



UNIT 5 | SESSION 4

THE PEOPLE BUILT THE TABERNACLE

EXODUS 35-40

KEY PASSAGE:

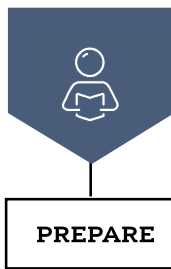
Psalm 95:6-7

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What is worship? Worship is celebrating the greatness of God.

CHRIST CONNECTION:

God told the Israelites to build a tabernacle where He would dwell with them. God wants to be with His people. As part of His plan to save sinners, God sent Jesus to dwell on earth with people.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



LEADER Bible Study

One of the key themes of the Bible is God’s desire to live with the people He created. We see this first in God’s creating the garden of Eden, placing Adam and Eve into this paradise, and then presumably coming down regularly to be with them. But when Adam and Eve rebelled against Creator God, one consequence of their sin was expulsion from the garden. No longer would God live with them as He had before.

Generations later, God instructed His people to do something curious: build a tent. Why? This tent, the tabernacle, would not be a place for treasures or food; no animals or people would live in it. This would be God’s tent, where He would dwell among His people, pointing back to Eden. Whenever the Israelites traveled, they broke down this tent and carried it with them. Then, when they arrived at their destination, they set up the tent once more—strategically and meaningfully placed in the center of the camp. God was not just with His people, He was at the center of His people. That was the place He deserved.

Note one feature of the tabernacle that would later give way to the permanent temple built in Jerusalem: the veil, or curtain. The innermost chamber of the tabernacle was called the holy of holies, or most holy place. This is where God’s presence

would be manifested above the ark of the covenant and mercy seat. This sacred area was separated from the next outer chamber—the holy place—by a heavy curtain. We later learn in Leviticus that only the high priest could enter into the holy of holies once a year—on the Day of Atonement. This curtain, then, was a picture of the ongoing separation between humanity and God because of sin. God wanted to dwell with people, but sin was preventing that from happening in full.

When Jesus came and paid the sin penalty for people, that curtain tore from top to bottom, symbolizing that entry into the holy of holies had been made through Jesus. But sin continues to corrupt the world, which is why one day Jesus will return, put an end to sin and death, and renew creation.

This is how the story of Scripture ends in Revelation—with Christ establishing His kingdom in a new heaven and earth and dwelling with His people forever. What God intended from the beginning will mark the beginning of eternity.

TERMS TO KNOW

Tabernacle: a portable tent where God met with His people. The word *tabernacle* means “dwelling place.” God wanted to dwell among them. (See Ex. 29:45-46.)

WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “ Can you think of someone that you enjoy spending time with? What do you like to do when you are together? ”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: BLINDFOLDED BUILDING

Form groups of five kids. Choose one group to come to the front of the room. Give four of the kids a blindfold. The kid without the blindfold will be the group leader.

Help kids put on blindfolds and direct them to stand in a straight line. Lay a rope at their feet. At your signal, kids should pick up the rope. Call out a shape and challenge the group to form the shape without looking and without dropping the rope.

The group leader may call out directions to help the group form the shape, but may not touch any member of the group. Once kids have formed the shape, they should freeze and remove their blindfolds. Repeat until every group has had a turn.

SAY “ Would this game have been more difficult without the group leader there to tell you where you should go? In today’s Bible story, we will hear how God instructed His people to build a place where He would dwell with them. He told them just what to do. ”

OPTION 2: GETTING TO KNOW YOU



Announce a category and instruct kids to find at least one other kid who shares their answers. When kids find others they have something in common with, the kids should stand together. Allow time for most of the kids to sort themselves before announcing another category.

Suggested categories:

- number of siblings
- favorite color
- preferred type of pet
- number of places you’ve lived
- birthday month

SAY “ Did you learn anything new about one another? Were you surprised by anyone’s answers? As we will see in today’s Bible story, God wants to be with us and He wants us to know Him. He knows us and loves us. Let’s find out what God told His people to do so He would dwell with them. ”

INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (2 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Welcome! I’m [your name]. It’s so good to see you. If you brought your Bible, hold it up. [Provide Bibles for kids who need one.] The Bible is a big book! Can anyone tell me what the Bible is about? [Allow kids to respond.] The Bible is God’s Word. It is full of stories about who God is and what He has done. It tells us about real people and events, and all the stories fit together to tell us the one big, wonderful story of God’s plan to rescue sinners.

At the beginning of the Bible—in Genesis 3—we can read how sin entered the world. Sin separates us from God, but we see that God didn’t give up on people. He wants to have a relationship with us! The Bible tells us everything we need to know to have a relationship with God. ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

SAY “ Do you remember our big picture question? It helps us focus on a bigger truth from the Bible. [Pause for kids to respond.] **What is worship?** The answer to that question is, **Worship is celebrating the greatness of God.** When we read and hear from the Bible, sing songs, and pray, we are celebrating God! He is honored when we gather together to worship Him. Keep that in mind when you hear today’s Bible story. ”



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Exodus 35–40. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “The People Built the Tabernacle.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

THE PEOPLE BUILT THE TABERNACLE

“**God** spoke to Moses on the mountain and **gave** him very **specific instructions for building a tabernacle**. The tabernacle would be a huge tent that the Israelites could take with them wherever they went. **God would meet with His people in the tabernacle**.

Moses told the Israelites everything God said. He asked them to bring materials: gold, silver, and bronze; blue, purple, and scarlet yarn; fine linen and goat hair; animal skins; wood; oil; spices; and gemstones.

God gave two men, Bezalel (BEHZ uh lehl) **and Oholiab** (oh HOH lih ab), **special skills for crafting things**. Bezalel, Oholiab, and all the other skilled craftsmen came together to build the tabernacle. **The people kept bringing offerings. Pretty soon, the craftsmen told Moses, “The people are bringing more than enough. We don’t need all of this.”** So Moses told the Israelites to stop bringing their offerings.

The craftsmen built the tabernacle just as God instructed. The tabernacle had 10 long curtains made out of linen. Eleven curtains made out of goat hair formed a tent over the tabernacle. Inside the tabernacle, the people made a veil. They made a wooden box covered in gold called an ark, a table, a lampstand, and many other parts. **Every part had a special purpose.**

God told Moses to bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the tabernacle. **Aaron put on special holy garments, and Moses anointed him to be priest.** Aaron’s sons were also anointed to serve God as priests.

Before, God had led the Israelites from a cloud; now the cloud covered the tabernacle. **God’s glory filled the tabernacle.** God made a sign for the people: **If the cloud covered the tabernacle, the people would stay** where they were. **When the cloud lifted from the tabernacle, the Israelites would move** and take the tabernacle with them.

The cloud of the Lord was on the tabernacle during the day, and fire was inside the cloud at night. All the Israelites could see it as they traveled.

Christ Connection: God told the Israelites to build a tabernacle where He would dwell with them. God wants to be with His people. As part of His plan to save sinners, God sent Jesus to dwell on earth with people. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Display a diagram: Display drawings of what the tabernacle might have looked like for kids to look at while you tell the story.

Call for active listening: Encourage kids to listen carefully for every time you say “God” while telling the story. When they hear the word, they should point up.

Small Group Discussion/Questions

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ God desires to be with His people. Open your Bible to Exodus 40. God led the people of Israel as they journeyed. God instructed the people to build a tabernacle, a place where He would dwell with His people.

Before, God had met with Moses on Mount Sinai, but now, God wanted to be among the people, so He gave them very specific instructions as to how to build the tabernacle and meet with Him there. The people of Israel obeyed God’s instructions to build the tabernacle.

Look at verses 36-38. [Choose a volunteer to read the verses aloud.] God led His people by His presence. During the day when a cloud was over the tabernacle, the people would know that the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. At night, if a fire filled the tabernacle, the people would know that the Lord was there. If the cloud moved, the people would know it was time to move.

God wants to be with His people. He made Himself visible through a cloud and a fire, but later, God would send His only Son, Jesus, to earth to dwell among people. Through Jesus, we can have salvation from the sins that separate us from God. When we experience forgiveness through Jesus, we can know with confidence that we will dwell with God forever. ”

3 CHRIST CONNECTION

SAY “ God told the Israelites to build a tabernacle where He would dwell with them. God wants to be with His people. As part of His plan to save sinners, God sent Jesus to dwell on earth with people. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.)

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

| **SAY** “ Without a tabernacle, how can we meet with God? ”

Help kids recognize that because of Jesus, we have full access to God through prayer and are able to be with Him forever. God met with His people in the tabernacle, and later, in a temple, which was a more permanent building. At Jesus’ death, the Bible says that the curtain that separated the place where God dwelt from the rest of the temple, was torn in two, demonstrating that we can meet with God.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Matt. 27:51.)

| **SAY** “ How do you feel knowing God wants a personal relationship with you? ”

Invite kids to share their thoughts about God being personal, loving, and near. Prompt them to think about how they build relationships with other people. Building a relationship takes time spent together, talking, and getting to know one another. God wants to spend time with His children and He wants us to know Him.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read John 1:12.)

| **SAY** “ How does God lead His children today? ”

Help kids recognize that God does not leave His children alone, without direction, but that He has given us everything we need to live in a way that brings Him glory. God leads His children by His Word, the Bible and through time spent in prayer. When we become children of God, He also gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit Who helps us understand God’s Word and how to apply it to our lives.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read 2 Pet. 1:3.)