

Unit 2

God Works in the Old Testament:

The Days of Patriarchs, the Tribes and the Judges

6. Abraham: Father of Faith

God helped Abraham grow as a person of faith throughout his life. He learned to trust that God would keep His promise to bless him and his descendants so that the whole world would be blessed through him. He became so close to the Lord that the Bible calls him "the friend of God."

7. Joseph: Man of Endurance

God helped Joseph mature through the hardships he endured. He learned to put aside the hurts of his past and dedicate himself to helping others. Through him God saved Abraham's descendants from starvation so that His promise to Abraham would be fulfilled.

8. Moses: Steadfast before the Lord

God helped Moses grow in inner strength and gave him the skills he needed to lead the Israelites for forty years. Through Moses God delivered Abraham's descendants from bondage in Egypt and established a covenant with them.

9. Ruth: Example of Self-Sacrifice

Salvation History continued as God worked through Ruth's self-sacrifice to continue the line of Abraham. Inspired by her commitment to Naomi, Boaz married her. Their grandson Jesse would be the father of David, the Ancestor of Christ.

C. 1850 BC	C. 1700 BC	C. 1428 BC	C. 1388-1020 BC
<i>Days of the Patriarchs</i>	<i>Days of the Patriarchs</i>	<i>Days of the Tribes</i>	<i>Days of the Judges</i>
<i>Abraham, Isaac & Jacob</i>	<i>Joseph</i>	<i>Moses</i>	<i>Ruth</i>

Unit Activity - The Jesse Tree

The concept of the Jesse Tree is taken from the book of Isaiah. At the end of chapter 10, Isaiah foretells the end of the Assyrian rule over Jerusalem as God "hack[ing] down the thickets of a forest with an ax." The Israelites - David's line - had been so razed. Then comes the promise in Isaiah 11:1-2, from which the Jesse Tree gets its name: "*A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.*" And from that line will come the Messiah... a new branch stronger and more fruitful than the original tree.

The earliest known Tree of Jesse depiction is found in a Bohemian codex dating from the year 1086. The Jesse Tree became a popular subject during the Middle Ages in both Western art and Eastern iconography. The modern practice, decorating a tree with symbols of Old Testament figures, is therefore a new interpretation of a traditional concept.

A Jesse Tree can be made in any of the following formats:

- *A traditional Christmas fir or spruce tree.*
- *A tree branch without leaves, two to three feet high, that has a main branch with lots of smaller branches attached to it. Place the branch in a bucket of dirt or rocks and cover the bucket with green fabric, felt, or paper.*
- *A banner or a poster on a wall. Cut a tree with branches from brown felt. Glue it to a piece of green felt, 24" x 36". Glue on small wooden pegs to hang the ornaments. Or attach Velcro® to the backs of the ornaments for attaching to the felt Jesse Tree.*
- *A mobile with the symbols fastened to it.*

Each figure in Units Two and Three is represented by an ornament for the tree. One side contains an icon, or a symbol of the character. An appropriate description or Scripture text may be written on the back. There is no prescribed way to arrange the ornaments on a Jesse Tree. Traditionally, the earlier figures (Adam and Eve, Noah, the Patriarchs) are placed at the bottom of the tree, and Christ at the top.

The Jesse Tree activity may be used in any of the following ways:

- *As a craft activity in each lesson or every other lesson in Units Two and Three with all the students working on one or two ornaments each time (preferable in smaller groups).*
- *As a craft activity in Lesson 26 (in larger groups), with each student creating an ornament for a different figure.*
- *As an in-class activity. The Tree may be decorated in class, as part of the lesson (Lesson 26).*
- *As a presentation to others. Students may also present the activity to one or more of the younger grades in the church school or as a part of the parish Christmas program using the script provided in Lesson 26.*
- *Grade Four students use the Jesse Tree in Lesson 13. You and the Fourth Grade Catechist may wish to join together for this project. Sixth Graders could show the ornaments they have made during the previous lesson or assist the Fourth Graders in decorating the tree together.*

Lesson 6 -Abraham: Father of Faith

Objectives

By the end of this lesson the student should know that:

- State God's promises to Abraham as found in Genesis
- Describe Abraham's response as a growing faith in God's promise
- See Abraham's faith as the model of New Testament vision of faith
- Compare the Hospitality of Abraham icon and of Rublev's Old Testament Trinity icon

For the Catechist

History is first lived experience. Only later it is reflected upon and written down. The history of our salvation is the story of God acting in our world. For the early Hebrew people, the experience of God's presence was a fact in their lives. They lived in dialogue with the God who chose them as His special people. The events that told of this relationship were passed on from generation to generation. Parents told their children all the mighty deeds that God had done for them. Thus each generation shared anew in the original experience.

The story of the Israelites, which plays an important role in Salvation History as told in the Bible, has a definite beginning. The call of Abraham and the promises made to him of both a new land and descendants would set in motion the events by which a new people, the Hebrews, would be formed. Because of his faith, Abraham was able to see the first fruits of this promise — the birth of his son, Isaac, and thus the beginning of this new people. Even after entering their new land, the theme of promise continued to live in the hearts of the Israelites. Their history was the source of hope to expect much more from their God. This expectation would ultimately be fulfilled and transcended in Christ, the center and the goal of Salvation History.

Matthew 1:17 divides the 2000 year history of the Israelites before Christ into three phases: from Abraham to David, from David to the Exile, from the Exile to Christ. This unit covers Matthew's first period, subdividing it into the days of the patriarchs (Abraham to Joseph), of the tribes (Moses and the Exodus) and of the judges. Emphasize this division throughout this unit and the next to give your students a sense of the historical reality of God's People and their progress through the ages.

Materials Needed:

Opening Prayer: Icon corner, Bibles, Troparia to the Patriarch Prayer Sheet

Review: *Time Travel through the Bible*

Guided Reading: Bibles, *Abingdon's Bible Maps for Children*

Activity A: "Haran Harbinger" Worksheet, Reporter's Background Fact Sheet, pencils

Activity B: "God's Promises to Abraham" Worksheet, pencils, Bibles

Activity C: "Jesse Tree" Worksheet, pencils, craft items

Activity D: "Living Your Faith" Worksheet D, pencils

Icons and Pictures:

Come Bless the Lord #18 The Holy Trinity

26 The Three Patriarchs

1. Opening Prayer

Have the **students read Matthew 1:17** from their Bibles. Note Matthew's division of Israelite history into three stages. Point out that this unit we will look at the first stage in their 2,000-year history before Christ. Then **pray together the troparia** to the Patriarchs on the Prayer Sheet.

2. Review

Review the main points of the previous lesson using the pages from your wall or easel pad.

Alternate: If you viewed the first segment of the video *Time Travel through the Bible* last week, show some of it again and ask the students what they remember of it from last week.

3. Introduction

Ask students if they know any stories of their parents' or ancestors' emigration to America. How and why did they travel here? How long did it take? How did they first live when they got here? Did people welcome them or make them feel like they didn't belong? How might it have been different if their trip had happened two hundred years ago or with the first European colonists in America? Indicate that today's lesson will be about people who left their country almost 4,000 years ago and that they did so in answer to a call from God.

Alternate: *Begin by telling a story of a time in which you were* asked to do something difficult for which you were not prepared: to move to another city, take on a different job or an additional family responsibility. Emphasize your indecision, fears or unwillingness to take such a risk. Encourage students to share similar experiences or imagine their reaction if something like that happened to them. Indicate that today's lesson will be about someone who took a far greater leap into the unknown in response to God's call.

Background Reading (Abraham and the Israelites):

“Genesis continues with the story of Abraham, ancestor of the Israelites and father of all who believe. Abraham had a series of profound personal experiences of the God of mystery: 'a trance fell upon him and a deep terrifying darkness enveloped him' (Gn 15:12). Abraham was called to put all his trust in God. He and his wife Sarah were old and childless, yet he was told by God that he would become the father of a great nation. He, in turn, was to leave his home and his clan for a new and strange land. Abraham would no longer see God as the local patron of a particular region, but the God of all creation" (LLI 31).

4. Guided Reading, Page 28 and 29

6 Abraham: Father of Faith



The story of Abraham begins about the year 1850 BC. Living in a town called Ur, in what is today southwestern Iraq, Abraham and his father were both engaged in the trading business. After Abraham married Sarah, they moved about 500 miles north to Haran, an important city in what is now Syria. In the *Hittite* language the name of this city was pronounced *ahuramu*. This is where our word *curse* comes from. Haran was on a main road to the Mediterranean Sea and, therefore, an important trading center. It was there that Abraham first heard the call of God.

"Go forth from the land of your kindfolk and from your father's house to a land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. . . . All the communities of the earth shall find blessing in you" (Genesis 12:1-3).

God called Abraham to pull up his roots, leave his relatives in the prosperous city of Haran and go into the unknown. A new moment in Salvation History would begin with Abraham, although he did not know it. But Abraham trusted God's promise, took his wife and everything he had, and left Haran. Although the 450-mile journey was a difficult one, Abraham believed that God would not fail him. He was willing to leave the life he knew and become a wanderer because he had begun to believe God would be with him.

When Abraham and Sarah crossed the Jordan River and arrived in the land of Canaan, God appeared again to Abraham and promised, "To your descendants I will give this land" (Genesis 12:7).

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Write the objectives of the lesson on a wall pad or easel pad so that the page can be preserved and used for review next week.

Direct the students to **look up any underlined words** in the lesson (*Hittite, Pharaoh, Dead Sea, Oak of Mamre, holocaust*) in the Glossary at the end of the book.

Have the students **read the first section** of the text, pages 28 and 29. Divide reading styles (aloud/silent; by one/all together).

After reading the first paragraph, have the **students refer to the map on page 168** of their text to see the Middle East as it was 4,000 years ago. Have them find the city of Ur near the southern end of the Euphrates River. Note that it is south of the ancient city of Babylon, near modern Baghdad.

Have the students **find the map of Abraham's journey** facing page 14 of the *New American Bible* and/or the wall map "Abraham's Journey." Show the trade route he would have followed from Ur north along the Euphrates River to Haran, then southeast towards the Mediterranean. Indicate how goods would be carried overland by caravan and over sea by ship to their destinations. Discuss how dangerous travel would have been in the small wooden ships of the age.

After reading the second paragraph, **have the students find Canaan** on these maps. Note that this is the territory that God promised would someday belong to Abraham's descendants. Note that God did not say how long they would have to wait, **then read the final paragraph** on the page.

Background Reading (God's Covenant):

"God took the initiative in entering into a relationship with Abraham and his descendants. In this God was making a covenant with all humanity. St. Paul would later explain this covenant from a Christian perspective 'Consider the case of Abraham: he "believed God, and it was credited to him as justice." This means that those who believe are sons of Abraham. Because Scripture saw in advance that God's way of justifying the Gentiles would be through faith, it foretold this good news to Abraham: "All nations shall be blessed in you." Thus it is that all who believe are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith' (Gal 3:6-9 NAB)" (LLI 31-32).



Point out that the **Bible does not say just how God revealed His will to Abraham here**. Note that it must have been extraordinary for Abraham to obey as he did. Discuss what it would take for you to leave your homeland to set off on a journey with no known destination. Note that Genesis 12:6 says that Abraham took the "persons he had acquired." A prosperous man like Abraham might have many servants, workers and even poor relations dependent on him. He would be responsible for all of them.

Point out that when we say Abraham trusted God, it does not mean that he understood what faith might mean. Read the section "**Mistakes along the Way**" and show how Abraham still didn't fully believe that God was going to give him a land and descendants.

Note that sometimes people don't really trust that God loves and forgives them. They think that they're "unworthy" of God's love. Others may not really believe that God wants them to live according to His commandments: they think they are free to live their own way without being accountable to God. We all need to learn to trust the truth of God's word.

Use the sidebar to review the idea of a covenant, the Mosaic Covenant and the New Covenant presented in Grades Four and Five. Note that in the earliest covenant, the one with Noah, God simply expected people to avoid killing each other. By the time of Moses, they had matured a bit. He could expect them to respect each other's family and property. By the time of Christ, He could call on them to love one another as He loves us.

Background Reading (Abraham in the Liturgy):

"The story of Abraham is read at Vespers and at the Presanctified Liturgies of the fourth and fifth weeks of Great Lent. Especially stressed are his call to a new land, the covenant of circumcision (replaced in Christianity by baptism), and his willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac. God refused to accept this sacrifice, perhaps as a sign that human sacrifice was repugnant to Him. What is important is Abraham's complete openness to God, who would later give us His only Son who would be sacrificed for us on the cross.

"Sometimes an icon of the sacrifice of Isaac is placed over the Table of Preparation to remind us of Abraham's faith. In this it invites us to show ourselves to be 'descendants of Abraham' by giving ourselves to God; as we pray in the litanies: 'let us commend ourselves and one another and our whole lives to Christ our God'" (LLI 32).

5. Guided Reading Pages 30-31

Abraham was so sure that he and Sarah would have no children that he planned to make one of his servants his heir. So God appeared to Abraham and made a covenant with him that, even though it took a long time, the promise would be fulfilled.

A Son Is Promised

The Bible tells how one day the Lord appeared to Abraham sitting by his tent at the Oak of Mamre. Abraham saw three men, standing nearby and rushed to give them hospitality. Sarah failed to hear him, and Abraham chose a calf from his herd for their dinner. While they ate, one of them promised that by the time they returned next year Abraham and Sarah would have a son. Sarah laughed, she was too old to have children. But it was the Lord who had promised them a child, and a child was born (Genesis 18:1-15).

Christians have always been impressed at how the Bible describes these three visitors as "the Lord" (Genesis 18:1). The Church sees this as a hint of something we would understand only centuries later, with the coming of Christ. The story of these three visitors suggests to us that the one God in whatever form: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Holy Trinity.

Illustrations often show scenes of this scene showing Abraham and Sarah serving their three heavenly guests. This icon is called the Hospitality of Abraham. In the fourteenth century St Andrew Rublev painted an icon of the three guests alone, without Abraham and Sarah. This became the Church's favorite icon of the Holy Trinity.

Rublev's icon does not show much food on the table, only a single bowl being blessed by one



of the visitors. This suggests the heavenly feast of the Eucharist. When we share it with faith, then we become guests of the Holy Trinity at the Lord's Table.

Abraham's Call to Sacrifice

Abraham dearly loved his son as any father would. Then one day, God spoke again to Abraham. He said, "Take your son Isaac, your only son, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There you shall offer him up as a burnt offering on a height that I will point out to you" (Genesis 22:2). How must Abraham have felt? Not only would he be losing his son, he would be losing all hope of becoming the founder of a new people! But Abraham had also experienced God's fidelity in the past and now believed that

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Have the students **compare the icon** of the Hospitality of Abraham on page 29 with that on page 30. Then read the section "**A Son Is Promised**" to learn what the icons represent and why they are different.

Remind the students that **to sacrifice something means to give it up**. Discuss how hard it is to give up things we like. Imagine if you had to give up someone you loved. Read the first two paragraphs of the section

"**Abraham's Call to Sacrifice**" and note that God was giving Abraham the chance to trust His promise completely, against all odds. By then Abraham was ready to trust that much and God spared Isaac.

Complete the reading, noting that with the coining of Christ we can all become friends of God by being followers of Jesus.

6. Activity A (Newspaper Article)

Divide the students into groups and distribute copies of the Activity A Worksheet and Fact Sheet to each. Direct the students to read the explanations on the Fact Sheet. Then have each group pretend that they are reporters traveling with Abraham on his journey and write a field dispatch on the Worksheet, describing some aspect of the trip.

Their articles may focus on the physical aspects of the journey, the reaction of Abraham's wife and servants to the trip, Abraham's sense of being called by God, or the response of people they meet on the journey.

7. Activity B (God's Promises to Abraham)

Have the students work together in twos or threes to read the appointed Scripture passages; fill out the Worksheet; then share their answers.

8. Activity C (Jesse Tree)

Have the students complete the ornaments on the Jesse Tree Worksheet (The Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob).

9. Activity D (Living Your Faith)

Have the students work individually to fill out the "Living Your Faith" Worksheet; then share their answers. Encourage students to see that a living faith is not just a matter of attending church, but of living one's whole life in a godly way.

- 10. Time Line** Display the time line poster. Have the students brainstorm the names of people mentioned in this lesson (*Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, Andrei Rublev*) and indicate the period in which each lived. Write in the names and dates under each appropriate heading. Reemphasize the idea that the days of the patriarchs are the first stage of the history of the Israelites.
- 11. Summary** End the lesson by summarizing the lesson from the aims on page 121, from the elements in the student text on which you focused and/or any other points raised in the lesson.
- 12. Closing Prayer** Conclude by reading the section from Psalm 105 and/or the troparion of Abraham on page 32 of the text.

Looking Ahead to Lesson 7

Lessons 6, 7 and 9 include repeated references to the threat of famine. Thank God, this is not part of our students' experience though it is still current in different parts of the world. Invite students to prepare for next week's lesson by (a) looking up "famine" in a social studies text, (b) conducting an internet search for "famine + Africa + today" or (c) viewing the PBS documentary, *Harvest of Despair: The Unknown Holocaust*, on Stalin's forced famine in Ukraine (B & W, 55 minutes, available on VHS or DVD through Amazon.com).

Troparia to the Patriarchs

From the Sunday of the Ancestors of Christ

Reader: Let us venerate the greatest of the Fathers: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; for in taking flesh of the Virgin from their line, Christ has been manifested as the Mighty God!

All: **Glory to You, O our God, glory to You!**

Reader: Celebrating the memory of the Fathers before the Law, let us venerate Jesus, who came forth divinely from their line; for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were the foundation of the Prophets and the Law, and the spiritual first fruits of grace in faith.

All: **Glory to You, O our God, glory to You!**

Reader: The Patriarchs and Fathers before the coming of the Law, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, were like radiant stars because of their faith. All the prophets and the just were illuminated by them, since they were like shining lamps; by the rays of their holy prophecy, they brought light to the whole creation.



Reporter's Background Fact Sheet

Trade and Commerce - Businessmen who wanted to make money did so through trading ventures. There was no Stock Market to play! Some went into manufacturing, building, farming and fishing, but those who wanted to move into more prosperous ventures did so as merchants and dealers buying commodities and then selling them. The "black gold" of those days was not crude oil but grain, much of which was exported from Egypt along trade routes throughout the Middle East and beyond. Some of the goods brought along these trade routes from the East, such as frankincense or silk or rugs, could be shipped out through ports on the Mediterranean.

Grain, wine and olive oil made up the bulk of overseas trade. Grain would be brought to the port, then put into sacks to be stacked in the hold, or sometimes poured straight into bins in the hold. The essential task during the voyage was to keep the grain dry. At the destination, the cargo of grain was put into sacks (if it was loose) and carted to nearby warehouses for distribution.

The range of commodities which were traded is extensive. All these things (and many more besides) could be seen and purchased in the markets: grain, wine, olive oil, perfumes, spices, linen, cotton, silk, rugs, dyes, bitumen, glass, metals, pottery and ceramics, timber, ivory, and fish (packed into salt barrels).

Travel - Transport overland was usually by wagon drawn by horses, mules or oxen. Camels were the preferred pack animals for crossing tracts of desert. These remarkable animals are ideally suited to travel on the long and arid caravan routes. Camels are quite capable of carrying 400 lbs plus a rider and easily cover 20 miles a day and can survive for a fortnight without water. They are created with the extraordinary ability to close their nostrils to protect them from sandstorms. Their elegant eyelashes protect their eyes from the blowing sand and their broad, padded feet enable them to stand and walk on soft sand. On many an occasion camel's milk has proved to be a man's life-saver. A single animal would not be expected to undertake a whole journey (unless it was comparatively short). A long journey was made in relays, rather like changing teams in a stagecoach. On main routes there were *caravanserais*, or inns, generally on the outskirts of a town. These were specially designed to offer accommodation for the human travelers and their animals. A *caravanserai* comprised a central courtyard with stables, enclosed by a cloister of small rooms for the guests. The advantage of sleeping in a *caravanserai* was the protection it afforded. The great gates were closed at night, giving travelers, goods, and animals complete security.

Food - Wheat and barley were grown for bread making. Barley produced an inferior quality of flour but its growing season was shorter and it did well on relatively poor soil. Barley grain was cheap and was used by poor people. This may indicate the social standing of the family whose son supplied Our Lord with five loaves when He fed the multitude (*John 6:9*). Wheat, being the more expensive grain, was used by the wealthier people. Grain was sold to the general public and also to bakers.

Grain was extracted from the harvested sheaves by threshing and winnowing. This was normally done at a threshing floor, an open platform of beaten earth. The pile of harvested wheat or barley was threshed by a man with a flail (two heavy sticks hinged with leather) to loosen the grain. If the amount was large, farmers used oxen to tread all over the pile to press out the grain. Threshing sledges were also used, wooden boards with pieces of rock or metal let into the underside. The farmer would stand on the sledge, which was harnessed to a donkey or an ox and drawn repeatedly over the pile. After the grain was loosened in this way, the farmer took a wooden fork (similar to a garden fork) and winnowed the

grain by tossing piles into the air. The straw and chaff were blown away by the wind and the grain settled onto the threshing floor to be gathered into baskets or sacks.

Vegetables were grown in large quantities. Beans, peas, onions, garlic, cucumbers, lentils, herbs, all found a place in local markets, but as there was then no method for preserving them, they could not be exported. Fruit and nuts were grown in profusion: grapes, melons, figs, dates, pomegranates and almonds. Grapes were eaten fresh when in season and as raisins. Wine was produced in large quantities and was normally drunk with water to dilute it.

Olives were grown in vast quantities. The oil was used for lighting and cooking. It was also used as a healing balm and a skin cleanser. Olives were pickled and eaten in abundance and so the olive harvest in the late autumn was a very important one.

Cloth - Cloth was made from a variety of materials. Flax, wool, goat hair, and camel hair were all woven into fabric. Cotton was imported from Egypt in its woven state, and silks were imported from China by traders. Sheep's wool was commonly used in biblical times both in the country and in the cities. The dyeing of wool was common. Dyes made from vegetables, clays and powdered stone were used. The highly prized purple color was obtained from the organs of certain shellfish. Its scarcity made it very expensive. Linen was made from flax. It was always used in its natural state and never dyed. The natural whiteness and softness of the cloth meant it was considered as a high quality fabric. Camel hair and goat hair were woven to make coarse and heavy garments such as shepherds' cloaks. They were water resistant and very warm. Tents were made from goat hair. The Bedouin make their tents out of woven goat hair even today.

Metals - The commonest metal in the ancient Middle East was copper. It was extracted from the ore by smelting, and smiths hardened the metal through hammering it. Around 2000 BC people discovered that a mixture of copper and 4% of tin made a far stronger metal: this was bronze. An enormous variety of bronze objects was used.

Pottery - Potters often congregated together on the edge of villages and towns. A plentiful supply of water was necessary for preparing and working the clay, and a potter's yard would be piled with broken pieces resulting from unsuccessful firings. In ancient times pieces of broken pottery ("*ostraca*" or "*potsherds*") were salvaged from pottery yards and used for writing informal notes and letters. Oil lamps were produced by the thousand. Their style gradually changed and archaeologists are able to date layers of civilization according to the styles they find.

Leatherwork - The use of animal skins dates from time immemorial. Adam and Eve were clothed with animal skins after the Fall. The Bible makes constant reference to things made of leather from clothes, belts and shoes. Leather was also used for writing purposes.

Adapted with permission from Christopher Hill, *Going to Work in Bible Times* (New Barnet, England: C L Publications, 1999)

- *If camels could travel 20 miles a day along the trade routes in the Middle East, how many days might a 450-mile journey like Abraham's take? How long would this trip take by car today?*
- *Genesis says that Abraham took all his possessions and all his dependents (relatives, servants, workers) with him. This certainly slowed them down. How many animals would be needed to take them on their journey?*
- *How much grain and water would they have to take with them? What would they have to buy in market towns along the way?*

God's Promises to Abraham

A - What were the three promises God made to Abraham? Read the following passages from the Old Testament and write the promise they contain

1. Genesis 13:14-15 _____

2. Genesis 18:18 _____

3. Genesis 22:16-18 _____

B - Look up the following New Testament passages in which Abraham is mentioned. Single out a different word in each passage that describes Abraham and write a sentence telling how he practiced this virtue in his life. (Example: Hebrews 11:17 - Faith - Abraham trusted God and left his home and relatives for a strange land.)

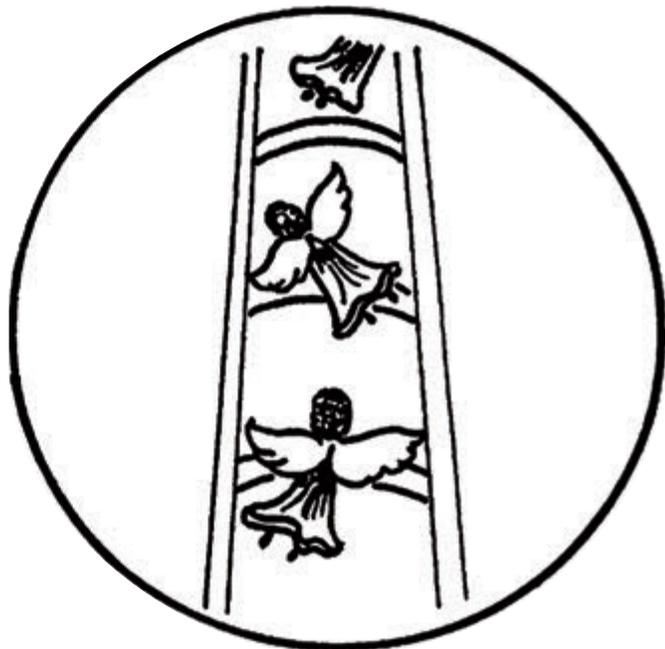
1. Romans 4:3 _____

2. James 2:21-23 _____

3. Galatians 3:9 _____

4. Hebrews 11:8 _____

The Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob



JACOB'S LADDER

Living Your Faith

To answer God's call, Abraham had to make some difficult choices. To live our faith we need to make choices too, when people around us don't encourage us to live as Christians.

1. Your friend has shoplifted a bracelet you have always admired and gives it to you as a gift. Has your friend broken a commandment? Which one? What should you do to live your faith?

2. A very popular girl has spread stories about a new girl in class that you know are not true. She expects you to join in the conversation. Has your friend broken a commandment? Which one? What should you do to live your faith?

3. On Saturday evening a fellow altar server calls to invite you to go to the beach with his family early Sunday morning. Is your friend breaking a commandment? Which one? What should you do to live your faith?

4. One of your church friends has won a trip to Disney World at the church festival. Some of your group start making nasty remarks and ignoring your mutual friend. Have your friends broken a commandment? Which one? What should you do to live your faith?

5. On your twelfth birthday your mother tells you that you are now expected to take daily responsibility for the trash and keeping the garage clean. You say that you will only do it if you get paid. Have you broken a commandment? Which one? What should you do to live your faith?

6. The latest fad in your school is to wear black clothes and devil's-head jewelry or decals. One of your friends, who dresses this way, invites you to check out this look and the other cool stuff at a magic shop downtown. Has your friend broken a commandment? Which one? What should you do to live your faith?

7. One of the expressions heard at school these days is Goddess of Perversity, taken from an album popular with many teens. Your friends are using it more and more. Have your friends broken a commandment? Which one? What should you do to live your faith?
