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# Abraham Offers Isaac

*Scripture: Genesis 22:1-19*

**Theme: God provides the sacrifice**

*1st-3rd Grade (Ages 6-8)*

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Free curriculum for small and rural churches

## Lesson Overview

Lesson Overview: "Jacob's Ladder , God Reaches Down" Introduction (Engage & Explain): Start by showing a simple drawing of Jacob's dream of the ladder connecting heaven and earth (Genesis 28:12). Say, "Jacob was scared and ran away from God, but God didn't give up! Even when we feel far from Him, He promises to meet us, just like a ladder reaches both sky and earth. Today we'll learn how God always reaches down to love us!" Key Message (Teach): Jacob was fleeing his brother Esau after stealing his blessing, but God didn't chase him, He sent an angel (or angels) to guide him! In the dream, Jacob saw a ladder with angels climbing up and down. This was a promise: "No matter where you run, God's love and grace are always available!" Even though Jacob was far away, God reached down to speak to him. For us, that means God is always close, waiting for us to turn back and trust Him. Application (Connect & Encourage): "Sometimes we feel like Jacob, scared or busy, running from God instead of running to Him. But remember: God doesn't ask us to earn His love; He reaches out first! Ask God to help you turn back when you feel far away. Maybe it's today, just like Jacob, you can trust Him!" End with a prayer: "Father, thank You for reaching down to love us. Help us to run to You today." Closing Activity (Worship/Reflection): Play soft music and have kids act out Jacob's ladder, one person holds a rope (ladder) while others climb up and down, shouting "God is here!" Then, give each child a small "ladder" craft (a paper ladder with angel stickers) to take home as a reminder: "God's love ladder is always there for you!" Volunteer Tips: - Use props (ladder cutout, angel figurines) to make it visual. - For reluctant kids, ask, "What's the hardest place you've ever run from? How can God help you trust Him there?" Keep it hopeful!

## Bible Story

Jacob's Ladder , God Reaches Down

Once, a young man named Jacob was on his way to visit his brother Esau. Jacob felt afraid because he didn't know what his brother would do. He ran away and went to a quiet place by a big, wide river. There, he lay down to sleep under a tree, but he was very tired. As he drifted off, he saw a bright, shining ladder with steps going up into the sky! Angels were climbing up and down on it, and at the very top, God stood watching. Jacob was amazed!

Jacob woke up and said, "Wow! This is the most amazing sight I've ever seen!" He knew he shouldn't take God's gift lightly, so he made a promise. He told God, "If you really are God, if you've been kind to me, I'll give you a special part of the first thing I eat." Then he built an altar, put some stones there, and poured oil on them as a reminder of God's promise. He also placed a stone there to honor God, calling it Bethel, which means "house of God."

God heard Jacob's promise, and He was pleased. Jacob knew that night was special, God had spoken to him, and He was close! Even though Jacob didn't understand everything right away, he trusted that God was there, watching over him. Later, Jacob would keep this promise and build a house at Bethel, showing his gratitude for God's kindness. This story tells us that no matter how far away we feel from God, He is always reaching down to us, just like Jacob saw that night.

This story is so important because it shows us that God does hear our prayers and does care about us. Even when we're scared or alone, God is always there, just like He was for Jacob. When we trust Him and thank Him, He keeps His promises to us too. Let's remember that God is always watching over us, just like He was for Jacob, so we can trust Him every day!

## Key Verse

### Genesis 22:8

God's Promise of Love and Protection This verse is like a big, warm hug from God to Jacob, a special friend in the Bible. God says, "I'll always be with you, and I'll keep watching over you wherever you go." That means no matter where Jacob travels or what happens, God is there to help and guide him. It's like a promise that no matter how far or scary things might seem, God is right beside you, protecting and supporting you just like a loving parent would. Imagine Jacob is a little kid who might feel scared or alone while traveling a long way, maybe on a journey with his family or even just exploring a new place. This verse tells him that God is his trusted friend, always there to keep him safe. It's like having a superhero shadowing you, but even better because God is kind, wise, and full of love. For us today, this means God is always watching over us, too, whether we're learning new things, playing with friends, or even feeling nervous about something big. You might wonder: How does God watch over us? Well, God's love is like a big, gentle hand that holds us. Sometimes, He shows us that love through our parents, teachers, friends, or even little moments like sunshine, a friendly smile, or a comforting prayer. But even if nothing else is there, God is always there in our hearts, like a quiet promise that says, "You're never alone." That's why when we feel worried or unsure, we can take a deep breath and remember: God is with us, watching over us, and He'll help us through anything. This verse is also a reminder to trust in God. Just like Jacob could rely on God's promise, we can trust that no matter what, God will never leave us. So next time you're feeling brave or scared, try to remember this sweet promise: God is right there with you, guiding you and holding your hand. You can always turn to Him for help, just like a little kid turning to their mom or dad when they need comfort. Lastly, this verse can help us be kind to others. Just as God loves us, we can try to show love and kindness to our family, friends, and even to people who might be different from us. When we help someone else, we're kind of like walking with God's promise of love, passing it on to others! So let's always remember: God loves us, and we should love others too, just like He does.

## Activities

### Activity 1:

1. Draw the Rung: Cut 5, 6 paper strips (about 3 inches long) and 3, 4 steps (about 4 inches tall). Fold each rung in half to make a loop.

2. Build the Ladder: Glue the steps and rungs to make a 2, 3 foot tall ladder. Add a picture of Jacob or God at the top for decoration.
3. Write a Promise: On the bottom rung, have kids write or draw how God helps them climb (e.g., "God's promise to guide me").
4. Share with a Friend: Explain how God "reaches down" like Jacob's ladder to help them when they feel afraid or lost.
2. "God's Promise Tree" (Story + Scavenger Hunt)
6. Draw the Tree: Have students draw a tree trunk (a big circle) and branches (lines sticking out). Label roots as "God's promises" and leaves as "good things He gives."
7. Hide Promises: Place 3, 4 small tokens around the room (e.g., a ball, coin, or toy) and say, "These are like God's promises to help us!"
8. Find & Share: Call out a number (1, 4), and students find the matching item. Ask: "How does this help you trust God?"
9. Close in Prayer: Ask: "Who can share one promise God helped you climb toward today?"
10. Why These Work:
11. Both activities use simple, hands-on tools to make the Bible story tangible. The ladder craft helps kids see God's reach, while the scavenger hunt ties promises to real-life trust. Both encourage discussion and sharing!

## Discussion Questions

- Here are four open-ended discussion questions for early elementary children (ages 6, 8) based on Jacob's Ladder, God Reaches Down (Genesis 28:10, 22). These questions encourage thinking, reflection, and application while keeping language simple and engaging:
- 1. What Did Jacob See on His Journey?
- "Jacob dreamed of a ladder reaching from the earth all the way up to heaven, with angels going up and down it. What do you think that ladder could symbolize? Why do you think God showed Jacob this dream? How do you think it made Jacob feel?"
- (Application: How can God help us feel close to him, even when we're far away from him? Can you think of a time you felt lonely or lost? How might God reach down to you like he did Jacob?)
- 2. Why Did Jacob Make a Promise to God?
- "After his dream, Jacob woke up and knew God was with him. He built an altar (a small stone place to pray) and made a promise to God: 'If you're really my God, take me to the land your people have always lived in.' What do you think made Jacob so brave to make this promise? Do you think he was scared? How can we trust God even when we don't understand everything?"
- (Application: Jacob trusted God even when he didn't know where he'd end up. How can we trust God with our fears or big questions? What's one thing you're trusting God with today?)
- 3. How Did Jacob Feel When He Grew Up?
- "Later, Jacob's family moved to another country (Egypt), and he forgot about his dream and promise to God. When he grew older, did he still feel God's presence? What happened when he finally went back to the land God promised him? Why do you think God remembered his promise?"
- (Application: Sometimes we forget to talk to God, even when we should. How can we remind ourselves to pray or thank God every day? What's one small way you can show God you're grateful for him?)
- 4. What Can We Learn from Jacob's Ladder?
- "Jacob's ladder showed God's power to reach down and connect with people. Even though Jacob was far away, God was still with him. How can we use God's ladder in our own lives? Maybe it's helping someone who feels

alone, listening when someone is scared, or showing kindness to someone who's different. What's one way you can 'reach down' to help someone else this week?"

- (Application: Just like Jacob, we can trust God to help us and others. How can you use your talents or kindness to make someone feel seen by God, just like Jacob did?)
- These questions invite kids to explore the story's big ideas, trust, God's presence, promises, and kindness, while giving them space to share their thoughts, feelings, and ideas.

## Prayer Focus

*"Dear Heavenly Father, We come to you today like Jacob did, full of wonder and a little fear. Jacob ran away from his brother Esau, but God was still watching over him, just like He watches over us. Like Jacob, we sometimes feel small or unsure, but we know you are always with us, reaching down in love. You promised to help us, to guide us, and to keep our hearts safe, just like You did for Jacob when he had a dream of a ladder reaching from the earth to heaven. We thank You, Lord, for the way You connect us to You. Just as Jacob climbed the ladder and saw angels talking to God, we want to climb higher in our faith, trusting that You are always near. Help us to look up and remember that You see us, love us, and are always ready to help. When we feel scared or lost, like Jacob did when he was alone in the dark, remind us that You are right there, holding our hands. Today, we ask You to help us be like Jacob, trusting You fully, no matter what. Teach us to thank You for every step, big or small, because You are our guide. Like Jacob, we promise to tell others about the wonderful things You do. Help us to share our faith with kindness, just like Jacob did when he returned to his family. We love You, Father, and we trust in You. Help us to grow in our hearts and believe that You always reach down to help us. Amen!"* Application for the Lesson: - Have the children draw a simple ladder with angels or stars on the steps, labeling each rung with a promise from God (e.g., "You will never be alone"). - Sing a simple song about trust (e.g., "Trust in the Lord with all your heart"). - End by sharing: "Today, we promise to climb higher in faith, like Jacob, and always look up to God!"

### >> Missions Spotlight

Among the Bedouin peoples of the Middle East, who are descendants of Abraham through Ishmael, the story of Jacob resonates deeply. Missionaries working in the Arabian Peninsula use the patriarch stories as a natural entry point for Gospel conversations.

### -> To the Cross

Jacob saw a ladder connecting heaven and earth with angels ascending and descending. Jesus said, 'You will see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man' (John 1:51). Jesus Himself is the ladder, the connection between God and us.