

UNIT ONE: I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER

LESSON 4: God Reveals Himself...to Abraham

CONTENTS OF LESSON:

1. Just as a student gradually increases in knowledge and understanding, God *gradually* revealed himself and his saving plan to mankind. [CCC 53]
2. He began by calling Abraham. He asked him to leave his home and later, to offer up his son. He also promised him numerous offspring and a land to live in. He promised that the world would be blessed through his offspring. This promise was fulfilled in Christ. [CCC 59-60, 706]
3. Abraham responded to God's call with faith. He set out into the unknown, believed in God's promises, and was ready to sacrifice his only son. [CCC 145,2570-72]
4. Mary is the most perfect example of faith. She believed 'the impossible' and said yes to God's plan, even to the death of her son. [CCC 148-9]
5. *Faith is needed for us to receive all that God wishes to give us, especially salvation. Faith means that I freely*
 - Accept Christ as my Lord. [personal adherence]
 - Accept the truth that God has revealed.
 - Obey God, trusting that he will take care of me. [CCC 144,150,183]

REFERENCES: Genesis 12:1-4; 17:8, 22:1-2, 9-18. Luke 1:26-45. Hebrews 11:8-12, 17-18.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Handouts, Bibles.

I. STARTER:

- Suppose you are reading a novel and your little 3year-old brother or cousin grabbed your book and said, "I want to read your book!" What would you say/do? [*Accept responses*] You might say, "You're too small. Wait till you go to school and learn to read." Or you might try teaching him to recognize some of the letters... Or you might give him a slap!
- God wanted to teach us about himself. He wanted to reveal who he is and his plan to save us. On our own there is no way that we could have understood this. But God taught us bit by bit. He slowly prepared the world for the coming of his Son.
- His first action was to call one man and teach him to trust him and follow him. Can you guess who that man was? What did God do to teach him about himself?

II. DEVELOPMENT:

1. Let's go back to the Bible, to Genesis, and find out.

[Give out the handouts. The students look up the references and answer questions 1-4. Go over the answers, bringing out:]

1. God told Abraham to leave his home and family and go to a place that he would show him.
2. He asked him to offer up his only son. (He stopped him in time, however, and gave him a ram to sacrifice instead of his son.)
3. God promised Abraham.. blessings, numerous offspring, a land to live in, and that the whole world would be blessed through his offspring. God was pointing to Christ and to heaven. ('Progeny' and 'offspring' mean descendants: children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren...) Through Jesus, Abraham's descendants are all the Christians in the world. The Promised Land is, for us heaven.
4. Faith enabled Abraham to obey and to receive God's blessings.

2. Let's look at another person who was like Abraham in some ways.

[This section can be done together as a class.]

KEY WORDS (Important words of Mary which show her faith): "I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be done to me according to your word!"

1. Mary had faith. She believed the 'impossible': that God would send his Son to become a human being in her womb. (Elisabeth realized this and said, "Blessed is she who believed.." (*FAITH and BELIEVING mean the same thing!*))
2. She too was ready to obey God.
3. She too, like Abraham, was ready to give up her only son as a sacrifice.

III. INTERIORISATION/PRAAYER:

We have looked at two great examples of faith: The Virgin Mary and Abraham. Let's just check what faith means. *[Read aloud FACTS ABOUT FAITH.]* Close your eyes. Ask yourself:

- Do I want to receive all that God wants to give me: His blessings, his salvation, eternal life in heaven? If the answer is yes, then...
- Do I accept Jesus as Lord of my life?
- Do I accept all the truths that God has revealed?
- Am I ready to obey him?
- Do I trust him to take care of me?

NOW THINK:

Did I ever feel God was asking me to do something a little difficult? Was I able to obey, or did I find it too difficult? Is it something that God is asking me at present?

Write down what you remember in the space in the handout (A CALL I HAVE EXPERIENCED) and be ready to share it.

[Students sit in small groups of 3 or 4 and reflect silently on the question. They share with each other and then pray for each other for the gift of faith. They say the 'Hail Mary', asking Mary to pray for them to grow in faith.]

HOME ASSIGNMENT: ⇨ Read the handout. ⇨ Learn the 'FAITH FACTS'.