



# God Tests Abraham

*Genesis 22:1–19, Hebrews 11:17–19*



## LESSON GOAL

Students will understand that we should trust God completely and obey His Word above all else.

## BIBLE TRUTHS

- God tested Abraham by asking him to sacrifice Isaac.
- Abraham trusted God to provide the sacrifice.
- Abraham loved God more than he loved Isaac.

## KEY VERSE

“And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness” (Genesis 15:6).

## APPLICATION

- Expect God to test your faith.
- Obey God’s Word no matter the cost.
- Trust that God will help you obey.
- Pray for His help in times of testing.

## NEXT WEEK

God Chooses Jacob over Esau  
Read Genesis 25–27.

### Symbol Key



Craft



Finger Play



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Center



Activity



Q & A



Age Group

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# Teacher Planning Sheet

## PREPARE

Objectives/Truths to cover this week

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Personal Application

*As a result of my study in this passage, God wants me to*

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

*Three ways students need to apply this passage are*

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## POINT

*Choose from various ideas to point students to the coming Bible lesson.*

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## PROCLAIM

*Choose from various ideas to proclaim the Bible lesson.*

### Presentation Ideas

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Praise/Music Ideas

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## PRACTICE

*Choose ideas to help review and apply today's lesson.*

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### Materials Needed

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## PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

*“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul... You shall teach them to your children” (Deuteronomy 11:18–19).*

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here to aid you in understanding the Scripture.

### Bible Background

Abraham was now well over 100 years old, perhaps as old as 120. By now he had settled in Beersheba, a hilly area midway between the Mediterranean Sea and the southern end of the Dead Sea. Isaac had been born during a journey into the Negev Desert, which lies between Palestine and the Sinai Desert. Sarah had demanded that Ishmael, Abraham’s older son by Hagar, be driven away from the family. God had instructed Abraham to comply with the demand, and he obeyed God, sending his older child away.

After these events, God tested the depth of Abraham’s faith. He spoke to Abraham directly. Abraham knew that his Canaanite neighbors sacrificed their children to idols, and he knew enough about God to realize how repugnant such a practice was to Him (Lev. 18:21; Deut. 12:31), but the voice of the Lord was so unmistakable that he obeyed without a moment’s hesitation. Abraham’s relationship with God was so intimate that he could discern His voice despite the seeming improbability of the Lord’s message. The name for God used here is not “Elohim” or “Jehovah” (the name used in connection with covenants and salvation) but is *Ha-Elohim*, “The God”—the powerful and yet personal being who purifies and chastens His chosen people.

The question arises, “What did faithful Abraham need to be purified of?” The answer is in verse 2. Because Isaac was such a long-awaited blessing from the Lord, Abraham had come to love him with a fervency that could compare only with his love for God. By obeying God’s command to sacrifice Isaac, Abraham would show that his love and devotion to God was even greater than his love for his son. Abraham was to go to the land of Moriah and offer his son as a sacrificial offering to the Lord; he was to kill his only child and then burn his dead body.

We are astounded by what is missing from this text. Abraham does not question or complain. He does not seek clarification or more detailed directions. We see no tarrying in prayer, self-questioning, stalling for time, or bargaining for advantage. In fact, Scripture is silent regarding his thoughts and feelings. Abraham simply got up the next morning and began to make the necessary preparations. He must have prayed fervently throughout this time, strengthening himself for the awful task at hand. The wood was loaded onto a donkey for the 50-mile trip from Beersheba to Jerusalem.

The mountain on which the sacrifice was to take place (later named Moriah) is generally thought to be the very place in Jerusalem where Solomon would build his temple, the place where all sacrifices would be offered. The area around Jerusalem is full of canyons and low hills, so Moriah would not be noticeable until the party was quite close to it. Abraham instructed the servants to remain behind, and he took the wood off the donkey and placed it on Isaac’s shoulders, just as Christ would later carry His own cross to a nearby location on the same hill. The servants would have no part in the sacrifice; they might have interfered out of love for

### Additional Reference Materials

*The MacArthur Study Bible* by John MacArthur

*Paradise to Prison: Studies in Genesis* by John J. Davis

Isaac. The patriarch himself carried the killing knife and a container of live coals from which the fire would be lit. There is dramatic pathos in the words “and the two of them went together.” We know from the last phrase in verse 5 that Abraham expected God to somehow return his son to him, and Hebrews 11:19 reveals that Abraham expected his boy’s body to be resurrected. But at this moment, Abraham must have viewed the hike up this mountain as the last climb they would enjoy together, at least for a while. How stark the contrast is. He was about to destroy the son he loved so deeply. No doubt Abraham was distraught, and Isaac sensed his father’s distress.

Isaac finally asked the inevitable question—where was the sacrificial lamb? Abraham responded with an answer intended to build the boy’s faith in God and in his father’s relationship with God. Again we read the phrase “so the two of them went together.” Somewhere between verses 8 and 9, the father finally shared with his son the command he had received from the Lord. Abraham piled up stones to build an altar, arranged the wood on top of the stones, and tied up his son. He took every precaution necessary to ensure the death of his own child.

Undoubtedly, Abraham had hoped that God would call off the sacrifice, but He had not, so Abraham resolved in his heart to slay Isaac. That was the moment of truth. When he reached out to pick up the knife, all three persons (God, Abraham, and Isaac) knew from actual experience where the patriarch’s first loyalty lay. A spiritual sacrifice had occurred even without physical sacrifice. In the moment of that decision, Abraham offered up his will before his God.

Although Ha-Elohim had issued the original command, the angel of Yahweh, the covenant-maker and Savior, Christ Himself, stopped Abraham. The double address (“Abraham, Abraham”) is always followed throughout Scripture by a command and a prophecy (Gen. 46:2; Exod. 3:4; 1 Sam. 3:10; Acts 9:4). Abraham’s response is the right one: “Here I am,” or literally, “Here I.”

God did not need to test Abraham in order to know what was in his heart. The Lord’s words, “now I know,” use a verb that denotes knowledge by experience; these words do not imply that Abraham’s response had been outside the scope of God’s omniscience. Was God simply pretending? No, there is no room in His nature for game-playing. This test was an opportunity for Abraham to demonstrate the genuineness of his faith (cf. 1 Pet. 1:7) and to display his devotion to God—a devotion that superseded even his love for his son.

At that moment, Abraham discovered the ram caught in the thicket. God stopped Abraham from slaying his son. Looking back to this event, Moses, the writer of Genesis, stated the story’s lesson through a saying that was common among the people: “In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided.” The hill on which Abraham’s and Isaac’s faith was tested to the limit became known as *Yahweh Yireh* (“the Lord will provide”).

Abraham had passed the test. Now Yahweh swore to bless the patriarch abundantly. The importance of this oath is attested to by the phrase “by Myself I have sworn” (v. 16). In Genesis 15, the Lord had promised Abraham descendants as numerous as the stars. Now the phrase “the sand which is on the seashore” is added; Abraham’s posterity would be innumerable. Moreover, they would overcome the defenses of their enemies (“possess the gate”), meaning that they would endure as a nation. And because the Messiah would come through Abraham’s descendants, all nations could potentially be blessed by believing on Him, the God of Abraham.

The faith of Christians is tested through adversity every day. Several principles emerge from this text to show us how to deal with such difficulties.

1. We must remember that adversity came into the world as a result of Adam’s sin. God did not invent it, but He does use it to cleanse and strengthen the lives of His people.

2. We can handle tests and trials if our relationship with God is open and trusting. Only then can we discern the pattern of His will amid the turmoil of adversity.
3. The Lord is one God, but He manifests the totality of His nature in various ways (as powerful, faithful Ruler; as a personal Ruler; and as Savior, for example). Simplistic notions about Him being merely “the man upstairs” mask the truth and deceive people.
4. When we are tempted to question God by asking how He could allow His people to suffer, we must remember that He loves us and does what is best for us, and that He permits testing to strengthen our faith. Despite appearances, God’s love for His own is unchanging.
5. We can never allow our love for God’s blessings (such as home, family, and vocational success) to surpass our love for Him or our desire to know Him more intimately. The greater our knowledge of God, the easier it will be to trust His loving nature.
6. Only one response is appropriate when our faith is tested: immediate, trusting obedience. We should say, “Here I am, Lord, at your service.”

When our faith is tested, we must not attempt to escape the trial or alleviate our pain. Rather, we should ask God to use it for His own purposes.

## POINT TO THE TRUTH

*“Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth” (Psalm 78:1).*

This section includes questions to review last week’s lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week’s lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



### Review Questions

*Use these questions to review and reinforce key truths.*

Who was the special baby promised to Abraham?  
*Isaac.*

How old were Abraham and Sarah when Isaac was born?  
*Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90.*

Why was Isaac’s birth a miracle? Why did they name him Isaac?  
*Sarah was too old to have a baby. Because of that, Abraham and Sarah had great joy, and they named him Isaac, which means “laughter.”*

How did Ishmael react?  
*He treated Isaac badly.*

Where were Ishmael and Hagar sent?  
*Into the wilderness, but God still took care of them.*

In what ways can you trust God?  
*[Let the students provide their own answers.]*



### Name Game Review

Begin describing a student in your class. Ask the students to guess whose name you are thinking of. Then describe people from last week's Bible lesson. If the students don't guess the name, tell them and then show them the review pictures. Help them say "Isaac" and "Abraham" and listen for those names today.



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### A Few of My Favorite Things

Have the students make a collage from magazine pictures or draw their own pictures of their favorite things. Allow them to share these with the class. Ask the students how they would feel if they were asked to give up their favorite things.



### Hard to Obey

Bring in a puppet and have it tell the students about times when it was hard to obey. Use examples from students' lives: sharing, arguing, making their beds, cleaning their rooms, etc. In today's lesson, we are going to learn about someone who had something very, very hard to obey. But in the end, his obedience showed that he loved God more than anything.



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### Test of Strength

Bring long pieces of three different kinds of thread, string, ribbon, cord, floss, twine, or fishing line. Have students guess which of these items is the strongest. Can we tell by looking? How can we find out for sure? We test them. Put one student on each end of the thread, string, etc., to be tested. Wrap the string around clean rags for the students to hold on to, and have students pull (like a tug-of-war). Does it break? If not, loop the string around another rag at each end, add two more students, and pull. Continue adding students until the material breaks. Test all three items. Be sure to have an adult stand behind the students to catch the last person, if necessary, when the string breaks.

## PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

*"Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done" (Psalm 78:4).*

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students' understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use during the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done directly from the Bible.

### Bible Lesson

#### Reading of Text

Read Genesis 22:1–19.

We all have been asked to obey our parents. Sometimes it seems very hard to obey. Sometimes we are very sinful and stubborn, and we just do not want to obey. Sometimes your mom or dad will ask you to share your very favorite toy with a brother or sister, and you just do not want to do it. Sometimes we love our toys more than we love God. Sometimes we want our way and not God's way. Today,

we are going to learn about a man who *did* obey God, even though it was very, very hard.

Last week we learned that God gave a special gift to Abraham and Sarah. That gift was Isaac. God fulfilled His promise to give Sarah and Abraham a son, even though it seemed impossible.

Isaac grew up and made his mother and father very happy. One day, God spoke to Abraham and asked him to do something very hard. God told Abraham to take Isaac to Mount Moriah. He told Abraham to kill Isaac and make him an offering to God. What would you have been thinking if you were Abraham? "God, did I hear you right? You want me to take my son, the son I have waited for so long, and kill him?" Abraham said none of those things. He obediently got up early the next morning, gathered what he would need, and set off for Mount Moriah. God did not really want Abraham to kill Isaac, but He did want to test Abraham. Whom did Abraham love more, God or Isaac?

God had promised that Abraham would be the father of a great nation through Isaac. Abraham did not know exactly how this was to happen, but He knew that God would keep His promises. He and Isaac continued on to the mountain. As they walked, Isaac asked his father where the lamb for the sacrifice was. Abraham's answer shows his total faith in God: "God Himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering." Then Abraham built an altar, placed wood upon it, and tied Isaac to it. Abraham stretched out his hand and picked up a knife. He was ready to kill his son if God asked. But before he could do it, the angel of the Lord spoke to him; "Do not lay a hand on the boy. Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from Me your son, your only son." Abraham had passed the test. He had proven that the most important thing in the world to him was his relationship with God and his obedience to Him.

Abraham being willing to give up the son he loved also gives us a symbol of God's sacrifice of His own Son, Jesus Christ. God willingly gave Him up as a sacrifice for our sin, and He went willingly, just as Isaac did.

Abraham looked up from the altar, and there, tangled in some bushes, was a ram. He took it and used it as a burnt offering to God in place of his son. The angel called to Abraham again and told him that because he obeyed, God would bless him and all nations through him. What a promise!



## Lesson Questions

Who was Isaac, and what was special about him?

*He was Abraham's promised son.*

Why did God ask Abraham to sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering?

*To test Abraham.*

Did God really want Abraham to kill Isaac?

*No. He wanted to show whom Abraham loved more, Him or Isaac.*

Did Abraham trust God?

*Yes.*

Did Abraham pass the test? How?

*Yes. He was obedient to God.*

What hard things does God want you to obey?

*[Let the students come up with their own answers.]*

## Presentation Ideas



### A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards

Use appropriate A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards with the lesson.



### Betty Lukens Flannelgraph

Use appropriate flannelgraph pieces with the lesson.



### Test of Faith

Ask one of the students to come stand next to you. Explain that you are going to test his faith by asking him to fall backward and trust that you will catch him. Tell the students that in today's lesson, they will learn how God tested Abraham's faith.



### Props

During the Bible lesson, bring in various props such as firewood, a lamb, and a puppet to represent Isaac. Use them as you tell the story.

## Praise and Worship

*Father Abraham\**

*Come, Let Us Worship and Bow Down*

*He's Got the Whole World in His Hands*

*Seek Ye First*

*The B-I-B-L-E*

*Trust and Obey*

*\*Replace "so let's just praise the Lord" with "if Jesus is our Lord."*



### Abraham's Test

God said it, and it must be done:

*(Point upward; pound fist into open hand.)*

"Abraham, go kill your son."

*(Point outward.)*

Up the mountain they climbed higher,

*(Pump arms as if hiking.)*

Bearing wood to build a fire.

*(Pretend to carry a load of wood under arms.)*

Isaac asked, "Where is the lamb?"

*(Hold hands out to sides, palms facing up.)*

"God will provide," said Abraham.

*(Point up.)*

Then to obey the Lord's command,

*(Place palms together as if praying; nod head.)*



He took his knife into his hand.

*(Raise hand as if holding knife.)*

Upon the altar Isaac laid,

*(Spread hands out in front of body to indicate a flat surface.)*

But suddenly the Lord called, "Wait!"

*(Thrust hand outward, palm facing out.)*

"Don't hurt the promised son," God said.

*(Wag finger back and forth.)*

"The ram can die for him instead."

*(Point to the side.)*

"Abraham, you've passed My test."

*(Nod head.)*

"Through you, the nations will be blessed."

*(Spread hands outward, palms up.)*

## PRACTICE THE TRUTH

*"That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments" (Psalm 78:7).*

Choose ideas from this section to review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



### Build an Altar

Have each student make his own miniature altar. First, have him glue together a pile of packing peanuts and stones. Then have him glue twigs or wooden craft sticks on top.

**Variation:** Have the class work together to build an altar, using large pieces of foam. If available, gather sticks and twigs from outside to use on top of the altar.



### Climbing Mount Moriah

Use a piece of brown or green construction paper to make Mount Moriah. Roll the construction paper along the long side to form a cone for the mountain. Glue or staple the cone so that it will not unroll. Make sure it is rolled so that the mountain stands straight up. Glue on a picture of Abraham and Isaac as if they are climbing the mountain. Type out Genesis 22:8 small enough so that 10 verses fit on a page. Glue the verse to the cone. Glue a small picture of a ram on the other side of the cone.



### Mount Moriah

Materials: one piece of white and one piece of brown construction paper for each student; wood chips; orange, yellow, and red tissue paper; a printout of Abraham and Isaac and a ram for each student

Directions: Give each student one piece of white and one piece of brown

construction paper, some wood chips, printouts, and some tissue paper. Instruct students to tear the brown construction paper into the shape of a large triangle to form Mount Moriah. Glue the brown mountain onto the center of the white construction paper. Have students glue wood chips on the lower left of the mountain. Crumple the tissue paper, and glue it on top of the wood chips as fire. Using the coloring sheet at the end of this lesson, cut out Abraham and Isaac and glue them to the right of the wood chips. Cut out a picture of a ram and glue it to the left of Mount Moriah to demonstrate that God provided a substitute.

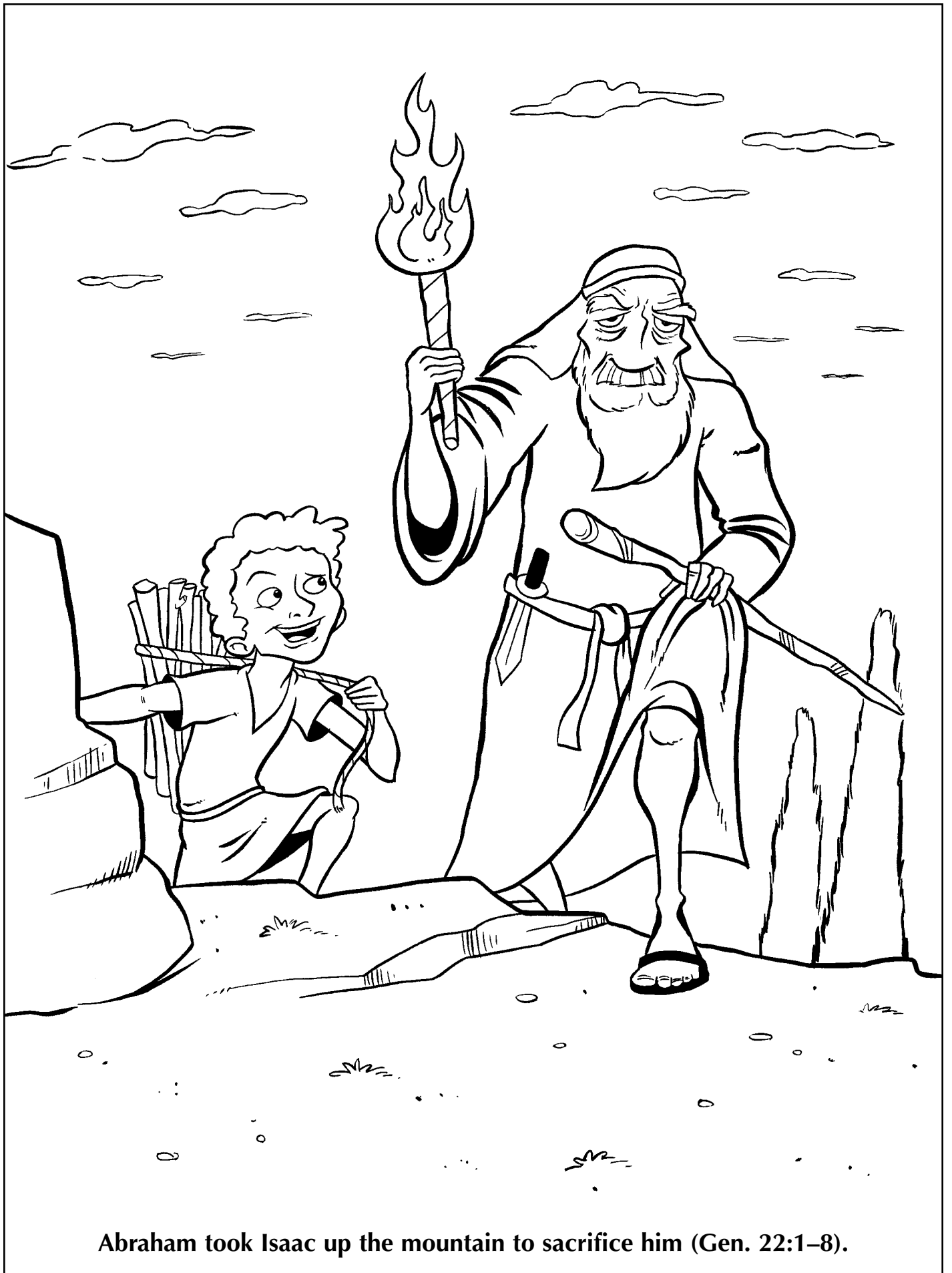
### Coloring Sheets

Give each student a copy of a coloring sheets at the back of this lesson. The students can color the pages in class or at home.



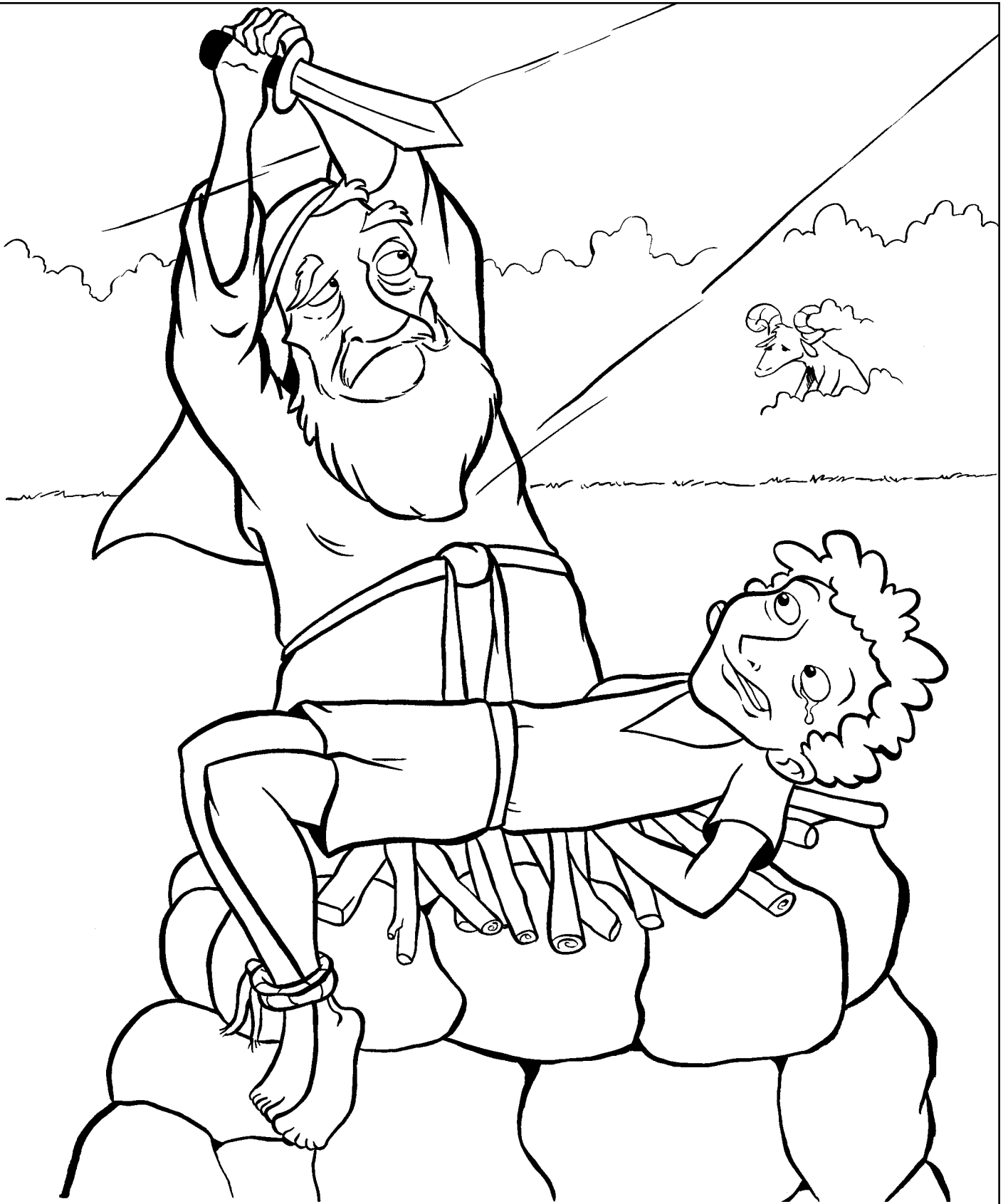
### MEMORY VERSE

“And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness” (Genesis 15:6).



Abraham took Isaac up the mountain to sacrifice him (Gen. 22:1-8).





**“[The angel of the Lord] said, ‘Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son...from Me’” (Genesis 22:12).**

