Praise Jesus!

**Bible Point**

God wants us to trust him, even if we don’t understand at first.

**Bible Verse**

“Many sorrows come to the wicked, but unfailing love surrounds those who trust the Lord” (Psalm 32:10).

**Growing Closer to Jesus**

Students will
- explore what it means to trust,
- learn why God is trustworthy, and
- commit to trusting God.

**Teacher Enrichment**

**Bible Basis**

- Abraham's faith is tested.

**Genesis 22:1-19**

The story may seem horrifying—what kind of God would command a parent to sacrifice a child? But if we examine the text, we can take comfort in knowing that God never intended for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. The whole event was designed to test Abraham; it was a chance for him to show how far he would go in obeying God.

The law God gave later strictly prohibited child sacrifice. Abraham must have been surprised at God’s command. However, Abraham obeyed.

Abraham’s faith in God and his willingness to obey are truly amazing. Not only was he willing to sacrifice his son, but he maintained faith that somehow his son would be returned to him. He said to his servants, “Then we will come right back” (Genesis 22:5). Somehow Abraham was confident that in spite of this command, God would preserve Isaac. And Isaac, too, showed faith. He submitted to being placed on the altar in obedience to God’s command.

Abraham passed the test, and God averted the death of Isaac. Abraham discovered that God is good and just and can be trusted even when we can’t understand him.

Other Scriptures used in this lesson are Psalm 90:1-2; 99:1-5; 111:1-7; 139:1-6; Ephesians 4:32; and 1 John 4:7-8.

**Prayer**

- Read Hebrews 11:17-19.
- Has God ever asked you to do something that seemed scary at first? How did you respond?
- Pray: Lord, help me and the children I teach to trust and obey you, even when…
**Lesson 8**

**Before the Lesson**
- Collect the necessary items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed on the chart.
- Make photocopies of the “Hands-On Fun at Home” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your students.
- Pray for your students and for God’s direction as you teach the lesson.

**This Lesson at a Glance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Students Will Do</th>
<th>Classroom Supplies</th>
<th>Learning Lab Supplies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attention Grabber</strong></td>
<td><strong>Do You Trust Me?</strong>—Volunteer to eat a mystery snack.</td>
<td>Snacks, plastic bag, crumpled paper bag or box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bible Exploration &amp; Application</strong></td>
<td><strong>Why Trust, Anyway?</strong>—Trust a guide to lead them, and explore scriptural reasons for trusting God.</td>
<td>Bibles, newsprint, markers, scissors, tape, paper scraps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prized Possessions</strong></td>
<td><strong>Draw favorite possessions, and read a story from Genesis 22:1-19.</strong></td>
<td>Bibles, paper, markers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trusting God Today</strong></td>
<td><strong>Share the story of a child who trusted God, and read Psalm 32:10.</strong></td>
<td>Bibles, CD player, markers, “Why Trust God?” poster from “Why Trust, Anyway?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Closing**

**Steps of Faith**—Take steps of faith, and pray together about trusting God.
Welcome

As kids arrive, ask them how they applied last week’s lesson to their lives. Ask questions such as, “Did you feel God’s protection last week?” and “How did you handle your fears?”

Remind kids that whenever you honk the Harpo horn twice, they are to stop talking, clap twice, and focus on you. Explain that it’s important to respond to this signal quickly so the class can do as many fun activities as possible.

Module Review

Use the casual interaction time at the beginning of class to ask kids the following module-review questions.

• Did you encounter anything scary this week? How did you handle your fear?
• What things have you done wrong since our lesson two weeks ago? How did your sin affect others? How did you respond?
• What things in your future can you trust God about? Have you experienced any good results because you’ve trusted God the past few weeks?
• What’s your favorite of the things you learned in the past few weeks? Why?
• How is your life different as a result of what we’ve learned in class this month?

Attention Grabber

Do You Trust Me?

SUPPLIES: snacks, plastic bag, crumpled paper bag or box

Place snacks in a clean plastic bag. Put the plastic bag inside a crumpled, dirty paper sack or messy looking box. Don’t let the kids see what’s inside.

Have kids sit in a circle on the floor. Stand in the center, and display the dirty sack. Say: I’ve got a surprise treat for anyone who trusts me. Who’d like to taste the treat?

Have volunteers stand up. Say to the volunteers: I know the bag is kind of dirty, but the treat is wonderful. Just open your mouth, and close your eyes tight.

Wait a moment to add to the suspense. Check to be sure volunteers can’t see what’s coming. Reach into the bag, and pop a treat into one volunteer’s mouth. Do the same for the other volunteers. Then remove the clean plastic bag and show it to the kids.

Ask: • What did you think when I offered you treats from a dirty, crumpled bag? (Gross; I’m not too hungry; I wonder what’s inside.)
It’s important that students be completely blindfolded for this activity. Students may need to pull the mystery masks down to the tips of their noses to make sure they can’t see.

If students have trouble coming up with reasons to trust God, guide them toward the following answers.

Psalm 90:1-2—God is eternal.
Psalm 99:1-5—God is fair and powerful.
Psalm 111:1-7—God is good and fair.
Psalm 139:1-6—God knows everything.
Ephesians 4:32—God is forgiving.
1 John 4:7-8—God is love.

• Volunteers, how did you react when I said you had to close your eyes and open your mouths? (Nervous; I wasn’t sure I made the right choice; I felt confident because I trusted you.)

• How is volunteering to eat a mystery treat like trusting God? (We trusted you that the treat would be good, and we have to trust God; you didn’t give us a bad treat, and God wouldn’t lead us into danger.)

Say: God wants us to trust him, even if we don’t understand at first. We don’t always understand why God does what he does, but we can always trust God to work things out for the best. Today we’re going to learn more about trusting God.

Distribute treats to the rest of the kids.

Bible Exploration & Application

Why Trust, Anyway?

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles, newsprint, markers, scissors, tape, paper scraps

Before class, write “Why Trust God?” in large letters across the top of a sheet of newsprint. Draw a line under the heading. Then draw lines to divide the rest of the sheet into six pieces, like a puzzle. (See illustration on pg. 91.) On each piece of the puzzle, write “God is ___________,” and one of the following Scriptures: Psalm 90:1-2; Psalm 99:1-5; Psalm 111:1-7; Psalm 139:1-6; Ephesians 4:32; 1 John 4:7-8. Cut the pieces apart and set them aside for use later in this lesson.

Form no more than three teams. Tape scraps of paper or small self-stick notes over the eyeholes of the mystery masks, and use the masks to blindfold one person on each team. Have each blindfolded person select a guide from his or her team.

Have the blindfolded kids stand across the room from the guides and other members of their respective teams. Scatter the fishnet, the rainbow spring, and the linking hearts and stars on the floor between the blindfolded kids and their teammates.

Say: Those who are blindfolded must cross the room to rejoin their teammates. There will be some obstacles in your way, but your guides will steer you around them. Try not to step on anything! If you step on the fishnet, you’ll have to start over; so listen carefully for your guide’s directions.

Guides, give your blindfolded team members instructions such as, “Take two small steps forward,” or “Take one big step to the right.” Remember that things on your right will be on the blindfolded person’s left, and things on your left will be on his or her right.

If you’re not a guide, please watch quietly. If you see someone step on the fishnet, raise your hand, and I’ll honk the Harpo horn. Then you can say the name of the person who stepped on the fishnet, and I’ll guide that person back to the starting point.

Spin blindfolded kids around three times, and then turn them in the right direction to cross the room. After all blindfolded people have completed the course, have them transfer the blindfolds to their guides. Let the newly blindfolded people choose guides.
while you rearrange the gizmos on the floor. Repeat the activity until everyone has completed the blindfolded walk. Encourage blindfolded kids to pick new guides each time.

After everyone has completed the blindfolded walk, collect the gizmos and place them out of sight for use in future lessons. Honk the Harpo horn to get kids’ attention. When kids respond, have teams discuss the following questions. Pause for a minute or two after each question to allow teams to discuss their responses.

Ask: • Did you trust your guide to give you good directions? Why or why not? (Yes, because I chose my guide myself; yes, because we were on the same team; I can trust my guide because I’m friends with her; no, I was afraid my guide would try to trick me.)

• How is following your guide’s instructions like following God? (God will show us where to go; I couldn’t see my guide, and I can’t see God; my guide knew things I didn’t know, and so does God.)

• Why should we trust God to give us good directions? (Because God loves us; because God knows everything; because God wants the best for us.)

Honk the Harpo horn twice to bring kids together. Invite them to share insights they gained from their team members.

Say: We may not always know why God asks us to do something, but we do know we can trust God. Let’s find out why.

Have kids return to their teams. Give each team a Bible, a marker, and two or three pieces of your “Why Trust God?” poster. Say: Look up your verses. Then write one reason you can trust God based on the Scripture you read. Choose one person in your group to be the Reader; one person to be the Recorder, who writes your reason for trusting God; one person to be the Encourager, who makes sure everyone contributes to the discussion; and one person to be the Reporter, who shares your reason with the class.

Give groups about three minutes to complete this activity, and then call everyone back together by honking the Harpo horn. Wait for kids to respond; then invite Reporters to share their groups’ discoveries.

Say: Sometimes we don’t understand the things God asks us to do. But if we remember how strong, loving, fair, and forgiving God is, it’s easier to follow where he leads us. ► God wants us to trust him, even if we don’t understand at first.

Prized Possessions

Supplies: Bibles, paper, markers

Give everyone a sheet of paper and a marker. Say: Draw a picture of your most prized possession. Think of something that’s so important you wouldn’t want to live without it.

Give kids a few minutes to draw their prized possessions. Then honk the Harpo horn to get everyone’s attention. When kids respond, have them form pairs. Say: Describe your drawing to your partner. Make sure you explain to your partner why this is your most prized possession.
After kids have described their drawings, invite them to exchange drawings with their partners. Have partners describe each other’s drawings to the class. Remind kids to say only positive things about each other’s work.

Collect the drawings as kids finish presenting them. When you’ve collected all the drawings, ask:

- **How would you react if I ripped up your drawings?** (I’d be mad; I’d be sad because I worked hard on it; I wouldn’t understand why you ripped them up.)
- **How would you feel if the possession in your drawing was actually destroyed?** (Really mad; sad to lose my favorite possession.)

Say: *Our Bible story today is about a time God asked Abraham to give up something much more important than a possession. Let’s see how Abraham responded.*

Distribute Bibles, and help kids look up **Genesis 22:1-19**. Ask a volunteer to read aloud verses 1-8. Have the other kids follow along in their Bibles. Then have kids stand as you ask the following questions. Say: *Raise your hand when you think of an answer to each question. I’d like to hear as many different answers as you can think of. When someone gives an answer you thought of and you don’t have anything more to add, you may sit down. When everyone is seated, I’ll ask you to stand again for the next question.*

- **How do you think Abraham felt when God told him to sacrifice Isaac?** (Scared; sad; angry; confused.)
- **How is that like the way you would have felt if I had destroyed the drawings of your prized possessions?** (Abraham probably felt worse, because Isaac was his only son; Abraham felt sad about giving up Isaac, just as I would have felt if you had ripped up my drawing.)

After all kids are seated, ask another volunteer to read aloud verses 9-12 while others follow along. Then have kids stand again.

Ask: **How do you think Isaac felt when Abraham tied him up and raised the knife to kill him?** (Terrified; worried that he was going to die; confused; he might have wondered if his father was crazy.)

- **How do you think Abraham and Isaac felt when God stopped the sacrifice?** (Relieved; happy; confused about why God changed his mind.)

After all kids are seated, ask another volunteer to read aloud verses 13-19 while others follow along. Then have kids stand again, and ask:

- **Why do you think God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac?** (God wanted to see if Abraham trusted him; God wanted to see if Abraham loved God more than he loved Isaac; God was planning to provide another sacrifice all along.)
- **A few weeks ago, we learned that God promised Abraham many offspring. Was God breaking this promise by asking Abraham to sacrifice Isaac? Why or why not?** (No, because God knew he wouldn’t make Abraham go through with the sacrifice; no, God could give Abraham more sons if he wanted to.)

Say: **God promised Abraham many descendants. And he kept his promise by giving Abraham a son. After Isaac was born, it would have been easy for Abraham to sit back and wait for more descendants to be born and forget about trusting God—especially when God asked Abraham to do something that seemed to go against God’s promise. But Abraham knew God was in control, so he did what God asked him to do.**
Abraham’s near sacrifice of Isaac is a difficult story, even for adults. Sacrifice was the Old Testament way of paying for sins. We no longer need to offer sacrifices because Jesus was willing to die on the cross to take the punishment for our sins. Jesus’ sacrifice has paid the price once and for all...for all our sins!

God wants us to trust him, even if we don’t understand at first. Remember, God knows what will happen in the future. If we trust God, God will guide us just as he guided Abraham.

HANDS-ON BIBLE

Give each person a small stone and a marker. Make sure kids have their Hands-On Bibles.

Have students turn to Genesis 22 in their Bibles and complete the “Do You Really Trust Me?” activity found there. When kids finish, ask:

- When is it hard for you to trust God? (When I’m being picked on; when I’m having trouble in school; when my parents fight; when my friends are being mean to me.)

- How can Abraham’s story encourage you to trust God? (I can remember that God came through for Abraham; I can remember that God is trustworthy because he is in control; I can remember that God wants what is best for me and wants me to trust him.)

Trusting God Today


Say: We’re going to hear from a boy who trusted God, even though he didn’t understand at first. While you listen, think of times in your own life when you didn’t understand why God wanted you to do something. Think of the good things God did in your life because you chose to follow him.

Play “Moving Away” (track 10) on the CD.

Have kids form pairs to discuss the following questions. Pause after each question to allow kids time to discuss their responses.

Ask: • Can you think of a time you had to do something you didn’t understand? What was that like? (Confusing because I didn’t know why I had to go to a new school; sad because my parents got a divorce.)

- Why do you think the boy trusted that God would be with him in a new place? (Because God was with him before he moved; he knew he could trust God.)

- When do you have a hard time trusting God? (When God wants me to do something I don’t like; when I’m scared and confused about the future; when I have to make a big change; when I don’t know what will happen next.)
Honk the *Harpo horn* to bring kids back together. Wait for kids to respond, and then have them share the responses they discussed with their partners. Say: **Sometimes it’s not easy to trust God. But it helps to know we have good reasons to trust him. Look at the “Why Trust God?” poster, and pick one reason you like the best. For example, if you think that life is sometimes unfair, you might decide to trust God because God is fair. After you pick a reason, tell your reason to everyone in the class. Say, “I’m [name], and I’ll trust God because…” After you share your reason, write your name on that section of the poster.**

Place several markers on the floor near the poster so kids can write their names. After several minutes, honk the *Harpo horn* to bring everyone together. Wait for kids to respond. Then distribute Bibles, and help kids find *Psalm 32:10*, *“Many sorrows come to the wicked, but unfailing love surrounds those who trust the Lord.”* After everyone has found the passage, ask a volunteer to read it aloud.

Say: **There are times when we don’t understand what God is doing in our lives. But God wants us to trust him, even if we don’t understand at first. If we follow God, we’ll eventually discover that God keeps his promises in surprising and fantastic ways. And God will never leave us alone when we follow him. He’s always with us.**

### Closing

#### Steps of Faith

**SUPPLIES:** none

Have kids form a circle and put their arms around the people on either side of them. Say: **Following God means taking steps of faith, one day at a time. To help us follow him, God has given us a circle of friends to support and encourage us. We’re in a special circle like that right now. We don’t always know what God will ask us to do, and sometimes we don’t understand why God wants us to do something. But following God means trusting and trying. And God wants us to trust him, even if we don’t understand at first.**

Let’s close our class today by praying about trusting God. We’ll each ask God to help us trust him. If you want to ask God to help you follow him in a special way, such as trusting him at school, pray about that. If you just want to say something like “Dear God, help me to trust you,” that’s OK, too. After each person prays, our circle will take one step to the right. Would someone like to start our prayer circle today?

Choose a volunteer to start the prayer. After each person prays, have the class take one step to the right. Close with a group hug.
Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the “Hands-On Fun at Home” handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with your kids. Encourage kids and parents to use the handout to spark meaningful discussion on this week’s topic.
God wants us to trust him, even if we don’t understand at first.

Bible Verse: “Many sorrows come to the wicked, but unfailing love surrounds those who trust the Lord” (Psalm 32:10).

Check It Out

• Read Ecclesiastes 8:16-17.
  Tell about a time you trusted God even though you didn’t understand. Why can’t we understand everything God has done?

• Read 1 Corinthians 2:9
  What’s the greatest thing you can ever imagine doing? God has something even greater planned for you!

Let It Grow

With your family, choose a small section of your yard to dig up for an early garden. Plant a few daffodil or tulip bulbs in your garden, and then sit back and wait for spring! Talk about how, just as we trust that the seasons will change and the flowers will bloom, we can trust in God’s love and guidance for us.

Faith Walk

Plan a family trust walk. Pick a leader, and blindfold everyone else in your family. Follow your leader through the house and outside if the weather’s nice. Take turns leading the walk. When everyone’s had a turn, tell each other how you felt as you walked blindfolded. Have each person share one reason why he or she trusted each member of the family.