

LESSON 10 || THE PLAGUES AND THE PASSOVER

SESSION SNAPSHOT

NARRATIVE PASSAGE: Exodus 7:1-7; Exodus 7:20-25; Exodus 8:1-7; Exodus 8:16-19; Exodus 8:20-24; Exodus 9:1-7; Exodus 9:8-12; Exodus 9:22-28, 35; Exodus 10:12-15; Exodus 10:21-27; Exodus 12:21-32; Exodus 12:37-51

GOSPEL FOCUS: John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:17-19

STUDENT TAKEAWAYS:

- See how God acted miraculously on behalf of His people to free them from slavery in Egypt.
- Understand that Jesus is the true Passover Lamb, saving us from death through His blood shed on the cross.
- Focus on the idea of being “ransomed” and how that impacts their lives.

OVERVIEW:

Why did Jesus have to die on the cross? While we can't cover all of this in one lesson, today, we get to talk about one small glimpse of it: Jesus was the perfect sacrificial lamb who saves us from death. This week, we're looking at the ten plagues, and we'll emphasize the final plague, the Passover, and how that relates to our salvation through Jesus. Encourage your students to really focus on the connection between the two because The Thread is a strong one this week.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO:

Each *Thread* lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These short videos are designed to help you grasp the lesson's main point as you prepare to teach.



BIBLE BACKGROUND

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide the basic context for the passages you'll be studying.

- **WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “CONTEXT”?** In every YM360 Bible study lesson, we encourage teachers to help students know *who* wrote a particular book, *when* it was written, and *why* it was written.
- **WHY TEACH CONTEXT?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

EXODUS

- *Author:* While there's no specific author named within the text, Moses is the accepted author for Exodus, with some editing and additions done after his death (such as the account of his death!).

- *Time frame:* The dating of the book of Exodus is a point of debate. The issue is that no one knows exactly when the Exodus occurred, whether in the mid-1400s BC or a later date around the mid-1200s BC. The writing of the book of Exodus would have occurred around those general dates.
- *Purpose:* Exodus means “a going out” or a “departure.” Exodus was written to be a record of God’s great rescue of His people from slavery in Egypt and His commands to His people, guiding them to live for His purposes in a new land.

JOHN

- *Author:* The Gospel of John was written by John the Apostle, son of Zebedee. A fisherman who left his trade to follow Jesus, John also penned the Book of Revelation and the three New Testament letters that bear his name.
- *Time frame:* The Gospel of John was probably written between 85 and 95 AD. John most likely wrote his gospel in Ephesus before he was exiled to Patmos.
- *Purpose:* John’s stated purpose for writing this book can be found in John 20:30-31, the last two verses in his gospel: “Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” John’s goal seems to have been to clearly communicate a full theology of Jesus as the Son of God, the promised Messiah.

1 PETER

- *Author:* 1 Peter was written by Peter, one of Jesus’ disciples and one of the key leaders of the early Church.
- *Time frame:* 1 Peter was likely written between 54-68 AD.
- *Purpose:* 1 Peter was written to a people under persecution, likely under the reign of Emperor Nero. Peter calls the Church to persevere under trials because eternal life awaits them. He encourages them that God’s promises to His people will endure and should be the foundation of their hope.

LESSON PLAN

The Lesson Plan contains four elements:

- **GETTING STARTED**— An introductory activity designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- **THE STORY**— A section featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- **THE THREAD**— A special emphasis where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- **WRAPPING UP**— An application-focused segment helping teenagers ask the question, “How am I impacted by what I learned today”?

GETTING STARTED

- *Goal:* To get students ready to take a quick run-through of all 10 plagues.
- *Set-Up:* You’re going to streamline your intro activity to allow as much time as possible to read through the 10 plagues.

FIRST, ask students if they can think of a time when someone did something extreme to get their attention. Maybe it was a crazy stunt someone pulled to ask them to prom. Or maybe their parents took their car keys for a week. Or maybe a coach yelled at them. Whatever it is, have students share a few examples. Be prepared to share one of your own, as well.

THEN, when students have finished, ask a few questions similar to the following:

- Did it work? Did the person who intended to get your attention actually get it?
- Did the person receive the outcome they wanted?

FINALLY, explain to students that you’re going to look at a wild story of God going to extraordinary lengths to get someone’s attention. Say something like:

- Remember what our goal is as we go through this study. We’re trying to learn the big-picture story of the Bible. This week’s lesson is about one of the most legendary stories in Scripture. As you recall, in the last lesson, we left Moses at the burning bush having a conversation with God. God told Moses that he was God’s choice to lead His people out of Egypt, where they were being held as slaves. What Moses couldn’t have guessed was how God was going to do it. We’re about to read more Scripture than we’ve read together thus far, but it’s an amazing story. Let’s jump in.

TRANSITION TO THE STORY, AND BUCKLE UP FOR A QUICK RUN-THROUGH OF THE 10 PLAGUES.

THE STORY

- *Goal:* To see how God acted miraculously on behalf of His people to free them from slavery in Egypt.
- *Set-Up:* If you choose, arrange to display the “Lesson 10 Plague Images” PDF as you read through the plagues. You can print it out, display it on a tablet, or drop the images into your favorite slideshow software. Students will need a Bible or a Bible app.

FIRST, explain that you’re about to go through the 10 plagues God sent to force Pharaoh to let His people go. For each plague, you’ll need a volunteer to read a passage. Let them know you’ll ask a couple of questions after each passage, but today’s goal is to cover a ton of ground. Say something like:

- We’re about to drink from a fire hose. (Not literally. That would be weird.) It’s going to take concentration and teamwork. Are you ready? Let’s do this.

THEN, set the stage by reading or having a student read Exodus 7:1-7. When you’ve finished, explain that with this background, you’re ready to get started.

Read or have a student read Exodus 7:20-25. (Display the “Plague One” image from the “Lesson 10 Plague Images” PDF.) When finished reading, ask:

- On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being “not that big of a deal” and 10 being “absolutely, horrifyingly awful,” what would you rate this plague?
- Why do you think it’s significant that we’re told the Egyptian magicians could replicate this plague?
 - *Answer:* It speaks to the mindset of Pharaoh (“If my magicians can do it, it’s not that big of a deal.”), and it’s important foreshadowing for what’s coming.

NEXT, read or have a student read Exodus 8:1-7. (Display the “Plague Two” image from the “Lesson 10 Plague Images” PDF.) When finished reading, ask:

- Again, on a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being “not that big of a deal” and 10 being “absolutely, horrifyingly awful,” what would you rate this plague? (Frogs in your bed??? Yikes!)
- Does anything else “jump” out at you about this plague? (Pun intended.)

THEN, read or have a student read Exodus 8:16-19. (Display the “Plague Three” image from the “Lesson 10 Plague Images” PDF.) When finished reading, ask:

- This is the first plague that the magicians could not replicate. What should this have caused Pharaoh to do?
 - *Answers will vary*, but you would think Pharaoh would have at least started to believe that God meant business.
- Even though they knew that this was the hand of God at work, Pharaoh still wouldn’t listen. Can you describe a moment when you knew something was wrong but still refused to listen?

NEXT, read or have a student read Exodus 8:20-24. (Display the “Plague Four” image from the “Lesson 10 Plague Images” PDF.) When finished reading, ask:

- Back to our “grossness scale.” Between 1 and 10, how gross is this one?

THEN, read or have a student read Exodus 9:1-7. (Display the “Plague Five” image from the “Lesson 10 Plague Images” PDF.) When finished reading, ask:

- Killing the livestock was a bold move and potentially the first plague that would have a destructive impact on all of Egypt. Why would this be such a big deal?
 - *Answer:* Livestock were used for food, milk, work, and transportation. Even war! This would have cost the Egyptians dearly.
- How do you think the ordinary Egyptians were starting to feel about Pharaoh’s stubbornness?
 - *Answers will vary.* But it’s an interesting case study of how one person’s sin, or poor judgment, can impact others.

NEXT, read or have a student read Exodus 9:8-12. (Display the “Plague Six” image from the “Lesson 10 Plague Images” PDF.) When finished reading, ask:

- Let’s hit our “grossness scale” again. Between 1 and 10, how gross is this one? Pretty gross, right?
- Imagine boils all over your body. You can’t stand, you can’t sit, and you can’t do anything. If you were Pharaoh, would you want to let the Israelites go, or would the boils infuriate you further and prohibit you from letting them leave?

THEN, read or have a student read Exodus 9:22-28, 35. (Display the “Plague Seven” image from the “Lesson 10 Plague Images” PDF.) When finished reading, ask:

- Pharaoh shows a crack in his resolve, but ultimately he goes back on his word. Sometimes we know the right decision but choose the wrong one. What are some reasons why people don’t want to do the right thing?
 - *Answers will vary.*

NEXT, read or have a student read Exodus 10:12-15. (Display the “Plague Eight” image from the “Lesson 10 Plague Images” PDF.) When finished reading, ask:

- At this point, Pharaoh has nothing to eat. His slaves are trying to leave. What was the risk for Pharaoh if he let the Israelites go? Why could you understand Pharaoh wanting to keep them around?
 - *Answers will vary.*

THEN, read or have a student read Exodus 10:21-27. (Display the “Plague Nine” image from the “Lesson 10 Plague Images” PDF.) When finished reading, say something like:

- It just got real, and it’s about to get worse. God did something only God could do. He made it dark for three full days! He defied the laws of nature, which He can do considering that He MADE the laws! By now, Pharaoh should have relented, but it’s too late. What’s coming next will devastate Egypt.

NEXT, read or have a student read Exodus 12:21-32. (Display the “Plague Ten” image from the “Lesson 10 Plague Images” PDF.) When finished reading, ask:

- What are your initial thoughts on the nature of this plague?
 - *Answers will vary.*
- Someone summarize what the Israelites had to do to make sure that the “destroyer” (some translations say “angel of death”) passed over them.
 - *Answers will vary:* They had to sacrifice an unblemished lamb and spread the blood over the door. The “destroyer” would see the blood and pass over the house.

Explain that the death of the firstborn was the final plague. Pharaoh and all of his people lost someone close to them, and at this point, they were done with Moses. Explain that they finally relented and let the Israelites go.

FINALLY, read or have a student read Exodus 12:37-51. When you’ve finished, say something like:

- God gave Pharaoh countless chances to let His people go. While the plagues may sound harsh to us, God was clear in the first verses that we read that this was His judgment over the Egyptians for their cruel treatment of His chosen people. And God gave Pharaoh many chances to relent. The plagues were all about God being faithful to His people. The last plague, the killing of the firstborn, was commemorated by the Jews in the Passover feast that they still celebrate yearly to remember God’s faithfulness in bringing them out of slavery. God proved His faithfulness in a powerful and startling way when He worked through the plagues to deliver His children.

IF STUDENTS DON’T HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, TRANSITION INTO THE THREAD TO SEE THE CONNECTION OF THE GOSPEL TO THE BIG-PICTURE NARRATIVE OF SCRIPTURE.

THE THREAD

FIRST, explain that with the Passover narrative, God asked the Israelites for a pure lamb to sacrifice. Say:

- Recall that the blood on their doorposts had to be from a pure animal. Explain that the blood MARKED God's people. The lamb's blood on the doorpost saved the people from death.

THEN, instruct students to turn to John 1:29. Read or have a student read the verse aloud, then ask:

- John called Jesus the "Lamb of God." John was making a direct association with the Passover lamb. Put on your thinking caps: What connection does Jesus have to Passover?
 - *Answer:* Just as the Passover Lamb saved the Israelites from death with its blood, Jesus's blood saved us from eternal death. Jesus was the true, Perfect Lamb. His blood on the cross marks all who believe in Him as God's people.

NEXT, read or have a student read 1 Peter 1:17-19. Then, say something like:

- Peter says we are saved from the "futile ways inherited from [our] forefathers." Peter is talking about how Jesus breaks the bonds of sin in our lives, sin that has impacted generations throughout time. What saves us from this sin?
 - *Answer:* The blood of Christ shed on the cross.
- And what does Peter call Jesus?
 - *Answer:* "A lamb without blemish or spot."

FINALLY, end this section by saying something similar to the following:

- How awesome is it that the Passover event and Jesus' death on the cross are thousands of years apart, yet the thread of God's love and grace connects them both? We just looked at a TON of Scripture, the most Scripture we'll cover at one time in this entire study. The point of covering so much today was to give you the complete picture of the incredible plan of redemption that God set into motion thousands of years ago. The Passover and the Exodus were huge aspects of God's plan to redeem humankind from the consequences of sin, but Jesus' death on the cross was the highlight of this plan. Let's wrap up our time today by thinking a little more about what it means to be rescued from our sins.

IF THERE ARE NO MORE THOUGHTS OR QUESTIONS, TRANSITION INTO THE WRAPPING UP ACTIVITY.

WRAPPING UP

- *Goal:* To focus on the idea of being "ransomed" and how that impacts their lives.
- *Set-Up:* None needed.

FIRST, direct students back to Peter's language in 1 Peter 1:17-19. Say something like:

- When Peter talked about what Jesus did for us, he said that we were "ransomed" from sin. How would you define the word "ransom?"
 - *Answer:* To ransom someone is to "redeem [them] from captivity, bondage, detention, etc., by paying a demanded price."
- So, if we take this definition, in what ways were we in captivity or bondage that we needed ransoming?
 - *Answer:* Without Jesus, our sin holds us captive. We're in bondage to sin with no way to overcome it on our own.

- Our definition says that to ransom is to free someone by paying a “demanded price.” What price does God demand for sinning against Him?
 - *Answer:* He demands a pure, sinless life. Paul wrote in Romans that sin earns death for us. Rebellion against God, which is what sin is, forfeits our life.

THEN, drive the point home by saying:

- And so that brings us to the cross. Jesus paid the demanded price to ransom you from sin. Jesus gave His life so that you don't have to.

Ask students what the proper response to this is. Ask them to suggest, in their own words, what they should do, feel, or think to respond to this truth. Encourage them to come up with practical suggestions.

FINALLY, encourage students and thank them for hanging with such a long lesson. Close the study in prayer, asking God to show you how to honor Jesus' sacrifice for you.

- If you've purchased the corresponding devotional journal, remind students they'll be working through Week 11 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions and to give memorizing this week's verse their best shot.
- If you're utilizing the digital devotions included in the Thread curriculum, remind students how you'll be making them available, i.e., Instagram, Facebook, etc.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well that you want to share?
- Something that didn't work that you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns at feedback@youthministry360.com.