

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE STARTERS SAMPLE

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT, FEBRUARY 25

Expectant Joy

Scripture focus: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

Summarize the story: Abraham and Sarah have had to wait a long time to have a baby. They had to leave their home and travel through unfriendly lands. Despite God's promise, they keep getting older, and they deeply doubt that they will ever have a child. Abraham even laughs when God makes this promise again! They will have to wait even longer after today's story, but God's promise does come true. They do have a baby and become the parents of many generations.

Visual aid: Stars. Although the promise that Sarah and Abraham's children will be as many as the stars in the sky is actually in Genesis 15, not today's reading from Genesis 17, stars are a better visual to provide than circumcision, which is the sign of the promise in today's text! It is worth giving participants an extra sentence or two of context. Create and hang a few simple stars made of construction paper, display an image of a starry night sky, share a star map, or use a Christmas light projector to scatter stars across your worship space.

Connection to a concept: Joy is something that carries us through.

Ask the kids: When have you had to wait for something really important? How did you feel when it finally happened? When has the promise of something good coming in the future made it easier to wait in the meantime? Share your own experiences with this too.

Spiritual practice: Gratitude

People who reflect on gratitude in their daily lives often report higher levels of happiness. Finding reasons to be grateful can help us get through tough times of waiting or challenge. This week's spiritual practice uses a repeating question. Each day this week, find a time when you can be with others in your home (mealtimes work well) and take turns answering this question: *For what are you grateful?* Here's the trick: don't answer it just once. Keep taking turns until everyone has answered the question at least three or four times. It is okay to pass. Answers may seem trivial or profound. Notice how the answers change as you keep going. What happens as you continue this practice throughout the week?