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.

KEY PASSAGE: Romans 4:3

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

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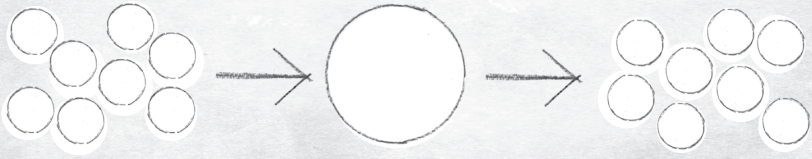

Leader BIBLE STUDY

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.



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 *ADVENTURE!*

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.

KEY PASSAGE: Romans 4:3

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

Welcome time

ARRIVING ACTIVITY: Waiting

Discuss a time when kids had to wait for a reward, prize, or experience. Ask kids what it feels like to wait for a teacher to pass out a test and what it feels like to wait the night before leaving for vacation.

SAY • Do you like to wait? Not many of us do. In our story today, God told Abraham to do something that seemed crazy, and Abraham had to wait to see how God would help him.

Activity page (5 minutes)

- "What Is There?" activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Guide kids to complete the activity page by coloring the numbers as instructed.

SAY • What was in the thicket or underbrush on your activity page? That's a ram. In today's Bible story, God provided a ram at a time when it mattered most. God asked Abraham to do something that seemed a little difficult, but Abraham knew God is always faithful. Abraham trusted God. Abraham did exactly what God told him to do. God provided for Abraham, and we'll learn more about what God did today!

Session starter (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Follow the leader

Guide kids to follow you around the room, imitating your actions. Begin with easily imitated actions, moving to more difficult actions. Make the final actions difficult to follow and seemingly nonsensical.

SAY • **Abraham trusted God even when he didn't understand God's plan.** Abraham chose to obey God, even though what God asked him to do seemed difficult or even unfair. Today we'll learn more about what God asked Abraham to do.

OPTION 2: What would you do?

- yellow and blue contruction paper
- tape

Tape a yellow sheet of construction paper to one side of the room and a blue sheet to the opposite wall. Explain that kids will listen to a scenario and show how they would respond by moving to the corresponding side of the room.

Scenarios:

1. God wants you to tell a friend about Him. Would you (yellow) tell them or (blue) be too nervous?
2. The Bible says to obey your parents, but they've asked you to do something you don't want to do. Do you (yellow) ignore them or (blue) do what they ask?
3. Your friend asks you to do something that you know is not right. Do you (yellow) do it anyway to be cool or (blue) stand up for what is right?

SAY • God asked Abraham to do something that probably seemed difficult. **Abraham trusted God even when he didn't understand God's plan.** Today we'll learn more about what God asked of Abraham.

Transition to large group

Large Group LEADER

SESSION TITLE: God Tested Abraham

BIBLE PASSAGE: Genesis 22:1-19

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KEY PASSAGE: Romans 4:3

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

Countdown

- countdown video

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

Introduce the session (2 minutes)

- Leader attire: semi-formal attire

[Large Group Leader enters wearing clothes that might be worn to a wedding.]

LEADER • Hello, friends! I didn't know you were still at this wedding. [*mumbling*] I didn't realize that this wedding was such an event. I thought that it would be over last week when we were together, but I found out the wedding isn't actually happening until next week. I'm glad we can all celebrate for so long though! A wedding is a big deal, because it's a picture of God's love for us and commitment to His people.

Giant timeline (2 minutes)

- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle
- Main Point Poster

LEADER • Let's review what we learned last week. Do you remember how Abraham's story began? Abraham trusted God, and **God promised to bless all the world through Abraham.** Abraham and his wife Sarah were very old, but they trusted that God would indeed make their descendants as numerous as the

stars because they knew that God always keeps His promises. God gave Abraham and Sarah a son, and they named him Isaac.

Big picture question (1 minute)

- Big Picture Question Poster

LEADER • Now, after Abraham waited so long for Isaac, God asked Abraham to give Isaac to Him. As difficult as it sounded, Abraham knew that he could trust God. God had already kept His promise to give him a son, and Abraham knew that God would continue to keep His promises to him. ***What did God promise? God made a covenant to bless His people***. Today's story continued this promise.

Key passage (4 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- "Abraham" song

LEADER • Our key passage reminds us that Abraham chose to believe God, and because of his faith, God credited righteousness to Abraham. Now, this doesn't mean that Abraham never messed up. God chose to forgive Abraham because God planned to send Jesus to earth to die and rise again once to take away sins for all time for anyone who believes in Him. We are credited with Jesus' righteousness when we trust Him. God sees us as if we have not sinned because of Jesus' payment for our sin on the cross.

Sing together "Abraham."

Sing (4 minutes)

- "Always Faithful" song

LEADER • Let's sing and thank God for sending Jesus so that we could be credited with His righteousness. God promised long ago to send a Messiah to pay for sin, and God kept His promise by sending Jesus. We

can trust that God is always faithful, no matter what situation we face!

Sing together "Always Faithful."

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

- Bibles
- "God Tested Abraham" Video
- Bible Story Picture Slide or Poster
- Main Point Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster

LEADER • Our story today comes from Genesis 22, where we will get to learn more about Abraham and his faith in God. God made a covenant, or promise, with Abraham to make His descendants as numerous as the stars. God also promised that He would bless all the world through Abraham. In today's story, **Abraham trusted God even when he didn't understand God's plan.**

Open your Bible to Genesis 22. Show the video or tell the Bible story in your own words using the script provided. For a shorter version of the story, read the bolded text.

LEADER • Last week we learned about God's promise to Abraham to give him as many descendants as there were stars in the sky. God kept His promise to give Abraham and Sarah a son, and they named him Isaac. Abraham had waited a long time for this promise. Then, God asked Abraham to take Isaac up to a mountain and sacrifice him to the Lord there.

Isaac was the son God had promised Abraham, and Abraham trusted that God would not break that promise. Abraham did not know what God had planned, but Abraham trusted that God would take care of Isaac. Hebrews 11:17-19 tells us that Abraham knew that God could even raise Isaac from the dead. This test of Abraham's faith didn't make it to that point, though. Abraham and Isaac got to the spot where the sacrifice would be made and set

up the altar. Then, the angel of the Lord stopped Abraham from sacrificing Isaac, and God provided a ram caught in a thicket. Even when Abraham didn't understand God's plan, he still obeyed and trusted God to be faithful to His promises.

This event would show God's people what would happen when He sent Jesus. Jesus is God's Son, sent to earth as the perfect sacrifice to pay for sin.

Ask the following review questions:

1. What did God tell Abraham to do? (*take Isaac to the mountain and give Him to God as a sacrifice, Genesis 22:2*)
2. How did Abraham respond to God's request? (*He did just as God said to do, Genesis 22:3-6*)
3. How did God provide for Abraham and Isaac? (*He provided a ram as a sacrifice, Genesis 22:13*)
4. ***What did God promise? God made a covenant to bless His people.***

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

- "Unit 2, Session 2" discussion starter video

LEADER • **Abraham trusted God even when he didn't understand God's plan.** God was showing Abraham and all of God's people who would come after Abraham a symbol of what would happen when Jesus came. The punishment for sin is death, and that is what each of us deserve. Instead, God provided Jesus as the sacrifice in our place. God has proven over and over again that He can be trusted. God always keeps His promises! Let's watch our discussion starter video and talk more about whom we can trust.

Show the "Unit 2, Session 2" video.

LEADER • Do you think that Jacob's friends should trust

him? How do we know whom to trust? We know God always keeps His promises and we can always trust Him—even when we don't understand His plan. How can we learn to trust God more?

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. If this is not possible, 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 and prayer (3 minutes)

• Big Picture Question Poster

Show the big picture question poster.

LEADER • Do you remember the answer to our big picture question? ***What did God promise? God made a covenant to bless His people.***

Before transitioning to small groups, make any necessary announcements. Lead kids in prayer. Praise God for giving us a picture of what He would do through Jesus in today's story. Thank God for sending Jesus so that we could be forgiven of our sins. Ask God to help kids trust that all of God's promises are true.

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.

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
- dress-up clothes
- index cards
- tape
- markers

Write one word of the key passage on separate index cards. Make two sets. Collect dress-up clothes and place them in two equal piles. Tape one index card inside each garment. Form two teams. Guide teams to line up.

Explain that teams will run relay style to the opposite side of the room, pick up one garment, put it on, and run back. When all the garments have been retrieved, kids will find all the index cards and work together to put the cards in order.

SAY • Abraham trusted God, and God credited Abraham's faith to him as righteousness. We can pray and ask Jesus to help us honor God with our lives, or live righteously, every day. Each time you put on your clothes in the morning, remember God's faithfulness to you!

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster
- Small Group Timeline
- paper
- markers

Guide kids to find Genesis 22 in their Bibles. Use the small group timeline to show kids today's Bible story. Review the last session, where we learned about Abraham and a special promise that God made to him. Show kids where today's story falls on the small group timeline. Read today's story

using the bolded text, or summarize the story in your own words.

Form groups of two or three kids. Give each group a couple sheets of paper and a marker. Explain that you will ask a question and groups will write down the answer on a sheet of paper. Then, you will ask everyone to hold up their answers. You may choose to keep score, or just play for fun. Ask the following review questions:

1. Who was Abraham and Sarah's son? (*Isaac, Gen. 22:2*)
2. What did God ask Abraham to do with Isaac? (*sacrifice him to God, Gen. 22:2*)
3. Where did Abraham and Isaac go to give a sacrifice to God? (*a mountain, Gen. 22:2*)
4. What did Abraham say when Isaac asked about the lamb? (*God would provide a lamb, Gen. 22:8*)
5. Who stopped Abraham when Isaac was on the altar? (*the angel of the Lord, Gen. 22:11*)
6. What did God provide as a sacrifice in Isaac's place? (*a ram, Gen. 22:13*)
7. ***What did God promise? God made a covenant to bless His people.***

Activity choice (10 minutes)



- classroom items, such as a sheet of construction paper, a stapler, a beach ball, an animal figurine, and a baby rattle

OPTION 1: Always true

Assign a random or motion to each item so that when you hold the item in the air, kids know what motion they are to do. You may ask them to jump six times when you hold up the stapler or to crawl when you hold up the animal. After assigning motions, guide kids to spread out around the room. You may play for fun, or eliminate the last kid to do the correct motion each time. The last child remaining in

the game wins.

SAY • Some of these instructions didn't make sense, but you obeyed my instructions anyway. **Abraham trusted God even when he didn't understand God's plan.** We can obey God, even when we don't understand His plan. God is good and He is faithful. He loves people and promises to care for those who trust Him. We can trust that God does what is best for us, even when it doesn't seem to make sense.

OPTION 2: Water bottle seek

- empty water bottles, 1 per kid
- star beads, 10 or so per kid
- small plastic rams, 1 per kid
- uncooked rice
- duct tape

Give each child an empty water bottle and guide him to place a star bead of each available color and a small plastic ram into his bottle. Then, help each child fill his bottle with rice to where the top of the label would have been. Place the cap on the bottle and secure it with duct tape. Guide kids to turn their bottles to find the stars and ram.

SAY • God promised Abraham that He would bless all the world through his family. God told Abraham that his family would be as numerous as the stars! Abraham waited many years for a son, whom he named Isaac. Then God asked Abraham to take Isaac to a mountain and sacrifice him to God. Abraham obeyed God. He trusted God, and God provided a ram, or a substitute, instead of Isaac.

Jesus is our substitute. Jesus died on the cross so we don't have to die to pay the punishment for our sins when we trust in Him. **Abraham trusted God even when he didn't understand God's plan.**

- Journal Page
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons or markers
- *Big Picture Cards for Families: Kids*

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute each child's journal and instruct the kids to list

or draw their favorite five toys. Ask them how they would feel if God asked them to give up those five items. Ask writers to write a sentence or two describing how Abraham must have felt. Then, guide all kids to write *I can trust God, even when it's hard.*

SAY • **Abraham trusted God even when he didn't understand God's plan.** We can trust God in every situation, too. We know God will be faithful to us because He has always been faithful to His people. The Bible teaches us that God will continue to be good to us.

Make sure each child secures this week's sheet in the journal, and then collect them. Keep the journals in the classroom so they will be available every week or as often as you wish to use them.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the coloring page provided with this session. Pray, thanking God for giving us a picture of what He would do for us through Jesus in this story. Ask God to help kids remember that He is good, faithful, and in control even when they don't understand His plan.

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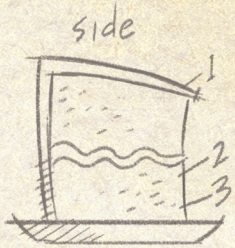
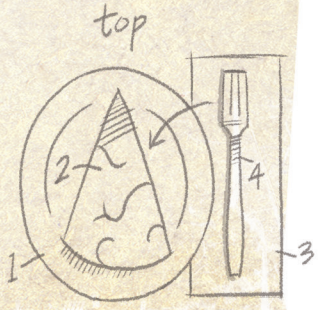
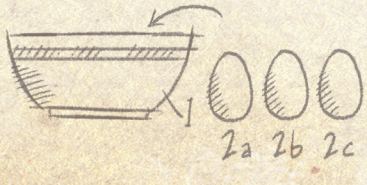
Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness.

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.





What Is There?

INSTRUCTIONS: Color each shape according to its assigned number to reveal what is hidden in the thicket.



DOWNLOAD THE TGP FAMILY APP

KEY PASSAGE: Romans 4:3

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- What did God promise? God made a covenant to bless His people.

BIBLE STORY:
GOD TESTED ABRAHAM

- God tested Abraham by telling him to sacrifice his son Isaac.
- Abraham trusted God and obeyed Him.
- God provided a ram to sacrifice instead of Isaac.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

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

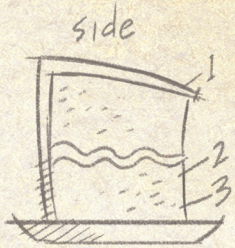
FAMILY ACTIVITY:

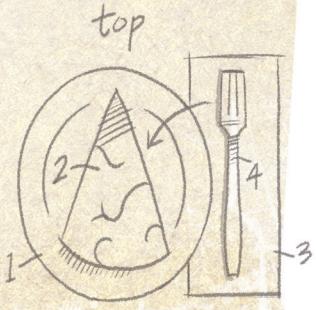
- Guide kids to complete someone else's chore. Remind them God sent Jesus to pay our penalty for sin as a substitute.
- Go further: Sing a song to worship God for His provision for your family.

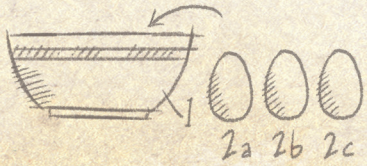


What did God promise?









What did God promise?

God made a covenant to bless His people.



