

STEP 2

Bible Learning
(15–20 minutes)

Bible Basis:

Abraham and Isaac on Mount Moriah (Gen. 22:1-19; Heb. 11:17-19).

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Genesis 22:1-19

¹Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!"

"Here I am," he replied.

²Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you."

³Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. ⁴On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. ⁵He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you."

⁶Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, ⁷Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?"

"Yes, my son?" Abraham replied.

"The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"

⁸Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together.

OBJECTIVE: That your students examine different dimensions of Abraham's faith as he made a tough choice.

Materials:

- Copies of *Blueprint*
- Pencils or pens

Have students read Genesis 22:1-19, the story of Abraham's near sacrifice of Isaac. As they read, ask them to list in their minds questions Abraham probably asked himself.

- ▶ **We are dealing with a very difficult passage in Scripture that may raise a lot of questions for you. It describes the toughest decision Abraham ever faced. What do you think were some of the questions going through Abraham's mind during this time?** (*Am I really hearing God? God has talked with me before, but maybe this time I am hearing "voices." Why is God asking me to do this? How can this be right?*)

As students think about Abraham's decisions, they may come up with questions about this passage: Was Abraham being irrational? Does God delight in human sacrifice? Why did God put Abraham to this kind of test? What did Abraham expect to happen? Today's Bible study addresses these questions. Have students turn to page 59 of *Blueprint* to find the Bible study.

Read the study together a paragraph at a time, stopping whenever the material addresses your students' questions. Additional questions are also provided for you.

■ FROM *Blueprint*—God Will Provide a Lamb

Today's text is a very difficult passage to understand unless we are willing to keep an open mind as we read. We can find meaning in what may appear to be an unfair test of courage.

- ▶ According to Genesis 22:1, why did God put Abraham through this? (*God did this in order to test Abraham and develop his faith. God does not delight in human sacrifice; in fact, He forbids it in Leviticus 18:21 and 20:2.*)

Fortunately, we can skip ahead to the end of the story to find the outcome. However, Abraham didn't have that advantage and was faced with the toughest choice of his entire life.

Abraham had to struggle with some of the same questions most of us have to face at some point in our lives. Is God trustworthy? Will I risk my dreams and hopes to be obedient to God's will even when I cannot understand it completely?

- ▶ **How does this story tie into what Jesus did for us on the cross?**
- ▶ **When Abraham addressed his servants, who did he say would return after the sacrifice? How could this be if Abraham intended to obey God?** (*Abraham said "we," meaning he and Isaac, would return. Abraham figured that God would give his son back to him somehow.*) Have your students read the New Testament commentary on this event in Hebrews 11:17-19.
- ▶ **What did Abraham stand to lose by sacrificing his only son?** (*He would not have any descendants, and all that God had promised would be lost.*)
- ▶ **According to this passage, what was Abraham counting on God to do?** (*Raise Isaac from the dead.*)



⁹When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!"

"Here I am," he replied.

¹²"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."

¹³Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son.

¹⁴So Abraham called the place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided."

¹⁵The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time ¹⁶and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, ¹⁸and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

¹⁹Then Abraham returned to his servants, and they set off together for Beersheba. And Abraham stayed in Beersheba.

Hebrews 11:17-19

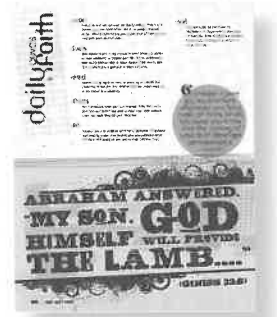
¹⁷By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, ¹⁸even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." ¹⁹Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.

In Abraham's time, the concept of a resurrection—bodily life after death—was virtually unknown. Religious leaders were still arguing about it even during Jesus' time! But today's text in Hebrews says that Abraham was counting on God to raise Isaac from the dead. Abraham's faith in the resurrection was such that he was sure he would receive his son back. According to what he told his servants, Abraham fully expected to come back down the hill with Isaac.

In a figurative sense, he did get Isaac back. By offering his son up to God, Abraham was showing that he believed God would keep His promise of a nation. With Abraham's loyalty proved, God gave Isaac back to his father. Abraham had passed this test of faith.

Call on someone to read today's memory verse, James 1:2-3. The verse is printed on page 60 of *Blueprint*.

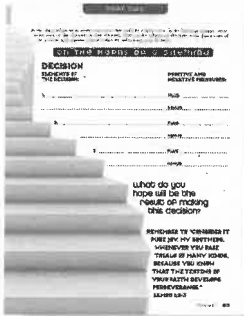
- ▶ **How does Abraham's story demonstrate today's memory verse?** (*Abraham's faith in God gave him the confidence to face this major trial. By trusting God's promise, Abraham's faith grew even deeper. Abraham kept on believing God, even when God asked him to do the impossible.*)



Even though Abraham faced a very difficult test, he trusted God. God rewarded Abraham's faith in Him by giving him his son Isaac. God also rewards us when we have faith in Him.

STEP 3

Bible Application
(5–10 minutes)



OBJECTIVE: To have the students outline a decision they are now facing.

Materials

- “Stepping Out” Part Two from *Blueprint*
- Bibles
- Pencils or pens

At this time, have students complete the second part of the “Stepping Out” worksheet from page 63 of *Blueprint*. Read the instruction paragraph to them, and have them outline a tough decision they are facing.

■ FROM *Blueprint*—Stepping Out

PART TWO

On the chart below, write down a tough choice you face right now that involves risk. In the left-hand column, write down some of the elements in your dilemma. Then, in the column on the right, write down some of the positive and negative pressures that are influencing your decision.

Give students a few minutes to work on this exercise. Ask some of them to volunteer their dilemmas. Don't require anyone to talk about the choices they face. Focus on the last question on the worksheet with those who are willing to talk (“What do you hope will be the result of making this decision?”). It's very important for teens to hear the stories of others and their struggles. It reminds them they are not the only ones facing tough choices. It's important that you as the teacher complete this exercise as well, just in case everyone is resistant to talking.

Because God is in control of all things, we can be certain the situations we are facing have some kind of purpose.

STEP 4

Life Response
(5–10 minutes)

Bible Truth:

God builds faith in His people by placing them in situations requiring tough choices.

OBJECTIVE: That your students see how they can be drawn closer to God in the midst of a tough situation.

Materials:

Bibles

▶ **Can you recall a time when you have experienced God's faithfulness after making a tough choice that honored God?**

You might want to start things off here by giving a personal example. Remind the class that, when facing tough choices, it is encouraging to remember that God has been faithful in the past. Faith means trusting that God will continue to be trustworthy in the future.

▶ **How could you see God working in the same way with the decisions you're facing now?**

Close the class in prayer, thanking God for His control over all things.

God will provide a lamb

Selections from Genesis and Hebrews

Today's text is a very difficult passage to understand unless we are willing to keep an open mind as we read. We can find meaning in what may appear to be an unfair test of courage.

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- ▶ How does this story tie into what Jesus did for us on the cross?

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In Abraham's time, the concept of a resurrection—bodily life after death—was virtually unknown. Religious leaders were still arguing about it even during Jesus' time! But today's text in Hebrews says that Abraham was *counting* on God to raise Isaac from the dead. Abraham's faith in the resurrection was such that he was sure he would receive his son back. According to what he told his servants, Abraham fully expected to come back down the hill with Isaac.

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Genesis 22:1-19

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Hebrews 11:17-19

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»mon

Problems are not optional for the Christian. That's why James uses the word *when*, not *if*, in today's memory verse. What problems are you experiencing? Ask God for help with each one of them.

»tues

God always has the big picture in mind when He allows certain problems to invade your life. Try to understand that God's perspective is much bigger than yours. Ask God to show you a glimpse of what He sees.

»wed

James encourages us here to allow joy to invade the problems in our life. Ask God to help you experience joy in the midst of problems.

»thurs

Tests measure what we have learned. Why then does God test our faith? Ask God to help your faith mature when you walk through your next test.

»fri

Perseverance is another word for endurance, toughness, and staying power. Ask God to give you patience when you face obstacles as you get in step with the Spirit.

»sat

Problems can be perceived as roadblocks to happiness or doorway to maturity. Write a letter to a trouble friend and encourage that person to trust the Lord.

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.

James 1:2-3

ABRAHAM ANSWERED.

"GOD HIMSELF
WILL PROVIDE

THE LAMB...."

(GENESIS 22:8)