

General Church Education



Family Lesson: Genesis 22
The Sacrifice
of Isaac

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Family Lesson 1 - J

The Sacrifice of Isaac
Genesis 22

Family Talk:
SACRIFICES FOR THE LORD

Rev. Frederick L. Schnarr

The story of how Abraham almost sacrificed his son Isaac on Mount Morrah is one that is hard for us to read about. It is so horrible to think that a father would be willing to sacrifice his son in this way, and that the Lord seemed to desire it, that we are at first struck with horror.

We know that Abraham was a good man. And so we ask ourselves how a good man could possibly imagine that the Lord wanted him to do such a terrible thing as to sacrifice his son.

Before we examine some of the things the Lord is teaching in this story, let us note a few things that the Writings say about sacrifices.

Sacrifices were unknown in both the Ancient and Most Ancient Churches. The worship of the people of the Silver and Golden age was so internal that they never thought of the Lord either needing or wanting to have sacrifices. Sacrifices arose when the Ancient Church came to its end, and the knowledge and love of spiritual things perished.

Sacrifices therefore arose, along with different forms of idolatry, with the Hebrew Church — certainly hundreds, but perhaps even thousands of years before Abraham's time. The more external and worldly people became, the more they developed false ideas about the Lord. They not only began to worship many gods instead of one, but they built altars, and began to sacrifice animals and eventually even their own children.

Abraham grew up among such people in the cities along the Euphrates River. He was an idolater, and was used to the idea of sacrifices — even human ones.

When the Lord asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, Abraham would have been grieved about the request, but not shocked, for this was a familiar thing to his people.

What Abraham did not know and could not yet understand, was that the Lord was trying in every possible way to stop and prevent human sacrifice. The main reason the Lord permitted the Israelites to sacrifice animals and birds was, indeed, so that they would not sacrifice humans.

As the Hebrew Church people turned to the use of sacrifice, the Lord then not only permitted this to prevent a worse thing from happening, but He made sure that the sacrifices they performed could be used to represent heavenly things. So the Lord not only commanded them when to sacrifice, but what animals and birds to use. And He did this so that whatever they did do, even if it was not the Lord's desire,

would still serve Him, so that His Word would bring together heaven and earth by means of representations.

New Church people are so fortunate, because we now know from the Word of the Lord's Second Coming that there is a beautiful and secret message in the story of Abraham trying to sacrifice his son Isaac. We know that the Lord was prophesying in this story about part of His life when He was in the world. He was talking about the temptations He would have, and how He would have to sacrifice His own life to save the human race.

We cannot very easily understand the Lord's temptations, but we can understand the idea of sacrificing something we love, and how hard it is for us to do this. When we give up part of our selfish and bad desires and feelings, it seems like we are giving up part of our very life. And it's not easy, is it? The stronger some ugly love or thought has a hold of us, the harder we have to fight it — the more of a sacrifice we have to make.

Giving up such things from our life seems like a sacrifice, because we don't feel or sense what will take its place. We know from the Lord's teachings that good loves, feelings, and thoughts will come to us, but only after things that are against them, things that are evil and false, are driven away.

When Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac, he did not at first see the ram stuck in the thicket. In the middle of our feeling sorry and sad about the things we are giving up, the Lord is providing good things to bring us truly heavenly and happy states in their place.

More than a thousand years after Abraham lived the Lord spoke about sacrifices to a prophet named Micah. We should memorize these words, and remember them whenever we are confused or mixed up about our sacrifices, and what the Lord expects from us. The words are so simple and so beautiful:

“With what shall I come before the Lord,
And bow myself before the High God?
Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings,
With calves a year old?

Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams
Or ten thousand rivers of oil?
Shall I give my first born for my transgression,
The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

He has shown you, O man, what is good;
And what does the Lord require of you
But to do justly,
To love mercy,
And to walk humbly with your God?”

(Micah 6: 6-8)

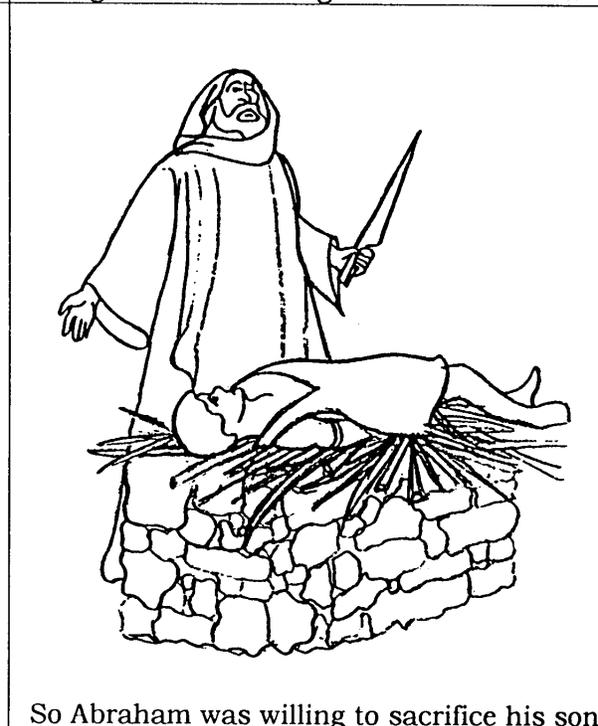
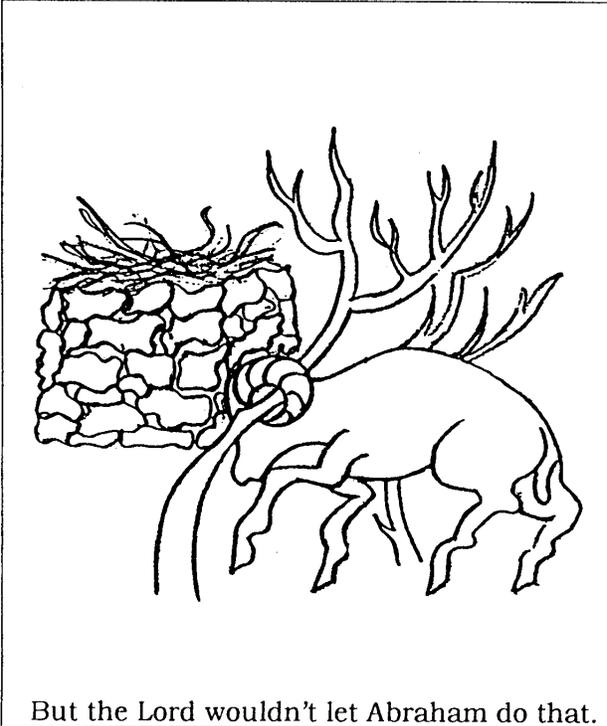
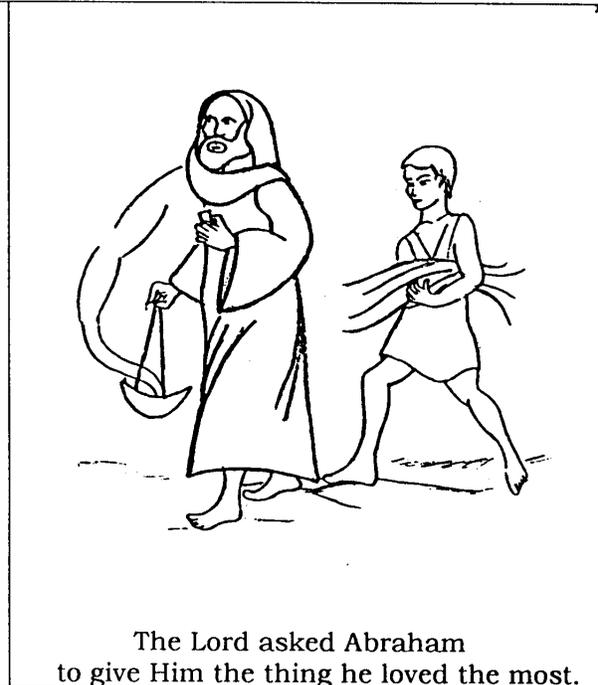
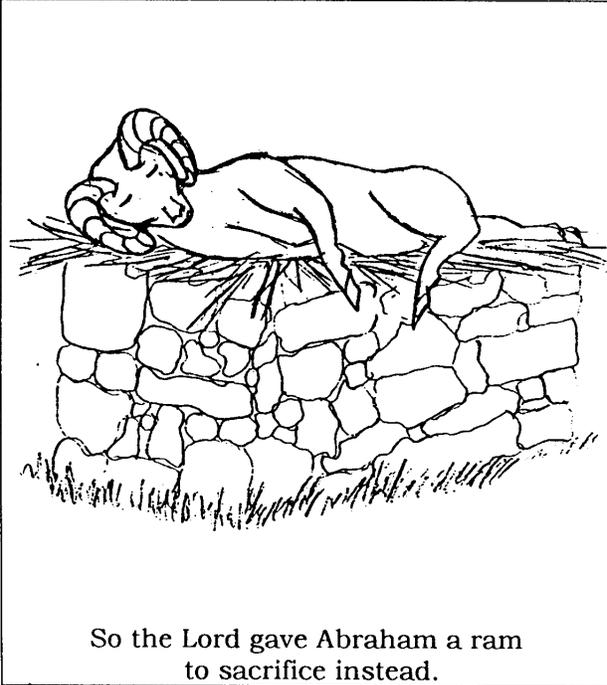
The Sacrifice of Isaac
Genesis 22:1-14
LEVEL 1 – FINDING THE RAM

First find the ram for Abraham to sacrifice, then color the picture.



The Sacrifice of Isaac
Genesis 22:1-14
LEVEL 2 – STORY BOOK

Directions: Cut out the 4 panels. Put them in the right order to tell the story.
Color the pictures. Staple them together to make a book.



The Sacrifice of Isaac **Genesis 22** **LEVEL 3 – THE LORD WILL PROVIDE**

MATERIALS NEEDED

The Word or Bible

People worship the Lord in lots of different ways. Many years ago in the time of Abraham they gave burnt offerings to God as a sign of their love for Him. These burnt offerings were usually animals.



In those days, if you loved the Lord and wanted to worship Him, it was said that you feared God. To fear God means to love God not to be afraid of Him.

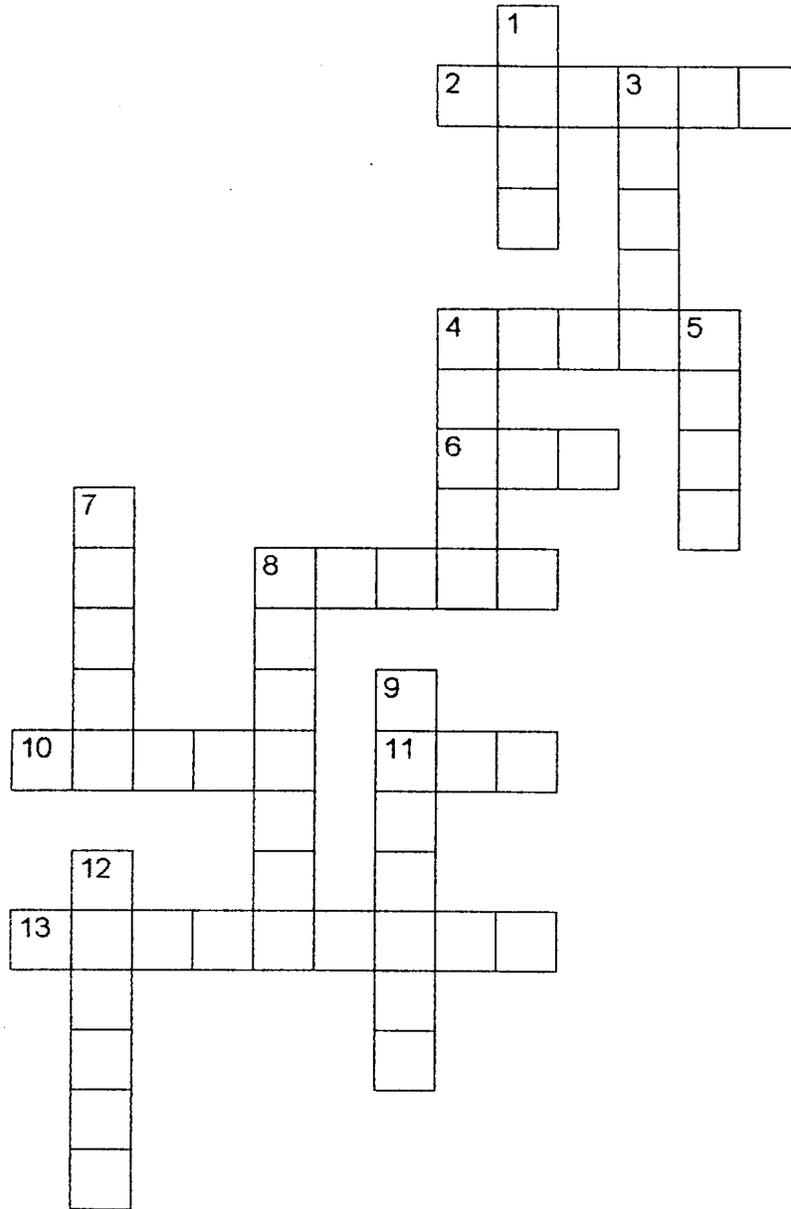
In this story Abraham was tested by the Lord. Abraham proved that he loved the Lord because he was willing to give up something he loved very much in order to obey the Lord.

Because Abraham loved and obeyed the Lord, the Lord provided. The Lord will always provide. He provided the ram, a male sheep, for the burnt offering. He will always bring good out of evil. We can trust in the Lord. This is why Abraham called the place of the burnt offering, “The-Lord-Will-Provide.”



Crossword Puzzle

There is a crossword puzzle on the next page for you to do. You will need to use your copy of the Word to find the answers to the clues. The answers can be found in Genesis 22:1-14



Across

- 2. they traveled on a -----
- 4. The -----of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven
- 6. Abraham took -----young men with him
- 8. they finally saw the place on the -----day
- 10. Abraham's son
- 11. the animal Abraham was given to sacrifice
- 13. Abraham was to go up one of the -----

Down

- 1. first Abraham placed the -----on the altar
- 3. Abraham took a ----- to slay his son
- 4. Abraham built an -----
- 5. Isaac wondered where the -----was for the offering
- 7. the ram was caught by its -----
- 8. an animal was caught in the -----
- 9. Abraham called the name of the place "The Lord Will -----"
- 12. the Lord told Abraham to go to the land of -----

The Sacrifice of Isaac
Genesis 22:1-14
LEVEL 4 – TRUE INNOCENCE

True innocence is a willingness to follow the Lord in our lives.



Abraham was willing to obey the Lord in *everything* of life. In this story the Lord asked Abraham to give up what he loved most of all — his son, Isaac.

Abraham obeyed the Lord until the very last moment, when the Lord gave him a ram to sacrifice instead of Isaac.



The Writings tell us that in the Word a ram means truth which is strong because it is innocent. True innocence is a willingness to follow the Lord in our lives.

Here are some situations for you to think about in *your* life.

Briefly discuss each situation: What do you think you might *want* to do?

What do you think is the *right* thing to do?

1. A friend leaves something at your house that you've always wanted. He has forgotten it, and won't remember anything about it.

2. People at school or work swear a lot and tease you for not swearing. They even call you a "goody-good."

3. You're watching television. The program begins to make fun of marriage.

4. Your friends say mean things about other people behind their backs.

5. You're in a bad mood and tired, but your family asks you to help clean the house.

6. You are playing a volleyball game in P.E. There is a player on your team who is not good at sports, but he tries very hard to do his best. He misses the final volley and your team loses.

The Sacrifice of Isaac

Genesis 22:1-14

LEVEL 5 – ABRAHAM’S TEMPTATION

Read this passage from the Old Testament about Abraham and Isaac:

Abraham’s temptation (Genesis 22:1-14)

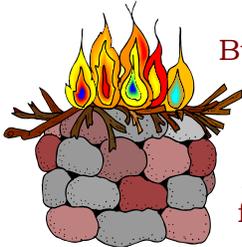
Now it came to pass after these things that God tempted (tested) Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.”

And He said, “Take now 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 of which I shall tell you.”

So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.

Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you.”

So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together.

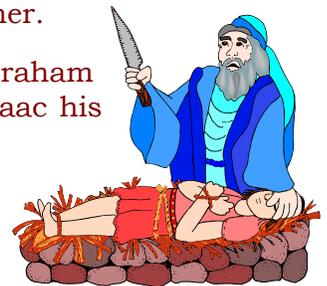


But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” And he said, “Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?”

And Abraham said, “My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering. And the two of them went together.

Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood.

And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.



But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.”



And He said, “Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.”

Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son.

And Abraham called the name of the place, The-Lord-Will-Provide, as it is said to this day, “In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided.”

What the Writings tell us

The Writings tell us that the stories of the Old and New Testament contain an internal sense that tell about the Lord, and about our mental and spiritual states.

The chapter you have just read about Abraham's temptation, tells, in the internal sense, about "the Lord's most grievous and inmost temptations...by which He united His Human Essence to His Divine Essence..." (Arcana Coelestia 2764)

The Lord's most grievous temptation

Now read about the Lord's "most grievous and inmost temptation."

(Matthew 27:27-50).

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him.



And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him.

When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head.

Then when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led him away to be crucified.

Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross.

And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull,

They gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink.

Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken y the prophet:

They divided My garments among them,
And for My clothing they cast lots (Ps.22:18).

Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there.

And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him:

**THIS IS JESUS
KING OF THE JEWS**



Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left.

And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, “You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.”

Likewise the chief priests, also mocking with the scribes and elders, said,

“He saved others; himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him.”

He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, ‘I am the Son of God.’”

Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing.

Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over the land.

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?”

that is “My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?”

Some of those who stood there, when they heard that, said, “this man is calling for Elijah!”

Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink.

The rest said, “Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him.”

Jesus, when he had cried out again with a loud voice, yielded up His spirit.



1. *What was Abraham’s temptation or trial?* _____

2. *What do you think was the Lord’s temptation or trial?* _____

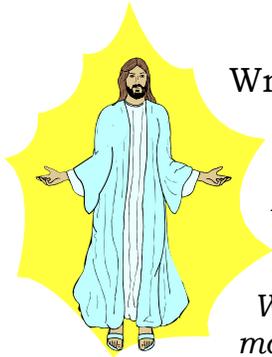
The Lord does not tempt people

“Now it came to pass after these things that God tempted Abraham..”
(Genesis 22:1)

Read what the Writings say about this verse:

As regards the words “God tempted, these are used in accordance with the sense of the letter, in which temptations and many other things are attributed to God. But in accordance with the internal sense the truth is that God does not tempt anyone. In times of temptation he is constantly delivering the person from it...But it is the evil residing with man which causes and even leads him into temptation. God is no more the cause of it than a king or a judge is when a person does evil and is therefore punished for it. For anyone who forsakes the laws of Divine order, all of which are those of good and from this of truth, makes himself subject to laws contrary to Divine order, which are those of evil and falsity, and consequently of punishments and torments.

(Arcana Coelestia 2768 portions)



Write your ideas

Can you think of ways in which ignoring rules and laws, especially the Lord’s laws, can lead us into unhappiness or punishment? Who do we blame? If a person breaks the law and is sent to prison, is it the judge’s fault? If we disobey the Lord’s rules and it causes unhappiness, is it the Lord’s fault?

Write some of your ideas below. Use the extra page if you need more space.

Blank page with horizontal lines for writing.