

Use Week of:

Unit 31 • Session 3

Jesus Is Better

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Hebrews 1–8

STORY POINT:

Jesus, our great High Priest, brought a better covenant.

KEY PASSAGE:

1 Chronicles 16:31

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.

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LEADER Bible Study

Hebrews was a letter written to encourage believers to not only stand strong in their faith, but also to grow in their faith. More than anything else, though, the writer of Hebrews preached the superiority of Jesus: Jesus was present at the creation of the world. He is the heir of all things and God spoke to the people through Him.

Because the writer of Hebrews was writing to a mostly Jewish audience, he used the history and heroes of the Old Testament to show how Jesus fulfilled all of God's promises to send a Messiah to save His people. As you introduce kids to the Book of Hebrews, concentrate on a major theme found in chapters 1–8: Jesus is better.

Jesus is better than angels. He is the Son of God. He is better than Moses and the Mosaic covenant. Jesus completely fulfilled the covenant of the Old Testament; that made Jesus' new covenant far better. Jesus is better than the tabernacle and the priests.

Because of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, the people no longer needed priests to speak to God for them or to offer sacrifices to take away their sins. These Old Testament figures, laws, and traditions pointed forward to someone better: Jesus.

Emphasize to kids that Jesus is better than anyone and anything. He is the better Prophet, the better Priest, and the better King. Everyone who trusts in Jesus has salvation from sin through His perfect life, death, and resurrection. As the church, Jesus calls us to share the gospel with the world. Jesus is the superior solution to the problem of sin. He is all that is needed for salvation.

The BIBLE Story

Jesus Is Better

Hebrews 1–8

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 all together.

The Holy Spirit helped a Christian leader write words of encouragement to the early church in the Book of Hebrews.

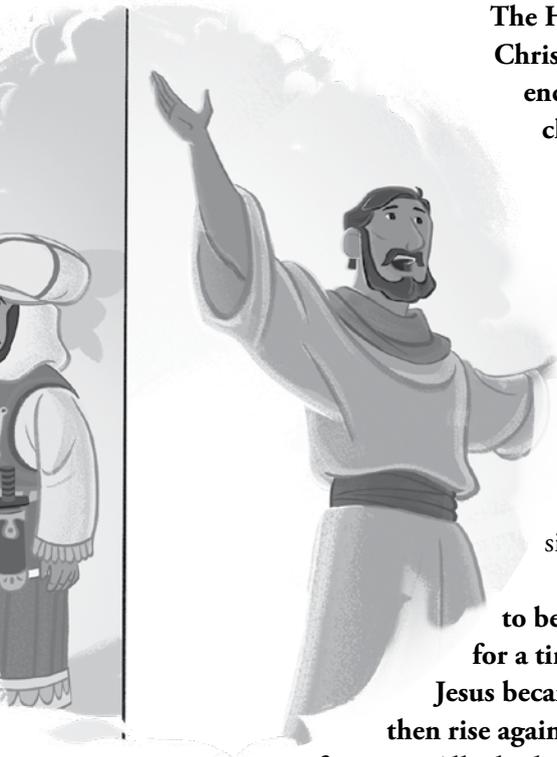
He wrote:

“Long ago, God spoke to His people through prophets. Now He speaks through Jesus. Jesus is God the Son, and He is like God in every way. Jesus is better than angels because He is God’s Son, the eternal King and Creator of everything who sits at God’s right hand.

“But Jesus humbled Himself to become lower than the angels for a time when He became a man.

Jesus became a person like us to die and then rise again. Jesus’ work rescues people from sin. All who believe in Him become His brothers and sisters. 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.

“This is why Jesus is the greatest! He is greater even than Moses, who was a faithful servant of God. Jesus was an even better servant. God used Moses to bring the Law to His people, but God used Jesus to bring the gospel! This is why we cannot turn away from Jesus. Instead, we need to encourage one another each day so that we don’t give in to sin. We don’t want to be like the Israelites who Moses led out of Egypt, and then rebelled against God and perished in the wilderness. The Israelites wanted a land of rest, but even Joshua could not provide rest for God’s people. We want to enter into God’s rest, and Jesus has provided something even better than land: spiritual rest in Him.

“Because Jesus is such a great high priest for us, we can hold fast to our faith. Jesus knows our weaknesses because He became a human and was tempted, although He never sinned. Because of Jesus, we can approach God with boldness; and God will give us mercy and grace.

“This is why Jesus is better than anything and why we cannot turn away from Him. The first covenant that God provided through Moses has been replaced by a second, better covenant through Jesus. **Salvation is found only in Jesus!**”

Christ Connection: Jesus is better than anyone and anything. He is the better Prophet, the better Priest, and the better King. Everyone who trusts in Jesus has salvation from sin through His perfect life, death, and resurrection.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Show pictures:** Display pictures of people or places that Jesus is better than: the prophets, angels, high priests, Moses, and the promised land.
- **Read a letter:** Print the story and fold it like a letter. As you tell the story, pretend you are reading from a letter that the writer of Hebrews wrote to encourage the early church. Explain that this letter can still be an encouragement to us today.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus Is Better

BIBLE PASSAGE: Hebrews 1–8

STORY POINT: Jesus, our great High Priest, brought a better covenant.

KEY PASSAGE: 1 Chronicles 16:31

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to tell about their most prized possession. Where did they get it, and what makes it so special?

SAY • Your most prized possession could be something with great sentimental value—like a toy from a loved one—or something to show for a great accomplishment—like a trophy or prize ribbon. Today we will learn about the One who is more valuable than anyone or anything else.

Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the “Treasure Rank” activity page. Kids will rank the pictured items from their least favorite to their favorite.

SAY • We each value different things in different ways. Some of you would rather have a new video game than a remote control car, or have new ballet slippers than candy and snacks. Today we’ll learn more about why knowing Jesus is the most valuable treasure.

- “Treasure Rank” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Mediated “mother, may I?”

Select two volunteers to stand at one end of the room, one to be *Mother* (or *Father*) and the other to be *Mediator*. Instruct the rest of the kids to stand at the far side of the room. Those kids will take turns making requests of *Mother* such as “Mother, may I take 12 steps forward?” *Mother* will decide whether to grant the request, alter the request (such as “No, but you may take 3 steps forward”) or deny the request. *Mother* will whisper her answer to the *Mediator*, who will tell the answer to the kid who made the request.

SAY • A *mediator* is someone who goes between two people or groups of people to help them communicate.

In our game it may have been a little silly to use a mediator, but today we will learn how Jesus is our mediator with God the Father, and why His role is very important to us.

OPTION 2: This or that?

Direct the kids to stand in the center of the room. Suggest two items, pointing to one side of the room for each. Kids will gather on the side of the room that corresponds with the item they would prefer. Select a kid from each side to explain her reasoning.

Suggested options: cake or ice cream, air hockey or foosball, pizza or tacos, blue or red, soda or juice.

SAY • We all have different preferences, and that’s good! God made us to be diverse and unique. But there’s one thing we should all agree on: Jesus is the best treasure in the world. Let’s talk more about that.

**LOW
PREP**

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus Is Better

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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.

Countdown

· countdown video

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

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

· leader attire

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

[Leader enters wearing business casual attire.]

LEADER • Hi there! I'm glad you could make it back this week. For those of you who are here for the first time, this is our model United Nations. We learn about the real United Nations by doing a pretend version of what the real United Nations does. The real UN is a group of nations that work together to bring peace and stability to the world.

All the member nations send representatives, called delegates, to make sure their nation's needs are heard and not ignored. Sometimes, other world leaders from the nations will come and make speeches.

We also have spoken about how there's an even better organization when it comes to bringing peace and stability to the world: the church. The church also has all kinds of different people from different nations making up her members, but we have one

ultimate leader, and He is the greatest leader of all. This week, we will talk more about what makes Jesus the best leader.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Let's go over our big picture question: *What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.* God's plan wasn't just to rescue certain kinds of sinners, but all sinners who have faith in Jesus. There was no way we could have earned salvation, so God's giving it freely to everyone who believes is very good news indeed. It takes a very perfect God to enact such a perfect plan.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

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

LEADER • A few weeks back we learned that part of the church's early growth came when God revealed that **the gospel is for all people.** As Gentiles began to hear and believe, the church spread further than it had before. However, along with this growth, the early church faced a lot of persecution. That's why it was important for leaders to encourage new churches. **Barnabas went to Antioch to encourage believers.** In addition to traveling, many church leaders wrote letters to encourage and instruct new believers. This week, we will be learning from one of those letters written to Jewish believers. Our story is called "Jesus is Better."

- Bibles
- “Jesus Is Better” video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Story Point Poster

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Hebrews 1–8. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Jesus Is Better.”

LEADER • Hebrews was originally written for Jewish believers who would have been very familiar with the stories of God’s work in the Old Testament. Throughout the history of Israel, God used different kinds of leaders for different roles. All these leaders helped to protect and guide the people to live under the old covenant.

Prophets, like Elijah and Moses, received messages from God and delivered them to His people. Kings, like David and Solomon, helped the people obey God by helping to enforce the rules God had given them and by ensuring the people had safe places to worship God. Priests, like Aaron and Eli, acted as the go-between to make sacrifices on behalf of the people. They spilled the blood of the animals needed to pay for sin.

Jesus is the perfect prophet, priest, and king. He is better than any other leader, and He perfectly fulfilled all the duties of all three main kinds of leaders. **Jesus, our great High Priest, brought a better covenant.** A *covenant* is a special kind of promise, often between God and humans.

In the old covenant, people had to offer sacrifices again and again to cover their sins. In the new covenant Jesus’ perfect sacrifice is enough for all sins, forever. In the old covenant, people who had faith in God’s promises still had the burden of the law weighing them down, reminding them that they

could never earn God's love. In the new covenant, Jesus' perfect righteousness frees us from the burden of the law. We can rest in God's love for us, knowing that we are saved by faith, not works.

Christ connection

LEADER • Jesus is better than anyone and anything. He is the better Prophet, the better Priest, and the better King. Everyone who trusts in Jesus has salvation from sin through His perfect life, death, and resurrection.

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the "Unit 31, Session 3" questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about times they may want to be the best, such as in competitions. Guide them to discuss why humility is important, and how they can be humble.

• "Unit 31, Session 3" Questions from Kids video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

LEADER • We've been learning about church planting missionaries in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The Wiltons tell people there about Jesus. **Jesus, our great High Priest, brought a better covenant.** Let's find out more about the city where the Wiltons are helping people to know that Jesus is better than anyone else.

• "Pittsburgh People" missions video

Show the missions video. Then pray for the Wiltons and any missionaries your church supports.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together 1 Chronicles 16:31. Then sing the key passage song.

• Key Passage Poster
• "Rejoice, Be Glad (1 Chronicles 16:31)" song

LEADER • The gospel is good news for all people. God wants to rescue everyone and will save all who have faith in Jesus. Someday, Jesus will restore the world to be perfect again, and all of creation will rejoice and sing praises to God together.

Sing (4 minutes)

• “Go Tell the World”
song

LEADER • As we learn more about how wonderful Jesus is, our love for Him will grow inside us more and more until we can't be silent. We will have to tell the world about Him.

Sing together “Go Tell the World.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • God, thank You for sending Jesus. Help us to see and believe all the ways He is better than anything and anyone. Give us faith to worship and obey Him. Fill us with Your Spirit so we can live according to Your Word as we wait for the day Jesus will fix everything. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

APPLY the Story



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KEY PASSAGE: 1 Chronicles 16:31

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

• Key Passage Poster

Form two groups of kids. Instruct the groups to stand on opposite sides of the room. Select a side to start the game by saying the first word of the key passage. The other side will have five seconds to say the next word. If they succeed, the first side will have five seconds to say the third word. Play continues in this way, alternating back and forth, until the whole key passage has been said. Each time a side is unable to provide the correct word, award a point to the opposing side. Then provide the word and restart the game from the beginning.

SAY • God is the Lord of all creation, and the gospel is reason to rejoice. *What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.* His plan is to save people from every tribe and nation. All those who are saved will worship Him. When Jesus returns, all of creation will worship and rejoice.

• Bibles, 1 per kid
• Story Point Poster
• Small Group Timeline
and Map Set
(005802970, optional)

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

Distribute a Bible to each kid. Help them find Hebrews 1–8. Hebrews is in the General Letters division.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. How did God speak to people long ago? (*through prophets, Heb. 1:1*)
2. Who is the perfect Prophet through whom God has spoken? (*Jesus, Heb. 1:2*)
3. How is Jesus a better high priest? (*He lived as a human, but never sinned; Heb. 5:1-10*)
4. Why is the new covenant better? *Guide kids to see that under the new covenant, we are declared righteous by God. Remind them that Jesus' sacrifice was perfect, and we don't need to keep offering more and more sacrifices. The old covenant was sufficient to show people their need for a Savior, but it is the new covenant that provides salvation from sin.*
5. What are things you sometimes value too highly? *Encourage kids to answer honestly and think about the people, things, or events that they may make idols in their lives. Remind them that Jesus is better, and help them think through ways to adjust their lives to make Him their priority.*
6. How can we hear from God? *Guide kids to understand that God's Word, Scripture, has been preserved for us. We can read the Bible to see Jesus' teachings from when He was on earth, as well as the teachings He gave through His apostles after returning to heaven. Help them remember that the Holy Spirit helps believers understand God's Word.*

SAY • Jesus, our great High Priest, brought a better covenant. We worship Him because of who He is and what He has done for us. His life, death, and resurrection made the way for us to be forgiven of sin and declared righteous before God to live forever.

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

LOW PREP

- paper
- pens

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment found in Teach the Story.

- construction paper
- plastic coins,
- adhesive gems
- other craft supplies such as glitter glue and stickers (optional)

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Food for thought

Explain that the Philly cheesesteak is a famous sandwich from Pennsylvania. It has thin slices of beef, grilled peppers and onions, melted cheese, and is served on a sub roll. Ask who has tasted one of these sandwiches. Does it sound like a sandwich they would like?

SAY • Part of missions is learning what the people around you like best—such as their favorite sandwich! Missionaries want to know a lot about the people they are sharing the gospel with. What do you think are some favorite foods of people in our community?

Encourage kids to think of popular restaurants around you or favorite foods brought to church meals.

Form small groups or pairs of kids and invite the groups to invent a new kind of sandwich. Ask one volunteer from each group to write the ingredients for their sandwich or draw a picture of the sandwich. For each ingredient, ask kids to think of one thing they can tell someone about Jesus. Give each group time to share with the others.

Review the big picture question and answer: ***What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.***

OPTION 2: The greatest treasure

Provide kids with construction paper, plastic coins, adhesive gems, and other craft supplies such as glitter glue and stickers. Encourage the kids to draw a treasure chest on their papers and decorate it with the coins, jewels, and other craft supplies. Help the kids write *Jesus is the greatest treasure* on their sheets.

SAY • Jesus, our great High Priest, brought a better

covenant. No matter what riches or popularity the world might have for us, Jesus will always be more valuable. He gives us hope for the future and lasting joy and peace. We can be a part of His plans for the world when we share the gospel and encourage others to live for Him.

Reflection and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper to each child. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure to send the sheets home with kids alongside the activity page so that parents can see what their kids have been learning.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.

· pencils and crayons
· paper
· Bible Story Coloring
Page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.