

THE TABERNACLE

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: EXODUS 25-27



God lives among His people.

The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

God announced His plan to live among His people – God called Moses to take up a collection and gave him instructions for the tabernacle. The tabernacle was where God purposed to rule and dwell among His people. It was made to exact specifications using the gold and precious items collected. The word “tabernacle” means tent or dwelling. In the Old Testament God made His dwelling in a literal tent. The tabernacle was God’s house and it confirmed God’s living presence among His people. God’s active presence set Him apart from the dead stone idols of the other nations. His presence dwelling with His people marked His blessing first in Eden. Here we see his presence among the people of Israel. God was present among us when Jesus came to earth. Now God’s active presence is in the Church by the Holy Spirit. Finally his presence will be with us in heaven where we will behold the Lord face to face.

Gods plan for His house had a purpose – God gave detailed plans for all of the tabernacle and all of its furnishings. The tabernacle and furnishings became the central focus of worship in Israel. God’s presence would dwell in the tabernacle and sacrifices would be made there for the people’s sins. The square inner court of the tabernacle formed the model for the temple and even the new Jerusalem to come (Revelation 21:16).

God gave specific instructions for the altar of God - Countless sacrifices were burned upon the altar and the blood of countless animals was sprinkled upon it to atone for sin. Rings were attached to the altar so wooden poles could be slipped through to transport the altar.

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WHERE IS JESUS?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

The tabernacle was set up to have an inner court of two rooms, the Holy Place was the first room, and within it, the Most Holy Place. The Most Holy Place is also known as the Holy of Holies. A curtain divided the two. Only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies, once a year, as a mediator between God and man. Each year he offered an atoning sacrifice for the people. This sacrifice was not a perfect sacrifice. It has to be repeated year after year. Jesus came as the perfect sacrifice. When He died on the cross, the temple curtain was torn in two from top to bottom. God wanted everyone to understand that Jesus' sacrifice was sufficient for all time and that the barrier between man and God had been removed in Christ. God would now tabernacle, or dwell in and among His people. From that moment on, God's people became the temple of God and His presence dwells continually in our hearts. John tells us the Word became flesh and made His dwelling (tabernacled) among us. Note: This reference to John's Gospel is about Jesus dwelling with us upon the earth prior to his ascension. I suggest you use I Corinthians 3:16-19 -- which is what you have been talking about.

ON THE ROAD TO EMMANUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

Bible Passage: Psalm 72:4

Connecting the passage to Christ:

Christ is the only one who would crush the head of the oppressor, that is, Satan. Jesus defended the cause of the poor and delivered the children of the needy.

Questions for reflection:

- How does this verse compare to Genesis 3:15? (God promises that there will come a man who will crush the head of the serpent, Satan. Here Satan is called the oppressor. Ultimately sins and evil are connected to the actions of Satan. Christ will defend man against this oppressor.)
- How did Jesus fulfill this word to defend the cause of the poor? (Jesus came to preach good news to the poor. He related to the poor with dignity, and gave them the same message He gave others.)

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SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

BUILDING THE FURNITURE

Supplies

modeling clay for several
teams of children

Divide the class into teams to build a part of the tabernacle. Each team is to work on a different piece of furniture in secret, taking the description from Exodus 25:10 – 27:8. Use the description of the Ark of the Covenant in Exodus 25:10-22. Compare the similarities and differences with the teams in the class.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- How did the men follow these simple instructions and make the temple articles? (God filled them with His Holy Spirit so they would know exactly how to do it. See Exodus 31:1-6.)
- Why was it important that the tabernacle be exact? (The tabernacle and each of its articles had a prophetic meaning, and pointed to the perfect sacrifice of God. They represented the ultimate sacrifice and offering of Jesus, the Lamb of God.)



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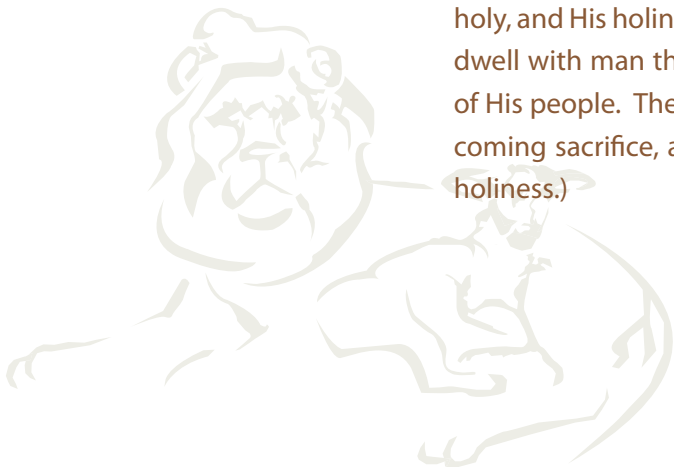
TABERNACLE TRIVIA

Hold a trivia competition between the boys and girls. Ask each team to pick a number from 1-10 and then answer that question about the tabernacle. A correct answer gets one point.

1. What piece of furniture would later hold the Ten Commandments? (The Ark of the Covenant.)
2. Name two of the items that were kept in the Ark of the Covenant. (The stone tablets of the Ten Commandments, a pot of manna, and Aaron's staff that budded.)
3. What kind of wood was used in the construction of the Ark of the Covenant? (Acacia wood.)
4. What metal was the lamp stand made out of? (Gold.)
5. What were two of the three main colors of the Tabernacle curtains? (Purple, blue, and scarlet.)
6. Which piece of the tabernacle furniture had almond blossoms on it? (The lamp stand.)
7. What metal was the altar made out of? (Bronze.)
8. What type of oil was used for the lamp? (Olive.)
9. Which of the following was not used in the temple construction: Goat skins, ram skins, skins of sea cows, skins of fine horses? (Skins of fine horses.)
10. What decoration was to be sewn into the curtains? (Cherubim.)

Then ask the class the following questions:

- What do we learn by reading all the instructions God gave about the tabernacle? (We realize God wanted it to be constructed a certain way for a very specific purpose.)
- Why couldn't Israel just build a house for God the way they wanted to? (God is holy, and His holiness needed to be honored and guarded. The only way God could dwell with man then was knowing that His Son would one day atone for the sins of His people. The tabernacle and its furniture were a continual reminder of Jesus' coming sacrifice, and the tabernacle kept the sin of man away from God and His holiness.)



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NO CURTAIN DIVIDES US

Supplies

- Bible
- an old sheet or cloth (cut a one inch slit to be able to tear it later)

This exercise will demonstrate what it was like to need to send a priest to talk and relate to God.

Place a Bible open to one of the chapters we are reading. Cover it with the sheet. Ask for a volunteer. Ask them to tell the class what a particular verse says. Tell them that the Bible is under the cover and the cover needs to be lifted to read it. When they then go to touch the cover, shout out, "No, don't touch that." Then explain that you are the only one who can touch it. They should look confused. You could then explain that the Word is holy and that you want them to read it but they cannot touch the sheet. Finally make a deal. Tell them you will act as the man in the middle. You will read it and tell them what to say to the class. Read a short portion such as Exodus 25:10 then whisper it to the volunteer and then ask him to repeat it to the class.

Explain how the priest would go inside to meet with God on behalf of the people. The people could not go by themselves. Now God has made a way for all of us to pray and talk to Him. Take the sheet, rip it in two, and toss it aside. Explain that when Jesus died, the temple curtain was torn in two. Now anyone who trusts in Jesus can approach the throne of grace and speak to God.

PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

IN CLASS PROJECT

The first and second grade children can use the preschool coloring sheet and questions. Have the older children draw a picture of the Ark of God with the cherubim lifting their wings over it.



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FOR OLDER GRADES

Read Hebrews 9:1-14.

- How is the New Covenant different from the Old Covenant? (Under the Old Covenant people worshipped God in a tabernacle made by human hands. Now, under the New Covenant, we can worship in the spiritual tent of our bodies. Whereas the sacrifices offered under the Old Covenant could only purify a person until they sinned again, Jesus' sacrifice can cleanse the conscience. The blood of Christ purifies us from all our sin once and for all.)

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Tabernacle – The word tabernacle means tent or dwelling. In the Old Testament God made His dwelling in a literal tent. In the New Testament John writes in John 1:14 “The Word became flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us.” Here we see that Jesus was the ultimate fulfillment of that Old Testament picture.

The tabernacle was God's house which demonstrated God's living presence among His people. God's presence set Him apart from the dead stone idols of the other nations. God's presence dwelling with His people marked His blessing first in Eden and then with the Nation of Israel and finally with us in heaven.

