

## ABRAHAM, THE FATHER OF FAITH

### CONCEPT

God provides.

### GOAL

**Christian** students will learn that because God is able and wants to provide for His children we can act in faith on His commands.

**Non-Christian** students will learn that only God can and wants to give us everything we need.

**PASSAGE: GENESIS 22:1-18; HEBREWS 11:17-19**

**Key Verse:** "... God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering..." Genesis 22:8 (NIV)

### PLANNING AHEAD\*

#### Lesson Supplies

#### Lesson:

- *Grandpa's Box*, Starr Meade

#### Learning Activity #1:

- 4 sets of 5 envelopes, each containing the letters of one of the following words – Forgive, Accept, Incredible plan, Truth, Heaven – and labeled with the first letter of the word it contains

#### Craft Supplies

#### Activity Stations:

- Printed Abraham/Isaac/Ram, 1/student
- Printed key verse/cross, 1/student
- Crayons or markers
- Scissors
- Glue sticks

\* **Teachers please note:** For clarity, the shaded areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag. **Items followed by an asterisk\* are to be supplied by the teaching team.**

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION / TEACHER HELPS

God had miraculously given Abraham and Sarah a son in their old age and then asked Abraham to give him back. How could God, especially the same God who later expressed abhorrence of human sacrifice (Deut. 18:9-10), actually ask His chosen servant to sacrifice his beloved son, the one through whom the promises would be fulfilled? Why would God require this of Abraham?

It's relatively easy to see how a parent could become overly attached and overprotective of a son who took such a long time to come, but Isaac, the "one and only son," was also the very personification of God's blessings to Abraham. Through Isaac would be born a nation and much more. Through Isaac, God tested Abraham's belief in God's ability to fulfill His promise. "The first verse of this narrative provides a necessary preliminary understanding of the events of the chapter. Without it God's request that Abraham offer up Isaac as a 'burnt offering' would be inexplicable. By stating clearly at the start that 'God tested Abraham' (v. 1), the writer quickly allays any doubt about God's real purpose. There is, then, no thought of an actual sacrifice of Isaac in the narrative, though in the mind of Abraham within the narrative that, of course, was the only thought that was entertained. The whole structure of the narrative focuses so strongly on the Lord's request that the writer apparently sensed the need to dispel any suspense or suspicion about the Lord's real intention."<sup>1</sup> In his determined obedience to God's command, Abraham exhibited his faith in God and experienced God's amazing provision.

Not understanding that God was testing him, imagine the shock and sorrow that Abraham must have felt when he heard the words, "Take your only son, Isaac, the son you love. Go to the land of Moriah. There kill him and offer him as a whole burnt offering." And yet the Biblical narrative does not really discuss Abraham's feelings at all—how very un-21<sup>st</sup> century-like! Instead, it says simply that, "Early in the morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took Isaac and two servants with him. He cut the wood for the sacrifice. Then they went to the place God had told them to go." Abraham received a command and his response was obedience.

Hebrews 11:17-19 gives some insight into Abraham's motivation. Abraham knew that God was faithful and that somehow He would fulfill His promises through Isaac, even if it meant raising him from the dead. So Abraham placed his trust in the promises of God. And God provided a substitute for Isaac. Abraham's faith was tested and proven genuine. He named the place "The Lord Will Provide."

Years later, in that very place, God himself would provide the sacrifice for the sins of the world in His "one and only son." The real substitute for Isaac was not a ram—it was Jesus. Abraham and Isaac, though unaware, served as a type of God's ultimate work of redemption—the cross. They had the privilege of foreshadowing the most significant event in human history.

It is sobering to think of the significance that might lie in our everyday responses to tests of faith. Just as Abraham did not know what God might do through his choice of trust and obedience, so also we do not know what exactly might be the results of our obedience. But we can depend on the truth that God wants to use our obedience to build our faith in Him while impacting others for eternity. He provides in ways we never could conceive. This lesson is intended to motivate the teachers and the students to aspire to great faith—the kind of faith that makes them willing to give themselves and all they have to a trustworthy God.

<sup>1</sup> *Expositor's Bible Commentary of the Old Testament*, Zondervan Reference Software, © 1989-90, Commentary on Genesis 22:1-14.

## LESSON PLAN

<b>SET UP/ INCORPORATION</b> 15-20 MIN	<b>Activity Stations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Craft – "God Provides" Pop-up</b> <b>Instructions:</b> Give each student one page with printed pictures of Abraham, Isaac and the ram and one page with printed key verse and cross. Color the pictures of Abraham, Isaac and the ram. Fold this page in half so the picture is on the outside. Color the cross on the other page. Fold this page in half with the key verse on the outside. Cut along the two vertical lines. Unfold the page and refold with the key verse on the inside. Fold the cut strip back and then fold it forward again. Open the page and place it on the table like a tent. Push the cut strip through to the other side of the page. Close the page and press firmly. Open to see the pop-up strip. Apply glue around the backside edges of the pop-up page and glue it to the inside of the Abraham, Isaac and ram page. Open the card and the cross will pop out.</li> <li>● <b>Missions Prayer</b> <b>Instructions:</b> Talk about and pray for Oasis Giving campaign and adopted missionary child.</li> </ul>
<b>INTRODUCTION/ INSTRUCTION</b> LG GROUP 2 MIN	<p>Remember the great man of the Bible we learned about last week? Abraham was willing to follow wherever God led him. He believed that God would always provide what was needed. God made a covenant, or promise, with Abraham. He promised to make Abraham the father of many, many people and that all the nations of the world would be blessed through one of Abraham's children. There was only one problem with God's covenant with Abraham. What do you need to have before you can have a lot of grandchildren and great grandchildren? You have to have at least one child, right? Abraham didn't have any children at all and he was an old man—75 years old. I bet some of your grandparents aren't even that old yet. But Abraham was willing to obey God and believed that God would give him and Sarah the son that He promised to them.</p>
<b>TRANSITION – 2 MIN</b>	<p>Let's find out how old Abraham and Sarah were when they finally had their baby. Everyone grab a Bible.</p>
<b>LESSON – LG GROUP</b> 10 MIN	<p><b>Instructions:</b> Read Grandpa's Box, pp. 40-45.</p> <p>When Isaac asked his dad where the lamb was for the sacrifice, Abraham answered in <b>chapter 22, verse 8</b>. Open your bibles and read along with me, "... <b>God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering...</b>" (<b>Genesis 22:8</b>). That's our key verse. God tested Abraham's faith, and Abraham believed that if he obeyed God, God would provide even though he didn't understand how He'd do it. The ram was the substitute sacrifice for Isaac. That was how God provided.</p> <p>Like Abraham we have friendships and things that are very important to us. Many of those relationships and possessions are more important to us than God. The problem with that is that things and people can't make our lives work right. Only God can do that. If we put Him first and seek His wisdom, He will give us what we need to have the best friendships in the world. He will give us things that we never imagined and we will see Him work in others and us in ways we never thought possible. Abraham did not have perfect faith. He blew it a lot and so do we. But God has already forgiven us and wants to convince us that He can and wants to give us everything we need. In this next week ask God to show you the things or people who are more important to you than He is.</p>
<b>TRANSITION – 2 MIN</b>	<p>Like Abraham, we show we have biblical faith when we obey God. We obey because we believe God will always provide or give us what we need. Let's repeat our key verse. "... <b>God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering...</b>" (<b>Genesis 22:8</b>). Let's play a game that will help us remember to take steps of faith.</p>
<b>LEARNING ACTIVITY #1 -- LG GROUP</b> 5 MIN	<p><b>GAME - Word Unscramble</b></p> <p><b>Instructions:</b> Divide class into 4 teams. Give each team 5 envelopes. The students will unscramble the 5 words. These 5 words state 5 things God provides for those who have faith.</p>

	The first team to unscramble all 5 words is the winner. The words are <b>F</b> orgive, <b>A</b> cept, <b>I</b> ncredibly, <b>T</b> hrough, <b>H</b> aven. Clues for the students: the first letters of the words spell FAITH. The "I" provision is 2 words and the theme for this year.
<b>TRANSITION – 2 MIN</b>	Everyone grab a Bible and get in our small groups to talk about what it means to have faith.
<b>LEARNING ACTIVITY</b> <b>#2 – SM GROUP</b> <b>10 MIN</b> Rationale: to apply scripture to real life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So here was Abraham who believed God and was willing to obey Him. Does anyone have a problem with God telling Abraham to kill his son? Does it seem very cruel and wicked? If God is wicked and evil, He can't be loving. But the Bible says He is compassionate and loving. So do you have any ideas how to solve this problem? Look at v. 1 of Genesis 22 for a clue (God was testing Abraham). So, what conclusion do you think we might come to about this command to kill Isaac?</li> <li>• What is the very first step of faith God wants everyone to take? (Ask God to accept you because Jesus died on the cross for your sins.) That's important because we can't obey God if we don't first know Him as our friend.</li> <li>• If you have accepted this gift, God wants your complete commitment to Him. Who knows why? Is it because He likes the power of being our boss and telling us what to do? Or maybe He just doesn't like us to have fun and enjoy life. Jesus said that He came to give us life and give it abundantly. So what's up with this complete commitment stuff?</li> <li>• When you wonder if God is really worthy of your faith, ask Him to remind you of ways you have stepped out in faith believing that He would provide and how He did provide. (Allow some time for discussion.)</li> </ul> <p>We are going to <b>pray</b> now. If you haven't accepted Jesus' death to pay for your sins, you can do that at any time. You can tell God that you want Jesus' sacrifice on the cross to pay for your sins. At that very moment, God you will become God's friend forever. If you are God's friend, you can ask Him to show you what steps of faith He wants you to make and to help you take those steps.</p>
<b>OPTIONAL ACTIVITY</b>	<p><b>Game: Back-to-Back</b></p> <p><b>Goal:</b> Students work together to bond as a class</p> <p><b>Instructions:</b> Divide the students into pairs. Have them sit down on the floor, back-to-back. Link their arms together at the elbow and try to stand up. When each pair is successful, have them hook up with another pair to try a foursome, group of six, etc.</p> <p><b>Debriefing Questions: (Note: These questions are open-ended—there is no “correct” answer.)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What did you learn from this exercise?</li> <li>• Did you learn anything different when you added people to the exercise?</li> </ul>