

## ADULT STUDY GUIDE

This is the adult component of the Enduring Faith Bible Curriculum. This piece follows the **same scope and sequence** as the other levels: **Early Childhood, Elementary, and Youth**. This alignment presents some amazing opportunities.

- First of all, it helps all ages speak a **common theological language**.
- Second, it helps God’s people build an understanding of the **lifelong nature of learning God’s Word**—that we don’t just learn the narratives once or twice before moving on to other matters.
- Third, and critical to this curriculum, it helps **equip households** to teach the faith at home.

If parents and other adults spend time meditating and discussing the narratives of the Bible while the younger generations in the congregation study the same narratives, then there will be greater opportunity throughout the week to **reflect together** upon what the narrative says and what it means. In other words, studying the narratives of the Bible as adults is a blessing in and of itself, but it also helps **equip parents and faith leaders** to be more confident and feel empowered to extend those conversations into the household.

## FEATURES OF THIS STUDY

This study guide is meant to provide some guidelines and springboards for discussion in your Bible study groups.

- The **first page** of each lesson provides the central focus statements, not only for the Adult level, but also for the other levels. Use this as a way to orient yourself to the **main themes and goals** of the lessons across all levels. You’ll also find helpful **tips for preparation**.
- The **middle two pages** begin with an introductory “**Launch**” section, which provides prompts for beginning the study and an open-ended reflection question to kick off group discussion. The following “**Learn & Live**” section breaks down the text into three to five narrative sections. Each one of these sections has some additional commentary, a reflection question, and some helps to better understand possible answers to the reflection question. The “**Leave**” section provides prompts for a final reflection question and some other considerations to close the lesson. The **sidebars** include leader tips and bonus activities to help you think through options for extending the lesson.
- The **final page** of each lesson is the student piece. Copy one lesson handout per learner, and distribute this at the beginning of class.

## TIPS FOR USE

This study guide is designed primarily to help give you, the leader, some thoughts and prompts to help guide and assist facilitation of the class. Below are some tips for how to use it.

- This is meant to be a Bible study, so each learner will need access to a Bible. Encourage your learners to bring their own to class.
- Don’t neglect the lesson handout. The primary reason for this page is to create some space for each learner to reflect and engage the questions on his or her own. Often, any given group will have one or two vocal learners and others who may not speak up. Consider using techniques to help engage all learners in the process, such as having each learner write down his or her reflection privately before sharing, having each learner share with a partner before opening up discussion, or changing the seating arrangements to create small groups.
- Use the opening reflection question as a time to build community. Adult learners, generally speaking, desire to share their experience with one another, and this lesson starter provides an opportunity for this.
- For each narrative section, ask volunteers to read the text aloud while the rest follow along. Don’t force anyone; adults, like children and youth, may be self-conscious about their reading or public speaking ability.

Download the Enduring Faith Page from the online digital resource center and hand out copies to your learners. Near the end of the lesson, talk through the prompts, which help the learners extend the lessons in their households throughout the week. Encourage learners to take this page home along with the lesson handout to be used throughout the week.

# A MERCIFUL SUBSTITUTE

Abraham and  
Isaac  
Genesis 22:1–19  
ca. 2037 BC

## BIBLE TRUTH

God saves us from death.

## LEARNER GOAL

I can express how the narrative of the sacrifice of Isaac illustrates how God in Christ saves us from death.

## BIBLE VERSE

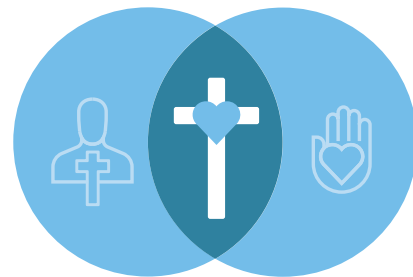
God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.  
Genesis 22:8

## LAW & GOSPEL

God requires a payment for my sin. **God sent His own Son, Jesus, as my substitute to pay for my sin.**

## SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

God had blessed Abraham with the son he had waited for his entire life; yet now God asks the seemingly impossible—sacrifice your son to Me. By faith, Abraham takes Isaac to the mountain, trusting God, who was able to raise his son from the dead. Abraham completes the test, and God provides the sacrifice.



## CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

### IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

God has spared me and provided His own Son, Jesus, as the Lamb who shed His blood for my sins.

### CALLING: WHY AM I HERE?

I can live as God's forgiven and redeemed child, with sins forgiven for Jesus' sake.

## GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE

*See how this lesson builds on learning for each age.*

### ADULT

I can express how the narrative of the sacrifice of Isaac illustrates how God in Christ saves us from death.

### YOUTH

I can share how Jesus is the final and ultimate sacrifice.

### ELEMENTARY

I understand how God provided Jesus as a sacrifice for my sins.

### EARLY CHILDHOOD

I know God sent His Son, Jesus, to save me by paying for my sins on the cross.

## LESSON PREP

**BASIC** Read the narrative and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

**MORE TIME** Read the articles “The Lamb of God” and “The Heart of the Atonement” in *The Lutheran Study Bible*, page 201.

**IN DEPTH** Read **Genesis 23** for more information on Sarah's death after this event.



### LEADER NOTE

Consider giving your learners examples, including giving up a possession, career, or relationship. Sometimes we need to make these sacrifices out of necessity or circumstance; other times it's out of service to a person or a cause, or just for our own good. Use this question as a springboard for your learners to get them thinking about the experience of sacrifice.



### BONUS ACTIVITY

Mount Moriah, the location where Abraham was to sacrifice Isaac, had great significance in Scripture and still represents a lot today. Consider looking up pictures of the Dome of the Rock, the Islamic mosque built over the site today, that covers the traditional site where this event came to pass. Then point the learners to other instances where the mountain in Moriah later played a role with David (2 Samuel 24) and Solomon (2 Chronicles 3:1).

# LAUNCH

## WELCOME

Welcome the group, and open in prayer. It may be a good time to take prayer requests and pray, either now or at the conclusion.

## REVIEW

Review the Bible Truth, Bible Verse, and Learner Goal. Then, begin with the opening question.

## OPENING REFLECTION

Think of a time when you sacrificed something important to you. What was that like?

# LEARN & LIVE

## GENESIS 22:1–2

### BIBLE COMMENTARY

God provides a son for Abraham, out of the goodness of God's heart and promise to bless the world through Abraham's offspring. Now that Isaac is a young man, it seems like all is well and God's faithfulness is ensured. Now, God comes to Abraham with a command to sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering on Mount Moriah. To drive home the gravity of the request, God even reiterates that this is Abraham's only son. To make matters more severe, God has and will constantly condemn the evil practice of child or human sacrifice to false gods. As such, this request would not only seem like an impossible task for Abraham, but also an evil counter to God's plan for His human creatures.

### REFLECTION QUESTION

Imagine that you were in Abraham's place. What would be your reaction to this abhorrent command from God? What are different potential reasons you could come up with as to why God might expect this of you?

### REFLECTION HELPS

Answers include these: God is desiring unquestioning obedience, God wants to show that life and death are meaningless to Him, and God wants to test Abraham. Regardless, with the little information we do have, it's important that the learners take a step back and wrestle with how hard this would have been for Abraham to hear.

## GENESIS 22:3–8

### BIBLE COMMENTARY

Abraham, intentionally and efficiently, goes about the process of bringing Isaac to the sacrifice. When they arrive, Abraham leaves his servants, puts the wood on his son, and carries the knife and fire up the mountain. When Isaac asks where the sacrifice is, Abraham confesses that God will provide the sacrifice. This simple statement reveals Abraham's faith in this great distress. He trusts that God knows how this will play out, even if it requires that he kill his own son and God resurrect him for the sake of the promise (Hebrews 11:17–19). Not only will this event, the climactic event in the narratives of Abraham, test the patriarch's faith like never before, it will also serve as an illustration for all time of God's faithfulness to His plan of salvation.

### REFLECTION QUESTION

Looking at the text, how does Abraham demonstrate true fear, love, and trust in God here? How might this serve as an example for us?

### REFLECTION HELPS

Abraham obeyed God and trusted in God's promise to bless the world through His ancestors, even if in the moment God's request didn't make sense. Though God does not call us to such extremes, we, too, cling to God's promises even when we can't see them.

## GENESIS 22:9–14

### BIBLE COMMENTARY

Here on Mount Moriah, the epic drama and picture of God’s plan of salvation plays out. Isaac likely humbles himself and willingly lays down to be sacrificed, and Abraham raises the knife to slaughter his son. Then, in an instant, the angel of the Lord calls to Abraham and tells him to stop. This voice, generally interpreted to be the very voice of the Son of God Himself, tells Abraham not only that he passed the test of faith but also that He has provided a proper sacrifice instead of Isaac. The Son of God turns great potential turmoil into worship. God demonstrates that He is the God who provides. He is faithful to keep His promise. One thousand years later, Solomon would build the temple on this very spot where God stopped the sacrifice of God’s promised child and instead provided a substitute. Two thousand years later, the very Son of God Himself, in human flesh, will be sacrificed as a substitute for all sinners for all time, all within sight of this very spot.

### REFLECTION QUESTION

List all the different ways this event serves as a picture for what will happen to Jesus later on Calvary.

### REFLECTION HELPS

Connections include these: a human sacrifice was expected and God intervened; God provided a sacrifice in the place of Isaac; it was the angel of the Lord, the Son of God Himself, who would one day suffer and die in man’s place; Jesus is symbolically equivalent to the ram in the bush.

## GENESIS 22:15–19

### BIBLE COMMENTARY

After the pivotal moment, God commends Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his precious son at His command. Because of this, God blesses Abraham. That said, the blessings God gives to Abraham were already promised multiple times, such as in Genesis 12 and Genesis 15. These include the multiplication of Abraham’s people, blessing in land, and most notably blessing the world through the ultimate arrival of the Messiah. God here reiterates His covenant promises. Though Abraham was commended for his faith, his blessings were not a reward for his obedience. They began and ended with God’s action. Likewise, as God calls us to obedience we should not expect earthly blessings as a reward. Instead we, like Abraham, remember that God’s action to forgive our sins and promise to restore creation are the ultimate blessings that are already promised us. We respond to faith with loving obedience to the God who has first loved us and always will.

### REFLECTION QUESTION

Based on God’s words to Abraham, how were Abraham’s faith and obedience connected? How are they connected in our lives?

### REFLECTION HELPS

Our faith, likewise, is in God’s promises. Obedience, for both Abraham and for us, originates in our God-given faith. The two are, for God’s people, inseparable. But obedience always flows from God’s action to give us faith through His means and God’s faithfulness to His promises first.

## LEAVE

### FINAL REFLECTION

Express how the narrative of the sacrifice of Isaac illustrates how God in Christ saves us from death.

### TAKE HOME

Equip your learners with ideas for taking the lesson into their households by giving them access to the Enduring Faith Pages.

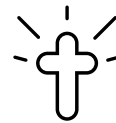
### CLOSE WITH PRAYER

If you haven’t yet, take prayer requests, or encourage a volunteer from the class to pray as you prepare to leave.



### BONUS ACTIVITY

Consider looking up and reading **Hebrews 11:17–19** together. Then consider these questions: What insights does this Scripture reveal about Abraham? What does this potentially teach us about the hope of the resurrection for God’s people in the Old Testament?



### CHRIST CONNECTION

Christ is the ultimate sacrifice, substituting His perfect, sinless life for our sinful lives to save us from the just wrath of God for eternity.



### LEADER NOTE

Answers to the fifth reflection may include how this shows God’s all-powerful will and desire for perfect obedience. This was lived for us on our behalf in Christ. The event also shows us God’s mercy in providing a substitute sacrifice instead of Isaac. God was faithful to His promise to give a son to Abraham, and He’s faithful to His promise to forgive us in Christ.

# A MERCIFUL SUBSTITUTE

ADULT  
Unit 4  
LESSON HANDOUT  
Lesson 4

## BIBLE TRUTH

God saves us from death.

## LEARNER GOAL

I can express how the narrative of the sacrifice of Isaac illustrates how God in Christ saves us from death.

## BIBLE VERSE

God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering. Genesis 22:8

Abraham and Isaac  
Genesis 22:1–19

## REFLECTIONS

**OPENING REFLECTION** Think of a time when you sacrificed something important to you. What was that like?

**GENESIS 22:1–2** Imagine that you were in Abraham’s place. What would be your reaction to this abhorrent command from God? What are different potential reasons you could come up with as to why God might expect this of you?

**GENESIS 22:3–8** Looking at the text, how does Abraham demonstrate true fear, love, and trust in God here? How might this serve as an example for us?

**GENESIS 22:9–14** List all the different ways this event serves as a picture for what will happen to Jesus later on Calvary.

**GENESIS 22:15–19** Based on God’s words to Abraham, how were Abraham’s faith and obedience connected? How are they connected in our lives?

**FINAL REFLECTION** Express how the narrative of the sacrifice of Isaac illustrates how God in Christ saves us from death.

## NOTES

Dotted lines for note-taking.