

Bible Point

God loves us and wants us to love him.

Bible Verse

We trust God (adapted from Psalm 52:8b).

Growing Closer to Jesus

- Children will
- name things they're thankful for,
 - hear how Abram built an altar to show his love for God,
 - take a pretend journey and stop to thank God on the way, and
 - show their love for God through singing and praying.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

■ Abram worships God.

**Genesis
12:7-9**



Abram's journey from his homeland to the promised land was likely not an easy one. It would have been over some rough and dangerous terrain. So it's natural that after arriving in the land God had promised him, Abram would stop and worship God. Abram's worship in Shechem was apparently just what God wanted to hear, because God appeared and responded with an affirmation of the promise he'd made to Abram earlier: "I will give this land to your descendants." And Abram was so moved by God's appearance that he constructed an altar commemorating the event. It was a way Abram could demonstrate his love for God, who had been so generous in loving him. And this was only the first of several such altars Abram built to commemorate God's goodness to him. God loved Abram, and Abram loved God. We would do well to follow Abram's example!

Prayer

- Read Exodus 24:3-4.
- How does Moses' building of an altar in this passage parallel Abram's building of the altars in Genesis 12:6-9?
- Pray: Lord, help me to always live out my love for you, especially as I teach the children you've placed in my care.

Before the Lesson

- Collect the necessary items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed in the chart on the next page.
- Make photocopies of the "Today I Learned..." handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your children.
- Pray for the children in your class and for God's direction as you teach the lesson.

This Lesson at a Glance

	What Children Will Do	Classroom Supplies	Learning Lab Supplies
Welcome Time	Welcome! —Receive name tags, and be greeted by the teacher.	“Desert Tent Name Tags” (p. 135), scissors, marker, safety pins or tape	
Let’s Get Started Direct children to one or more of the optional activities until everyone arrives.	Option 1: Camel Cargo —Carry things on their backs like Abram’s camels did.	Blocks, small toys	
	Option 2: Tent Play —Set up a blanket tent, and hear how Abram set up tents along his journey.	Blankets, chairs or table	
	Option 3: Grow a Tree —Make leaves for a tree, and hear how Abram rested by a big tree.	“Leaves” handout (p. 149), scissors, newspapers, wax paper, green and yellow chalk, cheese grater, cotton swabs, bowls, water, tape	
	Pick-Up Time —Sing a song as they pick up toys and gather for Bible Story Time.	CD player	
Bible Story Time 	Setting the Stage —Name things they’re thankful for as they build an altar out of blocks.	Blocks	
	Bible Song and Prayer Time —Sing a song, bring out the Bible, and pray together.	Bible, CD player	
	Hear and Tell the Bible Story —Hear how Abram built an altar to praise and thank God.	Bible, CD player, blanket	
	Top Stuff —Play a game to learn to stop and praise God.	CD player	
	Do the Bible Story —Travel around the room and stop to worship God.	Block altar, tree, tent set up earlier	
Closing 	What’s an Altar? —Teach Whiskers how Abram built an altar to worship God.	Block altar, tree, and tent set up earlier	
	Love-and-Follow Prayer —Sing a prayer to thank God for his love.	CD player	

*See the end of this lesson for extra-time ideas and supplies.

Welcome Time

SUPPLIES: “Desert Tent Name Tags” (p. 135), scissors, marker, safety pins or tape

- Kneel down and make eye contact with children as they arrive.
- Greet each child individually with an enthusiastic smile.
- Thank each child for coming to class today.
- As children arrive, ask them how they put last week’s lesson into practice. Use questions such as “What did you tell your family about Abram and his trip?” and “Tell me about a time you took a trip.”
- Say: **Today we’re going to learn that ► *God loves us and wants us to love him.***
- Hand out the desert tent name tags children made during Lesson 9, and help them attach the name tags to their clothing. Have extra name tags available for children who were not in class that week and to replace damaged name tags.
- Direct children to the Let’s Get Started activities you’ve set up.



◀ BIBLE POINT



It’s important to say the Bible Point just as it’s written in each activity. Repeating the Bible Point over and over throughout the lesson will help kids remember it and apply it to their lives.

Let’s Get Started

Set out one or more of the following activities for children to do as they arrive. After you greet each child, invite him or her to choose an activity.

Circulate among the activities to offer help as needed and direct children’s conversation toward the point of today’s lesson. Ask questions such as “What things are you thankful for?” or “When something really good happens, do you remember to thank God for it?”

■ Option 1: Camel Cargo

SUPPLIES: blocks, small toys

Remind children that Abram carried most of his household goods on camels or other pack animals. Form pairs, and let children take turns being camels and Abrams or Sarais. Show the Abrams or Sarais how to carefully pile a few blocks or small nonbreakable toys on their camels and then lead the camels around the room. Then let children switch roles. Explain that today you’ll hear how God continued to take care of Abram on his journey.

■ Option 2: Tent Play

SUPPLIES: blankets, chairs or table

Give children one or two blankets. Show them how to make a blanket tent using chairs or other classroom furniture. Let them play in the tent. Encourage children to pretend they’re sitting, eating, or sleeping in their tent. As they play, remind them that Abram and Sarai camped in tents on their long trip. Explain that today they’ll hear more about Abram and Sarai’s journey.





Make an Abraham's Journey bulletin board to further convey the Bible story. Cover a wall or bulletin board with a white or light blue background, and attach a strip of sand-colored paper to the bottom. On one side of the bulletin board, put a tree. You can make a three-dimensional tree trunk by twisting brown paper grocery sacks. Cut and twist smaller pieces of sack, and attach them to the tree trunk as branches. On the other side of the bulletin board put a construction paper mountain in the background. Children can add story pieces to this bulletin board each week.

■ Option 3: Grow a Tree

SUPPLIES: "Leaves" handout (p. 149), scissors, newspapers, wax paper, green and yellow chalk, cheese grater, cotton swabs, water, tape

Before class, photocopy and cut out the leaves from the handout. You'll need at least one leaf for each child. Cover a work area with newspapers, and then set out squares of wax paper. Grate green and yellow chalk into small piles onto each wax paper square.

Give each child a leaf. Set out cotton swabs and bowls of water. Show children how to paint their leaves by putting their cotton swabs into the water and then into the chalk and onto their leaves. Tell them they're making leaves for a classroom tree. Explain that Abram came to a big tree on his journey. Talk about how happy Abram must have been to find a tree in the desert where there weren't very many trees.

Have children attach their leaves to the tree on the Abraham's Journey bulletin board described in the X-tra Impact box. If you didn't make the bulletin board, you'll need to make a simple tree trunk by tearing and twisting brown paper grocery bags. Attach the trunk to a wall or bulletin board.

When everyone has arrived and you're ready to move on to Bible Story Time, encourage the children to finish what they're doing and get ready to clean up.

■ Pick-Up Time

SUPPLIES: CD player



Lead children in singing "Come Along With Me" (track 2) with the CD to the tune of "Come and Go With Me." Encourage children to sing along as they help clean up the room.



**Come along with me and pick up all our things,
Pick up all our things,
Pick up all our things.
Come along with me and pick up all our things
So our room will be clean.**

(Repeat 2x.)

teacher tips

You can substitute powdered tempera paint for the chalk in Option 3.

Bible Story Time

■ Setting the Stage

SUPPLIES: blocks

Tell children that when you turn the lights off and then on again, they're to stop what they're doing and raise their hands. Practice this signal a few times. Encourage children to respond quickly so you'll have time for all the fun activities you've planned.

Have children gather in a circle somewhere other than your story area. Set a box of blocks nearby.

Ask: • **What did you make or do when you came to our class today?** (Played in a tent; painted leaves; pretended to be a camel.)

Say: **Some of you made your own special tent with blankets, some of you painted leaves for our tree, and some of you carried loads on your backs like camels. You were all learning important things about our Bible story. Today we're going to hear some more about Abram's big trip and learn that** ► ***God loves us and wants us to love him.***

Set out blocks. Say: **In Abram's time, people built altars out of stones to show God that they loved him. The altars helped them remember the special ways God had helped them. Anytime people wanted to thank God for something, they just stopped and built an altar right then and there. Then they prayed to tell God thank you.**

We don't have any stones in our classroom, but we can build an altar out of blocks. When it's your turn to put a block on our altar, name something you want to thank God for. You can thank God for a favorite toy; for a person you know; or for something God has done for you, such as making you feel better after being sick or helping you do something that was hard for you. I'll go first.

Name something you're thankful for, and set a block in the center of the circle. Let children take turns naming things they're thankful for while adding blocks to the altar.

When everyone has had a turn, say: ► ***God loves us and wants us to love him.*** **One way we can show God we love him is by telling him thank you. As we built our altar, we each named things we're thankful for. Let's bring out our Bible now and hear what Abram thanked God for.**

Leave the block altar set up for use in "Do the Bible Story." Lead children to your story area for the next activity.



■ Bible Song and Prayer Time

SUPPLIES: Bible, CD player



tracks 3, 4

Say: **Now it's time to choose a helper to bring me the Bible marked with today's Bible story. As we sing our Bible song, we'll pass around our special Bible. The person who's holding the Bible when the music stops will be our Bible helper today.**

Lead the children in singing "I'm So Glad for the Bible" (track 3) with the CD to the tune of "Give Me Oil in My Lamp." As you sing, pass around the special Bible.



SING

I'm so glad for the Bible.

Keep me learnin', learnin', learnin'.

I'm so glad for God's book today.

I'm so glad for the Bible.

Keep me learnin', learnin', learnin'—

Keep me learnin' all about his way.

Let me hear 'bout God's love—

Keep me learnin', learnin', learnin'.

Let me hear 'bout God's love for me.

Let me hear 'bout God's love—

Keep me learnin', learnin', learnin'.

Let's shine the light for all to see.

(Repeat first verse.)

When the music stops, invite the child who's holding the Bible to bring it to you. Stamp the child's hand with the *star stamp*, and thank him or her for bringing you the Bible. Then stamp the other children's hands. Return the *star stamp* and *ink pad* to the Learning Lab.

Say: **I'm thankful for [name of child who brought the Bible], and I'm thankful for everyone in our class today. Let's thank God together for all our friends in this class.**

Lead children in singing "I'm So Glad We're Together" (track 4) with the *CD* to the tune of "Give Me Oil in My Lamp."



SING
I'm so glad we're together.
Keep us prayin', prayin', prayin'.
I'm so glad we're all here today.
I'm so glad we're together.
Keep us prayin', prayin', prayin'—
Prayin' for each other every day.

Lead children in folding their hands and bowing their heads as you continue to sing.

Thank you, Lord, for each one.
Keep me thankful, thankful, thankful.
Thank you for everyone who's here.
Thank you, Lord, for each one.
Keep me thankful, thankful, thankful—
Thankful for our friends both far and near.



■ Hear and Tell the Bible Story

SUPPLIES: Bible, CD player, blanket



Open the Bible to **Genesis 12:7-9**. Say: **Our story comes from the Bible, God's special book. Our Bible Big Book shows us pictures of the Bible Story.**

We're going to pretend we're with Abram and Sarai today and hear our Bible story in a tent. Can you help me make a tent?

Let children help you make a tent or use the tent children set up during Let's Get Started. When everyone is settled in your tent, bring out the *Bible Big Book: Abraham*. Read aloud pages 1 to 3, using the text for these pages printed on the back cover of the book. As you read, show children the pictures. After you finish the story, put the book away and out of sight.

Ask: • **How did God show his love to Abram and Sarai?** (By guiding them on their trip; by showing them a place to stay; by helping them find a tree in the desert.)

• **How did Abram show that he loved God?** (By obeying God; by building an altar.)

Say: **Abram loved God and trusted God to take care of him. ►God loves us and wants us to love him, just as Abram did.**

Ask: • **What are some ways we can show God we love him?** (Praying; making an altar; coming to church.)



BIBLE POINT ►

Say: **One way we can show God we love him is by singing songs to him. Let's learn a song we can sing about loving and following God.**

Lead the children in singing "God Is So Good" with the CD (track 15).



God is so good.
God is so good.
God is so good.
He's so good to me!

God is so good.
God is so good.
God is so good.
He's so good to me!

I'll follow him.
I'll follow him.
I'll follow him
Because he loves me so.

I'll follow him.
I'll follow him.
I'll follow him
Because he loves me so.



Say: **We can show Jesus that we love him by loving others, too. In the Bible, Jesus tells us to love one another, and he says that when we are kind to our neighbors, it's just like being kind to him. Let's each think of someone we can be kind to this week. Let children each name someone they can be kind to in the coming week. It's good to follow Jesus and show love to others, just as he tells us to do. Let's thank God for sending Jesus to show love to us!**

Pray: **Dear God, thank you for sending your Son, Jesus, to love us and to show us how to love others. In Jesus' name, amen.**

After the prayer, lead children out of the tent. Leave the tent set up for the next activity.

■ Top Stuff

SUPPLIES: CD player



track 13

Gather children around a small table. Bring out the *spin top*, and demonstrate how it spins. Say: **A top will only stand up when it's spinning or moving. When it stops spinning, it lies down. In our Bible story, when Abram was done traveling, he stopped to worship God. We can worship God, too, because ► God loves us and wants us to love him. Let's play a game to help us remember that.**

Spin the top and explain that when it stops, children should see who the top is pointing to. Whoever the top points to will say one reason why he or she loves God. Be ready to help children if they seem stumped for an answer. Children may say they love God because he's good, he gives them good families, and he made the sunshine.

After the child answers, spin the top to play again. Make sure everyone gets a chance to share a statement about God. When everyone has had a turn to share, ask:

- **How does God show he loves us?** (He takes care of us; he sent Jesus; he gives us good things.)
- **How can you show you love God?** (I can pray; I can tell him I love him; I can do what he says.)
- **How do you think God feels when we show we love him?** (Good; happy; special.)

BIBLE VERSE ►

Open your Bible to **Psalm 52:8b**, and show children the verse. Say: **Abram trusted God and we can too. Listen to our Bible verse for today: ►We trust God.** Repeat the verse together. **Abram trusted God, and God took care of him. Let's sing a song about trusting God.**

Lead children in singing "We Trust God" (adapted from Psalm 52:8b) with the CD (track 13) to the tune of "Jesus Loves Me."



SING

God, we'll trust and follow you (*point up*)
In all we say and all we do. (*Touch mouth with both hands; then extend arms.*)
We will trust you every day (*cross arms over chest*)
At home, at church, at school, at play. (*Turn in a circle with arms outstretched.*)

Yes, God, we trust you. (*Cross arms over chest; then extend arms upward.*)
Yes, God, we trust you. (*Cross arms over chest; then extend arms upward.*)
Yes, God, we trust you. (*Cross arms over chest; then extend arms upward.*)
We trust you every day. (*Cross arms over chest.*)

(Repeat.)

After the song, lead children in a round of applause for everyone's participation.

Say: **When Abram stopped traveling, he took time to worship God. Whether we're playing or eating or even at the grocery store, we can take time to worship God, too. That's because ►God loves us and wants us to love him.**

■ Do the Bible Story

SUPPLIES: block altar, tree, tent set up earlier

Be sure you have a paper tree on the bulletin board or wall. If you chose not to make a bulletin board or did not use Option 3, make a simple tree from construction paper, and tape it to a wall in the room.

Say: **Let's walk around our room and pretend we're Abram and Sarai traveling. One person will be Abram, one person will be Sarai, and the rest of us will be Abram's animals.**

Choose an Abram and a Sarai. Invite other children to choose to be a cow, sheep, donkey, camel, or goat. Then continue: **I'm going to read our Bible story again.**



BIBLE POINT ►

You'll need to listen carefully because it's your job to act out what's happening. For example, if I say, "Abram and his family and his servants and his animals walked and walked and walked," what will you do?

Pause to let children demonstrate walking around the room. Then continue: **You'll also want to listen for the places that Abram went. If I say "tent," walk over to our tent. If I say "tree," walk over to our tree. If I say "altar," walk over to our altar. Listen carefully as I read the story.**

Read the story below. Pause as necessary to help children do their actions.

Abram and his family and his servants and his animals walked and walked and walked! One day they came to a huge tree. There aren't very many trees in the desert, so Abram and his family enjoyed the cool shade. While they rested there, God spoke to Abram again. God promised to give the land around the tree to Abram and his family. Abram built an altar to mark the special place where God talked to him.

Then Abram traveled on until he came to a big hill. He pitched his tent on the hill and looked all around at the land God had given him. Abram built another altar to thank God for guiding him. Abram was glad to be in the new land.

Applaud children's participation in the story, and then say: **We knew where we were going on our journey. We knew that we would walk around our room and then stop at our tree, our altar, and our tent. Abram didn't know where God was leading him, but he knew that ►God loves us and wants us to love him.** So he trusted God to take care of him and his family and his animals.

Let's all be Abram's animals now. We can crawl over to our story area and see if our friend Whiskers is here.

Leave the tent, tree, and altar in place for Whiskers to see.



Closing

■ What's an Altar?

SUPPLIES: block altar, tree, tent set up earlier

Bring out Whiskers the Mouse, and go through the following puppet script. When you finish the script, put Whiskers away and out of sight.





Whiskers: Hello, friends. What have you been doing today? (*Looks around the room.*) Mmm-hmm. I see you've made a tree. Mmm-hmm. And a tent, too. I love to go camping. Looks like you've been busy today. (*Looks at block altar.*) Hey! What's that block thing over there?

Teacher: Children, let's tell Whiskers what we made with the blocks.

Whiskers: (*Interrupting*) Wait! Wait! Let me guess, OK? I love guessing games. I'll bet it's supposed to be a castle. It's a castle, right?

Teacher: Well, no, Whiskers, it's not a castle, it's...

Whiskers: NO! Don't tell me, I want to guess. It's a baseball stadium. But I think you should have made it a whole circle. If you moved some of the blocks on top around...

Teacher: Whiskers, it's not a baseball stadium. May we please tell you what it is?

Whiskers: NO, NO, NO! I know what it is! It's our church! But I think you should have asked me to help you build it. You know I'm very good at building with blocks. If you had just asked me, I could have built a great church building for you.

Teacher: Whiskers, I'm sure you're a great block builder. But it's not our church, either. Shall we tell you what it is?

Whiskers: Oh, all right. I give up. Tell me.

Teacher and children: It's an altar.

Whiskers: An altar? No wonder I couldn't guess. What's an altar?

Teacher: Children, can you help me tell Whiskers what an altar is and how it was used in our story?

(Lead children in telling Whiskers about the block altar. Help them explain that Abram built an altar to tell God thank you for helping him find the new land.)

Teacher: You see, Whiskers, Abram knew that ► God loves us and wants us to love him. So he built an altar to thank God for helping him on his journey.

Whiskers: Wow. That's kind of neat—a special place to worship and thank God for things. I think I want to build an altar. Maybe my brother will help me. He has lots of blocks. I think I'll go ask him right now. Goodbye!

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Love-and-Follow Prayer

SUPPLIES: CD player



Say: ► ***God loves us and wants us to love him.*** Let's tell God we love him by singing a prayer together.

Have children fold their hands and bow their heads as they sing "We Trust God" (adapted from Psalm 52:8b) to the tune of "Jesus Loves Me" with the CD (track 13).



**God, we'll trust and follow you
In all we say and all we do.
We will trust you every day
At home, at church, at school, at play.**

**Yes, God, we trust you.
Yes, God, we trust you.
Yes, God, we trust you.
We trust you every day.**

(Repeat.)



Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the "Today I Learned..." handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with the children. Encourage parents to use the handout to plan meaningful family activities to reinforce this week's topic.



For Extra Time

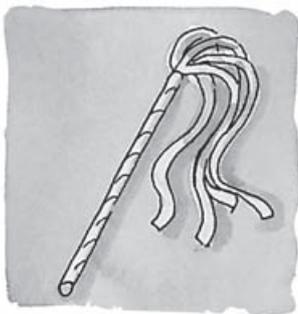
If you have a long class time or want to add additional elements to your lesson, try one of the following activities.

■ **Lively Learning: Tree, River, Mountain**

Remind children how Abram worshipped God on his journey, and explain that you're going to act out part of that story now. Choose two children to be Abram and Sarai. Tell the other children that when you say, "tree, river, mountain," their job is to form the shape of one of those three things. For example, "trees" might stretch out their arms like tree limbs, "rivers" might crawl across the room to imitate running water, and "mountains" might put their arms over their heads to form peaks.

Say: **Tree, river, mountain.** Wait for children to form their shapes. Then have Sarai and Abram make their way across the room through the human scenery. Repeat until everyone's had a chance to be Sarai or Abram.

■ **Make to Take: God's-Love Streamer Sticks**



Set out colored fabric ribbons or crepe paper streamers. Let each child choose three or four ribbons, and then help children tape their ribbons to the ends of drinking straws. Have children sing a favorite praise song such as "Jesus Loves Me" as they march around and wave their streamer sticks in celebration of God's love. As they're marching, remind them that ► God loves us and wants us to love him.

■ **Treat to Eat: Frosted Wheat Altars**

Give each child a handful of frosted wheat square cereal. Explain that Abram showed his love for God by building an altar out of stones. Show children how to use their wheat square "stones" to build altars. As they work, remind them that ► God loves us and wants us to love him. Encourage children to share ways they can show love for God as they eat their altars.

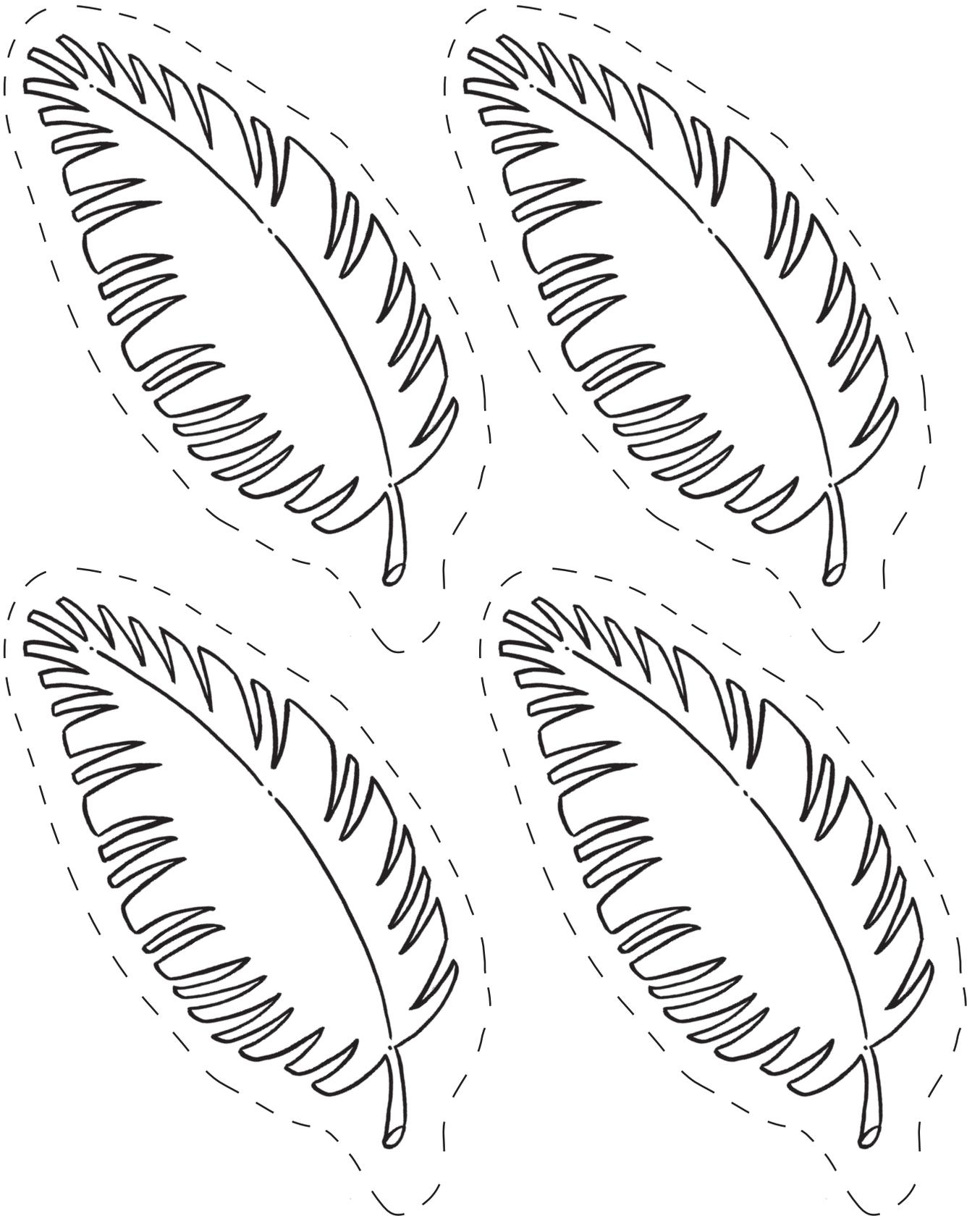


■ **Story Picture: Abram at the Altar**

Set out crayons, dishes of sand, and glue sticks. Give each child a copy of the "Today I Learned..." handout. Have children color the pictures and then rub glue on the desert sand. Help each child sprinkle a little bit of sand over the glue. As children work, talk about how Abram loved and trusted God. Remind them that ► God loves us and wants us to love him, too.

Leaves

Photocopy and cut out the leaves. You'll need one leaf for each child.



Today i learned...

God loves us and wants us to love him.

Help me learn this:

We trust God (adapted from Psalm 52:8b).

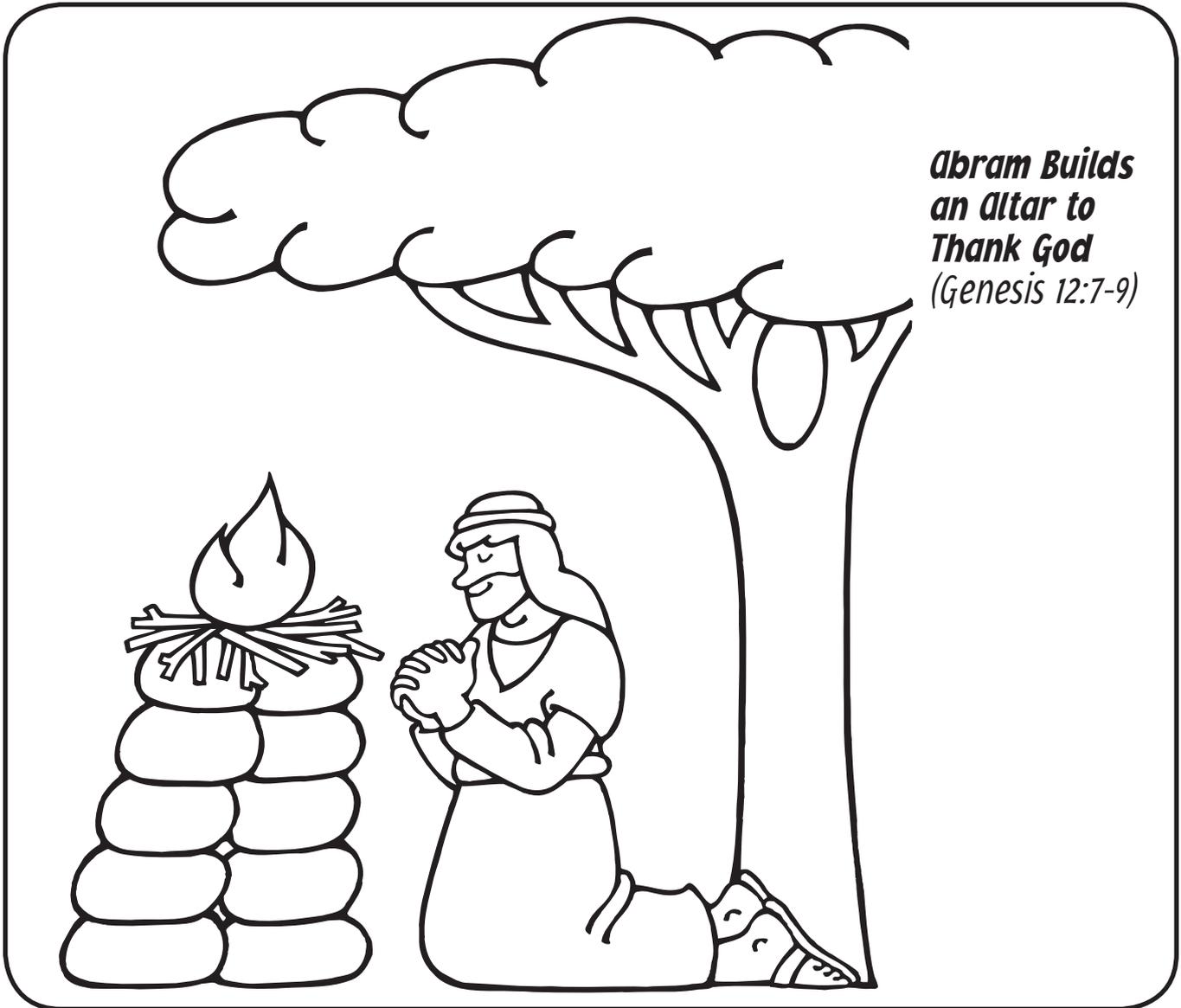
Ask me:

- Why did Abram build an altar to God?
- What can you do to show God you love him?
- How can our family show our love for God this week?

Family Fun

- Build a family altar as you share things you're thankful for. Take a walk through the park, and have each family member pick up a stone. When you've collected your stones, let family members take turns saying things they're thankful for and placing their stones in a pile.

Lesson 10
Today your child learned that **GOD LOVES US AND WANTS US TO LOVE HIM.** Children heard how Abram stopped to thank God on his way to the new land. They thanked God for all the things he's done for them.



Abram Builds an Altar to Thank God
(Genesis 12:7-9)