

General Church Education



The War of the Kings

Genesis 14:1-24

Lesson 7

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 2: The Lord Is Our Shepherd

For ages 7-8 years

The War of the Kings

Genesis 14:1-24

Ideas for Parents & Teachers

This is the first story in the Word about warfare. These battles depict the struggle between good and evil tendencies within a person. In the internal sense it is the story of temptation and spiritual combat. Reward for victory is represented by the bread and wine that Melchizedek gave to Abram with the accompanying blessing. As in the Holy Supper, these represent gifts of love and wisdom from the Lord. Abram's tithes are the acknowledgment that the victory and all blessings are from the Lord alone (*Arcana Coelestia* 1726, 1727).

For the child, a good message is about the qualities of real friendship and the ability to think about others and their needs as well as oneself. Young children are taught rules and customs of life through education and examples. This is a good age to discuss how true friends set personal concerns aside when others need them.

Ideas for Children

- Loving the neighbor is treating others as we would like to be treated (Luke 6:31).
- The Lord helps us when we try to do what is right, even when the job seems too big for us.
- The Lord rewards those who do good.
- The Lord helped Abram win the war.

From the Writings

Since the Lord is present within the good of charity, people are the neighbor according to the nature of the good and so of the charity in them. Society, smaller or greater, is also the neighbor. Our country, church, the Lord's kingdom, and above all, the Lord, are also the neighbor. See *Arcana Coelestia* 6712, 6819

If a soldier looks to the Lord and shuns evils as sins, and sincerely, justly, and faithfully does his duty, he becomes charity. He hates the wrongful spilling of blood. He is not averse to it in battle; for he thinks of the enemy as an enemy. When he hears the call to stop fighting, his fury ceases. He looks upon his captives after victory as neighbors, according to the quality of their good. Before the battle he raises his mind to the Lord, and commits his life into His hand. After he has done this, he lets his mind down into the body and becomes brave. The thought of the Lord, which he is then unconscious of, still remains in his mind, above his bravery. And then if he dies, he dies in the Lord; if he lives, he lives in the Lord. See *Charity* 166

Those who love their country and do good to it as the result of their good will, after death love the Lord's kingdom, since this is then their country; and those who love the Lord's kingdom love the Lord, because the Lord is all in all to His kingdom. See *True Christian Religion* 414

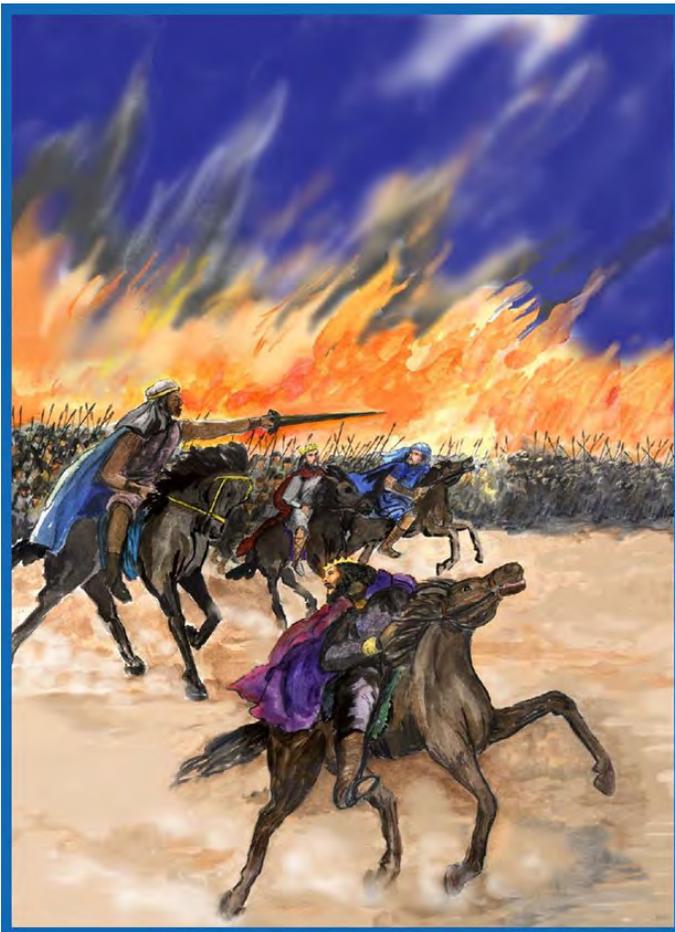
The War of the Kings

Lot was Abram's nephew, but they are often called brothers or brethren in the stories of the Word to show that they were very close family members. You remember that Lot's parents had died, and Abram had taken very good care of Lot as they journeyed to the land of Canaan.

When their herds were so large that they had to separate, why did Lot choose the green plains for his home? (This land looked like good pasture for his flocks.) Do you remember what evil cities were nearby? (Sodom and Gomorrah.)

Lot made his choice without stopping to think ahead. There was bound to be trouble with those wicked cities so close by. These cities were wicked because the people who lived there were selfish. Selfishness brings jealousy and quarreling because everybody wants their own way.

The people we choose to be around can have a strong influence on how we act. Sometimes we think that we will not get into trouble, even if we choose to be with friends who are not behaving well. We think that we can be strong enough to keep from doing the wrong things that others are doing. But it is not easy when we are with a group of people who are misbehaving.



Before long Lot found himself living in Sodom, and he also found himself in deep trouble.

How the Battle Started

There were five cities in the plain of Jordan: Sodom, Gomorrah and three other cities. They had all been conquered by Chedorlaomer, the king of Elam, a country far away. For twelve years these cities had been serving Chedorlaomer by paying him money. Let's read and see what happened in the thirteenth year.

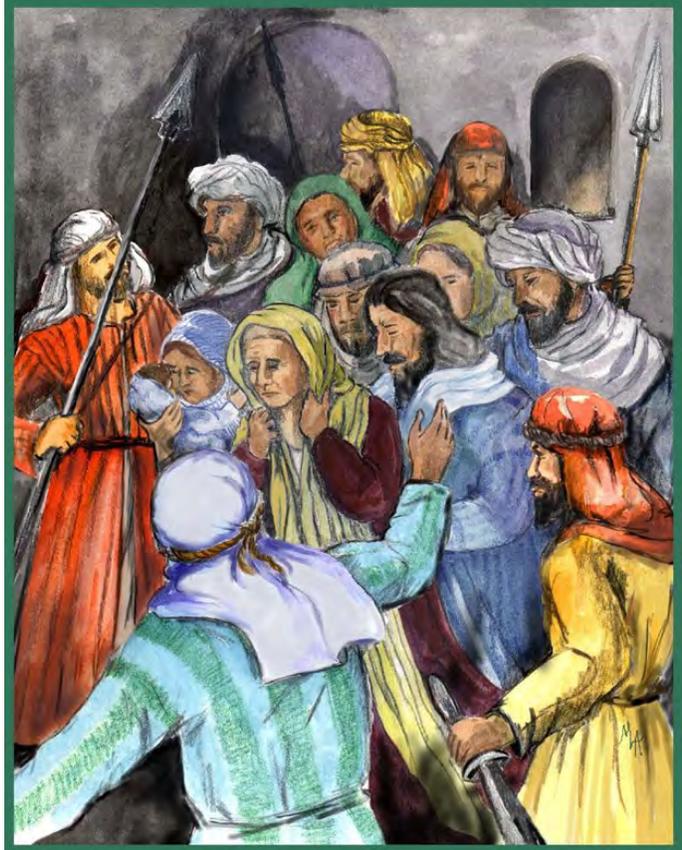
Read Genesis 14:1-4. What did the people of these five cities in the plain do? (They rebelled.)

Yes, they would not go along with Chedorlaomer any more. They refused to pay any more money to him. So, Chedorlaomer, the king of Elam, and three

other kings who were his neighbors in that land far away, came back to conquer these five cities again and make their people serve them.

Now these four kings had to travel the same journey that Abram, Sarai and Lot had taken when they came from the country of Ur. It was a long way around the desert, and it must have taken them quite a while. On their way, these four kings from the east conquered other people.

Chedorlaomer and the other three kings fought with giants who lived near the Jordan and conquered them. They conquered the Horites, people who lived in caves in the mountains. They conquered the Amalekites and the Amorites, people they found in the plains. Then they came to the region of the Dead Sea, a body of water that is so salty that no fish can live in it. There are also “slime pits” in this area. These pits are springs of pitch, a black, sticky substance like the asphalt used for paving roads today. It is the same substance used as mortar in the tower of Babel. This is where Sodom, Gomorrah and the other three cities were.



The five kings of these cities came out to fight against the four invading kings, but the four kings conquered the five, took some of them captive and took their goods or possessions with them. The kings of Sodom and Gomorrah managed to escape. Some of the people fell into the asphalt pits, others escaped to the mountains. But the invading kings captured Lot and his family and carried them away. Let’s read on to see how Abram found out about Lot’s capture.

Read Genesis 14:8-13. Who told Abram about Lot’s capture? (A person who escaped the battle.) Why do you think Abram might try to help Lot? (Because Lot was his nephew.)

At this time Abram was living in peace with his neighbors by the terebinth trees of Mamre. When he heard that his nephew had been captured, Abram bravely armed three hundred eighteen of his servants. With help from his neighbors, they followed the four kings and their men. Abram and his followers attacked the kings at night while they were sleeping and rescued Lot and his family. The Lord was certainly with Abram and his men, or else they could not have defeated such strong enemies! Let’s read about it now.

Read Genesis 14:14-16.

What a brave thing for Abram to do! Was he a good friend to Lot? (Yes, he was.)

You know that it is wrong to fight to selfishly get your own way. But it is honorable to fight to defend someone or to fight for your country. In fact, the Word tells us that people who love their country in this world will love the Lord's kingdom after death. On Abram's way home a wonderful thing happened. Melchizedek, a priest of God Most High and also the king of Salem, came out to meet him as he entered a valley near the town of Salem. He brought Abram bread and wine and he blessed him. In return, Abram gave him a tenth of everything that he had taken when he defeated the four kings. This showed his gratefulness that the Lord had given him success against the kings.

A True Friend

Abram was a true friend. As soon as he heard about Lot's troubles, he forgot about himself and set out to rescue his nephew and his family. When Lot was in danger, Abram willingly put himself in danger to try to save Lot. It would have been easier for Abram to stay safe at home. But true friends do not think only of themselves and what is good for them. They think about their friends and are happy when they are happy too. Have you ever tried to cheer up a friend who was sad? Perhaps you have spoken up for a friend when someone said something unkind about them.

Good friends treat others the way they would like to be treated. Sometimes this is called the Golden Rule. It is the law of heaven. The Lord taught it when He lived on earth. He knows that if we live by this rule, we will be living like the angels in heaven and will be rewarded with the kind of happiness they have. Just as Melchizedek came out to bless Abram and gave him bread and wine to nourish and comfort him after the battle, we also feel heavenly blessings of happiness when we think of others first and prove to be a good friend.



Discussion Questions

- Why do you think Abram tried to rescue Lot against such a strong enemy? (Answers may include that Abram loved his nephew Lot, that he did not think about his own safety when Lot was in danger, or that the Lord always helps us when we try to do what is right.)
- Why do you think it is good to help others when they need it? (Answers may include that this is the Golden Rule, this is the way angels behave, the Lord has told us to do this.)
- Describe a time when you helped someone who needed it.

Activity Overview | The War of the Kings

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.
Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.
You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. John 15:12-14

Songs

Hark the Song of Jubilee

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-hark-the-song-of-jubilee/>

The Two Great Commandments

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-the-two-great-commandments/>

Activities

Choose one or two.

- Activity 1 | Woven Heart Friendship Gift
- Activity 2 | Act Out the Story
- Picture to color

Additional Activities

- Discuss friendship. What makes a person a true friend?

Activity 1 | Woven Heart Friendship Gift

Abram was a good friend to Lot. Be a good friend by creating a heart, filling it with a small token (e.g. picture, something found in nature, something you have made, stickers, etc.) and giving it to a friend.

Supplies Needed

- 2 pieces of paper in contrasting colors (e.g. green and yellow, red and white)
- scissors
- pencil
- stencil (next page)

Directions

1. Fold the 2 pieces of colored paper in half widthwise. Cut to approximate size to fit the stencil below.
2. Cut out the stencil.
3. Place the stencil on the fold line of the colored paper as shown on right and trace around it.



4. Cut the shape out carefully along the lines. Be sure to cut accurately, especially along the vertical lines inside the heart. If you do not, you may not be able to finish assembling the project.



5. Repeat the last two steps with the second color. You will now have two pieces like this.



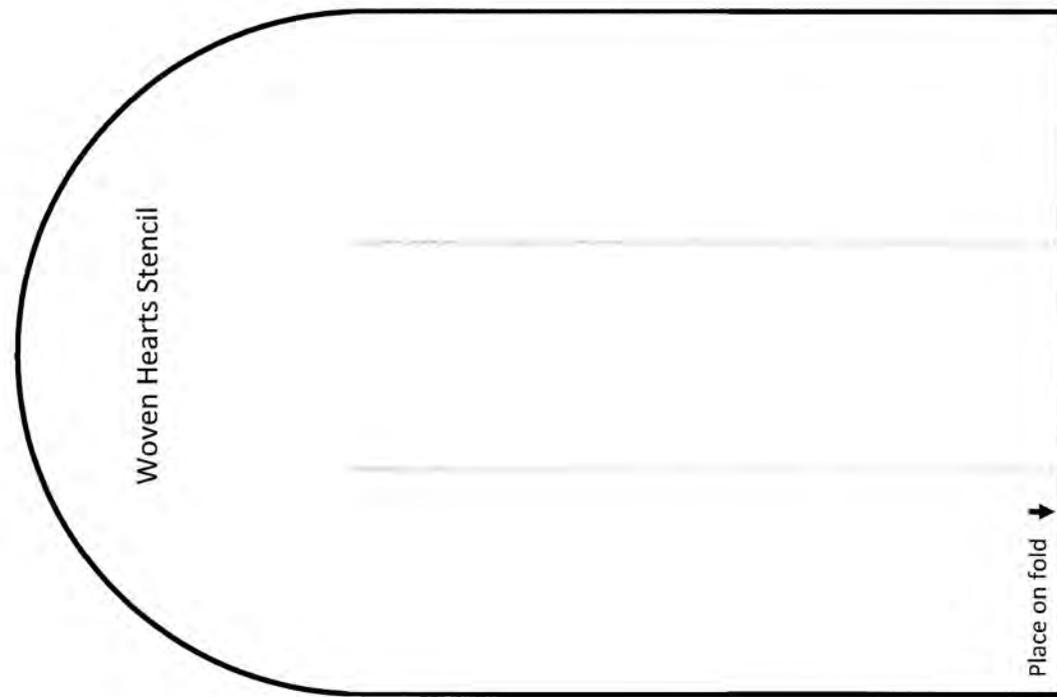
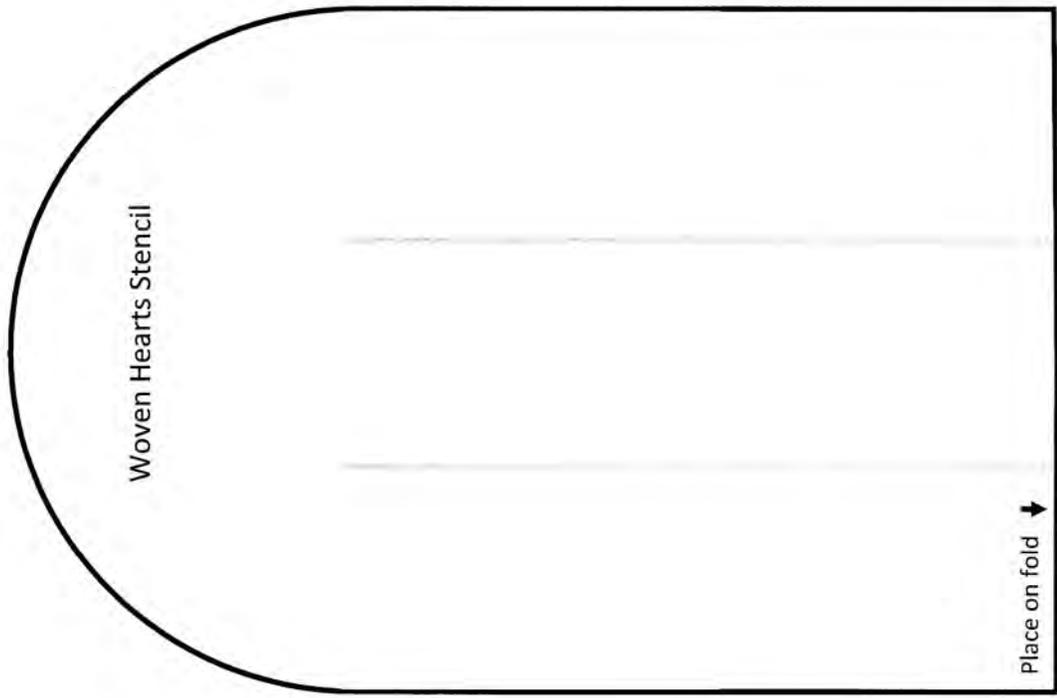
6. Lay the two pieces next to each other.

7. Open the fold in the stand on the right and put the first strand on the left through it. Open the second strand on the left and insert the strand on the right through it. Repeat step 6.



8. Continue weaving the heart until all strands are woven in.
9. You should now be able to open the heart to put something inside.





Activity 2 | Act Out the Story

The action of the story can be understood more easily by acting it out with movable objects. Cut out the crowns below and on the next page and use them to represent the kings and their armies from the story. Color or decorate the crowns so you can distinguish the two sides in the battle of the four foreign kings who came to conquer the five kings of Jordan's plain. Attach the crowns to blocks or something similar that you can use to move around as you retell the story. *Optional:* make a landscape by using blocks to build mountains, a blue scarf to

