

**ADULT UNIT I: The Genesis of Altars and Sacrifices**  
**ADULT GENERAL LESSON TITLE: Abraham Makes an Offering**  
**ADULT TOPIC: The Value of a Life**

**LESSON 3**  
**DATE: June 15, 2025**

**DEVOTIONAL READING: Romans 4:1-15**  
**BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Genesis 22:1-19**  
**PRINT PASSAGE: Genesis 22:1-14**

**Home Daily Bible Reading**

June 9	M	Genesis 17:15-22	God Promises a Son
June 10	T	Romans 4:1-15	Abraham's Righteous Faith
June 11	W	Romans 4:16-25	Life Out of Death
June 12	Th	Genesis 12:1-7	A Blessing to the Nations
June 13	F	Psalms 125-126	Joy for Weeping
June 14	Sa	Hebrews 11:8-12	Abraham's Courageous Faith
June 15	Su	Genesis 22:1-14	God Will Provide a Lamb

**EXALT!**

**Invocation** – Teacher or Learner

**Celebration** – *"Is Your All on the Altar of Sacrifice Laid?"* - #537 AME Zion Bicentennial Hymn

**Declaration** – Genesis 22:1-14 (*Read together by the class, by a volunteer or responsively.*)

**The Command to Sacrifice Isaac**

<sup>1</sup> After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." <sup>2</sup> He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you." <sup>3</sup> So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. <sup>4</sup> On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. <sup>5</sup> Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you."

<sup>6</sup> Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. And the two of them walked on together. <sup>7</sup> Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" <sup>8</sup> Abraham said, "God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." And the two of them walked on together.

<sup>9</sup> When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. <sup>10</sup> Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. <sup>11</sup> But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." <sup>12</sup> He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." <sup>13</sup> And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. <sup>14</sup> So Abraham called that place "The Lord will provide," as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided."

**Affirmation** – We will endeavor to value God's testing and trusting in our own lives. (*Spoken together by class and teacher*).

**ENGAGE:** (5-10 min.)

Obedience and trust are marks of commitment to one another. What do we offer to demonstrate ultimate allegiance and commitment? Abraham passes the test of faithfulness to God in his willingness to sacrifice his own son, Isaac, on the altar.

Break into groups and discuss your thoughts on how you respond to authorities or superiors in various circumstances. Do you always trust and obey those in authority over you, for instance? Are you very concerned about being trustworthy? Do you think there should be mutual trust between you and your superiors? Explain your answers. How do you respond when there seems to be a question of fairness when a superior assigns a difficult task? Do you tend to assess your values and priorities when given a difficult task? Give examples and explain your answers. Should one expect to be rewarded for obedience to a superior's directive? Why or why not?

**Genesis 22:1-7:** In his immediate reply, "Here I am" (Genesis 22:1), which serves as a refrain in the story (see vv. 7, 11), Abraham displays a readiness and anxiousness to respond to the divine call. The Hebrew word, in fact, suggests readiness and responsiveness to teaching. Furthermore, Abraham did not appear stunned by the request as one might suspect he would have been. Child sacrifices would have been more accurately described as infant sacrifices. Ancients would have offered them as fertility rituals or family/household "insurance." The prohibition against child sacrifice in the Old Testament (e.g., Leviticus 18:21; Jeremiah 7:30-34; Ezekiel 20:31) suggests that it was sometimes practiced in dire circumstances. There are no such conditions present in Genesis 22. In animal sacrifice, people provided a lavish meal for the deity, at times, with the officiates and the worshippers. Rituals included animal substitution, believing humans might be saved by transferring through ritual (expiation) the disease, evil spirit, or spell to the animal, which was then slaughtered. Such expiation is not offered as a reason for the sacrifice in Genesis 22. In the polytheism (belief in the existence and worship of many gods) of Abraham's day, national and cosmic (sky) deities handled the long-term concerns of stability for the world and nation. Other gods (city, ancestral deities) were more involved in the daily life of the people. Some commentators see in the naming of Moriah that Abraham is beginning to recognize that Yahweh is not just a replacement for one of the standard categories of deity but is a God fulfilling the roles of both cosmic and local gods.

**Genesis 22:8-14:** Abraham obediently proceeds to do as he was commanded without question. His reply to Isaac's query about the sacrificial animal seems pious, at least. He thus proceeds with the task in faith. There is a significance to the whole sacrificial tradition associated with Temple worship that grows out from the *akedah* [the binding of Isaac]. In 2 Chronicles 3:1, the mountain of the Temple is called "Mount Moriah," the mountain of the *akedah*. The sacrifice of the ram in place of Isaac is central to understanding sacrifice throughout the Old Testament. (For more on the significance of *akedah*, see Kathryn M. Schifferdecker, "Commentary on Genesis 22:1-14," <https://www.working-preacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/ordinary-13/commentary-on-genesis-221-14-5>. Accessed February 20, 2021.) Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac, difficult as it is to imagine, stands as a witness to God's claim on us as Creator of heaven and earth. Our lives and the lives of those most dear to us belong to God, who gave life to us in the first place. The story of the *akedah* assures us that God will provide, and that God will be present. We are reminded that in life and in death, we belong to God. "Hebrews

11:19 offers helpful commentary in stating that Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son because he believed that God could bring him back from the dead" (*Standard Lesson Commentary 2024-2025*, p. 360). We know that "the will of God was the driving force in Abraham's life. God was his ultimate motivation. Abraham's actions reveal the heart of true worship. God values obedience over sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:22)" (*Ibid.*, p. 363).

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**ELEVATE:** (10 min.)

In small groups, share ideas and responses concerning the following questions and issues: 1. God asks Abraham to demonstrate his trust through a willingness to offer his precious son to God. How can you show your trust in God by giving or sustaining life? 2. Think about it: How has the family of Abraham been a blessing to you as God promised? 3. Remembering that Isaac means "laughter," what joy can you find in this story? What joy can you find in difficult decisions? 4. A sacrifice is an act of worship. Name three things you can sacrifice to worship God. 5. Memorize the refrain of the song, "Here I Am, Lord" (Dan Schutte), and sing it when facing a difficult decision. 6. Measure your level of obedience to God's leading in your life. How do you size up? What do you need to change in your life to increase your obedience level?

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**iTHINK:** (5-7 min.)

1. Research infant sacrifice in the ancient Near East and the Old Testament's prohibitions of the practice.
2. Compare God's command to send away Ishmael (Genesis 21) with the command to sacrifice Isaac.
3. Review and discuss the covenant promise (Genesis 12; 15) that Abraham's family would be a blessing to the world.
4. Name your prized relationship and imagine God asking you to end it, just to test if you trust God enough. How is it possible to make sense of the severity of God's test?
5. Discuss the difficult issues that arise in this story in an era of increased awareness of child abuse.

**KEY VERSE:** Abraham called that place "The Lord will provide," as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided." Genesis 22:14