

# March 22 Elementary

**Bible Passage:** Leviticus / Rules for Sacrifice

**Story Point:** God is holy and requires a sacrifice for sin.

**Memory Verse:** “The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father’s God, and I will exalt him.” Exodus 15:2 ESV

**Big Picture Question:** What is worship? Worship is celebrating the greatness of God.

**Christ Connection:** *The sacrifices God required of His people were a hint of what God was going to do to forgive sinners. We no longer need to offer sacrifices because we trust in Jesus. Jesus offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice that takes away our sin once and for all.*

## **\* BIBLE STUDY TIPS FOR PARENTS:**

The tabernacle was complete. God now had a place where His glory could dwell without causing the Israelites to fear death. God had given His people laws from the mountain, and He gave them more rules for living and worshiping Him in the tabernacle. These rules are recorded in the Book of Leviticus. The reasoning behind Leviticus can be found in Leviticus 19:2: “Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.”

In Leviticus 17:11, God set apart the blood of a creature as the means for making atonement. This answers the question, “Why did Jesus have to die?” God’s requirement for the forgiveness of sins was the shedding of blood: “According to the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Heb. 9:22).

It is important to note a New Testament revelation about the sin offering. Hebrews 10:4 says, “It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.” Then why did God require people to make sacrifices? The institution of a sacrifice was to point to something greater—the ultimate sacrifice God would make by sending His own Son, Jesus Christ, to pay for the sins of the world once and for all. (See Eph. 1:7; Rom 5:9.)

The Book of Leviticus contains many rules for the Israelite people, but we do not obey all the rules in Leviticus today because we trust Jesus, who obeyed the law perfectly for us.

Few—if any!—of the kids will be familiar with the Book of Leviticus. Use this session as an opportunity to emphasize God’s holiness and His requirement of a blood sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. Lead them to treasure Jesus as the perfect and final sacrifice “who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29).

## **\*STORY:**

**SAY •** Remember how God formed the nation of Israel and brought them out of Egypt? After the Israelites left Egypt, they traveled toward the promised land. God was with the people, and He met with Moses on Mount Sinai to make a covenant with Israel. God chose Israel to be His special people, and He planned to bring His Son, Jesus, into the world through their descendants. Sadly, the Israelites did not obey God’s commands. But God loved them and showed them mercy. He wanted to be with them. Last week we heard that **God told His people how to build the tabernacle where He would dwell with them.**

When Moses was on Mount Sinai, God also gave him instructions about how the Israelites should worship and live. These instructions are found in the Book of Leviticus.

Use the Bible storytelling tips below to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video, or both!

### **Rules for Sacrifice: *Leviticus***

When Moses was with God on Mount Sinai, God gave him many laws. These laws showed the people what it looks like to live a holy life. **God is holy and cannot be around sin, but the Israelites could not keep God's laws perfectly. So God met with Moses in the tabernacle. He gave the people rules about how to live, how to worship God, and what to do when they sinned.**

**First, God gave rules about offerings. Offerings are gifts people give to God,** such as money or jewelry. Sometimes offerings included animals. People could also give grain and bread as offerings. **Different types of offerings were needed at different times.** When people wanted to praise God, they gave burnt offerings. When they wanted to say they were sorry for sin, they gave a sin offering.

**God also gave rules about the priests. Priests made the sacrifices that God commanded. The priests took care of the tabernacle, and they taught the people God's rules for living holy lives.** Aaron and his sons served as the priests. God gave them rules about how to offer sacrifices.

**God told Moses about a special day that would happen once a year. It was called the Day of Atonement.** *Atonement* means making right what has been wrong. The people needed to atone for their sin to make their relationship with God right again.

**On the Day of Atonement, the high priest went into the most holy place, a very special room in the tabernacle, to offer sacrifices for the sins of his family and for all the people.** He killed one goat as a sin offering. The high priest laid his hands on a second goat's head to transfer the sins of the people to the goat. This goat was the scapegoat. Then the goat was led away into the wilderness as a picture of the people's sins being removed.

**God said, "On that day your sin will be paid for. You will be made pure and clean. You will be clean from all of your sins in My sight."**

God also gave the Israelites rules about how they should live. He said, "Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy." God told the people what it is to be holy. God said, "Do not tell lies. Do not cheat. Love your neighbor as you love yourself. Obey My rules."

### **CLOSER:**

**SAY** • As God's chosen people, the Israelites needed to know how to live in a way that pleased God. So God gave them rules and laws as clear guides to know how to worship Him and to know right from wrong.

But God also knew they wouldn't follow all these rules all the time. **God is holy and requires a sacrifice for sin.** So God made a way for Israel's relationship with God to be made right. The people offered sacrifices to God to say they were sorry.

God even set aside a special day each year to clear away the sins of all the people. That was the Day of Atonement, when the high priest went into the most holy place of the tabernacle to offer sacrifices. This special day every year reminded the people that they needed a better sacrifice that would take away their sins once and for all.

Lots of other rules in Leviticus helped the people know how to live in peace with one another and respect one another. I'm sure some people back then didn't like the rules, just like some people today don't like the rules. But when we remember that rules exist to help us, it's easier to obey them.

### **\*Christ Connection:**

***Christ Connection:** The sacrifices God required of His people were a hint of what God was going to do to forgive sinners. We no longer need to offer sacrifices because we trust in Jesus. Jesus offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice that takes away our sin once and for all.*

**SAY** • All those animal sacrifices seem strange to us today, but they were a constant reminder to the Israelites that God is holy and He wanted them to live holy lives. When they didn't, forgiveness could only come through the shedding of blood. The sacrifices were a picture of what God was going to do in the future to forgive His people.

We no longer need to offer sacrifices because we trust in Jesus. Jesus offered His blood as the perfect sacrifice that takes away our sins once and for all.

### **\*GOSPEL PLAN:**

#### **Tech: Gospel Slide**

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means "good news." It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

**God rules.** Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

**We sinned.** Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)

**God provided.** Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

**Jesus gives.** Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.

**We respond.** Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

### **\*PRAYER**

**SAY** • God, thank You for Your Word. We read about the sacrifices made in the Old Testament and praise You for sending Jesus. He died and rose again to take away our sin once and for all. Amen.

### **\*KEY PASSAGE / MEMORY VERSE:**

**"The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him." Exodus 15:2 ESV**

**SAY** • Our key passage is such a good reminder for us that God is our strength and our song. We can praise and exalt Him together.

### **\*DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

#### **COMPREHENSION:**

- What could God's people give to Him as offerings? (*animals or grain, Lev. 1–3*)
- Who made the sacrifices that God commanded? (*the priests, Lev. 1-9*)
- What were offerings used for? (*praising God or dealing with sin, Lev. 1–4*)
- What kind of offering did people give when they wanted to say they were sorry for their sin? (*a sin offering, Lev. 4-5*)
- On what day each year did the High Priest go into the most holy place? (*the Day of Atonement, Lev. 16*)
- What purpose did the two goats serve on the Day of Atonement? (*One was killed for the people's sin, the other sent into the wilderness to represent the sin being carried away; Lev. 16*)

#### **YOUNGER:**

Help kids use the table of contents in their Bibles to find Leviticus. Explain that Leviticus is the third book in the Bible, and part of the Law—the first five books of the Old Testament.

Ask the following questions:

- Why was the Day of Atonement so important? *Guide kids to discuss the Israelites' need to be made right with God. Talk about their sin and how it separated them from God. Remind them that the Day of Atonement was God's way of dealing with sin before Jesus came.*

- Why don't we still have a Day of Atonement? *Talk about what Jesus accomplished on the cross. Remind them that His death was the one, perfect sacrifice to pay for sin forever. Remind the kids that we no longer need a scapegoat. When we trust in Jesus, He forgives us and removes our sin.*
- How are the offerings Christians give similar to the offerings the Israelites gave? How are they different? *Guide kids to discuss that Christians can still give resources—money, food, clothing, time, talents, and so forth—as a way to serve the church and glorify God. Discuss the fact that we no longer need to give sin offerings, because Jesus died for our sins.*

**Say** • **God is holy and requires a sacrifice for sin.** Before Jesus, people had to kill animals to deal with their sin. Now, if we trust in Jesus' perfect sacrifice, God forgives our sin and makes us new.

**OLDER:**

Open your Bible to Leviticus 1–5. Encourage them to look through the headings and identify how many different types of offerings are listed. (*burnt offering, grain offering, fellowship offering, sin offering, guilt offering*)

**Say** • In addition to specific offerings, God gave specific times for feasts and other sacred days in the books of Exodus and Leviticus. Many of those days required the people to rest. God wanted them to recognize that He would provide for them as long as they worshiped Him. He required the Israelites to rest and remember all that He had already done for them.

Show an Old Testament Mediterranean Map and review the regions where the Israelites traveled, including Egypt, the Red Sea, and Mount Sinai. Then ask the following questions:

- Why did God require animals to be sacrificed? *Help kids recognize that sacrifice goes all the way back to the first sin of Adam and Eve. When God made clothes to cover them (and their sin), He used animal skins. Animals were sacrificed to cover sin. (Option: Read Heb. 9:22.)*
- Sacrifices helped the people remember their sin and that God is holy. Why was that not enough? *Help kids recognize the sacrifices didn't completely take away the sin problem. People had to offer them again and again. It was never enough. (Option: Read Heb. 10:4.)*
- Why do we not need to offer animal sacrifices today? *Help kids recognize that Jesus was the perfect sacrifice, once and for all. He took our punishment on the cross, and we have forgiveness through His blood. (Option: Read Heb. 10:10.)*

**Say** • God knew all the sins we would ever commit, and sent Jesus to take care of all of them. Romans 5:8 says, "God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

**\*ACTIVITIES:** (providing additional options for you to choose from)

### **\*WILLING TO SACRIFICE**

**Say:** “Most things of value are not earned without some sort of sacrifice. Let’s see what you might be willing to sacrifice to get what you want.”

Ask kids if they would be willing to sacrifice...

1. Watching TV for practicing to be the best player on the team?
2. Eating sweets to be a faster runner?
3. Hanging with your friends to study and make a good grade on a test?
4. Sleeping in to do chores and earn money for something you wanted to buy?
5. Make up new ones based on the kids...

**Say:** “It’s not always easy to make a sacrifice. It often takes hard work, dedication and can be a difficult decision to make. In today’s lesson, we’re going to learn about some of the sacrifices the Israelites made so they could worship God as a holy God.

### **\*SET THINGS RIGHT**

Ask kids to close their eyes. Now, move one object in the room from it’s usual place to somewhere more conspicuous and obviously out of place. Then have them open their eyes and find the object out of place. Then encourage them to “make it right” by returning it to where it belongs. Continue playing, getting more difficult as you go.

**Say:** “It was obvious that something in the room wasn’t right. When we have sin in our lives, we are not right with God or one another. In the Old Testament, before Jesus came, people had to follow the rules for sacrifice that God gave them. People could not obey God perfectly and had to offer sacrifices to cover their sin. But God sent Jesus to live a perfect life and die the death we deserve. Jesus was our perfect sacrifice to pay for sin. When we believe in Jesus, God forgives our sin and removes it from us. We don’t have to offer new sacrifices because Jesus is enough. This is the good news worth telling the world about!

### **\*GUESS THE PRICE**

Bring out various grocery items or use a grocery store flyer and cover the prices. Ask kids to guess the price of different items. You can give them clues of “higher” or “lower” until they guess the price (or close to it!) Then discuss the price of sin.

**Say:** “God is holy and requires a sacrifice for sin. The Bible teaches us that the fair payment of our sin is death. In the Old Testament, people had to offer animal sacrifices to cover their sin. God provided the rules for sacrifice because He is merciful. He wanted His people to be with Him.

God showed His incredible mercy again, in an even bigger way, when He sent Jesus to live a perfect life and die on the cross. Jesus’ death completely paid for our sin. We don’t need to offer more sacrifices because Jesus’ sacrifice is perfect.