

# SESSION 1 LEAD IT: HIGH SCHOOL



## GOALS

Through this session students will...

- Trace the origins of the nation of God's chosen people, the Nation of Israel.
- See how God calls a group of people together for a purpose.
- Learn how Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were faithful to God's call.
- Be challenged to see that God is calling them as well.
- Begin to consider what things God might be calling them to as a group.

## MATERIALS: Group

- Whiteboard and markers
- Supplies for building an altar (review the options under Putting Into Practice)

## MATERIALS: Each Student

- Session 1 Scripture sheets
- the student journal pages for Session 1
- a Bible and pen (Students should bring their own Bibles. You can decide if you would like them to use a physical Bible or a Bible app like, "YouVersion.")

### Several Weeks Out:

Begin advertising the new study. Perhaps take advantage of social media outlets like Twitter and Facebook. Mass invites are a great first contact, but try to make subsequent invites more personal. As you make these contacts be clear about important meeting details such as location, start and end time, and what to bring.

### One Week Out:

Send out reminders as well as a challenge to students to familiarize themselves with the stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Perhaps include some key chapters for them to look at such as Genesis 12, Genesis 26, and Genesis 28. Consider including a list of questions for students to meditate on prior to the meeting such as "Do you think that God has a plan to use this group? If so, how?"

Spend some time prior to the study to recruit a team of people to pray for you and your group throughout the series. Give them an overview of the curriculum and some topics you will be covering. Consider asking parents, church leaders, and others to join you in praying for the next 8 weeks.

## SESSION INTRO

### Prayer

After your group has gathered, open your time up in prayer. Pray that as you delve into this study that God would reveal Himself to the group. Pray that God would show you through His Word what it looks like to be faithful to Him, and how He is also faithful to fulfill His promises to us. Pray that God's Spirit will open your hearts and move in the group.

### Open

Open your time with the following discussion.

**What are some of your favorite origins stories?**

Here are a few if they get stumped:  
 Anakin Skywalker's path to the dark side in Star Wars  
 Katniss is motivated to volunteer as tribute in The Hunger Games to save her sister,  
 Nearly every comic book hero has a terrific origins story.

**How is learning the origins essential to understanding the rest of the story or understanding the central character?**

**The Bible contains some of the greatest origins stories ever recorded. What are some origins stories that are mentioned in the Scriptures?** Use a whiteboard to record the group's responses. If your group gets stuck, here are a few responses to get them started.

- |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| -the world                               | -God's chosen people    |
| -sin                                     | -Jesus ministry         |
| -the sacrificial system to atone for sin | -Jesus' first followers |
| -God's law                               | -The church             |

**How does understanding these origins stories aid in our understanding of God?**

**How does understanding these stories help us in our relationship with God?**

## DIGGING IN

Share with your group that throughout the course of this study you will be focusing on three groups in particular: God's chosen people, Israel; Jesus' disciples; and your group. Understanding the stories of Israel and the disciples can give us great insight into what God requires of us as well as what He desires for us.

Have students read Genesis 12:1-5 from their Bibles. Invite students to look for the following as they read the passage:

- **Anything God told Abraham to do.**
- **Anything God said He will do.**
- **Abraham's response to God.**

After students have completed the process go around the group and ask them to share what they've found. You may want to record their responses on your whiteboard. The chart below gives you an idea of the "final product" when you finish this exercise.

Abraham	Isaac	Jacob
<b>God tells him to:</b> -leave his country, people -go to the land I'll show you  <b>God says He will:</b> -make him a great nation -bless him -bless those who bless him -curse those who curse him  <b>Abraham responds by:</b> -he left country, people	<b>God tells him to:</b> -do not leave the land you're in  <b>God says He will:</b> -be with him -bless him -give him all this land -will confirm the oath He gave to Isaac's dad, Abe -make his descendants numerous as the stars  <b>Isaac responds by:</b> -he stayed	<b>God tells him to:</b> -actually, no real instructions here  <b>God says He will:</b> -give him and his descendants the land he is lying on -descendants will be as numerous as the dust and will spread in all directions  <b>Jacob responds by:</b> -built an altar

Explain to your group that years after Abraham's call, as the fulfillment of a promise that God made to Abraham, Abraham and his wife gave birth to a son, Isaac. As the years passed God continued to honor the covenant that He made with Abraham through Isaac.

Have students read Genesis 26:1-6 from their Bibles. As they do, continue to have them record on their journal pages the same things they did with the story of Abraham. When everyone has finished working, review the responses with the group once again. As before, you may want to record responses on your whiteboard.

Share in your own words:

**As you may have guessed, God's promise to Abraham did not end with Isaac. Isaac had two sons of his own, Jacob and Esau. You may remember that Jacob convinced Esau to trade his birth right (normally an honor given to the oldest heir) for some food. He then proceeded to deceive Isaac into granting the birth right to him instead of Esau. Many years later God came to Jacob in a dream and reaffirmed the promise that he had made to Abraham many years before.**

Have students read Genesis 28:13-19 from their Bibles. As they do, have them finish up this section of their journal pages in the same fashion that they have done with the prior stories. When they are finished working, review the responses one last time. Continue recording the group's responses if you have been doing so up to this point.

## TAKING IT INWARD

Take this opportunity to encourage students to critically examine the Scriptures that they just read. In comparing the three stories, have them discuss the following questions:

**How do the instructions that God gave these three men differ?**

**How is the promise that God made to each consistent?**

**What similarities do you see in the way that each man responded?**

After your time of discussion encourage students to review the notes that they made on their worksheet regarding each story. Ask them to look for patterns that emerge from God's actions and a pattern of reactions from these men. After they have finished reading their notes and writing their responses bring the group back together to work toward a group consensus. Help your group arrive at a pattern that looks similar to the one below. Don't get hung up on wording or terminology here, the point is that we want them to understand the concept.

### God's Actions:

1. *God had a plan*
2. *God initiated contact with man*
3. *God orchestrated events*

### Man's Reactions:

1. *Man listened to God's plan*
2. *Man obeyed what God said*
3. *Man's obedience led to action*

## DIGGING DEEPER

On the student journal pages under the section titled "Israel's Growth" you'll see three Scripture references. These Scriptures record the stories of Jacob and his family crossing into Egypt, their growth while in bondage in Egypt, and ultimately the nation of Israel's journey out of Egypt. Encourage students to write down any reference to the size of Jacob's family at the time they crossed into Egypt, and then the size of the nation of Israel at the time of the Exodus. To help them understand the first Scripture, you may want to remind students that God changed Jacob's name to Israel.

Read the passages one at a time as a group. Ask students to write down the numbers asked for on their journal pages (these are also noted below).

### Genesis 46:27

What was the size of Jacob's family?  
70

### Exodus 12:37

What size was the nation that Jacob's family had grown into?  
600,000 men, not counting women and children

## Exodus 1:6-10

Under what circumstances did they experience this growth?

*While slaves in Egypt.*

### TAKING IT INWARD

Explain in your own words:

**In the same way that God accomplished His plan through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: God still brings people together, forms them into a group, and orchestrates the events that call these people to action. Bottom line, God still chooses to work through us and is looking for groups of people who are willing to respond to His call.**

Discuss the following questions:

**Think of some groups that you are a part of, perhaps an athletic team, a club you've joined, or even a group of friends. How did this group first come together? How has the group developed over time? What is your role in the group?**

**Given your experience with our group, and the people that God has brought together to form this group, what things or actions do you believe that God might be calling us to?**

**Looking at the events we have done as a group over the past three months, would you say that these events are helping us accomplish this calling? If so, in what ways? If not, what do we need to do to refocus?**

**God used different experiences to refine people and prepare them for service. How do you think that God might be refining our group now for service?**

**How might God be refining you?**

**When you learned that we were going to be doing this Bible study, what made you decide to participate?**

### PUTTING INTO PRACTICE

In a moment you're going to give students time to individually answer the questions on their journal pages under "Putting Into Practice." Before they begin, share the following to your group:

**The questions under Putting Into Practice will help you evaluate what you believe it is that God might be calling our group to. Reflect on the questions and think about how the answer to these questions might help us to transition from a youth *group* to a youth *ministry*. For each question avoid broad answers and list specific, attainable steps.**

Once they finish, bring students back together and go through the questions as a group.

**What can we do to start listening to God's call? What should we do differently?**

*For instance, commit to weekly times of prayer, allow for alone time with God, disconnect from social media and cell phones for a specific period of time to "listen" to God instead.*

**What are some ways we need to be faithful? What are some ways that you are going to work toward being more faithful?**

*For example, holding each other accountable to do what God has called us to, scheduling events that help accomplish God's purpose for our group, giving each person tasks and responsibilities that help the group achieve its purpose.*

**God's plan for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was to raise up a mighty nation of people who would be committed to**

**His purposes. What specific things do you think that God is calling this group to within our church? Within our schools? Within our community? Around the world?**

**What's your role in God's plan for our group?**

Share in your own words:

**Throughout Scripture, when God showed up and did something amazing, His people built altars to help them remember what God had done. In fact, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all built altars to the Lord on separate occasions where God had appeared to them. (Genesis 12:6-7, Genesis 26:23-25, and Genesis 35:1-7.)**

While altar making isn't a common practice these days, the idea of commemorating what God has done for us certainly is a great idea since we are by nature forgetful people. But here's the thing: let your group decide.

**Do you believe that God is at work in our group and is calling us to do something for Him?**

**Would it be appropriate to build an altar to God to commemorate His work?**

This activity can captivate the creative and artistic students in your group. You can provide some materials to build the altar (some suggestions are listed below), or you can encourage students to bring something to build the altar with the following week. This activity can be a powerful reminder of the group's commitment to pursue God's call.

#### **Altar Ideas**

- Jacob used the items that he found around him to build his altar. Have students search your meeting area for meaningful items to use in building the altar.
- Set up an altar building time and encourage students to bring items from home to assemble the altar. This can be practical altar items like wood or stones or duct tape, or it can be something symbolic, perhaps something that they are giving up to pursue God's call.
- Consider organizing a scavenger hunt for items to use in the altar. Some examples might be items left in the church van after a youth trip, work supplies from last year's mission trip, etc. You could also be creative and get some adults from your congregation involved and "hide" different altar building supplies at their homes and give students riddles or hints as to where each piece can be found. Use your creativity here.
- Give each student a stone. Have them personalize the stone (you can use markers, paint, craft supplies, etc.) and put their names on the stone. Use the individual stones to create the altar.

Close out your time together with prayer. Among other things that you pray for, pray for the group's willingness to follow God's call and to be faithful.