



# Count the Stars!

The Story of God's Promise to Abraham and Sarah

PATRICIA L. NEDERVELD



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Any questions or comments about *God Loves Me?* We'd love to hear from you.

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We are grateful to early childhood educators Jesslyn DeBoer, Patricia Nederveld, Sherry Ten Clay, and Yvonne Van Ee for their contributions to *God Loves Me*, a Bible story program for young children. We are also grateful to Estudio Haus for illustrating this children's book.

Photos on page 5 and 20: Shutterstock.

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ISBN 978-1-59255-835-3

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The Story of God's Promise to Abraham and Sarah

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY ESTUDIO HAUS



Grand Rapids, Michigan

This is a story from  
God's book, the Bible.

It's for say name(s) of your child(ren).  
It's for me too!



*Selections from  
Genesis 12-17*





“Count the stars!” God said to Abraham. “That’s how many people will be in your family! And I will be your God and your children’s God and your grandchildren’s God too. That’s my promise, Abraham.”

Abraham felt happy. He believed God’s promise.







“Abraham, I want you and Sarah, your wife, to pack up your things and move to a new land. Don’t worry! I’ll show you the way. Remember my promise—I am your God!”









Abraham and Sarah obeyed God. But it was a big job! Tents, helpers, furniture, animals—so much to move! At last it was time to go. Time to say goodbye to friends.



What a long trip! Day after day God  
showed them the way. Day after day  
Abraham and Sarah followed.  
For they believed God's promise.



“Stop! Here we are!” said God one day. Abraham and Sarah looked at the beautiful land. “This will be a home for your children and your grandchildren too. And don’t forget that I will be your God and your children’s God and your grandchildren’s God too.”









Tents, helpers, furniture, animals.  
Soon everything was in its new  
place. Abraham and Sarah were  
home! “Thank you for keeping  
your promise, God,” they prayed.



After a while God sent baby Isaac to Abraham and Sarah. They looked at each other and smiled. They looked at the stars high above their tent. Do you suppose they were remembering God's promise?









I wonder if you know  
about God's promise  
to your family . . .



*Dear God, we're glad  
that you promise to be  
our God. Thank you  
that our families  
belong to you too.  
Amen.*

# Suggestions for Using This Book

## *In a Group Setting*

### Opening and Story Time

Before the children arrive, arrange a path of paper footprints (*God Loves Me* pattern 3) on the floor, starting at the door, winding in and out around the room, and ending at your usual story circle. Ask the children to follow the footprints and find a place to sit at the end of the path. Gather everyone around you, join hands, and give thanks for a new day and a new story from God's book. (Show the children your Bible and remind them that each storybook you read tells a special story from God's book, the Bible.)

Read this book to the children, beginning on page 4 and inserting their names. Make sure everyone can see the pictures and go slowly, giving the children time to point to things that capture their imaginations or to respond to the story. You'll want to encourage everyone to respond to the question on page 21 too. End your story with the prayer printed there.

### Learning Through Play

The suggestions listed here are meant to help you provide props and experiences that will invite your twos and threes to play their way into the Scripture story and its simple truth. Try to provide plenty of time for the children to choose their own activities and to explore and play individually, which is the way of young children! Use group activities sparingly—little ones learn most comfortably (and happily) with a minimum of structure.

- At your art table make available dark blue or black construction paper and self-adhesive stars. (You might also want to cut moon shapes from yellow construction paper and make them available, along with glue sticks.) Encourage the children to make pictures of the night sky, with LOTS of stars in it. As the children work on their pictures, add this caption to the bottom of each: WE BELONG TO GOD. Together remember the promise God made to Abraham.
- Make a tent by covering a table with a large blanket or sheet, leaving an opening for a door. Provide dress-up clothes, a doll, a baby blanket, and so forth, and encourage children to pretend to be Abraham and Sarah. Remind them that God promises to love grandpas, grandmas, mommies, daddies, kids, and babies. Everyone in our families belongs to God!
- Ask a little helper to pick up the paper footprint trail. Let the children use your stack of footprints to make (and follow) their own footprint trails, pretending to be Abraham and Sarah on their long trip to a new home. Remind them that God showed Abraham and Sarah where to go and took care of them each step they walked.
- Play a version of Simon Says, calling it "Sarah Says!" Ask everyone to listen to Sarah and obey. Then give several simple action

commands, including these that are specific to the story. Sarah says:

- Count the stars! (Hold up three or four star cutouts.)
  - Pack up your things! (Pretend to put things in a box.)
  - Follow God! (March in place.)
  - Hush, baby Isaac! (Pretend to rock baby.)
  - Thank you, God! (Fold hands in prayer.)
- Teach the children a new song today. Play “God Is Watching Over You” (*Sing with Me Preschool Songs*, track 11) and listen to it together. Repeat it and invite the children to sing the words as the song becomes familiar.
  - Take a walk outdoors and bring a snack with you. Pretend to be Abraham and Sarah on their journey to a new home. Thank God for leading you, feeding you, and loving you—always!

## Closing

Call the children back together a few minutes before the end of their playtime; using a bell or music or a special rhyme works well. Make a circle, join hands, and close with a short prayer of thanks to God for always watching over us and keeping promises (or repeat the prayer on page 21).

## *At Home*

Celebrate God’s promise to be your family’s God. Take time to look at family pictures and recall special moments in your life as a family (including the birth or adoption of your preschooler). Tell your little one how thankful you are to God that your child belongs to your family—and that your family belongs to God. Use every opportunity this week to repeat this phrase together: “We belong to God!”



## Old Testament Stories

- 1 **Blue and Green and Purple Too!** *The Story of God's Colorful World*
- 2 **It's a Noisy Place!** *The Story of the First Creatures*
- 3 **Adam and Eve** *The Story of the First Man and Woman*
- 4 **Take Good Care of My World!** *The Story of Adam and Eve in the Garden*
- 5 **A Very Sad Day** *The Story of Adam and Eve's Disobedience*
- 6 **A Rainy, Rainy Day** *The Story of Noah*
- 7 **Count the Stars!** *The Story of God's Promise to Abraham and Sarah*
- 8 **A Girl Named Rebekah** *The Story of God's Answer to Abraham*
- 9 **Two Coats for Joseph** *The Story of Young Joseph*
- 10 **Plenty to Eat** *The Story of Joseph and His Brothers*
- 11 **Safe in a Basket** *The Story of Baby Moses*
- 12 **I'll Do It!** *The Story of Moses and the Burning Bush*
- 13 **Safe at Last!** *The Story of Moses and the Red Sea*
- 14 **What Is It?** *The Story of Manna in the Desert*
- 15 **A Tall Wall** *The Story of Jericho*
- 16 **A Baby for Hannah** *The Story of an Answered Prayer*
- 17 **Samuel, Samuel!** *The Story of God's Call to Samuel*
- 18 **Lions and Bears!** *The Story of David the Shepherd Boy*
- 19 **David and the Giant** *The Story of David and Goliath*
- 20 **A Little Jar of Oil** *The Story of Elisha and the Widow*
- 21 **One, Two, Three, Four, Five, Six, Seven!** *The Story of Elisha and Naaman*
- 22 **A Big Fish Story** *The Story of Jonah*
- 23 **Lions, Lions!** *The Story of Daniel*

## New Testament Stories

- 24 **Jesus Is Born!** *The Story of Christmas*
- 25 **Good News!** *The Story of the Shepherds*
- 26 **An Amazing Star!** *The Story of the Wise Men*
- 27 **Waiting, Waiting, Waiting!** *The Story of Simeon and Anna*
- 28 **Who Is This Child?** *The Story of Jesus in the Temple*
- 29 **Follow Me!** *The Story of Jesus and His Twelve Helpers*
- 30 **The Greatest Gift** *The Story of Jesus and the Woman at the Well*
- 31 **A Father's Wish** *The Story of Jesus and a Little Boy*

- 32 **Just Believe!** *The Story of Jesus and a Little Girl*
- 33 **Get Up and Walk!** *The Story of Jesus and a Man Who Couldn't Walk*
- 34 **A Little Lunch** *The Story of Jesus and a Hungry Crowd*
- 35 **A Scary Storm** *The Story of Jesus and a Stormy Sea*
- 36 **Thank You, Jesus!** *The Story of Jesus and One Thankful Man*
- 37 **A Wonderful Sight!** *The Story of Jesus and a Man Who Couldn't See*
- 38 **A Better Thing to Do** *The Story of Jesus and Mary and Martha*
- 39 **A Lost Lamb** *The Story of the Good Shepherd*
- 40 **Come to Me!** *The Story of Jesus and the Children*
- 41 **Have a Great Day!** *The Story of Jesus and Zacchaeus*
- 42 **I Love You, Jesus!** *The Story of Mary's Gift to Jesus*
- 43 **Hosanna!** *The Story of Palm Sunday*
- 44 **The Best Day Ever!** *The Story of Easter*
- 45 **Goodbye—for Now** *The Story of Jesus' Return to Heaven*
- 46 **A Prayer for Peter** *The Story of Peter in Prison*
- 47 **Sad Day, Happy Day!** *The Story of Peter and Dorcas*
- 48 **A New Friend** *The Story of Paul's Conversion*
- 49 **Over the Wall** *The Story of Paul's Escape in a Basket*
- 50 **A Song in the Night** *The Story of Paul and Silas in Prison*
- 51 **A Ride in the Night** *The Story of Paul's Escape on Horseback*
- 52 **The Shipwreck** *The Story of Paul's Rescue at Sea*

## Holiday Stories

Selected stories from the New Testament to help you celebrate the Christian year

- 24 **Jesus Is Born!** *The Story of Christmas*
- 25 **Good News!** *The Story of the Shepherds*
- 26 **An Amazing Star!** *The Story of the Wise Men*
- 43 **Hosanna!** *The Story of Palm Sunday*
- 44 **The Best Day Ever!** *The Story of Easter*
- 45 **Goodbye—for Now** *The Story of Jesus' Return to Heaven*

These fifty-two books are the heart of *God Loves Me*, a Bible story program designed for young children. Individual books (or the entire set) and the accompanying program guide can be ordered from Faith Alive Christian Resources at [www.faithaliveresources.org](http://www.faithaliveresources.org) or by calling 1-800-333-8300.



*Count the Stars!* tells the story of God's promise to Abraham and Sarah (found in Genesis 12-17) in simple words a young child can understand. Beautiful illustrations help little ones learn about God's love.

Suggestions for follow-up provide creative ideas to help children respond to the Bible story with their mouths and eyes and ears—and hands and feet too!

This Bible storybook is one of fifty-two books in the *God Loves Me* series for young children.

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ISBN 978-1-59255-835-3



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