

Kids' Chronicle

Abraham and Sara have a child

By JOE SARNICOLA

Abraham stood in the entrance of his tent. He could think only of the heat. It seemed as if it had not rained in a very long time, and the sun glared oppressively overhead. Even the livestock could feel it. The Israelites were easily agitated with each other over things that really were not important.

"God, visit my people," Abraham prayed. "Send us your blessing that we may live in peace with one another."

Immediately three men approached Abraham's tent. Abraham ran to meet them and said, "Good men, let me bring water so that you may wash your feet. And I will bring food. Sit under the shade of the tree, eat your fill, and after, continue on your journey."

One of the men answered, "We accept your kindness. Bring us water and food."

Abraham's wife, Sara, made fresh bread with her finest flour. One of the servants roasted a fresh steer from the livestock and brought fresh milk and cheese. The meal was brought before the visitors who ate while sitting under

a tree. As he was eating, the tallest of the three men, who was wearing expensive robes and sandals, said, "Where is Sara? Is that not your wife's name?"

"Yes," Abraham replied, "my wife's name is Sara. She is still in the tent. She baked the bread you have before you."

"And where is your son?" the man asked.

Abraham looked down at the ground and said flatly, "Sir, I have no son."

"In one year's time I will return," the man responded. "I promise you, by that time, Sara will be holding her own son in her arms."

In the tent, Sara laughed.



"Imagine me having a child now," Sara thought. "I am much too old to have children."

She laughed again.

The man heard her and said to Abraham, "Look at me."

Abraham suddenly realized that it was the Lord who was speaking to him and fell down on his knees.

"Abraham, why did your wife laugh?" the Lord said. "Is there anything your God cannot do? I say to you again, in one year, Sara will bear you a son."

Just as the Lord promised, Sara and Abraham had a son. They named him Isaac, which means "laughter."

"God made me laugh with his promise, now he has given me cause for rejoicing," Sara said.

Abraham, who was now 100 years old, proclaimed a feast and everyone celebrated with him.

God paid another visit to Abraham. "Because Isaac is your son," the Lord said, "I will make your descendants a great nation, and Isaac will share in that greatness."

Bible Accent

The language spoken by Abraham and the other ancient Israelites was Hebrew. As the Israelites interacted with other peoples, the language eventually changed and fell into disuse, except for religious and scholarly uses. By the time of Jesus, people spoke Aramaic instead.

There were 23 characters in the "square script" form of the Hebrew alphabet. There are also examples of a written Hebrew language that were dated before the use of the square form.

The actual origin of the Hebrew language is still a matter of discussion among biblical scholars. Because there are similarities among the Hebrew, Greek and Latin languages, it is believed that the Greeks borrowed Hebrew words and phrases and passed some of them to the Romans, who spoke Latin.

St. Bonaventure

Giovanni di Fidanza lived in 13th century Italy. Giovanni is better known by the name of St. Bonaventure, which legend says, was given to him by St. Francis of Assisi.

St. Bonaventure joined the Franciscans in 1240 and became a teacher of theology and Scripture in Paris, France. Some secular scholars criticized the simple lives of the Franciscans, so St. Bonaventure wrote "Concerning the Poverty of Christ," which defended their lifestyle. The book gained the approval of the pope, Alexander IV, and most of the criticism stopped.

An advocate for the education of clergy members, St. Bonaventure believed the Franciscans should serve as teachers and spiritual leaders. He was named minister-general of his order and his skillful leadership helped to unite the Franciscans and to make them more effective ministers. We honor him on July 15.



Kids' Club

You can win a \$50 savings bond by writing an essay (100 or fewer words) answering this question:

God blessed Abraham and Sara with a son. What does the Bible tell us about Isaac?

Send your essay — including name, home address, telephone number, school and grade — to **Catholic Courier, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, N.Y. 14624**. Deadline for entries is July 16, 1998. The winner will be notified by phone and receive the savings bond by mail. In addition, the winner's essay will be published in an upcoming issue of *Kids' Chronicle*.

Last month's winner was Katie Varrenti, a sixth-grade student at Mother of Sorrows School, Greece. In response to the question, **Who is one of your favorite priests and why?** she wrote:

My favorite priest is Father Raymond Heisel. Father Heisel recently passed away from cancer. He was a favorite to so many because he was very gentle, caring, and kind to everyone. That is the reason he was also known as the "Gentle Giant of Paddy Hill." We always "looked up to him!" Whenever Father preached the homily, he would frequently add a little joke to make us laugh, but yet teach us a lesson.

Father Heisel is also my favorite priest because he reminds me of my Grandpa, tall, gentle, caring, and kind. Father Heisel was a very well-respected priest here at Mother of Sorrows, and we will never forget him! It's been just one year since he passed away!

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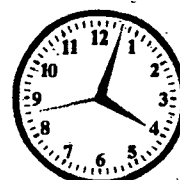
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Q&A

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Genesis 18

1. What did the visitor promise Abraham?
2. How did Sara to the promise?

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Puzzle

God honored Abraham because of his faith. Chapter 11 of the Book of Hebrews is sometimes called "the roll call of faith." Circle the names of the Bible characters in the list below who are mentioned in that chapter.

Answers on page 9

Abel, Ezekiel, Enoch,
Nathan, Noah, Jacob,
John, Joseph, Anthony,
Moses, Omar, Jethro