# Am I Willing to Sacrifice?

Some stories in the Bible lend themselves to crafts and colouring sheets.  This is not one of them.

There is no way to lightly depict a father being asked to kill and sacrifice his precious son.  The story of Abraham Preparing to Sacrifice His Son is a test of faith like no other.

Of course, even as Abraham was about to carry through with what God had told him to do, an angel intervened and stopped him.  Yes, Abraham had reasoned that God would not ask this unless he planned to bring his son, Isaac, back from the dead after the sacrifice (Hebrews 11:17-19).  But even so, there was a father and a son and a knife.

As difficult it is to comprehend the events of Genesis 22:1-18  they are only a foreshadowing of another time, later in history, when another father allows his son to be sacrificed on a cross.

I wanted the children in my Bible class to contemplate sacrifice.  I wanted them to think about what it would mean to love and trust God so much that we would be willing to give up something we hold precious.  Abraham passed the test and showed he was willing to go to any extreme God asked of him.  Would we pass that test?

The following activity meant a lot to my group of kids so I thought you might like to try it too.  Like Abraham, they will be taken to the very edge in contemplating sacrifice but then they will not actually be sacrificing.

I would suggest you speak calmly and not too fast so that you create an environment of contemplation among the children.

# Supplies you will need:

- Enough paper so that each child will have a few small sheets of paper
- Pens or pencils
- Some flat stones
- Something upon which to place the stones (I used a round metal pizza pan)
- An empty box of matches

# Instructions:

After telling the story of Abraham and Isaac further discuss how God was more important to Abraham than anything or anyone. Abraham proved that he was willing to sacrifice even the most important thing in his life, his son.  Is God that precious to us?  What would we be willing to sacrifice if we were tested?

1. Have the children write or draw what is important or precious to them on small pieces of paper.  One item on each piece of paper.  As they write you can already begin asking them whether the thing written on their paper is as important as God. Keep in mind that this is not about good or bad.  They will be writing down some very good things and people.  This is about whether or not God is more important than even the MOST precious things.
2. After they have written for a little while then bring out the stones and stack them together to form an altar.  My class was sitting at a table so I placed the stones on the metal pizza pan in the centre of the table.  The children immediately recognised it was an altar.
3. Now ask the children to think carefully about what they have written on their papers and whether or not they would be willing to give them up (sacrifice them) if God asked them to.
   If they are willing to give it up then have them scrunch up the piece of paper and place it on the altar. Don't rush this.  Allow them to really consider. More than one child in my class was not ready to "sacrifice" what they had written but, after some

thought, bravely decided to do so. When they place something on the altar be sure and tell them you understand how difficult it is and are proud they have made that decision. After all, sacrifice is difficult for children just like it is difficult for us adults!

4. Once the papers are all on the "altar" then bring out the matchbox. When you seem to be ready to burn all of these sacrifices then open the matchbox to show that it is empty.

At this point continue the conversation to relate the activity back to Abraham. Here is what I said, "Of course we are not going to burn all of these things. God wants us to enjoy all of these blessings in our lives. After all, many of these people and things are very good for us and he does not want us to give them up.

But God DOES want us to understand that HE is more important than even the best things in our lives. Isaac was the best thing in Abraham's life but Abraham's willingness to sacrifice him showed that God was even more important than his beloved son.

In today's bible lesson we learn that God tested Abraham to see if he was willing to give up Isaac if it was for God. Abraham passed the test.

And guess what? Today we have had a kind of test. YOU were willing to give up your precious things if it was for God. You showed that God is more important than all of these things. You passed the test. I am so proud of you."

At the conclusion of the activity I prayed out loud for each child individually.

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