

Year A, Week 28 (June 8, 2008)
Genesis 24:12-21 Isaac and Rebekah

Hymn suggestions: *Father Abraham* (calmly!); or *Shout to the North and the South*

Items Needed:

- Abraham figure
- male servant figure
- camel
- blocks to make a well
- Rebekah figure
- Laban figure
- (optional: other figures for the rest of Rebekah's family.)

Directions: before you talk, set out some small blocks to make a rough well.

We've been talking about how God made a promise with his people. We learned that God chose Abraham and his wife Sarah. (*Touch Abraham figure.*) He sent them to a new place called Canaan, and he made a promise – or a covenant – with them. He told Abraham that one day he would have as many descendants as there are stars in the sky or grains of sand at the beach.

God told Abraham, “This is my covenant. I will be your God, and you will be my people.”

Even though Abraham and Sarah were old when God made these promises, they did have a boy, whom they called Isaac.

In our story today, Isaac has grown up, and Abraham is quite old. He is ready for Isaac to get married and have children of his own and live in this new land, as God promised.

So Abraham called one of his servants to him. (*Set out Abraham and servant.*)

Abraham said to the servant, “I would like for my son to get married, but I don't want him to marry one of the Canaanite women who live around here. I would like for him to marry a girl from our old home. Promise me that you'll go back to my old home and find a nice girl for Isaac to marry.”

The servant took ten camels with him, loaded with gifts from Abraham. He journeyed back to Abraham's homeland and he arrived at the city around evening. That's the time of day when the young women went to the well to draw water for their families. (*Move servant and camel to well.*)

The servant prayed, “God, please help me succeed today. All the young ladies are coming to get water. Here's what I'd like: I will tell one girl, ‘Please, let me have a drink from your jar.’ And the one who tells me, ‘Yes, you have a drink, and then I will water your camels.’ – let her be the one who should marry Isaac.”

And before the servant even finished speaking, along came Abraham's niece Rebekah with her water jar on her shoulder. She was very beautiful, and she came and filled up her jar. (*Set out Rebekah figure.*)

The servant said to her, "Please, can I have a drink of water from your jar?"

She said to him, "Drink," and handed him her jar. Then she said, "Now I will draw some water for your camels." So she emptied her jar into a trough from which the camels could drink.

The servant looked at her in silence to figure out whether she was the right wife for Isaac.

Then the servant took a gold nose ring and two bracelets for Rebekah. He asked her who her family was and whether he and his camels could stay with her family for the night.

She answered his questions and told him there would be plenty of room and food for him and his camels.

The servant took a minute to thank God for showing him Rebekah, while Rebekah ran home to tell her family about the stranger. (*Remove Rebekah figure.*)

When Rebekah's brother Laban saw her new jewelry, he went to the well and invited the servant to his home. He set food before the servant. (*Set down Laban figure.*)

But the servant said, "Before I eat, I want to tell you my story. I am your relative Abraham's servant. The Lord has blessed Abraham, and he is rich. He even has a son, Isaac, born in Abraham's old age. Now Isaac is old enough to marry, so Abraham sent me here – to his own people – to find him a wife." He told them about how he had prayed that the right girl would offer him water and get water for his camels. And he asked the family if Rebekah could marry Isaac.

They said, "The story you have told us is from God. Take Rebekah with you, as the Lord has spoken."

But the next morning when the servant wanted to leave, they said they wanted Rebekah to stay for a little longer. But the servant said he'd like for her to return with him now. The family asked Rebekah what she wanted to do, and she decided to leave with the servant to go be Isaac's wife.

Questions without Response:

- I wonder ... how Rebekah knew that it was the right thing to do to go, leave her family, travel with a stranger to a place far away, and then marry someone she didn't know at all?
- I wonder ... if God asked us to do something difficult, if we could say yes, just like Rebekah did?