

Confirmation - Women in the Old Testament: Esther, Sarah Rachel, Tamar

How do We Identify Ourselves?

The Old Testament writers chose to preserve all the uncomfortable stories.

How is God speaking to us today?

### **Esther – Chapters 1-10** Lucy, Luke and Emma

King Xerxes gave a banquet and called Queen Vashti to come and display her beauty. She refused to come. King declared that Vashti was banded from seeing the King and her royal position was taken from her. Esther was made Queen.

The King didn't know that Esther was an Israelite (Her nationality and her family background). Her uncle, Mordecai, helped Esther.

2 men plotted to kill King Xerxes and Mordecai found out, told Esther who told the King and the 2 men were killed.

King Xerxes honored Haman as a high noble. Haman found out that Mordecai was a Jew and Haman sought to kill all the Jews. The King remembered that Mordecai had saved him from the 2 men who killed him and made sure that Mordecai was thanked and paraded through the city on a horse and was given a gift.

Esther prepared a banquet for the King and Haman. The King asked Esther what she wanted from him. Esther told him to save her people. The King heard that Haman was going to kill all the Jews and the King got mad and he had Haman killed.

Esther helped save her people.

### **Sarah – Genesis 11:27-Genesis 23** Owen, Katlyn, Luke Q

Sarah is the wife of Abraham. God made a covenant with Abraham and Sarah that they would have descendants that number the amount of stars in the sky.

Sarah cannot get pregnant. She offers Hagar to Abraham. Hagar gives birth to Ishmael. Sarah gets pregnant and has Isaac. Sarah wants Abraham to exile Hagar and Ishmael and they are put out into the desert. God continues to bless Hagar and Ishmael and he is a leader of a great nation.

God tells Abraham to bind Isaac and to sacrifice him. God tested to understand that "Abraham loved and feared God because Abraham did not withhold from God Abraham's beloved son, Isaac." Gen 22:12

After this Sarah died after living 127 years. She died in Hebron in the land of Canaan.

### **Rachel (Jacob's wife) and Leah Genesis 29:1-30:26**

Rachel and Leah – Daughters of Laban (Laban was Rebekah's brother)  
Jacob needed to leave home and seek sanctuary at Laban's because he cheated his brother Esau out of his birth right and Isaac's blessing.

Jacob loved Rachel and worked 7 years for her. Laban tricked him and had Jacob marry the older sister, Leah. Jacob worked 7 more years for Rachel.

God knew that Jacob didn't love Leah so God had Leah get pregnant.

**Leah** gave birth to 6 sons and 1 daughter.

Zilpah (Leah's slave) gave birth to 2 sons of Jacob

Bilhah (Rachel's slave) gave birth to 2 sons of Jacob

**Rachel** gave birth to Joseph and Benjamin

Before Jacob and his family left the house of Laban, Rachel stole her Father's household gods. Laban was angry and searched all of the belongings they took away with them and he couldn't find the gods. Rachel had put them under the saddle of the camel she was on and told her father she was having her period so that he would not search her on the camel. Laban had neglected to give his daughters their inheritance (Gen 31:14-16).

Rachel becomes a trickster like her father, her aunt (Rebekah), and her husband. Not knowing that the idols were in his wife's possession, Jacob pronounced a curse on whoever had them: "With whoever you will find your gods, he will not live" (Genesis 31:32).

Rachel was with Jacob when he was reunited with Esau. Soon after Rachel gave birth to Benjamin and she died right after giving birth. She is buried right outside of Bethlehem, not in the ancestral plot.

Jacob loved Joseph the best of all the sons. The other brothers were jealous, thought of killing him, but sold him to traders who were traveling to Egypt.

The family didn't see him until there was a famine and they traveled to Egypt to plead for food.

**Tamar - 2 Samuel 13:1-39** Linnea and Anders

Tamar raped by her half brother Amnon.

Amnon fell in love with Tamar and was so tormented that he got sick because of his love for her. Amnon's friend, Jonadab (Son of King David's brother Shimean) was crafty and suggested that he ask King David to tell Tamar to come and make cakes in his sight in his tent and then feed him. When Tamar did that he raped her. Tamar tried to talk him out of it by saying, "No my brother, do not force me; for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do anything so vile! As for me where could I carry my shame? And as for you, you would be as one of the scoundrels in Israel. Now therefore, I beg you, speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from you." But Amnon didn't listen to her and raped her. Then Amnon was seized with a great loathing for her and told her to get out.

Tamar put ashes on her head, and tore the long robe that she was wearing; she put her hand on her head, and went away, crying aloud as she went.

Absalom her brother heard her crying and learned what had happened. He said, "Be quiet for now, my sister; he is your brother; do not take this to heart." Tamar remained a desolate woman in her brother Absalom's house.

When King David heard about this he was angry, but he did not do anything to Amnon. Absalom didn't say anything to Amnon for awhile. Then Absalom made sure that Amnon had plenty of wine at a banquet and then asked his servant to kill Amnon. The King wept and Absalom fled to Geshur for 3 years.

Confirmation – **“How do we Identify Ourselves?”**

5 minutes to review the story

Cheat sheet for the stories will be in individual envelopes.

Present the story for 3 minutes to the group- This happened, before that, after that.

Worksheet for each group.

Worksheet -

**Esther**

How did Esther and Mordeci show courage?

How did Esther rely on God?

Who of God's people helped Esther?

How was God a part of these people's lives?

How do you identify with Esther?

## **Worksheet**

### **Sarah**

Sarah had patience and waited a long time for God's promise of having many descendants. Sarah got impatient with God and didn't put her trust in God when she brought Hagar into the picture. What happened when she lost trust in God's power to bless Sarah with children?

Sarah was jealous of Hagar and told Abraham to banish Hagar and Ishmael. Do we do things that we don't think through and regret our choices sometimes? Give me an example -

How did God bless Sarah?

How do you identify with Sarah's story?

**Worksheet**  
**Rachel – Leah**

1. Rachel married Jacob who cheated his brother Esau out of his birth rite and his father's blessing. Laban (Rachel's Father) cheated Jacob out of marriage to Rachel and gave him Leah instead. Rachel stole from Laban when they were leaving his land by taking 2 god statues.

If you don't play by the rules does that mean that others don't have to obey the rules in dealing with you? Tell me why you came to this answer -

2. Jacob loved Rachel's first son, Joseph, more than the other 10 sons he had. How did Jacob's preference of Joseph cause Joseph problems later?

3. How did God work in Rachel's life?

3. God blessed Leah with a child because Jacob didn't love her. Then God blessed Leah with 9 more sons and a daughter while Rachel was barren. Leah gave birth to Judah who is the ancestor of Jesus. Leah was blessed by God in this story. How was Rachel blessed? How was she cursed in this story?

How do you identify with Rachel or Leah?

## **Worksheet**

### **Tamar**

How did Tamar show courage?

How did King David show leadership in this story?

How did Absalom help Tamar?

Do you think that Amnon got what he deserved? If no, what would you agree would be the consequences for his actions?

Do you identify with anyone in this story? If so, how?