Glenview New Church Sunday Morning Program Primary Lessons: Phase 3 – Lesson 18 The Tabernacle and the Ark of the Testimony (Exodus 25:10-22; 40:17-38)

## I. Underlying Ideas for the Teacher

- A. The plan of the tabernacle is the blueprint for a heavenly character.
- B. Every individual is a church in least form.
- C. A study of the spiritual sense of the laws given at Sinai shows us how practical and important every detail of the letter of the Word is for us.
- D. Worship of the Lord should be at the heart of everything we do.
- E. The commandments must be written in our hearts, not just in our minds.
- F. Basic correspondences:
  - 1. The tabernacle = The life planned and lived according to the Lord's directions
  - 2. The Holy of Holies = The inmost heart
  - 3. The Holy Place = The thoughts
  - 4. The outer court = The outward life
  - 5. Gold = Love to the Lord
  - 6. Silver = Truth
  - 7. Brass or bronze = Natural goodness
  - 8. Acacia wood = The good of righteousness
  - 9. Cherubim = The Lord's providence protecting us from profaning holy things

# II. Story Circle

- A. Introduction
  - Moses was leading the children of Israel from one place to their eventual home. What were these two places? (From Egypt, to holy land or Canaan)
  - 2. At one place they stopped for almost a year. From the top of a mountain the Lord gave them an important set of laws. What were these laws called? (Ten Commandments)
  - 3. What mountain was this? (Mt. Sinai)
  - 4. After Moses had been gone 40 days and nights while the Lord gave him many other laws, what did the children of Israel, led by Aaron, do? (Gave Aaron their gold earrings; he fashioned a golden calf, and they worshiped it.)

- 5. When Moses came down from Mt. Sinai and saw the idol, he was angry and destroyed it. He also threw down the tables of stone with the commandments written on them. They broke, but later the Lord wrote the commandments on a second set of tablets hewn by Moses.
- 6. While Moses was up on Mt. Sinai receiving laws from the Lord, the Lord also told him how to build and furnish a tabernacle in which they were to worship. The thing of most importance in the tabernacle was the ark, a box or chest in which they were to keep the two tables of stone which had the Ten Commandments written on them.
- 7. Listen and watch while we learn about the tabernacle and the ark with this model.
- B. Tell/Read the Story
  - 1. Read aloud Exodus 25:10-22 (the Ark) and Exodus 40:17-38 (the Tabernacle). Refer to pages attached to this lesson entitled "Details Concerning the Tabernacle" to fill in details that interest you and/or the children.
- C. Ideas to Discuss
  - 1. What was the ark to be made of? (Acacia wood)
  - 2. With what was it overlaid? (Gold)
  - 3. How was it to be carried? (Poles inserted through rings)
  - 4. What was on top of the ark? (Mercy seat, which was the top, and cherubim above it)
  - 5. What was to be kept inside the ark? (Tables of stone on which were the Ten Commandments)
  - 6. What were the walls of the tabernacle made of? (Wood overlaid with gold)
  - 7. What was it covered with? (4 coverings: linen, goats' hair, rams' skins dyed red, badger skins)
  - 8. A veil divided the tabernacle into two parts. What was the inner part called? (Holy of Holies) What about the other part? (Holy Place)
  - 9. Outside was an open court. What was it surrounded by? (Linen curtains)
  - 10. What was all the wood inside the tabernacle covered with? (Gold)
  - 11. What were the articles of furniture in the outer court covered with? (Bronze)
  - 12. Can you name any of the articles of furniture inside the tabernacle? (Ark in Holy of Holies; table of showbread, lampstand, and altar of incense in Holy Place)
  - 13. What furniture was in the outer court? (Altar of burnt offering, laver)
  - 14. How did the Israelites know when to camp and when to continue on their journey? (When they were to stay in camp, a cloud by day and fire by night were above the tabernacle rested; when they were to move on, these were lifted.)

#### D. Further Ideas

- 1. Like the temple, which the Israelites built later, the tabernacle was built to be the dwelling place of the Lord with men. But we can have a dwelling place of the Lord in us, too. This us our heavenly character.
- 2. This dwelling place of the Lord, or the "temple within us," is divided into three parts:
  - a. Our "Holy of Holies" is our inmost heart where the Lord speaks to us.
  - b. Our "Holy Place" is our mind, where we think about the Lord and about what we ought to do.
  - c. And our "outer court" is our behavior, what everyone can see.
- 3. So how do you think the ark can be in our "Holy of Holies," in our inmost heart? (By learning the Lord's Word, including the Ten Commandments, and holding them in our hearts, respecting them, doing what they say, etc.)

## **III. Enrichment Activities**

- A. Music
  - 1. "The Law of the Lord," LORI'S SONGS FROM THE WORD III, Side 2, 10<sup>th</sup> song.
  - 2. "Ten Commandments," LORI'S SONGS FROM THE WORD II, Side A, 4th song.
  - 3. "All that the Lord hath spoken," HYMNAL #245
  - "Kol asher dibber Y'HOWAH," HYMNAL #246 (Hebrew version of #245).

## B. Activities

- It is intended that the teacher have the Story Circle for this lesson carried on around a model of the tabernacle. There is a commercially made tabernacle model that can be bought at the Swedenborg Center, Glenview. (Needs some assembly.) Allow children to examine the model anytime after you are finished with Story Circle.
- 2. Re-enact the freewill offering. Moses asked the Israelites for freewill offerings of the materials needed to make the tabernacle. They gave more than enough. The offerings were the following: gold, silver, bronze; blue, purple, and scarlet yarn; linen thread; goat's hair; rams' skins dyed red, badgers' skins; acacia wood (a desert bush); olive oil; spices and incense; precious stones. Provide the children with as many of these offerings, or substitutes, as possible, and have them re-enact the freewill offering.

- C. Projects
  - 1. See attached sheet, "The Ark of the Covenant." (Templates included.)
  - 2. See attached sheet, "Religion Projects," on making a tabernacle veil.
  - 3. Set up camp around the tabernacle. This project is intended to give the children a rough but hands-on feel for the tabernacle.
    - a. Make the pillar of fire and cloud. Cover one side of one piece of white poster board with cotton balls, another piece color as fire. Duct tape or string the two together so a child can wear them over the shoulders, sandwich board style.
    - b. Make the tabernacle. (The children who do this part of the project could play the part of the Levites, the ones responsible for setting up and taking down the tabernacle.) Cover a long table with four blankets ("curtains")--double size works well. It is not necessary for the colors to match the real curtain colors. Mention to the children that the tabernacle would have been much bigger than what they are making. Elaborate if you wish (tape up veils, make an ark for the Holy of Holies). The child wearing the pillar of fire and cloud should stand at the ark end of the tabernacle.
    - c. The children arrange themselves in camps around the tabernacle. (See section IX, Arrangement of Israelites around the Tabernacle; chart of the Order of Encampment.) One child could represent one camp if necessary.
    - d. When the pillar moves, take down the tabernacle curtains and follow the pillar until it stops, which is where the tabernacle would be set up again.

# IV. Teaching Aids

- A. Model of the tabernacle (mentioned in "Activities" above).
- B. 11" x 17" line drawings of the tabernacle and the Israelites camping around it can be purchased from the General Church Book Center in Bryn Athyn (\$10 each in 1988).
- C. Pictures from *The Tabernacle of Israel* by Rt. Rev. George de Charms.



#### Details Concerning the Tabernacle

## I. Inmost part called the Holy of Holies

- A. Only the ark was in it
- B. Only high priest (Aaron) allowed to enter

## II. Other covered part of tabernacle called the Holy Place

- A. Referred to as the tent or tabernacle of meeting
- B. In it were the table of showbread, the lampstand, and the altar of incense

## III. Structure of tabernacle (covered part)

- A. Walls built with upright boards of acacia wood overlaid with gold, held up by rings with poles through them, and silver sockets
- B. Coverings were:
  - 1. Linen and blue, purple, and scarlet yarn with designs of cherubim on them
  - 2. Goats hair curtain
  - 3. Curtain of rams' skins dyed red
  - 4. Covering of badger skins
- C. Veil is covered entrances to Holy Place and Holy of Holies

## IV. Outer uncovered area around the tabernacle called the Outer Court

- A. In it were the layer and the altar of burnt offering
- B. Court was enclosed by white linen curtains held up by posts in bronze sockets
- C. Levites and priests allowed here

## V. Furniture of tabernacle

- A. Table of Showbread
  - 1. Made of acacia wood, overlaid with gold
  - 2. 2 cubits (length) x 1 cubit (width) x 1 ½ cubits (height)
  - 3. 4 gold rings at corners and gold poles to carry it
  - 4. Dishes, pans, pitchers, and bowls of pure gold
  - 5. Showbread to be on table at all times

#### B. Ark

- 1. Made of acacia wood, overlaid with gold
- 2. 2 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cubits (length) x 1 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cubits (width) x 1 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cubits (height)
- 3. 4 gold rings at corners
- 4. Overlaid wood poles through rings to carry it
- 5. Testimony (or Ten Commandments) on tables of stone to be kept in it
- 6. Mercy seat (top) made of pure gold
- 7. Two solid gold cherubim with wings touching on top of mercy seat, facing each other
- 8. Lord spoke to Moses "from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim" (Ex. 25:22)
- C. Gold Lampstand
  - 1. Made of pure, hammered gold
  - 2. 7 branches
  - 3. 7 lamps filled with olive oil
- D. Altar of Incense
  - 1. Made of acacia wood, overlaid with gold
  - 2. 1 cubit (length) x 1 cubit (width) x 2 cubits (height)
  - 3. Horns at its corners
  - 4. Rings at corners and gold poles to carry it
  - 5. Sweet incense to be burnt upon it daily
  - 6. Blood of the sin offering of atonement sprinkled on its horns once a year
- E. Altar of Burnt Offering
  - 1. Made of acacia wood, overlaid with bronze
  - 2. 5 cubits (length) x 5 cubits (width) x 3 cubits (height)
  - 3. Horns at corners
  - 4. Bronze grate
  - 5. 4 bronze rings at corners and bronze poles to carry it
  - 6. Pans for ashes, shovels, basins, forks, and firepans of bronze
- F. The Laver
  - 1. Made of bronze
  - 2. Water kept in it which Aaron and his sons were to wash in before entering tabernacle of meeting or offering burnt offering

# VI. Garments for Priesthood

- A. High priest (Aaron)
  - 1. Ephod
    - a. Made of woven gold, blue, purple, scarlet and linen thread
    - b. Held on by shoulder straps



- C. The Levites camped in front of the other tribes, closest to the tabernacle on each side. They formed 4 camps under the emblems of the 3 sons of Levi (on 3 sides) and under the emblem of Moses and Aaron (on the 4th side).
- X. Duties of the Levites



- A. Attended to needs of Aaron.
- B. Did work in and around tabernacle.
- C. Were in charge of taking down, transporting, and setting up the tabernacle

## XI. The Lord's Glory Fills the Tabernacle

- A. When cloud descended and Lord's glory filled the tabernacle, children of Israel camped.
- B. When it was taken up, they journeyed.
- C. Cloud by day, fire by night.



**RELIGION PROJECTS** Designed by Lori Odhner, Wendy Hoo, and Sonia Werner Text: Exodus 25-27 Subject: The Tabernacle; The Holy of Holies Dole Notes: Volume: 2 Chapter: 39 Page: 157 Age Group: Beginners: 3-5 basic supplies: 2 A O MARKERS 0000000 PAINT materials: -red, blue, and purple yarn - a dull, large needle for each child - a piece of white muslin (or old table cloth) teacher preparation: - choose a piece of tabric that's big enough to have all the children sit around the edge of it, so they can all embroider on it. many pieces of yarn - aut to 2' lengths. procedure: -spread Fabric on table or Floor, and have children sit all around each person the edges. embroiders - help the children thread red, blue and purple yarn the yarn into the on the veil needles, and teach them to embroider notes: This group project could in and out, anywhere be returned to many times, in their section of to add more embroidery. the Fabric. - when time runs out, MUSIC: First Songs: "All that the Lord hath Spoken ... assume the veil is done, and tack it up for all to admire no one takes it home.