

06. Faith



BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

Genesis 22:1-19

Hebrews 11:1

God tests Abraham's faith by asking him to sacrifice his son



AIMS

To help the children consider that faith is not just believing, but it involves acting

To help them think about why Abraham was able to trust and to reflect on how easy or difficult they find it to trust God

This is a difficult story, so be careful not to over-dramatize it, and allow time to deal with any questions the children may have.

Abraham showed faith by trusting God and obeying him even when he was asked to do something very hard that he didn't understand. God is someone that we can trust and have faith that he has a good plan for us and he won't let us down.



PREP FOR LEADERS

Read the Bible verses for this session, and reflect:

- Why was Abraham able to trust God and obey him when he was asked to do something so difficult?
- When have you had to show your faith in God by taking action?

Take some time to pray for your group.



GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

▶ Blindfold Obstacle Course

You will need: blindfolds

Get the children to split into pairs and give a blindfold to one child in each pair.

Set up an obstacle course (this could be as simple as chairs placed around the middle of the room) and let the children with blindfolds take it in turns to get around the obstacles to the other side of the room by following directions from their partner.

Once all the children have completed it, switch roles so that the other person in the pair can have a turn.

Discuss how they felt about having to do this task without being able to see where they were going. Was it easy or difficult to trust their partner?

▶ Trust Game

You will need: a blindfold

Ask for a volunteer to play a trust game.

Blindfold the child, and then get them to fall back while you stand behind them and catch them.

Once you have done this, say you're going to do it again, but this time move in front of them before telling them to fall back (another leader

(continued overleaf)

should be told in advance to move behind them at that point ready to catch them). If they need reassurance, ask the other children to tell them if it's safe to fall back.

Discuss how easy/ difficult it was for them to trust that they would be ok when they could tell by your voice that you were not standing behind them.

Highlight that what really showed how much they trusted was whether or not they took action. It's one thing to say you trust someone, but its another to take action to show that you trust.



▶ Recap

Remind the children of what they heard last week - for a long time Abraham had to trust God's promise when it looked like it would never come true, but eventually it did come true and Abraham and Sarah had a son. Later, Abraham had to face an even bigger test of his faith.

▶ Abraham's Story

You will need: equipment to show PowerPoint or printed pictures, Bibles

Below is an outline to tell the story using the pictures from Free Bible Images (free to download here:

freebibleimages.org/illustrations/abraham-isaac/)

You could use these on PowerPoint or print them out. The numbers on the script correspond with the slides in the presentation. This part of the story begins at slide 6 in the presentation, but you could use slides 1-5 to recap last week's lesson.

You can either read the script that is provided or have some of

the children read the account from the Bible. Verse numbers are indicated after each slide number to show which verses match with which picture.

6. (v1-2) God spoke to Abraham again and he said, "Abraham, I want you to take your only son Isaac and go to the land of Moriah. When you get there, I want you to give Isaac to me as a sacrifice on the mountain I will show you."

Abraham must have been horrified! What a horrible message! God was asking him to kill his son! How could God ask him to do something so awful? It didn't make any sense that God would ask such a thing. And remember God's promise to Abraham - God had said Abraham would have millions of descendants, but right now, Isaac was the only descendant Abraham had and God was asking him to kill him?

7. (v3) Abraham's heart must have been breaking but he trusted God and he knew he had to obey God. The next morning, he got his donkey ready and he chopped wood for the sacrifice. He got Isaac and two of his servants and set off for the place God told him to go.

8. (v4-5) When they got close to the place, Abraham told his servants to stop there. He said, "Isaac and I will go on a little further to worship God and then we will come back."

9. (v6) So they walked on together.

10. (v7-8) As they walked, Isaac said, "We have the wood and we have the fire, but where is the lamb for the sacrifice?" Abraham said to him, "God will provide a lamb."

11. (v9) When they reached the place God showed him, Abraham built an altar with some stones and arranged the wood on it. Then he tied Isaac

up, placed him on top of the altar and took out his knife to kill him.

12. (v10-12) At the moment he was about to bring his hand down, plunging the knife into Isaac, he heard a voice. It was an angel. "Abraham, stop!" it said. "Don't harm the boy. Now I know that you really trust God because you have not held back even your only son from him."

13. (v13) Then Abraham looked up and he saw a ram caught in a bush by its horns. It was not an accident - God had placed it there. Abraham sacrificed the ram in place of Isaac and so the father and son were able to go home together. Abraham thanked God for providing the ram to die in Isaac's place.

14. (v14-18) Do you think God really wanted Abraham to kill his son? Why would he ask him to do this? It was a test of his faith, to see if Abraham would do anything God asked him to even something really hard. Abraham passed the test and proved that he really had faith in God and that he would be willing to do anything God asked him to.

15. (v19) Abraham named the place "The Lord will provide" because God had provided a sacrifice - an animal to die in place of Isaac.

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REFLECT & RESPOND

▶ Reflection

Discuss together: Why do you think Abraham was willing to do what God asked? How do you think he would have felt about it?

If we're going to follow God, he wants us to have faith like Abraham did.

▶ Invisible Ink

You will need: card prepared with message in invisible ink, Bible, paintbrush, dark coloured juice

Tell the children that you are going to look at a verse from later on in the Bible which talks about faith. Show them what looks like a blank piece of card but tell them the verse is there.

(You will need to have prepared for this in advance by writing the message in invisible ink. To make this, mix equal quantities of bicarbonate of soda and water. Then dip a cotton bud into the mixture and use it to write the message on the cards)

The verse is: "Faith means being sure of the things we hope for and knowing that something is real even if we do not see it." (Hebrews 11:1 NCV) - you can either write the whole verse or just write the reference and then look it up in the Bible once it is revealed.

To reveal the message let one of the children paint over the card with dark coloured juice, e.g. grape juice or blackcurrant squash.

Give the children a moment to reflect that sometimes things are really there even when you can't see them.

▶ Prayer

Abraham was sure that he could trust God and that God had a good plan for him, even though it didn't look like it from what he was being asked to do. Sometimes if we are following God we may be asked to do things that are hard, but we can trust that God is with us, he will help us, and he has a good plan for us.

Think for yourself about how much you think you can trust God. You might really trust him like Abraham, you might trust him a bit, you might not be sure yet that you can trust him at all. That's a decision you'll have to make for yourself as you find out more about God.

Give the children a moment to reflect, and then lead them in prayer, asking for God's help to trust him in situations where it is difficult.



ADDITIONAL IDEAS

▶ Video

You will need: equipment to play video

This video from Max 7 includes the text of Genesis 22 being read from the CEV along with animation: max7.org/en/resource/abrahamtested