

HE IS BETTER.

A Series in the Book of Hebrews



Hebrews

A Note to the Parents/Teachers

The book of Hebrews is often summed up in one simple phrase: Jesus is better. Yet the book of Hebrews is itself is far from a simple book. The audience of this letter appears to be primarily Jewish Christians who grew up in Judaism but have believed in Jesus. Yet, they seem to be facing persecution for believing that Jesus was/is the Messiah that Israel had been waiting for. The author responds to these believers turning from faith in Jesus by showing that Jesus is superior to every possible thing that you could put in his place.

Call to Worship

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come. You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will, they were created and have their being.” - Revelation 4:8,11

Starter

Evidence of Grace

Ask kids to share ways they’ve seen God at work lately. Anything, big or small, which is good is from God. Take time to thank God together.

Discussion Question(s):

- What does a representative of a country, home, or classroom do? If an authority sends a someone as a representative, what power or authority does that representative have?

Text

Hebrews 4:14 - 5:10

Big Idea: Jesus is the better *PRIEST*

Summary

Here the author of Hebrews once again revisits this idea of Jesus being the better high priest. In chapter 3:1 the author mentions that Jesus is our high priest and apostle. Let's explore what the function of the high priest during this time was and then see how Jesus is the better high priest then and now.

The ancient Israelites had an earthly high priest. This high priest was the only person allowed to enter into what was called the "Holy of Holies" or The Most Holy Place. This was a place where the Ark of the Covenant was held and thus was believed to be a place where the Spirit of God dwelt. The High priest was the only one allowed to enter this place once a year on the Day of Atonement. The high priest would enter the Holy of Holies to go before God on behalf of the people to offer sacrifices for the sins of the people, talk to God on behalf of the people, and was a representative of the people to God.

But the high priests were human. So while they offered sacrifices on behalf of the people of God they also had to offer sacrifices on their own behalf for their own sin. Thus, the human high priests were pointing toward a perfect high priest that would one day fully atone for all of the sins of humanity and also fully enter God's presence and represent humans before God — Jesus.

The Israelites had a sense that they needed someone to represent them before God, someone to intercede on their behalf, and it was a high priest. They had a sense that they were not able to stand in the presence of a Holy God on their own merits. One of the stories that our culture tells us today is that we don't need anyone to do anything for us or to represent us. We are entitled to our own beliefs, rights, way of thinking, and every individual can decide for themselves what is good and not good and how they want to live (sound familiar?). Sometimes we think we don't need anyone to help us. We think we can do it on our own. We might think sometimes that we don't need Jesus. We might think that as long as we are good and obey, or maybe not do anything really bad like The truth is, we do need someone to intercede

Jesus

Jesus' suffering and obedience meant that he was "made perfect" (5:9). Now, what this means is that Jesus was obedient and faithful to God even through suffering and ultimately death. Jesus lived a perfect and sinless life and he proved that by obeying the will of his Father even when he was tempted to live for himself or when it was hard. His suffering and obedience made him a better representative for us. He knows what it is like to be human and to be tempted to not listen to God and choose our own way. But His obedience is the reason why we have hope in his representation. He did not fall or waver or give up: he was obedient, even when that meant he would die.

Not only was Jesus a better high priest and representative for us to God because of his sinless, perfect, obedient life but, his sinless life also allowed him to be the perfect and final sacrifice. Remember the high priest would make a sacrifice in the Holy of Holies once a year to atone for

the sins of the people. Jesus was not only the high priest, but also the sacrifice to atone for the sins of all people from every tribe, language, and nation!

When Jesus died on the cross the veil or curtain that separated the Holy of Holies room from the rest of the temple was torn down. This symbolized that there was no longer a separation between the Spirit of God and his people. Now, the ultimate and final sacrifice had been given in the person of Jesus. A high priest no longer had to enter the presence of God's Spirit, but soon God would send His Spirit to live in ALL who would place their life and faith in Him.

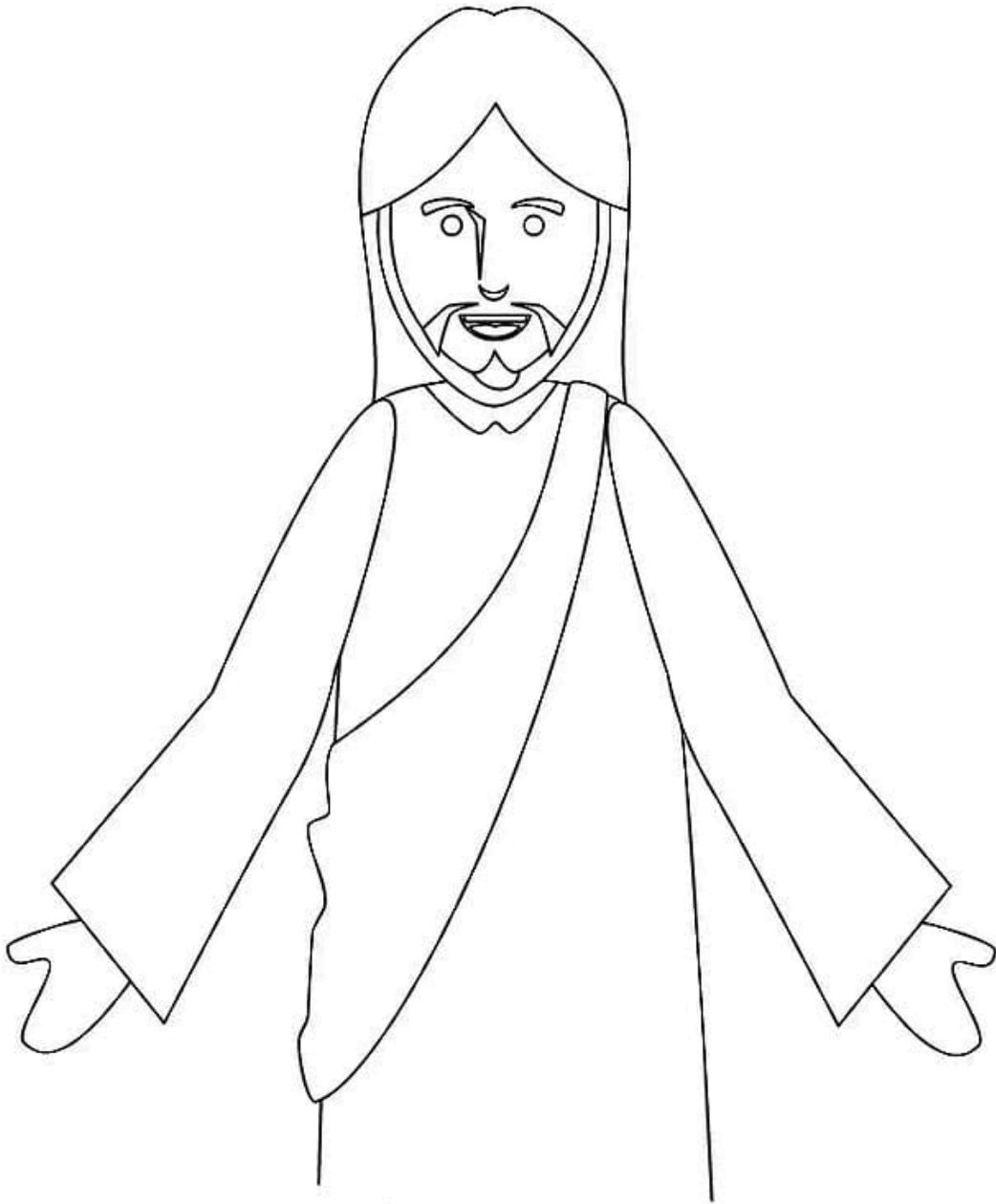
Dialogue Questions - you may use some or all

- In what ways are we called to be representatives? (Represent God's kingdom here on earth)
- In what ways have you tried to represent yourself before God, rather than letting Jesus represent you?
- What keeps you from being sure of your standing with God? Or. What causes you to doubt your standing and identity in Jesus?
- What does Jesus' sacrifice mean for you? What does it mean for your neighbor or classmate that does not know Jesus?
- How can we share this story of what Jesus has done on our behalf with our friends?

Breakout Time

Pray:

God, I know that you are the one true living God who created all things. You created the earth and everything on the earth. You created me. Thank you for sending your Son Jesus so that I can be forgiven of worshiping other things. Forgive me for sometimes worshiping other things than you. I repent. Holy Spirit, please work in my heart to love God and love others in a way that points them to Jesus and your Kingdom. May our hearts be filled with love for you and for others in response to what you have done in and through your Son Jesus and the story you have invited us to now participate in. Help me to think of my community this week and how I can love them well so that they might know you more.



Jesus christ is our
great high priest