

Kids' Chronicle

God tests an old man's faith

BY JOE SARNICOLA

"Abraham!"
 "Yes, Lord, I am here."
 "I want you take your son Isaac and bring him to the mountain. Then I want you to build an altar and offer him as a sacrifice to me."
 "Isaac? My son? But he is the son you promised I would have with Sarah, even though we were both very old. My son, my son."
 Abraham loaded up his donkeys for the journey, and he brought along two of his servants and the wood that would be used for the sacrificial fire. Isaac rode on a donkey next to his father.
 "What does God want you to do, father?" asked Isaac. "I am excited that you are letting me come along with you. Will I hear the voice of God, too?"
 Trying not to let Isaac see the tears in his eyes, Abraham answered, "God wants us to pray on the mountain."
 When the mountain came into view, Abraham instructed his servants to set up camp, while he and Isaac went ahead. Isaac carried the wood, and Abraham carried a torch, a length of rope and the knife for the sacrifice.
 "Where is the sheep for the sacrifice, father?"
 "God will provide one for us, son." Abraham built an altar with stones that he found and placed the wood on top of it. He then took the rope, tied Isaac up

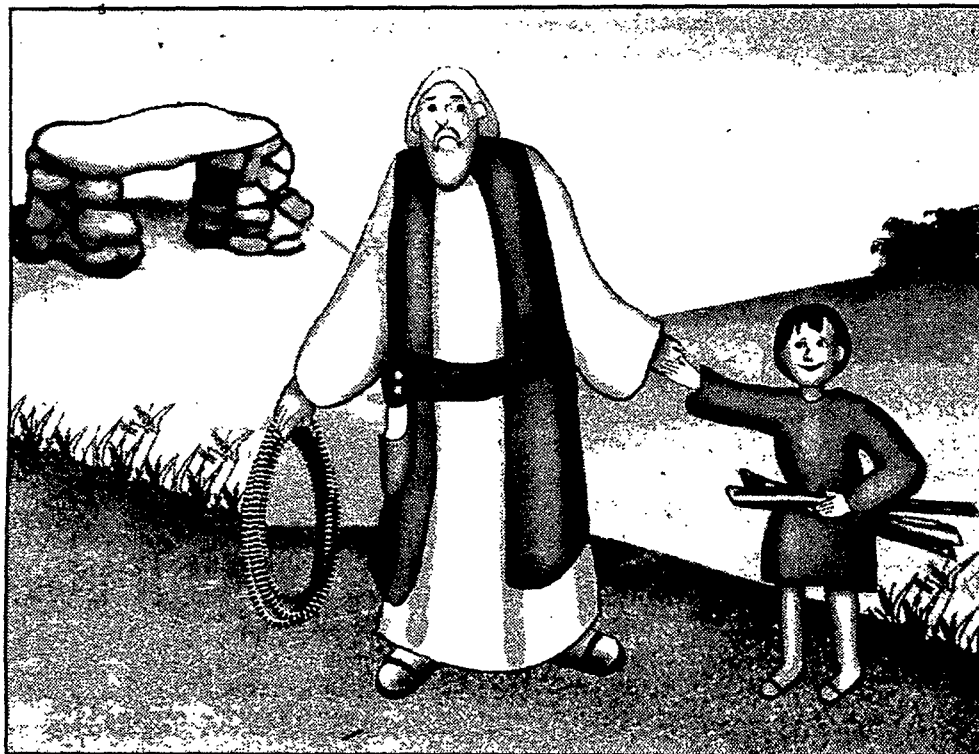


Illustration by Linda Jeanne Rivers

with it, and set the boy on the altar. Abraham raised the knife up over his head. Then a voice that was so loud the mountain shook ordered, "Stop!" Abraham dropped the knife. "Abraham, my servant," said the Lord. "Because you did not even hold back your son, I will bless you with descendants as abundant as the stars of the sky and the sand of the sea. And each of

them will be blessed. There is no need to harm the boy. Set him free."
 Abraham immediately heard the bleating of a wild ram whose horns were caught in a bush. He quickly untied Isaac and offered the ram that God had provided instead.
 Abraham put his arms around Isaac and said, "God knew from the start you would not come to any harm. He was only testing an old man's faith. From now on we will call this place Yahweh-yireh, because God provided a sacrifice. We can go home now."

READ MORE ABOUT IT:
 Genesis 22

Q&A

1. What did God ask Abraham to do?
2. Why did God bless Abraham's descendants?

Bible Accent

Abraham, whose name means "father of a multitude," was one of the most important figures of the Old Testament. He became a father to two sons while he was a very old man. His son Isaac became the father of Jacob. The 12 tribes of ancient Israel were named after the sons of Jacob. In the Book of Genesis, God told him, "I will make of you a great nation. I will maintain my covenant with you throughout the ages."
 When God was preparing to destroy the village of Sodom, where Abraham's nephew Lot lived, Abraham pleaded with him not to destroy it if even 10 righteous people could be found in it. The hardest test of Abraham's faith came when God told him to sacrifice Isaac. Abraham obeyed, and God provided another sacrifice so that Isaac would live.

St. Cyril

St. Cyril grew up in Jerusalem in the early fourth century. After his ordination as a priest, St. Maximus, then bishop of Jerusalem, put Cyril in charge of the religious students. Bitter disagreements began to develop between Cyril, who became bishop of Jerusalem, and Archbishop Acacius over religious jurisdiction and beliefs. Acacius called Cyril before a committee. Cyril refused to appear, and Acacius ordered him to be expelled from Jerusalem.
 Cyril asked for an appeal of his sentence. Within two years, he was cleared of any wrongdoing and Acacius was removed from his office. Cyril continued to face political charges during his life, but he eventually was invited to take part in the great council of Constantinople in 381 and he was later named a doctor of the church. We honor him on March 18.

Puzzle

From the list below, circle the seven sacraments.

1. baptism	2. Advent	3. confirmation
4. beatitudes	5. Eucharist	6. reconciliation
7. cardinal virtues	8. faith	9. marriage
10. holy orders	11. anointing the sick	12. prayer

Answers on page 9

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Kids' Club

You can win a \$50 savings bond by writing an essay (100 or fewer words) answering this question: **What are some of the ways we can show we have faith in God, even when we don't understand why God wants us to do something?**

Send your essay — including name, home address, telephone number, school and grade — to **Catholic Courier, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, N.Y. 14624**. Deadline for entries is March 16, 2000. The winner will be notified by phone and receive the savings bond by mail. In addition, the winner's essay will be published in an upcoming issue of *Kids' Chronicle*.

Last month's winner was Dylan Crilly, a sixth-grader at Sacred Heart School. In response to the question, **Why is it so important for us to have faith when we ask Jesus for something we need?** he wrote:

It is important for us to have faith when we ask for something we need. I think it is important because we might need someone to get better, or to help us to follow God's words. We need Jesus' help for us to do good in school. You need to have faith in Jesus first so you can believe he will answer your prayer.

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