#### Lesson 2:

#### Building the Tabernacle

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE:

Exodus 25:1-31:11; 35:1-40:38; Hebrews 5; 7:25-28; 8:1-6,9,10

MEMORY WORK:

Joshua 1:9

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

Worship is one way I show God that I love Him. God has a plan (design) for how He wants me to worship Him, just as He did for the Israelites in the Old Testament.

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| **LESSON STARTS HERE** |

INTRODUCTION:

Review last week’s lesson.

After God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, He gave Moses instructions for building a special tent where the Israelites would worship Him. God was very specific about how to build this big tent called the Tabernacle. As we study today’s lesson, think about what it would have been like to help build the Tabernacle.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. While Moses was on Mount Sinai, some of the instructions God gave him were about a special place of worship for the Israelites. This special place would be called “the Tabernacle,” or “tent of meeting.” God knew that His people would need a place of worship and a definite plan of worship while they were moving from place to place so that they would be reminded to worship **Him** and **not** idols like the ones they had left behind in Egypt (Exodus 23:33). The Tabernacle would be in the middle of their camp, so it would remind the Israelites that God was always with them.
2. God also set aside the tribe of Levi (the tribe of Moses and his family) to take care of the Tabernacle and everything related to worship. Aaron, Moses’ brother, was chosen by God to be the first High Priest. Only men from the tribe of Levi (Levites) were allowed to help with worship—and only certain ones were allowed in the Tabernacle of Meeting itself.
3. The Tabernacle was a portable, or movable, place of worship, i.e., a tent, because the Israelites would be moving around in the wilderness for a long time. The tent was about 45 feet long by 15 feet wide and was surrounded by an outer court made of curtains and poles.
4. The outer court was about 150 feet long by 75 feet wide. The sides were made of seven-foot- long linen curtains hung from bronze poles. There were two very important objects in this outer court: the altar of burnt offering (about eight feet square and five feet high) and the bronze laver. Every day the people brought sacrifices that were gifts to God. [The gifts were also signs of repentance.]

**TEACHER’S NOTE**: The Bible gives all the measurements for the Tabernacle in cubits instead of feet or yards (just as it does for Noah’s ark). A cubit was the length of a man’s arm from his elbow to the end of his middle finger, so the actual length of a cubit varied. Most resource books estimate the cubit to have been about 18 inches.

**Laver:** Large basin where the priests could wash their hands before and after offering

sacrifices

1. The Tabernacle was divided into two rooms: the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. The support beams of the Tabernacle were made of acacia wood and covered with gold. The top (roof) of the Tabernacle was made of four long curtains laid on top of one another: linen, goat’s hair, ram’s skin dyed red, and another type of animal skin (translations differ considerably). [The leather skins would have provided a waterproof covering for the other three coverings.]
2. Inside the Holy Place, or outer chamber, were three pieces of furniture, each covered in gold: the table of showbread, the altar of incense, and the lampstand.
3. The table of showbread was about three feet long, 18 inches wide, and two feet high. On each corner of the table was a gold ring. Poles were placed through the rings so that the table could be carried from place to place on the shoulders of the priests. Once a week, 12 cakes of bread were placed on this table. [These 12 loaves of bread represented the 12 Tribes of Israel who were supposed to be holy and dedicated to God.]
4. The altar of incense measured about 18 inches wide by 18 inches deep by 36 inches long. It had a horn and a gold ring on each corner so that it could also be put on poles and moved from place to place. Sweet-smelling incense was burned here to represent the prayers of the people going up to God (Revelation 5:8; 8:3; 2 Corinthians 2:15).
5. The lampstand or “menorah” was a seven-branched lampstand of pure gold. The lampstand provided light for the priests as they did their duties in the sanctuary.

**TEACHER’S NOTE:** The number **seven** is used throughout the Bible and Hebrew literature to represent the idea of completeness or perfection.

1. Separating the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place was a curtain (veil) made of blue, scarlet, and purple fabrics. This curtain represented the fact that under the Old Law (the law given to Moses), the people couldn’t approach God directly in the Most Holy Place. Only the High Priest could enter the Most Holy Place—and only once a year, on the Day of Atonement. (When Jesus died on the cross, the veil of the Temple was split down the middle as a sign that God could be approached by followers of God at any time because of Jesus’ sacrifice.)
2. Only one thing was inside the Most Holy Place: the Ark of the Covenant. It was a box about four feet long by two feet wide by two feet high; it was covered inside and out with gold. There were rings on the corners through which poles were put to carry the Ark. Only the Levites were allowed to carry the Ark of the Covenant (and the table of showbread and altar of incense), and only one family within the Levite tribe: the sons of Kohath. Each time the Ark was moved, the Levites in charge covered it with a special cloth. (The other furnishings of the tabernacle were moved in six covered wagons drawn by two oxen each.) **No one** but the High Priest was ever to look at the Ark of the Covenant; ***no one was ever to touch it****.* The lid of this special box was called “the mercy seat.” On the mercy seat sat two cherubim whose wings were stretched toward the center of the lid.

**TEACHER’S NOTE:** Hebrews chapters 9 and 10 tell us that the items of the Tabernacle were symbolic of various New Testament ideas. While there is disagreement among commentaries as to what each tabernacle item symbolized, some suggest the following:

* + The “altar of burnt offerings” represents the sacrifice of Christ (cf. John 1:29).
  + The “laver” was a symbol of cleansing connected with baptism in the New Testament (cf. Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:5).
  + In the holy place, the lampstand may represent the light of God’s Word (cf. Psalm 119:105,130).
  + The “altar of incense” likely represents the prayers of the saints (cf. Luke 1:9-10; Revelation 5:8).
  + The twelve loaves of bread on the table were called the showbread or “bread of presence,” perhaps signifying the presence of God, the “Bread of Life” (John 6:48),

with His people. Some think the Lord’s Supper is also suggested.

 • The sanctuary or “Holy Place” (where the altar of incense, the lampstand, and the table

of showbread were placed) is thought to represent the church in the New Testament

(cf. Acts 15:16-17; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Timothy 3:15). Aaron and his sons, the priests, were allowed to go into the sanctuary. In the New Testament, all Christians are “priests” (1 Peter 2:5,9) and can approach God in worship as the priests did under the Law of Moses.

* + Under the Law of Moses, the “Most Holy Place” (i.e., the part of the Tabernacle that had the Ark of the Covenant and that represents heaven) wherein God manifested His presence was only entered one time each year by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement.
  + The veil separating the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place was torn in two by God at Jesus’ death, symbolizing the fact that those who have been washed by the blood of Jesus can now approach God directly through prayer.

[For more information, see Jackson, Wayne (2011), *A New Testament Commentary* (Stockton, CA: Christian Courier Publications), pp. 501-502.]

1. Initially, the Ark contained the two tablets of stone on which were written the Ten Commandments. At some point, a jar of manna and Aaron’s rod that budded were also placed inside the ark (Hebrews 9:4).
2. God helped men with special talents to build the Tabernacle. All the materials used to build it were given by the Israelites. In fact, so much was given that Moses had to tell the people to stop bringing their gifts for the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:2; 36:3,5,6)!
3. According to Exodus 40:2,17, the Tabernacle was assembled at Mount Sinai at the beginning of their second year out of Egypt, 14 days before the Passover, to celebrate the first anniversary of the Exodus.
4. Just as God had special ways for the Jews to worship (according to the laws of the Old Testament), He has special ways for us to worship today (under the New Testament). He expects us to follow His commandments regarding worship just as carefully as the Israelites were supposed to.
5. Beginning with Adam, God required animal sacrifices as part of worship. The deaths of animals reminded His people that their sins had consequences, and there was no forgiveness without the shedding of blood. The writer of Hebrews says the same thing about the New Covenant God has made with Christians. Jesus was the last sacrifice for our sins. His death was the most powerful reminder ever of how much our sins hurt God, and what He is willing to do to save us/to help us get to heaven.

RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL VISUALS (note disclaimers):

##### Betty Lukens’ felt pieces. Lesson 38 in the Betty Lukens Manuel

* ABeka Flash-a-Card Series (DISCLAIMER: use the cards, not the lesson book;)
* Free Bible Images – Saved on flash drive. Can be presented on classroom tv. Script included in lesson file. There are two files to choose from. They will be labeled “02A” and “02B” in the Visuals folder.
* Paper Model of the Tabernacle – Extra pieces are in the lesson file

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS:

### SUNDAY

LEARNING CENTERS AND ACTIVITIES:

* Ark of the Covenant – Use an old shoe box or other small box for the ark. The ark was gold. Boxes can be spray painted gold or wrapped in yellow wrapping paper (the lid would need to be wrapped separately). A fold up box can also be made using yellow cardstock and the cricut in the workroom. The lesson file has angel templates that can be copied to put on top of the ark. Inside the ark should be the tablets, a jar of manna, and Aaron’s rod (a stick). Golden straws or spray painted dowel rods can be used for the poles that carried the ark. This is a large project for 4 year olds, but a neat visual – even if the teacher makes just one to show and save for later years. 
* Craft Stick Ark of the Covenant – Make a 2D Ark of the covenant out of craft sticks. Example pictures are below.

 

* Discuss the different parts of the tabernacle – Use the paper model to discuss the different rooms and furniture in the tabernacle. Discuss how this is very different from our worship today.

### WEDNESDAY NIGHT

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Review Sunday’s lesson. briefly (See [Review Questions](http://www.apcurriculum.com/dcirfol/4-24-32RQ.pdf) for example questions.)

LEARNING CENTERS AND ACTIVITIES:

* Have Lincoln logs and/or wooden blocks they can use to build “tabernacles.” Have pieces of cloth that they can use to make walls and roofs.
* As the children are building, talk to them about what the church building is made of, how long it took to build it. Then direct your comments toward the Israelites’ special place of worship, the tabernacle. Discuss how many people freely gave of what they had to be able to build it. We should freely give to God today as well.

### Review Questions

1. God wanted the Israelites to have a special place to worship. What was it called?
   1. The Tabernacle
2. What tribe was set aside to take care of everything related to worship?
   1. The tribe of Levi
3. Who was the first High Priest?
   1. Aaron
4. How big was the Tabernacle?
   1. About 45 feet long and 15 feet wide
5. What two important items were in the outer court?
   1. The altar of burnt offerings and the bronze laver
6. What were the names of the two rooms within the Tabernacle?
   1. The Holy Place and the Most Holy Place
7. What was in the Holy Place?
   1. Table of showbread, altar of incense, and the lampstand
8. What was in the Most Holy Place?
   1. The Ark of the Covenant
9. What was in the Ark of the Covenant?
   1. The Ten Commandments, Aaron’s rod, and a jar of manna

10.Was anyone allowed into the Most Holy Place?

1. Only the High Priest, and only for one day: the Day of Atonement

Additional Notes / Activities Performed & Curriculum Feed Back

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