

UNIT 26 | SESSION 4

JESUS IS OUR PERFECT PRIEST

HEBREWS 7

KEY PASSAGE:

Hebrews 4:15

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

How is Jesus the perfect Priest? Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for sin, and He speaks to God the Father for us today.

CHRIST CONNECTION:

Jesus is the perfect Priest, the High Priest who interceded on behalf of the people by laying down His life to be a once-and-for-all sacrifice for sin. Everyone who trusts in Jesus has salvation from sin through His perfect life, death, and resurrection.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



LEADER Bible Study

It is difficult to comprehend the gospel’s richness without understanding Christ’s role as perfect priest. Because we do not live in the same religious and sacrificial system that the early church was so familiar with, we may struggle to savor the nuances of all this divine position entails.

Throughout the promises of the old covenant, priests were necessary to represent the people before God and make atonement for sin. However, because these priests were not sinless themselves, they could not fully and perfectly pay the price for the sins of their fellow man. For this reason, the greater, perfect Priest—Jesus—was needed, and only He could satisfy the wrath of God on our behalf.

Only Christ held the power of an indestructible life, having been crucified and raised again for all eternity. Whereas earthly priests could only serve for the duration of their lifetimes, Jesus holds this position forever, now seated at the right hand of God the Father. The promises of God through Jesus were perfected and completed through His eternal, all-encompassing sacrifice.

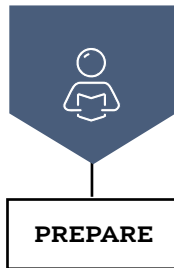
In Christ alone we find salvation and relationship with the Father. When we trust in Jesus by faith, we are made righteous and find peace with God; these are the promises

foreshadowed by Melchizedek, whose name means king of righteousness and of peace (Hebrews 7:2). Jesus, the perfect Son of God, is even greater than this priest who blessed Abraham and reminded him of the victory God granted him in battles before.

Explain to kids that in Jesus we find complete forgiveness and victory in the war against sin and death. He rose again that we would experience the promise of eternal life that only comes through faith in Him. No earthly priest was able to accomplish such a feat. Without His work on our behalf, we would remain condemned by the law. Through Jesus, we are held back no longer, fully alive and set free to love the Lord with all we are.

DOCTRINE TO KNOW

Christ as Priest: Jesus accomplishes the work of reconciling us to God. His perfect righteousness is presented to the Father for our justification, and He intercedes for us and prays for us to remain faithful.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- “Finish the Drawing” activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- dry erase board
- dry erase marker

Session Starter (Option 2)

- pennies
- cups, 1 per team



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- “Jesus Is Our Perfect Priest” video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- “Unit 26, Session 4” questions from kids video

Missions Moment

- map of the United States

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- “Gracious Father (Hebrews 4:15)” song
- worship song of your choice (optional)
- dry erase board
- dry erase marker



LOVE

Review & Bible skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set
- world map



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- water-filled bins, 1 per group
- scissors, 1 per group
- cardstock, 1 per group
- craft sticks, 10–12 per group
- empty water bottles, 2 per group

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- Big Picture Question Poster

Journal and Prayer

- Journal Page
- “Jesus Is the Better Priest” activity page



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “Have you ever worked really hard at something but it still wasn’t enough? Maybe you practiced an instrument but still played an incorrect note or you studied hard for a test and didn’t make the grade you wanted. Tell me about it.”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Finish the Drawing” on the activity page.

SAY “You had to finish drawing the picture to make it complete. Today, we will learn how the priests of the Old Testament could never completely offer a perfect sacrifice to take away sin. Let’s learn how Jesus is our perfect Priest.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: LIKE US IN EVERY WAY



Prompt kids to remember that Jesus is both fully God and fully man. Tell kids that as man Jesus is like us in every way except that He never sinned. Encourage kids to think of some ways Jesus is like us. Lead kids to think about Bible stories that help us understand Jesus’ humanity such as Jesus growing tired (John 4:6), Jesus weeping (John 11:35), and Jesus eating food (Matt. 26:26). Invite kids to write down their responses on a dry erase board.

Discuss how Jesus faced temptations like us (Luke 4) and understands our weakness toward sin. Remind kids that Jesus lived the perfect life that we cannot and that He did so in our place.

SAY “The whole Bible tells us the story of how people can never measure up to God’s perfect standard. So God put on flesh and became a man—Jesus. He became like us in every way, except sin. Today, we will learn how Jesus is our High Priest who gave His life to save us from sin.”

OPTION 2: NEVER FINISHED RELAY

Form kids into two teams and ask them to line up on one side of the room. Fill two cups with pennies equal to the number of kids on each team. Place the cups on the opposite side of the room. Direct each team to send a kid one at a time to take away one penny from the cup and race back to their team. When the last kid from each team has taken out the last penny, fill the cups with more pennies. Tell the teams their work is not complete because more pennies remain. Lead kids to race again to remove the pennies. Repeat a third time after the last penny from each cup has been taken away.

SAY “Each time you thought the last penny was removed from the cup, more pennies were added. This reminds me of the priests in the Old Testament whose job was never finished. They had to continually offer sacrifices for their sins and the sins of the people because everyone kept on sinning. Today, we will learn that Jesus came to be the perfect and final sacrifice to take away sin once and for all.”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “Hi, kids! My name is [your name], and I am so happy to see you! Every week we use our Bible to read a story from God’s Word together. Do you have your Bible? If so, please take it out. [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] Today, we will be reading from the book of Hebrews in the New Testament.

The book of Hebrews was written to encourage Jewish believers who faced persecution for following Jesus. Some believers thought it would be better and easier to go back to their Jewish rules and traditions. But the author of Hebrews wanted the people to know that Jesus is better than all the rules and traditions of Judaism, and that Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection was always God’s plan to bring salvation to the world. Today, we will learn that Jesus, our perfect Priest, gave His life once and for all to forever take away the sins of all who believe in Him.”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

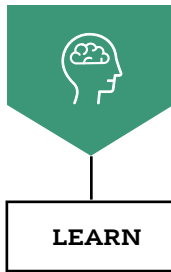
SAY “In the Old Testament, God established the office of priest to act a go-between or mediator between God and man. Priests, like Aaron, offered sacrifices for sins on behalf of the people. They stood in the gap and served to represent the people before God. Priests offered animal sacrifices to pay for the sins of the people. But the priests were sinful too. They had to offer sacrifices for their own sins. Everyone, including the priests, kept sinning over and over again. So the animal sacrifices had to be made over and over again as well. We need a perfect Priest who can take away sin forever.

How is Jesus the perfect Priest? Does anyone remember the answer? [Allow responses.] **Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for sin, and He speaks to God the Father for us today.** Jesus is the better perfect Priest who never sinned and whose blood takes away all sin. When we trust in Jesus, we are saved from sin and death.”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “Over the past three weeks, we have learned about the events that happened during Jesus’ last week before the crucifixion. First, He was anointed with oil by Mary. Then we learned about the last meal Jesus had with His disciples. Only Jesus could fulfill the old covenant and begin the new covenant. Lastly, we learned about Jesus being arrested even though He did nothing wrong. We read that even though it was hard, and all His friends left Him, Jesus still chose to follow God’s plan to bring salvation into the world. Today, we will continue learning that Jesus came to earth and lived a perfect life so that He could be the perfect sacrifice our sin requires.”



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Hebrews 7. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Jesus Is Our Perfect Priest.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

JESUS IS OUR PERFECT PRIEST

“ The early church was made up of almost all Jewish believers who were persecuted for following Jesus. Because their lives had become difficult, many believers began to wonder if following Jesus was worth it. Some may have even thought about giving up on Jesus altogether.

In the past, God’s people—the nation of Israel—were led by priests. Priests led the people to worship God through sacrifices. Aaron the Levite and his descendants were priests.

The Holy Spirit helped a Christian leader write words of encouragement to the early church in the book of Hebrews. The author of Hebrews told Jesus’ followers that Jesus is better. Jesus became like us in every way so He could become a merciful and faithful High Priest for us. Because Jesus suffered and was tempted, He is able to help us when we are tempted.

The writer of Hebrews reminded the believers about Melchizedek. Melchizedek is the first person in the Bible to be called a priest. This is what the author wrote:

“We know Melchizedek was greater than Aaron, the first chief priest of Israel, because Abraham gave him a tenth of his treasure. **Melchizedek**, the king of Salem and priest of the God Most High, **reminds us of Jesus—the Son of God.** Aaron and all the priests who came after him were men who died. **Jesus is our Priest who lives forever.**”

The priesthood of Aaron and the Levites, who made sacrifices for the sins of the people, was not enough to save them forever. The law set up as priests men who were weak, limited by their sin and by death. **Their work pointed forward to a greater priest—Jesus. Jesus fulfilled God’s promise and became the perfect sacrifice. Now we have a perfect Priest forever.**

“Jesus is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, since He will never die again; He always lives to intercede for them.

“Jesus is the priest we need. He is holy and without sin. Jesus doesn’t need to offer sacrifices every day, as high priests do—first for their own sins, then for those of the people. Jesus did this once for all time when he offered himself. God sent to us His Son, our perfect Priest forever.”

Christ Connection: Jesus is the perfect Priest, the High Priest who interceded on

STORYTELLING TIPS

Active listening: Tell kids that every time they hear the word “priest” they should say “Jesus is better.”

Stand then sit: Stand while you teach about the priesthood of Aaron and the Levites. Then sit down when you teach how Jesus is our greater Priest who offered Himself as a once-and-for all sacrifice. Tell kids that Jesus is now seated at the right hand of God because His mission is complete.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

behalf of the people by laying down His life to be a once-and-for-all sacrifice for sin. Everyone who trusts in Jesus has salvation from sin through His perfect life, death, and resurrection. ”

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ God set apart the family of Aaron and his future relatives to be the line of priests who would serve God. These priests were called Levites. It was their responsibility to offer sacrifices for sins. But before Aaron, the Bible tells us of another man who served as priest to the Most High God. Does anyone remember his name? [Choose a volunteer to read aloud Hebrews 7:1.] His name was Melchizedek. A unique characteristic about Melchizedek is that he had no family records written in the Bible. It was like he had always existed. Look at Hebrews 7:3. [Choose a volunteer to read aloud Hebrews 7:3.] Melchizedek reminds us of Jesus. Jesus is the eternal Son of God who has always existed. This makes Jesus better than any earthly priest because the earthly priests have not always existed. The priests were born and then they died. Jesus is our perfect Priest who lives forever.

The priests tried to keep the law but they could not. The law did not serve to make them perfect. Instead, the law revealed their sin and the people’s sin. The priests would then have to make animal sacrifice to pay for their sin and the sin of the people. How is Jesus different from the former priests? Look at Hebrews 7:26-27. [Choose a volunteer to read aloud Hebrews 7:26-27.] Jesus is holy and sinless! He has no need to offer daily sacrifices for His own sins. Jesus chose to offer Himself once and for all as the perfect spotless Lamb of God for the sins of others.

Jesus lives forever as our Priest. He is our mediator before God because His blood completely takes away our sin and allows us to come to God. Jesus continues to pray for us and act for our good. Anyone who trusts in Jesus will be saved and will always have Him as their perfect High Priest. ”

3 CHRIST CONNECTION

SAY “ Jesus is the perfect Priest, the High Priest who interceded on behalf of the people by laying down His life to be a once-and-for-all sacrifice for sin. Everyone who trusts in Jesus has salvation from sin through His perfect life, death, and resurrection. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 26, Session 4” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. If Jesus was tempted, how did He never sin?
2. How can Jesus help you when you are tempted to sin?



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Point to Seattle, Washington, on a map of the United States. Remind kids that church planters Dave and Mary Elliff believed God called them to Seattle, Washington, to reach people for Jesus. Tell kids that even though Seattle has many amazing features, landmarks, and businesses, it is still a city with many who are not Christians. Explain that only 2 out of every 10 people take the Bible seriously and believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

SAY “ The population of Seattle continues to grow every year. This growth has led to more homelessness, crime, and hunger for many in the Seattle metro area. Many people need to hear the hope of Jesus and how only He can save them.

Seattle has also experienced greater numbers of people as many move there from countries like China, Cambodia, and Ghana. The neighborhoods of Seattle are very diverse and have unique needs. Many more churches are needed to reach the growing population. ”

Close in prayer, thanking God for the church planters who are in Seattle helping others know Jesus. Ask God to send more people to start new churches to tell the growing population about the good news of Jesus.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Hebrews 4:15 together.

SAY “ Jesus is our perfect High Priest because He is holy and sinless. He gave His life as the perfect sacrifice to save us from our sin. ”

Write the first letter of each word of the key passage on a dry erase board. Lead kids to raise their hands to fill in the rest of the words in order of the key passage. Invite kids to say the key passage aloud when it is complete. Repeat the activity as time allows.

Lead kids to sing “Gracious Father (Hebrews 4:15).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

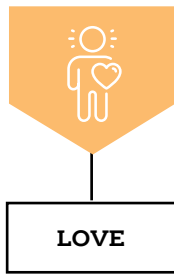
7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ Dear God, we praise You for sending Jesus to be our perfect High Priest. Thank You that Jesus’ sacrifice made the way for us to come to You by faith in Him. Help us honor Jesus’ sacrifice by living to bring Him glory. Amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Hebrews 7. Explain that the main emphasis of the book of Hebrews was to remind Jewish believers that Jesus is better than angels, priests, or the old covenant rules. Tell kids that the book of Hebrews helps us better understand how the Old Testament sacrifices and priesthood point to Jesus. Tell kids that we do not know the exact location of the intended audience of the book of Hebrews. Point out Judea (G9), Syria (E11), and Galatia (C8) as places where Jewish Christians lived on the New Testament Mediterranean Map.

Consider comparing the New Testament Mediterranean Map to a modern-day map to help kids understand where these stories took place. (Tip: Locate the areas in and around modern-day Turkey and Jerusalem.) Choose a volunteer to read aloud Hebrews 7:21-24.

SAY “ Jesus guarantees us a better covenant because it is made on better promises. The old covenant required people to obey the law perfectly, but no one could follow it perfectly. As our High Priest, Jesus gives us a better covenant with better promises because He fulfilled the law perfectly for us. God promised that our salvation is not dependent on what we can do, but on what Jesus has done for us. Jesus lived a perfect life, died in our place, and rose again. He is our Priest forever. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ Can you work hard to earn God’s love or favor? Why not? ”

Remind kids that we cannot do anything to earn God’s favor and love. Discuss how God showed His love to us through Jesus who lived a perfect life for us and died in our place. Encourage kids to remember that we show love to God because of what Jesus has done.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 3:20.)

SAY “ Are our future sins forgiven? Why? ”

Tell kids that Jesus’ sacrifice takes away anyone’s sins who trusts in Him for all time. Explain that we are not yet perfect and we will still sin. Tell kids that because of Jesus’ sacrifice we are justified or made right before God forever. Encourage kids to flee from sin by obeying God’s Word and asking Jesus to help them.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Heb. 10:10.)

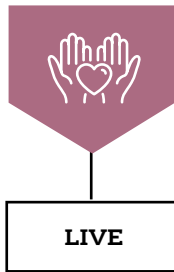
SAY “ How do you feel knowing Jesus lives forever to speak to God for you and always acts for your good? ”

Answers will vary. Discuss how Jesus’ intercession is an act of grace. Remind kids that sin deserves death, but Jesus died in our place. Help kids understand that anyone who trusts in Jesus will always be forgiven of sin.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Heb. 7:25.)

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: BUILD A BRIDGE



Tell kids that Seattle is home to the world's longest floating bridge called the Evergreen Point Floating Bridge. Explain that the bridge uses concrete pontoons to make it float across Lake Washington.

Form kids into groups of four. Provide each group with a water-filled bin, tape, scissors, 10–12 craft sticks, cardstock, two empty water bottles, and a 3-inch wide by 8-inch long strip of cardstock. Lead kids to tape the craft sticks across the cardstock. Then direct kids to lay the empty water bottles flat on the table and tape the cardstock with craft sticks on top of the water bottles. Point out that the water bottles act as floating pontoons. Tell kids to place their “floating bridge” in the water. If time allows, test the bridge's buoyancy by placing one or two objects on the bridge.

SAY “ This bridge reminds me of Jesus. As our Priest, He acts as a ‘bridge’ to bring us to God. We can pray that the people of Seattle come to know Jesus, our perfect Priest. ”

OPTION 2: WE NEED A MEDIATOR



Form kids into groups of three or four and give each group a Bible, paper, and markers. Tell kids that as our High Priest, Jesus is also our mediator. Define mediator as a person who acts to bring people together who are enemies. Explain that because of our sin we are enemies of God. Lead groups to look up and read 1 Timothy 2:5-6.

Tell kids that Jesus is our Mediator. Explain that Jesus' sacrifice on the cross made the way for us to come to God. Ask kids to think about how Jesus is our Mediator and to draw a picture to explain how He brings us to God. Kids may choose to draw a bridge as a symbol or a cross connecting God and people or any other image that helps explain how Jesus is our Mediator.

SAY “ Faith in Jesus is the only way to come to God. We cannot reach God on our own. Even if we do a lot of good things, we are still sinners. Jesus' sacrifice made the way for us to be forgiven and come to God. ”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, thanking God that we have a mediator through Jesus. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Jesus Is the Better Priest” on the activity page.



JOURNAL PAGE

1. What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
2. What does this story teach me about myself?
3. Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
4. Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
5. How does this story help me to live on mission better?



Unit 26 • Session 4

JESUS IS OUR PERFECT PRIEST

Hebrews 7

HOW IS JESUS THE PERFECT PRIEST? JESUS WAS THE PERFECT SACRIFICE FOR SIN, AND HE SPEAKS TO GOD THE FATHER FOR US TODAY.

In the past, God's people were led by priests. Priests led the people to worship God through sacrifices.

The Holy Spirit helped a Christian leader write words of encouragement to the early church in the book of Hebrews. The author of Hebrews told Jesus' followers that Jesus is better. Jesus became like us in every way so He could become a merciful and faithful High Priest for us.

The writer of Hebrews reminded the believers about Melchizedek. Melchizedek is the first person in the Bible to be called a priest.

"Melchizedek reminds us of Jesus. Jesus is our priest who lives forever."

The priesthood of Aaron and the Levites, who made sacrifices for the sins of the people, was not enough to save them forever.

Their work pointed forward to a greater Priest—Jesus. Jesus fulfilled God's promise and became the perfect sacrifice. Now we have a perfect Priest forever.

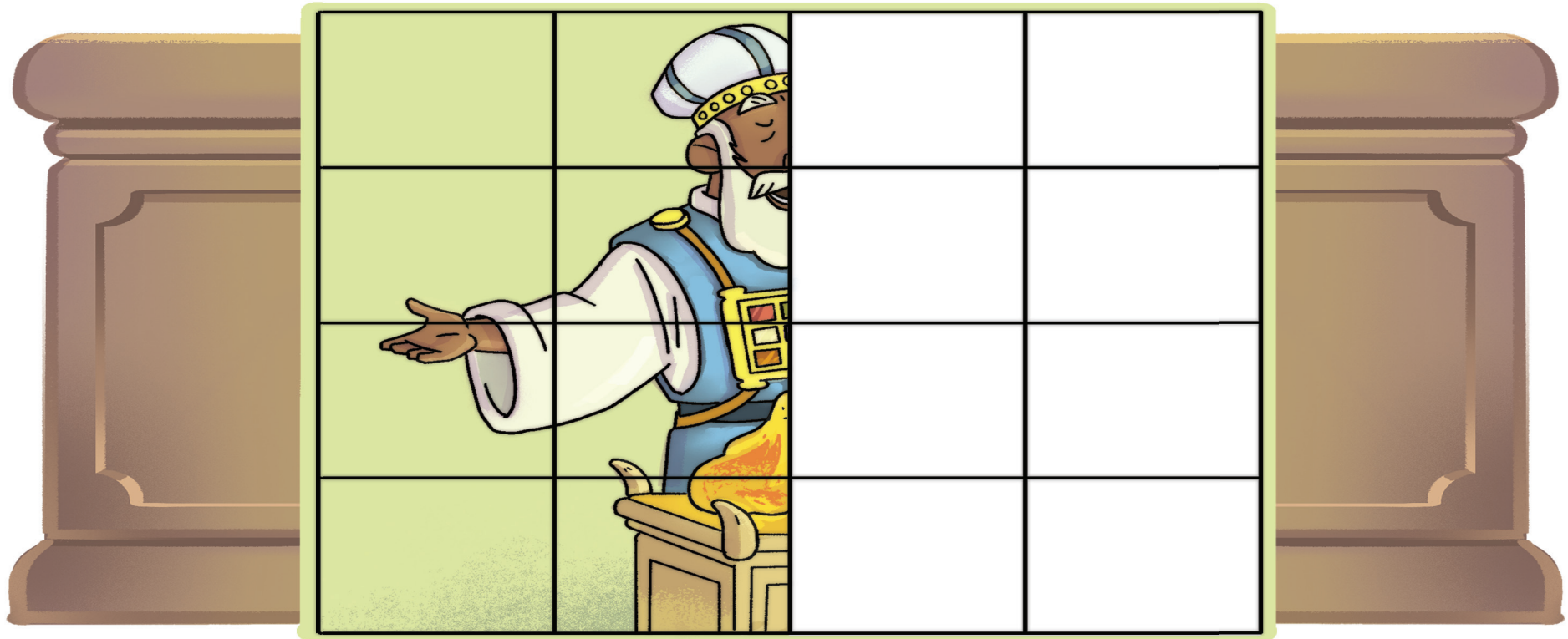
"Jesus is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, since He will never die again.

"Jesus is the priest we need. Jesus doesn't need to offer sacrifices every day, as high priests do. Jesus did this once for all time when He offered Himself. God sent to us His Son, our perfect Priest forever."

Christ Connection: Jesus is the perfect Priest, the High Priest who interceded on behalf of the people by laying down His life to be a once-and-for-all sacrifice for sin. Everyone who trusts in Jesus has salvation from sin through His perfect life, death, and resurrection.

FOLD

Finish the Drawing | In the Old Testament, priests stood at the altar and offered sacrifices for their sins and the sin of the people. Use the grid to help you draw the other half of the priest and altar.



Jesus Is the Better Priest | Circle the statements that are true about Jesus as our High Priest. Use the Bible references to help you.

Jesus came from the priestly line of the Levites. (Hebrews 7:14)

Jesus is a Priest forever. (Hebrews 7:17)

Jesus is the guarantor of a better covenant. (Hebrews 7:22)

Jesus is able to save those who draw near to God. (Hebrews 7:25)

Jesus is a holy and innocent High Priest. (Hebrews 7:26)

Jesus continues to stand and offer sacrifices. (Hebrews 7:27)

Jesus offered Himself as a sacrifice once and for all. (Hebrews 7:27)

Jesus has not been made perfect forever. (Hebrews 7:28)



NAME:



Jesus Is Our Perfect Priest

BIBLE STORY SUMMARY:

- The author of Hebrews wrote that Jesus is better. Jesus became like us in every way so He could become a merciful and faithful High Priest for us.
- The law set up priests who were sinful and died. Their sacrifices pointed to our need for Jesus. Jesus' sacrifice is for all time and completely takes away sin.
- Jesus is our sinless Priest who lives forever.

CHRIST CONNECTION:

Jesus is the perfect Priest, the High Priest who interceded on behalf of the people by laying down His life to be a once-and-for-all sacrifice for sin. Everyone who trusts in Jesus has salvation from sin through His perfect life, death, and resurrection.

KEY PASSAGE: Hebrews 4:15

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

How is Jesus the perfect Priest? Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for sin, and He speaks to God the Father for us today.