

Lesson 3 / March 16, 2008

# The Ultimate Substitute

for use as

## STEP 1

### Lesson 3 Focus:

Jesus took what we  
deserved.

### Lesson 3 Bible Basis:

Mark 15:16-37;  
Hebrews 10:19-22

Students will explore the concept of substitution and learn how Jesus was the ultimate substitute.

**B**efore class, write adjectives on slips of paper that would be appropriate for describing a movie scene (e.g. *funny, tragic, tense*, etc.). Divide your class into groups of three or four and give each group one of these slips. Then tell them they're going to create their own movie scenes around a common theme: substitutes. Have them brainstorm the word *substitute* and think of as many different applications as possible. They might think of substitute teachers, the substitution of one player for another in a basketball or hockey game, food "substitutes" like Egg Beaters, etc.

Once they've come up with several options, have them choose one and create a 1-3 minute skit using their chosen variation on the theme, *plus* the adjective you've handed them. So you might find yourself watching a tragic scene about substituting walnuts for pecans in a recipe. Or a scary sketch about a substitute quarterback in a football game.

An alternative would be to do this Mad-Libs style (<http://us.penguingroup.com/static/packages/us/yreaders/madlibs/fun.html>) and ask students to list nouns without knowing the purpose of the exercise. You might prompt them by saying, "Give me an animal," "Give me a proper noun," etc. Once you have a creative list of subjects, assign one to each group and have the students pair their nouns with the word "substitute." You might end up with skits about substitute bus drivers, substitute diving boards, or substitute socks.

After you've thoroughly explored the concept of substitutes, reel your students in with some more serious talk about the most important substitute ever.

Clearly, you're very familiar with the word "substitute." But did you know that it's a very important word in connection with the crucifixion?

Let's go to the Old Testament for some background.

**Have you ever heard the word "scapegoat"? What do you think that means?** Students may have heard the word, but most won't know what it means. Some will have an idea that it has to do with getting blamed for something.

Lesson 3  
Memory  
Verse

God was reconciling  
the world to himself in  
Christ, not counting  
men's sins against  
them.

—2 Corinthians 5:19a

I'm going to read a few verses to you that explain what a *scapegoat* is, because it's a very important kind of substitute. This is from the part of the Bible where the Israelites are wandering in the desert between Egypt and the Promised Land. God is telling Moses what to do when the people have sinned.

Read Leviticus 16:20-22 aloud.

- **In this passage, how does the goat act as a substitute?** (*The goat substitutes for the sinful people of Israel—symbolically carrying their sins away because they can't do it on their own. The goat may also be going into the desert to die with the weight of the people's sins on his back.*)
- **Do you see any similarities between the scapegoat and the story of Jesus' crucifixion?**

Let's take a look at how Jesus did the job of a scapegoat—and then some!—when he became the ultimate substitute.

[Continue on to steps 2 and 3 in your *Middle School Teacher's Guide*. Your step 4 appears below.]

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# The Ultimate Substitute

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## STEP 4

Lesson 3

### Focus:

Jesus took what we  
deserved.

Lesson 3

### Bible Basis:

Mark 15:16-37;  
Hebrews 10:19-22

#### You will need:

- Paper for each student
- Writing utensil for each student
- White 2x4 inch mailing labels with the word "Jesus" written on each one in red

**H**ave students write down all of the sins they can think of that they have committed in the past week. These could include dishonesty, disrespect for parents, lack of kindness toward brothers and sisters, etc. (Be sure to allow them to spread out around the classroom so that no one else can see their papers. This exercise should be between them and God alone. Next, ask them to come up with an appropriate punishment for each sin (grounding, loss of privileges, etc.) and write those down too.

Now, read Romans 3:23 out loud: **For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**

Have the students cross out their list of punishments and write "death" in their place, since each sin makes them deserving of death. (If this seems too harsh to them, remind them of the balance exercise from Step 3 in your *Middle School Teacher's Guide*.)

Now, go over the memory verse together. Then have students take the "Jesus" stickers and cover over their death sentences. Use as many stickers as it takes for each student's punishment column to be covered.

- **How did you feel when you wrote in death as the punishment for every one of your sins?**
- **How did you feel when you covered that punishment with "Jesus" to symbolize His taking that punishment for you?**

Have you truly accepted Jesus as your substitute who pays for your sins? If not, always feel free to come share any of your questions with me, and I'd love to talk to you about it.

Close in prayer.

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