

Obedience and Sacrifice

The purpose of Sunday School is to inspire class members to learn, teach, and live the gospel of Jesus Christ every day.

As class members study accounts of obedience and sacrifice in the scriptures, they will learn that we are blessed when we obey God' s commandments—even when we don' t understand all of the reasons for the commandments.

Prepare

As you study [Genesis 4; 22](#); [Moses 5:1–11, 16–26](#), consider asking yourself:

- What sacrifices have I made to keep the Lord' s commandments? How have I been blessed as a result?
 - What could class members do to discover what the scriptures teach about obedience and sacrifice? How could they help one another learn about obedience and sacrifice?
 - What sacrifices are class members making to obey the commandments of God? How can they support and encourage one another in these efforts?
 - How will I inspire class members to learn, teach, and live this doctrine?
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Encourage personal and family study

Each week you have the opportunity to encourage class members to have meaningful scripture study, individually and with their families. For instance, you could do one of the following:

- Invite one or more class members to tell about how they teach the gospel to their family. As the class discusses different ways to teach the gospel at home, you could spend a few minutes showing class members the videos, images, and audio files available in the [Media Library](#) on LDS.org.
 - Invite class members to share how they have acted on impressions they received during a previous class or in their own scripture study.
 - Ask class members to share or explain verses in [Genesis 4; 22](#); [Moses 5:1–11, 16–26](#) that are especially meaningful to them. This activity could take the majority of the time in class.
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Teaching in the Savior' s Way

The Savior taught others to love and serve by loving and serving them. He taught them to pray by praying with them and for them. To His disciples He said, “Come, follow me” ([Luke 18:22](#)). He taught the Nephites to be “even as I am” ([3 Nephi 27:27](#)). His example was His most powerful method of teaching. What can you do to teach by example?

Learn together and invite to act

Follow the guidance of the Spirit as you select one or more of these activities or create your own based on the needs of your class.

- **Why is it important to obey God’ s commandments even when we don’ t know all the reasons for them?**

A few class members could role-play a youth asking a parent to explain the reasons behind a commandment (such as tithing, fasting, or keeping the Sabbath day holy). They could discuss how the youth may best gain an understanding of the commandment through obeying it. Class members could then read [Moses 5:1–11](#) and identify the commandment Adam and Eve were given and the reason the commandment was given. Class members could share what they have learned from experiences in which they obeyed a commandment without fully understanding it at first.

- **How can we make offerings that are acceptable to the Lord?**

Class members could make a list on the board of temporal and spiritual blessings they would like to receive. What might we need to give up, or sacrifice, to receive these blessings? How can we ensure that we are making righteous and worthy sacrifices? As part of this discussion, you could read [Doctrine and Covenants 130:20–21](#). A class member could summarize the account in [Moses 5:16–26](#) (you may want to ask him or her to prepare beforehand). Why did the Lord accept Abel’ s sacrifice but reject Cain’ s offering? Why is it important to make sacrifices in the way the Lord commands? (see the statement from Elder Robert D. Hales in “Additional learning resources,” below).

- **What can we learn from Abraham about obedience and sacrifice?**

You could show the video “[Akedah \(The Binding\)](#).” and class members could follow along in their scriptures in [Genesis 22](#) and mark verses that impress them. After the video, class members could share their thoughts about this event and any verses in Genesis 22 that are particularly meaningful to them. What do those verses teach? What do we learn about obedience and sacrifice from Abraham’ s experience? Encourage class members to write down impressions they have received during class. As part of this discussion, you could share President Thomas S. Monson’ s account of Abraham and Isaac or the statement from Elder Neil L. Andersen in “Additional learning resources,” below.

Learning and living the gospel every day

Encourage class members to think about what they have learned and felt today. What do they feel impressed to do? For instance, they could:

- Share with their families something from today’ s discussion.
- Continue studying this doctrine and act on what they learn.
- Examine their lives and determine, with guidance from the Spirit, what sacrifices they need to make in order to be more obedient to God’ s commandments.

During the coming week, you could send class members suggestions for home study from the additional learning resources at the end of the next outline you select. Encourage them to consider using one of the ideas listed under “Basic Scripture Study Strategies” or “Family Study Ideas” as they review these resources.

Additional learning resources

- [Hebrews 11:4, 17](#); [Jacob 4:5](#); [D&C 97:8](#); [132:50](#)
- President Thomas S. Monson, “Obedience Brings Blessings,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 89–92
- Elder Dallin H. Oaks, “[Sacrifice](#),” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2012, 19–22
- Elder Bruce D. Porter, “[A Broken Heart and a Contrite Spirit](#),” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 31–32
- Elder Neil L. Andersen taught: “Many sacrifices are quietly accomplished: returned missionaries not delaying the responsibility of finding their eternal companion; righteous women desiring children and investing their lives in rearing them in love and truth; families carefully restricting the media and Internet influences that would tarnish their spirits; husbands and wives finding more time to be in the temple together” (“[It’ s True, Isn’ t It? Then What Else Matters?](#)” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2007, 75).
- Elder Robert D. Hales shared this experience of President George Albert Smith, which illustrates the importance of obeying on the Lord’ s terms:

“President George Albert Smith taught a very important lesson on the disposition of tithes. He told of inviting a boyhood friend, whom he had not seen for some time, to accompany him to a stake conference. This friend had achieved success in the financial world. As they were driving home from the conference, he told President Smith about his method of paying tithing. He said that if he made ten thousand dollars, he would put one thousand dollars in the bank for tithing. Then, he said, when someone needed money for a worthwhile cause, he would write a check. ‘Little by little I exhaust the thousand dollars,’ he said, ‘and every dollar of it has gone where I know it has done good.’ Then he asked President Smith what he thought of that plan.

“President Smith replied: ‘I think you are a very generous man with someone else’ s property. You have not paid any tithing. You have told me what you have done with the Lord’ s money, but you have not told me that you have given anyone a penny of your own. He is the best partner you have in the world. He gives you everything you have, even the air you breathe. He has said you should take one-tenth of what comes to you and give it to the Church as directed by the Lord. You haven’ t done that; you have taken your best partner’ s money, and have given it away.’

“About a month later, the two men met on the street, and President Smith was happy to learn that his friend was paying his tithing as the Lord had directed. (See *Improvement Era*, June 1947, p. 357.)” (“The Divine Law of Tithing,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1986).

- Video: "[Akedah \(The Binding\)](#)" (12:57)
- *Old Testament Student Manual: Genesis–2 Kings* (2003)

Additional insight

- Why did the Lord accept Abel' s sacrifice and reject Cain' s offering?

Adam and his family were commanded to offer sacrifices "in similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father" (Moses 5:7). The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: "By faith in this atonement or plan of redemption, Abel offered to God a sacrifice that was accepted, which was the firstlings of the flock. Cain offered of the fruit of the ground, and was not accepted, because he could not do it in faith; he could have no faith, or could not exercise faith contrary to the plan of heaven. It must be shedding the blood of the Only Begotten to atone for man, for this was the plan of redemption, and without the shedding of blood was no remission. And as the sacrifice was instituted for a type by which man was to discern the great Sacrifice which God had prepared, to offer a sacrifice contrary to that, no faith could be exercised, because redemption was not purchased in that way, nor the power of atonement instituted after that order; consequently Cain could have no faith; and whatsoever is not of faith, is sin. But Abel offered an acceptable sacrifice, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God Himself testifying of his gifts [see [Hebrews 11:4](#)]" ([Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith](#) [2007], 48).