

Have you ever looked up at night and seen the stars in the sky?

Close your eyes for a moment and imagine them there - twinkling in the night sky - so very many stars. Have you ever tried to count them?

Father God made the world and everything in it. He made every one of those millions and millions of stars. And no matter where we go in the world, there they all are, twinkling in the night sky above us.

*The very same stars that we see here today.*

*Whenever you hear me say that, can you show me your stars twinkling? Hold up your stars and let's practise:*

*The very same stars that we see here today.*

Can you imagine the stars twinkling over the desert at night? So many stars in the sky - and so many grains of sand in the desert.

A long, long time ago, an old man called Abraham stood among the grains of sand in the desert and looked up at all the stars twinkling in the night sky.

*The very same stars that we see here today.*

Abraham, his wife Sarah, and their whole family had been on a long journey. God had said to Abraham:

*“Leave your country and your relatives and go to the land that I will show you. I will bless you and make you the father of a great nation. You will become famous and be a blessing to others.”*

Abraham didn't understand what God meant. He and his wife Sarah were very old, and they had no children. How could he become a father at his age? But he always did what God told him to do. So he set off to the land of Canaan with Sarah and his family, his servants and his sheep and goats.

A long time passed. Still Sarah had no children, and by now she and Abraham were nearly a hundred years old. But nothing is impossible with God.

And that's why Abraham was standing among the grains of sand in the desert, looking up at all the stars twinkling in the night sky.

*The very same stars that we see here today.*

Because God had spoken to him again.

“Come outside with me, Abraham. Look up at the stars and count them - if you can! That's how big your family's going to be.”

When Sarah heard God's promise, she laughed. But God always keeps his promises. And when their first son was born, God told them to call him Isaac. In their language, “Isaac” sounds like “laugh”.

Abraham did what God told him to do. He trusted God, even when it looked like all hope was lost. After Isaac, his family grew and grew. There were children and grandchildren and great-great-great-grandchildren ... more and more of God's people as time went by. All living together under the stars that twinkle in the night sky.

*The very same stars that we see here today.*

Until eventually, two thousand years later, another very special baby was born, in the land that God gave Abraham. The baby's name was Jesus. Do you think that Jesus sometimes looked up at all the stars twinkling in the night sky - the stars that Father God made and showed to Abraham?

*The very same stars that we see here today.*

Jesus said:

“Good news! You don't have to have Abraham as your great-great-great...great-great-grandad to be part of God's family. All you have to do is trust God, like Abraham did. Come on, I'll show you the way.”

Jesus said that God is our Father and we are all brothers and sisters in God's family. He taught us to love God and love each other, just as he loves us.

Let's say together the prayer that he taught us.