

HAGAR

**THE STRANGER • KEY SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:
Genesis 16, 21:8-21**



PREPARATION

Before your group meets, read Hagar's story from Scripture as well as the narrative from the workbook to familiarize yourself with it. You also may want to read over the following sections ahead of time and preview the video.



OPENING DISCUSSION—5 MINUTES

Begin your time together by asking these questions to get everyone thinking.

1. How do we treat strangers different from those we would consider part of our inner circle?
2. Can you think of any traditions, customs, or societal norms that people from other times or cultures may find peculiar or weird?

INTRODUCTION

Briefly recap Hagar's story from Scripture with your group. Use the following context to help.

HER CONTEXT—10 MINUTES

Sarah and Hagar represent two different social classes. Sarah was the wife of Abraham, who was the recipient of the divine promises. She was the matriarch in the family. She had the power to control the destiny of those who served her. Even her husband listened to her. Hagar was a slave, a foreigner, an Egyptian, unrelated to the Amorite group of Sarah. She stood outside the divine promises. So Sarah represents the powerful element in the society; Hagar represents the poor and the afflicted. Sarah, however, lacked something very important to an ancient woman; she was not a mother. Though she was Abraham's wife, she had borne him no children.



Talk about this with your group. How might Hagar’s life have turned out differently had the choices of Abraham and Sarah not had an effect on her?

HER STORY—10 MINUTES

You may choose to read aloud as a group or listen to the audio of the narrative of Hagar, or you may have done this before class. Take a few minutes to talk about the narrative. What stood out? How might Hagar have felt after doing all she was told, bearing a namesake for her master, then being sent away?

THE STORY FINDS ITS PLACE IN ME— 15 MINUTES

Use some or all of these questions as time allows to elicit conversation within the group. Your group may also want to share some of their reflections from the questions in the workbook. Do either or both as time allows.

1. Hagar was rejected by those she lived her life with. However, God valued her and had a plan for her. Tell of a time in your life when you felt rejected or outcast and God provided for you.
2. Hagar tried to leave. She’d given up on her seemingly hopeless situation yet God called her back. What situation in your life is God asking you to come back to or stay in, relying on His grace to be sufficient?



3. Why do you think God chose the symbol of water to communicate the gift of himself—His acceptance and care to Hagar? What might be a symbol God would use today, in your life?
4. Though we hear little more of Hagar and Ishmael's story, we know that Hagar and Abraham birthed a nation through Ishmael. What does this tell us about how God views the stranger, the outcast, the broken?

VIDEO—10 MINUTES

Watch the video together and discuss.

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

Lord, we have all been strangers; alone and afraid in the desert, thirsty and crying out to you. Help us to remember that you are the God who sees us. The God who hears us. Help us to see the strangers in our midst, Lord, and to see and hear them through your eyes and ears. Amen.

