

Reuniting  
**THE CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM**  
a toolkit for peace

*A slideshow to accompany the  
presentation and dialogue*

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# We found the following resources helpful:

- “Abraham: Journey of Faith” by Tad Szulc, photographs by Reza, in National Geographic December 2001. pp. 90-129.
- Armstrong, Karen. Islam: A Short History. New York: Random House Inc., 2000.
- BBC World News  
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/people/features/world\\_religions/index.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/people/features/world_religions/index.shtml)
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- Elcott, David. “What’s Jewish,” The American Jewish Committee.
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- Fisher, Mary. Living Reflections. New York: Apprentice Hall, 1997.
- Judaism 101. <http://www.jewfaq.org/toc.htm>
- Middle East Resources: “Portraying the Arabs: Prejudices and Stereotypes.” Cambridge: Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University, 1991. National geographic website.

# QUESTIONS...

*All involved with Reuniting THE CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM a toolkit for peace use questions as a starting point for dialogue. You, the audience, are also invited to join the dialogue by thinking about the following questions, asking your own questions, and offering your ideas.*

WHY DO YOU THINK THE STORY OF  
ABRAHAM IS IMPORTANT IN THE PROJECT?

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE  
THREE ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS?

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN STEREOTYPED?

WHAT HOT TOPICS IN YOUR FAITH OR IN  
OTHER FAITHS DO YOU HAVE TROUBLE  
COMPREHENDING?

# Why do you think the story of ABRAHAM is important in the project?

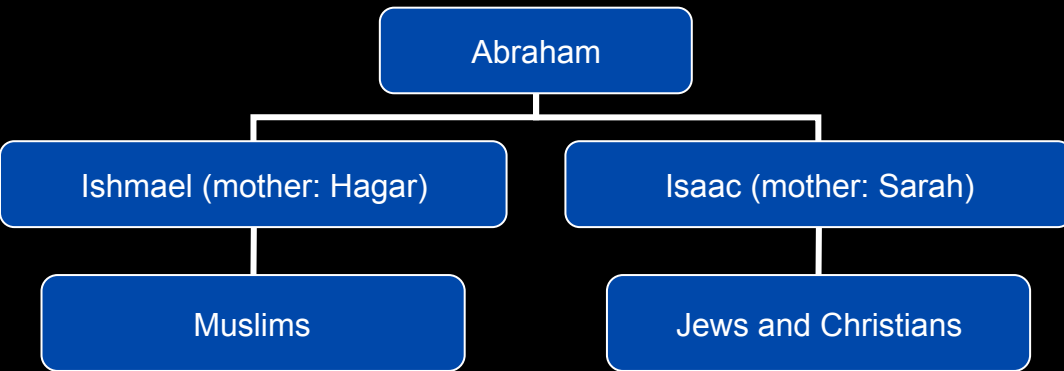
***“The Koran, the Torah, and the Bible all recognize Abraham as the father of their religions: Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. Abraham’s first son, Ishmael, became the forefather of Islam. Abraham’s second son, Isaac, became the forefather of Judaism and Christianity. So, if we all have the same father, why have we so often seen each other as enemies?”***

--Reuniting THE CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM a toolkit for  
peace

- In *Reuniting THE CHILDREN OF ABRHAM a toolkit for peace*, the characters are challenged by the differences in their faiths and their understanding of the stories of Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael and Isaac.
- Yet each steps into the other's shoes, awakening curiosity, respect, and a desire to continue listening. The project offers hope as to what reality might be like if we can remember our similarities and be open to our differences.



# *Who was Abraham?*



Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all trace their roots back to Abraham, and believers all find inspiration in his relationship with God.

# *In each faith, his name resonates with meaning:*

- For **Jews**, he is the **“First monotheist,”** the first to believe in the covenant...that we are always in relationship with God.
- In Genesis, God made a covenant with Abraham: ***“I shall make of you a great nation and all the families of the earth shall bless themselves by you.”*** (Gen 12:2-3)

- Bill McNeece, Pluralism Project 2002





- For Christians he is the “**Father of Faith**,” as all who believe in Jesus are Abraham’s spiritual offspring.
- In Galatians, the apostle Paul wrote, “*Understand then, that those who believe are children of Abraham... So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.*” (Galatians 3:7,9)

- Bill McNeece, Pluralism Project, 2002



- Bill McNeece, Pluralism Project 2002



- For **Muslims**, he is “**Father of the Faiths**,” an ancestor of the Prophet Muhammad and a Muslim submitting to the will of God.
- In the Qur’ an (Surah 16:120), “***Surely Abraham was an exemplar, obedient to Allah, upright, and he was not of the polytheists.***”

# How do the *three faiths* relate the sacrifice story?

God's call and Abraham's willingness to sacrifice a son represents one of the *most powerful and important* Abrahamic stories for *all three faiths*; each tradition has interpreted the story in light of its own core values and concerns.

# How do *Jews* interpret the sacrifice story?

Jews read the *akedah*, the “binding” of Isaac, from Genesis each year on the High Holiday of Rosh Hashanah:

*“Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?” Isaac asks his father as they approach Mount Moriah, and Abraham answers, “God himself will provide the lamb for an offering.”*

In Judaism, the harrowing incident underscores the covenant, the commitment that God and Abraham have made to each other, and a clear rejection of child sacrifice.

- Marc Chagall, *Abraham and Isaac on route* [www.msgr.ca/msgr-4/marc\\_chagall\\_abraham\\_et\\_isaac](http://www.msgr.ca/msgr-4/marc_chagall_abraham_et_isaac)



# How do *Muslims* interpret the sacrifice story?

In the Qu'ran, the story of the sacrifice does not name the son, but Islamic tradition holds him to be Ishmael.

He is steadfast and forbearing, offering himself up willingly, an exemplar of submission to God's will.

This spirit of sacrifice and obedience to God is celebrated in the Festival of Eid ul Adha, the Festival of Sacrifice, the culminating event of the Hajj.

Muslims around the world join the pilgrims in Mecca to commemorate Eid ul Adha by attending religious services, visiting each other's homes, and sharing lamb as a symbol of Abraham's sacrifice.

- A traditional Eid greeting:
- May Allah Bless you with a Happy Eid (Holiday)  
[www.islamicity.com/ecards](http://www.islamicity.com/ecards)





# How do *Christians* interpret the sacrifice story?

Christians have viewed the story of Isaac on Mount Moriah as a forerunner of Jesus' death and resurrection.

He believed in a God who would fulfill the covenant promise to create a new nation, while Christians believe that God raised Jesus from the dead to establish a new covenant for all who believe.

Just as Rosh Hashanah and Eid ul Adha commemorate the story, Good Friday and Easter evoke Abraham and Isaac in its remembrance of the death and resurrection.

Marc Chagall, *The Binding of Isaac*  
[www.jesuswalk.com/abraham/images/chagall](http://www.jesuswalk.com/abraham/images/chagall)



# What *questions* do you have regarding *Abraham*?

In all three faith traditions, the story of the sacrifice ends similarly: *an angel or messenger intercedes to stop the sacrifice of the son*. Abraham has proven himself faithful. Yet a host of questions remain for many. We invite you to ask your own questions and add your comments.

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