



# Rotation Model Sunday School Lesson Plans

## “Abraham and Isaac”

**Memory Verse:** “Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.”  
(Genesis 22:8a)

### Learning Center Overview:

**Holy Word Cinema:** This video workshop includes a discussion of the Nest video, “Abraham and Isaac”

**Art:** Mold “witness stones” from Cloud Clay to explore ways in which Christians today are witnesses to encounters with God. Use the “Take Home Sheet” to explain the Bible story of “Abraham and Isaac: God Will Provide” to families.

**Computer Lab:** Students will explore portions of the Abraham and Sarah software including a wonderful music video-reflection about the near-sacrifice, and prepare your students to receive two phone calls from God at the beginning and end of the lesson!

**Bible Games:** This unique Bible Skills & Games workshop uses a lot of sand to help students understand how Abraham's faithful life gave rise to billions of faithful lives. This workshop also includes some math computations that invoke a little used multiple-intelligence for stirring and remembering our faith story. Especially good for older children.

### Rotation Objectives for Abraham and Isaac: God Will Provide

After completing this Rotation, participants will be able to:

- locate the story in the Bible, Genesis 22:1-18.
- retell the story in their own words.
- understand that Abraham trusted in God's love and promises and obeyed God even when it was hard.
- see the concept of Old Testament sacrifice and how it relates to Jesus being the "Lamb of God."
- understand that God willingly sacrificed his only Son, Jesus, for us.
- discuss ways God provides for us today



## Holy Word Cinema

1. Watch the Nest video "Abraham and Isaac"
2. Use the Adventure Quiz in the Special Features section to have kids answer questions about the movie/Bible Story. Even if kids know the answer, refer to the Scripture option, to have kids pull the right answer from the Scripture verses projected for that question.
3. Share this month's memory verse.
4. Close with prayer.



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 / Writing Team Lesson Set: Abraham & Isaac ~ God Will Provide  
 / (WT) Abraham & Isaac: God Will Provide ~ Art (2 lessons)

## Reply to "(WT) Abraham & Isaac: God Will Provide ~ Art (2 lessons)"



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### Abraham & Isaac: God Will Provide

#### Art Workshop [1]

#### Summary of Lesson Activity

This lesson plays off of an archaeological insight about the story related to the practice of setting up "sacred witness stones" — as a way of remembering our role as witnesses to God. Students will create "witness stones" from Air-Dry Clay.



#### Scripture

**Passage:** Genesis 22:1-18

**Key/Memory Verse:** Abraham said, "God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son."  
 Genesis 22:8a (NRSV)

#### Objectives for the Rotation

See [Bible Background](#).

#### Preparation

- Read [Bible Background](#) and scripture.
- Read about "witness stones" in the [Sunday Software Guide to Abraham-Sarah.pdf](#) on page 7 under heading "Phrase 2: What are these stones about?".

For a more in-depth look at these structures that are found in different cultures, see an article by Uzi Avner "[Sacred Stones in the Desert](#)" from Biblical Archaeology Society.

- **Experiment** with the clay so you are familiar with its properties and can help the students use it. More information about working with Air-Dry Clay: (Product info from crayola.ca Dries to a hard solid - no kiln or oven needed! Perfect for school projects or arts and crafts. Can be painted with tempera, acrylic or watercolour paints when dry. Model Magic tools work great with Air-Dry Clay. Softens easily with water and quickly cleans from hands and surfaces. Recommended for ages 4 and up).
- **Customize** the [take-home sheet](#) (at the end of this lesson plan) as necessary, and make a copy for each child. Consider also including it in the church newsletter or on the church's website.
- If the "Sunday School Hour" is long enough, **consider buying additional** white Air-Dry Clay, and allowing each child to make a lamb in addition to his witness stone. See [here](#) for help in creating animal sculptures.
- **Print** a copy of the picture of the witness stones (shown below) to share with the children.



Ancient Stone Altar Site in Negev Desert

## Materials List

- Bibles
- Amaco Cloud Clay (discontinued) use either plain white or multicolored assortment packs; at least 2 oz. per student.  
(Alternative: Crayola® Model Magic® Bucket (Air-Dry Clay) - Natural Colors, inside the bucket are 4 - 8oz packets: one terra cotta, one bisque, one earth tone and one white, easy to use and air dry in 24 hours. If you purchase at Michaels you can use their weekly 40% off online coupon to reduce the cost. This clay was used in photos shown here.)
- Paper plates for carrying the projects home
- Toothpicks for "writing" on the clay
- A copy of the take-home sheet for each child (see attachment at end of lesson)
- Zipper-closing plastic bags to store leftover clay, so that it won't dry out.





3. Did God want Isaac killed? Or was this a test? (Comment that back in those ancient days, some religions did practice human sacrifice! By testing Abraham, and then providing the Ram, God was saying "no!" to that practice.)
4. You are now witnesses to this story. What will you tell others that it says about Abraham and about God? (**Technique:** Pass the large "witness stone" (cardboard box) to each student as you ask this question. When they take the stone, they answer.)
5. If we don't witness to God's amazing story, can we be called his children?  
(The answer is obviously "no" so remind them that "being a witness" is what God's children do. We tell others. And you might remind them of something Jesus said on Palm Sunday when the Priests told Jesus to silence the crowd. Jesus said, "*if the people are silent, God will make the rocks to sing!*")

Tell them that today they will create their own witness stones as a reminder of what God wants them to do in their life: *Be a Witness to God*

### Art Reflection Activity

Give each child a piece of the Air-Dry Clay. (Depending on the size of the class and the available clay, allow each child to choose the color(s) he wants.) Allow the children to handle the clay and explore its properties as you explain the project: each child will create his own witness stone. The stones do not necessarily need to look like the stones in the photo. You might make the witness look more like a self-portrait, a "stone you."



**While the children are working with the clay:**



- Talk about what it means to be a witness.
- Ask them to describe Abraham's encounters with God.
- Talk with them about their own encounters with God. When and how has God been present in their lives and in the lives of those around them?
- Is an encounter something physical? Or is it a feeling? Or a sense of faith? Children will think of "seeing" God, but ***stress that encounters are often a sense of grace, peace, conviction, wisdom, strength.***
- Say: Your witness stone may not witness to a BIG event like Abraham and Isaac's. And it may not remind you of something that has already happened. ***Instead, your witness stone today could be a reminder that God WILL encounter you! And your stone will remind you to be ready and listening.***

After completing their "stone witness you" Have them write "God will provide" in the stone using a toothpick. At this time, have them also ***write their name after the word "provide."***

Discuss that memory verse they have just inscribed: "Abraham said, 'God himself will provide....'"

### Go back to your Witness Box:

Pass around a marker and the witness box (from your opening) and have the students add things (write or draw) that God provides us, to the back or sides of the box.

**Keep in mind things that God provided Abraham as well:** *a mission, a message, and encounters with God's spirit that would strengthen Abraham's faith.*



One of the BIG things that God provides is his spirit. Like he did with Abraham, God promises to personally encounter us.

### Extra time:

If the "Sunday School Hour" is long enough, consider allowing each child to make a lamb in addition to his witness stone. See [here](#) for help in creating animal sculptures. (This is amaco.com's "lesson plan 4-legged creatures").

### Closing:

Remind them to take their stones home and put them in a place where they will see them and be reminded that God will provide.

Encourage them to tell others about their creations, and be witnesses to God's activity in their lives.



Let the children know that the clay will dry overnight. Give each child a paper plate to carry his or her stone on, and also give each child a take-home letter for his parents.

Give each student a copy of the Abraham and Isaac Take Home Sheet (attached to this post at rotation.org)

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## Additional Suggestions

### Adaptations - Younger Children:

- The opening activity of defining what a "witness" is, will be especially important to younger children.
- Use real stones to illustrate the idea of "witness stones" (younger children are in the "concrete" stage of thinking and some won't understand your stack of Bibles as stones).
- Use a storybook Bible.
- Inscribe the children's names (or initials) on their stone witness stone, and instead of the Bible verse, use the phrase, "I am a witness for God."

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Written by: Amy Crane and Neil MacQueen

Classroom photos courtesy of Luanne Payne, Hampton United, Hampton Ontario

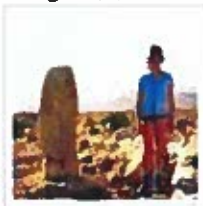
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 Attachments

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#### Images (6)



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/ Writing Team Lesson Set: Abraham & Isaac ~ God Will Provide  
/ (WT) Abraham & Isaac: God Will Provide ~ Computer

## (WT) Abraham & Isaac: God Will Provide ~ Computer



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### Abraham & Isaac: God Will Provide

### Computer Workshop

#### Summary of Lesson Activity

Students will use the Abraham & Sarah software (Sunday Software) to hear and ponder the "near sacrifice" of Isaac – with a special life application focus on what we can expect God to ask of us, and what God has done for us all. Students will also receive two phone calls from God during this lesson!

➡ This software program is now free! [See its description and download it now.](#)

#### Scripture

**Passage:** Genesis 22:1-18

**Key/Memory Verse:** Abraham said, "God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son."  
Genesis 22:8a (NRSV)

#### Objectives for the Rotation

See [Bible Background](#).

#### Preparation & Materials

- Read [Bible Background](#) and scripture.
- Download and Preview the Abraham and Sarah software and its Guide
- Pencils
- Print the student worksheet attached to this lesson plan. (see the end of this lesson)
- Prep a volunteer to call your cellphone at the beginning and end of your lesson. (See script)

## Lesson Plan

### Open

Welcome your students and then introduce today's story by doing the following . . .

Tell them that they will be using the Abraham and Sarah software today with a worksheet.

### The first phone call from God to your class

At this pre-appointed time, have a volunteer outside your class call your cellphone. Put them on speaker phone and carry on a brief conversation along the lines suggested at the end of this lesson plan. ***(See phone call dialog at the end of this lesson.)***

Hang up on God and say, "Can you imagine if that really WAS God calling us to leave our families and move to \_\_\_\_\_ (somewhere 200 miles from where you live) to start a new church?"

- Would you go?
- What questions would you have?
- What do you think your family and friends would say?
- Would you be willing to give up what God said you had to give up?

Say: Today we are studying the story of Abraham and Sarah from the Book of Genesis. About 3400 years ago, they too heard God calling them to a difficult task, to move to a new land at great risk. But that was not the only difficult test God had for them. Soon after they moved, God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac as a sign of faith. It was an enormous test of Abraham and Sarah's faith. Let's get into the software to learn more about it.

Divide into as many teams as you have computer workstations using the Abraham and Sarah software. Pass out the Abraham Worksheets and pencils, and instruct the students to complete it as they move through the appropriate section of the program.

### Dig (approximately 20 minutes)

Start the software. As it begins, students are swept in over the desert to the tune of "I Heard a Voice Today" and see Abraham and Sarah on their way to the land of Canaan. Students then come circling up to the "The Scriptorium" navigational podium. Click the "Near Sacrifice" option, and begin listening to and watching the story. Fill out the worksheet as they work through the options.

There are four "stones" or megaliths to view in the following order. They contain information that corresponds to some of the questions in the worksheet.

**Megalith One:** "Read and hear Genesis 22" -this is a video/animation of the Genesis 22 story. View it first.

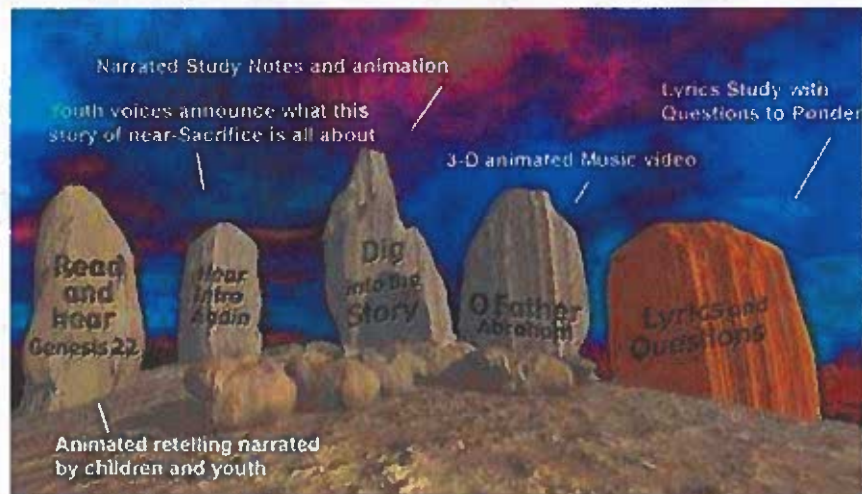
**Megalith Two:** "Hear Intro Again" –use to help fill-in Worksheet Question #1.

**Megalith Three:** "Dig into the Story" –these are very important narrated study notes explaining this amazing episode. You may have the students view some or all.

**Megalith Four:** View the "O Father Abraham" song/video. It retells the Genesis 22 but adds an important insight that Christians have made about the story of Abraham and Isaac. It has follow up questions that will explain some of the lyrics. If you're using the worksheet, some of the answers are found in these lyric studies. Options: If you have time, and/or prefer this section to the above activities or worksheet. Suggest you go through the "Lyrics and Questions" reflection activity with older students as a group.

**Megalith Five:** Print Lyrics and Study Questions (also accessible in Megalith Four above). Note: quick access for teacher's use.

Here is what the Megalith Menu looks like in the software:



## Reflect

Away from the computers go over their worksheets. They have life application questions in them. God's "final phone call" is a life application step too!

## God's Final Phone Call

God calls your class one more time, asking them to give some things up. *(See suggested script below.)*

Closing: At the end of the final phone call, students will tell God something they are thankful for, and promise to listen to God

## If extra time



**Play the "Map Game" in Abraham and Sarah program.** Students drag modern-day country titles onto correct locations on the map to win. This activity is particularly significant given the regular appearance of these countries in the news these days.

**If you have previously studied other Abraham and Sarah stories** with the class, you can also play the Quiz Game which is a one or two-player quiz about general Abe & Sarah knowledge.

## Suggested Dialog God's Opening Phone Call

*Feel free to embellish!*

On cue, God calls your cell phone...

Teacher: Hello? Really? It's really really you? Let me put you on speakerphone. Kids, say hello to God!

God: Hey kids, what's up?

Teacher: Well what's up with you, God, I mean, aren't you kind of busy this morning with everyone worshipping and praying all over the world

God: Well sure, but I have something to ask you and the kids. You kids up for a special mission? (sure!)

God: Well here it is, I want you to leave your families and friends, walk to \_\_\_\_\_ about 200 miles away, and start a new church from scratch, taking nothing but what you can carry, and without any extra money or food. Who's up for that!

God: Oh, and one more thing, along the way I want you to show me how much faith you have by deciding to sacrifice one of you in my honor. Ok? I'm thinking it should be the youngest boy in your group. Everyone okay with that?

Teacher: Well I don't know God, that's pretty far, and we kind of like \_\_\_\_\_ (the boy).

God: Tell you what, if you do as I say, start that church and sacrifice \_\_\_\_\_, I will make you all famous and make sure you are prosperous, DEAL?

Teacher: Maybe we ought to put that to a vote.

God: Well why don't you all think about it first, I know I'm asking a lot. I'll call back later, okay?

## Suggested Dialog for God's Closing Phone Call

*God has been primed to make specific comments about each student. Below are kinds of pointed things God should say. They may be tough, but so is the story!*

Teacher: O My Lord! It's My Lord Again! Hello, God, let me put you on speakerphone.



God: Hi kids...how did your lesson go? Any questions? (feel free to ask one)

God: I just wanted to say that I've decided NOT to ask you to leave everything behind right now. The church would miss you, and I don't want your moms all over my case! BUT....I do have a couple of things I am going to ask each of you. Actually, since I'm God I'm going to TELL YOU what I want you to do. For example:

John, I want you to start coming to church more often. I need you to learn more about my Word, because I have great plans for you, Ok?

Jane, I want you to be more friendly to the new kids at our church and not just your friends. You could be one of my top ambassadors, Ok?

Jeff, I want you to give up being the wise-guy. You're smart, and I want you to be a leader. Ok?

And teacher, I want you to come better prepared to teach my word, even if it means going to bed earlier so that you're rested to teach, deal?

All of you are my wonderful children, but to follow me, there are things you need to stop doing, and things you need to start doing better. Have a nice day!

Teacher: Lord! Before you go, can we each say a word of thanksgiving to you?

God: Well sure, but only if you include a promise with it. Like... "Lord I promise to be more faithful." How about that?

*Kids offer up a thanksgiving and end it with, "and I promise to be more faithful."*

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## Additional Suggestions

The Phone Calls could be a guest appearance.

If you have time, consider having the students create their own "phone calls from God" after considering "what would God call us about and call us *on*."

**Adaptations - Younger children:** will need led through the software, and the worksheet could simply become a guide for the teacher at their side.

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Screenshot from software used with permission from Sunday Software.

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 Attachments

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Images (1)



Files (1)

[Abraham-Sacrifice-Worksheet.pdf](#)

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/ Writing Team Lesson Set: Abraham & Isaac ~ God Will Provide  
/ (WT) Abraham & Isaac: God Will Provide ~ Bible Skills & Games (2 lessons)

## Reply to "(WT) Abraham & Isaac: God Will Provide ~ Bible Skills & Games (2 lessons)"



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### Abraham & Isaac: God Will Provide

#### Bible Skills & Games Workshop [2]

#### Summary of Lesson Activity

Students will play with sand in some unique ways to understand the importance of Abraham's test and God's plans for the world, and to learn some Bible skills related to the region where God first established his Covenant. The activities included use your students' mathematical intelligence, as well as, tactile and visual intelligences. Combined, the lesson is designed to leave a strong memory.

#### Scripture

**Passage:** Genesis 22:1-18

**Key/Memory Verse:** Abraham said, "God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son."  
Genesis 22:8a

(Immediately after the test the Lord said...) "I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore." Genesis 22:17

#### Objectives for the Rotation

See [Bible Background](#).

#### Objectives for this Workshop

In addition to the Rotation objectives, after this particular lesson, students will:

- Understand how one person's faithfulness & testing led to a great outcome for many, and consider how each of us can follow in his footsteps.
  - Understand the geography of the region, which has significance in both Abraham's story, God's plan, and today's world.
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## Preparation

- [Read Bible Background](#), scripture.
- Print and become familiar with [the map handout](#). (attached to this lesson post)
- Prepare "Place Cards" (Index cards) - see "Sand Activity #2" overview & map handout for instructions.

## Materials List

- Bibles
  - A calculator or two
  - paper & pencils
  - Map of the Middle East
  - 50 lb bag of play sand
  - A large washtub or plastic bin to hold the sand.
  - 9 x 12 blue tarp
  - Several 1 cup measuring cups
  - Index cards (see map handout for instructions)
  - Clock or timer
  - stick (optional)
  - [Copies of the Map Handout](#) (attached to this post)
  - digital camera (optional)
- 

## Lesson Plan

### Open

Welcome your students and summarize what you hope they will learn today: *that God provides us with all we need to be his disciples, to reach out to the world, -if we are willing to obey God's sometimes difficult demands.* Invite several students to come forward one at a time to have their strength tested. (Each of these test metaphors will be addressed again later in the reflection.)

### STRENGTH TESTS:

**1. See how long a student can hold a Bible in each hand** with your arms straight out from your sides. (Ask them how long they think they can do it, then have them do it the entire rest of the time while you do the other strength tests, --occasionally telling them to hang in there!) After a few minutes,

their arms will fatigue. If someone else thinks its easy, let them try. If you get a real strong one, have them hold the Bibles until they can't!

**2. Have one student try to pick another up off the floor.** Have the seated student sit with their legs and arms crossed. Choose a light student, then a heavy student to be seated.

**3. Have a student lay on their back arching -with only their feet and hands touching the ground.** They'll only be able to do this for a while. To speed it up, place an object on their stomach and tell them to balance it there.

Point: Eventually we all fail on our own own. This is also true about faith. We need God to strengthen our faith, which often happens when we are tested. We need God to provide us with forgiveness when we fail, and teach us how to get stronger and do things the right way. (We'll pick up on this idea in the end reflection activity.)

### READ THE SCRIPTURE

You may read this together from your Bibles, or from an age appropriate Bible storybook. **"Let's read the story** of another test of strength, this one in the Bible...the story of Abraham's faith test in Genesis 22:1-18."

### DISCUSSION ABOUT THE SCRIPTURE

Why do teachers test you in school?

*To find out what you know and give you a grade.*

Why did God test Abraham?

*To test Abraham's faith and obedience, to see if he had enough to be the kind of leader God needed to start his nation of faith.*

Did Abraham pass God's test?

*This is an interesting question. He didn't kill Isaac, but instead, God stopped the test.*

What do you think God would have done if Abraham had said "no, I will not offer my son?"

*Perhaps that too was a right answer that God would accept!*

What was God's reward to Abraham? (look it up in Gen 22:17)

*To make Abraham's descendants number like the stars or sands on the shore.*

### Conclude with these observations:

- Asking Abraham to sacrifice his son was an extreme test.
- God does not want us to kill other people. The Ten Commandments forbid it.
- God knew he would provide a ram to save Isaac's life. God provides the ram for our lives too, the Lamb of God we know as Jesus.

- It's a dramatic message that is hard to forget! ...that God is good, not bad. And that means whether we pass or fail, whether our faith is strong or weak, God still provides.

## Dig (literally!) 😊

### Overview:

In these next two activities, students will be working with a bag of play sand in the classroom on a large blue tarp. Don't worry about making a mess. The sand is dry and any that spills will vacuum easily. These are activities led by the teacher who shares as the activity unfolds. "What to say" is suggested below. You could do these one after the other, or set them up as two stations and students could rotate during the lesson.

**In the first activity** students will transfer sand from a large container onto a large blue tarp on the floor using cup measures as they explore the idea of God's promise to Abraham. **In the second "map" activity**, they'll be drawing a map of the Middle East in the sand that is on the blue tarp to help them study both the idea of why God chose the Middle East, and to send Abraham to Canaan, ...and to correlate this area to the names of the countries there that they hear about in the today's headlines. After you're done with the sand, have the students lift the tarp and pour it back into your large container.

## Sand Activity #1: "Math Fun with Abraham's Sandy Descendants"

**Writer's Note:** Mathematics is one of the 7 intelligences our brains use to learn and remember all sorts of information, not just numbers. This activity stimulates that intelligence in a fun way by crunching some sand numbers and coming up with a pretty impressive result.

Because Abraham was faithful and God provided him with the Ram, God did indeed bless Abraham, - as promised, with making his descendants as numerous as the grains of sand on the seashore. That's why we're using sand grains in the following demonstration.

**The Mathematical Point:** One person's strong faith can make a big difference in the world.

**Say:** There are 4.4 Billion Christians, Muslims, and Jews living in the world today who claim Abraham as the father of their faith. One faithful person turned into 4.4 Billion!

There are approximately 5 million little grains of sand in one cup of sand.

**Q1:** How many cups of sand would we need to pile here to equal 4.4 Billion grains of sand, --one for each person inspired by Abraham's faith??

**A1:** We would need 880 cups of sand to represent each living descendant of Abraham.

(4.4 billion / 5 million = 880 cups of sand grains).



**Q2:** Do you think we have 880 cups of sand here? That would be 4.4 Billion grains of sand! Let's have everyone write down their guess of how many cups we have here today and then let's start scooping.

Scoop the sand one cup at a time into a pile on the blue tarp.

**A2:** There should be approximately 60 cups of sand in a 50 pound bag of play sand. How many cups are we short? (880 cups minus the # of cups kids counted = what we are short)

**Q3:** So here's the big math question: If there are 5 million grains in each cup, and 4.4 Billion living descendants of Abraham, and we scooped \_\_\_ cups from our bag of play sand, how many bags of play sand would we need to haul in here to have 1 grain for every descendant of Abraham?

**A3:** The equation is: 880 cups (which is 4.4 billion grains) divided by the number of scoops your class scooped out of your bag = the number of bags you would need to have 4.4 Billion grains. For example, 880 cups divided by 60 cups per bag = 15 bags of sand would be needed to amass 4.4 billion grains.

*Now have the students spread the sand as thinly and flatly as they can across the tarp in order to set up this next visual lesson...*

**Q4:** This is a guess, not an equation you need to figure out, but it is based on real math. Here's the question: If you could spread this sand so that it was only ONE GRAIN DEEP, how many tarp covered football fields would you need to spread all 4.4 billion grains of sand, one grain deep?

**A4:** Spread out 1 grain high you would need about **4 football fields** to show one grain for every descendant of Abraham.

**Point: One person, doing exactly what God asked him to do, became a blessing to 4.4 billion people alive today. I'd say God provided pretty well, wouldn't you!**

*The map activity will reinforce and expand on this point.*

## Sand Activity #2: The Middle East Sand Map Game

**Overview:** You will be creating a sand map of the Middle East on the blue tarp, and then challenging the kids to re-create it. This activity is strong in both visual and tactile, --which are also part of the brains learning intelligences or senses. You will be doing and talking at the same time, and inviting students to join you. Attached to this lesson at rotation.org is a map handout of the Middle East with "suggested comments." The teacher should use this to create their deck of index "place name" cards in the following activity, and to guide the point of the activity! See the handout for more about the point.

### DIRECTIONS:

**1. Have the students spread a thin layer of sand across the blue tarp** to make a sand rectangle approximately 4 feet wide and 3 feet high. Leave the rest of the sand off to the side for use in step 4 below. The attached handout shows the map and has 'comments' to share. When you or students

scooch away the sand to make the seas/ivers, the blue of the tarp will show through as the water, which helps define the familiar shapes of the Middle East and Canaan.

**2. Scooch away sand to make these bodies of water appear:** "Mediterranean," "Red Sea," "Persian Gulf," "Tigris and Euphrates." Drop corresponding **Water Name Cards** on or near each body of water as you describe something Biblical about each one. You may ask older student if they know where they go in relation to each other or "who lived along there?"

**3. Next, use a stick or your finger to draw some country borders, then pull out your Country Name Cards** and lay them in the correct locations saying something about each country's history and current situation in the Middle East, as you draw and label.

**4. The Big Sand Move:** Ask the students, "If you were God, and wanted to plant a people of faith who would spread your message throughout the world, where would you start them out?"

The answer is in the story of Abraham! God called Abraham and his family to Israel/Canaan because it is centrally located at the crossroads of that region. Over time, great empires would rise and march through the area -Assyrians, Persians, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, (see notes below for details), --each came into contact with Israel, and Israel's faith. That is why God called Abraham and his family to go live there. Remember God's promise/Covenant with Abraham? Go there and I will make you a great nation. Your descendants will be greater than the sands along the seashore.

**So now add more sand onto Israel,** and then have the students help you carefully spread it across your map from Israel to the rest of the countries, while you reinforce the idea that God chose and tested Abraham because God had a big mission he wanted accomplished. You might also distribute a couple of cups to a couple of student to "walk across the room" to Europe and Africa, Asia and China.

**5. Bring out a big student map of the Middle East** and have the students compare the map with the sand map you have walked them through. In the next step, you'll take away both the classroom map and sand map and see if the students can recreate it.

### 6. Now Play the Sand Map Game!

Remove the name cards and fill in the water (blue tarp spots). Now **challenge one or two groups to reconstruct the map.** If you have two groups, divide the tarp into two sections. Hide the reference map you were using! Set a time limit so that it feels like a contest. If you have more than two groups, you could limit each group to 3 minutes and have the second group improve/correct the first group's work, and so on. Each will likely get some right, some wrong.

Take pictures of the finished map(s)!

## Reflect

Remind students of the 3 tests of strength we began the class with. Quickly recreate the first *two* tests and ask students how God could provide to help us pass each test of strength. Say: What "Ram" would God send each who was struggling with the test?

The first two tests were....

**1. See how long a student can hold a Bible in each hand** with your arms straight out from your sides. Say: The Word is heavy! (Invite two students to help support the Bible-holder's arms.) God provides us with teachers, preachers, and friends who help us hold on to the Word and understand it. And the great thing about God and the Word, is the more we read and trust it, the more IT gives US strength.

**2. Have one student try to pick another up off the floor.** Now invite all the students to pick up the person. Many hands make the work light. God provides us with helpers who lead us, feed us, teach us, and care for us. When we are weak, the Spirit provides for us, just like the Spirit provided for Abraham, and grew his people into a great nation of believers, --which we are part of today. With God's help, and each other's help, we can do all that God asks us to do.

Have each student place some sand in their hand to take home, and conclude with a prayer to remind us that we are one grain, but like Abraham, we too can help spread the word.

*(Alternately or additionally, there are some reflection questions on the Map Handout about how we can plant ourselves in various place to serve God.)*

## Additional Suggestions

The two sand activities could be "stations" staffed by two different leaders that the kids rotate between.

At the beginning of the lesson have a cup of sand in a glass jar with the question: "*Guess the Number of Sand Grains In Here.*" Offer a small prize to the winner. This guessing game could also be put out for the congregation after class as part of a display.

**Adaptations - Younger Children:** They won't be able to do the big math, but they can wrestle with smaller numbers, such as the number of scoops. Count with them, and They will enjoy drawing the map in the sand with you, even though very young children may not be able to associate the map with a real place. Tracing Abraham's route with their fingers and outlining a few countries will serve as tactile memory hooks for the information.

Younger children could also do a sand painting by wiping a thin layer of glue on cardstock, then sprinkling colored sand. Use a popsicle stick to scrape away or push some sound in the glue to add to the illustration. Glue a scripture verse you provide to the back of it. Alternately, they could simply mix some sand with some gold stars, and a tuft of Ram's hair (cotton) in a ziploc sandwich bag, and include Gen 22 verse on a slip of paper.

**Adaptations - Intergenerational:** Have the intergenerational groups do each test of strength and sand activity/demo as a "station." Adjust the strength demonstrations in the direction of "how long were you all able to hold 2 Bibles in each hand?" and similarly. Have them record their strength scores, and do the math

calculations at each station. Reconvene around the tarp and have a little contest to see who can make the best looking and most accurate "Middle East" map from memory.

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