

Sunday school lesson – Upper Primary

BIG IDEA	God tests his people
Bible Reading	Genesis 22:1-19
Preparation	<p>Read Genesis 22 The account recorded in this chapter can be difficult to understand. Why would God ask Abraham to sacrifice his own son? We are given the answer to this in verse one. God was testing Abraham. God sometimes puts us in situations that are perplexing, confusing and even painful. He does this to test whether we will still trust and obey him, even in the midst of such difficulties. This is not because God needs to find out what is in our hearts - God already knows everything, including what will happen in the future. Since God has also promised to work all things for the good of those who love him (Romans 8:28), we can assume that rather than being for his own benefit, God’s testing of his children must produce some benefit to ourselves. Indeed, that is exactly what we find to be true. When we obey God in the midst of testing, the result is assurance of his promises and of his provision (Genesis 22:14-18). He also uses testing to produce in us perseverance and spiritual maturity (James 1:3-4). Ultimately, when God’s children persevere and remain faithful through testing, this brings glory to God himself (1 Peter 1:7). While we, the readers, are given insight into the reason behind these events, Abraham himself was not explicitly told that this was a test. God did not say to Abraham “Now I am going to test you. Take your son, your only son, whom you love...” But Abraham still obeyed the perplexing command, and as a result, received a renewal of the covenant promises. We may not always recognise God’s testing, but if we learn to trust and obey God through all circumstances, the result will be greater assurance of who God is and how he provides for us, as well as a stronger faith that has been refined through fire.</p> <p>Take home message: Trust and obey God even when you don’t understand what he is doing. That is the way that God will show himself to be faithful.</p> <p>Prepare for “Getting Started”: Blow up a balloon. Put a clear sticker / sticky tape on it. Have a needle to bring also</p>
Getting Started	<p>Produce your balloon with the sticker on it. Ask the children to tell you if it will burst when you poke it? Tell them that it won’t burst and ask them if they believe you. Prick the balloon through the sticker and show them that it doesn’t burst. Ask the children if they believe you now? Talk about the fact that even if you trust someone, it is hard to believe them if they tell you something that seems impossible. But if they are able to see the truth demonstrated, then it is easier to believe.</p>
Finding Out 1. God tests Abraham (v.1-2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Q: God had promised children to Abraham and Sarah, but what was the problem?</i> ➤ It was impossible for Abraham and Sarah to have children, but God had done the impossible and given them a baby! ➤ Things were finally going well for Abraham. After waiting for such a long time, God had finally kept his promise. God was going to give Abraham lots of children through Isaac – just as he promised. ➤ Sometime later, God appeared again to Abraham.

<p>2. Abraham’s response (v.3-8)</p>	<p>Read Genesis 22:1-2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q: <i>What did God ask Abraham to do?</i> ➤ God had finally provided Isaac as the one through whom he would fulfil his promise, and now he was asking Abraham to give him up! • Q: <i>Why would God ask Abraham to give up Isaac (verse 1)?</i> ➤ God was testing to see if Abraham would obey him, even when he couldn’t understand what was happening. Note that although we know this, Abraham was not told that this was a test! ➤ The test was not because God needed to find out what Abraham would do – he already knew. God sometimes does things we don’t understand. But he always knows what he is doing and always acts for the good of his children. <p>Read Genesis 22:3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q: <i>How did Abraham respond?</i> ➤ Abraham obeyed God immediately. He did exactly as God commanded him. <p>Read Genesis 22:4-8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Point out that Abraham told the servants that “we” will come back to you ➤ Show again that Abraham obeyed God completely. • Q: <i>How did Abraham answer Isaac’s question about the lamb for the offering?</i> ➤ Abraham trusted God to provide. He didn’t know how, but he continued to trust God to keep his promise to give him lots of children through Isaac. Even though he didn’t understand, he obeyed God anyway.
<p>3. God provides (v.9-19)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Describe what happens in verses 9 and 10 – the biblical account builds up the suspense; try to get the children to feel this also... then what happens next? <p>Read Genesis 22:11-12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q: <i>How do you think Abraham (and Isaac!) felt at this point?</i> ➤ Describe Abraham discovering the ram in the bushes • Q: <i>What had Abraham said to Isaac when Isaac had asked about the lamb? And what had God done?</i> ➤ Abraham had trusted God to keep his promise, and to provide for him, and that is exactly what God did. Not only that, God spoke to him again, and repeated his promise that Abraham would have as many descendants as stars in the sky. • Q: <i>What had Abraham learned through this test?</i> ➤ He learned that God could be trusted to provide, even when he didn’t know how. ➤ Relate this back to the “Getting Started” activity – Abraham had seen the truth of God’s ability to provide and keep his promise, so his faith was stronger as a result
<p>So What?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Talk about things that we sometimes go through that are not easy or nice (e.g. sickness, being teased at school, missing out on something...) How can we obey God in these situations, even when we don’t understand why it is happening (e.g. not complaining when we are sick, loving people who are mean to us, being content even when we don’t get what we want)? God can use this to prove to us that he can be trusted (Maybe give an example from your own life).
<p>Memory Verse</p>	<p>Psalms 145:3 Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom.</p>

Sunday school lesson – Lower Primary

BIG IDEA	God tests his people
Bible Reading	Genesis 22:1-19
Preparation	<p>Read Genesis 22 The account recorded in this chapter can be difficult to understand. Why would God ask Abraham to sacrifice his own son? We are given the answer to this in verse one. God was testing Abraham. God sometimes puts us in situations that are perplexing, confusing and even painful. He does this to test whether we will still trust and obey him, even in the midst of such difficulties. This is not because God needs to find out what is in our hearts - God already knows everything, including what will happen in the future. Since God has also promised to work all things for the good of those who love him (Romans 8:28), we can assume that rather than being for his own benefit, God’s testing of his children must produce some benefit to ourselves. Indeed, that is exactly what we find to be true. When we obey God in the midst of testing, the result is assurance of his promises and of his provision (Genesis 22:14-18). He also uses testing to produce in us perseverance and spiritual maturity (James 1:3-4). Ultimately, when God’s children persevere and remain faithful through testing, this brings glory to God himself (1 Peter 1:7). While we, the readers, are given insight into the reason behind these events, Abraham himself was not explicitly told that this was a test. God did not say to Abraham “Now I am going to test you. Take your son, your only son, whom you love...” But Abraham still obeyed the perplexing command, and as a result, received a renewal of the covenant promises. We may not always recognise God’s testing, but if we learn to trust and obey God through all circumstances, the result will be greater assurance of who God is and how he provides for us, as well as a stronger faith that has been refined through fire.</p> <p>Take home message: Trust and obey God even when you don’t understand what he is doing. That is the way that God will show himself to be faithful.</p> <p>Prepare for “Getting Started”: Blow up a balloon. Put a clear sticker / sticky tape on it. Have a needle to bring also (you might want to practice the demonstration as described below beforehand!)</p>
Getting Started	<p>Produce your balloon with the sticker on it. Ask the children to tell you if it will burst when you poke it? Tell them that it won’t burst and ask them if they believe you. Prick the balloon through the sticker and show them that it doesn’t burst. Ask the children if they believe you now? Talk about the fact that even if you trust someone, it is hard to believe them if they tell you something that seems impossible. But if they are able to see the truth demonstrated, then it is easier to believe.</p>
Finding Out 1. God tests Abraham (v.1-2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Q: Remember from last week, God had promised to give children to Abraham and Sarah, but what was the problem?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It was impossible for Abraham and Sarah to have children because they were too old, but God had done the impossible and given them a baby! ➤ Sometime later, God appeared again to Abraham. This time, God spoke to Abraham and asked him to give up his son Isaac. ➤ What a strange thing to ask Abraham to do! God had finally kept his promise and

<p>2. Abraham's response (v.3-8)</p> <p>3. God provides (v.9-19)</p>	<p>given a son to Abraham – and now he was asking him to give him up!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Q: Why would God ask Abraham to give up Isaac (verse 1)?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Explain that God was testing Abraham to see if he would obey him, even when he couldn't understand what God was doing. ➢ Explain that the test was not because God needed to know if Abraham would obey him – he already knew what was in Abraham's heart – so it must have been good for Abraham. God sometimes acts in ways we don't understand. But he always does what is good for those who are trusting in him. <p>Read Genesis 22:3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Q: How did Abraham respond to God?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Abraham obeyed God immediately. He did exactly as God commanded him. <p>Read Genesis 22:4-5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Point out that Abraham told the servants that “we” will come back to you, which means he believed that God could still keep his promise about Isaac. <p>Read Genesis 22:6-8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Q: How did Abraham answer Isaac's question about the lamb for the offering?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Abraham trusted God to provide. He didn't know how, but he continued to trust God to keep his promise. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Describe what happens in verses 9 and 10 (<i>give the amount of detail that you feel appropriate to your class</i>). Try to build the suspense as the biblical account does. <p>Read Genesis 22:11-12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Q: How do you think Abraham (and Isaac!) felt at this point?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Describe Abraham discovering the ram in the bushes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Q: What had Abraham said to Isaac when Isaac had asked about the lamb? And what had God done?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Abraham had trusted God to keep his promise, and to provide for him, and that is exactly what God did. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Q: What had Abraham learned through this test?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Abraham learned that God could be trusted to provide, even when he didn't know how God would do this. ➢ Relate this back to the “Getting Started” activity – Abraham had seen how God is able to give him everything he needed, so this meant he trusted God more. Talk about how even though what happened was hard for Abraham, it turned out to be a good thing for him in the end, because he got to know God better.
<p>So What?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Talk about things that we sometimes have to go through that are not easy or nice (e.g. sickness, being teased at school, missing out on something...) Talk about how God can use hard things in our life to show us that he can be trusted (Maybe give an example from your own life).
<p>Memory Verse</p>	<p>Psalm 145:3 <i>Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom.</i></p>

Sunday school lesson – Pre-School

BIG IDEA	God tests his people
Bible Reading	Genesis 22:1-19
Preparation	<p>Read Genesis 22 The account recorded in this chapter can be difficult to understand. Why would God ask Abraham to sacrifice his own son? We are given the answer to this in verse one. God was testing Abraham. God sometimes puts us in situations that are perplexing, confusing and even painful. He does this to test whether we will still trust and obey him, even in the midst of such difficulties. This is not because God needs to find out what is in our hearts - God already knows everything, including what will happen in the future. Since God has also promised to work all things for the good of those who love him (Romans 8:28), we can assume that rather than being for his own benefit, God’s testing of his children must produce some benefit to ourselves. Indeed, that is exactly what we find to be true. When we obey God in the midst of testing, the result is assurance of his promises and of his provision (Genesis 22:14-18). He also uses testing to produce in us perseverance and spiritual maturity (James 1:3-4). Ultimately, when God’s children persevere and remain faithful through testing, this brings glory to God himself (1 Peter 1:7). While we, the readers, are given insight into the reason behind these events, Abraham himself was not explicitly told that this was a test. God did not say to Abraham “Now I am going to test you. Take your son, your only son, whom you love...” But Abraham still obeyed the perplexing command, and as a result, received a renewal of the covenant promises. We may not always recognise God’s testing, but if we learn to trust and obey God through all circumstances, the result will be greater assurance of who God is and how he provides for us, as well as a stronger faith that has been refined through fire.</p> <p>Take home message: Trust and obey God even when you don’t understand what he is doing. That is the way that God will show himself to be faithful.</p> <p>Prepare for “Getting Started”: Blow up a balloon. Put a clear sticker / sticky tape on it. Have a needle to bring also (you might want to practice the demonstration as described below beforehand!)</p>
Getting Started	Produce your balloon with the sticker on it. Ask the children to tell you if it will burst when you poke it? Tell them that it won’t burst and ask them if they believe you. Prick the balloon through the sticker and show them that it doesn’t burst. Ask the children if they believe you now? Talk about the fact that it is easier to believe something if you see it for yourself.
Finding Out 1. God tests Abraham (v.1-2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Q: Remember from last week, God had promised to give children to Abraham and Sarah – what was the name of their baby?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ God had kept his promise. Even though it had taken a long, long time, he had finally given them a baby! ➤ Years later, when Isaac was older, God again spoke to Abraham. ➤ God asked Abraham to give up his son Isaac. He told Abraham that he had to be willing for Isaac to die. ➤ What a strange thing to ask Abraham to do! God had finally kept his promise and

<p>2. Abraham’s response (v.3-8)</p> <p>3. God provides (v.9-19)</p>	<p>given a son to Abraham – and now he was asking him to give him up!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ God had a good reason for doing this. He wanted to see if Abraham would obey him, even when he couldn’t understand what God was doing. ➤ God sometimes does things we don’t understand. But he always does what is good for those who are trusting in him. <p>Read Genesis 22:3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Q: How did Abraham respond to God?</i> ➤ Abraham obeyed God immediately. He did exactly as God commanded him. ➤ Describe Abraham and Isaac walking up the mountain together. Explain that normally they would need to take a lamb with them to give as a present to God, but that Abraham didn’t have a lamb (because God had asked for Isaac instead). <p>Read Genesis 22:7-8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Q: Who did Abraham say would provide a lamb for them?</i> ➤ Abraham trusted God to provide the lamb. He didn’t know how this would happen. But even though he didn’t understand, he obeyed God anyway. ➤ They got all the way to the top of the mountain, and Isaac was about to die... when God spoke to Abraham again and told him that he didn’t have to give up Isaac after all! • <i>Q: How do you think Abraham (and Isaac!) felt?</i> ➤ Describe Abraham discovering the sheep in the bushes ➤ Abraham had trusted God to keep his promise, and to provide for him, and that is exactly what God did! ➤ Abraham learned that God could be trusted to give him everything he needed, even when he didn’t know how God would do this. ➤ Relate this back to the “Getting Started” activity – Abraham had seen how God is able to give him everything he needed, so this meant he trusted God more. Talk about how even though what happened was hard for Abraham, it turned out to be a good thing for him in the end, because he got to know God better.
So What?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sometimes we have to go through things that are not easy or nice (e.g. being sick, missing out on something...) Talk about how God can use hard things to help us to see that we can trust him (Maybe give an example from your own life).
Memory Verse	<p>Psalm 145:3 <i>Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom</i></p>
Alternative to worksheet	<p>Make a mask with a sad face on one side and a happy face on the other side (using paper plates/round pieces of card and a stick). Use it to reinforce the message – “God can use sad things (<i>sad face</i>) for our good (<i>happy face</i>)”</p>