

# The Eucharist in Salvation History

## UNIT 5, LESSON 2

### Learning Goals

- The Eucharist is the “source and summit of the Christian life.”
- Jesus is the Passover Lamb of God whose sacrifice saves us from sin and death.
- Jesus clearly taught that we must eat His Body and drink His Blood in order to have eternal life.
- Jesus gives us His Body and Blood under the appearance of bread and wine in the Eucharist.



### Connection to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

- CCC 1324
- CCC 1333-1336
- CCC 1394
- CCC 1413
- CCC 1419



### Vocabulary

- Source and Summit
- Lamb of God
- Passover

## BIBLICAL TOUCHSTONES

You will keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, and then, with the whole community of Israel assembled, it will be slaughtered during the evening twilight. They will take some of its blood and apply it to the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They will consume its meat that same night, eating it roasted with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

EXODUS 12:6-8

Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you.

JOHN 6:53

# Lesson Plan

## Materials

- The Sacrament of the Eucharist
- The Passover Sacrifice Reading Guide
- Sophia Sketchpad video on the Eucharist, found at [SophiaSketchpad.org](https://SophiaSketchpad.org)

## DAY ONE

### Warm-Up

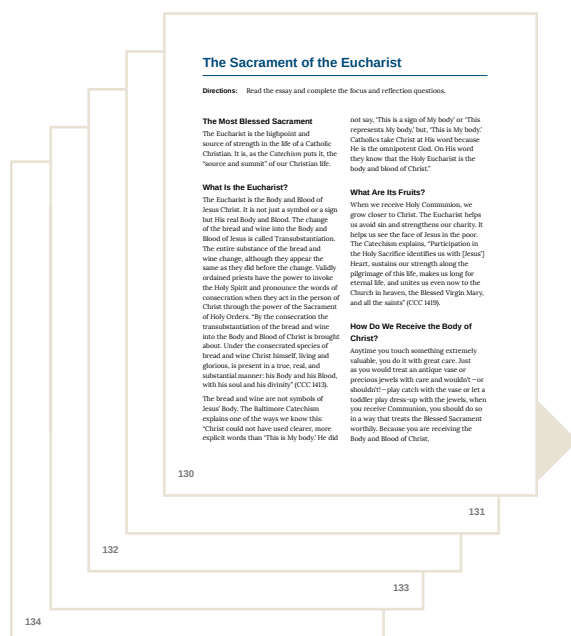
A. Project on the board and have a student stand and read aloud *Catechism* no. 1324:

“The Eucharist is ‘the source and summit of the Christian life.’”

B. Ask students the following questions:

- What is the source of a thing? *Where it comes from. It's origin or beginning.*
- We often talk about the source of a river. What does that mean? *The origin or beginning of the river, where the water begins to flow.*
- What is the summit of a thing? *Its top or highest point.*
- We often talk about the summit of a mountain. What does that mean? *The top or highest point of the mountain; its peak.*
- What do you think it means, then, to say that the Eucharist is the “source and summit of the Christian life”? *The Eucharist is where the Christian life comes from. It is the origin or beginning of the Christian life. The Eucharist is also where the Christian life flows from. The Eucharist is the peak or highest expression of the Christian life.*

C. Explain to students that the *Catechism* puts it like this: “The other sacraments, and indeed all ... ministries and works ... are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself” (CCC 1324). In other words, the whole of the Christian begins with the Eucharist and is directed toward the Eucharist. It is the “source and summit” of our Faith.



## Activity

Ask students to turn to **The Sacrament of the Eucharist (page 130)**. Have them read it and complete the focus and reflection questions.

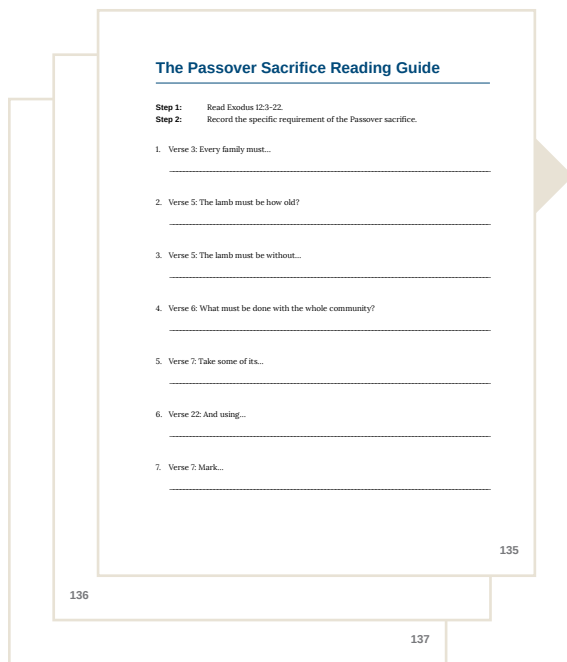
## Formative Assessment

Review and discuss the answers to **The Sacrament of the Eucharist**. Ask your students to turn to a neighbor and take turns sharing one thing that they learned from today's lesson. Circulate around the room and observe.

## DAY TWO

### Warm-Up

- A. Ask students to brainstorm a list of powerful and majestic animals. *These might include lions, tigers, eagles, wolves, bears, whales, and so forth.*
- B. Ask students which animal they might choose to represent God, who is all powerful, all knowing, unchanging, infinite, and transcendent.
- C. Explain to students that at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, John the Baptist proclaimed Jesus to be "the Lamb of God." Ask students to describe the characteristics of a lamb. *These might include that it is small, white, fluffy, innocent, clean, gentle, and so forth. Lambs are also well known for their docility, or calmness and willingness to follow the flock or shepherd. Accept other reasoned answers.*
- D. Ask students why they think a lamb is a better animal to represent Jesus than any of the other powerful animals they named. Answers might include because Jesus was gentle and kind, He was innocent, and He willingly followed His Father's will and gave His life on the Cross for our sins.
- E. Explain to students that there is another reason that John proclaimed Jesus to be the Lamb of God. Ask them to recall the story of the Exodus, when Moses led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. Ask them to share anything they remember of the story, such as the slavery of the Israelites, God's appearing to Moses in the burning bush, God's sending the ten plagues through Moses, the crossing of the Red Sea, and most importantly the Passover. On the night that the Angel of Death passed through Egypt and killed the firstborn of every family, the Israelites were told by God to sacrifice a lamb according to specific instructions as a sign for God to "pass over" their homes and spare their firstborn. Jesus instituted a New Passover for the New Covenant, in which instead of a lamb for the sacrifice, He would be the once-and-for-all sacrifice, the Lamb of God that would spare all God's people from the slavery of sin.



## Activity

Arrange students into pairs or trios. Have students turn to **The Passover Sacrifice Reading Guide (page 135)**. Ask each student group read Exodus 12:3-22 and complete the activity on the worksheet.

## Formative Assessment

Review and discuss the answers to **The Passover Sacrifice Reading Guide**. Have students write a five to seven sentence paragraph that compares the Passover of the New Covenant to the Passover of Exodus.

## DAY THREE

### Warm-Up

A. Project on the board and have a student stand and read aloud Luke 22:14-20:

“When the hour came, he took his place at table with the apostles. He said to them, ‘I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for, I tell you, I shall not eat it [again] until there is fulfillment in the kingdom of God.’ Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and said, ‘Take this and share it among yourselves; for I tell you [that] from this time on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.’ Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me.’ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.’”

B. Ask your students the following questions:

- What is this Scripture passage the story of? *The Last Supper*.
- What similarities do you see between this account of the Last Supper and the Passover that we studied in the last lesson? *Jesus says He has desired to eat this Passover with his Apostles. There was a cup of wine and bread. Jesus said the cup of wine is the new covenant in His blood which will be shed for us.*

C. Explain to students that the bread and wine at the Last Supper and at every Catholic Mass become the actual Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. We believe this because Jesus told us so, not only at the Last Supper, but also in John 6, which we call the Bread of Life Discourse.

## Activity and Assessment

- A. Show the Sophia Sketchpad video on the Eucharist (found at **SophiaSketchpad.org**) up to the 2:17 mark. This section of the video addresses the Bread of Life Discourse in John 6. The rest of the video will be used in a later lesson.
- B. Ask students what stood out to them in the portion of the video they watched and what questions the video might have brought up.
- C. Show the video up to the 2:17 mark a second time.
- D. Ask your students the following questions and have a discussion with them:
  - What did Jesus claim in John 6? *"I AM the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."*
  - How did the crowd respond to Jesus' claims? *Many expressed disbelief and thought His teaching was absurd, and they struggled to accept that what Jesus said was true. They asked "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"*
  - What did Jesus do in response to the crowd? *He could have backed down when He saw their reactions, but He didn't. Instead, He reinforced what He had said before.*
  - What did Jesus claim about eating the flesh of the Son of Man and drinking His blood? *Jesus said, "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you do not have life within you."*
  - Ultimately, what happened to many of the people in the crowd? *Many of His disciples left and refused to follow Him.*
  - When was the very first Mass celebrated? By whom? *At the Last Supper, by Jesus Himself.*
  - Through Jesus, what did the Apostles become at the Last Supper? *The first priests.*
  - Was Jesus being literal when offered His Body and Blood to eat and drink? *Absolutely!*
  - Why do you think it is hard for some people to believe the bread and wine at Mass become the Body and Blood of Jesus? *Answers may include that it is hard to believe because we can't see it happen, or that it might be strange to think of eating someone's body and drinking his blood. This may be a sensitive topic, so be sure to be gentle in guiding the discussion.*
  - What do we have to do sometimes with things that are hard to believe? *Have faith and trust that it is true.*
- E. Explain to your students that after many in the crowd left, struggling with Jesus' teaching, Jesus turned to His Apostles and asked, "Will you also go away?" This is the same question that Jesus asks of all of us. The Eucharist is a mystery of our Faith – not a mystery that we must solve, but a mystery that goes beyond our ability to understand fully. The Catechism tells us "the Lord's question echoes through the ages, as a loving invitation to discover that only he has 'the words of eternal life' and that to receive in faith the gift of his Eucharist is to receive the Lord himself" (CCC 1336). Jesus knows our hearts and invites us to know Him deeper and deeper when we encounter Him in the Eucharist.

# The Sacrament of the Eucharist

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**Directions:** Read the essay and complete the focus and reflection questions.

## The Most Blessed Sacrament

The Eucharist is the highpoint and source of strength in the life of a Catholic Christian. It is, as the *Catechism* puts it, the “source and summit” of our Christian life.

## What Is the Eucharist?

The Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. It is not just a symbol or a sign but His real Body and Blood. The change of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus is called Transubstantiation. The entire substance of the bread and wine change, although they appear the same as they did before the change. Validly ordained priests have the power to invoke the Holy Spirit and pronounce the words of consecration when they act in the person of Christ through the power of the Sacrament of Holy Orders. “By the consecration the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ is brought about. Under the consecrated species of bread and wine Christ himself, living and glorious, is present in a true, real, and substantial manner: his Body and his Blood, with his soul and his divinity” (CCC 1413).

The bread and wine are not symbols of Jesus’ Body. The Baltimore Catechism explains one of the ways we know this: “Christ could not have used clearer, more explicit words than ‘This is My body.’ He did

not say, ‘This is a sign of My body’ or ‘This represents My body,’ but, ‘This is My body.’ Catholics take Christ at His word because He is the omnipotent God. On His word they know that the Holy Eucharist is the body and blood of Christ.”

## What Are Its Fruits?

When we receive Holy Communion, we grow closer to Christ. The Eucharist helps us avoid sin and strengthens our charity. It helps us see the face of Jesus in the poor. The Catechism explains, “Participation in the Holy Sacrifice identifies us with [Jesus]’ Heart, sustains our strength along the pilgrimage of this life, makes us long for eternal life, and unites us even now to the Church in heaven, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and all the saints” (CCC 1419).

## How Do We Receive the Body of Christ?

Anytime you touch something extremely valuable, you do it with great care. Just as you would treat an antique vase or precious jewels with care and wouldn’t – or shouldn’t! – play catch with the vase or let a toddler play dress-up with the jewels, when you receive Communion, you should do so in a way that treats the Blessed Sacrament worthily. Because you are receiving the Body and Blood of Christ,

you should fast for at least one hour before receiving Communion, except for water and medicine. It is also important to dress in appropriate attire for Mass as a sign of respect.

When you arrive at Mass, make the Sign of the Cross with holy water to remind yourself of your Baptism and that you are a member of Christ's Body, the Church. Then genuflect toward the Real Presence of Jesus in the tabernacle before you enter your pew. Try to focus your thoughts on the mystery you are about to encounter.

You can receive the Eucharist on your tongue (the ordinary way), a traditional sign of our humility before God and an acknowledgment that it is Christ who feeds us. It is also possible to receive Communion in your hands (the optional way). If you do so, you should make sure your hands are clean and empty, placing your left hand flat over your right, and that you put the host in your mouth right away rather than waiting until you return to your pew.

Non-Catholics and Catholics who are in a state of mortal sin may not receive Communion. Some question this decision because they believe it excludes people and causes division among Christians. And the fact is that it does exclude people. So why do we do it?

We do it because when we receive Jesus Christ into our souls, our souls should be ready to give Him a good, pure home. Our souls should be in the state of grace to receive Him worthily. If we are in the state of mortal sin and receive the Eucharist, we commit sacrilege, treating a sacred object unworthily, as if we don't care. Confession

restores grace to the soul and purifies the soul for the Eucharist.

For non-Catholics and others who do not believe the Eucharist is the Lord, to take the Eucharist would be a lie. Anyone who isn't fully initiated into the life of the Church cannot receive the gifts the Eucharist offers.

The Catechism and canon law provide for very limited circumstances where, in case of "grave necessity," such as the danger of death, Sacraments may be administered to those who ask, "provided that they manifest the Catholic faith ... and are properly disposed" (CIC 844 § 4).

It's important to remember that excluding people is not necessarily bad. You would exclude novice pilots from flying commercial jets, for example. You would exclude first-year medical students from the operating room. A ten-year-old at his first violin lesson cannot play at Carnegie Hall. This is because you can't just one day fly a plane, perform open-heart surgery, or perform a violin concerto: you must first practice and prepare.

### **Why Should We Receive Communion Often?**

Just as we need to eat and drink several times a day to maintain our physical strength, so we also need to receive the Eucharist to feed the soul. The very Body of Christ, the Eucharist, strengthens and nourishes the Body of Christ – the Church – whose members are gathered in that Eucharistic celebration. When we eat food, our bodies receive the nourishment

## Answer Key

1. It is the real Body and Blood of Jesus.
2. Transubstantiation.
3. A priest.
4. Because He is the omnipotent God and was very clear and explicit in His teaching.

5. When we receive Holy Communion, we grow closer to Christ. The Eucharist helps us avoid sin and strengthens our charity. It helps us see the face of Jesus in the poor. The Catechism explains, "Participation in the Holy Sacrifice identifies us with [Jesus'] Heart, sustains our strength along the pilgrimage of this life, makes us long for eternal life, and unites us even now to the Church in heaven, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and all the saints" (CCC 1419).

6. Those who receive Communion should do so in a way that treats the Blessed Sacrament worthily. Because we are receiving the Body and Blood of Christ, we should fast for at least one hour before receiving Communion, except for water and medicine.

they need to maintain strength. When we eat the Eucharist, our souls receive the nourishment they need to maintain strength.

Frequent reception of the Eucharist, explains the *Catechism*, increases charity in our daily life and that charity allows us to root ourselves in Christ (CCC 1394). So what does increasing charity in our daily life mean? It means that we see things in a different way; a more positive and hopeful

way – a way that leads us to practice the values of the Kingdom of God and to steer clear of values that lifestyles of materialism and consumerism promote. Frequent reception of the Eucharist helps us to keep our spiritual goals in check and to avoid those little things in life that lead us to sin.

Catholics are required to receive Communion once a year, but the Church warmly invites us to receive it much more often: every week, even every day!

1. How is the Eucharist not just a symbol or a sign?

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2. What word describes the change of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus?

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3. Who has the power to invoke the Holy Spirit and consecrate the Eucharist?

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4. Why do Catholics take Christ at His word when it comes to the presence of Christ's Body and Blood in the Eucharist?

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5. What are two fruits of Holy Communion?

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6. How should we receive Holy Communion?

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## Answer Key

7. To remind us of our Baptism and that we are a members of Christ's Body, the Church, and to focus our thoughts.

8. Receiving on the tongue is the ordinary way to receive Communion, but it is also acceptable to receive in our hands. We should make sure our hands are clean and empty, placing our left hand flat over our right, and that we put the host in our mouth right away rather than waiting till we return to our pew.

9. Because they are in a state of mortal sin. If we are in the state of mortal sin and receive the Eucharist, we commit sacrilege, treating a sacred object unworthily, as if we don't care. Confession restores grace to the soul and purifies the soul for the Eucharist.

10. No. For non-Catholics and others who do not believe the Eucharist is the Lord, to receive Communion would be a lie. Anyone who isn't fully initiated into the life of the Church cannot receive the gifts the Eucharist offers. It's not always bad to exclude people from certain things because sometimes it is not appropriate for everyone to be included.

11. When we eat the Eucharist, our souls receive the nourishment they need to maintain strength.

12. Frequently, because it increases charity in our daily life, and that charity allows us to root ourselves in Christ. Once a year.

7. Why do we bless ourselves with holy water and genuflect toward the tabernacle when we arrive for Mass?

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8. What are the two acceptable ways to receive the Eucharist?

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9. For what reason should a Catholic not receive Communion? Why is this appropriate? What must a person in this state do in order to receive Communion again?

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10. Can a non-Catholic receive Holy Communion? Why or why not? Why is excluding people from certain things not always a bad thing?

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11. How does the Eucharist feed our souls?

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12. How often should we receive the Eucharist and why? What is the barest minimum a Catholic is required to do to receive the Eucharist?

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## Answer Key

### Reflection Question:

Accept reasoned answers.

#### Reflection Question

If you are Catholic, describe how you felt at your First Communion when you received the Eucharist. If you are not Catholic, describe a time you felt especially close to Jesus or desired to be near Him.

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## Answer Key

1. Procure for itself  
a lamb
2. A year old
3. Blemish
4. Slaughter the  
lamb at the  
evening twilight
5. Blood
6. Bunch of hyssop
7. Mark the two  
door posts and  
lintel of their  
houses

## The Passover Sacrifice Reading Guide

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**Step 1:** Read Exodus 12:3-22.

**Step 2:** Record the specific requirement of the Passover sacrifice.

1. Verse 3: Every family must...

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2. Verse 5: The lamb must be how old?

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3. Verse 5: The lamb must be without...

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4. Verse 6: What must be done with the whole community?

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5. Verse 7: Take some of its...

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6. Verse 22: And using...

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7. Verse 7: Mark...

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## Answer Key

8. Consumed (eaten)
9. Unleavened bread  
and bitter herbs
10. Go through Egypt  
and strike down  
every firstborn in  
the land
11. Pass over the  
house
12. Remembered  
for future  
generations  
forever

8. Verse 8: That same night the lamb must be...

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9. Verse 8: With...

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10. Verse 12: On this night, the Lord will...

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11. Verse 13: Seeing the mark, God will...

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12. Verse 14: This day will be...

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## Answer Key

1. Lamb of God
2. Unblemished lamb
3. Passover meal
4. Death of the lamb
5. Bread of Life
6. Covenant in blood
7. Hyssop branch
8. Remember

**Step 3:** Read the follow Scripture passages and match them to the different requirements of the Passover sacrifice. Write the entire phrase, not just the number.

Unblemished lamb	Bread of Life	Lamb of God	Passover Meal
Remember	Covenant in Blood	Death of the Lamb	Hyssop Branch

1. John 1:36: \_\_\_\_\_
2. John 19:36: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Luke 22:14-15: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Luke 18:31-33: \_\_\_\_\_
5. John 6:53-57: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Luke 22:20: \_\_\_\_\_
7. John 19:28 – 30: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Luke 22:19: \_\_\_\_\_



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1. How is the Eucharist not just a symbol or a sign?

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2. What word describes the change of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus?

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3. Who has the power to invoke the Holy Spirit and consecrate the Eucharist?

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4. Why do Catholics take Christ at His word when it comes to the presence of Christ's Body and Blood in the Eucharist?

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5. What are two fruits of Holy Communion?

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# The Passover Sacrifice Reading Guide

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**Step 1:** Read Exodus 12:3-22.

**Step 2:** Record the specific requirement of the Passover sacrifice.

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9. Verse 8: With...

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10. Verse 12: On this night, the Lord will...

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11. Verse 13: Seeing the mark, God will...

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12. Verse 14: This day will be...

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**Step 3:** Read the follow Scripture passages and match them to the different requirements of the Passover sacrifice. Write the entire phrase, not just the number.

Unblemished lamb	Bread of Life	Lamb of God	Passover Meal
Remember	Covenant in Blood	Death of the Lamb	Hyssop Branch

1. John 1:36: \_\_\_\_\_
2. John 19:36: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Luke 22:14-15: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Luke 18:31-33: \_\_\_\_\_
5. John 6:53-57: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Luke 22:20: \_\_\_\_\_
7. John 19:28 – 30: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Luke 22:19: \_\_\_\_\_