Preschool–Grade 6

Hagar and the God Who Sees

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: No one is invisible to God. He sees us, hears us and provides, even in our wilderness.
Bible passage: Genesis 16:6–13 and Genesis 21:14–20. Students read them out loud themselves.
Memory verse: "And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?" *Genesis 16:13 (KJV)* and "The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry." *Psalms 34:15 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read Genesis 16:1–16 and Genesis 21:8–21 for the whole picture. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses, or go around the room a few verses each.

1. Opening game: Who Noticed? (5–10 minutes)

Ask a few quick questions and let students call out answers: 1) What color shoes is the person on your right wearing? 2) How many windows are in this room? 3) What did I write on the board before class? Most people miss things right in front of them. Then ask: *Have you ever felt like no one noticed you?* Say: "Today we meet a servant woman who felt alone twice in the wilderness, and found out God had noticed her all along."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Background (tell it): Hagar was Sarai's Egyptian handmaid. Sarai gave her to Abram as a wife so that Sarai might have children by her, and when Hagar was expecting a child, there was trouble between the two women (Genesis 16:1–5). Keep it to that.
Read out loud: Genesis 16:6–13. Then tell: Hagar bare Abram a son, Ishmael, when Abram was eighty-six (16:15–16). Years later, after Isaac was born and weaned, Sarah asked Abraham to send Hagar and her son away, and God promised Abraham, "also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation" (21:8–13).
Read out loud: Genesis 21:14–20. The old words in both passages are on the next page.

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Old words in Genesis 16:6–13 and 21:14–20

- **dealt hardly** (16:6): treated harshly; **fountain** (16:7): a spring of water; **whence**, **whither** (16:8): from where, to where
- **submit thyself under her hands** (16:9): obey her; **seed** (16:10): children and grandchildren; **affliction** (16:11): trouble and misery
- **a wild man** (16:12): a free man who lives wild and strong; **dwell in the presence of all his brethren** (16:12): live near all his relatives
- **seest**, **seeth** (16:13): see, sees; **looked after him that seeth me** (16:13): looked on the One who sees me
- **bottle** (21:14): a skin bag for water; **wandered** (21:14): walked with no road to follow; **spent** (21:15): used up
- **over against him** (21:16): across from him; **a bowshot** (21:16): as far as an arrow flies; **what aileth thee** (21:17): what is wrong with you
- **archer** (21:20): a man who shoots with a bow

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. Hagar was a servant, a foreigner and treated harshly (16:1, 16:6). Yet the angel of the LORD came looking for her and called her by name (16:7–8). What does that say about who matters to God?
2. The angel asked, "whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go?" (16:8). Why might God ask questions He already knows the answers to?
3. God told Hagar to go back (16:9). Why is obeying God sometimes harder than running away?
4. Hagar gave God a name: "Thou God seest me" (16:13). If you named God from something He did in your life, what name would you give?
5. Hagar wept, but "God heard the voice of the lad" (21:16–17). What does it mean that God hears us "where he is" (21:17), right where we are?
6. The well was there before Hagar saw it (21:19). What has God given you that you might not have noticed yet?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words in Genesis 16:13 and Psalms 34:15: **spake** means spoke; **thou** means you; **seest** means see; **seeth** means sees; **the righteous** are people who do right in God's eyes; **unto their cry** means to their crying out to Him.
Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Genesis 16:13 this week; keep working on Psalms 34:15 next week too.

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5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "The God who saw Hagar sees you, and the God who heard the lad hears you. God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the Holy Ghost, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
Pray with the students, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. When have I felt alone, unseen or unheard?
2. Looking back, where can I see that God was there, like the well that was there before Hagar saw it?
3. Write a short prayer to "the God who sees me," telling Him what I need Him to hear today (Psalms 34:15).
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: notice one person who might feel unseen, and let them know you see them.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, You are the God who sees us. Your eyes are on us and Your ears are open to our cry. When we feel alone, help us remember that You find us right where we are. Open our eyes to see what You provide. Thank You for loving us and making a way to save us through Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a student asks about Hagar and Abram or why Sarah sent them away: stay with what the text says and keep it short. Genesis 16:1–5 and 21:9–13 tell it; the lesson's focus is what God did for Hagar. If a student asks how old Ishmael was, the Bible says Abram was eighty-six when he was born (16:16) and a hundred when Isaac was born (21:5), so he was no longer a little child.

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