

Sacrifice



Luke 20 to 24:12



In this session the young people follow the events of the first Easter as the tension in Jerusalem reaches its climax. As Jesus shares the Last Supper, prays in the garden, faces trial and goes to the cross, they discover that his death was not simply a tragic ending but a willing act of sacrifice. Luke's Gospel highlights Jesus' innocence, his obedience to the Father and his extraordinary forgiveness – even in suffering. Through these events the young people will explore how Jesus gave his life for others and what this reveals about the kind of King he truly is.

You will need:

- Paper
- Felt-tips
- Glue sticks
- Additional paper or card for the Sound Check activity



Beat

Say:

Over the past few weeks many Christians may have been observing Lent. During this season people often give up something as a reminder of Jesus' sacrifice.

Ask:

- Did anyone give up something for Lent this year? If so, what was it and how difficult was it to make that sacrifice?
- What kinds of things do people usually give up for Lent?

Say:

Let's try a quick challenge. I'm going to name a few things, and I want you to think if you would be willing to give them up for Lent.

Examples:

- Chocolate
- Your phone
- Social media
- Gaming
- Watching TV

Ask:

- Are the things we usually give up for Lent really a sacrifice?
- What makes something a real sacrifice?

Say:

In today's Bassline we are going to explore the events of the first Easter and the sacrifice Jesus was willing to make for us.



 **Bridge**

Ask:

When does giving something up become meaningful rather than just difficult?

 **Amplify**

Say:

As Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, the tension that had been building throughout Luke's Gospel began to reach its climax. The crowds welcomed Jesus as a king, but the religious leaders saw him as a threat. The following clip summarises Luke 20 to 23. As you watch, notice what Jesus chooses to do, even when things become difficult.

Watch:

The Crucifixion of Jesus: Luke 19-23 – Bible Project (stop at 4:05)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=_unHmAf7INk

Leader's notes:

Explain to the group that they are going to walk through the key events of Holy Week. Encourage volunteers to read the Scripture passages used throughout this section.

The Last Supper

Read:

¹⁹ And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.’

²⁰ In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.’

– (Luke 22:19–20)

Say:

Jesus shared a final meal with his disciples during the Passover festival. As they ate together he took bread and broke it, telling them that it was his body which would be given for them. He then shared a cup of wine and explained that it represented his blood poured out to bring a new covenant between God and his people.

Ask:

- Why do you think Jesus chose this moment, during the Passover meal, to explain the meaning of his death?
- What does the language of something being ‘given’ and ‘poured out’ suggest about the way Jesus understands what is about to happen?

Say:

Passover was the festival where God’s people remembered how God had rescued them from slavery in Egypt. By sharing this meal with his disciples, Jesus helps them understand that his own death will bring a new kind of rescue for God’s people. When he speaks about his body being ‘given’ and his blood ‘poured out’, Jesus is describing the sacrifice he is about to make. Even though the disciples may not fully understand yet, Jesus is showing them that his death will open a new covenant between God and his people.

The Garden of Gethsemane

Read:

³⁹ Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. ⁴⁰ On reaching the place, he said to them, ‘Pray that you will not fall into temptation.’ ⁴¹ He withdrew about a stone’s throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, ⁴² ‘Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.’ ⁴³ An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. ⁴⁴ And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

⁴⁵ When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. ⁴⁶ ‘Why are you sleeping?’ he asked them. ‘Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.’

– (Luke 22:39–46)

Ask:

- What does Jesus' prayer reveal about the tension he is experiencing?
- Why do you think Luke includes this moment before Jesus is arrested?

Say:

Here we see the cost of Jesus' sacrifice. He is honest about the suffering ahead, yet he still chooses to trust his Father's will. Meanwhile the disciples are unable to stay awake long enough to support him in prayer.

The Trials

Read:

¹³ Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, ¹⁴ and said to them, 'You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him. ¹⁵ Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death. ¹⁶ Therefore, I will punish him and then release him.'

— (Luke 23:13-16)

Say:

Instead of releasing Jesus, the crowd demanded that a man named Barabbas, guilty of inciting a rebellion, should be set free.

Ask:

- Why does Luke emphasise that Jesus is innocent throughout the trial?
- What do we learn about Jesus from the fact that the guilty man goes free while the innocent man is condemned?

Say:

Jesus became the innocent sacrifice in place of those who should have received the punishment. He was then taken outside the city and crucified alongside two criminals.

The Crucifixion

Read:

³³ When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals - one on his right, the other on his left. ³⁴ Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.' And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

— (Luke 23:33-34)

Ask:

- What stands out to you about Jesus' response to the people who are crucifying him?
- What does this moment reveal about the nature of Jesus' sacrifice?

Say:

Even as he suffered, Jesus offered mercy and forgiveness. His sacrifice revealed the depth of God's love for his people. After Jesus died, Joseph of Arimathea asked for his body and laid it in a tomb. Some of the women who had followed Jesus watched carefully where Jesus had been placed so they could return later with spices to honour him.

Ask:

If you had been one of Jesus' followers that day, what do you think you might have been feeling as his body was placed in the tomb?

The Empty Tomb

Say:

Early on the first day of the week, the women returned to the tomb with the spices they had prepared, expecting to honour Jesus' body. What they found surprised and frightened them.

Read:

² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. ⁵ In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead?' ⁶ He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ⁷ "The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again." ⁸ Then they remembered his words.

– (Luke 24:2-8)

Ask:

– What do you think the angels meant when they said, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead?'

Say:

The women came expecting to mourn, but instead they discovered that the tomb was empty. Jesus had been raised from the dead. The sacrifice that seemed to end in death had become the beginning of new life.

 **Bridge****Ask:**

What do these events show us about the kind of king Jesus really is?

Sound Check

Leader's notes:

In this Sound Check activity the young people reflect on the brokenness in the world and the sacrifice of Jesus by creating a paper cross. They then rearrange the torn pieces to form a new shape, symbolising the hope and new life revealed through the resurrection.

Give each young person a sheet of paper and a felt-tip pen.

Say:

Earlier we saw how Jesus willingly gave his life for others. The cross shows the cost of that sacrifice, but the empty tomb reminds us that death was not the end of the story.

Leader's notes:

Ask the young people to write a few words or draw pictures on their paper that represent brokenness in the world or things that people struggle with.

Examples:

- fear
- injustice
- suffering
- guilt
- loneliness
- pain

Once they have filled their page with ideas, invite them to tear their paper to form the shape of a cross.

Say:

The cross reminds us that Jesus stepped into a broken world and gave his life for others.

Leader's notes:

Ask the young people to rearrange the torn pieces into a new shape, such as a heart or another symbol of hope. They can stick both the cross and the new shape on to another piece of paper and share what they have created.

Say:

The resurrection shows us that Jesus' sacrifice was not the end of the story. What looked like defeat became the beginning of new life.

Bridge

Ask:

What does the cross show us about how Jesus chose to respond to the brokenness in our world?

Selah

Say:

We have walked through the events of the first Easter and seen the cost of Jesus' sacrifice. As you watch the clip, take a moment to reflect on what the sacrifice of Jesus means to you personally.

Watch:

Natalie Grant – Films and Music Inspired by The Story 'Alive' (5:04)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Om3mm2du--k

Leader's notes:

Invite the young people to write a short prayer of thanksgiving on the paper they created during the Sound Check activity, thanking Jesus for his sacrifice and the new life made possible through his resurrection. You may wish to invite volunteers to share their prayers, or close the session by praying on behalf of the group.

Coda

Say:

In a piece of music, the coda brings the different aspects of the melody, harmonies and bassline to a conclusion. It pulls together the different themes and often, but not always, brings resolution to a piece of music.

Ask:

- As you reflect on everything you have learned today, what is your coda?
- What is the one thing you will take away from this session about the sacrifice Jesus made for us?

Leader's notes:

Give the young people a moment to think about your question and briefly share their coda with the group before the session comes to an end.

