

Year A, Week 27 (June 1, 2008)
Genesis 22: 1-17a Abraham is Tested

Hymn suggestions: *Father Abraham* (calmly!); or *Shout to the North and the South*

Items Needed:

- Abraham figure
- small boy figure
- donkey figure
- two servant figures (optional)
- block for altar
- sheep (for ram)

Directions: Set out the block for the altar. Set out the animal or hide it, as you like.

We've been talking about how God made a promise with his people. We learned that God chose Abraham and his wife Sarah. (*Touch Abraham figure.*) He sent them to a new place, and he made a promise – or a covenant – with them.

The Lord said to Abraham, “Look all around you, north, south, east, and west. I will give all this land to you and your children. You will have as many descendants as there are specks of dust in the earth.”

God also told him, “Look at the stars in the sky and see if you can count them. You will have that many descendants, and more.” Abraham believed the Lord, which the Lord counted as righteousness.

God said, “This is my covenant. I will be your God, and you will be my people.”

When God made this promise, Abraham and Sarah were already old enough to be grandparents, but sure enough, he promised them a son, and they did have a son. They called him Isaac, which means laughter, because when God first promised them a baby, they laughed because they thought they were too old.

One day, God tested Abraham.

He said to him, “Abraham!”

Abraham said, “Here I am.”

God said, “Take your son, your only son, whom you love, and go off a ways to the mountains. I will show you a certain mountain, and there I want you to kill Isaac, offering him as a sacrifice to me.”

Abraham rose early in the morning. He saddled his donkey, and took two servants plus Isaac. He cut wood to fuel the fire for a burnt offering and he set out for the mountains. On the third

day, Abraham saw the right place in the distance. (*Place donkey, servants, and boy near Abraham.*)

Abraham asked his servants to stay with the donkey. He said, “The boy and I will go to the mountain and worship, and then we’ll come back.” Abraham gathered up the wood for the burnt offering and set off with Isaac. (*Move Abraham and Isaac figures off some distance.*)

Isaac said, “Father!”

Abraham said, “Here I am, my son.”

Isaac said, “The fire and the wood are here – but where is the lamb for your burnt offering to God?”

Abraham said, “God himself will provide a lamb, my son.”

The two continued on.

When they reached the right spot, Abraham built an altar and laid the wood for a fire. (*Set out block for altar.*) Then he tied up his son Isaac and laid him on the altar. (*Place Isaac on altar.*)

Then Abraham lifted his knife to kill his son as a sacrifice. But a voice came from the heavens that said, “Abraham! Abraham!”

“Here I am,” he said.

The voice continued, “Do not lay a hand on your boy. Don’t do a thing to him. I now know that you fear and obey God. You would even give your son, your only son, for me.”

Abraham untied his son. Then he looked up and saw a ram with its horns caught in a nearby thicket. He went and caught the ram and offered it up as a burnt sacrifice instead of his son.” He decided to call this mountain, “The Lord will provide.” (*Pick up the sheep figure.*)

Then the voice from heaven called out again, “Because you have obeyed me in this, I will indeed make your descendants as many as the stars in the sky, as many as the grains of sand on the seashore.”

Questions without Response:

- I wonder... how Abraham knew that God was speaking to him?
- I wonder... how Abraham had the faith in God to almost sacrifice his son?
- I wonder... what Isaac was thinking?
- I wonder... how Abraham felt when he was untying Isaac?
- I wonder... if God was thinking of when he would someday sacrifice Jesus?