

Focus Points

"Focus Points" are short activities that draw students into the lesson. They take only a few minutes to do. Many can be used as quick-start activities to engage the students and focus their attention at the beginning of class. Others may fit well during the lesson to reinforce a point and drive it home. Still others may serve as good wrap-up activities. "Focus Points" come in many forms. Choose and use them as you see fit.

Focus Point – The Sacrifice of Isaac

Genesis 22:1 *After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I!"² He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."*

(1) For preteens and teens.

Bring in props: a bundle of kindling sticks, a hunting knife, a bowl with a burning candle or alcohol, a large calendar with three days circled on it (e.g., at Passover season), and some rope. Ask the class, "What do these mean to you?" See if they can recall the story in Genesis that involves all of these things.

If your students can handle a bit of drama, bind one of them. Have the student lie on the kindling sticks. Bare the hunting knife. Ask the class to imagine they are Abraham or Isaac at this moment. What faith did the father and son exhibit in this incident?

If you really have a flair for the dramatic, have someone hide out of sight, unseen by your students. At the appropriate moment, have the person shout, "Abraham, Abraham!" Play out the interchange between the angel and Abraham recorded in Genesis 22:11-12, 15-18.

(2) For teens.

Display the following words where your students will see them as soon as they come to class.

**TEMPT ONLY SON MORIAH BURNT OFFERING
MOUNTAIN WOOD THIRD DAY WORSHIP
COME AGAIN KNIFE GOD WILL PROVIDE
LAMB RAM OBEYED TOGETHER MY FATHER**

Start the lesson by asking your students:

- > What do these words have in common?
- > What book of the Bible contains all of them?
- > What chapter of this book contains all of them?
- > What can you tell me about the significance of any of these words?

Then go directly into the lesson on the sacrifice of Isaac.

(3) For teens.

Ask your students where the sacrifice of Isaac is recorded in the Bible. Can they give the book and chapter?

Have everyone open their Bibles to Genesis 22:1-18 and read it together.

Then have your students work in pairs and find as many ways as they can that the sacrifice of Isaac in this passage foreshadows the sacrifice of Christ. Give them four or five minutes to make a list.

Ask them to tell you what they have found and compile a class list of all the parallels.

Why do they think so many details, pointing forward to Christ, show up in the story of Isaac in Genesis? Do they know what a "type" is? Isaac is one of many Old Testament types of Christ. Other details of his life point forward to Christ as well.