



Lesson 31.1: Abraham and three strangers

(Genesis 18:1-15 and 21:1-7)

Episode 31 – Senators Only [Timing: 0.00 to 12:41]

Objective

- To explore the theme of being welcoming.

Summary of resources required this lesson

- Friends and Heroes Episode 31
- DVD player
- “Welcome” word outlines (*see Preparation in the Starting off section*)
- “Abraham and the three strangers” picture (*Printable Resources – page 5*)
- “Welcome” in Arabic & Hebrew (*Printable Resources – page 6*)
- Colouring pens or other decorating media
- Backing paper for wall display
- Adhesive
- A “This is me” questionnaire for each child (*Printable Resources – page 7*)
- Pens or pencils
- Sticky notelets or small pieces of paper

Summary of Friends and Heroes story

Macky and Antonius continue their secret work helping the Friends of Jesus. Meanwhile, Tobias is working for Senator Marcus and Portia sees him collecting some barrels at the dockside. She is horrified to discover that whatever is inside them is lethal. Later she also finds out that Marcus plans to use the contents of these barrels to bring an end to the Friends of Jesus in Rome, once and for all!

Prepare yourself – *Remember to pray first!*

Watch Episode 31: Notice how different characters are well disposed to others – or not! Portia cares: she gives money for the family of a stranger who dies. Macky and Antonius care: they welcome the Friends of Jesus they have rescued. On the other hand, Tobias thinks only of himself, as does Faustus. And Marcus is scheming to rid Rome of the Friends of Jesus.

Starting off

Craft activity – Wall display

Materials

- Episode 31 and DVD player
- “Welcome” word outlines (see *Preparation below*)
- “Abraham welcomes three strangers” picture (*Printable Resources – page 5*)
- “Welcome” in Arabic & Hebrew (*Printable Resources – page 6*)
- Colouring pens or other decorating media
- Backing paper for wall display
- Adhesive

Preparation

- Using a marker pen, write out in bubble-style lettering a number of foreign words that mean “Welcome”. A list is available on the next page. Also, outlines of Arabic and Hebrew are available on *Printable Resources – page 6*.

Watch the first part of Episode 31 together, from the beginning to the point when Portia reacts to Faustus’s statement in the warehouse that the contents of the barrels will bring about the end of the Friends of Jesus in Rome (stop point = 12:41).

Afterwards, tell the children that we are going to be concentrating on how welcoming, or otherwise, people are to one another. Obviously, as revealed very starkly in the last scene viewed, neither Marcus nor Faustus are welcoming to the Friends of Jesus in Rome. In fact, quite the reverse! On the other hand, Abraham, in today’s Bible story, couldn’t have been more welcoming to the three strangers passing by his tent. Indeed, when he saw them, he rushed out to greet them, offered to wash their feet, and gave them food and rest. Tell the children that they are now going to make a wall display celebrating the idea of welcoming people. Tell them that they are going to use words of welcome from all over the world. Ask them if they know any foreign words for “welcome”. Show them the ones you have, and have fun together pronouncing the ones you know.

Let the children colour in the different “Welcome” words, and then arrange them around the picture of Abraham and the strangers (the centerpiece of the display). You might like to add the following words above, below of around the display: “Abraham welcomed three strangers”.

Bienvenue	French	Bem-vindos	Portuguese
Willkommen	German	Welkom	Dutch
Benvenuti	Italian	Faillt	Manx Gaelic
Bienvenidos	Spanish	Croeso	Welsh

In deeper

How well do you know me?

Materials

- A “This is me” questionnaire for each child (*Printable Resources – page 7*)
- Pens or pencils

In this section you will help the children explore that being welcoming isn't restricted to the people we know. We should be prepared to be welcoming to everyone.

Distribute a questionnaire to each member of your group. Tell them to fill it in privately and secretly. Arrange your room to facilitate this as much as possible, and help anyone who has difficulty with writing their answers.

Afterwards, collect in the questionnaires and then tell the group that you are going to test them on how well they know one another. Select a questionnaire and then pick a person who was not the author. Tell them that you are going to select a question from the questionnaire, and that they have to try and give an answer that matches the one written by the author. Tell them who the author is, and then ask the question. Share with the group how well the reply matches with the answer on the questionnaire. Move round the group selecting different children and different questionnaires. Create a fun atmosphere, so that mismatches are enjoyed, rather than seen as “wrong” or “disappointing” in some way.

Afterwards, review some of the surprises (matches and mismatches) encountered in this activity. Point out how sometimes we know one another well, sometimes we don't know one another as well as we thought, and sometimes we just don't know one another well at all – particularly if we've only just met them.

Take some time to explore together what it is like when you meet somebody new. How uncertain, nervous or wary are we? Does it depend on where we are? Is there a difference whether we are meeting a stranger in a place that we are used to, with other people we know around us, or whether we are a stranger too? If we feel like a stranger, or are unsure, what difference does it make if the people there welcome us – or don't?

Use elements of today's stories to inform the discussion, such as:

- **Abraham's complete and active openness and generosity towards the three strangers; and**
- **Macky's and Antonius's openness and generosity to the refugee Friends of Jesus, compared to Marcus's intolerance and hostility.**

God wants us to be open to everyone, just as he is (more of this in next time's lesson). We should be welcoming, not just to those who we know well or even a little; we should be welcoming to everyone, all the time – and even if we are not on home ground. Just like Abraham, we do not know when we first meet people how they will enrich our lives – but they almost certainly will.

Prayer time

Materials

- Sticky notes or small pieces of paper
- Pens

God wants us to be welcoming to everyone.

Take time now to add to the wall display created earlier. Encourage the children to write the first names of people that they know personally, well or otherwise, on sticky notes or small pieces of paper. Fill out the display with these names. Now ask them to write one more name on another note or small piece of paper. This should be a name that doesn't really mean anything to them. It could be the name of a person they have yet to meet – a stranger. This will signify our willingness to embrace and welcome the people we have yet to meet.

Afterwards stand in a ring, linking hands, and pray something similar to the following:

Dear welcoming Father God

*We promise to be open and welcoming
to all the people in our lives now,
and in the future.*

Amen

Printable Resources

Lesson 31.1 – Abraham welcomes three strangers

- Cut out this image as a centerpiece for your wall display.



Printable Resources

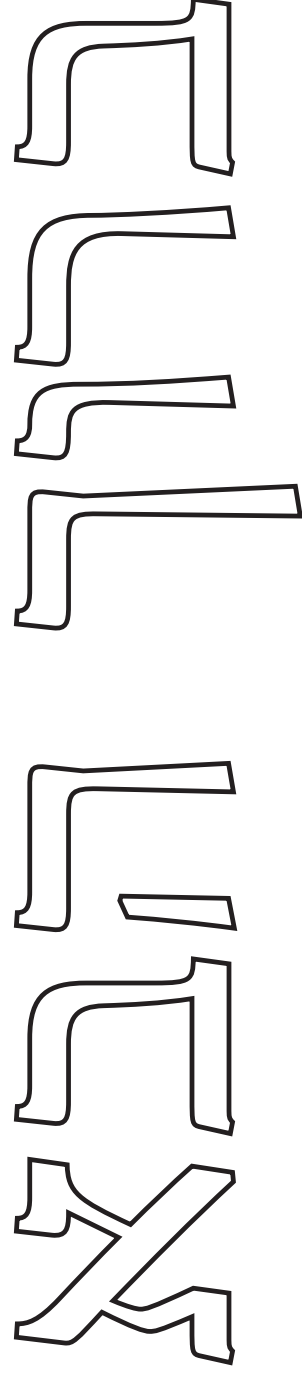
Lesson 31.1 – Welcome in Arabic and Hebrew

- Cut out these phrases so that they can be coloured and added to the wall display.
- The Arabic is pronounced “ahlan wa-sahlan”. The Hebrew is pronounced “barukh haba”. Both read right to left, and both are singular forms.

Arabic



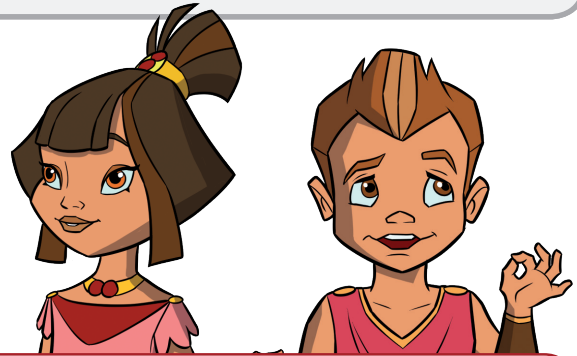
Hebrew



Printable Resources

Lesson 31.1 – “This is me” questionnaire

- Fill this form out secretly. Don't let anybody else see. When you're finished, hand the sheet back to your group leader.



Name:	
My favourite meal is:	
The main colour in my bedroom is:	
I go to school at:	
My favourite TV programme is:	
My favourite song is:	
My favourite Friends and Heroes character is:	
I would like to go on a holiday to:	
I think the best person alive today is:	
When I grow up, I would like to be:	

Extra, extra!

Lesson 31.1 – Bible numbers



Abraham welcomed strangers who were passing by, and he gave them the best of what he had. The Bible is full of numbers. Here's a short quiz for you. If you don't know the answers, there are clues!



	Clue
a) Jesus chose <input type="text"/> disciples.	$4 + 4 + 4$
b) The Israelites spent <input type="text"/> years roaming the desert.	5×8
c) Joseph had <input type="text"/> brothers.	$\frac{22}{2}$
d) Joseph was sold for <input type="text"/> pieces of silver.	$7 + 16 - 3$
e) There are <input type="text"/> books in the Old Testament.	$13 + 13 + 13$
f) There were <input type="text"/> people on Noah's Ark	$17 - 9$
g) When Jesus healed 10 lepers, only <input type="text"/> came back to thank him.	1×1
h) There are <input type="text"/> books in the New Testament.	$9 + 9 + 9$
i) Jesus fed a crowd of 5000 with <input type="text"/> loaves and 2 fishes.	$\frac{20}{4}$

"Then he said to them, "Anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me also welcomes my Father who sent me. Whoever is the least among you is the greatest.""

Luke 9:48 [New Living Translation]

Answers:

a) 12 b) 40 c) 11 d) 20 e) 39 f) 8 g) 1 h) 27 i) 5