

General Church Education



The Priest's Garments

Exodus 39:1-43

Lesson 17

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 3: The Lord Is Our Lawgiver

For ages 8-9 years

The Priest's Garments

Exodus 39:1-43

For Parents and Teachers

Children enjoy learning about the beautiful clothes the priests of Israel wore. These clothes represent the Lord's truth or teachings which come to us from the Lord through heaven. The holy garments were made "for glory and for beauty" for the priests to wear while they were doing their special duties of taking care of the tabernacle, offering sacrifices, burning incense, trimming the lamps and all the other things they did connected with worship. In this lesson the children will learn how the Lord could communicate with the high priest through lights flashing from the stones on the breastplate. They will learn how the Lord commanded Moses to anoint all parts of the tabernacle and also the priests to set them apart as sacred for worship. This worship and ritual were the means for keeping the children of Israel aware of the Lord's presence with them as He guided them back to the Holy Land. Worship does the same thing for us as our lives are guided to heaven.

Ideas for Children

- When we worship, the Lord is present in our hearts and minds.
- The Lord is always with us in His Word so it is important that we go to it daily.
- The ritual of worship reminds us about the Lord, so we don't forget Him and He can be close to us.

From the Writings

Light and radiance are meant by the Urim and Thummim. Through the stones in the breastplate varying radiations of the light of heaven came forth. These radiant lights differed according to answers given through them. This explains why they assumed different colors.

Divine Truth coming from the Lord's Divine Good manifests itself to the angels as light. It is the source of all the light of heaven. The colors from it are variations of intelligence and wisdom among them. For all wisdom and intelligence is a product of Divine Truth or light. From this it may be recognized that radiations of that light in various colors are the medium through which Divine Truths, coming as answers, present themselves in the heavens.

A similar function was served by the Urim and Thummim when God was asked something. But it should be remembered that whenever a radiance was seen in them the answer was declared at the same time by an audible voice. This declaration was made through angels, to whom what they declared had been revealed by the Lord through such a radiance. For as has been stated, this is how Divine Truths coming as answers present themselves in heaven. See *Arcana Coelestia* 9905

The Priest's Garments

Exodus 39:1-43

Words to Understand

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

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

intricately—done with elaborate detail

onyx—a stone often of light pink color

signet—a seal or stamp used for making a signature

span—the length from the tip of the little finger to the tip of the thumb when the hand is spread out, about eight inches

exquisite—very beautiful and carefully made

anoint—to pour holy oil on a person or thing



The Tabernacle

The tabernacle that the Lord instructed the ancient Israelites to build. It had a special inner room, the Holy of Holies, where the gold-covered ark was kept. What was kept inside the ark? (The Ten Commandments.) The Holy Place, an outer room, was lit by oil lamps on the lampstand that reflected the golden surfaces of the walls and the three pieces of golden furniture in that room. What else was in the Holy Place? (The altar of incense and the table of showbread.) Do you remember the things made of brass in the outer court? (The laver and altar of burnt offering.) All these furnishings were designed so that the priests could lead the people in worship. Let's find out how the priests were dressed.

Read Exodus 39:1-31.

The Holy Garments

The tribe of Levi was set apart for leading the worship of the Lord. Do you remember that Moses was from the tribe of Levi? First they made clothes for Aaron, the older brother of Moses. He was going to be the High Priest. The outer garment was called the "ephod." It was something like a vest, opening at the sides instead of the front. It was made from gold, blue, purple,

scarlet and white linen. The gold was real gold, hammered in thin plates and then cut into wires. These wires were worked into the blue, the purple, the scarlet and the white linen. It was joined over the shoulders with straps. A girdle, or belt, of the same colors went around the High Priest's waist.

What kind of stones were on the shoulder straps of the ephod? (Two onyx stones in settings of gold.) On these stones they carved the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, six names on each stone. Do you remember the names of the twelve tribes? They were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulon, Joseph, and Benjamin.



Did you notice that the breastplate the same colors as the ephod? It measured a span each way, about eight inches square. They set precious stones in settings of gold on the breastplate. There were twelve stones in four rows, three stones in each row. The first and third rows had stones of warm, fiery colors while the second and fourth rows had stones of cooler colors. On each of these precious stones was the name of one of the tribes of Israel. The breastplate was fastened at its four corners by blue ribbon to four gold rings in the ephod. The ephod and the breastplate were the holiest of the High Priest's clothing.

The Urim and Thummim

The breastplate was used by the High Priest whenever he spoke to the Lord. He would ask the Lord a question, and the Lord would answer by flashes of light coming out of the stones. For this reason, the breast-plate was called the Urim and Thummim, which means "lights" and "perfections." The flashes of light would not come from all of the stones at once, but from one or more at a time. The High Priest knew what each stone meant, so he could read the Lord's answer in the flashing of lights. The Lord would speak with a living voice while He gave flashes of light.

What did the High Priest wear underneath the ephod? He wore a long robe, woven all in blue. What designs were embroidered around the hem of this blue robe? (Pomegranates of blue, purple and scarlet.) Between each embroidered pomegranate there was a golden bell. When the High Priest, walked into the tabernacle, the people could hear the bells as he moved.

Then they made a linen coat with a woven design to



be worn inside the robe, a turban and breeches (trousers) of linen. Finally they made a plate of pure gold, wrote "HOLINESS TO THE LORD," on it, and tied it to Aaron's turban with blue ribbon. At last everything was finished. **Read Exodus 39:32-43** to find out what Moses did next.

The Anointing

The Lord commanded Moses to anoint the tabernacle. Moses obeyed. Anointing with oil sets something or someone apart for a special, holy purpose. Moses was also commanded to bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tabernacle and wash them. Then Moses put the priest's clothes on them and anointed them. This made Aaron and his sons priests of the Lord to lead the people of Israel in worshipping the Lord.

The Cloud and the Glory

Next a bright cloud covered the tabernacle and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, showing that the tabernacle was now His house. The cloud was the same cloud that had led the children of Israel out of Egypt. Now it stood over the tabernacle. During the day it was seen as a cloud and at night it looked like fire to show that the Lord would always be with the children of Israel, just as He is always with us in His Word. For forty years the cloud led the Israelites on their journey. When the cloud moved, they packed everything, including the tabernacle, and followed it. When it stopped, they set up the tabernacle again, and camped around it.



Discussion Ideas

- It's important to set apart things for worship. New Church priests are ordained in a special worship ceremony and given a white robe, a golden girdle, and blue stole.
- Talk about making a special place to keep the Word in your home. Talk about designing a worship service to meet the needs of your family.

Activity Overview | The Priest's Garments

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering. Exodus 25:2

Songs

Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-worship-the-lord-in-the-beauty-ofholiness/>

How Good are Thy Tents O Jacob

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-how-good-are-thy-tents-o-jacob/>

Projects

Choose one or two activities.

- Activity 1 | Make a Model of the High Priest
- Activity 2 | Make a Model of the Breastplate
- Picture to color—The High Priest (Exodus 39)

Additional Activity Ideas

- Watch a video showing a faithful reproduction of tabernacle and its furnishings; *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.
- Review *The 12 Sons of Jacob* song at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-the-twelve-sons-of-jacob-song/>.
- Discuss different kinds of clothes we wear. Why do people wear different clothes for different jobs? How uniforms or robes help us know what that person can do for us? Why do different clothes affect the way we feel? What special clothing do you wear?
- The children of Israel were happy because they had a special place to worship the Lord. Talk about where you worship the Lord—at home, or with others at church.

Activity 1 | Make a Model of the High Priest

Priests were all members of the tribe of Levi. They rotated responsibilities in the tabernacle and lived among the tribes. There was only one high priest, who was the only person allowed to enter the holy of holies.

Materials Needed

1 stiff white paper (to print the paper model of the priest)

High Priest Template (next page)

scissors

markers or colored pencils

optional: tape to secure the high priest's clothing in place

Directions

1. Print the *High Priest Template* on to stiff paper.
2. Since we have descriptions of the clothing, but not samples, it is hard to say exactly what the garments looked like. Children may use some artistic license in how they color the clothing using the color scheme given in Exodus 39. Use the colored picture in the lesson book to help you. Color the high priest and his clothes using markers or colored pencils as follows.

The priest's robe—solid blue

The ephod—red, blue and purple.

The stones of the breastplate—a variety of bright colors. The cloth around them is red, blue, purple and gold linen.

3. Cut around the priest and his clothing on the heavy black lines, being careful not to cut off the tabs.
4. Fold the tabs around the clothing down.
5. Dress the priest in his garments, as shown.



High Priest Template



Activity 2 | Make a Model of the Breastplate

The High Priest wore a breastplate on his chest. He used it when he spoke to the Lord. He would ask the Lord a question, and the Lord would answer by flashes of light coming out of the stones. The High Priest knew what each stone meant, so he could read the Lord's answer in the flashing lights. Discover what it looked like by making a model.

Materials Needed

Breastplate Template

stiff gold or yellow paper for printing

scissors

single hole punch

markers or colored pencils

approx. 2' (60cm) yarn or string to wear the finished project

Option: to make the breastplate a little fancier glue colored sequins, glass beads *or* jelly beans on as the breastplate stones

Directions

1. Print the *Breastplate Template* on stiff gold paper.
2. Follow the directions on the template to color the stones the correct color.
3. Cut out the breastplate on the lines.
4. Punch a hole in the two top corners of the breastplate. Thread one end of the yarn or string through each hole and tie a knot to hold in place.
5. Try on the breastplate.

Breastplate Template

<p>Beryl Green</p>	<p>Zebulun</p>	<p>Onyx Black</p>	<p>Joseph</p>
<p>Jacinth Yellow</p>	<p>Gad</p>	<p>Agate Blue</p>	<p>Asher</p>
<p>Emerald Green</p>	<p>Judah</p>	<p>Sapphire Blue</p>	<p>Dan</p>
<p>Ruby Red</p>	<p>Reuben</p>	<p>Topaz Yellow</p>	<p>Simeon</p>
<p>Carbuncle Red</p>	<p>Levi</p>	<p>Diamond Clear</p>	<p>Naphtali</p>
<p>Jasper Red</p>	<p>Benjamin</p>	<p>Amethyst Purple</p>	<p>Issachar</p>

