

WHAT IS A SACRIFICE?

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

RIGHTEOUS FORGIVE SIN UNRIGHTEOUS COSTLY

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Leviticus 1:1-9; 9:1-24; 1 John 4:9-10

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the preadolescents comprehend that although sin is something so costly, God always provides a way for us to be forgiven

MEMORY VERSE

“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit” (1 Peter 3:18, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

“Sacrifice” is an interesting word. What images come to your mind when you think about it? Could it be that of an altar bathed in blood? Maybe that of a known missionary who leaves his family and friends to go to a distant place?

These images suggest that many of us see sacrifice as something distant, an irrelevant concept that has little or no impact on our daily lives.

For many, sacrifice isn’t only unimportant, but also expresses something negative. This may be true for some students in your group. They live in a world that emphasizes privilege and consumption, not renunciation. The idea of sacrifice may seem old fashioned, not to say unpleasant. For this reason, students must understand the biblical concept of sacrifice.

In this lesson, they’ll learn that sacrifice is the purpose of God’s grace, and made it possible to restore the relationship between himself and the fallen human race as a result of sin. Instead of allowing the immediate death of Adam and Eve, God allowed the sacrifice of animals and products of the earth to replace human life. Later, the Creator, in the person of Jesus Christ, would give his life as a final sacrifice for sin.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

It's surprising that the Bible doesn't clarify the origin of sacrifice. After Adam and Eve sinned, it was reasonable to wait for some instructions from God about how they would relate to him in the future. But he said nothing. Still, we find that sacrificial offerings were made to God from the beginning. In Genesis 4, we see Cain and Abel presenting their offerings.

Many assumed that God rejected Cain's sacrifice because it was not done with blood, but this is doubtful. When God established the sacrificial system after the exodus, it included grain offerings. It's much more likely that Cain's heart and motives weren't correct. This is important when the Hebrews offered their sacrifices to God without interest in pleasing him; he was not satisfied with that.

Sacrifice involves bringing an offering as a gift to God. The terms "bring" and "offering" are typical of the Hebrew language. Both suggest the idea of giving voluntarily, and three of the five major offerings were voluntary. Here again the importance of a correct attitude in relation to God is clear.

Usually, we think of sacrifices as a way of obtaining forgiveness for sins. But in reality, there were different types, symbolizing different aspects of the relationship with God. Some focused on getting favor from him, others were to recognize God's provision and express gratitude.

But remember that the Creator takes sin very seriously. To restore the relationship with him, a person must give up something valuable. For this reason, different levels of offerings for the poorest and richest people were described. An additional sign to denote the seriousness of sin was, in most cases, the sacrifice of an animal's life.

Our attitudes towards sin are often taken very lightly today.

We say: "The devil made me do it." God doesn't agree with this. Sin is serious and costly.

Sinners must recognize their sin. At each sacrifice of an animal, the worshiper had to place his hand on the head of the animal. By doing this, the person admitted that there was sin and that this animal was dying in his place.

Often, people in our society try to put blame for their bad deeds on someone or something other than themselves. We cannot deny the many factors that contribute to lead us to act badly. But we must remember that sin is the violation of a known law of God, and this makes us accountable to him.

"The wages of sin is death." Animals for sacrifice were to die, symbolizing that the sinner deserved that end because of his failure. Finally, Jesus Christ sacrificed his life to free us from our sin. Never forget that it's we who should have been hung on that bloodstained cross. Only the best we have is enough for God. In burnt offerings of communion and guilt, the animal offered must be without defect. That perfect animal symbolized the moral perfection that the Holy God demanded, and the perfect nature of the real sacrifice that Jesus Christ would offer.

Although today we don't offer perfect animals in sacrifice, the principle remains in force. We must offer God the best we have, all our heart, soul, mind and strength as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2).

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

What is a sacrifice?

On the board draw lines for each letter of the term "Sacrifice." Ask students to add the letters, one by one, until they discover the mysterious word. Hand out Student Activity Sheet #393-A. Ask the students to write the definition of "sacrifice." Then they can tell the rest of the group. Discuss the definition of sacrifice: to give or get rid of something valuable in order to receive something much better. Sometimes the sacrifice benefits the person who gives it. On other occasions, it favors someone else.

Then guide the students to look at the figures on the page and ask them to comment on what types of sacrifices the people there would have made to achieve what they have in life. (For example, a runner may have sacrificed his favorite foods to be in good physical condition. The graduate will have sacrificed a lot of time studying, would have sacrificed going out with his friends in order to study with dedication and obtain a degree and a career. The couple will have left their parents to marry and form their own home, etc.)

Ask: "What do you think when you hear the word "sacrifice"? Is it a good word or an ugly word for you? Last week we learned how serious sin is. All of us should have died for our sins. But God had another plan to deal with them. That plan implied sacrifice. We'll learn more about this."

Hand out Student Activity Sheet #393-B.

TEACH THE LESSON

Sacrifices for sin

You can start by mentioning something about the background of the sacrifices with the following comments:

- The Bible doesn't tell us when God asked people to offer sacrifices.
- But we know that it was very early in history, since Cain and Abel offered sacrifices of their cattle and harvest.
- The custom of offering individual or family sacrifices continued until God rescued the people from slavery in Egypt. For example: Noah offered a sacrifice after leaving the ark (Genesis 8:20).
- When the people camped at the base of Mount Sinai, God gave detailed instructions on how the sacrifices would be made in the future.

Read with your students Leviticus 1:1-9, describing what the burnt offering consisted of. This offering presents three aspects that were true for most sacrifices.

Lead the students to complete the student activity sheet called: "Sacrifices for Sin." The missing words in the first column are in bold type:

- 1.The person was to bring a perfect animal to be sacrificed.
- 2.The person put his hand on the head of the animal that would be sacrificed.
- 3.The person killed the animal. The priest sprinkled the blood of the animal on the altar.

You can tell them that this may seem to be horrendous for us, but God wants to show us, by this means, three very important truths.

In the opposite column write:

- Sin brings death. (Corresponds to point 3.)
- Sin has a price. (Corresponds to point 1.)
- Sin makes us feel guilty. (Corresponds to point 2.)

Let the students read Leviticus 9:22-24 in unison. Finish the Bible study by saying: God created people to have a close relationship with him. The Old Testament sacrificial system gave God's people a way to restore this relationship and obtain peace and joy that it produces until God sent his Son Jesus as the final and perfect sacrifice for the sin of all who repent.

CONNECT THE LESSON

Sacrifices for sin

Distribute Student Activity Sheet #393-C and explain the instructions to the group. Students need to complete the statements found on the left by filling in the blanks. Then they should read the statements on the right and draw a line from each sacrifice to its meaning. God's incredible sacrifice

Give the group Student Activity Sheet #393-D (God's Incredible Sacrifice). Ask them to open their Bibles to 1 John 4:9-10 to complete the biblical text. Once completed, let the students explain in their own words what they understood from the verse. Clarify the wrong concepts. The importance of the text is that they understand that God sent his Son Jesus Christ to pay for our sins. That is, Christ died (the offering and perfect sacrifice) instead of us.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

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Use this activity to present and help your group learn the memory verse. You already have the memory verse written on cards. Practice the verse you wrote on the board several times. Explain again the importance of Christ's sacrifice to re-establish God's

relationship with people, shattered by sin and the fall of Adam and Eve. Place the cards in a bag or in a box. Ask the students to take a word and try to remember the previous one and the one that follows. While they're pulling different words, they are to be put in order until the text is complete. If there are some who don't know the words, others can help them..

WRAP-UP

Pray

Lead the group in prayer giving thanks because Christ covered all our sins with his blood and we no longer have to make animal sacrifices.

Encourage

Challenge the students to think during the week about how many sacrifices they would have to make if they were in Old Testament times. Tell them that they can tell about their experiences during the next session. Encourage the students to think about how God sent Jesus as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. And for that we should be grateful.

Invite

Tell the group something interesting about the next session to encourage attendance. Don't forget to give them any items to take home.