

General Church Education



Making the Tabernacle

Exodus 35:4-10, 20-35; 36:1-7

Lesson 15

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 3: The Lord Is Our Lawgiver

For ages 8-9 years

Making the Tabernacle

Exodus 35:4-10, 20-35; 36:1-7

For Parents and Teachers

As the children of Israel continued traveling through the Sinai peninsula, their trust and faith in the Lord and His power wavered. Though the Lord was always with the Israelites, they often strayed. As a way to be present among them, the Lord told Moses that the Israelites were to build a special place of worship. The tabernacle was constructed following the Lord's specific directions. It contained furniture used in their ritual for worship. The tabernacle was a moveable tent that they carried with them until they reached their final destination, the land of Canaan.

The tabernacle was the "house of God" or the Lord's dwelling place with the ancient Israelites and its details represent every place the Lord dwells. It represents heaven and also how the Lord dwells with each of us when our lives are in true order. The three parts of the tabernacle correspond to the three parts in us: will, thought and outward act. The Holy of Holies is our will, the part of us where we are most intimately connected with the Lord and where He is always present with us. The Holy Place is where the Lord dwells in our conscious thought and in our worship of Him. The Outer Court represents our outer lives that are open to view, the part of our lives seen by others. When our lives are in true order, the Lord dwells in every part of us. His love and wisdom are reaching out and affecting all that we think and do.

Ideas for Children

- The Lord designed the tabernacle.
- Precious materials taken from Egypt were used in building the tabernacle.
- The people gave the materials and their time freely.

From the Writings

Worship freely given is true worship, and what is offered willingly is pleasing to the Lord. For this reason the children of Israel had free-will sacrifices and were told that all who were moved should bring a choice offering to Jehovah for the making of the Tabernacle.

We always long to become free if we are not free, for freedom is our life. From this it is evident that nothing is pleasing to the Lord that is not done willingly, in freedom. For when we do not worship the Lord freely, we worship Him with nothing of our own.

When we are regenerating we take the Lord's gift of freedom and use it to compel ourselves and humble our rational mind so that it may submit itself, and in consequence we receive a heavenly identity (proprium). This identity is gradually perfected by the Lord and becomes more and more free, so that it becomes the affection for good and for truth and brings delight, and happiness. See *True Christian Religion* 495 and *Arcana Coelestia* 1947

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Reading: Luke 10:25-37

Words to Understand

artisan—an artist or skilled worker

craftsman—someone who works skillfully to make things

ephod—a richly embroidered outer garment worn by priests of ancient Israel

breastplate—embroidered cloth with twelve jewels, worn by the high priest

gifted—talented or having a natural ability to do something

freewill offering—an offering given from your heart, because you want to, not because it is demanded

sanctuary—a holy place set aside for worship

cherubim—winged heavenly beings or angels

coupled—joined together

cubit—the length from the elbow to the tip of the fingers; about 18 inches (45cm)

Disobedience of the Israelites

Do you remember how angry Moses was when he saw the people worshipping the golden calf, how he threw the two stone tablets down and they broke in pieces? The Lord knew that the children of Israel needed the Ten Commandments. He told Moses to cut two more tables of stone and come to the top of Mount Sinai again. When Moses returned to the camp this time his face shone with a wonderful light as he carried the new tablets of stone with the Ten Commandments written on them. Moses told the people that the Lord wanted them to build a very special place to put the Ten Commandments, a place that was to be like a church building. In this place of worship the two stone tablets would be kept safe and holy. **Read Exodus 35:4-10, 20-35; 36:1-7.**

The Design of the Tabernacle

While Moses was on the mountain the Lord had opened his spiritual eyes to see the pattern or design of the tabernacle which was the building the Israelites would use for worship. It would be beautiful and made of very precious materials. Of course, the Israelites were still traveling. They were on their way through the wilderness to the land of Canaan where they would make their permanent home. So this building had



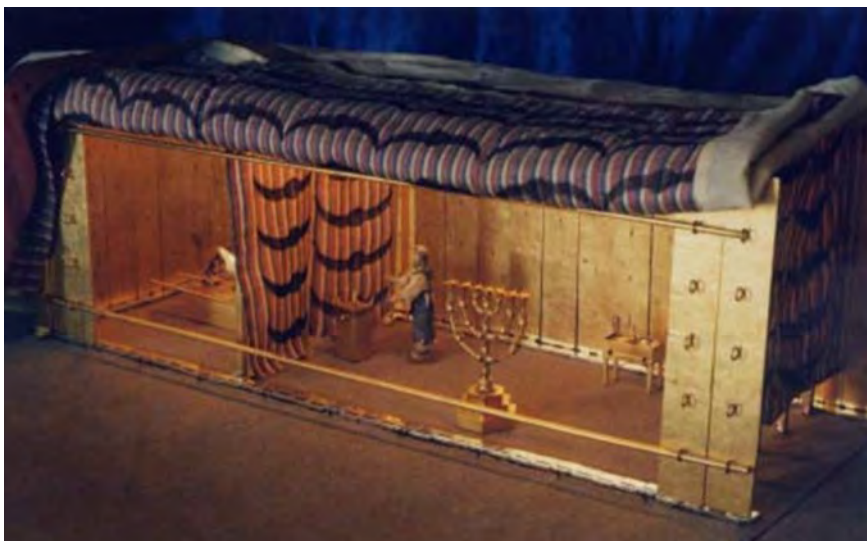
to be portable. It was designed as a very special tent that could be taken down quickly and carried on their journey and then set up when they stopped. The tabernacle was always to be in the center of this large company of people. When they camped, the people set up their tents around it. When they marched on, the tabernacle traveled in the center of the people. The pillar of cloud and fire stood over the tabernacle for all to see whenever they camped.

Free Will Offerings

Moses asked the children of Israel to bring free will offerings or gifts of things that were needed to make the tabernacle. What kinds of things were needed? They needed gold, silver and brass; linen cloth of blue, purple, scarlet and white. They needed rams' skins dyed red, badger skins, acacia wood, oil and spices. They were also to bring onyx stones and other precious jewels to make an ephod and breastplate, special things worn by the priests which we will learn about later. Do you think the people were willing to give all these things as free gifts? How would you have responded to this request? In fact, the Israelites were very generous. They brought more than enough gifts. At last Moses had to tell them to stop giving!

Building the Tabernacle

Two men, Bezalel and Aholiab, were chosen by the Lord to be in charge of building the tabernacle. The Lord put wisdom in their hearts so that they were inspired to do the work just as in the pattern Moses had seen on the mountain. Bezalel was in charge of working with gold, silver and brass. Aholiab was in charge of making curtains and embroidery work. The craftsmen skillfully carved designs into the wood and precious metals. They cut and set the jewels. Gifted women spun yarn. First they made ten blue, purple and scarlet linen curtains embroidered with cherubim to cover the tabernacle. The curtains were joined with blue loops and golden clasps. Next they made eleven curtains of goat's hair joined with loops and clasps of brass. Then they made two leather coverings to protect everything underneath: one of rams' skins dyed red and one of badger skins.



The Walls

The tabernacle walls were made of acacia (cedar) wood cut into long boards and covered with gold. Each board fit into a silver socket at the bottom. Horizontal acacia wood poles covered with gold helped connect the boards to make the walls solid. There were three walls; one back wall and two side walls. When

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curtains were hung over them, they formed a tent. The building was thirty cubits (45') long, ten cubits (15') wide and ten cubits (15') high. Inside were two rooms. The innermost one, the Most Holy Place or Holy of Holies, was in the shape of a cube because the length, width and height were the same. The other room, the Holy Place, was a long rectangle.



The rooms were divided by a hanging curtain called a “veil.” This veil was decorated with cherubim embroidered on the fine linen fabric of blue, purple and scarlet.

The Courtyard

Around the tabernacle was a large court enclosed by a fence that was half the height of the tabernacle walls. At the east end, the direction the tabernacle faced, was a gate. People could come to the gate of the court and see priests performing their services. The priests also served in the Holy Place, but only the high priest entered the Holy of Holies, once a year.

A Place for the Lord

The Israelites built the tabernacle as a place for the Lord to be with them and to keep the two stone tablets with the Commandments safe and holy. It was the “Lord’s house.” Today, we call the church the “Lord’s house.” The Lord is with us all the time although we cannot see Him. He is especially near us in church because we are learning from Him and praying to Him. We all need to feel that the Lord is close to us. We need to build a place for the Lord in our hearts. How can we do this? When we love the Commandments and try to live according to them, our hearts and minds become the “Lord’s house.”

Discussion Ideas

- How is a church different from the tabernacle?
- The Israelites were very willing to give free will offerings to make the tabernacle. Why do you think this was?
- How do we give “free will” offerings to the Lord and His church today?

Activity Overview | Making the Tabernacle

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

Then all the people answered together and said, “All that the Lord has spoken we will do.”
So Moses brought back the words of the people to the Lord. Exodus 19:8

Songs

We Will Serve the Lord

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-we-will-serve-the-lord/>

Projects

Choose one or two activities.

- Activity 1 | Tabernacle Measurement Activity
- Activity 2 | Making the Tabernacle Mix and Match
- Picture to color—Building the Tabernacle Walls (Exodus 35, 36)

Additional Activity Ideas

- Watch a video showing a faithful reproduction of tabernacle; *The Tabernacle Model at Glencairn Museum* (Bryn Athyn, US) at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-the-tabernacle-of-israel/>. The narrator explains the parts of the tabernacle and how the tabernacle was used for worship.
- The tabernacle was a structure where the children of Israel could remember and worship the Lord. In what ways could you “build a tabernacle” in your life to worship the Lord?
- Look at samples of the precious metals and fabrics used to build the tabernacle.
- Search for images of the “Tabernacle of Moses” online to see how the tabernacle fit into the encampment of the children of Israel.



Activity 1 | Tabernacle Measurement Activity

The tabernacle was a movable “church” that the children of Israel used as they journeyed through the wilderness and entered the land of Canaan. Map out the tabernacle using the cubit measure of a person’s arm and string or yarn.

Materials Needed

40+ yards of yarn or string

a space large enough to mark out the tabernacle (45 x 15 feet)

optional: 4 sticks, cones or other posts to mark the corners of the tabernacle

Directions

1. The tabernacle was 30 cubits long by 10 cubits wide. A cubit is approximately 18” (15cm), or the length of a man’s forearm.
2. Put a marker in the ground at one corner of the tabernacle you will be building.
3. Use your arm, or a child’s arm, to measure 30 lengths of yarn or string. Starting at the corner you have marked, stretch the yarn out to show the length of the tabernacle. Place a second marker at the end of the yarn.
4. Measure 10 lengths of yarn. Continue a line at right angles to the first line you placed. Place a third marker at the end of the yarn.
5. Measure 30 lengths of yarn to create the opposite side of the tent. Place a fourth marker at the end of the yarn.
6. Complete the outline by taking the string back to the first corner.
7. *Optional:* mark the holy of holies where the ark of the covenant containing the Ten Commandments was kept. It is 10 x 10 cubits, and lies at one end of the tent of the tabernacle. Mark 10 cubits off at one end of the space you have measured to show where the ark was kept.



Activity 2 | Making the Tabernacle Mix and Match

Read each question. Write the letter that matches the correct answer on the line before each question.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ___ 1. What did the Lord want the Israelites to build? | A. They were set in sockets of silver and had horizontal poles. |
| ___ 2. What was the tabernacle? | B. Yes, more than enough. |
| ___ 3. What was the tabernacle to be used for? | C. Bezalel and Aholiab |
| ___ 4. What were the people to bring to Moses? | D. A tabernacle. |
| ___ 5. Were the people willing to bring gifts? | E. It was to be used for a church. |
| ___ 6. What two men were chosen to work on the tabernacle? | F. 30 cubits long, 10 cubits wide and 10 cubits high. |
| ___ 7. How many coverings did they make for the tabernacle? | G. They were made of acacia wood covered with gold. |
| ___ 8. What were the walls of the tabernacle made of? | H. It was a tent that they could take with them. |
| ___ 9. How did the boards stand upright? | I. They made four coverings for the tabernacle. |
| ___ 10. How big was the tabernacle? | J. The people were to bring free will offerings. |

Answers:
1. D
2. H
3. E
4. J
5. B
6. C
7. I
8. G
9. A
10. F

