



1. Materials

For this session each student will need—

- the Session 11 Scripture sheet
- the student journal page for Session 11
- his or her own Bible, a pen, and a notebook

You'll also need—

- a whiteboard and markers
- a pack of colored pencils (at least two colors per student)
- images of famous or local bridges (printed or projected)
- optional: grape juice, bread, small cups, and a basket or plate for communion (See the Optional Close in Wrapping It Up.)

2. Session Intro

GOALS OF SESSION 11

As students experience this session, they will—

- examine the details of Jesus' trial and crucifixion.
- gain understanding of Jesus as the sacrificial Lamb of God.
- be challenged to make Jesus' sacrifice a motivation for living life in a different way.

PRAYER

Once the group has gathered, open in prayer. Pray that students can put aside the stress of the day in order to be moved by the most sacred event of all time—Jesus' death on the cross.

OPEN

Name That Bridge

Begin with a game on famous bridges. Gather images of the bridges noted below or a few bridges in your area. You can either print or project the images. Divide the group into two or more teams. As you show each image, give a point to the team that identifies it first. Feel free to give a few "fun facts" you might learn in your search about each bridge after the students name it. (Fun-fact examples: The London Tower Bridge took more than eight years to construct. In 1993, seven people bungee jumped off the New River Gorge Bridge in a cage; when it came to rest, a jumper bungee jumped from the cage. The Roebling Bridge in Cincinnati served as the prototype for the Brooklyn Bridge in New York City. People first envisioned the Mackinac Bridge in the 1880s, but it didn't open for traffic until the 1950s.)

- London Tower Bridge
- Brooklyn Bridge
- Roebling Bridge
- Sydney Harbor Bridge
- Sunshine Skyway Bridge
- George Washington Bridge
- Mackinac Bridge

- New River Gorge Bridge
- Golden Gate Bridge

Transition into the study with the following questions. Explain that ever since Adam and Eve sinned, a gap has separated man and God. And God has been on a quest to bridge that gap. Ask—

What are some things God has used throughout history to bridge the gap between us and him?

- He used offerings (Abel, Noah).
- He used a rainbow (Noah).
- He used the Ten Commandments, written on stone (i.e., the “old covenant” or Law).
- He used animal sacrifices (Moses, Israel).
- He has used the Bible.

How does God bridge that gap for us today?

It’s an obvious question, but get the answer on record: Jesus.

What connections or similarities do you see between Jesus and the other “bridges” God has used?

- Jesus is the perfect offering.
- The rainbow was a promise that God would never destroy mankind by a flood; Jesus promised that we’ll never be destroyed if we believe in him.
- Jesus was the initiator of a “new covenant” written on hearts.
- Jesus’ blood, which came from the ultimate sacrifice of death, cleanses us from sin.

3. Pre-Dig

First Blood

Explain that the passage the group will look at first shows the culmination of God’s grand, eternal plan to redeem a sinful world. The concept of offering his own Son as a sacrifice for sinful people isn’t something that had just occurred to God. He’d been dropping hints about this plan for centuries.

To help them get the maximum impact as they study Jesus’ crucifixion, give them a quick refresher on God’s grand plan:

- **More than any other Gospel writer, John portrays Jesus as the Lamb of God.**
- **John’s Jewish readers would have easily understood the significance of this title—as your group will too in just a few minutes.**

Ask students to read Exodus 12:1-15 from their Bibles. As they read, tell your students—

- 1. Write down everything you learn about the lamb in the space provided on your journal pages.**
- 2. Write down everything you learn about blood, along with everything the blood would do.**

When most have finished (it’s okay if some haven’t), ask what they learned about the lamb and record it on the whiteboard. As you draw out the main points of the passage, the board will begin to look something like this:

The Lamb

- There was one lamb for each household (v. 3).
- The lamb was taken on the 10th day of the first month of the year (v. 2-3).
- The lamb was a year-old male without defect (v. 5).
- The lamb was taken care of until the 14th day (v. 6).
- The lamb was slaughtered at twilight (v. 6).
- Its blood was to be put on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses (v. 7).



After you've written the main facts on the whiteboard, guide the discussion, asking—

How do you think the lamb felt about this process?

Elicit the observation that the lamb was completely innocent—in fact, it was a perfect lamb that had done nothing wrong.

How long did they keep the lamb before sacrificing it?

Let the group figure this out. They should come up with four days. Point out that this was enough time to get attached to the lamb, just like we get attached to our pets today.

What did God say he would do when he saw the blood on the houses?

He would “pass over” the house, and no destructive plague would touch it. He would not permit the destroyer to enter the house and strike the people down.

(Ask students to record the answer to this question in the space provided on their journal pages. They'll refer to this info in another exercise.)

So what role, in essence, did the blood of the lamb play in their lives?

It saved them. It meant the difference between death and life!

How significant do you think it was that Jesus was killed at the exact time of the Passover feast?

The Passover (God's idea) foreshadowed Jesus' death perfectly—proving that God had this plan in mind centuries before it ever happened.

4. Digging In

Power-Play Ploy

Fast-forward roughly 1,475 years³. Share with your group that Jesus' sacrifice began with a trial that for all practical purposes wasn't a trial, but a power play between men desperate for control. The scene they're about to study will be familiar to those who've grown up in the church. But encourage your group to read John 18:28–19:16 from their Scripture sheets as if they're the very first readers of John's Gospel. Have your students—

- 1. Mark with colored pencils everything the Jewish leaders did to coerce Pilate into sentencing Jesus to death.**
- 2. In another color, mark everything Pilate said or did to try to avoid sentencing Jesus.**

After most have finished, discuss this scene between Pilate and the Jewish leaders.

What ploys did the Jewish leaders use to coerce Pilate into crucifying Jesus?

-First they tried to get Pilate to grant them a favor, no questions asked.

-Then they questioned Pilate's loyalty to Caesar because he was being lenient toward someone who claimed to be king (thus opposing Caesar).

-Their declaration that they had no king but Caesar had to have been a manipulative ploy; it went against everything the Jews believed about God.

What were the Jewish leaders willing to give up in order to have Jesus executed?

They did the very thing they falsely accused Jesus of doing: They blasphemed God by declaring they had no king but Caesar.

³ Biblical scholars vary on dates. The dates we've used here are based on those used in *The International Inductive Study Bible* (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1992).

5. Digging Deeper

“Corrupt and Conniving” Meets “Undefined and Spotless”

Now ask students to read on their own John 19:1-37 using their Scripture sheets. (They’ve already read part of it, so urge them to get even more out of the second read.) Before they get going, give these instructions:

Picture yourself just a few feet away from Jesus during the events you’re about to read. As you read the passage, circle every phrase that describes an action done to Jesus’ physical body, such as any act that would have drawn blood.

Remind them that when they read this passage, they’re witnessing the event in history that makes it possible for them to be freed from their sins and thus connected to God. Tell them to remember that Jesus had *each one of them* in mind while this action was taking place.

When most have finished, ask them to share, in order, every action done to Jesus’ body. As you record their observations on the whiteboard, your list will look something like this:

What They Did to Jesus

- They flogged him (v. 1).
- They put a crown of thorns on his head (v. 2).
- They clothed him in a purple robe (v. 2).
- They struck him in the face (v. 3).
- They crucified him (v. 18).
- They gave him a sponge of wine vinegar, supposedly to quench his thirst (v. 29).
- They pierced his side with a spear (v. 34).

6. Taking It Inward



Broken and Spilled

After compiling this list, ask the group what else they observed in this scene. Then discuss:

What parallels do you see between the sacrifice of the Passover lamb and Jesus’ death?

Elicit that in both cases, blood was shed. Also, neither the lamb nor Jesus had done anything wrong. Both were innocent and without defect.

Explain that the group members will experience the next set of Scriptures in solitude. Before they disperse, tell your students—

- 1. Find places where you can get alone with God.**
- 2. You’ll need your Bibles, journal pages, and pens.**
- 3. Follow the instructions under Taking It Inward, which will tell you much more about the sacrifice Jesus made as the Lamb of God. I won’t force you to share your answers, so feel free to respond honestly.**

We've noted the Scripture references and observations below for your reference.

John 1:29	1 Peter 1:18-21	Revelation 5:9-13
<i>John the Baptist called Jesus "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."</i>	<i>-Jesus was a lamb without blemish or defect. -His precious blood redeemed us from an empty way of life.</i>	<i>-The Lamb was slain. -With his blood he purchased men for God from every tribe, language, people, and nation. -The Lamb is worthy of power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and praise.</i>

7. Wrapping It Up

Name Drop

After a few minutes, call the group back together. Ask any volunteers to share what they experienced in their personal study of Jesus' sacrifice. You may want to prompt the discussion with these questions:

What did you write in response to the knowledge that a drop of Jesus' blood had your name on it?

How did you complete the sentence:

"Because Jesus' sacrifice has cleansed me and bridged the gap between God and me, I will..."

On their journal pages, students were encouraged to consider options such as an attitude of the heart that needs to change, or maybe an action to take such as asking someone for forgiveness or helping an elderly person with a task.

Ask students to discuss whether they agree or disagree with this statement:

Our gratitude for Jesus' sacrifice directly impacts our lifestyle, attitudes, actions, and thoughts. If Jesus isn't noticeably present in these aspects of our lives, we are conveying that we aren't grateful for what Jesus has done.

Close by praying that your students will experience what it means to have Jesus' blood deliver them from an empty way of life.

OPTIONAL CLOSE: One of the best ways for your group to focus on Jesus' broken body and blood is to take the Lord's Supper together. In Session 5 we suggested communion as a way to emphasize the intimacy Jesus taught in John 6: eating his flesh and drinking his blood. Communion here can take on the added meaning of expressing gratitude for Jesus' sacrifice. If you choose to close the session this way, be sure to have an area prepared with the elements for communion. This can be a time when students personalize the sacrifice Jesus made for them—the drop of blood with their name on it—and consider how their gratitude for this sacrifice can impact their everyday routine.