



## SESSION 3

# A son for Abraham



### MEETING AIM

To explore hospitality and how God can speak through visitors.



### BIBLE PASSAGE

Genesis 18:1-15



### BACKGROUND

In Abraham's culture, hospitality was all-important. Welcoming visitors and strangers was the norm rather than something remarkable. Through extending hospitality to three particular strangers, Abraham heard God speak. In a world where so many people are marginalised, isolated and ignored, showing godly hospitality is more important than ever. Perhaps we, too, will hear God speak as we welcome strangers. (By the way, God changed Abram and Sarai's names in the previous chapter. Abram is now Abraham – 'father of many' – underlining God's promise of numerous descendants. Sarai is now Sarah.)

## + GATHERING TIME



Serve drinks at this point, but save the food for the 'Bible exploration' section (see below). As usual, chat to your young people and see how they are doing. Bring up the subject of visitors and see if anyone has ever had a memorable visitor at home. Perhaps someone might have had a celebrity visit them, or someone else they might have been excited to see. Has anyone had a visitor who was memorable for all the wrong reasons?

## + GAME



### You will need: chairs

Have the young people sit in a circle, on chairs. You should stand in the middle of the circle. Allocate each of the young people the name of a fruit (for example, apple, banana, mango, peach). You should have several young people for each fruit. When you call the name of a fruit, each of the players allocated that fruit should move across the circle and take one of the recently vacated seats. You should also try to take one of these seats. When all

the seats are taken, there will be one player left standing. This player should call another fruit, and so on. Instead of calling a single fruit, the player in the middle can also call: "Fruit salad". On this call, every player in the circle must find a new seat.

After a few minutes, comment that being excluded – being the 'odd one out' – is not a nice feeling. Choosing to welcome people instead of shutting them out can make a big difference to us as well as to those who are excluded.

## + BIBLE EXPLORATION



### You will need: bread; butter; cold cooked meat (and vegetarian alternative); Bibles

As with the events described in Genesis 18:1-15, this activity centres around a meal. If possible, have your group sit around a table while they eat. If your budget and preparation time won't stretch to fresh bread and cooked meats, serving toast is fine.

Give out Bibles and read Genesis 18:1-15 as a group. Ask particular volunteers to read the lines for Abraham, Sarah, the visitors, the Lord and the narrator.

Afterwards, ask the young people what they think Abraham and Sarah might have been thinking and feeling while all this was taking place. Start by asking those who read Abraham's and Sarah's lines, then throw the discussion open to the whole group. Try to draw out how the visitors made a difference to Abraham and Sarah. (It might help to explain that having children was a really big deal in this culture and that not being able to have children was seen as highly shameful.)

## + CHATTING TOGETHER



Use the following questions as a starting point for a discussion:

- Why do you think Abraham was so keen to welcome his visitors?
- Why might showing hospitality to strangers be important (for us as well as for Abraham)?
- Why might that not be an easy thing to do?
- How might it benefit us?

## + CREATIVE RESPONSE



### You will need: news articles

Gather a selection of news articles – local, national and international – which highlight individuals or groups of people who need hospitality. Newspapers, magazines and news websites are all good sources for news items like these.

Let the young people read some of these news articles and comment on what kinds of people need hospitality. If we were going to offer hospitality to people like this, what might we gain from it? Might God somehow speak through them, as he did through Abraham's visitors? How might that work in our context? What kinds of things can put us off welcoming strangers?

To take practical action based on the content of this session, why not explore making your church a place of welcome for marginalised people (see [placesofwelcome.org](http://placesofwelcome.org))? Or maybe your young people are interested in making their school a Refugees Welcome school (see [refugees-welcome.org.uk](http://refugees-welcome.org.uk)).

## + PRAYER



### You will need: Bible; pegs; marker pens

Let each of the young people find some space and get comfortable. Invite them to close their eyes. Explain that Jesus also had a few things to say about welcoming outsiders. Here's one particularly memorable story.

Read out Matthew 25:31-40. Read clearly and slowly, pausing between phrases. Encourage the young people to reflect on Jesus' words and how they might apply to us.

Give each of the young people a peg and a pen. Ask everyone to write on their peg the name of a person or group of people who needs to be shown hospitality. Allow one minute for everyone in the room to stick their peg on another person. When the minute is over, have anyone with more than one peg stuck on them to give a peg to someone who has none.

Divide the young people into pairs. Ask everyone to pray with their partner for the person or group of people written on their peg. Short, simple prayers are fine. After a couple of minutes, round off with a prayer of your own, asking God to speak to you all as you welcome outsiders in his name. Encourage the group to take a peg home and pray for that person or group over the coming week.