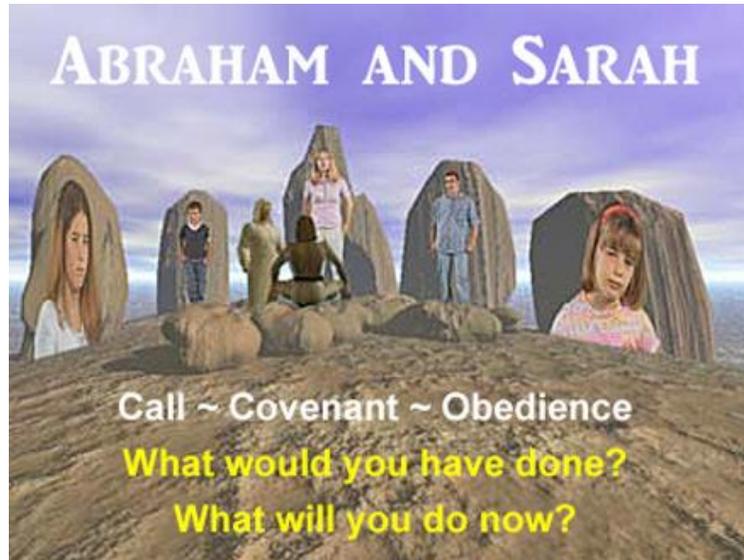


Sunday Software's Guide to Abraham and Sarah

The Abraham and Sarah software is, being made available by Sunday Software for free to Rotation.org's supporting members and members of their congregations. See the software download page at Rotation.org for details. Be sure you have the latest version of Quicktime for Windows (7.7.9) or the program's menus and animations won't run. Make the program fill more of your screen by adjusting the Display size in Windows. See Tech Notes at the end of this guide or the Display PDF in the download.



What this story *and* this software program are all about:

The **narration** at the beginning of the program and the narrated intro to the Near-Sacrifice of Isaac section can be considered the SUMMARIES of what the Bible and this software are trying to teach. The certificate your students can print in the Pay It Forward section echoes these words:

God visited a man named Abram.... and called him to take his family on a difficult journey...to become a people dedicated to receiving the message of God and sharing it with the world. This is their story. Is it yours? God tested Abraham, Sarah and Isaac's faith by asking for the sacrifice of Isaac. This story reveals what you can expect from God, what God expects from you, and what God will do for us all.

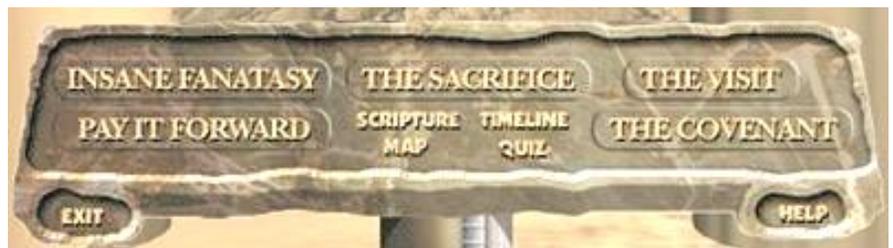
In addition to telling the stories, this software program features many discussion activities and question to help students to hear the call and make this THEIR story through life application. Thus, we strongly recommend that a parent or teacher be the "guide by the side" as students explore the Abraham and Sarah software.

Abe Overview:

The menu which rises in the "Scriptorium" links you to the stories that are told and additional learning sections.

The Three Major Stories:

1. The Covenant
2. The Visit
3. The Sacrifice



The Four Study Activities:

1. Timeline
2. Scripture
3. Quiz
4. Map Game

Two Major Reflection Activities:

1. Insane Fanat-asy
2. Pay It Forward

Scriptures Covered: (and can be read when you click the “scripture” button on the Scriptorium’s console.)

- Genesis 11:31- 12:9 Abram in Ur and Haran
- Genesis 15:1-21 God's Covenant with Abram
- Genesis 17:1-5, 15-22 God's promise to Abraham and Sarah
- Genesis 18:1-15 Sarah and Abraham's Visitors
- Genesis 22: 1-18 The Near Sacrifice

Age Range

Without help, the program requires the ability to read. Some of the subject matter is challenging for younger children. A teacher or parent should go along with every age student to get the most out of the software.

Lesson Planning Suggestions

You can cherry-pick content, or go through the story in sequence. Depends on your goals, time and age group.

Here is the natural progression of the story and software:

Call → Covenant → Visit → Sacrifice → Insane Fanat-asy* → Pay It Forward

To do everything in that order would take you over an hour. So use this guide to either “pick and choose” your way through the program, or break it down into multiple lessons. The biggest time factor will be how much time you want to spend discussing the presentations and answering the questions that are included.

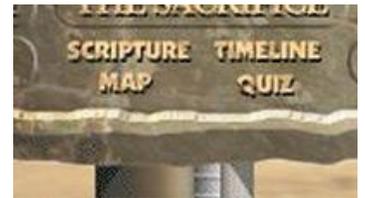
About the two major reflection activities

The Insane Fanatasy song video and responding activity is about "heeding the call" and can thus be a reflection activity for any of the three main story sections (Covenant, Visit, Sacrifice). Insane Fanat-asy is primarily for older students, but younger kids might get a kick out of it -if you explain it..The idea for the song came from a young person’s actual experience trying to explain their new faith to his friends.

Pay it Forward is an optional section for use at the end of any of the sections, or at the end of studying the entire PROGRAM, i.e. "we pay forward the gift." Pay it Forward also contains a certificate of completion to print, a handout to take home, and a "Video Player" in the Pay It Forward section that allows you or your students to access any of the main music videos individually.

Scriptorium Console Details

Where did the Scriptorium come from? We don't know, but it is the way your students select and are “launched” into the program’s content. In addition to the FIVE MAIN LEARNING AREAS the Console has these four optional learning areas:



Timeline --shows your students what time in history this story takes place. CLICK on the various locations to see pop-up text. Rolling over the spots reveals the "period in history" that particular age is known by.

Map --shows where in history it takes place. It also shows the two possible routes Abraham followed to get to Canaan. And you can play a game with about a dozen of the name places. Click the 'G' button and the name places fall out. Drag them back to their correct location and receive a bonus study note and question to ponder.

Quiz --is exactly that, a horse-race quiz about the PROGRAM's contents for one or two players. Best to save this till the last. The Quiz is only 15 questions long. It is the same each time it is taken, though questions appear in random order. In two player mode, the quiz continues until the both players finish.

Scripture --pops up the NRSV Genesis scripture texts which tell these stories. A reference for serious readers. See the list of scripture listed in the beginning of this guide.

Outline and Teaching Notes

The Opening Call

The "Call" is in the opening narration and song, the "Covenant" section below. God's promise and call to us is reflected on throughout the program.

The software program begins with the following important narration. It is the question which the entire story is about. You might want to write it on the board for all to see, or see if students can reconstruct it before moving on. The song that comes after it reinforces the same idea and functions as what God's call to Abraham was all about.

*Long before the time of Jesus, Before the time of David , and Ruth and Moses, God visited a man named Abram in the lands of UR and Haran and called him to take his family on a difficult journey to a new land called Canaan.His descendants were to become a Kingdom of Priests ...a people dedicated to receiving the message of God and sharing it with the world. **This is their story. Is it yours?***

After hearing the kids' narration of the Call, you hear the song: "I heard a Voice Today" ...and see the video showing Abraham's caravan, the desert. The song and video end in our Scriptorium --the place where students can access the rest of the story. The song tells the story of Abraham's Call to move to Canaan. You can replay this video by going into the Pay It Forward Section and accessing the Video Player.

*"...I have a job for you....I'll plant your people there to show the world I care..."
"Nothing expedient, a Call for Obedience"*

Extra questions to consider:

1. Why did God call Abraham and Sarah? (Why would God call you?)
2. Why a couple from Iraq? (that's where Haran is) Why send them to Canaan? (Where does God want to send you?)
3. What do the lyrics "Nothing expedient, a call for obedience" mean to you? (How can you be obedient?)

Comment: God must have seen something in their character. God definitely saw potential in planting a people to serve him at the crossroads between great empires. What in your character/talents can God use for his Kingdom? Where are the "crossroad" opportunities to serve in your world right now?

The Covenant

Genesis 15: God tells Abraham to build place a sacrifice on the altar, then puts him in a deep sleep as the sky turns to night. Then God blesses the offering and establishes his Covenant.

You will hear Voiceover of God giving the Covenant. We see Abraham from the back by an altar. After the story you can click various words spelled out in the nighttime start to learn more about the concept of Covenant. This is not an exhaustive treatment of the concept.

Here is God's Narration of the "Covenant" animation:



Do not be afraid Abram I AM your protector and your reward will be GREAT Look to the heavens and count the star so shall be your descendants. Place an offering of animals on the altar. From the Nile River to the great Euphrates river. The land of the Canaanites and Hittites, the Amorites and Jebusites, -to your descendants I give this land, for on this day have I made my covenant with you."

I wonder what your students will think about our use of young voices as the voice of God? What does God's voice sound like anyway?

As the **GOD NARRATION/ANIMATION ENDS** ...the stars in the sky will spell out several words. The "**star words**" are buttons. Click on them to *hear the following narrations*. Some have visuals associated with them.

The Star Words:

1- Covenant- The English word "covenant" means "agreement" or "promise." In Genesis chapter 15 God promises Abraham that his descendants will be a great nation serving God. Early Christians used "testament" -a Roman word, instead of "covenant." So you can say "Old and New Covenant," "Old and New Testament," or "Old and New Agreement" or "Old and New Promise." They all mean the same thing. The old covenant raised up a family of people to follow God. The new covenant announced by Jesus is a promise to the entire planet. Read John 3:16 to hear this promise.

2- Torch and smoking fire pot - The torch and smoking fire pot are two of the more unusual symbols used in the Bible to describe the mysterious presence of God. In the story of Exodus, God is a fire that does not consume a bush, God is a pillar of smoke by day and fire by night. Neither fire nor smoke can be touched and both can disappear as quickly as they came. Fire gives light and warmth and can also be used to guide. Fire burns away and cleanses. Smoke can surround you but you can't grab hold of it. What things from your world could describe what God is like?

3- Altar - Altars are special tables where worshippers make promises and give offerings to God. In Old Testament times altars were often built outdoors using stone. Offerings would include the best animals owned by the worshipper who believed a "blood offering" would bring forgiveness of their sins. Most Protestant churches no longer have altars. Instead, they have Communion tables where people gather to hear Jesus' promise that their sins are already forgiven through his sacrifice on the cross. At the Communion Table, God feeds us with spiritual food.

Does your church have an altar? What good things does a Communion Table say about God that an altar does not?

4- Canaan -a map of all the locations mentioned in Genesis 15: 1-21. (See Scriptorium Map Game for bigger picture.)

5- Genesis 15: 1-21 text only.

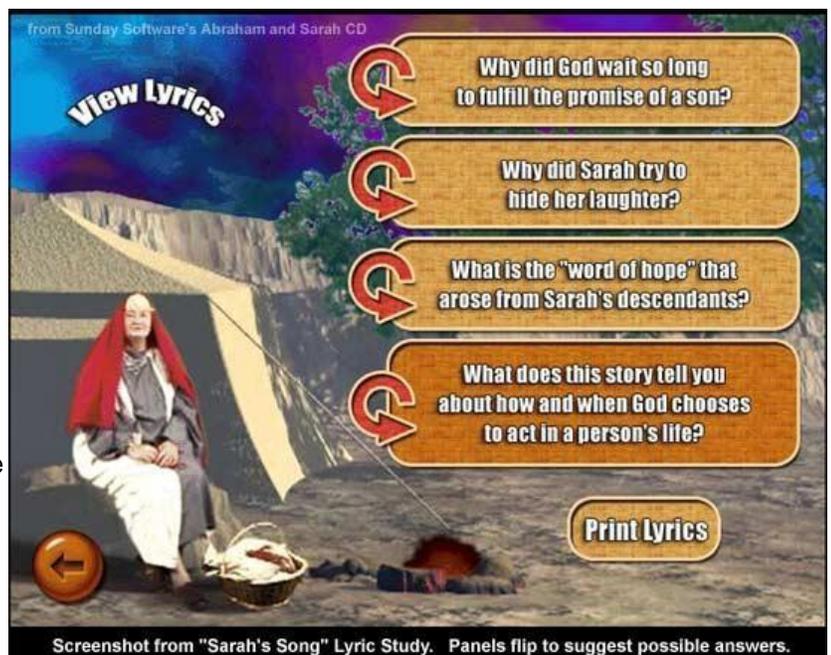
The Visit:

Genesis 18: Sarah retells her story of the angels visiting her and Abraham outside their tent. After her story is told kids can click icons in sky to hear her talk more about that subject. One of those initiates the "SARAH" song music video.

Button 1: "Sarah's Story - Genesis 18"

This activates the first video of Sarah telling her story and angels walking into scene.

(Sarah....Genesis 18) One day around noon my husband Abraham was sitting near our tent under the Oak Trees at Mamre in the land God had promised us. And suddenly he noticed three men. He got up and ran to meet them and invited them to rest in the shade and stay awhile before continuing on their journey. And they agreed. So Abraham ran back to the tent and said to me saying, "Quick Sarah! Get your best flour and bake some bread." Which I immediately did --knowing these weren't just any travelers. When the food was ready Abraham served the bread to the visitors along with some cheese curds and milk and roasted meat. Then one of them said "Where is your wife Sarah?" "In the tent," he replied.
(continued next page)



Then one of them said, "About this time next year I will return, and your wife Sarah will finally have that son she's been hoping for." Well when I overheard this -I started to laugh to myself thinking "How could an old woman like me have a baby?" And then the Lord turned to Abraham and said, "Why is your wife Sarah laughing? Is anything too hard for the LORD?" Well I was doubly shocked now, one of them was God and I had just laughed at him. So I said, "O No Lord, I didn't laugh." But God said, "Oh yes you did." And that is how I got the news that God was going to keep his Covenant promise and make a great nation spring forth from our family.

Button 2: "About My Life"

This is the video of Sarah saying "How do I want people to remember me? Hummmmm? Well I guess I want people to remember me as the woman who got up and went when God said 'get up and go.' I want them to remember --me-- laughing out loud when God's said I was going to have a baby. oh and I really want them to remember that I trusted God's plan -even when God asked me to give up my son. You bet I cried and wailed, but in my heart... I had learned to trust God's way completely, even when it was hard.

Button 3: "Why I laughed"

Hoy....You bet I laughed... When God walks up to you at 90 -you're expecting a ride home to heaven! ...not a trip to labor and delivery. I was scared and absolutely thrilled all at the same time. I've had a lot of time to think about that day ...and you know I don't think God minded me laughing at him at all. Because that's what God's about --the birth of laughter, the wiping away of tears.

Button 4: "Sarah's Song" --this compact little music-video makes a theological statement about the importance and impact of Sarah's role in the story.

Lyrics:

1) *Sarah, did you think that God forgotten? From your womb, there's a nation to begotten... and we hear laughter around the world.*

2) *Sarah, we can see it in your eyes, a world of hope from your family will arise. And we hear laughter, around the world... Did you think that God forgotten?*

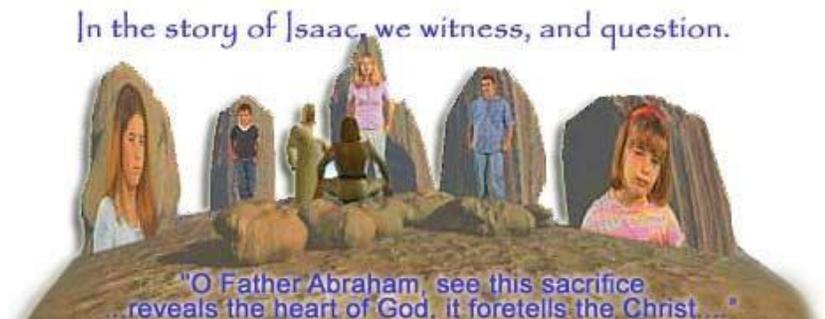
Additional Points to ponder (more are found in the program): Does God forget? How does God keep God's promises? How is Israel like a womb? What is the laughter God wants to be heard "around the world"?

Button 5: "Sarah's Song Lyrics"

This "print lyrics button is found on the mountainside above her tent. It includes questions for reflection and a PRINT button for those who want to print lyrics for more discussion. Note: in version 2.0 of the PROGRAM we changed the way the lyrics/questions here print --adding a graphic (seen above) so that those without printers can explore the questions.

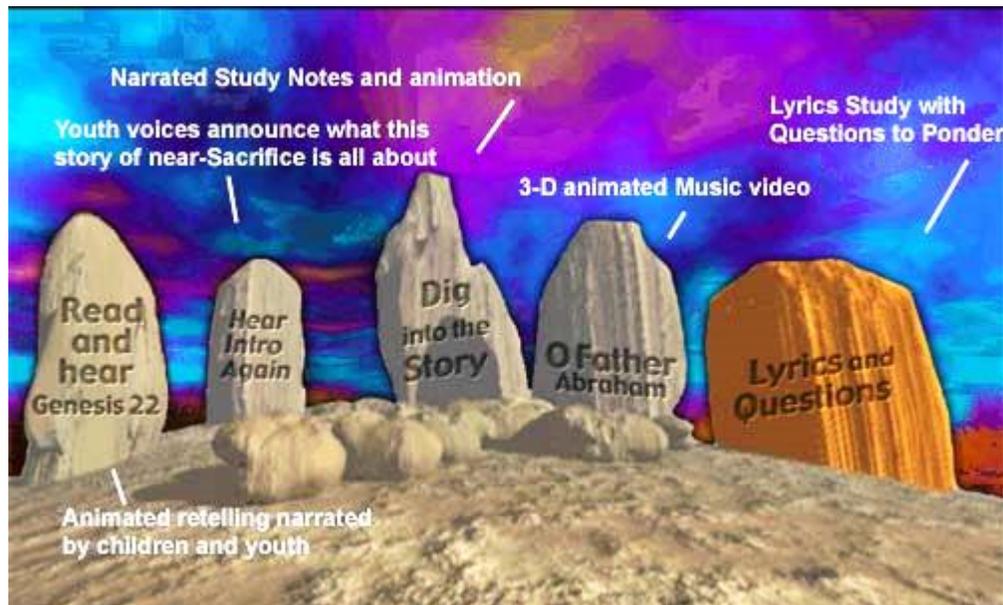
The Near - Sacrifice:

Yes...this is a touch-y subject, especially for some teachers who don't understand this story and for younger students because of the subject matter. I've heard from some people that they want to avoid it. But wait til you've seen how we deal with this "ultimate episode" in Abraham and Sarah's story. The story of God's Covenant includes this amazing test of "worthiness." But it is also a test applied to God --i.e. -how will God act toward us. Watch the two videos here and read the narrated notes.



Abraham brings Isaac to the altar. Stone megaliths "witness" the story unfold.

Voiceover: *We believe in a God who tests us. God tested Abraham, Sarah and Isaac's faith by asking for the sacrifice of Isaac. This is that story. It reveals what you can expect from God. It reveals what God can expect from you. It reveals what God will do for us all.*



The Megaliths or “Sacred Stones” have the following clickable labels:

- =**Megalith One:** "Read and hear Genesis 22" -this is a video/animation of the Genesis 22 story. **VIEW IT FIRST.**
- =**Megalith Two:** "Dig into the Story" -these are very important narrated study notes explaining this amazing episode. See below.
- =**Megalith Three:** "O Father Abraham" song/video and following up questions to click on. We retell the Genesis 22 but add an amazing conclusion that Christians have made about this story.
- =**Megalith Four:** "Lyrics and Questions" -a reflection activity for older students.

DETAIL: Megalith Two: “Dig into the story”

When this monolith is clicked, it appears large on the right side of the screen and the following THREE clickable text phrases appear (see drawing on this page). When the phrase is clicked, the following text appears across the screen.



Phrase 1: "Child Sacrifice?"

At the dawn of civilization people worshiped many gods. They believed they had to offer food and special objects to the gods to win the gods' favor. Some religions even offered their children as a sacrifice to please their gods. They believed that offering a child's "innocent" blood would somehow wash away their sins. In Genesis 22, God tested Abraham and Sarah's faith by asking them for the most precious thing in their whole life -their son. By substituting the ram in Isaac's place, God was telling Abraham and Sarah that their faith was strong enough for them to be the founding parents of a great nation. God was also telling them and the whole world (and) that child sacrifice was not required.

2000 years later, God would use these symbols again by offering himself in the person of Jesus. God turned Jesus' death on the cross into a "final offering" for our sins.

Questions: What do our offerings say about us to God? What does the offering of the ram and Jesus say about God? For further reading: Hebrews 10:1-18

Phrase 2: What are these stones about?

For thousands of years religious people in many lands have set up sacred stone megaliths (mega=large, lith=stone). They were raised to commemorate special events, keep track of worship and agricultural calendars, and act as silent "witnesses" to promises made and the sacredness of the location. Archaeologists have found stone worship sites throughout the Middle East and around the world, -the most famous being Stonehenge in England. The Old Testament records many occasions when Bible heroes worshipped at outdoor stone altars or set up sacred stones to commemorate an event. Tradition says that Abraham built the altar on which to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Moriah which later became the site for the Temple in Jerusalem. Were there stone megaliths at Abraham's altar? Maybe. Are we called to be witnesses at this fantastic story? Definitely.



Ancient Stone Altar Site in Negev Desert

Two more questions to ask your students: *What are the "sacred structures" we set up in our day and faith? How do we "witness" (remember, share) the story of God to others?*

Phrase 3: "What is faith?"

"What is Faith?"

It is something you are sure of even though you can't see it. -Hebrews 11:1 It can be small and still do great things. -Luke 17:5-6. It puts us at peace with God. - Romans 5:1. And faith is sometimes used to describe "how much" you believe. What is your definition of faith?

Phrase 4: "Tough Questions"

- What would God have done if Abraham, Sarah, or Isaac had said "no" to the test?
- How do you think Abraham explained the test to Isaac?
- What would you have done if you had been Abraham? Sarah? Isaac?
- What sort of test might God design in today's world for Abraham?
- How does God still test today's faithful?

DETAIL: Megalith 3: The "O Father Abraham" Video

First you'll see and hear a very cool and creative reflection on the story of Isaac's near sacrifice that gets at the question "What was going through their minds?" ..and "what does this mean for us?"

After the music video is over you will see a graphic of the altar/megaliths with kids standing inside the 5 stones. The following phrases are written on the stone around the kids. Roll your mouse over a stone to pop-up one of the following "pondering questions and answers." Each is ripe for discussion.



Stone phrase 1: Would you've killed your son?

Answer 1: As difficult as this may be to accept, Abraham probably trusted God enough to do whatever God asked. Do you have that much faith?

Continued on next page...

Stone phrase 2: Did she question?

Answer 2: The Bible doesn't say what Sarah thought about the near-sacrifice, but you can bet she was upset about it. Like a parent, God doesn't expect us to understand or even agree with everything God requires, but God does expect us to trust and obey. Do you love God that much?

Stone phrase 3: Reveals the heart of God...

Answer 3: God does not ask us for unreasonable or unbearable acts of obedience.

Stone phrase 4: It foretells the Christ...

Answer 4: Christians have long seen the similarities between the "almost-sacrifice" of Isaac and God offering himself in Jesus on the cross. In Jesus, God provides symbolic "payment" for our sins so that we can love and serve God with joy, rather than fear or guilt.

Stone phrase 5: View and Print Lyrics

Suggested Questions to Ask Your Students (or put on a worksheet for them to answer)

- Would you have followed through on God's orders?
- If you were Sarah, what would you be thinking, doing?
- How does this story reveal the character of God?
- How is the story of Isaac's near-sacrifice similar and dissimilar to Christ's sacrifice?

Theological Note about the Near-Sacrifice:

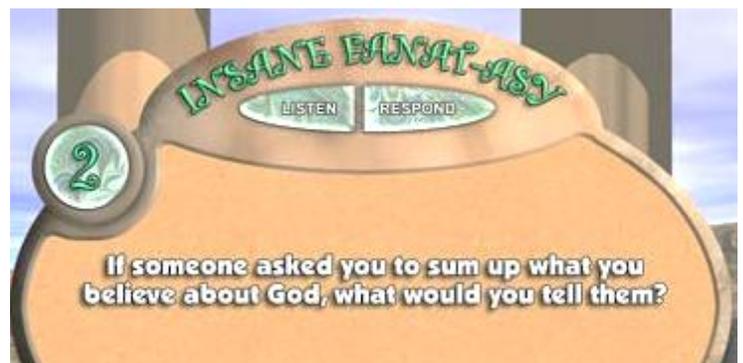
It is a shocking scene. But God's word often speaks in shocking images to sear ideas into our faith. Traditional Sunday School teaching has treated the Sacrifice as a separate incident among the Abraham stories. It is not. It is the culminating episode of a three part play. In fact, it is a play about God, as much as it is about Abraham. It is about Faith - Patience - Obedience for Abraham. For God it is a demonstration of PLAN - TESTING - RESPONSIBILITY. God takes responsibility for providing what we need to be forgiven. By forcing us right up to the moment of Abraham raising his knife, God prepares us for the huge sigh of relief -which is God's grace given to us both in the form of the Ram, and later, the Lamb. Yahweh will not be like the other gods who thirst for payment. God will not ask us to pay the ultimate price for our sin. God will pay that price. The near-sacrifice of Isaac foreshadows the sacrifice of Christ. In fact, we cannot fully understand God's gracious redemptive plan without the story of sacrifice as precursor to Christ's sacrifice. <>< Neil

Insane Fanat-asy:

This activity may be most suitable for older students, however, the questions could be rephrased and discussed with younger elementary. You may be surprised just how relevant this "peer pressure" discussion is for them. The inspiration for the song came from a youth's real-life experience. The term "insane fanatasy" was coined by a youth group that contributed lyric ideas for the song.

Abraham and Sarah's story looks ridiculous to the non-believer and scoffer. They don't see in it an amazing portrayal of God and Abraham's faithfulness to each other. It looks like religious insanity.

Following God in your life can sometimes bring people down on you. Listen to the song of one young person who chose to follow God, and the actual words which friends said about that decision. Then respond with your own words. There are SEVEN questions.



Insane Fanat-asy Options:

LISTEN -launches the music video.

RESPOND -launches the set of questions you see below in this outline. Students can type in responses.

PRINT LYRICS -prints the Lyrics along with the Questions used in the RESPOND guestbook texts (not their responses).

PRINT TEXT -prints the student's responses.

Here are the seven response questions seen in the Fanat-asy Reflection:

"Temporary Form"

My faith in God is as strong as_____.

"Throwing it all away"

Name two things a person must be willing to give up to follow God:_____and_____.

"I know what they're saying about me"

Write down one thing people probably said about Abraham behind his back when he told them about his call to go to a new land.

What would your friends at school say if you started talking about your faith in God more openly and started making changes in the way you lived your life and treated others?

"He'll come 'round some day"

Name something that can cause someone to lose faith or stumble on their walk with God.

"But I believe"

If someone asked you to sum up what you believe about God, what would you tell them?

"Insane Fanat-asy"

Insane: 1. a degree of mental malfunctioning 2. Extreme foolishness; folly
 Fanatic: extreme, unreasoning enthusiasm for a cause (abbreviation: fan)
 Fantasy: creative invention of the mind, hallucination, unrealistic
 Insane Fanatasy: what some people believe faith or the religious life is.

"How 'bout U ?"

If your faith were a car what kind of car would you say it is right now?
 If your journey with God was a road, what kind of road are you on right now?
 What sign is God waving at you on the road up ahead?
 What two people can help you the most on your journey right now?

Print Lyrics Button -prints a copy of the song's lyrics as heard on the program

Pay it Forward:

In this reflection section, three choices present themselves in this section of the program. TIP: You might want to print the certificate AHEAD OF TIME and make copies of it, just in case you run into problems with the print function.

Options:

Print a Certificate of Completion --a fun way for students to show others what they did and perhaps generate discussion with mum and dad.

Pay It Forward --an experiment in promoting good deeds. Print the form and send home with students. Ask them to bring it back next time you gather. Following the instructions on the Pay It Forward PDF.

The Pay It Forward pdf can be printed from the installed Abraham software folder. It's in the PDF folder there.

Also in that folder is a "Congratulations" Certificate which can be printed for completing the entire program.

Music Video Player --we've provided you a quick way to preview/review the four major music videos in the PROGRAM.

Abe Technical Notes:

Install Quicktime for Windows version 7.7.9 to run all the menus and videos in the program. This is a free utility from Apple for Windows. <https://support.apple.com/kb/DL837>

Windows 7, 8, and 10 have a "display scaling" feature you can play with to make all our software, including Abraham and Sarah, appear larger on your screen. 125% or 150% is usually the good setting depending on the size and current resolution of your monitor.

⇒ The **Windows 10** "scale and layout" option is found in the Windows 10 "Settings App," and not in the Windows Control Panel (for some dumb reason). To find it, click any blank area on your Desktop and select Display Properties to locate the scaling feature.

⇒ The "display scaling" option in **Windows 7 and 8** is found in the Windows Control Panel.

For additional tech helps, go to sundaysoftware.com/support