Use Week of:

God Tested Abraham

BIBLE PASSAGE: Genesis 22:1-19

MAIN POINT: Abraham trusted God even when he didn't understand God's plan.

UNIT KEY PASSAGE: Romans 4:3

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What did God promise? God made a covenant to bless His people.

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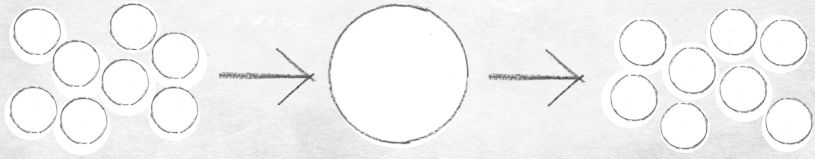

Leader BIBLE STUDY

When Abraham was well over 100 years old, he received another message from God. It was a test, actually. God instructed Abraham to take his son Isaac, the son of promise, and sacrifice him on a mountain God would tell him about. Abraham had waited so many years for this child!

But Abraham obeyed. He got up early the next day and left for his trip. Not waiting around to see if God would change His mind, he saddled the donkey, took the wood, two servants, and his son, and left on the journey as God commanded.

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As Isaac walked with his father, he noticed something was missing. They had the wood and the fire, but "Where is the lamb?" Isaac asked. Abraham answered that God Himself would provide. And God did indeed.

By this point, Abraham had supreme faith that God was able to do anything. Hebrews 11:17-19 gives us a peek inside Abraham's mind: "He considered God to be able even to raise someone from the dead."

God provided a ram for the burnt offering in place of Isaac, who was spared. After what we might imagine was quite a worship service, Abraham and Isaac returned home.

In the New Testament, God brings through John the Baptist the final answer to Isaac's inquiry, "Where is the lamb?" "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). God provided a ram for Abraham, but for all of humanity He has provided His Son, Jesus Christ, the ultimate sacrifice for sin.

MINISTRY GRID
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Additional resources for each session are available at *gospelproject.com.* For free training and session-by-session help, visit *www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.*

God Tested Abraham

Genesis 22:1-19

God kept His promise to give Abraham a son. Abraham and his wife Sarah were very old when their son Isaac was born. One day, God tested Abraham. God wanted to make sure that Abraham loved God most of all.

"Abraham," God said.

"Here I am," Abraham answered.

"Take your son Isaac to the mountain and give him to Me as a sacrifice," God said.

A *sacrifice* is anything of value brought to God as a way to show obedience, love, thanksgiving, or the need for forgiveness. During Old Testament times, a sacrifice usually involved killing an animal. This time, God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac instead.

Abraham obeyed God. He got up early the next day and left with Isaac, two servants, and a donkey carrying supplies. They walked for three days before they got to the mountain where God wanted Abraham to make the sacrifice. Abraham asked his servants to stay with the donkey, and he **and Isaac went up the mountain with the supplies for the sacrifice.**

Isaac noticed something was missing. "My father," he said, "where is the lamb for the offering?"

Abraham answered, "God Himself will provide the lamb."

When they got to the place God had directed them, Abraham built an altar and placed the wood on top. Then he put Isaac on top of the wood. **Just as Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac, the Angel of the Lord called out,**

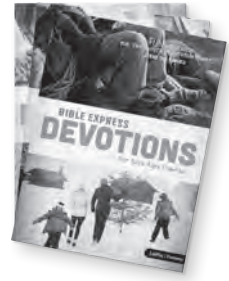
"Abraham, Abraham!"

Abraham stopped. The Angel of the Lord said, "Do not lay a hand on the boy or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your only son from Me."

Abraham looked up and saw a ram trapped by its horns in the bushes. He offered to God the ram instead of Isaac. Abraham named the place, "The Lord Will Provide."

The Angel of the Lord reminded Abraham that God would keep the covenant He made with Abraham. God again promised to bless Abraham, to make his family as numerous as all the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashores. God promised victory over Abraham's enemies and blessing to all the earth through Abraham's family.

Christ Connection: Abraham showed his love for God by being willing to sacrifice his son Isaac. This is how God showed His love for us: He sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross so that we could have eternal life through Him.



WANT TO DISCOVER GOD'S WORD? GET *BIBLE EXPRESS!*

Invite kids to check out this week's devotionals to discover that just as God provided a ram as a substitute for Isaac, He provided His Son, Jesus, to be the perfect sacrifice for sin. (1 John 2:12) Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out *www.lifeway.com/devotionals.*

Small Group OPENING

SESSION TITLE: God Tested Abraham

BIBLE PASSAGE: Genesis 22:1-19

MAIN POINT: Abraham trusted God even when he didn't understand God's plan.

UNIT KEY PASSAGE: Romans 4:3

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What did God promise? God made a covenant to bless His people.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to share about a time when they had to trust someone else.

Activity page (5 minutes)

- "What's Wrong?" activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Distribute activity pages and challenge kids to find the six items in the scene that do not belong.

SAY • The two people in this picture were father and son. Does anyone know who they are? (*Abraham and Isaac*) We will learn more about them in our Bible story today.

Session starter (10 minutes)

LOW PREP

- paper
- pencils

OPTION 1: Pop quiz

Give each kid a piece of paper and a pencil. Instruct boys and girls to number their papers from 1 to 10. Ask the following questions about the Bible. (Note: These questions are intentionally difficult! It's OK if kids don't know the answers.) Then review the answers together.

1. How many books are in the Bible? (*66*)
2. Who wrote the first five books of the Bible? (*Moses*)

3. The average blue whale is about 75 feet long. How many blue whales would you have to line up to equal the length of Noah's ark? (*about 6, Noah's ark was about 450 feet long; Gen. 6:15*)
4. What is the first of the Ten Commandments? (*Do not have other gods besides Me, Ex. 20:3*)
5. How many Bible books are named after women? (*two, Esther and Ruth*)
6. Saul had two names. What was Saul's Roman name? (*Paul, Acts 13:9*)
7. Who was King Solomon's dad? (*King David*)
8. How many chapters are in the Bible? (*1,189*)
9. What is the shortest chapter in the Bible? (*Ps. 117*)
10. How old was the oldest person mentioned in the Bible? (*Methuselah lived 969 years, Gen. 5:27*)

SAY • Today we are going to hear a story from the Bible about a time God tested Abraham. God's test for Abraham was very hard. God tested Abraham's faith to see if Abraham really trusted God.

OPTION 2: Where is the lamb?

• toy lamb

Option: Use a cotton ball to represent a lamb.

Choose a volunteer to sit in a chair with his back to the class. Put the toy lamb under his chair. Someone from the class should quietly take the lamb.

When you say, "Where is the lamb?" the volunteer should turn around. He gets three chances to guess where the lamb is. Play a several rounds as time allows.

SAY • That's what Isaac asked in our Bible story: "Where is the lamb?" Let's find out what he meant.

Transition to large group

Large Group LEADER

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Countdown

- countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as large group time begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

- leader attire
- rolls of streamer
- firewood or bundle of sticks

[Large Group Leader enters carrying a few rolls of streamer and a piece of firewood or bundle of sticks. Leader sets the items on the floor or a table at the front of the room.]

LEADER • Welcome back, everyone! If you were here last time, you might remember that I am in the middle of helping two of my friends get ready for their wedding. They are getting ready to make a covenant, promising to be with each other for the rest of their lives. Oh, I love weddings! But this is becoming a lot of work. I'm supposed to be decorating. I have some streamers here, and some firewood … how on earth do you decorate with firewood? I do not understand my friends' plan for decorating. When the bride finishes taste-testing wedding cake, I will have to ask her what is going on.

Hey, that reminds me of today's Bible story. Raise your hand if you remember what we learned about last time.

Giant timeline (2 minutes)

- Giant Timeline

Point out "God's Covenant with Abraham" on the giant timeline. Remind kids that God had called Abraham to leave his home and go to a place God would tell him about. God made a covenant with Abraham, and He promised to bless all the world through Abraham.

LEADER • God promised to give Abraham a family, even though he and his wife were old and did not have any kids. God kept His promise, and He gave Abraham a son named Isaac.

Here is today's Bible story: "God Tested Abraham." Oh, boy. I wonder what kind of test this was. I wonder if Abraham had to study very hard. Do you think he passed the test? I hope he remembered his number two pencil!

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

- Bibles
- "God Tested Abraham" video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Main Point Poster
- firewood or sticks

Open your Bible to Genesis 22. Tell the Bible story in your own words, or show the Bible story video "God Tested Abraham." After kids hear the story, pile some firewood or sticks at the front of the room.

LEADER • Abraham and Isaac went to the mountain where God wanted Abraham to make the sacrifice. Isaac carried the supplies for his father, but he noticed something was missing. A sacrifice usually involved killing an animal. Where was the lamb for the sacrifice? Abraham said, "God will provide."

Putting his son on the altar was probably very hard for Abraham to do, but **Abraham trusted God even when he didn't understand God's plan.** God had made a promise to Abraham. ***What did God***

promise? God made a covenant to bless His people. God promised that Abraham would have a large family, but how could that happen if God took his son? [*See Heb. 11:17-19.*] God saw that Abraham trusted Him, and the angel told Abraham not to hurt Isaac. God provided a ram to sacrifice instead.

Give a Bible to two kids. Instruct one kid to find and read Genesis 22:12. Then lead the other to read John 3:16.

LEADER • Abraham showed his love for God by being willing to sacrifice his son Isaac. This is how God showed His love for us: He sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross so that we could have eternal life through Him.

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me (optional)

Use Scripture and the guide provided with this session to explain to boys and girls how to become a Christian. Assign individuals to meet with kids who have more questions.

Encourage boys and girls to ask their parents, small group leaders, or other Christian adults any questions they may have about becoming a Christian.

Big picture question (1 minute)

• Big Picture Question Poster

Call on random boys and girls to answer the big picture question. If a kid struggles to answer, allow him to read the answer from the big picture question poster.

LEADER • ***What did God promise? God made a covenant to bless His people.*** God said that through Abraham's family, all the nations of the earth would be blessed. God blesses all the nations of the earth through His Son, Jesus, who was born into Abraham's family.

Key passage (4 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- "Abraham" song

LEADER • Trusting God during hard times can be difficult, but even when God asked Abraham to give up his son Isaac, Abraham trusted God. That's what our key passage is about. Let's read it together.

Lead kids to read Romans 4:3 from the key passage poster.

LEADER • Someone is righteous if he never sins (like Jesus), so how could Abraham be righteous? A person is also righteous if God takes away his sin and trades it for Jesus' righteousness.

Abraham did not know that God was going to send His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sin, but he trusted that God would keep His promise to bless the whole world through him. Abraham did not know how God would do it, but because he had faith, God counted his sin as righteousness.

When we trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior, He takes away our sin and gives us His righteousness.

Play the key passage song and invite kids to sing along.

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

- "Unit 2, Session 2" discussion starter video

Show the "Unit 2, Session 2" discussion starter video. Lead kids to talk about a time they had to trust someone else.

1. Was it difficult to trust another person?
2. Are some people easier to trust than others? Why or why not?
3. How do we know that we can trust God?

LEADER • We can trust God because we know He is good. The Bible tells us about Him, and it shows us that He has always been faithful to His people. God has never broken His promises. He has never done anything wrong. God never changes; He will always

be faithful, He will always keep His promises, and He will always do what is right.

Sing (4 minutes)

- "Always Faithful" song

LEADER • We can trust that God will keep all of His promises. Everything God does is for His glory and our good. We can trust God even when we don't understand His plans. That makes me want to sing! Will you join me?

Sing together "Always Faithful."

Prayer (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to small groups.

LEADER • Father God, You are good. Thank You for sparing Isaac by providing a ram instead. Thank You for sparing our lives, too. We know we deserve to die because of our sin, but You sent Your Son, Jesus, to die in our place. Thank You for giving up Your Son as our substitute. We do not deserve Him, but we joyfully accept Him. We love You. Amen.

Dismiss to small groups

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means "good news." It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

 **God rules.** Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

 **We sinned.** Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)

 **God provided.** Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

 **Jesus gives.** Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:19.

 **We respond.** Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus.

Small Group LEADER

SESSION TITLE: God Tested Abraham

BIBLE PASSAGE: Genesis 22:1-19

MAIN POINT: Abraham trusted God even when he didn't understand God's plan.

UNIT KEY PASSAGE: Romans 4:3

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What did God promise? God made a covenant to bless His people.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- chalkboards or dry erase boards, 2
- chalk or markers

Form two teams and instruct them to line up single file at one side of the room. At the other side of the room, position a chalkboard across from each team. Write the first word of the key passage on each chalkboard.

Give the first player on each team a piece of chalk. When you say go, she should run to the chalkboard and write the next word of the key passage. She will return the chalk to the next player who will write the next word.

Each player may either write the next word or, if the previous player made a mistake, he may erase the previous word and write the correct word. The first team to correctly write the key passage wins.

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

SAY • Can anyone tell me what it means to be righteous? (*to be perfect, without sin*) How can a sinner become righteous? (*When a sinner trusts in Jesus, God takes away her sin and trades it for Jesus' righteousness.*)

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster

Lead kids to act out the Bible story. Copy the following script for volunteers to read as they act out the roles of Abraham, Isaac, two servants, the Angel of the Lord, and the ram. Remaining kids can follow along in their Bibles.

NARRATOR: One day, God tested Abraham. God wanted to make sure that Abraham loved God most of all. God said, "Take your son Isaac to the mountain and give him to Me as a sacrifice."

Abraham got up early the next day and left with Isaac, two servants, and a donkey carrying supplies. They walked for three days before they got to the mountain where God wanted Abraham to make the sacrifice. Abraham and Isaac went up the mountain with the supplies for the sacrifice.

ISAAC: My father, where is the lamb for the offering?

ABRAHAM: God Himself will provide the lamb.

NARRATOR: When they got to the place, Abraham built an altar. Just as Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac, the Angel of the Lord called out.

ANGEL OF THE LORD: Abraham, Abraham!

NARRATOR: Abraham stopped.

ANGEL OF THE LORD: Do not lay a hand on the boy or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your only son from Me.

NARRATOR: Abraham looked up and saw a ram trapped by its horns in the bushes. He offered the ram to God instead of sacrificing Isaac.

If time allows, choose new volunteers to play the roles. Encourage kids in the audience to gasp or cheer, providing sound effects where appropriate.

SAY • **Abraham trusted God even when he didn't understand God's plan.** Abraham was willing to do anything for God because he feared God. He

respected God and loved Him. Would you be willing to do anything God asked you to do?

Allow time for kids to think and discuss their responses.

Activity choice (10 minutes)



- Bibles, 1 per kid
- index cards
- pencils

OPTION 1: Good question! game

Give each kid an index card, a pencil, and a Bible. Guide kids to find Genesis 22:1-19. Instruct boys and girls to read over the verses and write on the index card a question about the Bible story. Questions should begin with *Who*, *What*, *When*, *Where*, or *Why*? Tell kids to include the verse number where the answer can be found.

Collect the cards and read them one at a time. Challenge kids to answer the questions. Consider these examples:

1. When did Abraham go to the mountain? (*early in the morning, Gen. 22:3*)
2. What was missing? (*the lamb, Gen. 22:7*)
3. Whom did Abraham say would provide the lamb? (*God, Gen. 22:8*)

SAY • Why did God tell Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac? We know that God was testing Abraham, but Abraham did not know that. **Abraham trusted God even when he didn't understand God's plan.**

Point out that Isaac trusted his father, Abraham. Who else trusted His Father no matter what? (*Jesus*) Remind kids that God gave up His Son to rescue people from sin.

- heavyweight paper
- white glue
- sand
- watercolor paints
- paintbrushes
- silver markers
- star stickers (optional)

OPTION 2: Paint starry beach scenes

Invite kids to paint pictures of the beach at night. Suggest they use dark colors such as blue and purple to paint the sky. Demonstrate how to brush a thin layer of glue over the beach. Then sprinkle sand over the glue. Encourage kids to

use stickers or silver markers to fill the sky with stars.

As kids work, talk about God's promise to Abraham. What did God say about the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore?

SAY • God spared Isaac, and He kept His promise to Abraham to make his offspring as numerous as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore.

Through Isaac, Abraham's family grew, and eventually God's Son, Jesus, was born into Abraham's family. Through Him, all the nations of the earth are blessed.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

- Journal Page
- markers or colored pencils
- "God Provided" activity page, 1 per kid

Give each kid the journal page and a pencil. Remind kids that **Abraham trusted God even when he didn't understand God's plan.** Prompt kids to write about a situation they currently face or a question they have about the future.

Encourage them to pray about those things this week and ask God to help them trust Him and His plan.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "God Provided" on the activity page. Kids should color in the shapes according to the key to reveal the hidden picture.

SAY • What did God provide as a sacrifice for Isaac? (*a ram*) Whom did God provide as a sacrifice for us? (*His Son, Jesus*)

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.

Journal Page

God the Covenant-Maker

Key Passage: Romans 4:3

Big Picture Question: What did God promise?
God made a covenant to bless His people.

Session 1: God's Covenant with Abraham
Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-21; 17:1-9
God promised to bless all the world through Abraham.

Session 2: God Tested Abraham
Genesis 22:1-19
Abraham trusted God even when he didn't understand God's plan.

Session 3: The Promise Reaffirmed
Genesis 25:19-26; 26:1-6; 28:10-22
God reminded Abraham's family that He always keeps His promises.



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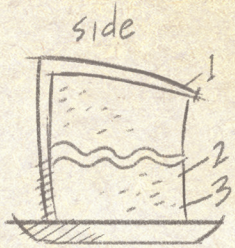
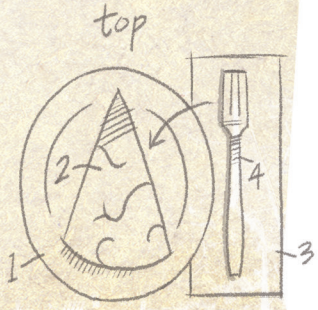
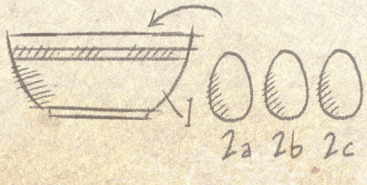
Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness.

Romans 4:3









Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

Romans 4:3



"Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness."

Romans 4:3



"Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

Romans 4:3



Abraham trusted God even when he didn't understand God's plan.





Journal Page

Write about a tough situation you currently face or a question you have about the future. Pray about those things this week and ask God to help you trust Him and His plan.



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Sometimes it is hard to obey. Tell about a time when obeying was hard for you.
- Whom did God provide as our substitute? (*Jesus took the punishment we deserve for our sin.*)

FOLD



God Tested Abraham

Genesis 22:1-19

MAIN POINT: ABRAHAM TRUSTED GOD EVEN WHEN HE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND GOD'S PLAN.

God kept His promise to give Abraham a son. Abraham and his wife Sarah were very old when their son Isaac was born. One day, God tested Abraham. God wanted to make sure that Abraham loved God most of all.

"Take your son Isaac to the mountain and give him to Me as a sacrifice," God said. Abraham obeyed God. He got up early the next day and left with Isaac, two servants, and a donkey carrying supplies. They walked for three days before they got to the mountain where God wanted Abraham to make the sacrifice. Abraham and Isaac went up the mountain with the supplies for the sacrifice.

Isaac noticed something was missing. "My father," he said, "where is the lamb for the offering?"

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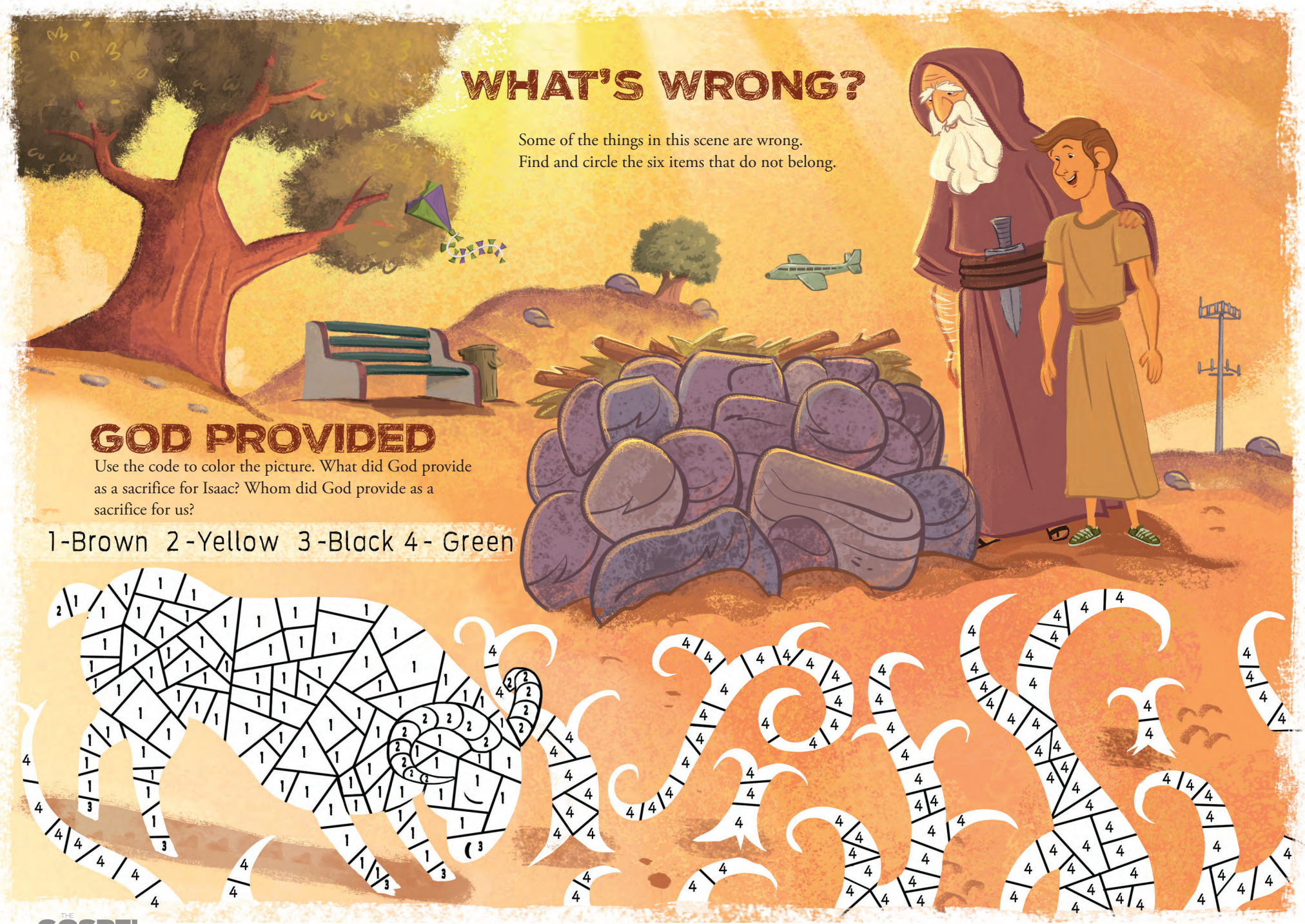
WHAT'S WRONG?

Some of the things in this scene are wrong.
Find and circle the six items that do not belong.



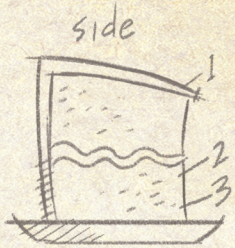
GOD PROVIDED

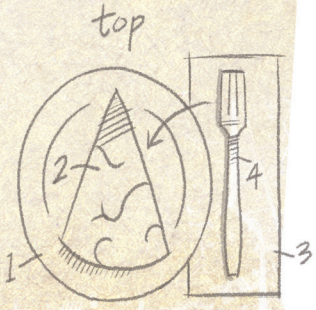
Use the code to color the picture. What did God provide as a sacrifice for Isaac? Whom did God provide as a sacrifice for us?

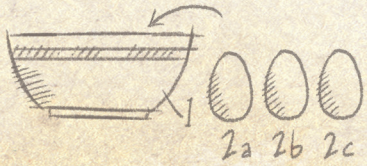
1-Brown 2-Yellow 3-Black 4- Green

What did God promise?









What did God promise?

God made a covenant to bless His people.



