

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

Your Faith or Your Dreams
Genesis 22:1-19

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a Unit of sessions needs to have access to the "Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study". That information is often provided at the beginning of that Unit of sessions. The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

You may want to provide an alternate lesson for preschoolers and the group will need to be sensitive to the questions children may have about Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son, Isaac.

Have pictures of children of group members or pictures of children in general to introduce the concepts of the lesson.

Bible Study Leader:

If possible, have written copies of Discussion Question #1 for the group to consider.

Worship Time Leader:

Music Sources:

Worthy of Worship, *Baptist Hymnal*, 1991, #3; *The Worship Hymnal*, 2008, #3; CCLI #82869

Awesome God, *WOW Worship*, 2003; *The Worship Hymnal*, 2008, #63; CCLI #41099

Here I am to Worship, *WOW Worship*, 2003, *The Worship Hymnal*, 2008, #130; CCLI #3266032

Wherever He Leads I'll Go, *Baptist Hymnal*, 1991, #285; *The Worship Hymnal*, 2008, #437; CCLI #25194

1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

Gathering together:

Read together Revelation 4:11

**You are worthy, our Lord and God,
To receive glory and honour and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they were created
and have their being.**

Sing **Worthy of Worship**, *The Worship Hymnal*, 2008, #3; CCLI #82869

First thoughts:

Have pictures of children of group members or pictures of children in general to introduce the concepts of the lesson.

Today we will examine one of the most difficult passages in the Bible to understand and to apply to our own lives. We are aware that many religions have demanded human sacrifice. We consider those religions to be far removed from Christian faith based on Christ's love for us. Today's world news is filled with examples of people willing to sacrifice their lives in suicide bombings in order to kill those whose beliefs differ. They believe they will have an eternal reward for those actions. Families feel pride in the sacrifice that is made.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Thus, it is with difficulty that we understand the story of how God asked Abraham to be willing to sacrifice his long awaited son, Isaac. What does God want to teach us today?

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

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Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

Your Faith or Your Dreams

Focal Text

Genesis 22:1-19

Background Text

Genesis 22:1-19

Main Idea

God calls us to risk our reliance on our human dreams and methods and live in trust that God will provide.

Question to Explore

What human dreams and methods are you willing to give up?

Teaching Aim

To lead participants to decide to emphasize trust in God rather than reliance on human dreams and methods.

Introduction to your personal study:

Does love of family come before love of God? How much faith do we need when everything is going along smoothly in our lives? Do we trust God to obey his most radical demands of us?

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study**”, found at the beginning of this Unit. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

God had promised Abraham that his descendants would number more than the sands of the seashore and that through him all nations would be blessed.

As Abraham and Sarah grew older, and no heir was born to them, they took matters into their own hands, and worked out a plan for Abraham to have a son through a servant girl, Hagar. Because this was not the son of promise, their plan brought about suffering and turmoil in the family. Abraham once again focused his eyes on God's plan and waited patiently for it to come about. In God's due time, a son Isaac, was born to Sarah and Abraham in their old age.

Focusing on the Meaning:

This story "inquires into the deepest understanding of God's relationship to man. Isaac was not only Abraham's beloved son; he represented the purpose of his entire life and all the promises that God had ever made to him. If he surrendered Isaac to God, there was nothing left. What God had given, he seemed now to be taking away. Abraham was not expected to understand; he was only expected to obey" (*The Broadman Bible Commentary*, Vol. 1. Nashville: Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1969, page 187).

Genesis 22:1-19

22:1 God called upon Abraham in order to test his faith and Abraham responded, although he did not know it was a test.

22:2 God requested that Abraham take his precious only son into the mountainous region of Moriah and offer him as a sacrifice to God. God was not trying to cause Abraham to sin – he was giving him an opportunity to demonstrate his loyalty and love for God. Was it more than his love for his son? Very often our suffering is not because God is punishing us but rather that he is placing us in a situation where our faith will have the opportunity to grow. We know that God was opposed to human sacrifice as practiced by the heathens of that area. He is the giver of life, and does not desire to waste or destroy it unnecessarily.

"How could the God of love revealed by Jesus Christ ever ask such a thing of a man? He would certainly not do so today, for we know through Israel's own law and prophets, which were certainly based upon the outcome of this event, that human sacrifice is not acceptable to God. In Abraham's day a clear understanding of God's attitude toward such an offering was not likely. In fact by means of this command to Abraham God would afterwards be able to show positively that he did not want the sacrifice at all. He only wanted Abraham to be willing to offer it" (*The Broadman Bible Commentary*, Vol. 1. Nashville: Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1969, page 188).

22:3 The next morning (perhaps God's word came to him while he slept) Abraham arose and saddled the donkey. He, Isaac, and two servants cut wood for the burnt offering and then set out for the place God had told him about. God requires devotion without reservation. Abraham was tuned in to God's voice – he was eager to obey, although his heart must have been very heavy at the thought of what was required of him.

22:4 After three days travel they saw the place in the distance where they were going. History tells us that this same mountain region is where Christ himself was crucified outside Jerusalem many years later.

22:5 Abraham asked his servants to remain in the foothills with the donkey while he and Isaac continued on. He assured the servants that he and Isaac would return after worship. Perhaps he even thought that God would raise Isaac from the dead after Abraham had obediently sacrificed him.

22:6, 7 While Isaac carried the wood for the offering, Abraham carried the knife and fire starter. Isaac questioned his father as to the whereabouts of the lamb for the sacrifice.

22:8 Abraham answered prophetically that God himself would provide the lamb of sacrifice. This passage has many foreshadowed pictures of the sacrifice of God's only son Jesus.

22:9 When they reached the assigned place, Abraham built an altar, arranged the wood on it, then bound his son and laid him on it. Isaac was no longer a small child – he could have overpowered his father, but he, too, acted in complete obedience.

22:10-12 As Abraham raised his hand to strike Isaac with the knife, an angel of the lord called to him and admonished him not to harm Isaac. He was sure now that Abraham trusted God completely because he was willing to obey to the point of giving up the best thing he had in all the world.

22:13,14 When Abraham looked up he saw a ram caught in the hedge. He took the ram and offered it as a sacrifice in place of his son. Abraham named that place "God will provide" as a testament to God's goodness. God did not allow him to sacrifice his son. Because of his obedience, other provisions were made for the offering. Obedience always guarantees provision.

22:15-18 Then the angel of the Lord spoke to Abraham again. He declared that since Abraham had not withheld his most precious possession, God would indeed bless him and make his descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and the sand along the shore. He reminded him that they would gain possession of the promised land and through them every nation on earth would be blessed. It was all because of Abraham's obedience.

22:19 In a rather anticlimactic way, this very dramatic passage concludes with Abraham and Isaac returning to the waiting servants and setting off for their home in Beersheba, where they continued to live under God's provision.

Abraham, the first patriarch of the Hebrews, experienced a great victory in this test of faith God took him through. He had been through other times of testing – leaving his homeland, parting from his nephew Lot, and separating from his son Ishmael. He did not always understand all the details of what God was asking of him, but he always trusted God. He learned that one of God's names is Jehovah-Jirah “God will provide”.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

This passage takes us through a time of severe testing in Abraham's life, in which he was called upon to let go of something very precious to him in order to remain obedient to God's leading. It helps us understand that God will provide whatever it is we need to deal with any situation, as long as we are obedient.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

Your Faith or Your Dreams

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Focal Text

Genesis 22:1-19

Background Text

Genesis 22:1-19

Main Idea

God calls us to risk our reliance on our human dreams and methods and live in trust that God will provide.

Question to Explore

What human dreams and methods are you willing to give up?

Teaching Aim

To lead participants to decide to emphasize trust in God rather than reliance on human dreams and methods.

Connect with Life:

Read the following paragraph and invite the group to share their feelings about it. You may want to have written copies of this paragraph so that the group can more carefully consider the implications.

We may not always understand how or why God acts in some circumstances, but we can count on Him to always provide what we need if we faithfully obey him. Our obedience may even allow us to witness a miracle. God will provide for us what He expects from us. He does not make impossible or unreasonable demands of us. He

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Your Faith or Your Dreams – 09-25-05-en

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knows what is best for each of our lives. God's purpose in this world is always redemptive.

Guide the Study:

Before class, write this outline on the board:

- (1) God tested Abraham (Genesis 11:1-2)
- (2) Abraham trusted God (Genesis 22:3-8)
- (3) Abraham passed God's test (Genesis 22:9-14)
- (4) God Honoured Abraham's Trust (Genesis 22:15-19)

Encourage members to share personal dreams for the future they entertained as they were growing up.

Encourage answers to these questions:

Have some of them been fulfilled?

Has God pointed some in different directions?

Request a person to read the scripture passage in its entirety: Genesis 22:1-19.

Then have another person read Genesis 22:1-2.

Say: What would we think if we did know the end of the story? Abraham did not know this was a test. God never intended for Abraham to kill his son.

Ask: What did Abraham feel? How would you feel?

Tell the group: Imagine you are Abraham. Do you see yourself arguing with God about the wisdom of giving up Isaac? Describe your conversation with God.

Have another person read Genesis 22:3-8.

Say: Isaac was the treasure of his parents, the way many children are the treasure of their parents and grandparents today. Abraham did what God said without waiting. He did everything that was necessary to make a burnt offering to God, except that he did not bring the lamb. Notice that Abraham told his servants "We will come back." Abraham did not know what God would do, but he trusted God to do something. Abraham completely trusted God, as Isaac completely trust his father.

Invite the group to now put themselves in Isaac's place. Ask them: To what extent was he obedient?

Have someone read Genesis 22:9-14.

Comment: God did not intend for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. This test proved Abraham's understanding that God's promise to bless him and his descendants would not be made void. Abraham showed that he fully trusted God.

Look for responses and discussion: What are concrete ways in which we learn to trust God's providential care. (Daily thank him for the ordinary ways in which he cares for us; examine times in our lives in which God has manifested his care; read stories of others who share ways in which God has cared for them; study and memorize Bible passage relating to His care).

Ask someone to read Genesis 22:15-19.

Seek opinions on this: How does this verse make us feel? ***"Good will come to all the nations of the earth by your children and their children's children. Because you have obeyed My voice."*** Genesis 22:18.

Add: Do you think this promise applied only to Abraham or is it applicable to us today?

Then question the group: Does our faithfulness make a difference in how God blesses our children and grandchildren and our community and world?

Invite the group to do this: Search the passage for parallels to the New Testament account of Christ's sacrificial death.

Comment: God did not require Abraham to sacrifice his son. But what God did not require of Abraham, God was willing to do Himself. God sent his only son, Jesus, to be offered as the ultimate sacrifice for all sin.

Ask the class to say together the familiar verse from John 3:16.

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Encourage input from the group as to what is the most precious thing in each of their lives, outside their relationship with Christ. (children, mate, church family, career, etc.)

Offer this challenge:

Are you willing to walk away from what is precious to you if God asks you to so?

Are you change jobs or place of residence if God indicated a task which he had for you to do?

Then suggest this: Think about how much we limit what God can do and bless in our lives by our lack of obedience.

Conclude with a time of prayer of commitment to obedience to God's direction.

(Helpful ideas for the Bible Study Plan were taken from the Teaching Guide, Unit 1: Israel's First Family, Lesson 5: God First or Family First? Online materials from BaptistWay Press, www.baptistway.com).

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

Your Faith or Your Dreams **Genesis 22:1-19**

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

What Does My Future Hold?

Make a list of careers you think sound interesting. What are the reasons one of those careers might be right for you? What changes in your study habits or choices might you need to make to make it possible to pursue such a career? What place does God's will have in the plans you are making today for your future? Who could help you understand more about finding God's will for your life?

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Your Faith or Your Dreams***
Genesis 22:1-19**Beginning the Service:****Awesome God**, *The Worship Hymnal*, 2008, #63; CCLI #41099**Here I am to Worship**, *The Worship Hymnal*, 2008, #130; CCLI # 3266032**Offering:****Praying for the World:**

At least 38 million people live in Central America and Panama. In every major city in this area, gangs are the primary cause of violent crime. Some researchers say as many as 40,000 young people are involved in these gangs. Out of 9 violent deaths each day, 8 are committed by gang members! Pray for those local believers and missionaries who minister among gangs in very dangerous places. This ministry moment seems particularly poignant as we consider God's special place for every child that is born. For every gang member, we can imagine the shattered hopes and dreams of a parent.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

God's Gifts—God's Plans**Introduction:**

A family awaits the birth of a new baby. This baby will be born in a far away place. It is the dry season and water must be carried by hand. They will have to travel a number of miles to receive medical care, but their vehicle has not been trustworthy recently. Neither has their refrigerator. In fact, everything seems to have gone wrong that could possibly have gone wrong.

What makes it possible for the parents of this young couple to wait relatively calmly in their home thousands of miles away. What keeps them from boarding a plane, flying to the place where the young couple lives and forcibly causing them to return to a safer environment.

The parents learned some things long ago and have passed them on to their children. Abraham had learned these things as well. They enabled him to follow God's commands to prepare to sacrifice Isaac.

1. Every child is a gift from God.

Certainly, Abraham and Sarah knew this. God had promised a son, but that son delayed in being born. Sarah was 90 years old when Isaac was born. Could Abraham and Sarah doubt that this child was a gift from God!

Couples who have difficulty in conceiving a child know well that children are a gift of God. Couples who wait for years to adopt a child are very aware that the child they adopt is a special gift. Couples who try various means of helping with conception know that a child is a gift.

New parents, even those who are non-religious, are overcome at the birth of a child with an overwhelming sense of being given a precious gift.

Sadly, sometimes parents do not see their precious new baby as a gift. Conflict between the parents, a single mother bearing a child alone without a support system, or a family with so many children that there are neither economic means or emotional strength to give this child, can create such a tragedy. It is not the way God meant it to be. Every child is meant to be received as a gift from God.

2. God has a plan for each child bigger than the plans which parents can make.

In affluent countries, parents begin to plan for a child's education when they are still pre-schoolers. Language, music, and sports classes may consume much of both the parents and the child's time. Saving for private schools and for university may put huge demands on the family's income, but no sacrifice seems too great.

However, in most places in the world today, plans for children revolve around trying to provide food and shelter for the day's needs. In either case, it is essential that parents remember that God's plans are better than our plans.

Abraham had great plans for Isaac. He was to be the one through whom God would bless the nations. He was to be the one who provided descendants for Abraham. Yet, in this time of trial, Abraham understood that God's plans for Isaac were better than his plans.

God gave Jeremiah the disagreeable task of proclaiming to the Israelite people the punishment of the Lord for their disobedience. Early in his life the word of the Lord came to him saying ***"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."***

Jeremiah replied, ***"Ah, Sovereign Lord, I do not know how to speak; I am only a child."***

But the Lord said, ***"Do not say, 'I am only a child. You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you.'"*** (Jeremiah 1: 4-8)

Many years before the time of Jeremiah, Abraham could not see how God's plans in Isaac's life were going to work out. But he trusted God that those plans would be better than the plans he would imagine.

3. God is able to protect those we love.

Isaac asked his father, ***"but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"***

"God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." Abraham replied.

Abraham went about the business of traveling to the site of the sacrifice; gathering the wood for the sacrifice and building the altar. Abraham's only command up to this point was to take his son and sacrifice him as a burnt offering. We can imagine Abraham's agony throughout the entire journey. As he bound Isaac and laid him on top of the wood and reached out his hand to slay his own son, the pain would have been unbearable.

Then came the angel of the Lord calling out to him from heaven, ***"Abraham, Abraham!"*** ***"Here I am,"*** he replied.

"Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. ***"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."***

Down through the ages of time since Abraham, parents have had to learn that God is able to protect those we love.

We do all we can. We provide good schooling and we hope that our values will be passed on to our children. We monitor friends and pray that our teenagers will not be influenced by drugs and alcohol. But ultimately, the best protection we can give our children is to say, ***“Here I am, Lord. I give myself and my child to you.”***

One missionary family left the country where they had served during the years of the oldest daughter’s growing up. She went away to university at the time this family was leaving for another assignment. She was deeply grieved when she knew she could no longer return home to the country where she had such deep roots. The parents grieved for her, but they knew God had called them to another responsibility.

Before many years passed, the daughter came for a visit. Then she decided to do additional studies and before long she met and married a young man who was studying in the seminary where her parents taught. Her parents’ “new country” became hers.

Recently, she and her family served in a refugee mission situation a long distance away in Europe. Again, her parents asked God for His protection and guidance on their daughter. Once more, they knew that God was able to protect those they love.

As we close, let us return to the young couple awaiting a new baby in a far away and somewhat hostile country. When did they learn to depend on God? When did their parents learn to entrust them into God’s care?

Parents and children learned in dozens of smaller situations over the life of the child. When God spoke to them, the parents answered, “Here I am”. Through childhood play times and injuries and illness; through teenage angst and the pain of giving independence; through good decisions and bad decisions of young adulthood, the parents gave their child to the Lord’s protection.

Call to Commitment:

The topic for our study and worship today is “Your Faith or Your Dreams”. Parents have dreams for their children. Sometimes those dreams get in the way of trusting God to direct the lives of our children. A parent may dream that his/her child will be a successful doctor, hockey player, or politician. Dreams are important, but not as important as seeking God’s will as we parent or as we live our own lives. It is a popular credo of Western societies to say to children, “You can be whatever you want to be.” How might we restate that credo to say to our children that it is better to be whatever God wants one to be?

Concluding the Service:

Sing **Wherever He Leads I’ll Go** *The Worship Hymnal*, 2008, #437; CCLI #25194

Print and cut copies for each participant in the Gathering Time:

**You are worthy, our Lord and God,
To receive glory and honour and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they were created
and have their being.**

Revelation 4:11

**You are worthy, our Lord and God,
To receive glory and honour and power,
for you created all things,
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