

JESUS-CENTERED LIFE

Week 6: Jesus, the Slaughtered Lamb

This includes:

1. Leader Preparation
2. Lesson Guide

1. LEADER PREPARATION

LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson you'll help your teenagers explore Jesus through a particular "name" he's given in Scripture—the slaughtered Lamb. Through three different "explorations"—a painting, a film clip, and a prayer experience—students will focus on Jesus' *willing* sacrifice, and come to see him in a way they never have before.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. WHAT: We can find great significance behind one of the names of Jesus given in Scripture—the slaughtered Lamb.
2. WHY: Often we think Jesus was killed by the Jewish and Roman authorities, but the truth is he gave up his life for us, willingly.
3. HOW: Your students will discover, through three "explorations," the deep meaning behind Jesus as the slaughtered Lamb.

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 53:7-8

SECONDARY SCRIPTURES

Matthew 12:8-16; 27:11-26; John 1:29; 11:50; 18:19-24; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Revelation 5:2, 6; 7:17

TEACHING PREP

The short overview below is designed to help you prepare for your lesson. While you may not want to convey this information word-for-word with your teenagers, you'll definitely want to refer to it as you lead.

Read Isaiah 53:7-8.

Jesus' names symbolize his nature—the essence of who he is. And his names also represent his "work"—his true mission from God. For example, "Rabbi" describes Jesus' nature of truth and his work of teaching. Today we'll explore what "Lamb of God"



says about Jesus' nature and his work. Here are a few other places in the Bible that describe Jesus as a lamb:

- John 1:29: *The next day John [the Baptist] saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"*
- 1 Peter 1:18-19: *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*
- Revelation 5, 7 (excerpts): In the vision John records in the book of Revelation, he hears a mighty angel ask, *"Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?"* (5:2). He goes on to observe: *Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders* (5:6). And then he ends this portion of his vision with: *"For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. 'And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes' "* (7:17).

In the early part of Jesus' ministry, he reveals who he is, but consciously does things to delay his arrest and execution. In John 8:20-21, Jesus reveals his true identity. But the authorities don't seize him. This happens many times on his journey to a turning point in his public ministry. In the middle of that journey, he tells his followers that he's going where "you cannot come." Where is Jesus going that we can't come? To the altar to be slaughtered. He's the Lamb—alone in this mission. This explains his many betrayals, his loneliness in Gethsemane, and his aloneness on the cross. We aren't asked to go where Jesus goes because we can't—*only* the Lamb can go where Jesus is going.

In Matthew 12:8-16, Jesus heals a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath. He appears to do this to purposely antagonize the powerful Jewish leaders of Jerusalem. Only when Jesus enters Jerusalem—the seat of political power—does he become a real threat. This is the start of his downward journey to the cross. Now Jesus intentionally does things to get himself killed. In John 11:50, the high priest Caiaphas hatches the death plot against Jesus. Caiaphas says: *"It's expedient for you that one man die for the people"* (NASB). And later, in John 18:19-24, Jesus seals his own death by purposely provoking the high priest. Finally, in Matthew 27:11-26, Pilate tries hard to release Jesus, but Jesus outsmarts him and makes sure he will be executed. Jesus didn't come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it. He didn't come to abolish the brutal system of animal sacrifice; he came to place the once-and-final sacrifice on the altar.



THE BEFORE & AFTER [OPTIONAL]

Text Message Questions

We've provided a couple of different text message questions to send out to your students prior to your meeting. Feel free to use one or both of the questions below. As with the rest of the curriculum, edit these questions to fit the needs of your ministry.

- Tired of just talking about Jesus? Ready to experience him? Come to small group.
- Is the “Lamb of God” like a cuddly stuffed animal, or is he something wholly different? Come to small group for an adventure you’ll never forget.

Parent Email

We've provided you with an email below that you can send to your parents following the lesson. Our hope is to encourage parents to continue the conversation at home. Feel free to edit and customize the email to fit your ministry needs.

Dear parents,

We've finished our six-week study that focused on answering the question Jesus asked his disciples: “Who do you say that I am?” In this final lesson, we explored Jesus' heart and character through a particular “name” he's given in Scripture—the slaughtered Lamb. Through three different “explorations”—a painting, a film clip, and a prayer experience—students focused on Jesus' willing sacrifice and came to see him in a way they never had before.

As you go throughout the week, help reinforce this lesson in your teenager's life by discussing this question as you have the opportunity:

- How have these three “explorations” of Jesus as the slaughtered Lamb changed or deepened the way you understand or see Jesus?

Thanks for all your prayers for our small group ministry. Have an awesome week!



JESUS-CENTERED LIFE

Week 6:
Jesus, the Slaughtered Lamb

2. LESSON GUIDE

GETTING THINGS STARTED [OPTIONAL]

Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, and then jump into today's lesson.



If you came up with an opening activity, movie clip, or game that worked well with your group, and you'd like to share it with other youth workers, please email us at ideas@simplyyouthministry.com.

TEACHING GUIDE



The goal of the Teaching Points is to help students capture the essence of each lesson with more discussion and less lecture-style teaching. The main points we have chosen are (1) Jesus is like a slaughtered lamb, (2) Jesus is like Obi-Wan Kenobi, and (3) Jesus is revealed in personal parables.



Remember: All throughout these lessons, it's up to you to choose (1) how many questions you use, and (2) the wording of the main points—keep ours, or change the wording to make it clearer for your audience.

Read Isaiah 53:7-8 together as a group. Consider dividing verses among your students so everyone has a chance to read.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *We can describe Jesus in so many ways. It's amazing how many names he's been given in Scripture. "Lamb of God" is one of his names, and he's also been called "The lion of the tribe of Judah."*

ASK:

- *What other names of Jesus can you remember?* [Add these, if students don't mention them—Messiah, Master, Teacher, Christ, Son of God, Rabbi, Prophet.]

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Jesus' names symbolize his nature—the essence of who he is. And his names also represent his "work"—his true mission from God. For*



example, “Rabbi” describes Jesus’ nature of truth and his work of teaching. Today we’ll explore what “Lamb of God” says about Jesus’ nature and his work. In addition to Isaiah 53, let’s look at a few places in the Bible that describe Jesus as a lamb:

- *John 1:29*: The next day John [the Baptist] saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”
- *1 Peter 1:18-19*: For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.
- *Revelation 5–7 (excerpts)*: In the vision John records in the book of Revelation, he hears a mighty angel ask, “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?” (5:2). He goes on to observe: Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders (5:6). And then he ends this portion of his vision with: “For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. ‘And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes’ (7:17).

1. Jesus is like a slaughtered lamb

Print copies of *Agnus Dei* by Francisco Zurbarán—just go to <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/picture/2012/apr/02/francisco-de-zurbaran-agnus-dei> or simply search Google Images for “Agnus Dei by the artist Zurbarán.” If possible, print on a color printer. Give each student a copy of the painting.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *This lesson will be focused on three adventurous experiments in observation. You’ll use art, film, and parables as jumping-off points to experience Jesus as the “slaughtered Lamb.” By the way, it’s important not to back away from the word slaughtered, even though it’s a strong word. Let’s start by focusing on the painting Agnus Dei by the artist Francisco Zurbarán. He painted this portrait of Jesus—using the metaphor of the slaughtered lamb that’s in Bible—in the early 1600s. The original now hangs in the Museo Del Prado in Madrid. For the next five minutes, simply stare at the print. That’s right—five straight minutes of staring at the painting. I realize this will be an uncomfortably long time, but just play with this experience by following my directions. Resist the urge to look away or to look at others. Simply ask God to give you insight into Jesus as you look at the painting. As you study the painting, think about these three questions:*



ASK:

- What do you notice about the lamb, as a metaphor for Jesus?
- What supports the way you see Jesus?
- What challenges the way you see Jesus?

After five minutes, **ASK:**

- Tell about at least one thing you learned from your insights into the painting.

2. Jesus is like Obi-Wan Kenobi

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: Scenes from films can function like metaphors, helping us understand God and the Christian life. For example, let's watch the "death scene" of Obi-Wan Kenobi from the original Star Wars film to discover clues to Jesus as the slaughtered lamb. For the few who've never seen this movie, or in case you've forgotten the story, this scene shows the old master "Jedi Knight" Obi-Wan Kenobi battling with Darth Vader, the personification of evil. Obi-Wan is the spiritual leader of the rebel movement fighting against the evil empire. In this scene, Obi-Wan looks for Darth Vader to fight him while his young friends in the rebellion try to rescue Princess Leia from imprisonment and torture.

EXPLORATION: Play the "death scene" of Obi-Wan Kenobi—1:29:53 to 1:32:54 on the DVD of the original *Star Wars* movie, also known as *Star Wars: Episode IV*. After the clip, have kids get with a partner, then take five minutes or so to answer these questions:

ASK:

- What do you notice about Obi-Wan Kenobi, as a metaphor for Jesus?
- What supports the way you see Jesus?
- What challenges the way you see Jesus?

After five minutes, **ASK:**

- Tell about at least one thing you learned from your insights into the Star Wars scene.



3. Jesus is revealed in personal parables

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Next we'll do something that's adventurous and out-of-the-norm. For the next five minutes you can go anywhere you want, as long as it's not too far from our meeting area. Wander until something captures your eye or ear. This might be as simple as noticing what draws your attention as you walk—a sound, a sight, or anything. As soon as you notice something, stop and simply ask God to show you if he's offering you a “parable” or “metaphor” that gives insight into Jesus as the slaughtered Lamb. It's simple—pause when your eye or ear catches something, anything, and ask God if there is an insight into Jesus as the slaughtered Lamb locked up in that thing. In Romans 1 Paul says God has implanted truths about his character and personality in his creation—we just have to pay attention. You might find something or not—don't worry about it. This isn't a test. We're just playing. Yet don't rush the process. If you notice something, wait in silence long enough to give yourself a chance to see and God a chance to reveal a parable or metaphor of Jesus as the slaughtered Lamb. Just wait on God. See you in five minutes—I'll call you back when it's time.*

ASK:

- *What did you notice, and how might it be a parable or metaphor for the slaughtered Lamb?*

It's likely that at least one person in your group will come back with a parable or metaphor. But if no one does, or if many people didn't sense anything on their walk, back up your emphasis about “playing” with this. This isn't some kind of a test of faith—it's adventuring with God. Affirm your students' willingness to open themselves, and mention that it sometimes takes time to get used to interacting with God this way. It would be a good idea to try this experience yourself—either during the study or prior to it. That way, you can offer your own experience, and your own parable, as an example here. For those who don't come back with a parable, you can still explore what the experience was like for them. Sometimes people actually find a parable but don't recognize it at the time.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION [OPTIONAL]

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Jesus gave up his life of his own will. No one took it from him. Up until a specific point in his ministry, Jesus was gathering crowds and actively trying to avoid getting into trouble with the Jewish and Roman authorities.*



In the early part of Jesus' ministry, he reveals who he is but consciously does things to delay his arrest and execution. In John 8:20-21, Jesus reveals his true identity. But the authorities don't seize him. This happens many times on his journey to a turning point in his public ministry, when he tells his followers that he's going where "you cannot come." Where is Jesus going that we can't come? To the altar to be slaughtered. He's the Lamb—alone in this mission. This explains his many betrayals, his loneliness in Gethsemane, and his aloneness on the cross. We aren't asked to go where Jesus goes because we can't—only the Lamb can go where Jesus is going. Jesus didn't come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it. He didn't come to abolish the brutal system of animal sacrifice; he came to place the once-and-final sacrifice on the altar.

ASK:

- *How have these three "explorations" of Jesus as the slaughtered Lamb changed or deepened the way you understand or see Jesus?*

SUMMARY

End your lesson here. Provide your teenagers with a quick summary or take-home challenge based on (1) the content of this lesson, (2) the dialogue that took place during the lesson, (3) your understanding of the issues and struggles your teenagers are facing, and (4) the big picture of your youth ministry and what your leadership team wants accomplished with the teaching and discussion time.



**LEADER
TIP**

FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]

Encourage and/or challenge your teenagers to memorize the verse below.

He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth (Isaiah 53:7).



**LEADER
TIP**

