

LIFE Group Leader Handout

May 12, 2019 Mother's Day

When Mothering Got Messy

Pastor Michael O'Connor

Scripture--Genesis 16

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar. 2 And Sarai said to Abram, "Behold now, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. 3 So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. 4 And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress. 5 And Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my servant to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the Lord judge between you and me!" 6 But Abram said to Sarai, "Behold, your servant is in your power; do to her as you please." Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she fled from her.

7 The angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. 8 And he said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai." 9 The angel of the Lord said to her, "Return to your mistress and submit to her." 10 The angel of the Lord also said to her, "I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude." 11 And the angel of the Lord said to her,

"Behold, you are pregnant

and shall bear a son.

You shall call his name Ishmael,

because the Lord has listened to your affliction.

12 He shall be a wild donkey of a man,

his hand against everyone

and everyone's hand against him,

and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen."

13 So she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, "You are a God of seeing," for she said, "Truly here I have seen him who looks after me." 14 Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; it lies between Kadesh and Bered.

15 And Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. 16 Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.

Main Idea--God Seeks Out Hagar Even Though This Was Not His Plan and She Was Not His Choice

The Search for Heroes:

- Sarah?
- Abraham?
- Hagar?

God Steps In

Obstacles--

- This was not his plan
- She was not his choice

The Graciousness of God Revealed

The angel of the Lord found her...

The Plan of God Revealed

A promise, a prophecy and a provision.

“Return to your mistress and submit to her.” (v. 9)

The People of God as “a house of bread.”

Hagar’s Responds in Faith

So she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, “You are a God of seeing,” for she said, “Truly here I have seen him who looks after me.” (v. 13)

Make Summer Your Group's Ally

Leverage the change of pace to build into your group.

By Brett Eastman

Everyone seems to look forward to the summer—except perhaps small-group leaders. They dread watching everything they've built over the course of the year quickly evaporate with the heat of summer. They throw up their arms to summer and launch into thoughts on how to rebuild or restart the whole group again in the fall. But summer doesn't necessarily signal the demise of your group.

What everyone likes about summer is the change of pace. The evenings are longer. Kids are out of school. Days are a little more relaxed. And vacations are on everyone's mind. Why not use this change of pace to build into your small group?

Make Some Time

While many people travel during the summer, your group members won't be gone for the entire three months. During a May meeting, ask everyone to bring their calendars. Then, find six dates where your group can get together and possibly do a Bible study. You don't even need six weeks in a row. Just locate six dates out of three months and focus your group on experiencing Christ together this summer.

Some groups may not be up for another study during the summer. Our school days trained us to study for nine months and play for three. That's not a bad strategy for your group either. Why not spend the summer months playing together? Have a picnic or a lake day. Go camping together. Spend a day at the beach or in the mountains. Find a family-friendly theme park or zoo. Even a backyard barbecue, a golf outing, a shopping trip, or a fishing trip can really bond your group members together. Summer is a great time to enjoy the relationships that you have diligently built over the year.

Serve Together

In addition to fun and social times, why not serve together? You don't necessarily need a grand strategy. Just sit down with your group and talk about the needs they've observed in your community. How could your group reach out and serve this summer? Is there an elderly person with an overgrown yard? Your group could adopt him or her for the summer and work on the yard together. Is there a Sunday school teacher who could use a break? Your group could rotate leading the class and give the teacher a rest. As your group looks around, you'll be amazed at the number of ways you can use a little summer downtime to make a difference.

Another place to look is the neighborhood you meet in. Summer is the one season when everyone seems to emerge from their houses. Why not have a block party and invite the neighbors to join you? Make it a big event. Rent a bounce house for the kids. Barbecue some hot dogs. Then set everything up in your front yard. The neighborhood kids won't be able to resist. The parents will soon be following behind.

Celebrate Together

Maybe your group helped to start some other groups this past year. Why not have a reunion? Get everyone together from all of the groups that started out of your group. Have some food. Play some games. Then look at the number of people who are there. This will really give your group a great reward for stepping out in multiplying new groups. Plus, it's just great to get your original group back together.

Summer may not be the best stretch for a weekly Bible study, but the change of pace could be great for your group. Sit down with your group and make some plans. Then, do whatever your group agrees on. Fall will be here before you know it, and you can pick up your normal schedule then.