

Gem Seeking

LITTLE GEMS STORY

Parent/Teacher Preparation:

Please see the [Instructions for the Little Gems Story](#) on the YMTOI website. This will help you to understand how to prepare for the story.

Parting Is Such Sweet Sorrow

Shalom children! This week we are going to finish the book of Bereishit and learn about some promises and agreements our patriarchs Abraham, Yitshaq and Ya'aqob made when it came time to bury their loved ones. **(Place patriarchs on board.)** You might be asking what is a patriarch? Patriarchs are men who are the heads of a family like your dad but they are also the heads of a tribe like the tribe of Yisra'el. We also have our matriarchs Sarah, Ribqah, Leah and Rahel. **(Place matriarchs on board.)** Matriarchs are women like your mom. They were married to the patriarchs.

Let's start with an important agreement that our 1st patriarch Abraham made with his neighbors in the land of Kena'an. **(Place older Abraham on board.)** Sarah our 1st matriarch **(place older Sarah on board)** did not live quite as long as her husband Abraham, and she died there in the land of Kena'an at the age of 127. That doesn't seem like a short life, but way back in the Bible times, people lived much longer than they do now. After Sarah died, Abraham was very, very sad. **(Place sad emoji on board.)** But when he was done crying, he decided to do something to honor her. He was going to buy her a beautiful burial place.

Back then, you wouldn't always bury a loved one in the ground. Instead, you would look for just the right cave, then wrap them up, lay them inside, and seal it off with a large stone. Abraham knew of a beautiful field, called Makpelah. Can you say it with me children? Say Mak-pe-lah. **(Allow children to answer.)** Very good! And in that field were many trees and a nice, big, cave. **(Remove older Sarah from board and place cave on board.)** Abraham knew that this peaceful cave would be the perfect place to bury his dear Sarah. And later, when the time came for him, there would be room in the big cave for him, too.

The problem was, the field of Makpelah was in an area that belonged to the family of Heth, who was a Kena'anite. **(Place sons of Heth on board.)** Abraham had lived in that land for some time, but he was not a Kena'anite himself. They may not let a foreigner buy this field that their own family might need someday. But when Abraham asked the sons of Heth about it, what a nice surprise he got! They were very agreeable to him, and said, "You are like a prince to us. You may pick the best of any of our burial places!" The sons of Heth were right.

Because Abraham honored Elohim, he had become a wealthy and important man among them, and helped the Kena'anites to prosper by buying food, fancy clothing and many other things from them. He was fair and generous to everyone. The sons of Heth knew that when Abraham made an agreement, he always kept his word.



Well, it turned out that Makpelah was owned by one of the neighbors of Heth's family, Ephron the Hittite. **(Place Ephron on board.)** So, the sons of Heth told Ephron that Abraham wanted to buy his field to bury his dead. Better yet, he said he would pay the full price in silver for the field and its cave. So, the sons of Heth went with Ephron to the city gate to talk with Abraham about the sale. Abraham bowed and humbly asked to purchase the field and the cave. But Ephron said, "Oh, don't bother paying me for the land; in the presence of all these witnesses, I give it to you. Go and bury your dead!"

Now, Abraham didn't want to hurt anyone's feelings by refusing such a generous gift, but he happened to have his thinking cap on that day. He knew that if he said yes to Ephron's gift of the land, someday down the road the sons of these Kena'anites might forget all about their forefather's generosity. Ephron's children and grandchildren did not worship Yahweh. They could easily stir up trouble and try to take back the field for themselves. So once again, Abraham humbled himself and bowed before them. "Please listen to me," he said, "and take the full amount of silver in payment and let me bury my dead there."

This was very unusual, because in those days people hardly ever paid full price for anything. They would say, "10 shekels? You're charging way too much! I can only afford 5." And the seller would say, "5? That's ridiculous! Can't you see how valuable this is? I can't take any less than 8." They would go back and forth about the price until they could agree. But Abraham offered Ephron whatever price he wanted to name, no matter how high - no haggling. Do you think perhaps Ephron was seeing dollar signs - um, well, shekel signs? He was thinking, "Ooh, I'm gonna make a bundle on this deal!" So, he named a nice round price: 400 shekels of silver! **(Place silver moneybag on board.)** Abraham didn't even blink. He weighed out the money in the presence of all the people and received a deed - the written proof that he was now the owner of the field, along with all the trees in the field - and best of all, the big cave. **(Place deed on board and point to cave.)** Now the Kena'anites would have to keep their word. I wonder if all of you keep your promises, just because you know it's the right thing to do. Do your parents have to make you follow through, or do you stick to your word, even if you don't always like to? **(Allow children to answer.)**

You see, Abraham didn't care about the price, because he remembered the solemn agreement - the covenant - that Yahweh had made with him and with all his children and grandchildren after him. If they would follow and obey Elohim, He would one day cause the Yisra'elites to possess the entire land of Kena'an. **(Place land of Kena'an scene on board.)** Abraham trusted that Yahweh would be true to His promise.

So, Abraham buried his dear Sarah in the cave of the field of Makpelah. And when he died, he was placed beside her in the cave. **(Remove all characters from board except for the cave and older Abraham. Place older Sarah on board along with older Abraham in front of the cave.)**



Now let's look at what happened quite a few years later. When Abraham's son Yitshaq died, his sons Ya'aqob and Esaw buried him - guess where? Yes, in the cave of Makpelah. **(Place older Yitshaq on board next to older Abraham and Sarah.)** Their mother Ribqah was buried there as well. **(Place older Ribqah on board next to Yitshaq.)** And then, at the good old age of 127, Ya'aqob died in the land of Mitsrayim. **(Place older Ya'aqob on board.)** He made his son Yoseph **(place Yoseph as governor on board)** promise to bury him back in Kena'an, alongside his father and mother, Yitshaq and Ribqah, and his grandfather and grandmother, Abraham and Sarah. **(Point to each person as you say their name.)** Even though Yoseph was very busy serving Pharaoh **(place Pharaoh on board)**, the ruler still allowed him to take his father's body on the long journey back to Kena'an to bury him. You see, Pharaoh understood the importance of keeping a promise - especially to a family member on their deathbed. Not only did Pharaoh say yes, but he arranged for Yoseph to take a great company of Mitsrite officials to mourn with him, to show respect for his father. **(Place group of Mitsrite men on board.)**

Now, when it came to burying their dead, the Mitsrites were very, very good at this thing called embalming. Have you ever heard that word before? Maybe you've heard of the word mummy? Embalming is another word for mummy. Embalming was a way of using special oils and spices to keep a dead body looking good for a long, long time. **(Place oils and spices on board.)** They would then wrap the body in a white linen fabric that looked like bandages and that is usually how we see mummies. **(Place white linen fabric strips on board.)** So, the body of Ya'aqob was embalmed, because he was about to be taken on a long, hot journey back to Kena'an, and they wanted to keep him smelling nice for the funeral service! **(Remove older Ya'aqob from board and place embalmed Ya'aqob on board.)** And when they got to Kena'an, Yoseph placed him - where?

Yes, in the cave of Makpelah, beside Abraham, Sarah, Yitshaq, Ribqah, and also Ya'aqob's wife Le'ah. **(Point to patriarchs and matriarchs and place embalmed Ya'aqob and older Le'ah next to them.)**

At last the time came for Yoseph to die, at the ripe age of 110. **(Remove Yoseph as governor from board.)** He made the children of Yisra'el promise that one day, when Yahweh was ready to bring His people back to Kena'an to possess it, they would take his bones with them and bury him with his ancestors. So, Yoseph was embalmed, too, and sealed in a coffin to wait for the day that they could take his body back there. **(Place coffin on board.)**

Do you think they kept their promise to take Yoseph back there? Do you think that Yahweh fulfilled the covenant He made to Abraham, Yitshaq and Ya'aqob to give the children of Yisra'el the land of Kena'an? We'll have to keep reading the Torah to find out!

Well children, our study through the book of Bereishit with our patriarchs and matriarchs is now finished. Next week we will hear stories from the 2nd book of the Torah, Shemot and continue learning about the children of Yisra'el and see what new adventures they encounter.

We will see you next week for another exciting Little Gems story!

