

Heroes of the Old Testament

Teaching Plan

Teaching Tips

Ahead of introducing *Heroes of the Old Testament* to the children, take time to familiarize yourself with the contents. Review this handout and how it correlates to the children's resource.

The resource is designed for children to interact with. Have the children follow along as you read aloud, and engage them in hands-on interaction with the resource, as suggested in the teaching steps below.

Background

The 46 books of the Old Testament share the stories, experiences, prayers, prophecies, laws, and wisdom of God's people prior to the birth of Christ. But it is not merely a collection of stories and wise sayings. Because the Bible is authored by God and written by human authors inspired by the Holy Spirit, the salvation history recorded in the Old Testament is not a distant story, but a living experience of God's love for his people, and his covenant relationship with them. As members of God's family, we read the Bible with the understanding that it is our story too.

Children may not be ready to plumb the depths of revelation and theology in the Bible, but young imaginations can be captivated by stories of Old Testament heroes—people chosen by God, (often against their own will) to take some action to fulfill God's plan. We can help children see that these heroes are people like us, who sometimes make mistakes, but whose actions—big and small—reveal God's unending, faithful love for us.

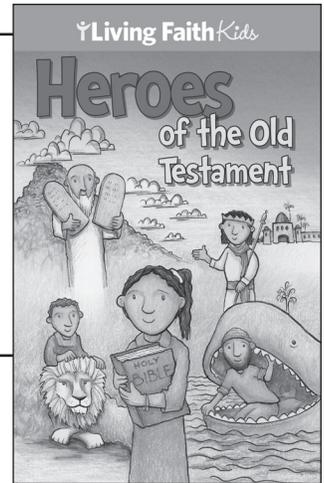
Opening Prayer

Begin your lessons with prayer. Use the following or modify it each time you pray it with the group.

Loving God, thank you for the people who have gone before us, showing the way to you. Help us learn from their stories about how we can follow you all the days of our lives. Amen.

Teaching Steps

<p>Page(s)</p>	
<p>COVER</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct the children to look at the cover of their booklets. Say, <i>We will be learning about the adventures of some great heroes who trusted God no matter what happened around them.</i> • Discuss the art. Ask the children if they can identify any of the Bible people pictured. (Moses, David, Daniel, Jonah). Point out how the child carries the Bible and is also part of the entire picture, because as children of God, we know that the stories of the Bible are our stories too.



<p>2-3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read aloud the head and first paragraph on page 2. Ask, <i>What do you remember about how you first learned about God?</i> • Read the second paragraph. Ask, <i>What does it mean to take a risk? Can you think of reasons why God might want people to take risks (or stay away from them) at times?</i> • Read the story on page 3: Abraham and Sarah's Big Family Adventure. Ask, <i>What was the risk God wanted Abram to take? (Move to a strange new land.) Why might Abram have been unsure about it? (He was old and travel was probably difficult; he didn't know anyone there.) How did God show Abram that he was part of God's family? (God changed Abram and Sarai's names to Abraham and Sarah.)</i>
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FIRST HEROES

It's great to be first, isn't it? Like when you're the first person in line for ice cream, or when you win first place in a race. The first person to do something big, like walking on the moon or discovering a new land, is a hero, that's for sure. But what about the first person in history who trusted God? Or the first person who forgave their neighbor instead of getting even? And think about this: The people who performed these heroic acts didn't have the Bible to guide them because it hadn't been written yet. They didn't have churches or Sunday school like we have today. All they had was their faith and trust in God. Now that's heroic!

You probably know the Bible story about the very first people, Adam and Eve. The Old Testament is brimming with many more stories about heroic firsts. You can get to know a few of them here. One story goes back almost 4,000 years, to a couple whose names were Abram and Sarai. God asked them to take a big risk. Would they accept it? Read their story to find out!

HEROES @ WORK

Abraham didn't just think about following God. He took action. All along the journey to Canaan, he set up altars to worship God. What action can you take to show how much you love God?

Abraham and Sarah's BIG Family Adventure

Do you know anybody who is 75 years old? At that age, most people think about settling down and relaxing. But for Abram, the adventures were just beginning. That's when God told him to pack up and move to a new land. For Abram and his wife Sarai, this was risky. There was God sending them? Would they find friends or enemies there? But Abram and Sarai trusted God. They set out on their journey, and God led them to a land called Canaan. (That's pronounced KAY-ven. It's a place where many Bible events would happen.) In Canaan, God told Abram to look at the stars in the sky. This was the number of descendants (grandkids, great-grandkids and so on) that God promised Abram. There was just one problem. Abram and Sarai didn't have any kids of their own. What's more, Abram was now 99 years old! God also promised that Abram would be the father of many nations and that Sarai would have a son. To show that they were part of his family, God gave them new names: Abraham and Sarah. Abraham trusted God, and the next year, Sarah gave birth to a baby boy. They named him Isaac. And just as God had promised, Abraham became the father of many descendants and nations. Since Abraham is the patriarch (PAH-tree-ohk) or father of the Jewish people, he's our ancestor in faith too!

Place the stars in the sky to show how Abraham's journey grew!