**The Story of Parabolas, QUADRATICS by James Tanton**

Draw a fixed point (called the *focus*) and a fixed line (called the *directrix*) on the page. Then the *parabola* with this focus and directrix is the set of all points in the plane equally distant from F and L as shown.   


One can construct a parabolic curve by folding paper. (This is fun. Try it!)

Draw a dot a couple of inches up from the bottom edge of the page for the focus F and imagine the bottom ege line as the directrix L .

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
|  |  |

Now lift up the bottom edge and align one point on it with the point F. Make a crease and unfold. *FL*Do this another 50 times or so, lifting different points along the bottom edge up to the point F and making a crease line each and every time. Those crease lines outline a curve, and that curve is a parabola!