



## EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Session 1: A Substitute

Suggested Week of Use: March 3, 2024

Core Passage: Genesis 22:1-14

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### News Story Summary

While standardized testing was broadly abandoned as a college entrance requirement during the COVID-19 pandemic, the SAT and ACT seem poised to make a comeback. For example, Ivy League schools Dartmouth College and Yale University have announced a transition back to standardized testing as a tool for admission decisions in 2029. Some colleges, such as the University of California system, have committed to remain test free, while others will continue to make it optional. However, more schools are opting to again use SAT or ACT scores to measure students' readiness for college.

Critics contend that standardized tests favor wealthy and other advantaged students, but the College Board points out that the exams don't create disparities. Instead, they help reveal the inequalities that exist. Indeed, some research shows that, despite misgivings and debate over their limitations, standardized tests remain trustworthy indicators of student success.

For more about this story, search "Ivy League schools reinstating standardized tests."

### Engage

To supplement the Engage activities, direct the group to make a list of times when they have been tested as an opportunity for advancement. Lead them to think about driver's tests, physical exams for military service, professional licensures, and so forth. Encourage them to raise their hands if they took the SAT or ACT as a college prerequisite. Ask: *How did you do? What made it challenging for you?* Share the information from the news story about colleges moving back to standardized tests as an evaluation tool for admissions. Point out that such tests are not the only way to measure a student's readiness for college, but testing can help both individuals and the university know whether students are prepared for college. Explain that today's session focuses on a very difficult test Abraham had to take. Note that God gave him the test as a way to demonstrate his faith and to learn more about his walk with God.

### Challenge

To supplement the Challenge activities, remind the group that standardized tests are controversial because of questions of bias. Note that God asking Abraham to sacrifice Isaac was a test that likely raised questions for Abraham—but God had a purpose. Encourage adults to share what Abraham learned from the test. Say: *God's tests help us to know Him better and discover His plan for our lives. Because he was tested, Abraham knew that he could fully trust God. When you are tested, pray that your faith will be strong and your trust in God full.*