

ABRAHAM IS TESTED

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: GENESIS 22:1-19



*When Abraham was told to sacrifice his son, God Himself provided a sacrifice.
(This strongly points to Christ.)*

The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

Abraham's faith in God moved him to obedience – Hebrews 11:19 gives us a glimpse of Abraham's faith and thoughts when he was asked by God to sacrifice Isaac. Abraham was willing to sacrifice his only son because he believed that God could and would raise him from the dead. In Genesis 22:5 we read that Abraham told the servants to wait while he and Isaac went to worship and that both he and his son would return to them. Abraham was not only confident in God resurrecting Isaac; he assumed that he would be coming home with his son that same day!

Isaac's obedience toward his father moved him to submission – There is no report of struggle on Isaac's part in this story. Imagine a son, so filled with faith in God and respect for the judgment of his father that he allowed his father to tie him up and placed him on an altar to be sacrificed. This picture of a submissive son is a foreshadowing of Jesus submitting to the will of the Father in giving up His own life for us on the cross.

Abraham had faith in God and God moved to save – In Genesis 22:12 God said "for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son from me." No one could understand the pain and anguish associated with offering up an only son more than God. We can only imagine how deeply affected God was by Abraham's obedience and faith. God moved to spare Isaac and provide a substitute sacrifice which reminded God then, and reminds us today, of the substitutionary atonement of Christ.

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WHERE IS JESUS?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

Abraham was called to sacrifice his only son. Because Abraham believed that God would resurrect his son from the dead, he obeyed. At the last moment God intervened, prevented the sacrifice and provided a ram in a thicket as the sacrifice on Isaac's behalf.

In this story we see the foreshadowing of the future sacrifice of Christ in the following:

- Isaac, the only son was sacrificed – Jesus the only son was sacrificed
- Isaac was willingly bound for death – Jesus willingly took the cross upon Himself
- The ram caught in the thicket was a substitute provided by God – Jesus is our substitute provided by God (see Revelation 5:6-14.)

ON THE ROAD TO EMMANUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

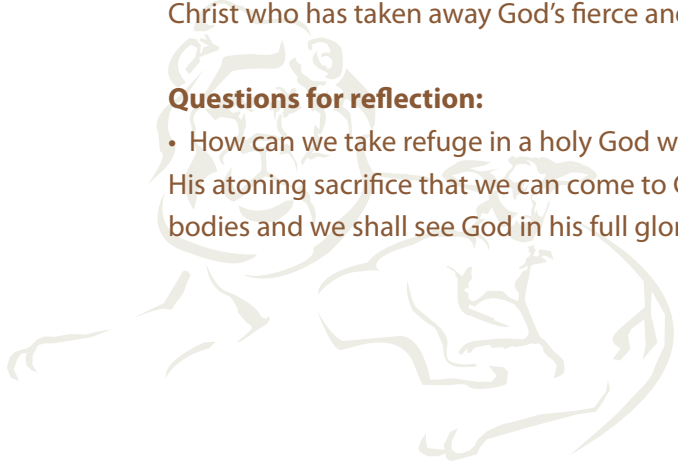
Bible Passage: Psalm 5:11

Connecting the passage to Christ:

"Let all who take refuge in you rejoice." With these words David encourages us to take refuge in God. But how can we take refuge in a holy God? Even the priests of Israel could not regularly come near to his holy presence. The answer is that we find refuge in God through Christ alone. We can take refuge in Christ who has taken away God's fierce and holy wrath toward us.

Questions for reflection:

- How can we take refuge in a holy God who we cannot look at or touch? (It is only through Christ and His atoning sacrifice that we can come to God. Our sinful bodies will one day be changed into glorious bodies and we shall see God in his full glory.)



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SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

A SHADOW OF THE CROSS

Supplies

- large hammer (a short handled sledge hammer is best)
- large nail (a landscaping spike six inches long or more)
- a dagger or large knife

Hold up the hammer and nail and ask the class to identify them. Then hold up the knife and ask the class to identify it. Finally, ask the class what the two have in common. Use this object lesson to connect the story of the sacrifice of Isaac to the crucifixion of Christ.

Then ask the class the following question:

- How does the sacrifice of Isaac point us to the story of Jesus and his death on the cross? (See the Where is Jesus? section for the answer.)



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COMPARING YOUR FAITH

This exercise is designed to help the children see that real faith is evidenced by obedience to God.

Ask the class the following questions:

- Who do you think demonstrated more faith: Abraham in his willingness to sacrifice his son, or Isaac who was willing to be bound and be sacrificed?

Use these questions to get the children thinking about faith.

- How do we know if a person has true faith, or is just saying they believe? (A person with true faith passes the test of obedience. Abraham was willing to go so far as to kill his son. If Abraham would have said no to God's request, he might claim to believe, but his declaration would only be empty words.)

- How does God test our faith today? (Children and adults are still tested today. If a child truly believes that God said for them to honor their parents and it will go well with them and they will have a long life, then they will obey their parents. But if they don't believe God they will do what they want. Obedience is always the measure of faith. We don't obey to please God or gain his favor, but if we believe in Him it will translate into obedience.)



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LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

Supplies

video camera and TV
monitor

Divide the class into groups of 6-8 children. Give all the groups ten minutes to plan and prepare a mime skit of the sacrifice of Abraham. Explain to them that a mime skit involves acting but no talking. Have people playing the roles of Abraham, Isaac, two servants, and the angel of the Lord. The rest of the team can help in the planning.

Take a video recording of each team and if there is time, replay the skit.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- For those who played Isaac, how did you feel when Abraham was about to kill you?
- What did you learn about Abraham's faith in God?
- What message does Abraham's sacrifice of his son send to us about our willingness to give up everything for God? (If Abraham was willing to give up his own son, we should be willing to give up anything that stands in the way of serving God with all our heart.)
- What did God give up for us? (God sent His only Son to take our place on the cross and receive the just punishment for our sins.)



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TYPES AND SHADOWS

Supplies

soft modeling clay and a bucket full of odds and ends that you can press into the clay to make images such as a comb, a bolt, a paper clip, etc, overhead projector and screen or wall to shine the overhead on.

Read through "A Little Theology" concerning types and shadows. Before class, roll 10 balls of clay and flatten them. Press 10 different objects into the clay pancakes to form impressions. (Pick out a few hard ones that leave less defined impressions like a glasses case, book spline, or nail, point first).

Set the overhead projector up on a table and stand a book up to serve as a blind from the class.

Ask the class to first guess all the impressions in the clay. They will be uncertain of some of the more difficult ones. To give them an additional clue, take the objects one at a time and place them behind the blind on the glass of the overhead so that their shadow is cast up on the wall or screen. See if that helps the children guess more accurately.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- What can we learn from an impression or type of the object?
- What can we learn from a shadow of an object?
- What can't we learn?
- What is missing from what we see?

Teach them the meaning of types and shadows in the Bible and see if they can give you the types and shadows of Christ found in this passage of scripture.

PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

IN CLASS PROJECT

The first and second grade children can use the preschool coloring sheet and questions. Have the older children draw a picture of a ram caught in a thicket by his horns.



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FOR OLDER GRADES

Supplies

pen and paper

After reading the story of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac read Matthew 19:16-26, the story of the rich young man. Ask the children to compare the actions of the rich young man with Abraham. Have them do this by writing down their answers to the following questions.

- Who was asked to give up more, the rich young man or Abraham?
- Why did the rich young man walk away sad but Abraham walk away glad?
- What can we learn from this comparison for our own lives?
- How did Abraham demonstrate his belief in the words Jesus used in Matthew 19:26, "with God all things are possible?"

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Types and Shadows - The Bible is full of prophetic symbolism. Theologians call these prophetic symbols types or shadows. The word type has its origin in the Greek word TUPOS which means the mark left by a hit or blow. If you strike soft clay with your fist it will leave an impression or mark. That mark is a type of your fist.

God, in His providence, arranged the lives of men to give us some hints of what would happen in the future. Looking back we can see how events in the past are very much like later events.

The story of Abraham and the sacrifice of his son is full of these "types." Abraham is a type of God who also gave up His only Son for us. The ram is a type of Christ acting as a substitute for Isaac. Isaac is a type of Christ, willingly submitting to the sacrifice he does not deserve at the hands of a father who loves him.

A shadow is just another way of saying type. A shadow gives us the outline of its owner but no color or image. We can get some information about the object from its shadow but it doesn't compare with seeing the original.

These types and shadows were designed to give clues to the plan of God and demonstrate His purpose in the the plan of redemption of man. God is and always will be in control of every detail of history. He is the God who causes the ram to be caught in the thicket and He is the one who is able to save.