

SACRIFICE

CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Pencils and pieces of paper; small container
- Copies of the downloadable 622 service booklet
- Copies of the lesson handout
- Copy of the leader's notes
- OPTIONAL: A white board, easel pad, or chalk board with markers/chalk
- OPTIONAL: Bibles (ESV or similar recommended)
- OPTIONAL: Have notebooks on hand for teens to take home and use as prayer journals if they wish

ICE BREAKER: FEAR IN A JAR

As the teens arrive, ask them to think about fears they have. Have each teen take two pieces of paper and write something they fear on each, then fold and place their fears in a container. (Different teens may coincidentally choose the same fear, so ask for a minimum of two fears each to avoid running out. However, try to keep in mind that you want every teen to have someone speak to at least one of their fears, so you don't want too many extras.) Have the teens seated in a circle. One at a time, teens select a fear from the jar and must talk about: 1) how that fear might affect someone, and 2) how they would try to help someone overcome that fear.

FOR SMALL GROUPS, ASK THEM TO WRITE SEVERAL FEARS ON DIFFERENT PIECES OF PAPER, AND HAVE EACH PERSON TAKE MULTIPLE TURNS. FOR LARGE GROUPS, YOU MAY NEED TO LIMIT THE TIME. FOR VERY SMALL GROUPS WHERE IT MAY BE UNCOMFORTABLY OBVIOUS WHO SUBMITTED WHICH FEAR, YOU MAY WANT TO SUGGEST WRITING THE FEARS OF OTHERS THEY KNOW IF THEY DO NOT WISH TO REVEAL THEIR PERSONAL FEARS TO THE GROUP.

622: BEGINNING WITH PRAYER

Begin the formal part of the lesson by saying together the first part of the order of service for young people in the booklet, up to the middle of page 4.

AT THIS POINT IN THE LESSON, ASK IF THE TEENS SUCCEEDED IN DOING LAST WEEK'S CHALLENGE, HOW IT WENT, AND WHETHER THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO SHARE.

DISCUSSION: WHAT'S WORTH THE TROUBLE?

As an introduction to the lesson ask the teens to discuss the following questions.

DEPENDING ON THE COMFORT LEVEL FOR SHARING IN YOUR GROUP, IT MAY BE EASIER TO HAVE THEM VOLUNTEER ANSWERS WITH ALL RESPONSES WRITTEN TOGETHER ON A BOARD.

- What kind of incentive would it take to get you to face a deep fear?
- What kind of incentive would it take to get you to give up something you value?
- How does it feel to make a sacrifice? How does it feel when someone else makes a sacrifice for you?

A few things worth pointing out (if they don't otherwise arise during the discussion):

- *Sometimes the desire to overcome a fear can be enough to make us face that fear. But more often we need a stronger incentive to do something that we find difficult, whether it is facing a fear or giving up something of value. For example, often parents' instincts to protect a child will give them the courage and incentive needed both to overcome the fear of a threat and also to risk their own lives.*

SACRIFICE

- *(The word “sacrifice” can have two different meanings, but they are related. It can refer to an animal that is killed as an offering to God, or we might use that word if we are talking about giving up something we like. In the context of this discussion, try to focus on the idea of giving up something that’s of value.)*
- *Sacrificing something is hard to do, but if we choose to do it freely it is usually because what we’re getting in return is worth the trouble to us. We may feel hesitation, fear or even regret, but there is a satisfaction arising from the belief that it will be worth it. For example, I may sacrifice going out with friends in order to study for an exam, because I know that achieving a good mark can impact my future.*
- *When someone makes a sacrifice for us it can make us feel valued, indebted and grateful. For example, if friends give up attending a concert in order to cheer me on at a sports match, I would feel that they really care about me and I would want to also find ways to show them the same support.*

THE LESSON: HEBREWS 9, 10

The first part of the lesson gives a bit of context to connect the Old Testament sacrificial system with the sacrifice of Christ. Then the teens are asked to read the text (either silently to themselves or aloud together), followed by some additional questions for discussion.

(IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP RESPOND TO QUESTIONS THAT MAY BE RAISED DURING THIS UNIT, WE RECOMMEND “DISCOVERING THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER: A HANDS-ON APPROACH, VOLUME 2: OUR LIFE IN THE CHURCH” BY SUE CARELESS.)

The Old Testament points us to Jesus in many powerful ways. Remember the story of the Passover? How about the story of the manna in the wilderness? And we’ve only just scratched the surface: there’s much more! God gave Israel something else during that action-packed time: the law.

Now the law revealed to the people how to “love the Lord with their heart, soul, and mind, and how to love their neighbours as themselves”. That’s the summary that Jesus gave to us in the New Testament. But the Old Testament law was very complex. In fact, the people always fell short of fully obeying it. And so one aspect of the law was all about what the people should do when they messed up, in order to be in a right relationship with God again. It was a system of animal sacrifices offered by the priests on behalf of the people to “atone” for their sins.

Fast forward to the prophet Isaiah, still in the Old Testament. He talked about a person who would come to be a *perfect* sacrifice, when he said: “He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed”.

The NT author of the epistle to the Hebrews spent four chapters on making it clear to readers that the OT sacrifices were just shadows or copies that pointed to something truer and more real: Jesus.

Refer to Hebrews 9: 11-12, 24; 10:11-17.

(VERSES HAVE BEEN CLIPPED FROM THE READING FOR THE SAKE OF BREVITY AND FOCUS, BUT IF YOU HAVE TIME TO EXPLORE THE PASSAGE FULLY, FEEL FREE TO READ IT IN ITS ENTIRETY: HEBREWS 9:11:10-17.)

(THE TEXT IS PROVIDED ON THE BACK OF THE HANDOUTS AND IN THESE LEADERS’ NOTES SO THAT EVERYONE CAN MARK IT UP AND MAKE NOTES ON IT IF DESIRED. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN READ OUT OF A BIBLE.)

Read through the text. Then ask the teens to respond to what they’ve just read. Here are some questions to help guide the discussion.

- Make a chart that compares the “copies” with the “true things” as pointed out in the text. Consider the who, what, where, frequency and effect of the sacrifice.
- What do you think motivated Jesus’ sacrifice?
- How can we respond to the sacrifice that was made for us?

SACRIFICE

A few notes and reflections for reference:

- “Copies” (Shadows) / “True Things” (Substance)
Human priests / Christ the High Priest
Blood of goats and calves / Christ’s blood
Holy places made with hands / Heaven; In God’s presence
Repeatedly / Once for all
Insufficient to take away sins/ Perfect; Achieving forgiveness of sins
- Jesus’ sacrifice was motivated by his love for us. “For God so loved the world that he sent his only son...” (John 3:16). His sacrifice means that our sins can be forgiven and we can be in a right relationship with God – so he considered rescuing us worth such a sacrifice!
- We can respond with gratitude, by remembering his sacrifice in Holy Communion, and by faithful living. The passage in Hebrews continues with the word “therefore”, so if we had time to go on we could look at how the author wants us to respond to all that he’s just said, which is by drawing near to God with faith, hope, obedient living and loving service.

DURING EACH LESSON, IF THE TEENS RAISE THEOLOGICAL OR BIBLICAL QUESTIONS THAT YOU DON’T FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT ANSWERING, SAY SO, BUT LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU’LL FIND THE ANSWER AND RESPOND AT THE NEXT MEETING.

PREVIEW: AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Take a brief moment to look at the at-home challenge together.

THE WEEKLY “AT-HOME CHALLENGE” IS TYPICALLY A SIMPLE ASSIGNMENT TO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME IN PRIVATE PRAYER. ENCOURAGE THE TEENS TO GET NOTEBOOKS THAT CAN BE USED AS PRAYER JOURNALS. ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO SHOW THEIR JOURNAL OR THEIR PRIVATE PRAYERS TO ANYONE.

Each morning and evening, follow the prayer plan that you created for yourself.

(If you didn’t make one, try saying the morning and evening prayers from the “Forms of Prayer to be used in Families”, which begins on page 728 of the BCP. If you don’t have a copy, you can look it up here: <http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer>).

Set aside a few moments when you pray, to quietly reflect upon this verse from scripture (Isaiah 53:4-5):

“Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows... he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.”

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect, pausing to reflect after each phrase.

O God, who in a wonderful sacrament hast left unto us a memorial of thy passion: Grant us so to reverence the holy mysteries of thy Body and Blood, that we may ever know within ourselves the fruit of thy redemption; who livest and reignest with the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

(THE SECOND COLLECT FOR THE MAUNDY THURSDAY, BCP PAGE 169)

SACRIFICE

622 (AGAIN)

Close with any prayers that might be appropriate in the context of the discussion of the day.

AT THE END OF EACH LESSON, IF YOU FIND THAT YOU STILL HAVE LOTS OF TIME REMAINING, YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO TAKE SOME TIME TO EXPLORE THE “PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS” SECTION IN THE BCP (PAGES 39-62, OR YOU CAN USE THE DOWNLOADABLE BOOKLET). AS YOUR GROUP MEMBERS COME ACROSS PRAYERS THAT THEY FIND RELEVANT, PAUSE AND PRAY THEM TOGETHER. IF YOU’RE PRESSED FOR TIME, YOU MIGHT CLOSE WITH THE THEMED PRAYER FROM THE AT-HOME CHALLENGE.

Then finish with the “Grace”, the final prayer in the booklet.

HEBREWS 9, 10: **THE PERFECT SACRIFICE**

9 ¹¹But when Christ appeared as a high priest... ¹²he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption...

10 ¹¹And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹²But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. ¹⁴For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

¹⁵And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, ¹⁶“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,” ¹⁷then he adds, “I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.” ¹⁸Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.