

## Introduction for the Leader

This study is meant to shed some light on young people in Scripture and how God worked through them or through their situation. As young people look to live out their vocation, these stories can point them to examples of God's work through young leaders in the past. The idea is that they will not only study these Bible stories but look particularly at the ways we can trust God's promises and reflect God's love to others.

This is a four-part study.

- Session 1 - We will look at Isaac and how we can see the foreshadowing of a Savior.
- Session 2 - We will look at David and see how his faith and trust in God carried him through in his encounter with Goliath.
- Session 3 - We will look at Joseph and how God saved many people through the seeming misfortune of Joseph.
- Session 4 - The final part of the study will be about our trust in God and what that means for our life.

It is my hope that this study is beneficial for you and your group. Blessings.

---

## Session 1: Isaac

### Leader Note

In part one we will be focusing on the character of Isaac. While Isaac wasn't a leader yet in this story, God used him as a wonderful example of faith. We can look at Isaac and Abraham in this challenging moment and see how God worked through them. We will also focus on Abraham and as a foreshadowing of Jesus' coming as we look at the section about Isaac's sacrifice.

### Open in Prayer

### Opening Discussion

Open the discussion with some, or all, of these questions. If you have a large group, you may want to break them into small groups.

- Have you ever had to do something that's really hard for you?
- What kind of feelings came with that task?
- Have you ever had a time in your life when it was hard for you to put your trust in God?

- Have you had a time where it was very easy to trust God because you could see Him clearly at work in a situation?

Take time to process the answers from the kids. Use this as a transition into the story of Abraham and Isaac, where God asks Abraham to do something that will require full trust and reliance on God.

## The Study

Read Genesis 22

What does God ask Abraham to do?

In verse 2 God tells Abraham to take Isaac to Moriah to offer him as a burnt offering.

What is Abraham's response?

Abraham rose early the next morning and set out on his way. This section of scripture has always been puzzling to me, especially now that I'm a father. The bible doesn't say that Abraham asks God questions, it just says that he set out on his way.

If you were in Abraham's place, how would you respond to God?

You may get a wide variety of answers to this question. There could be answers of sadness, anger, disbelief, confusion. Maybe some of them will say that they would try to bargain with God or come up with another way for the situation to play out. Take time to process this with the kids. You may find out a little bit about them and how they handle stress. If they are being honest, none of them will have the same response that Abraham did. I know I wouldn't. I would have a hundred different questions for God.

Where do we see the faith of Abraham?

- Verse 5
  - Abraham tells his young men to wait for him and the boy to return.
    - The Lutheran Study Bible says that Abraham believed that God would raise Isaac from the dead. God was going to do more than that. He was going to provide a substitute for Isaac. There is some great foreshadowing there!
    - Abraham's faith wasn't something he did on his own, a great feat that we can't imagine. It was a gift of God working in him.

Where do we see the faith of Isaac and Abraham together?

- Verses 7 and 8
  - Isaac asks his father where the sacrifice is for the burnt offering and Abraham says, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering my son." (Genesis 22:7-8, ESV)
    - Again, we see this unwavering faith from Abraham and we also see that faith in Isaac. He walks on trusting God would provide the lamb as well.

What do you put your faith and trust in? Discussion

Take time here to talk with students about what they put their faith and trust in. If you have a large piece of paper and markers, create a list with your youth of things that people can put their trust in. This is the place where we want to highlight the sin of trusting in things other than God. This is also a perfect time to discuss the 1st commandment and what it means to make other things into "gods" in our life. What I mean by that, is what are some of those things that the kids put before God in their life. Maybe it's friends, money, technology, etc. The list could go on and on.

Then talk about what happens when we put our faith in the things, and people, of this world. We are let down or left wanting more because of the sinful condition of this world (if time allows, you could branch off to Genesis 3 here and talk about the fall and original sin). You can then talk about putting your faith and trust in God and what that means. You can also look for Bible verses that we can use to remind ourselves of God's faithfulness to His promises.

We are getting ready to move into the portion of the study where we look at the foreshadowing of the coming Savior, so this discussion will be a great transition into that.

How does God provide for Abraham and Isaac in verses 9-14?

Abraham has prepared his son and built the altar. Both Abraham and Isaac trust that God, even when they don't know the outcome, will provide for them. Abraham is readying himself to sacrifice his son and Isaac is willing to be sacrificed. Then an angel calls out to him and says to not harm Isaac. Then, in the thicket they see a ram caught by the horns. The ram is then sacrificed in Isaac's place. God has provided a sacrifice for Abraham.

How has God provided for us?

Just as God provided the ram for Abraham's sacrifice, He has provided "the lamb" for us. Without Christ, we would be left to make payment for our own sins, and that would lead to certain death and hell. But thanks be to God, we have been covered by the perfect blood of Jesus on the cross.

What are the parallels between the story of Isaac and Jesus?

- First Born Sons
  - Genesis 22:1
    - "Take your son, your only son..."
  - Jesus is the only Son of the Father
- Lambs
  - Genesis 22:13
    - "Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son."
      - A young male is called a ram lamb
  - John 1:29
    - "The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"
- Sacrifices
  - God provided a ram for Abraham to sacrifice in place of Isaac
  - God provided Jesus as a sacrifice for all mankind

Read Genesis 26:1-5

What is God's promise to Isaac in these verses?

In verse 4 God says, "I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and I will give your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all nations of the earth shall be blessed..." (Genesis 26:4, ESV)

What does it mean when it says that all nations of the earth will be blessed?

The blessing will be the gift of God's son. He is the blessing to all the nations. God is continuing the covenant he made with Isaac's father, Abraham. We saw similarities between Isaac and Jesus when we discussed the sacrifice earlier in this chapter. Now, we are seeing a direct promise from God of Jesus coming to be a blessing to all people.

### Final Discussion

- As we looked at the story today, what is something that stood out to you about Abraham?
  - There will be a variety of answers here, but we want to steer them back to Abraham's unwavering trust in God.
- Through this story, we see the faithfulness of God to Abraham. Where can you see God's faithfulness in your life?
  - Some students may have a hard time with this question. If they do, point them to God's promise of a Savior for them and what that means for them (ie: forgiveness of sins and eternal life).

As we can see with the story of Abraham and Isaac, God is always faithful. He was to Abraham and He is to you as well.

### Close with Prayer

## Part 2: David

### Leader Note

In part 2 we will be studying the story of David and Goliath. We will be looking at how God worked through a young David and used David's faith and trust in God alone in his fight with Goliath. The goal of this part of the study is to talk about putting our faith and trust in God, what that means for us, and how we can put that faith into action.

### Open in Prayer

### Opening Discussion

Ask the students if they have ever been mocked for their faith or asked why they believe in God. They don't have to share, but if they would like to that would be great. Ask the students how that made them feel. Answers will vary. Some students may have felt fear, embarrassment, sadness, etc. Maybe they didn't know what to say or how to answer that person. You may find that there is the occasional student that was stirred to action by these questions and gave an answer about their faith and trust in God. Use this discussion to lead into the study about David and Goliath. Tell the kids that today you're going to be talking about David and how he was able to stand up for his beliefs, and his people, through his faith and trust in God.

### The Study

Read 1 Samuel 17:1-11

What do we find out about the Philistine named Goliath?

You can spend time talking about how tall he was, how much armor he wore, and how big his weapons were. Goliath was absolutely an intimidating figure. Not only was Goliath intimidating physically, but also mentally intimidating. You can look back at the opening discussion questions and talk about how those are mentally intimidating questions. Sometimes we tend to try and rely on our own knowledge instead of relying on what God has revealed to us in scripture.

In verse 10 it talks about Goliath defying the Israelites. When he defies them, who else is he defying? The Israelites are the chosen people of God. By defying them, Goliath is also saying that he is defying God himself.

Are there times in your life when you have defied God?

This doesn't have to be an open discussion question, it can be a rhetorical question that you ask the group to ponder. If teens struggle with this, encourage them to think of times when they knew the right thing to do, and chose the sinful, perhaps easier or safer, choice instead.

What did the Israelites do about this defiance from Goliath?

They did nothing. They didn't stand up for themselves or for God.

Next, read 1 Samuel 17:23-27; 31-37

What was David's response to the words of Goliath?

David was upset by the fact that Goliath had spoken out against God.



What did Saul say to David in verse 33?

Saul tells him that he is not able to battle Goliath because of his youth.

Has there ever been a time you have been told you can't do something because you are young?

Allow for some time for answers here. If you have a big group, you might want to use a pair share first. You are probably going to hear a wide array of things. Some of them will be minor and some of them may be a bit deeper. Select a few of them to open up discussion and see how it made them feel and if it impacted them trying to do something else in the future.

You could also use this time to see if there is something in the church or youth group that they feel like they aren't "allowed" to do because they are young. If these things pop up, be sure to listen well and ask good questions, rather than being defensive.

What was David's response in verse 37?

David tells Saul that the Lord will deliver him in this battle.

Where did David place his trust?

David was firmly trusting in the Lord to deliver him.

Trust in People vs. Trust in God

Ask students to give some examples of times where they had to put their trust in someone other than themselves.

- Was that hard for you? If so, why?

Saul didn't trust that David could defeat Goliath. He seemed far too young and inexperienced. Saul was trying to put his trust in David, and not in God. And trusting in David to kill a far bigger, far more experienced fighter seemed like a bad idea.

This is a great place to talk about how trust is a very important thing in a relationship and how it's very easy to let others down. This is our original sin showing through. We break people's trust and we hurt others because we are sinful. In those times we have to be willing to confess those sins and ask for forgiveness.

In contrast to that, we can put our trust in God because He keeps His promises to us. We can see this illustrated in the sending of His son, Jesus. He promised way back in Genesis chapter 3 to send a savior and He did. Jesus is the cure for that sinful condition we have. Trust in God is going to be what sees David through this battle as well.

What did David go into battle armed with?

- Verses 38-39
  - David was suited up in Saul's armor for the battle. He had a helmet, coat of mail, and a sword.
  - The problem was that they were too big for David and he couldn't wear them into battle.
  - So, David went to battle with no armor.
- Verse 40
  - A staff
    - Possibly the staff that David had already used to fight off the lion and bear that he mentioned in verse 34...
  - 5 smooth stones

- David found these laying in a brook by the battle site.
  - A sling
- None of these things that David had compared to the armor and weapons of Goliath.

What was Goliath's response to seeing David in verse 43?

Goliath was mocking David and took offense to the fact that the Israelites thought that he could be defeated by a child.

What was David's response to Goliath in verses 45-47?

Again, David relies on God and not on his own power.

What was the outcome of the battle?

David was victorious because of his faith and trust in God. David believed that God would guard and protect him. The staff, sling, and stones were secondary to the faith and trust in God.

Did it matter to God that David was just a boy?

No, it doesn't matter that David was just a boy.

### Final Discussion

Talk about how God used this boy to defeat a giant that the entire army of Israel wanted nothing to do with. Ask the students what they think it means to fully rely on God. Talk to them about how reliance on God is hard and what in our sinful nature makes it hard.

Note: if David had died in this battle with Goliath, then the line of Jesus would have died with him. I always like to remind students of these things as we go through the bible. God's plan was to send His son as the Savior of the world and He was going to see that plan through to completion.

Challenge the students to think about ways that they can live out their faith and trust in God. Encourage them to think of ways to volunteer at the church or in their community. As Christians we do good works in response to the amazing gifts of faith, forgiveness and eternal life that God has given to us. God's plan throughout scripture is clear. He is sending Jesus to die on the cross for all mankind. What an amazing gift that is! And what an amazing privilege it is for us to be able to share that good news with the world.

### Close in Prayer

## Part 3: Joseph

### Leader Note

This part of the study will focus on Joseph. We will be looking at how he was sold into slavery in Egypt, and how God used that to provide for His chosen people, the Israelites. Through this young people will be able to see how God can work through crises and difficult situations and use them in their vocations no matter what happens around them.

### Open in Prayer

### Opening Discussion

Ask the students to think about times in their lives where they have struggled to see God at work. They don't have to share, but if they are willing to then by all means let them. Ask them, or have them think about, what emotions they were feeling at that time. Ask them how they were able to handle that situation. Tell them that today they will be learning about Joseph and looking at how God was at work in his life even in times of distress and even when Joseph probably couldn't see him at work.

### The Study

Read Genesis 37

What caused Joseph's brothers to hate him?

- Verse 3
  - "Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe of many colors." (ESV)
  - A robe given just to Joseph caused envy among his brothers.
- Verses 5-8
  - Joseph had a dream that his sheaf of grain stood up in the field and all of his brothers' sheaves bowed down to his.
  - This young brother is telling all of his brothers that they will in essence bow down to him. I can't imagine that would sit well with them.
- Verses 9-11
  - Again, Joseph has a dream that the universe is revolving around him.
  - This time Joseph even included his parents in bowing down and his father rebuked him for it.
- To say Joseph and his brothers had a strained relationship would be an understatement..

### Family Jealousy

- How would you feel if one of your friends or family members told you that one day you would bow down and worship them?

If it were me, I would think that they were joking. Then, once I realized they weren't joking, I would wonder about their state of mind. No one likes being told what they will and won't do, and Joseph's brothers were no different. Jealousy can take a toll in friendships and in families. There can be times where circumstances and sinful behavior add up to real anger and hatred, even among people who are supposed to love and care for one another.



## What happened to Joseph?

- Verses 18-20
  - Joseph's brothers saw him from a far way off, and their first inclination was to kill him.
- Verse 24
  - They threw Joseph down into a pit.
- Verse 28
  - Joseph's brothers sold him to the Ishmaelites.

## Where is God?

Ask the students if they still think God was at work in Joseph's life. Really listen to how they answer a question like this and be alert for responses that may distort the Gospel. Many people have this idea that if you are a believer that bad things don't happen to you. This couldn't be further from the truth. Take a look at Joseph's life so far: His brothers hate him. He's been sold to traders and is being shipped off to Egypt.

Being a Christian doesn't mean that bad things won't happen to you. What it does mean is that when bad things happen to you, you have a God that you can turn to and lean on to get you through those things. You have a God who can continue to work faith in you, allowing God's light to continue to shine through you. Ask the students if there have been times in their life where they have had to lean on God.

## Was God still at work in Joseph's life?

- Genesis 39:23
  - "The keeper of the prison paid no attention to anything that was in Joseph's charge, because the Lord was with him. And whatever he did, the Lord made it succeed."
  - God was still there with Joseph despite the bad things going on for him.

## Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams

- Genesis 41:16
  - Joseph laid the foundation of the interpretation.
    - "Joseph answered Pharaoh, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer."" (ESV)
  - Joseph is quick to tell Pharaoh that this isn't him at work, but God at work.
- Genesis 41:29-30
  - There will be seven years of plenty and then seven years of famine.

## Pharaoh's response

- Genesis 41:38-41
  - Pharaoh recognizes the spirit of God in Joseph and appoints him over all of Egypt. Second in command only to Pharaoh himself.
    - This is a pretty amazing thing that happens here. Pharaoh, who isn't a believer, is acknowledging the power of God in Joseph.
    - God is definitely still at work in Joseph's life.

## How does Joseph provide for not only the people of Egypt, but also for the people of Israel?

Joseph was able to store up enough food during the years of plenty to feed Egypt and to provide food and supplies for his family as well. God worked through Joseph to protect and care for God's people and their neighbors.

Did Joseph repay his brothers' actions in kind?

- Genesis 50:19-21
  - "But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them."
- Joseph forgave his brothers and also recognized that God was able to work good through the bad things that had happened in his life.
- Had Joseph not been sold to the traders and sent to Egypt, we would not have been able to store up all the food that sustained the people through the 7 years of famine.
- God used a seemingly hopeless situation to save the lives of countless people.

### Final Discussion

Have the students reflect on their comments from the opening discussion. Can they relate at all to the story of Joseph? Would they have been able to forgive as Joseph did or to see God's hand at work in that situation?

We are presented with opportunities to forgive others daily. Sometimes it is for small things and sometimes it is for very big things. Sometimes that forgiveness is hard to give. But, as Christians, we are called to forgive just as God forgives us.

Joseph could have believed that God had abandoned him when his brothers sold him into slavery. Instead, he knew God was with him and God worked through Joseph to save many people. God didn't make bad things happen to Joseph; that was sin in this world. But God redeemed the situation and used Joseph powerfully.

We are shown through the life of Joseph that God is always working his plan of salvation. God saved the Israelites from starvation by working through Joseph and God continues to work his plan of salvation for you in your life as well.

### Close in Prayer

## Part 4: God at Work in You and Through You

### Leader Note

This final installment of the study will build on the idea of faith and trust in God. We will talk about how we can live out our faith and what the Bible tells us about God's plan of salvation and what that means for us. Our goal here is to lead the students in a discussion about what it means to be a believer in God. It has an effect, or should have an effect, on what we say and what we do.

### Open in Prayer

### Opening Discussion/Activity

If you think your group can handle it, start this study with some trust falls. If trust falls are too intimidating, you could set up a small obstacle course with things scattered around the floor and have one student be blindfolded and another student lead them around the obstacle course by the hand at first and then using just their voice a second time. This will illustrate the idea of trusting in someone else.

Ask the students how putting their trust in someone else made them feel. For some, I would guess that it caused some anxiety. Some may say that they were fine with it. In our study today, we are going to continue our discussion about trusting in God.

### The Study

We are going to break this study into two parts. The first part will be about God's plan of salvation and the second part will be what that plan means for us in our life.

Read Genesis 3:14-15 (if time allows, you could read all of Genesis chapter 3)

What is God's plan based on these two verses?

God's plan is to send a Savior into the world that has now been broken by sin. Verse 15 tells us that there will be enmity between the devil and the offspring of woman. Enmity means to be actively opposed or hostile to something. Jesus is the one that is actively opposed to the devil and all that he stands for.

Is this the only time in scripture we see this promise or a foreshadowing of this promise?

No, we can look back to our study on Abraham and Isaac and see the foreshadowing in that story as well. Refer back to part 1 of this study and talk about the ram provided by God for a sacrifice and the fact that Isaac was the first-born son of Abraham and Jesus is the first born son of God.

Read Luke 2:11

Did God keep his promise from Genesis?

Yes! We see here in Luke the fulfillment of God's promise to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3. The savior is born, and God's plan of salvation continues on.

Read Matthew 27:45-28:10

Was Jesus' birth the end of the story?

Certainly not. Here we see the death and resurrection of Jesus. This goes back to Genesis chapter 3 when it discusses the bruising of the heel and the bruising of the head.

What does this mean for us?

- John 3:16
  - We see in this verse that because of Jesus' death and resurrection, we will receive eternal life.

Trust in God and what that means for us.

As you can see by now, a recurring theme in this series is trust in God. We trust that God will do what he says He's going to do because we can see in scripture that God keeps His promises. God has promised us forgiveness of sins and eternal life. If you have time, you can have students find other times when God kept His promises to His people throughout the Bible.

Ask the students what it means to them to have forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Ask them if they ever had trouble forgiving someone. I would bet, if they are being honest, that answer will be yes. Ask them why it would be hard to forgive someone, if they themselves have been forgiven by God. The answer is sin. We have a hard time forgiving because we are sinful. What does all of this talk of trust and forgiveness have to do with us in our daily lives? Let's take a look at scripture and see.

What does the bible tell us about trust?

- Proverbs 3:5-6
  - Verse 5: We see here that we should trust in the Lord with all our heart.
    - This is a first commandment statement here. There should be nothing in our lives that takes a higher place than God.
  - Verse 6: In all our ways we are to acknowledge Him.
    - Why are we to acknowledge Him?
      - Because he is God and we are not. His ways are perfect and ours are not.
- Jeremiah 17:7
  - Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord.
    - When we put our trust in God we will be blessed.
    - This doesn't mean that we will get everything we ask for or desire, this means that God will provide for us in terms of forgiveness of sins and eternal life. The rewards of trust in God are heavenly rewards. They are eternal life with God.
  - Whose trust is the Lord
    - Notice here that it says not only to trust in the Lord, but our trust IS the Lord. Our trust is in the promises of God that I mentioned above.

How does all this talk about forgiveness and eternal life relate to me today?

- Matthew 5:16
  - When we let our light shine, it is so we can point people to God and the wonderful blessing that He gives to us.
  - Our good works are a response to the grace and mercy that God shows to us. Our good works ARE NOT so that people will look at us and say what a good person we are. They are for people to look at us and see what an amazing God we have.
  - So, as believers, we are called to live a life that looks different than that of the world. We are called to live in the way that God would have us live; in a way that points people to Him.

- Have students list roles and responsibilities they have where they can reflect God's love for them to others. Discuss where that might be difficult or times when the Holy Spirit has worked in them to share the Gospel in a way they didn't expect.
- 1 Peter 3: 14-16
  - We are called to always be prepared to share your gift of faith and make a defense of the Gospel.
    - We do this by knowing God's Word and living out our vocation by serving our neighbors in Jesus' name.
      - We can do this in both words and actions. We are called to act in love, with gentleness and respect so that regardless of the circumstances God can be glorified in our actions.
  - Baptism
    - We rely on the work of the Holy Spirit to bring people to faith. We are not capable of doing it ourselves. We share the good news and point people to Jesus, where they can receive faith and forgiveness of sins and eternal life.
  - Teaching
    - What are some ways you can get involved in your church teaching?
      - Sunday school, vacation bible school, leading a youth group bible study?
      - Encourage your students to think about these things. When they are tasked with leading a study, it forces them into the scriptures where they can see our amazing God at work.
  - God is with us
    - God promises to be with us always. He is with us in our hearts when we are trying to talk to our friends about our faith and we aren't sure what to say. He's with us when we are struggling and looking for help. He's always with us, every step of the way.

### Final Discussion

Throughout this study we have looked at different people from the bible and how they trusted in God and God delivered them. Then in this study we looked at our own trust in God and how He has delivered eternal life to us.

Ask your students if they have learned anything new about trust over the course of this study. Ask the students if they can identify anyone in their life that needs to hear about faith in Jesus and forgiveness of sins and eternal life. If they say yes, encourage them to reach out to that person. If they are not comfortable reaching out on their own, and you are willing to help them, please do that. If you are not comfortable with that, please get them in touch with your pastor, who I'm sure would be more than happy to help them reach out to their friend.

End this study by encouraging your students to live out their faith in their vocations. To be bold in their proclamation of the gospel in both their words and actions. Be there to offer a comforting word when times are hard. Be there with a word of forgiveness when that is needed.

Finally, thank you for your work with the youth of our church. May God continue to bless your efforts as you spread God's word.

### Close in Prayer