THE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY

**CHILDREN’S MEETING LESSON**

**DATE:** December 25, 2016

**SUBJECT: GOD’S CALLING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: God Called Isaac (2) Isaac - A Peacemaker**

**SCRIPTURE:** Genesis 26:1-35

**AIM:** To show the children that God wants us to be peacemakers because peacemakers express God and draw people to God.

**MEMORY VERSES TO CHOOSE FROM:** Matthew 5:9 (Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.); Hebrews 12:14a (Pursue peace with all men…); Romans 12:18 (If possible, as far as it depends on you, live in peace with all men.); Psalms 34:14 (Turn away from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it.); Colossians 3:13 (Bearing one another and forgiving one another, if anyone should have a complaint against anyone; even as the Lord forgave you, so also *should* you *forgive*.)

**SONG SUGGESTIONS:** 19 (When We’re Kind to Others); 178 (Through Me); 2 (Surely Goodness and Mercy Shall Follow Me); 80 (Jesus Bids Us Shine); 5501 (Peacemakers); 9529 *BSS* Vessels Unto Honor Song #9 (Pursue Peace with all Men); 9219 *BSS* David Song #19 (I'd Like to Honor You); 1304 (Behold How Good and How Pleasant It Is)

**CRAFT IDEAS:** Fanfold paper and cut out people so that they are connected and it looks like they are holding hands. Write PEACEMAKERS across the front.

**BACKGROUND:** We have heard how Isaac, through obedience and an open heart, learned to trust God completely for all his needs and how God lovingly took care of him. In the prior lesson, we heard how God took care of Isaac’s need to be married. Abraham wanted his servant to find someone for Isaac from among Abraham’s country and relatives. This was very important, because Abraham did not want his son to take a wife from the daughters of the Canaanites among whom they lived. The Canaanites were an evil and idolatrous people. Abraham’s servant prayed to God that the girl who offered him and his camels a drink would be the one chosen by God for Isaac. God answered this prayer, and Rebekah and her family all cooperated. Rebekah willingly went back with the servant got married. Isaac loved his wife Rebekah.

**CONTENT:** There was a famine in the land where Isaac and his family were living. The famine drove Isaac north to Gerar where Abimelech was king of the Philistines. The Lord appeared to Isaac at this time and told him not to go down to Egypt but to live in this land for a while. God told Isaac that He would be with him and would bless him. God confirmed the oath He had made to his father Abraham. God reminded Isaac of the promise, “I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven and will give to your seed all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed, Because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.” Isaac obeyed and stayed in Gerar.

Isaac was afraid that the men of Gerar would kill him to get his beautiful wife Rebekah, so he lied and told them she was his sister. When Abimelech found out that Isaac had lied, he rebuked Isaac. The king made a decree that if anyone harmed Isaac or Rebekah they would be put to death. Isaac then lived in safety.

God kept His promise to Isaac and he became a very wealthy man. He had so many flocks and herds and servants that the Philistines became jealous of him. As a result, they plugged Isaac’s wells with earth (these wells had been dug by Abraham). Abimelech then told Isaac to move away from them because he had become too powerful. The Gerar area was right on the edge of the desert so water was as precious as gold. When someone dug a well it was the same as staking a claim to the land. To plug someone’s well was an act of aggression—a very serious crime in the land. Isaac had every right to fight back when the Philistines stopped up his wells, but he chose to keep the peace.

Isaac moved and settled in the valley of Gerar and reopened the wells that had been dug by his father Abraham. Isaac’s servants also dug three new wells. When disputes arose between them and the Philistines concerning the first two wells, Isaac moved on rather than to start a big conflict. It was at the third well that there was no quarreling, so Isaac named the well Rehoboth (room).

From there Isaac went to Beersheba where God appeared to him again to reaffirm His promise. Isaac built an altar to the Lord. Abimelech then came to Isaac from Gerar and wanted to have a peace treaty with Isaac because he clearly saw that the Lord was with him. Isaac was quick to respond and turned the occasion into a celebration. The next morning Abimelech and his aides departed in peace.

The same day, Isaac’s servants came and told him that they had found water in the well they had dug. Isaac called the place Shibah and the name of the city became Beer-sheba.

**SUGGESTED APPLICATIONS TO CHOOSE FROM:**

* **Pursuing Peace.** The Bible tells us to seek and pursue peace (Psalms 34:14; Hebrews 12:14a; 2 Timothy 2:22). It takes hard work to pursue peace. To pursue peace is something active, like chasing to catch something. It is not always our first inclination to seek peace. Rather, our first inclination may be to fight back when someone does something wrong to us. Isaac had every right to fight back, yet he chose not to. Like Isaac, we also can choose the way of peace. Perhaps serving ones can help think of some examples from their own lives in which the Lord helped them choose peace. Help the children consider examples with their own siblings, friends, parents, etc. in which they could choose the way of peace. When others see that we are people of peace, they may be attracted to the Lord, just like Abimelech was.
* **Forgiving others.** When other people reach out to us in peace, we should be receptive, just like Isaac was. We should not hold a grudge. Colossians 3:13 says, “Bearing one another and forgiving one another, if anyone should have a complaint against anyone; even as the Lord forgave you, so also should you forgive.”

Adapted from *Bringing Children from Adam to Christ in God’s Economy:* Vol. 4, *God’s Calling in the Old Testament*, Lesson 9 and the Church in New York City’s Children’s Meeting lessons: 1/16/94; 1/02/2000; 12/25/05; 1/1/12