the Master Glossary.

Jacob describes God as a **shepherd**. Normally a shepherd takes care of the flocks of sheep and goats. Shepherd is described in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for shepherd you have used in other passages.

Jacob mentions an **angel** when pronouncing the blessing. The angel is a supernatural being who is a messenger from God. Use the same word for angel that you have used in previous passages. Angel is discussed in the Master Glossary.

To take something by the sword and bow means to capture or take it through a battle. Jacob fought for the piece of land that Jacob is giving to Joseph.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 48:1-22

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (25821682 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 49:1-28

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 49:1-28 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This passage continues the conclusion of the story of Jacob and Joseph. Jacob is near death. Jacob has blessed Joseph and Joseph's 2 sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. Now Jacob calls all the other sons to come for Jacob's final words. Jacob's words are more like a prophecy than a blessing. This means that Jacob is saying this will happen in the future. Jacob tells each son what the future holds for that son's descendants. The blessing is serious. Most people in Jacob's time would consider the blessing to be binding on the person receiving the blessing. Jacob curses some of the sons. Jacob speaks in poetic format.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about an old man such as a grandfather who is near death. What would a man such as this grandfather say to his sons and grandsons? How would he say it? If your culture doesn't have a tradition of the father giving a blessing to his children before he dies, when would a blessing be given? Who would give the blessing? How would people receive the blessing?

Reuben is the first-born son. Usually, this son has rights and privileges that the other sons don't have. In some cultures, the first-born son inherits everything. The first-born son also takes on the leadership role in the family. Years before this time, Reuben slept with Bilhah, one of Jacob's wives. Jacob uses a word picture to describe this act. Jacob says that Reuben disgraced or defiled the marriage bed. This means that Reuben made the marriage bed or the bed where Jacob normally slept with Bilhah unclean by sleeping with Bilhah. Jacob did not punish Reuben at the time that Reuben slept with Bilhah. Jacob seems to be using that event as the reason for what Jacob says to Reuben at this time. Now, Jacob says that Reuben will lose Reuben's position of leadership in the family. Because Reuben was not able to control himself, Reuben will not be the leader of the family.

Jacob talked about Simeon and Levi together. These two brothers received the same message. Jacob talked about Simeon and Levi as if they were not present. Jacob pronounced some curses on Simeon and Levi because of their anger and their wrath. Wrath is a stronger word for anger. Jacob says that Simeon and Levi crippled oxen. This means they cut the tendon behind the knee of the back legs. Once this tendon is cut, the animal cannot walk properly and cannot pull anything like a plow or a cart. In a previous passage, after Dinah was raped, Simeon and Levi killed all the men of Shechem. Jacob did not punish them at that time. However, that act seems to be the reason for the curses that Jacob gives in this passage.

Show a picture of an ox.

The words Jacob says to these next sons sound like blessings.

Jacob talks directly to Judah. The message to Judah sounds like a blessing. Judah's descendants will be rulers. Jacob uses word pictures to talk about how strong Judah's family will become. After the lion eats, it lies down to sleep. Even when the lion is asleep, other animals don't dare attack the lion. The scepter is the rod that a king holds and uses to show the king has power. Jacob uses word images of the grape vine, wine and milk as symbols to say that Judah's descendants will prosper or become rich. Judah's descendants will experience God's blessing in the future. Jacob uses the word picture of washing clothes in wine to indicate that Judah's descendants will be very rich.

Show a picture of an Egyptian king holding a scepter.

Show a picture of a sleeping lion. Show a picture of a donkey with its foal.

Show a picture of a grapevine.

Jacob talks about Zebulun. Jacob says that Zebulun's descendants will work with ships. Jacob talks about Issachar. Jacob seems to be telling Issachar that Issachar's descendants will work hard for other masters in order to live in peace. Peace and security seem more important to Issachar's descendants than freedom. The message for Issachar uses a word that isn't clear. Some think this word means sheepfold, some think it means land outside the village that isn't owned by one person. This land is used as grazing land by anyone. The word could also mean campfire. The animal crouches or lies down to rest in this area. The messages for Zebulun and for Issachar sound like blessings.

Stop here and show a picture of a crouching animal or an animal lying down.

Show a map of Israel with Sidon marked. This map should have Beersheba and Hebron marked.

Jacob talks about Dan. Jacob compares Dan to a poisonous snake. Jacob is saying that Dan's descendants will bring justice to Israel. Israel refers to the people or the descendants of Jacob.

Jacob talks about Gad. People will come to attack the descendants of Gad but Gad's descendants will then attack those who came to invade or raid the area.

Jacob talks about Asher. Asher's descendants will live in a fertile area. This means that they will have plenty of good food.

Jacob talks about Naphtali. Naphtali's descendants will be like a female deer that produces beautiful fawns or young deer. Some translations use the word for a big tree rather than a female deer. This big tree has beautiful branches.

Stop and show a picture of a deer with a fawn.

Jacob's message for Joseph is the longest. At first Jacob talks about Joseph. Jacob compares Joseph to a wild donkey. Joseph was attacked sometime in the past. Joseph defended himself and became stronger. Archers shot arrows at Joseph but Joseph's bow remained strong. Some translations use a different word picture. Some translations compare Joseph to a fruit-bearing plant that climbs over a wall. Most people prefer the donkey illustration because it follows the pattern with the other sons. Jacob used animals to describe the other sons.

Stop here and show a picture of an archer with a bow and arrows.

Then Jacob talks directly to Joseph and blesses Joseph. Jacob uses a number of different names of God in pronouncing the blessing.

Jacob talks about Benjamin. Jacob compares Benjamin's descendants to a hungry wolf. People thought the wolf was greedy. The wolf was a fierce animal. Jacob uses a word picture of morning and evening to refer to the whole day.

Stop and show a picture of a wolf.

These were Jacob's final words to each of his sons. Jacob gave each son a message for that son.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 1 scene.

First scene: Jacob calls his sons to come and Jacob tells each son his future.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- Reuben
- Simeon
- Levi
- Judah
- Zebulun
- Issachar
- Dan
- Gad
- Asher
- Naphtali
- Joseph
- Benjamin

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

As Jacob speaks to each son, Jacob changes the way Jacob talks to the sons. Sometimes Jacob speaks directly to the son. Jacob says, "You are or you will be." At other times Jacob speaks about the son. Jacob says, "He and his" when talking about these sons. Notice where the language and thus the verb usage changes. Jacob does not speak to the sons according to birth order. Rather, Jacob speaks to each of Leah's sons first, followed by the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah but not in birth order and finally the sons of Rachel.

Jacob spoke in poetry. In Jacob's language, people usually spoke blessings and curses in poetry.

With these words to his sons, Jacob usually says something and then repeats what he said slightly differently. Jacob speaks like this so that the second line of the poem makes the first line stronger in meaning. Sometimes the second line uses stronger words than the first line. Speaking this way causes a lot of repetition.

Stop and play a game. Divide the translation team into two teams. Have one group say something like, "You are a tall man." Have the other team reply with something stronger. "You are like a tall tree." Have the team work on a number of complimentary descriptions like this. Another example: "You are a river winding through the woods." Answer, "You are like a raging river going through the ravines or canyons." The goal of this game is for the translators to see how Jacob uses poetry and repetition with a stronger second sentence to give Jacob's last words to his sons. The entire passage uses this type of poetry. This game will help the translators understand the rhythm of the poetry.

Jacob spoke to Reuben first. There are 3 pairs of ideas in the message to Reuben. The first is a statement. The second repeats the first but stronger. You are first in pride. You are first in power. Try to identify each of these statements and see how the second part repeats the first but with stronger language.

Reuben, Simeon, and Levi had each done something really bad in earlier years. Reuben slept with Jacob's wife Bilhah. Simeon and Levi went to the town of Shechem and killed all the men as revenge because their sister Dinah had been raped. Jacob did not punish these sons at the time. Now at the time of giving Jacob's last message, Jacob hands out punishment to the first three sons. Jacob took away Reuben's rights as the first-born son. Jacob cursed Simeon and Levi.

Jacob spoke directly to Judah, who was the fourth son. Jacob says that a descendant of Judah will be the king. Jacob uses a number of word pictures to show that Judah's descendants will be rich.

Stop and discuss: Talk about a group of people who are wealthy. Listen to see if any word pictures are used to describe their wealth and power.

The message for Issachar is not clear. Issachar is like a donkey resting between two things. One suggestion for meaning is saddle packs or the loads that are put on donkeys or camels for these animals to transport. Another meaning could be fire pits. Another meaning could be the space outside a town where anyone can graze their animals. The land does not belong to one person but is for everyone to use. The word could also mean the sheep fold or where the sheep were kept. You need to choose which of these options would be best understood by your audience. Issachar sees how pleasant it is to rest in the area and stays there to work hard for other people.

The message to Joseph uses a number of names for God. These names are: Mighty One of Jacob, Shepherd, Rock of Israel, the God of your father, the Almighty.

Stop and play a game. Assign one of these names to each person on the translation team. Call out the name. The person with that name stands up and explains the meaning of the name. Continue until all can respond quickly. Then change the assignments and play the game again.

Stop and discuss: Talk about the word pictures used in each blessing or curse. Talk about the word picture and what it really means.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 1 scene.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- Reuben
- Simeon
- Levi
- Judah
- Zebulun
- Issachar
- Dan
- Gad
- Asher
- Naphtali
- Joseph
- Benjamin

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

This is one long scene with Jacob talking to each son in turn. All of the sons are present and have gathered around the bed of Jacob. Jacob is near death.

Jacob first speaks to Reuben, Simeon and Levi. The messages for Reuben, Simeon and Levi all refer to things that these sons did in the past that were not punished at the time.

Stop the action: Ask each son, "How are you feeling now as you hear what your father is saying to you?" You may hear, "I regret what I did. I should not have slept with Bilhah. It's hard to lose my inheritance over something I did so long ago. I should have told my father I regretted it." Or, "I'm not sorry. We had to take revenge for our sister. Father wouldn't do anything. We had to act. I don't care about a blessing anyway." Restart the action.

Jacob gives a long blessing to Judah. Jacob says that Judah's family will rule over the others. Judah's family will be rich.

Stop the action: Ask Judah, "How do you feel about this blessing?" You may hear, "I am astonished. I don't know why father has chosen me for this blessing. Father is saying that kings will come from my descendants. Father seems to be making a particular promise about one future king. I wonder what that means." Restart the action.

Jacob tells Issachar that Issachar's descendants will want to live in a prosperous and safe place and will lose their freedom because of this.

Stop the action: Ask Issachar, "How do you feel about what will happen to your descendants?" You may hear, "I don't understand why they have to lose their freedom and work for others. It seems natural to want to live in a safe and prosperous place. Maybe father is mistaken on this. I want them to be happy." Restart the action.

Jacob gives shorter blessings to Zebulun, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, and Benjamin. Each blessing is different.

Stop the action: Ask each one, "How do you feel about your blessing?" You may hear, "I'm happy. It seems fair. My descendants should do well and be happy." Or, "I don't like being compared to a poisonous snake. I think father could have found something better for me and my descendants." Or, "I don't like being thought of as a hungry wolf. That gives a bad image. I would rather be one of the other illustrations that father used." Or, "I want my descendants to do well and be happy. Father seems to indicate that they will be happy and that makes me happy." Restart the action.

Jacob gave the longest blessing to Joseph. Jacob has already blessed Joseph and blessed Joseph's two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. Now Jacob blesses Joseph again and with the longest blessing that Jacob pronounces. Jacob calls on God to bless Joseph. Jacob did not call on God when giving Jacob's message to the other sons.

Stop the action: Ask the other brothers, "How do you feel now that you have heard Joseph's blessing?" You may hear, "I'm okay. I received a good one for me. I'm not jealous of Joseph anymore. Father has always loved Joseph the most and we all knew it. Joseph has treated us well. I wish Joseph well." Or, "Father loves Joseph the best. We know that. I wish father loved me as much but that won't happen." Or, "I hope Joseph doesn't try to kill us or get his revenge after father dies. This blessing gives Joseph a lot of power. I don't want Joseph to get revenge for what we did to Joseph." Ask Joseph, "How do you feel about this blessing?" You may hear, "I am happy with it. I love my father. I don't want him to die but I know that the time has come. I will be glad to remember these things that father has said to me. Father has asked God to bless me with even more than God has given me up to now. I'm very thankful." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jacob speaks to each son. Some of what Jacob says is a blessing. Use the same word for **bless** that you have used in previous passages. Bless is discussed in the Master Glossary. Jacob curses some of the sons. Use the same word for **curse** that you have used in other passages. Curse is discussed in the Master Glossary.

Jacob refers to himself as **Israel**. Jacob and Israel are the same person. Israel is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for Israel that you used in previous passages.

Jacob used the following names for God. God is discussed in the Master Glossary. As you use these names, be sure that your audience understands that these are names for the same God.

- Mighty One of Jacob: This is a title for God that declares that God is very powerful. Jacob worships this God.
- Shepherd: This title is a word picture. The shepherd cares for his sheep. The shepherd guides and protects the sheep. God as the Shepherd cares and protects His people.
- Rock of Israel: This is a word picture describing God as a large stone like a foundation stone. God is strong. God is permanent or everlasting. People can trust and depend on God. If your people don't understand the word picture, you might say that God is the one on whom Israel depends.
- The God of your father: Jacob is using this phrase as a title for God. Jacob worshipped God. Because Jacob worships God, then the sons should also worship the same God.
- The Almighty: This is the title for God Shaddai which means all powerful. The word for God is not in the text. The title usually is **El-Shaddai**. El-Shaddai is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word you have used in previous passages.

These are the 12 tribes of Israel. Each of Jacob's sons had descendants who formed tribes. The 12 tribes used the names of Jacob's sons. A **tribe** is a collection of families descending from one ancestor.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 49:1–28

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (18110196 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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Genesis 49:29–50:14

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 49:29–50:14 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jacob realizes that Jacob is near death. Jacob has called his sons to come and Jacob has given his last words to his sons. This is a narrative account of Jacob's death and burial.

Jacob told his sons that Jacob would soon join his ancestors. Jacob means that Jacob is going to die soon and then he will be with his ancestors who have already died.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about someone who knows he will die soon. How does this person talk about his coming death? What word pictures does he use to describe his approaching death?

Jacob told his sons that Jacob wanted to be buried with Jacob's father, Isaac, and Jacob's grandfather, Abraham, in the cave that Abraham had purchased. Jacob remembered the exact details on where this cave is located. Ephron the Hittite sold the field and the cave of Machpelah to Abraham. The names were all used in the previous passage when Abraham purchased the cave. Refer to Genesis 23 for the way you pronounced the names of the person who owned the field, and where the cave is located. The cave is in Hebron where Jacob lived for a long time. Jacob wants to be buried in this cave. This means that Jacob's body will be placed in the cave, not in a hole dug in the ground. Jacob reminds his sons that Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah and Leah are all already buried in this cave. Abraham and Sarah are Jacob's grandparents. Isaac and Rebekah are Jacob's parents. Leah is Jacob's first wife. Rachel, sister of Leah and the wife Jacob loved, died near Bethlehem and is buried there on the road leading to Bethlehem.

After Jacob finished these instructions, Jacob drew his feet into his bed and breathed his last and joined his ancestors in death. According to a previous passage, Jacob sat up to talk with Joseph and bless Joseph. Jacob continued sitting to give his last words to the other sons. Now that Jacob has finished talking, Jacob lies down. The reference of drawing his feet into the bed means that Jacob then reclined in the bed. Drew his last breath is a word picture to say that Jacob died. To draw your last breath and join your ancestors was a common way to describe death. This same wording was used for the death of Abraham and the death of Isaac.

Stop and discuss: Tell several stories about someone who dies. Listen carefully to how the storyteller says that the person is dead. Notice any word pictures or special words that are used over and over to describe the death.

Joseph throws himself over Jacob and weeps. This is an action of bending down and embracing or hugging the body of Jacob in great sorrow. A normal way to express grief was to weep loudly and kiss the body of the dead person. Joseph's actions followed the usual Hebrew customs of grieving. Joseph's actions show how much Joseph loved Jacob.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story of a beloved person who dies at an old age. Notice how the family members express their grief.

Joseph ordered the Egyptians to prepare Jacob's body for burial. The Egyptians had a way of preserving the body. The Egyptian doctors would embalm the body which is a process that took 40 days. Embalming preserves the body so that the body doesn't decay. By embalming the body, Jacob's sons were able to take Jacob's body back to Canaan as Jacob wanted. The embalming process involved using spices and oils and wrapping the body in strips of cloth.

Show a picture of an Egyptian mummy.

The Egyptians mourned Jacob's death for 70 days. The embalming took 40 days so the Egyptians continued mourning for another 30 days longer. For the Egyptians to mourn Jacob 70 days seems as if they are treating Jacob as a person of high position. Some believe that the king ordered this time of mourning to show respect for the father of Joseph. The passage uses the name Israel when referring to embalming Jacob. Some translations use Israel and other translations keep the name Jacob.

After the period of mourning, Joseph asked advisors of the king to speak to the king on Joseph's behalf. Joseph did not approach the king directly with this request. Joseph has been involved with the embalming process or touching Jacob's dead body. Normally, the Egyptians would not allow Joseph to approach the king right after handling a dead body.

Joseph explained that Joseph had sworn an oath to Jacob to take Jacob's body back to Canaan for burial. Joseph asks for permission from the king to take Jacob's body back to Canaan. Joseph promises to return to Egypt. The king granted Joseph's request.

Senior officers of Egypt, senior members from the king's household and other officials from Egypt went with Joseph. Joseph took his own household which means his family and his servants. The brothers took their households. They left the small children and the animals in Egypt. Flocks usually include animals such as sheep

and goats. Herds include animals such as cows, donkeys, camels or horses. A large number of chariots with charioteers also went with Joseph.

Show the map of Egypt and Canaan with the land of Goshen and Hebron marked. Show the normal route between Egypt and Canaan. Show a picture of an Egyptian chariot with a charioteer driving.

They stopped at a place called the threshing floor of Atad which is near the Jordan River and had a great and solemn memorial service with 7 days of mourning for Jacob. A threshing floor is where grain is beaten so that the grain separates from the stalk. This is a place where the ground is very hard so that the grain doesn't go into the dirt but remains on top of the ground. Canaanite peoples watched this memorial service. A threshing floor would be a good place to have a memorial service. The threshing floor was a large open space where it would be easy for people to gather. We don't know why Joseph chose this threshing floor. Normally, each village would have a threshing floor.

Show a picture of a threshing floor.

Finally Jacob's sons, all 12 of them, carried Jacob to the cave and buried Jacob in the same place where Abraham and Isaac were buried.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

First scene: Jacob gives his final instructions for where Jacob would be buried. Then Jacob died.

Second scene: Joseph mourned. Joseph ordered the embalming of Jacob. The Egyptians mourned Jacob for 70 days.

Third scene: Joseph goes to ask permission to take Jacob's body back to Canaan for burial. The king agrees.

Fourth scene: A huge number of people go with Joseph and his brothers to take Jacob back to Canaan for burial. They bury Jacob as Jacob requested, in the cave with his ancestors.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- Joseph
- Joseph's brothers
- Egyptian doctors
- The king of Egypt
- The king's advisors
- Senior officers of Egypt
- Senior members of the king's household
- The king's officials
- Joseph's entire household
- The entire household of each brother
- Charioteers
- Local Canaanites

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In scene 1, Jacob tells his sons that he wants to be buried in the same cave where Abraham and Isaac are buried. Jacob remembers exactly where the cave is and gives the sons specifics about the cave so that there will be no confusion later. Jacob was sitting up when Jacob was talking to the sons. When Jacob finished talking, Jacob lay back on the bed and died. The passage uses the same formula for death that was used for Abraham and Isaac. The passage says, "He drew his last breath and joined his ancestors in death."

In scene 2, Joseph puts his arms around his father's body and weeps. Joseph also kisses Jacob's face. Joseph orders the Egyptian doctors to embalm or preserve Jacob's body so that the body can be taken to Canaan for burial. The Egyptians mourn for Jacob for 70 days. They are treating Jacob as if Jacob were a very important person.

In scene 3, Joseph asks the king's advisors to ask the king to let Joseph take Jacob's body back to Canaan for burial. Joseph promises to return to Egypt. The king grants permission for Joseph to take Jacob's body to Canaan.

In scene 4, Joseph and the brothers take their households and go to Canaan. They leave the small children and their animals in Egypt. Large numbers of Egyptian officials accompany the family as they take Jacob back to Canaan. They stop at a threshing floor near the Jordan River and have a memorial service with 7 days of mourning. Local Canaanite people watch this.

They carried Jacob's body to the cave and buried Jacob. This is the cave that Abraham had purchased. Jacob's sons did as Jacob had commanded them.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jacob
- Joseph
- Joseph's brothers
- Egyptian doctors
- The king of Egypt
- The king's advisors
- Senior officers of Egypt
- Senior members of the king's household
- The king's officials
- Joseph's entire household
- The entire household of each brother
- Charioteers
- Local Canaanites

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

In scene 1, Jacob has finished giving his last words to each of his sons. Now Jacob tells the sons that Jacob wants to be taken back to Canaan and be buried in the same cave with Abraham and Isaac.

Stop the action: Ask Jacob, "Why is it so important to you that you are buried with your ancestors?" You may hear, "Canaan is our home. God promised that land to me and to my descendants. If they take me there to bury me, then they will return to live there some day in the future. They must go back to Canaan. This is what God wants." Restart the action.

Then Jacob lies down, draws his last breath and dies.

In scene 2, Joseph throws himself onto Jacob's body and weeps. Joseph kisses Jacob.

Stop the action: Ask the brothers, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "Father is dead. It seemed like we would always have our father. I don't know how we will go on without our father. I am glad he got to be with Joseph again before he died. We must honor his request to go back to Canaan for burial. I wonder how Joseph will treat us now that father is dead. I will worry about that later. I want to grieve my father now. It's good that Joseph is the one beside him to kiss him. Joseph was Father's favorite. We always knew that." Restart the action.

Joseph commands the Egyptian doctors to embalm or preserve Jacob's body. This process keeps Jacob's body from decay. The Egyptians mourn Jacob for 70 days.

Stop the action: Ask the Egyptians, "Why are you mourning Jacob? He isn't one of you." You may hear, "He was a great man. Look at his sons. Look at Joseph who is our governor. We must honor the memory of Joseph's father." Restart the action.

In scene 3, Joseph asks permission from the king to take Jacob's body back to Canaan for burial. Joseph explains that Joseph swore an oath or gave a solemn promise to Jacob that this would be done. The king agreed that Joseph must keep his promise.

Stop the action: Ask the king, "Why are you letting Joseph go to Canaan. Aren't you afraid he won't return?" You may hear, "Joseph promised he will return. One thing I've learned is Joseph keeps his promises. Joseph will do as he said. Joseph promised his father and he should keep the promise. I'm not worried about this. I know Joseph will come back." Restart the action.

In scene 4, Joseph, the brothers and all their households go to Canaan. They leave the small children and animals in Egypt. Many Egyptian officials go with them.

Stop the action: Ask Joseph, "How does it feel to be back in Canaan again?" You may hear, "This is my home. I'm glad to see it again even on a sad occasion. I wish I could return now and live here. I must keep my promise to the king. It's good to know that this is our real home. Someday, my children will come here to live. God gave us this land. They must come for their inheritance." Ask the brothers, "How do you feel being back in Canaan?" You may hear, "This is home. It's so much better here than Egypt. I'm glad we were able to go to Egypt so we could survive the famine. We need to come back and live here. This is our ancestral home. We know God gave us this land. I must keep teaching my children so they don't forget. I think the fact that our ancestors are buried here will help them want to come back here to live. Plus, Father in his last words told us about living here. Father expects us to come back here. The children must return here to live." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jacob talks about the ancestral burial cave in Canaan. Jacob recalls the name of the person that Abraham purchased the cave from as well as its exact location. Use the same pronunciation for these names that you used in previous passages.

The passage uses the same way to describe death that was used for Abraham and Isaac. Jacob drew his last breath and joined his ancestors. It would be good to use the same expressions you used with Abraham and Isaac.

Joseph embraced Jacob's body, wept and kissed Jacob's face. These are normal cultural mourning actions for the Hebrew people of that time. Joseph's way of showing grief may seem strange in your culture. Another possibility is to translate what Joseph did and add a statement such as, "This is the way the ancient Hebrews mourned."

To mourn someone means that you feel grief or sorrow that this person has died. A period of mourning in many cultures is a time when people come together to go through the customs or rituals of grieving. Some wear special clothes. Some weep together. In some cultures, the mourners throw ashes or dust over their heads. The Egyptians mourned Jacob for 70 days.

To **embalm** the body is to go through a specific process of preserving the body so that it doesn't decay as the dead body normally does. In some cultures, the process of embalming is unknown. Rather than explain embalming, you may say that Joseph ordered the Egyptian doctors to prepare Jacob's body for burial. Or, you can say that Joseph ordered that Jacob's body be prepared for burial.

Joseph went to ask permission from the **king** to take Jacob's body to Canaan for burial. Some translations use king and others use the word **Pharaoh**. Pharaoh is the title used by the king of Egypt. Use the same way of talking about the king that you have used in previous passages.

Joseph explained that Joseph had sworn an **oath** to take Jacob's body back to Canaan. An oath is a solemn promise. Oath is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for oath that you have used in previous passages.

Joseph and his brothers took their **households** except the very young children. A household is everyone who lives in and works in the house. This would include family members as well as servants. Household is in the Master Glossary.

Chariots driven by charioteers went with Jacob's family to Canaan. The charioteer is the person who stands in the chariot and drives or directs the horses.

Show the picture of a chariot with a charioteer.

The family and Egyptians stopped at a **threshing floor** near the Jordan River to have a memorial service and go through a period of 7 days of mourning. The threshing floor is an area of hard-packed dirt where grain is beaten from the stalk.

Show the picture of the threshing floor.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 49:29–50:14

Audio Content

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Genesis 50:15-21

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 50:15–21 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The funeral and time of mourning for Jacob has passed. Joseph's brothers now realize that with Jacob dead, Joseph might seek revenge for the awful things they did to Joseph years before. The author of Genesis is moving rapidly towards the end of the story of Jacob and Joseph. This is a narrative account of the brothers' encounter with Joseph.

Jacob was buried in Canaan. All those who went to Canaan had to return to Egypt. In addition to the 70 days of mourning, this trip to Hebron and return to Egypt would have taken many days.

Stop and show the map with Canaan and Egypt marked. Hebron and the Land of Goshen should be marked on the map. The route between Hebron and the Land of Goshen should be marked.

Everyone was back in Egypt and back to normal life. The brothers would have been in their area of Goshen with their families and their animals. Joseph would have been in the city with the king carrying out Joseph's work as governor of Egypt. Joseph's 10 brothers, the ones who had sold Joseph as a slave, became fearful. They are now realizing that Jacob is no longer alive and able to protect them. Benjamin is not a part of this group. As long as Jacob lived, the brothers felt that Joseph would not punish them for their actions. Jacob is no longer there as a protector. Now the brothers are afraid that Joseph will take revenge.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about a large family. Someone does something terrible to someone else in the family. As long as the father lives, nothing happens to the person who did the terrible deed. What happens when the father dies? Why would they wait until the death of the father to seek revenge?

The brothers fear that Joseph will now punish them for what they did to Joseph when they sold Joseph as a slave. They pose a hypothetical question. This is a type of question that begins with words such as "suppose" or "what if." The person asking the question does not know if what he thinks is true. He asks the question in case this is true. The brothers are saying, "What if Joseph hates us or bears a grudge against us?" To bear a grudge is a word picture that means that the person has feelings of anger and desire for revenge that he carries inside him. These feelings are resentment against someone for something that person did. Some translations use a word picture and say, "Joseph will pay us back for the wrong we did." This is a word picture for revenge. This means that they did something bad to Joseph and now Joseph will do something bad to them.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about a man who decides after a long time or many years to take revenge for something that was done years ago. Listen to what the man says as he plans his actions. How does he describe what he wants to do and why he wants to do it? You are listening for word pictures that would be natural in your culture.

The brothers recognize that selling Joseph as a slave was wrong. Now the brothers decide to take action before Joseph can take revenge on them. The brothers are trying to protect themselves from Joseph's revenge. They believe that Joseph will take revenge.

The 10 brothers send a message to Joseph. The brothers say that Jacob told them to ask for forgiveness. To do this, Jacob would need to know that the brothers had sold Joseph many years ago. Jacob never did anything that would indicate that Jacob knew what the brothers had done. The brothers appear to think that using the name of their father in this way will cause Joseph to show them mercy. The brothers are making it seem like Jacob is asking Joseph to forgive his brothers. The scriptures don't give any indication of whether this statement is true or not. The translators should translate it as if it is true.

The brothers refer to themselves as servants of the God of your father. This means that the brothers worship the same God as Jacob and Joseph. The brothers serve God or worship God. They keep referring to Jacob as your father or as Joseph's father. They do this to remind Joseph of Joseph's responsibility to do the will of Jacob. The message says, "Please forgive your brothers for the great sin or crime they did to you." The text uses 3 words to describe what the brothers did. The text uses the words crime, sin, and wrong. Crime is a sinful action that involves revolt and rebellion. Crime is a really strong word. Wrong is a more general word that includes many kinds of offenses. Forgive means to remove or take away sin or wrongdoing. Sin or wrongdoing here is a strong word that refers to a crime. The word sin has the idea that someone has willingly broken a law. This is the first time that the brothers admit to Joseph that selling Joseph as a slave was wrong.

Stop and discuss: Talk about an incident between family members or friends that happened some time ago. This should be something severe that resulted in changed lives for at least one person. As the person talks about what someone did to him, notice the word choices. You are listening to see if all the words have the same level of meaning or if some words are stronger than others.

After saying that Jacob had asked for forgiveness for the brothers, the brothers beg for forgiveness for themselves. When Joseph hears this, Joseph breaks down and weeps. This means that Joseph loses control of his emotions or can't control his emotions and weeps. We don't know why Joseph is weeping.

Then the brothers come to see Joseph and throw themselves to the floor in front of Joseph. To throw something is a violent action. This is not a simple bowing or simply getting on their knees. The brothers offer to be Joseph's slaves. The brothers sold Joseph as a slave and here the brothers are volunteering to become Joseph's slaves. A slave belongs to another person. A slave has no freedom of action. As a young boy, Joseph had dreams that seemed to indicate that one day in the future, his brothers would bow to Joseph. The text doesn't tell us if Joseph recalls these dreams at this point.

Joseph tells them not to be afraid. Joseph asks, "Am I God?" This is a question that doesn't require an answer. Joseph means that God is the one who judges people or decides on sin. Joseph is saying, "I'm not God. I can't punish you." Joseph repeats some of what Joseph said when Joseph first revealed himself to his brothers. Joseph tells the brothers that God brought Joseph to a place where Joseph could save the lives of many people. The brothers meant to harm Joseph but God was really in control.

Joseph told the brothers not to be afraid. Joseph promised to continue to look after the brothers and their families. Joseph spoke kindly to the brothers. Joseph made them feel good again.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: The brothers become fearful that Joseph will take revenge for all that the brothers did to Joseph.

Second scene: The brothers send a message to Joseph.

Third scene: The brothers come to see Joseph. Joseph reminds them that God brought Joseph to Egypt so that Joseph could save the lives of many people.

The characters in this story include:

- The 10 brothers
- Joseph
- Jacob is mentioned.

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In scene 1, Jacob's funeral is over. Everyone has returned to Egypt. Life gets back to normal. Some time has passed. The brothers realize that Jacob is no longer present to protect them from Joseph's anger. The brothers begin to think of things that Joseph might do. The brothers use the expression, "What if..." Or "Suppose..." This is a way of suggesting that something might happen or might not happen.

Stop and discuss: Have different team members talk about situations that might happen but haven't yet, such as, "What if it rains really hard?" Or, "What if a flood happens?" Or, "What if the crops don't produce this year?" Or, "What if I don't succeed in my exams?" Listen to how each person talks about this possibility that may or may not happen. You are looking for the way to introduce this statement by the brothers.

The brothers are afraid that Joseph will take revenge on the brothers. The brothers are admitting that they did wrong when they sold Joseph.

In scene 2, the brothers send a message to Joseph. We don't know if the message was spoken by a spokesman or written. The brothers refer to Jacob and say, "your father" to Joseph. The brothers do not say, "our father." The brothers tell Joseph that Jacob told the brothers to say to Joseph, "Forgive your brothers for the great wrong or evil thing they did to you." After giving this message from Jacob, the brothers then ask Joseph to forgive them for their sin. Joseph breaks down and weeps after hearing the message.

In scene 3, the brothers come to see Joseph and throw themselves to the floor in front of Joseph. To throw something is a violent action. This is not a simple bowing or simply getting on their knees.

Stop and act: Demonstrate different ways of getting on your knees and putting your face to the floor. Each time you do this, make the falling a stronger action. Try to use words to describe each time someone falls. Notice that the words used are getting stronger and more violent. Keep going until you have someone throwing himself on the floor. Be careful not to get hurt. Your translation would describe the strongest action.

The brothers offer to be Joseph's slaves. The brothers are afraid that Joseph will kill them. To be a slave is better than to die. They would rather live as slaves than be killed.

Joseph tells his brothers not to be afraid of Joseph. Joseph tells them that Joseph is not God. Joseph says this in the way of a question that doesn't require an answer. Joseph says, "Am I God?" Then Joseph reminds the brothers that God is the one who judges sin. Joseph will not judge them because Joseph is not God. Joseph reminds them of what Joseph told the brothers when Joseph first revealed himself to them. Joseph told them,

"You meant this for harm, but God meant this for good. God brought me to Egypt so that I could save the lives of many people." Joseph continued talking kindly to the brothers. Eventually Joseph convinced the brothers that Joseph would not harm them.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- The 10 brothers
- Joseph
- Jacob is mentioned.

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

In scene 1, Jacob's family and all those who went to the funeral have returned to Egypt. Life has returned to normal. Joseph's brothers begin to think about what might happen to them if Joseph decides to get revenge. Jacob is not there to protect the brothers from Joseph's revenge. These are the 10 brothers who sold Joseph as a slave. Benjamin is not a part of this group.

Stop the action: Ask the brothers, "Why are you afraid now? Why weren't you afraid before Jacob died?" You may hear, "As long as father was alive, Joseph would never act. Joseph would not do anything to upset our father. Joseph loved our father. We also didn't want to upset our father. This is why we never told father what we did. Father would have been really upset about it. Now that father isn't here to keep Joseph from acting, we don't know what Joseph will do. I know I would get revenge. I think Joseph might get revenge. I think Joseph will do something terrible to us to pay back for what we did." Restart the action.

In scene 2, the brothers sent a message to Joseph. In this message, the brothers tell Joseph that Jacob had told the brothers to give this message to Joseph after Jacob's death. The brothers refer to Jacob as "Your father" when talking to Joseph. The brothers tell Joseph that they worship the God of your father. In the message, the brothers admit to Joseph that they did wrong in selling Joseph. This is the first time they admit their guilt or that what they did was wrong. Joseph weeps when Joseph receives the message.

Stop the action: Ask the brothers, "Why are you using the expression, 'Your father' to Joseph?" You may hear, "I think I need to remind Joseph that we share the same father. I want Joseph to remember that Jacob loved Joseph. I want Joseph to think about what Jacob would want before Joseph does anything to us. I want to remind Joseph that we all worship the same God." Ask Joseph, "How are you feeling as you receive this message from your brothers?" You may hear, "I am so sad that they think I will harm them. I told them I would take care of them. I'm so sorry that they can't accept that and are worrying about their future. It feels good in one way to have them say that they did me wrong. They did. But I told them already that God meant it for good. Why can't they believe this?" Ask Joseph, "Why are you crying?" You may hear, "I am crying because of so many things. I'm crying that the relationship between us still isn't normal and probably never will be. I miss my father. It makes me sad that they have used father's name like this. I know my father didn't send this message. It makes me sad that they think I would believe this. I must tell them again not to fear for the future." Restart the action.

In scene 3, the brothers come to see Joseph. The brothers throw themselves on the floor in front of Joseph. The brothers offer to become Joseph's slaves.

Stop the action: Ask the brothers, "Why are you offering to be Joseph's slaves?" You may hear, "I think Joseph may kill us. To be a slave would be better than death. We sold Joseph. Revenge would be that Joseph would sell us." Restart the action.

Joseph tells the brothers not to be afraid. Joseph tells them that Joseph isn't God. God is the one who judges not Joseph. Joseph reminds them that what they meant for evil, God intended for good. Joseph reminds the brothers that God brought Joseph to Egypt and to the position of governor of Egypt so that Joseph could save many lives. Joseph continued to speak kindly to his brothers. Eventually the brothers believed Joseph was speaking the truth to them.

Stop the action: Ask Joseph, "How are you feeling right now?" You may hear, "I hope I have reassured them. I hope they aren't afraid anymore. I am telling the truth. I believe God brought me here and put me in this position so I could save many lives. I hope we can have a normal family relationship now." Ask the brothers, "How are you feeling now?" You may hear, "I believe that Joseph is not going to harm us. I believe that Joseph is telling the truth when Joseph says that he won't judge us. It must be true that God put Joseph into this important position. I know he was a slave when he left Canaan. I wish we hadn't acted as we did. I've carried the burden of guilt for many years. I'm glad to know that Joseph came out of this okay. Maybe we can be family again." Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The brothers ask a question that doesn't require an answer. This can be stated as a positive statement. "What if Joseph shows his anger?" can become "Joseph will show his anger." This type of question suggests that something might happen in the future but may not happen.

The brothers refer to their **sin** in the way they treated Joseph and they ask Joseph to **forgive** them. The text uses 3 words to describe what the brothers did. The text uses the words crime, sin and wrong. Crime is a sinful action that involves revolt and rebellion. Crime is a really strong word. Wrong is a more general word that includes many kinds of offences. Sin is discussed in the Master Glossary. Forgiveness is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word you have used in other passages.

The brothers say that they are **servants** of God. This means that they worship God. Then the brothers offer to be slaves of Joseph. The word servant and the word **slave** are the same word here but the meaning is different. The word servant as used here is referring to the specific relationship between God and the person worshipping God. One way to say this is "We worship the same God as your father" or "We serve the same God as your father." By offering to be Joseph's slave, they are offering to give up their freedom. If they become Joseph's slaves, they will have no freedom. The word servant is in the Master Glossary. The word slave is in the Master Glossary. Use the same word you used before. The word for **God** is the usual name for God. God is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same name for God you have been using.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 50:15-21

Audio Content

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Genesis 50:22-26

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

Hear Genesis 50:22-26 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The author finishes the story of Joseph. This is the conclusion of the story and the end of the book of Genesis. This is a narrative account of the death of Joseph.

Joseph and Joseph's 11 brothers and their families continue to live in Egypt.

Stop and discuss: Tell about a father with many children. Talk about the children of those children and their children. Now talk about all these people who are related to each other as descendants from the first father. What words do you use to describe the large family group? You are looking for the words you use to describe family and large kinship groups.

Joseph lives to 110 years of age. Joseph lived 17 years in Canaan. Joseph lived 93 years in Egypt. Egyptians considered 110 to be the ideal age.

Joseph saw three generations of descendants of Ephraim. This means that Ephraim had sons, grandsons and great grandsons and Joseph saw them. The translation could also mean that Joseph saw Ephraim's descendants to the third generation.

Jacob had adopted Manasseh and Ephraim as Jacob's own sons. Jacob blessed Ephraim and Manasseh giving Ephraim the blessing for the oldest son even though Ephraim is the second son. Now Joseph adopts Manasseh's grandsons.

Joseph's oldest son Manasseh had a son named Makir. The passage says that Makir's sons were born on Joseph's knees. We first saw this expression with Rachel when Bilhah's children were born on Rachel's knees. In this way, Bilhah's children became Rachel's children. When Jacob adopted Manasseh and Ephraim, Jacob took the boys between Jacob's knees. This is a way of saying that Joseph took these children as Joseph's own children or Joseph adopted these children. Adoption means that you take the child as your own child the same as if you gave birth to that child. The adopted child has the same rights as a child born to the parents.

Stop and discuss: Tell about someone who adopted children or a child when it was born. What is the adoption procedure? How do people know that this child is now the child of his adoptive parent?

Joseph told his brothers that Joseph would die soon. We don't know if the word brothers here means Joseph's actual brothers or the families or descendants of the brothers. Joseph was 110 which means all the brothers but Benjamin would be much older than 110. Joseph said to the brothers or the descendants of the brothers, "God will come and lead you out of Egypt and you will return to the land that God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Joseph made the sons of Israel swear an oath to take Joseph's bones back to Canaan when they returned to Canaan. We don't know if any of the brothers were still living when Joseph died. Benjamin is the only one younger than Joseph. Sons of Israel could mean any of the descendants of Jacob. As each brother died, someone from his direct descendants took over leadership of his part of the family. Joseph may have been talking to these leaders of the family. Whether it was the brothers or their descendants, Joseph asked that they promise that Joseph's body would be taken to Canaan for burial. The promise that Joseph asks for is an oath. To swear an

oath is a solemn promise and one that can't be broken. Joseph wants to make sure that they take his body back to Canaan. Joseph did not want to be buried in Egypt.

Stop and show the map of Egypt and Canaan with Hebron marked.

Joseph died. The Egyptians embalmed Joseph. This is the same process that was used with Jacob. Embalming preserves the body from decay. The Egyptian doctors would embalm the body which is a process that took 40 days. By embalming the body, Jacob's descendants would be able to take Joseph's body back to Canaan as Joseph wanted. The embalming process involved using spices and oils and wrapping the body in strips of cloth. When finished, the body was called a mummy. Joseph's body was placed in a coffin. Any box used for burying the body is called a coffin. The Egyptians placed embalmed bodies in a special box called a sarcophagus. This special box helped preserve the embalmed body.

Stop and show a picture of a sarcophagus used for an important man.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Joseph lives to 110. Joseph adopts the children of Manasseh's son Makir. Manasseh is Joseph's oldest son.

Second scene: Joseph tells his brothers' families that Joseph will die soon. Joseph has them promise to take Joseph's body back to Canaan for burial.

Third scene: Joseph dies and is embalmed.

The characters in this story include:

- Joseph
- Ephraim and Ephraim's sons and grandsons
- Manasseh and Manasseh's son Makir
- Makir's sons
- Joseph's brothers and their families
- Egyptian embalmers

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

After returning from Canaan and telling his brothers again that Joseph will take care of them, the families live in the region of Goshen. Time passes. Joseph lives to be 110. The deaths of Joseph's brothers are not mentioned. Joseph is younger than 10 of the brothers. Only Benjamin is younger than Joseph. It would be reasonable to assume that the brothers have died and descendants of each brother now lead that brother's family.

Joseph's 2 sons have children. Joseph sees Ephraim's children to the third generation. This could mean that Joseph sees Ephraim's children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. The translation isn't clear as to which generation is alive when Joseph reaches 110. Ephraim is Joseph's second son. Jacob adopted Ephraim and gave Ephraim the blessing of the first son.

Joseph's son Manasseh has a son named Makir. Jacob also adopted Manasseh but gave Manasseh the blessing of a younger son, even though Manasseh is the oldest son. Joseph adopted Makir's children. This means that Makir's children inherited Joseph's property.

In scene 2, Joseph tells his brothers or the descendants of his brothers that Joseph is going to die soon. Joseph reminds the brothers that God has promised to take them back to Canaan to the land God gave to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Jacob made the descendants of Israel or descendants of Jacob swear an oath to take the body of Joseph back to Canaan for burial. They are to take Joseph's body with them when God takes them back to Canaan.

In scene 3, Joseph died. The Egyptian embalmers embalmed Joseph's body and put the body in a coffin. This coffin would help preserve Joseph's embalmed body.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Joseph
- Ephraim and Ephraim's sons and grandsons
- Manasseh and Manasseh's son Makir
- Makir's sons
- Joseph's brothers and their families
- Egyptian embalmers

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

In scene one, Joseph continues to live in Egypt. The other sons of Jacob along with their families also continue to live in Egypt. Joseph lives to be 110. Joseph sees the children of Ephraim, Joseph's second son to the third generation. Joseph also sees the children of Manasseh, Joseph's first-born son. Joseph decides to adopt the children of Makir who is Manasseh's son.

Stop the action: Ask Manasseh, "How do you feel about your father adopting your grandchildren?" You may hear, "This pleases me. I like it that my father is showing such good favor to my grandson and his children. This will help them later in life." Ask Joseph, "Why are you adopting Makir's children?" You may hear, "My father took Manasseh and Ephraim as his sons. I want sons to inherit my share. Manasseh is my oldest. It is right that I favor Manasseh's grandsons." Restart the action.

In scene 2, Joseph tells the family that Joseph will soon die. Joseph says, "God will come to help you and take you back to Canaan, the land God promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

Stop the action: Ask the descendants of Jacob, "How do you feel when you hear that Joseph will soon die?" You may hear, "This is frightening news. It seems like Joseph has always been here taking care of us, making sure that we have what we need. How will we live without Joseph to help us? Joseph says that God will come to help

us. I guess we must trust God to keep that promise. Joseph says God will come to take us back to Canaan. I wonder when we will go back. Egypt is home to me. I don't know how to live in Canaan. That sounds pretty difficult I will try not to worry about it." Ask Joseph, "How are you feeling about your death?" You may hear, "I'm old and I'm tired. It is time for me to go. It will be good to see my father Jacob again. It will be good to see my grandfather Isaac. I never met my great grandfather Abraham. It will be good to meet him. I have trusted God all my life. I will continue to trust God now. I know that God has been with me wherever I've been. God was with me in Potiphar's house and in prison. God helped me lead Egypt. God will be with me as I die. I can trust God in this." Restart the action.

Joseph made the descendants of Israel swear an oath to take Jacob's body back to Canaan.

Stop the action: Ask Joseph, "Why do you want to be buried in Canaan?" You may hear, "Canaan is the land God promised us. I want them to remember that we must go back to Canaan. I don't want them to get so comfortable here that they refuse to go back. If they have to take me back because they swore an oath, this will help them return. Having your ancestors buried in the land ties the current generation to that land. This is really important. They must go back." Restart the action.

In scene 3, after Joseph died, the Egyptian embalmers embalmed Joseph's body. This preserved Joseph's body so that the descendants could take Joseph's body when they went back to Canaan. The Egyptians used a special box or coffin to help preserve Joseph's embalmed body.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Joseph **adopted** the sons of Manasseh's son Makir. Adoption means taking the sons as your own. This is a legal process. The adopted son has all the rights that a natural born son has. The sons of Makir would have inherited from Joseph as a son would inherit. Use the same word for adopt that you used in previous passages.

Joseph tells his brothers or the families of his brothers that "**God** will lead you out of this land of Egypt." God is the usual name for God. God is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for God that you used in other passages.

Jacob asked the sons of Israel or Jacob's descendants to swear an **oath**. An oath is a solemn promise. Oath is discussed in the Master Glossary. Use the same word for oath that you have used in previous passages. **Israel** is Jacob's new name. Use the same word for Israel that you have used in other passages. Israel is discussed in the Master Glossary.

When Joseph died, the Egyptians **embalmed** Joseph. This is the same process that was used for Jacob. Use the same words to describe this that you used with Jacob's death.

Joseph's body was placed in a coffin in Egypt. Any burial box is called a coffin. The coffin used for Joseph was a specially decorated box that helped preserve the embalmed body. The Egyptians called this a sarcophagus. The mummy or embalmed body was placed in this special box. The descendants of Jacob kept this box and 400 years later carried it back to Canaan when they left Egypt.

Show a picture of a sarcophagus used for an important man.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Genesis 50:22-26

Audio Content

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