**Story of Abraham from G3L2:**

**PROPS:** (see picture under this lesson at [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org))

* Horse figurine
* Star, moon and sun cutouts
* “Idols” (figurines made of modeling clay) on a plate- one needs to be bigger then the others (towards the end of the story you will smash the other ones and leave the largest figurine- as part of the story)

*The**historical episode for this lesson provides an account of the life of Abraham, focusing principally on the opposition He faced. You should decide before class how you will approach this period. What we have done is provide you with one long narrative written in a language accessible to you, but perhaps too difficult for the children. Whether you tell it as it is written or simplify it substantially, will depend on your students’ level of comprehension. You can also as we mentioned earlier, recount only part of the episode to them at any given time. However you choose to proceed, it is important to make it clear that* ***no force no matter how powerful could prevent Abraham from achieving His mission*** *and that* ***His exile from the land of His birth became the cause of the progress of His descendants, who spread His teachings to many nations.***

Manifestations of God have come to guide humanity throughout the ages, appearing in different places at various stages of history. Abraham, Whose name means “the father of nations”, was a Manifestation Who lived thousands of years ago. He was born at a time when **few** people believed in one God. Tradition tells that on the night that Abraham was born, his father had many guests, including the wise men of the court of King Nimrod. As the visitors left the house at dawn, they saw a large star rising in the east, which seemed to consume stars from the each of the four corners of the sky, by the way that it was rising.

The wise man believed this unusual occurrence must be a sign connected with the birth of Abraham, foretelling His great power. They decided to inform the king and went to see him at once. The most respected among them related to Nimrod what they had witnessed and what they believed to be the meaning of this wondrous sign. Fearing that the child would one day take power from him, Nimrod called for Abraham’s father and offered gold and silver in exchange for the baby. Upon hearing Nimrod’s command to surrender his son, Abraham’s father decided to pose a question to the king. Not long before, Nimrod had given him a beautiful horse. Another man now wished to buy the horse for a good price, and he asked the king what he should do. Nimrod’s advice was clear: How could he ever think of selling so unique and precious a gift from his king? How could gold and silver ever replace such a gift? To this, Abraham’s father responded: just as money could not replace the gift of a king, so could it never replace his own child. This argument temporarily satisfied the king, but Abraham’s father knew that Nimrod would continue to insist on claiming his Son. So for ten years he kept Abraham in hiding, long enough for the king and his wise men to forget about what had happened on the night of His birth.

Like most people at the time, Abraham’s family worshiped idols, that is, figures made of stone, wood, or clay (can have figures made of clay to show as an example). Idols had first been created as symbols of the attributes of God, for example, of love and justice, but these physical objects had gradually come to be seen as gods themselves. So people prayed to idols, believing that such figurines had power to help and guide them, as well as to punish them. Some idols were even thought to represent powers in nature such as the sun, the moon, and the stars. **Do you know what Abraham’s father did for a living?** Abraham’s father made and sold idols, so Abraham was surrounded by them from childhood. When He was still young, however, it became clear to Him that such man-made objects had no powers, and He was drawn by Divine forces to seek the Source of true power that guided humanity.

As the story is told, Abraham was a **child** when, observing the stars, the moon and the sun, He came to know that there was one God, the Creators of all things. Seeing the brilliance of a star one night, He said, **“This is my Lord.”** When it set, however, He said, **“I love not those that set.”** Seeing the moon rise in its great splendor, even brighter that the star, He said, “**This is my Lord.”** But it, too, set. When the sun rose, illuminating all around Him, Abraham praised its greatness in comparison to the moon and star. Yet it, too, set, and, at the moment, even as a young child, He knew that there was one true Creator, greater than all these powers, who had brought the world into being and that He, alone, should be worshipped. Abraham declared, **“For me, I have set my face firmly and truly, towards Him, Who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall I give partners to God.”**

As a young man, Abraham was sometimes asked to look after His father’s shop and help sell idols. Yet he took every opportunity to discourage people from buying them, pointing out that idols could not eat or drink, walk or talk; how could they believe, He would inquire, that such figures had the power to help them. Abraham wanted to teach people about the one true God and to lead them away from idol worship. **How do you think Abraham’s father reacted?** Not very well. So angry did His father become at His son for denying the gods of His people that he cast Him out from the family home. **(Do you see how much detachment and reliance on God are needed in following the truth?)**

Undeterred, Abraham continued to try to show the people the path to God. It is said that one day, to help them understand the powerlessness of the idols, He went to the place where they were kept when no one else was there. **Do you know what He did?** He destroyed them all but one –the largest one. Later, when the people returned and saw the broken idols, they remembered what Abraham had been telling them and called for Him. How could this happen, they inquired. Abraham pointed to the one remaining idol and suggested that perhaps this one had destroyed the others. They need only ask the idol to find out, He stated. **“But the idol cannot speak or move.”** Exclaimed the people, **“How could it have destroyed the others? How can it tell us what happened?”**

In response to their questions, Abraham called on them, as He had done many times before, to abandon their worship of such **powerless** idols and to follow the one true God, the Maker of all. It seems simple to us, but at that time it was very hard for them to be detached and let go of the ideas they had formed in their heads. Few would listen and Abraham was brought before the King Nimrod to be punished for destroying the idols. Upon hearing the accusations Nimrod asked Who this Mighty God was that Abraham had told his people to follow. Abraham’s answer was unequivocal: it is the one true God Who gives life and death to all. Nimrod responded boastfully that he, too, as king, could give life and death by his very command. But Abraham went on to explain that it is God Who makes the sun rise in the east. He asked Nimrod whether, as king, he could make the sun rise in the west instead. Nimrod grew so angry this that he ordered Abraham to be burned to death. Yet nothing he could do could harm Abraham, Who came through the fire uninjured. Of course it was within the power of God to protect Abraham from any earthly affliction, but the Bahai Writings say that the fire that Nimrod enkindled burned in the *hearts of men*. It was *the fire of animosity and hatred* that he ignited against Abraham. But all that animosity and hatred could not prevent Him from proclaiming His message.

At last Abraham was exiled from His native land. **Do you know what that means?** He had to leave the land of His birth. With His wife Sarah, His nephew Lot and a few others who had accepted the Message of the one true God, Abraham set off from the place of His birth and headed westward. For many years they travelled, but Abraham never feared, for God had promised Him He would guide Abraham to another land and that, from Him, would come forth a great nation. Eventually the small group reached a place called Canaan, which came to be known as the Promised Land or the Holy Land. This was the land on which, as God had ordained, the children of Abraham would settle and prosper.

Abraham endured many hardships in the Promised Land, but He raised up a people which held firm to the belief that there is only one God, the Maker of all things. God blessed these people and assured Abraham that, through His descendants, people from many nations all over the world would one day recognize and worship their Creator.

And, of course all that God had decreed came to pass. He changes abasement, difficulties and hardships into glory! From one of Abraham’s sons, Isaac, descended the Hebrew people who followed the laws of God taught by Moses. Later Jesus Christ was born among them, and people of diverse backgrounds and nations followed His teachings. Another son, Ishmael, became the father of the Arab people who were transformed by the Word of God revealed by Muhammad. The Bab, Whose teachings paved the way for Bahaullah, was a descendent of Muhammad through Muhammad’s daughter Fatimih. And the family of Baha’u’llah, too, traces its roots back to Abraham. We will learn about all of these Manifestations of God later, but for now you can see how God’s promise to Abraham was fulfilled*.*