



# **Worship at Home**

# **28 February 2021**

#### **Opening Call To Worship**

Trust in the Lord, and do good;

Take delight in the Lord,
and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act.

He will make your life shine like the noonday.

Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for him (from Psalm 37)

### **Opening Prayer**

Father, you who loved us first and loves us always, draw us nearer to you and to those around us – even in a virtual way.

You have called us to be attentive to the work of your kingdom.

You have graced us with gifts that are physical and spiritual.

Loving God in this season of Lent, we examine our lives
You know when we have slipped up or fallen short
You know where we are fearful or vulnerable
You know our unanswered questions and the doubts of our souls
And so we pray that your presence will sustain us on our Journey
Through this Lockdown Lent.

We pray that you would meet our deepest needs, Forgive our sins, humble any foolish thoughts awaken our spirits each morning to the gift of a fresh new day. Hear us as we share the prayer that Jesus taught us. . .



It is with great sadness that we have to intimate the death of

Mrs Pauline Brown 3 Wester Kinleith Farm Cottages

Mrs Brown's funeral will take place in Currie Kirk on Tuesday 9 March at 12.30 pm

Please pray for the family

Our Father, who art in heaven; hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever.

Amen.

#### Genesis 17: 1-7 & 15-19—The Covenant of Circumcision



When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to him. He said, "I am the Mighty God. Walk faithfully with me. Live in a way that pleases me. I will now act on my covenant between me and you. I will greatly increase the number of your children after you."

Abram fell with his face to the ground. God said to him, "This is my covenant with you. You will be the father of many nations. You will not be called Abram anymore. Your name will be Abraham, because I have made you a father of many nations. I will greatly increase the number of your children after you. Nations and kings will come from you. I will make my

covenant with you last forever. It will be between me and you and your family after you for all time to come. I will be your God. And I will be the God of all your family after you.

#### 15-19

God also said to Abraham, "Do not continue to call your wife by the name Sarai. Her name will be Sarah. I will give her my blessing. You can be sure that I will give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations. Kings of nations will come from her."

Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?" And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!"

Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.



#### What is Fairtrade—Viola MacPhail

#### Currie Kirk in Fairtrade Fortnight 22 February to 7 March 2021

This is the middle Sunday of Fairtrade Fortnight – a time when we focus on the needs of some of the poorest farmers in the developing Third World.

The Kirk Session recently decided to renew its support for the Fairtrade Foundation and has been awarded Fairtrade Church certification.

What does Fairtrade mean?

Fairtrade is a simple way to make a difference to the lives of the people in developing countries of the Third World who grow the things we love like coffee, tea, bananas, chocolate. In fact, there are now over 5,000 Fairtrade products ranging from apricots to coffee, cotton, olive oil, footballs to wine – an ever-growing list.



The Fairtrade Foundation was formed in 1992 by Christian Aid, Oxfam, Traidcraft and others to improve fairness for the world's poorest farmers. Fairtrade is unique. It changes the way that trade works for smallholder farmers in developing countries by guaranteeing them better prices, decent working conditions and local sustainability in a fairer deal.

Fairtrade Foundation sets social, environment and economic standards for trade between larger companies and farmer-producers, setting a Fairtrade Minimum Price and an additional Fairtrade Premium for community projects. The Premium can be invested in local projects chosen by farmer co-operatives to provide schooling or health facilities or improve irrigation and provide clean water.

Importantly the farming co-operatives decide where to invest the Premium for the greatest benefit to their communities. Through Fairtrade, farmers and workers take more control over their lives with a more secure and sustainable livelihood, giving them the hope of a better life ahead, an escape from poverty and injustices in the trade system.

Fairtrade products carry the Fairtrade Mark. This is an independent stamp of approval which means that consumers can be reassured that the Fairtrade Foundation has checked that international standards have been met, that farmers have received a fair price which covers their costs and that workers have been paid a living wage. The Foundation ensures that everyone really is getting a better deal.



What can we do as consumers?

Every purchase we make has a direct impact on the lives of marginalised producers. By thinking about commodities we buy and use that are produced far away, such as tea, coffee, bananas, wine, olive oil etc, we can have a significant impact on the lives of others. In buying Fairtrade certified products we are helping to make a difference and give farmers a stable price that enables them to support their families and invest for their future.



Currie Kirk has been a Fairtrade Church since 2007. It has decided to renew its support for the Fairtrade Foundation and retain its certification as a Fairtrade Church by following 3 principles:

Using Fairtrade, tea, coffee and sugar after Kirk services and wherever possible at all church functions and meetings serving refreshments.

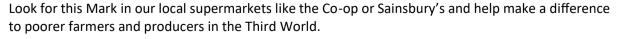


Highlighting and supporting the annual Fairtrade Fortnight held in late February/early March.

Promoting the use of Fairtrade products at events, explaining why we promote Fairtrade to support some of the poorest people in the world as a matter of social justice, an important part of Christian values

Did you know Scotland is a Fairtrade Nation, Edinburgh is a Fairtrade City and now Currie Kirk has agreed to recommit to being a Fairtrade Church. Brilliant!!

Fairtrade Fortnight lasts from 22 Feb-7 March. Currie Kirk usually runs a Fairtrade Fortnight Sunday Lunch in the Gibson Craig, normally attended by some 60-70 people. Of course, that won't be possible this year under lockdown restrictions. But we can all still do our best to support Fairtrade—and not just during Fairtrade Fortnight. How do we do this? By choosing goods that carry the Fairtrade Mark in our everyday shopping, such as coffee, tea, sugar, bananas—delicious!





More information from Viola MacPhail 449 4664

The climate crisis is happening now and many 3rd World producers are at the forefront of the changes. Fairtrade supports them in farming sustainably and tackling the challenges of climate change.

#### Fairtrade Fortnight—Heather

Everything you buy, every chocolate bar, every T-shirt, every banana, has a story. The story goes back months, even years before it reaches your hands. Your chocolate, fruit or clothing has a whole previous life, involving distant places and many people.

Its story continues long after you as well. If you have a chocolate bar what happens to the wrapper it came in, how long will it last? What do you do with the clothes you've outgrown or have had enough of? What about a banana peel, where does it end up?



These things are only ever yours for a short time, but you play a really important part in the story. In fact, your part affects the way the rest of the story goes.

What we choose to buy and where we choose to buy it makes a difference. You've probably already made lots of choices today – what to have for breakfast, whether to get dressed to watch the church service or stay in your pyjamas, maybe you chose an extra 10 minutes in bed instead of having a shower! Sometimes we make good choices and other times we don't, but to make good choices we need information about what our choices will mean for us and what effect they'll have on others.

Viola has told us a little bit about Fairtrade today, and buying Fairtrade items can make a huge difference to a person's life or to a community. We may never meet the people who make our chocolate or clothes, who grow our bananas or farm our tea, but we can make a big difference to their lives.

As Christians God instructs us to care for the world that he has made, and to care for the people he made too, which is everyone. When we buy Fairtrade, even if it's just one small thing, we're choosing to improve the life of other people. And when we responsibly get rid of our waste we're showing care not only for our world, but for the future, for those who come after us.

Our choices are powerful. Their effects can reach far beyond us. They can help shape the world. The daily decisions we make about what to eat, drink and wear affect the lives of people around the world and the health of our planet.

In today's Bible reading, God gave Abraham and Sarah a promise – to give them many descendants. They had to trust God to fulfil his promise. But they also had to play their part. When God asked them to go somewhere, or to do something or not do something, they had to choose whether or not to obey or go their own way. In the end Abraham and Sarah did have a son, and from them the nation of Israel came. Their choice to trust in God and follow Him made a difference not only to their lives but to the lives of their descendants. I wonder what might have happened if they had chosen not to trust in God.

So this week let's all try to be a bit more considerate about what we buy or how we get rid of things. Even one better choice this week can make a positive change in the world. Perhaps you could cook or bake using at least one Fairtrade item. Or look around your home to see what you have already that's Fairtrade. Maybe the next chocolate bar or banana or jar of coffee you buy could be Fairtrade. You can make a difference and you can show you care for this amazing world that God has created.

#### Meditation:

There was a Primary School teacher and at the start of school year she would ask her young children to do a writing assignment to describe their summer holidays. One boy wrote the following:

Every year we spend two weeks visiting Grandma and Papa. They used to live in a brick house but they've moved to Florida to a retirement community. Everyone there lives in nice little huts so they don't have to mow their grass. They ride around on scooters and everyone wears name tags because they don't know who they are anymore. There is a swimming pool where they do exercises but they don't do them very well. They don't swim, they just jump up and down with caps on. At the gate there is a doll's house with an old man sitting In it. He watches all day so nobody can escape. Sometimes they sneak out in their golf carts. Grandma says Papa worked hard to earn his retirement and so I have to



work hard so I can retire. When I get old I want to be the man in the doll's house so I can let people out to visit their grandchildren.

It is always funny when we learn how little people view us when we are getting older. Jim Simpson tells of a grandfather tasked with bathing identical twin boys before dinner. Dinner time came and one boy Jack arrived spotless in his pyjamas. The other boy Johnny was filthy. As he was scratching his head and looked confused, Jack shouted out "Papa you bathed me twice"!

I know many of you are lucky to have children, or grandchildren nearby . . .but many of you ache to see your friends and loved ones and the lockdown has made it even harder.

Today we read once again the story of Abraham and Sarah and God's Covenant Promise to make them parents, grandparents, even great grandparents to a multitude of descendants.

Abraham is often referred to as the father of all our faiths. He and his wife Sarah were the first people with whom God made a covenant promise. When they were still Abram and Sarai, God had called them to leave their immediate family and to move from Babylon to Horan, a land they had not yet seen. Yet they put their trust in God. In our reading, God is called, El Shaddai, which is actually means "I am the God Almighty". Gary Stratman points out that the word Covenant is mentioned 396 times in the bible. When it comes to God's promises, God always takes the initiative. It is God who gives the promise and the blessing and human beings who receive His promise and blessing and in this way, God works out his plan for our salvation. Even the command to Abraham to walk before me blameless is not possible without God's power and mercy.

God told Abraham, "I will make my covenant between me and you and I will multiply your descendants." God has promised Abraham "I will bless Sarah and give you a son from Her. I will bless her richly and she will become the mother of many nations and Kings of nations will be among her descendants. Whilst God initiates the promises with humanity, our response is to worship God."

In Chapters 17 and 18, though we encounter both Abraham and Sarah having a very human response to God's declaration that he will give them a Son together. In Chapter 17, we heard, Abraham feel down laughing in disbelief. He asks, How can I become a father at the age of a hundred, and Sara have a baby when she is ninety. In Chapter 18, it is Sarah who hears the news and laughs.

We may wonder why each in turn, Abrahan and Sarah burst out laughing. Maybe the laughter came from the gap between God's promise and the zero possibility of their human situation, having a child in their older years. Abraham is a hundred, Sarah is not much younger. And so, maybe the laughter was because they had given up on having children a long time ago. We remember how in desperation that Abraham fathered a son with the servant girl Hagar. Sarah must have felt bitter about that. But by now, years of experience and wisdom had taught them to give up the hope of children and to be comfortable and accepting of it. It can be a sign of acceptance when we are able to laugh at a futile situation or a hopeless cause. Perhaps laughter was a coping mechanism, a way of poking fun at an outrageous suggestion.

Or, maybe the laughter was just nervous energy—you know how sometimes when we know we are not supposed to laugh but we just can't help it and laughter erupts.

Or maybe Sarah's laughter was just out of sheer joy. . . the bible tells us:

Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I now have this pleasure?"

Abraham and Sarah had lived faithfully—certainly not perfectly, in fact very imperfectly if you read the book of Genesis. But they trusted God. They must have been thinking, "God you are so funny, we know you're not serious . . . and then, Oh, you are serious!" God was serious, and soon enough, Sarah's body began to change and her outlook on life would be radically shifted. She would bear a Son.

Their story reminds us that when we have a real faith in God, it is good to expect the unexpected. God can make us laugh or smile, by creating hope in the most unlikely of situations. Sarah and Abraham most certainly had a great sense of humour because when this little boy was born, as God decreed, they chose to call him, Isaac, which, in Hebrew means "He laughs."

Laughter is one of God's gifts of grace. It is a sign that we are comfortable in our own skin. It is an instinctive and joyful response . . . I don't know how any of us would have coped with lockdown without the ability to laugh. I have met people with terminal cancer who make sure to laugh. It is a serious thing if we become so serious that we can't laugh.

I read that Beethoven apparently died with clenched fists and a scowl on his face. He had grown bitter because he was deaf and, not being able to hear took away the enjoyment of music. It is never good when bitterness creeps in. We sometimes meet people who feel embittered because life has given them a hard turn. Sometimes they are angry at the people who hurt them, sometimes maybe angry at God whom they feel has let them down—maybe they think is there a God, if there is, is he working against me?

Yet, it is always uplifting to read about people who have had to battle overwhelming odds and kept a positive outlook and even a sense of humour. We cannot always control what happens to us but we can control our attitude, our response—we can choose to become bitter and live with our fists clenched or we can live faithfully and ask God to help us heal and to remain hopeful. God answers our prayers, just not always as we might expect or hope or even exactly when we might want them to be answered. But scripture and our faith assure us that all in all, God's intentions for our lives are always good.

I think of Nelson Mandela. In the face of racism and after 27 years behind bars. Now that was a real LOCKDOWN, . . . . but he came out to heal a nation, and he has so many funny, hopeful quotes. Somehow he kept his soul intact. In his book *Long Walk to Freedom*, he clearly felt that he was called to free Africa from the chains of Apartheid. We wonder how he kept his hope and his humour and yet he did. Released at the age of 72, did he laugh to be told within a year that he would be hailed as Mandiba, the Father of the Nation. I know that in Currie, 72 is very young and we have many young spirited Octogenarians and Nonagenarians and one or two Centenarians. But still, at 72 he must have been amazed to find that he still had so much good to do—good things for the salvation of his people. Alas like many places we need still pray for South Africa—Africa still has a long way to go on its journey to justice and freedom.

As I mentioned at the start, it is great to be able to laugh at ourselves, especially as we get older and wiser. My dad always says remember to laugh at yourself. Other people will laugh at you anyway, but that way you get in there first. In the book of Proverbs we read, "A cheerful heart doeth good like a medicine but a crushed spirit dries up the bones."

I know that this Covid Pandemic has crushed our spirits a little. People report not sleeping, and suffering from anxiety. The loss of learning the loss of social contact the loss of life . . . and the news here and around the world. The Myanmar military coup which has locked up Aung Yang Suu Kyi. Princess Latifa held prisoner in a villa by her father, not to mention Hong Kong, Russia and all the places where peaceful protesters are being locked up or killed. We need to keep our spirits up—not let them be crushed and what better way than to keep praying and to keep laughing. Reinhold Niebuhr is a Christian Author who once said, "Laughter is the beginning of prayer."

I do love Reverend James Simpson's little books of wit and wisdom. My father always advises to keep two books next to the bed. The bible and a joke book. He says that if you wake up in the middle of the night worrying, try the joke book.

I came across some actual quotes from children describing their grandparents. Here goes:

I love my grandparents because they let me eat ice cream for breakfast.

We get to show them how to make their tv come on and they thing it's magic.

My granny thinks I am made of sugar. She calls me her sweetie.

My grandad takes me to football practice. He even helps my coach. He tells me he knows more than the coach.

Let us remember Sarah and her sense of humour—her willingness to follow and find hope when hope was impossible, Abraham and Sarah who became the parents of Isaac grandparents of Jacob and the great grandparents of the twelve tribes of Israel and all of their stories of faith that continue through Genesis. And despite the truth that none of them were perfect human beings, God called them into his purposes for the salvation of humanity. As we journey through Lent, we are invited to reflect on these great stories of faith. We can reflect on how God can choose us and work in us and with us even though we are humanly imperfect. Journeying with God can bring surprises and great joy.

Today let us smile with joy, even laugh out loud about the fact that God CAN find us even in the most improbable situations. He can work in the most unlikely scenarios and he can make things happen when hope for the future can seem impossible. God often invited unlikely folk like Abraham or Sarah to be the bearers of his promises to redeem humanity and free us not only from human forms of imprisonment but spiritual ones too. God is the great liberator with us in this gradual walk to lockdown freedom.





### Pastoral Prayer—Krys Hume

Father, we thank you for the joy of life; for the wonderful world in which you have placed us; for all those whom you have given us to share our journey through life. We thank you for the life and ministry of Jesus and also for the Holy Spirit who helps us to live out our faith.

We pray for our world. We pray for those in positions of power, nationally and locally, that they may always seek the good of the people over whom they have charge. Give them your wisdom.

We pray for the needs of people everywhere. You know what they are. We pray for those known to us personally to be in particular need; those who are sick and those who are dying; for those who mourn and those who are hurting; for those who are overwhelmed by the burdens in their lives. We name them in the stillness of our hearts.

Father, we especially pray for all people whose lives have been affected by coronavirus, here and worldwide. Be with them and their families and friends. We pray for the NHS staff and all who care for those affected by the virus. We thank you for the hard work of the scientists and their success in finding vaccines. We pray that they may be able to keep up with the variants and that vaccination will continue as quickly as possible so that life may open up once again. We pray for the way ahead and especially at this time for the successful gradual return of our school pupils. Bless pupils, teachers and other staff as they seek a return to normality.

We pray for ourselves as your church in Currie and for Easter, our minister. Be with her, especially at this time, as she leads us in your ways and in your work and give us strength, enthusiasm and energy to be your people, proclaiming the good news of Jesus through the love of God.

Father, as we travel through Lent towards Easter, we ask you to help us reflect on our lives, and on what you mean to us. In the midst of bustle and busyness may we find your presence, in times of aloneness, your arms around us, and in moments of joy and gladness, may we give you thanks and praise. And at all times and in all places may we know that you are always with us, and love and care for us.

Through Jesus, your Son.

**AMEN** 

### **Worship at Currie Kirk**

Many of you will have heard on the News on Tuesday, 23 February that 'Some communal worship' is to resume on 5 April. What exactly that means for Currie Kirk remains to be seen and we are waiting for advice from Church of Scotland headquarters. It seems likely that it will be for something like a maximum of 20 people which is really a non-starter once you deduct from that the Minister and a few Elders.

So it looks like our YouTube Sunday services will be with us for some time to come. We have been looking into the possibility of live streaming a service from the Gibson Craig Halls. This requires fibre optic broadband cabling which has still to reach the Kirkgate but is in Lanark Road West. However, whilst City Fibre has confirmed that it has installed lines which cover the Gibson Craig they say they have "come across challenges that stop us from connecting to your property right now". This is doubly frustrating because we cannot get it right now and you cannot speak to a human being to ask what the problem is and how long it will take to resolve. Watch this space!

Hamish Leal

#### **Lenten Studies**

Easter will be holding a series of Lenten Studies every <u>Wednesday at 1pm</u>. Each session should last about an hour and will be conducted via zoom. If you are interested in taking part, please email Louise:

elf.lamont@blueyonder.co.uk

by Tuesday morning and she will send you the link.

#### **Currie Kirk Guild**

We had another successful coffee and chat morning on Tuesday and, as usual, it was lovely to see so many people and find out everybody's news.

This Tuesday 2 March we are having a speaker. Iain MacIntyre will be telling us "A Tale of Two Skeletons" which sounds most intriguing. If your curiosity is getting the better of you, do join us to find out what it is all about. The meeting starts at 10 am and anybody, whether Guild members or not, is welcome to participate.

Just email me at elf.lamont@blueyonder.co.uk and I will send you the link.

Stay safe and look after each other.

Louise Lamont Guild President

Sunday Club is taking place on Zoom this term. Fortnightly beginning on Sunday 24th January at 4.30pm. We'll have a Bible story, games and activities together for around 45 minutes. If your child would like to join in then contact Heather at familyworker jvp@outlook.com for details.

#### **Kirk Contacts**

Minister: Rev Dr Easter Smart—Tel: 449 4719 email: esmart@churchofscotland.org.uk
Session Clerk: Hamish Leal—Tel: 449 3288 email: hamish@hamishleal.co.uk
Family worker: Heather Merriman email: Familyworker\_JVP@outlook.com
Please get in touch with Nina at the Kirk Office—451 5141
email currie\_kirk@btconnect.com> if you need anything.
We have friends willing to listen, shop, walk a dog, fix a garden.
Website: //www.curriekirk.org/ or //www.facebook.com/CurrieKirk/
All sermons from Currie Kirk can be found on the Kirk's website and on YouTube—search Currie Kirk

### Can we help St Luke's in India one more time?

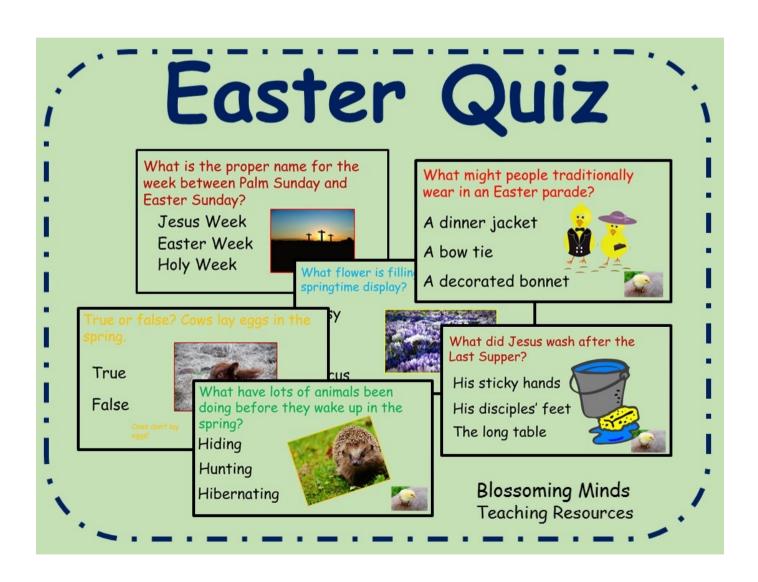
Some of you will remember about fifteen years ago we helped St Luke's Leprosarium in South India with donations of about £1,000 on two or three occasions. They have been in contact through an email to Meg Watson and are asking if we might be able to help them again as they are facing tough times due to the pandemic.



When it was established in 1870, the first doctor was a Rev. J.M.

Strachan from Edinburgh. Our own Gordon MacKinlay and his wife visited St Luke's in 2003 when they went to see their son who was working in the area. Gordon told our last Session meeting that contrary to what people think, leprosy still exists. Session has decided that we should hold a Lenten Appeal for the hospital over the next five weeks so anyone who would like to help this worthwhile cause should send any donation to Eddie Pigott. We will try and bring you more information about St Luke's over the next few weeks.

#### **Hamish Leal**





## **Abram to Abraham**

These resources are designed to help you explore the Bible as a family together at home while we can't go to church. Be as creative as you want to be and enjoy spending time with each other and with God.

# Prepare yourself...

Holy God, we come from our busy lives.

We often forget that you walk with

As we gather now, help us to be more aware of who you are.

Thank you for caring about our every moment.

Help us to trust you, to follow you and to rely on you every day.
Amen.



# Question...



What good news have you heard this week?

Did you hear any bad news?

# Challenge...

Write the letters A-Z on a piece of paper. See if you can write a girls name and a boys name for every letter of the alphabet!



### Read the Bible...

Today's verses are found in Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16. You can read them in a Bible or find them here.

You could try reading the verses in different versions to see if it adds to your understanding of the passage.

## Talk together...



- \* People usually get given their names by their parents, sometimes by grandparents or siblings. Sometimes they are named after someone else. What do you know about your name? Do you know what it means? Do you know anyone else with the same name as you?
- \* If you could change your name, what would you change it to and why?
- \* In today's story God changes Abraham and Sarah's names. Can you think of anyone else in the Bible who's name changed?
- \* Abraham had first been given the promise of a child and descendants when he was 75, why do you think God was waiting so long to fulfil his promise?
- \* Think about people God chose to follow him and be leaders, were they special or important before God chose them? Why do you think God chooses ordinary people?
- \* I wonder what the story of Abraham and Sarah teach us about being followers of God?
- \* God calls all of us to care for each other and the world he's given us, what could you do this week to make a positive difference?

## Play together...

Name hangman: Play a game of hangman but use names of people in your family, friends,
Bible characters.

## Make something...

Get creative and use whatever art and craft materials you have to make a poster of your name. Maybe you want to include what your name means or a picture of who you're named after (if you are named after someone!).

God knows your name, he knows everything about you and you are special to Him. Look up Psalm 139:13-18 and spend some time talking to God, thanking him for knowing all about you and loving you no matter what.

# Pray together...

God of strength and love, we are sorry when we worry so much about what others think of us. Help us to be brave and to help each other through challenging moments.

We bring to you those who have been rejected for their faith, for being different, for telling the truth, for standing up for those who are vulnerable. Give them, and us, the courage to do the right thing.

Amen.



# Do something...

Watch this video of the marshmallow challenge: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QX">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QX</a> oy9614HQ

How well do you think you would do? How long do you think you could wait before eating it?

Challenge: set a timer for how long you think you can go then do the challenge! How do you think it felt for Abraham and Sarah to wait for God's promises to be fulfilled?



# Praise together...

<u>Psalm 139</u> (You have searched me) <u>Who you say I am</u> <u>Everybody's welcome</u>