

Explore the Bible Adult Leader Guide Teaching Plans

Session 13: God Provides

Genesis 24:1-17

Memory Verse: Genesis 24:27a

PREPARE TO LEAD THE GROUP TIME

READ Genesis 24:1–25:19, First Thoughts, and Understand the Context.

STUDY Genesis 24:1-17, using the commentary. As you study, make notes on the details of the servant’s prayer, observing how God’s purposes may be revealed as we petition Him for wisdom and discernment.

PLAN your teaching outline, incorporating pointers from Lead Group Bible Study. You also will find More Ideas to help the group learn how God provided for Isaac and apply those lessons to their personal situations. Also consider reviewing the ideas in *QuickSource* and at blog.lifeway.com/explorethebible.

DEVELOP yourself using the **free helps** found at ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible.

GATHER THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

Personal Study Guides; Paper and pens. Prepare to display the following Pack Item: **PACK ITEM 9** (*Poster: Abraham’s Family Tree*).

LEAD GROUP BIBLE STUDY

FOCUS ATTENTION (FIRST THOUGHTS):

ENGAGE: Call for a volunteer to read the paragraph under First Thoughts in the PSG (p. 133) on asking for directions. Then discuss the questions provided: *Describe a time when you stopped to get what turned out to be poor directions, or used a faulty navigational device. What frustrations did you experience?*

TRANSITION: Emphasize the need for direction and reliable direction. *God gave Abraham directions about his future and the future of his family. Abraham and the servant he entrusted to find Isaac’s wife turned to God for directions. They had followed God’s directions in the past, and now they sought His guidance for the future. We can trust God to lead us down the right paths.* (PSG, p. 133)

EXPLORE THE TEXT:

READ: Invite the group to read Genesis 24:1-9 silently, taking mental notes on the opening details of this intriguing saga and visualizing it as a feature film.

SHARE: Based upon what they just read, ask the group to mention aspects of the story that they find particularly interesting, puzzling, or revealing.

COMMENT: Be prepared to bring up key highlights: the fact that God had blessed Abraham in all the ways He had promised; Abraham’s natural paternal desire to see his son settled into marriage, especially now that Sarah had passed on; and the part Isaac would play in God’s covenant promise.

REVIEW: Refer to **Pack Item 9** (*Poster: Abraham’s Family Tree*), noting that finding Isaac a wife was part of the fulfillment of God’s plan.

CLARIFY: Direct the group to search the PSG on page 134 for insight on why Abraham requested that Isaac not marry a woman from Canaan, where pagan practices prevailed.

MINI-LECTURE: Using the background information in the PSG on page 134, describe the meaning of placing one's hand under the thigh.

ASK: *What is the significance of the notation that God had blessed Abraham in everything? What concerns might Abraham have harbored about the kind of person his son would marry?* (PSG, p. 135)

GUIDE: *The man who once upon a time suggested revisions to God's plan was now unwilling to waver from it.* Lead the group to discuss how experience can change one's perspective.

ASK: *What concerns might have prompted Abraham to tell the servant not to take Isaac back to Abraham's native land? What does his directive imply about the promises made to Abraham?* (PSG, p. 136).

TRANSITION: *Armed with detailed instructions and a thorough understanding of Abraham's plan, the servant went off to find Isaac a spouse.*

READ: Instruct the group to read Genesis 24:10-14 to themselves, taking mental notes of details that particularly interested, puzzled, or delighted them.

SHARE: Encourage the group to comment on the points in this part of the story that they found compelling.

GUIDE: Drawing on commentary under verses 10-11 (PSG, pp. 136-137), note that the servant's journey would not be easy to accomplish for many reasons.

ASK: *What are some of the difficulties the servant would have encountered on such a journey? What does God's provision in this story teach us about His sovereignty?* (PSG, p. 137)

HIGHLIGHT: Draw attention to the servant's prayer and recount the specific details. Encourage the group review the PSG comments (pp. 137-138) on the servant asking God to establish who the right woman was by behavior that required kindness and hard work—qualities that would be needed in a wife for Isaac.

ASK: *How would you characterize the prayer of the servant? What lessons concerning prayer can be learned from the servant?* (PSG, p. 138)

READ: Encourage the group to read silently Genesis 24:15-17.

ASK: *When we become aware of God providing for our needs, how do we typically respond? How do our reactions compare to the reaction of the servant?* (PSG, p. 139)

CLARIFY: Point out that some of God's answers to prayer may take a long time but others are almost instantaneous. Refer to the sovereignty of God in establishing His time line.

HIGHLIGHT: Draw the group's attention to the description of Rebekah, who was more than coincidentally in the right place at the right time (vv. 15-16). It was clear that God had ordained this meeting. *Delineate the qualities that made Rebekah an attractive partner for Isaac.*

GUIDE: Draw attention to the servant's faith, which apparently was strong like his master's, noting that how we live out our faith has a profound effect on others.

DISCUSS: Direct a volunteer to read the last paragraph on page 139 of the PSG. Then ask: *In what ways can our needs and our wants be different, and in what ways can they be similar? How can believers today express trust in God for their needs just as Abraham and his servant did?*

SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE (IN MY CONTEXT):

COMMENT: Remind the group that in any situation, whether it is the choice of a spouse, a job, or other small or large decision, God will provide guidance at our point of need.

REVIEW: *If anyone needs wisdom, it is readily available.* Call on a volunteer to read James 1:5. Warn the group, however, that faith is required. Then read James 1:6.

SAY: *The lesson and example of Abraham and his servant and the call on each of our lives is to be people of faith.* Then lead the group to discuss the first question set under In My Context on page 140 of the PSG.

PRAY: Lead the group in a prayer of faith, asking God to give them wisdom for the individual decisions confronting them in order to fulfill God's plans.

PRACTICE

After the session, contact group members and offer to pray specifically for God's guidance on a decision they are facing.

Share a need of your own for which you are seeking wisdom and discernment.

Pray daily for God to guide you in your decision. Expect that guidance to come in the form of peace of mind.

MORE IDEAS

FOCUS ATTENTION (FIRST THOUGHTS):

Engage the group by asking them to think about people who have had great influence in their lives, especially those they met in unusual or compelling circumstances. These could include their spouses, business partners, mentors, and so forth. Lead the group to consider the role God played in that relationship. Encourage the group to share incidents of risk involved, such as taking a chance and hiring someone who became a great asset to the company.

EXPLORE THE TEXT:

To supplement the teaching on the instructions that Abraham gave his servant, conduct a debate about why a wife for Isaac should be from his homeland vs. a foreign land.

To drive home the relevance of the servant's prayer, direct the group to break down its elements: For whom did he ask? What did he ask? When? Why did he ask? Where? What indicators of success did he request?

To supplement the group's understanding of the unique circumstances at the well, encourage them to consider how they would respond if someone approached them with a surprising offer that he or she claimed to be from God.

SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE (IN MY CONTEXT):

Remind the group that it was faith that prompted the servant to pray, and it was trust in God's answer that led the servant to Rebekah. Encourage the group to apply faith to every decision that they make by taking the decision directly to God and trusting that He will guide the decision-making process.

SUGGESTED MUSIC IDEA

Read the lyrics to "Wherever He Leads I'll Go" by B. B. McKinney, noting that Abraham's legacy of faith extended to his servant, his son, and his entire family.