

General Church Education



The Lord Changes Names

Genesis 15:1-7; 17:1-9

Lesson 8

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 2: The Lord Is Our Shepherd

For ages 7-8 years

The Lord Changes Names

Genesis 15:1-7; 17:1-9

Ideas for Parents & Teachers

This is the story of the Lord’s covenant with Abram and the resulting change in the names of Abram and Sarai. The Lord was able to make this covenant with Abram because of Abram’s willingness to follow the Lord. Abram demonstrated this over and over again in his life.

The new name, Abraham, means “father of a multitude,” which he became. The addition of the letter “H” from the name Jehovah is very important. The Lord’s name represents His Divinity. Jehovah means the Lord as the “One who is.” All life comes from Him. All goodness, truth and power are His as well. When we, like Abraham and Sarah, look to the Lord as the power of our lives and walk in His ways, we are also given “children” or an abundance of spiritual life.

Ideas for Children

- The “H” in Jehovah’s name was added to Abram’s and Sarai’s names by the Lord to show that the Lord was close to them.
- According to the covenant established with Abraham, he and his people would follow and obey the Lord. In return the Lord would make him rich, give him all the land of Canaan and make him the father of a great nation.

From the Writings

A name includes everything in its entirety within that person, for in heaven when anyone is referred to by name, or when a name is used, a mental picture of the person’s nature comes up, that is, of all that is theirs, with them and in them. This is why “name” in the Word means “the nature of.”

In the Ten Commandments, “You shall not take the name of Jehovah your God in vain, for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless who has taken His name in vain” (Exodus 20:7, Deuteronomy 5:11). Here taking God’s name in vain does not mean His name but every single thing that comes from Him, and so every single thing belonging to the worship of Him, which must not be treated with disdain, still less be blasphemed and defiled by what is filthy. In the Lord’s Prayer, “Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, as in heaven so on earth” (Luke 11:2).

Nor in this instance is “name” used to mean name but all things that belong to love and faith, for these are God’s, or the Lord’s, and derive from Him. Since the latter are holy, the Lord’s kingdom comes, and His will is done on earth as it is in heaven, when they are upheld as being holy. “The nations will see your righteousness and all the kings your glory; and you will be called by a new name which the mouth of Jehovah will announce” (Isaiah 62:2).

Here “you will be called by a new name” stands for becoming a different person—as a result of being created anew or regenerated, and so stands for becoming such. See *Arcana Coelestia* 2009

The Lord Changes Names

Abram was a good man. He had answered the Lord's call to leave his homeland and make a difficult journey to a new land called Canaan. After Abram arrived in the land of Canaan, there was a famine and he took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all of his belongings to Egypt in order to find food. When they returned to Canaan with riches and with large herds of animals, Abram gave Lot the first choice of a place to live. Do you remember what Abram did when Lot was captured by invading kings? (Abram went after them and brought Lot back even though Abram and his men were greatly outnumbered by the enemy forces.)

Now Abram was once again living in peace, camped in his tent by the oaks or terebinth trees near the city of Hebron. But Abram was getting old and there was one thing that he and Sarai did not have. Do you remember what that was? (A child.)

Abram's Vision

One day Abram had a comforting vision from the Lord. A vision is like a dream but usually comes when the person is awake. Let's read about this vision and see why Abram was sad.

Read Genesis 15:1-4. What was Abram worried about? (That he had no child of his own and that the only heir he had was one of his servants.)

Abram had no child to inherit the land and all his possessions. Abram thought that when he died, everything of his would go to the head servant of his household. But in this vision, the Lord told Abram that he would have a child of his own. Then the Lord took Abram outside his



tent at night and told him something that must have been wonderful to hear but very difficult to believe.

Read Genesis 15:5-7. What did the Lord ask Abram to count? (The stars, if he was able.) Did Abram believe the Lord when he was told that his descendants would be as countless as the stars? (Yes, he did believe.)

Can you picture in your mind Abram as an old man looking out at all the stars in the night sky and learning that he would have many, many people coming after him in his family? Abram had followed the Lord for so long and tried his best to obey Him. He must have felt deep joy at the promise of his dearest wish.

God's Covenant with Abram

A covenant is an agreement between two people or two groups of people. Each side promises to do something for the other. In other words, when God made a covenant with Abram, God promised to do something for Abram and in return Abram promised to do something for God. Let's read and find out what the Lord wanted Abram to do for his part of the agreement.

Read Genesis 17:1. How old was Abram? (Ninety-nine.) What was Abram to do in this covenant with God? (Abram was to “walk before the Lord and be blameless.”) This means that as Abram lived his life, he was to obey the Lord and follow His commands. Read the next verse to see what the Lord promised Abram.



Read Genesis 17:2. What do you think it means to “multiply you exceedingly”? (That Abram would have many descendants.) Then God gave Abram a sign of this covenant. He changed Abram's name. In doing so, the Lord gave something from His own name to Abram's name. You notice that in Jehovah, which is the Lord's name in Hebrew, one letter appears twice. Which letter is it? (The letter “H.”)

Every letter in the Hebrew language has special importance. Place the palm of your hand in front of your mouth. Make the sound of the letter “H.” Did you feel your breath on your hand? Your breath is very important. We breathe every moment of every day while we live here on earth. It is the Lord who gives us the breath of life. Our lives come from Him. Compare the sound of other letters which are formed by the lips and tongue. Notice that “H” is just a breath, and therefore stands for the pure infinite life that comes from the Lord.

Do you think this was an important change in Abram's name? (Yes.) From now on he was known as Abraham and his wife was called Sarah. Both received the addition of the letter “H” to their names to show how close they were to the Lord. It was the sign of Abraham's covenant with the Lord.

Abram and Sarai loved and obeyed the Lord. The Lord made a covenant with Abram. As a sign of their closeness to the Lord, He changed their names and added a letter from His name to each of their names. Their new names were Abraham and Sarah.

Our Names

Names in many languages have meanings. The Hebrew name Abraham means “father of a multitude.” What a great name that was for one who would become the patriarch or father of a whole nation!

Do you know what your name means? Ask your parents what they can tell you about your name. Sometimes children are named for someone in the family or someone that the parents admire. Sometimes a child’s name is chosen because the name has a special meaning or because the parents like the sound of it.

Whatever name you are given at your birth is not as important as the name you make for yourself. When people say your name, a certain kind of person will come to mind. Other people will immediately have thoughts and feelings about you when they hear your name mentioned. Your family will have loving thoughts and feelings when your name is said because they care so much about you. Your friends may think of special qualities that you have. For instance, some people are good at running, catching balls and other sports activities. Others are good at making pictures or building things. Some are especially interested in music or dancing. What kinds of things do you like to do? What are your special talents?

Our names can describe not only our talents but especially what kind of person we are. Are you loving and kind? Are you a good friend to others? Do you try to obey the Lord in your life? Abraham certainly tried to obey the Lord throughout his long life. The Lord was like a shepherd to Abraham. He took care of Abraham and Sarah and blessed them with many good things. When we look to the Lord as our Shepherd, He can guide our lives too, and this will bring us much happiness.



Discussion Questions

- What do you remember about the covenant between the Lord and Abram? (The Lord would give Abram and Sarai a son, and they would obey the Lord.)
- What can you tell about the sign of the covenant between the Lord and Abram? (The letter “H” was added to both names making them Abraham and Sarah. This letter appears twice in Jehovah and represents the breath of life from the Lord.)
- How would you like others to think of you when your name is said?

Activity Overview | The Lord Changes Names

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 | Name Change Project
- Activity 2 | Write the Lord's Name in Hebrew
- Picture to color

Additional Activity Ideas

- Go outside on a dark night with a clear sky and see how many stars you can count.
- Look at a star chart online, or a book about stars.

Activity 1 | Name Change Project

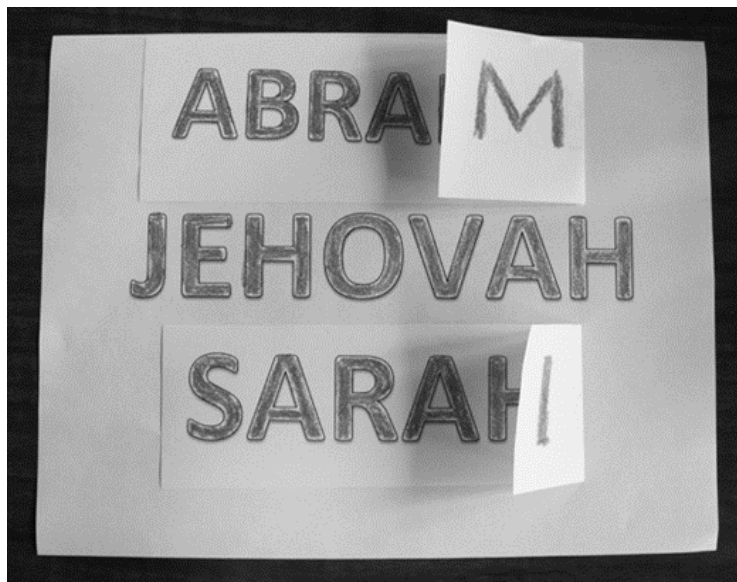
Make an interactive project showing how Abram's name was changed to Abraham, and how Sarai's name was changed to Sarah.

Supplies Needed

- pages with names of Jehovah, and Abraham and Sarah
- colored pencils or crayons
- glue

Directions

1. Color the name Jehovah, and the "H" in AbraHam and SaraH in red, to stand for the Lord.
2. Use a dark blue, purple or green to color in the rest of the letters in the names Abraham and Sarah. Take time to make them beautiful.
3. Cut out the rectangle shapes around the names of Abraham and Sarah.
4. Fold the paper so only Abra... and Sara... show. Draw "M" and "T" on the folded part to complete the names.
5. Glue the names on to the Jehovah page.
6. When dry, fold the papers out and re-tell the story of how the Lord changed Abram's name to Abraham and Sarai's to Sarah. Explain why He did it.



JEHOVAH

SARAH

ABRAHAM

Activity 2 | Write the Lord's Name in Hebrew

In the Old Testament, the Lord's name, Jehovah, is written in Hebrew. Hebrew is written from right to left. Look at the Lord's name. Trace over the letters from right to left, and then copy the letters in the space below. Finish by writing "Lord", the English translation of Jehovah, underneath it.

Here is Jehovah in Hebrew. Trace the letters from right to left.



Write "Jehovah" here starting from the right hand side.

Write "Lord" here.

