



Welcome Others

GENESIS 18:1-10



GOAL

Youth discover what the Bible teaches about welcoming others and identify ways to become more hospitable.

- A** Art
- AM** Active/Movement
- AT** Abstract Thinking
- C** Conversation
- CT** Concrete Thinking
- D** Drama
- G** Game
- M** Music
- QC** Quiet/Contemplative
- S** Service
- T** Technology
- X** Extra Prep

THIS SESSION

During this session, we will explore a prime example of hospitality in the Scriptures. We will learn that we should welcome others because God has welcomed us, and because we never know when we might find ourselves in a situation where we are outsiders. Finally, we will discover that, when we give a warm welcome to others, we often receive unexpected blessings in return.

THE BIBLE STORY

This session recalls the story of Abraham and Sarah entertaining strangers in Genesis 18. In the previous chapter, God told Abraham that he and his elderly wife would have a child. This child’s lineage would be plentiful and forever blessed. In Genesis 18, Abraham encounters three strangers and invites them to his home. His household provides a space for the men to rest and offers them a hearty meal. After this, the strangers reaffirm the promise God made in the previous chapter, that Sarah would give birth.

This story teaches the importance of hospitality. Abraham did not hold back in extending the warmest welcome possible. So, too, should we be exuberant in our hospitality to others. Similarly, we learn of the reward that comes with showing hospitality. By giving such a warm welcome to their guests, Abraham and Sarah received an immense blessing in return.

CONNECTIONS WITH YOUTH

While youth may be familiar with welcoming others in the context of church, they may not as readily connect God’s mandate for hospitality to other areas of life. This session will demonstrate how to do so.

SESSION PREPARATION

- Gather Bibles, newsprint, marker, paper, and pens.
- Depending on the options you choose:
 - “Serve a Meal to Others” (p. 8): Gather required food. Please consider any dietary restrictions and food allergies. Make the necessary adjustments by substituting or adding alternative foods.

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



PRAYER

Welcoming God, guide me as I guide your children to be more like you. Amen.

GETTING STARTED

WELCOMING OTHERS C AM

As participants arrive, help them form groups of two or three. Invite them to either greet one another in a standard greeting of hello or handshake or encourage them to invent a kind greeting that they can use when welcoming others. It may be a spoken greeting or some sort of creative handshake or gesture. After they have greeted the members of their group, tell them to learn one thing about each person that most people don't know. They will need to remember this information, because they will introduce each other when the session begins.

INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE Choose one or more options.

INTRODUCING A FRIEND C

Ask for volunteers to share what they learned about the others in their group from the previous activity. Invite them to begin with the prompt "I'd like you to meet _____. One thing I learned about them is _____."

Internet-connected device

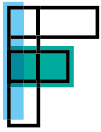
WELCOMING IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES C T

Show the YouTube video "Learn to Say Welcome in 15 languages" (bit.ly/FMWelcome15, 0:44) to learn how to say "welcome" in different languages. The first time you play the video, have youth close their eyes and count in their heads how many languages they can identify. When the video is completed, ask youth how many languages they were able to recognize. Play the video again and invite them to learn one greeting they had never heard before. You may need to play it through several times. Encourage them to use their newfound skills as they meet new people who may speak different languages.

PRAYER QC

Lead the youth in prayer by inviting them to repeat each line after you:

Dear God, /
open our ears to hear you, /
open our eyes to see the humanity of others, /
and open our hearts to receive others /
as you have received us. /
Amen. /



FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

Choose one or more options.

READING THE BIBLE STORY

C

Bible

Ask a volunteer to read Genesis 18:1–10. Invite youth to ask questions or share what the story brings up for them. Consider one or more of these questions for discussion:

- ➔ How did Abraham and Sarah provide hospitality to their guests?
- ➔ Why do you think Abraham went out of his way to be hospitable to these strangers?
- ➔ Although Abraham and Sarah were generous to their guests, what did the guests give them in return? What does this tell us about hospitality?

REENACTING THE BIBLE STORY

D AM

Bible

Invite volunteers to reenact the Bible story. The cast will include Abraham, Sarah, and the three strangers.



If you have a limited number of youth, one person can play the role of all three strangers. If you have more youth, consider having someone act as the narrator of the story by reading the story from the Bible while other participants act out the story.

Encourage actors to have fun and improvise while maintaining the general structure of the Bible story. They do not need to read the text while acting.

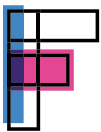
WORD SEARCH

QC CT

Copies of Resource Page 1

Distribute copies of Resource Page 1 and encourage youth to find the words and solve the puzzle. Words may be vertical, horizontal, or diagonal. In the spaces below, write the remaining letters in order to find one thing Abraham says in the Scripture passage.

Solution: “My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant.”



FINDING THE PRACTICE THEN AND NOW

Choose one or both options.

IMMIGRATION VIDEO

T C AT

Internet-connected device

Show the YouTube video “It Wasn’t Easy Growing Up as an Immigrant” (bit.ly/FMImmigrant, 3:46). Have a discussion about the video. Consider one or more of the following questions for discussion:

- ➔ Why did people treat Corrie like an outsider? How did this treatment make her feel?
- ➔ What were some instances where people welcomed Corrie?
- ➔ When was a time you felt like an outsider?
- ➔ What can we learn from this story?

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- Copies of Resource Page 2

THE “WELCOME TIME LINE”

C CT

Hand out copies of Resource Page 2. Review the “Welcome Time Line” of notable events over the past few centuries of Christian history where a warmer and wider welcome was extended to groups of people who were previously excluded. Note that some of the events were quite recent. Ask youth which of these events they knew about. Wonder together how they feel about the information presented in the time line.



PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or more options.

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- Newsprint, marker

T-CHART

C CT

Have the youth evaluate how your church shows hospitality. On newsprint, create a T-chart by drawing a line down the middle of the paper. Label the top of one column “what we do well” and the other column “how we can improve.” Together, list ways the church shows hospitality well. Then, brainstorm ways the church can be more hospitable. Think about who is welcome and who is not. After you have finished brainstorming, collectively draft a short welcome statement on behalf of the group. You may wish to post this statement somewhere in your meeting space. Consider presenting this to your church leaders with the youth for a conversation.



Make this an individual activity by having youth create their own T-charts on a piece of paper.

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- Paper, colored pens

ANSWERING A PROMPT

QC AT A

Have youth fold a piece of paper in half. On one half, have them write, “I feel most welcome when. . . .” On the other half, have them write, “I welcome others by” Invite the youth to respond to both prompts using words and/or pictures. Encourage volunteers to share their responses.

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- Bread or crackers
 - Juice and/or water

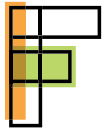
SERVING A MEAL TO OTHERS

AM X

Set up a simple meal of bread or crackers and juice. Have participants serve one another. While eating together, discuss how it felt to serve others and to be served by someone else. Wonder together how we might implement this type of hospitality in our everyday lives.



Check on any food allergies or dietary restrictions. Make substitutions or provide alternatives as needed.



FOLLOWING JESUS

Read Hebrews 13:2:

“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.”

Encourage youth to look for ways to welcome others in the coming days.

Invite a volunteer to close with this prayer:

Welcoming God, thank you for loving us and welcoming us into your family. Help us to be more compassionate. Give us the courage to be bold in welcoming others. Amen.

Word Search

ABRAHAM

ATE (not part of "wATER")

BREAD

CALF

FEET

GENESIS

HOSPITALITY

LISTENING

LORD

MAKE

MAMRE

MILK

OAKS

PROMISE

REFRESH

REST

SARAH

STRANGER

TENT

TREES

WATER

WELCOME

WIFE

M A B R A H A M Y L O W H
 R C D I P F I M A K E I O
 F A L W S R F T I M N F S
 D L O A A F O E R A R E P
 S F R T R G W M E E V E I
 O T D E A R E W I T E I T
 T H R R H Y L N O S U S A
 D R E A O N C O E T E P L
 B E F A N S O S O S B Y I
 R S R Y O G M U A R I S T
 E T E A T E E E K R V S Y
 A A S T E N T R S M I L K
 D N H L I S T E N I N G T

_____, _____
 _____, _____

 _____.

Welcome Time Line

This time line displays a few snapshots of Christian denominations wrestling with extending a wider welcome to all of God's children.

