

The Israelites Build the Tabernacle

Overview



Materials You'll Need

- large empty can with lid or empty shoe box with cover
- scrap papers, glitter, markers
- scissors
- glue



Scriptures

Ex 35-40

Bible Truth Objective(s)

God is pleased when we give our best to Him; God's work can be accomplished only when people are willing to give their best to Him

Behavioral Objective(s)

To learn to be cheerful givers and to do our best at everything for God

Memory Verse

"God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Cor 9:7b)



Bible Knowledge

The Tabernacle

In order to build the tabernacle, the Israelites had to bring offerings to the Lord. The Bible records that those whose hearts were stirred gave cheerfully, so much so that there was more than enough (Ex 36:6-7). When did they get all this gold and jewelry? When they left Egypt. The offerings included gold, silver, jewels, linen, skins, and spices (Ex 35:5-8).

Building the tabernacle took tremendous manpower, effort, and involvement. Those who were skilled builders contributed to the furnishings of the tabernacle while gifted women artisans made the garments for the priests. The tabernacle was not just something put together quickly. God had every detail planned out (Ex 36:8-40:33).

Key Tabernacle Pieces

Ark of the Covenant

Mercy Seat

Curtain

Table of Showbread

Bread of the Presence

Gold Lampstand

Altar of Incense

Anointing Oil

Altar for the Burnt Offerings

Bronze Basin (Laver)

Moses was careful to obey God's instructions to the smallest detail. When the tabernacle was finally complete, Moses inspected the finished work, saw that it was done according to God's will, and then blessed the people (Ex 39:43).

God filled the tabernacle with His glory. But the cloud was not only an indication of His presence. It was also a way to direct the Israelites' movement. Whenever the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, the Israelites would move forward on their journey. But if the cloud was not taken up, the people would stay put (Ex 40:36-38). Almost five hundred years later Solomon built the temple, which replaced the tabernacle as the central place of worship. God also filled the temple with His glory (2 Chr 5, 13, 14). But when Israel turned from God, His glory and presence departed from the temple (2 Kgs 25).



Understanding Your Students

Because your students are so young, it may be hard for them to really understand the importance and spirit of offering. Many times, they offer money that their parents give them just before class starts. This may lead them to think that money or materialistic things are the only offerings that can be made. Also, money given to them just prior to class doesn't hold much special meaning for them. In order to encourage the students to offer cheerfully and meaningfully, explain to them that there are many different types of offerings that we can make. Some are offerings of money, some are resources (e.g. home, food, transportation for ministers, etc.) and some are

gifts of our time.

Your children can offer to God with the money they have been given, even if it's only a small amount. But do stress that God looks at the heart of the giver. Does the giver feel sad about offering the money, or does the giver feel good about offering? Or does the giver feel nothing as he offers?

We can also offer to God by helping others, in class or in the church. List some concrete things the children can do. Prayer is another way of offering thanks to God for His blessings to us.

After the discussion, you could have them create posters to display ways they can offer to God. Below the pictures, include captions that relate to the types of offerings being given. Post these around the room to help remind the students of the different things they can do to offer cheerfully to God.



Vocabulary

Offering

to give something to God or to church

Tabernacle

a large tent used by the Israelites where the Ark of the Covenant stayed

Dwell

to live or have a home

Concentrate

to use all your attention on one thing



Before You Teach

We know from the history of the Israelites that they were not always grateful to God, as they often forgot His mercy, grace and power when they came upon difficult times. But they did have their moments when their great love for God shone through. In today's lesson, we see how the Israelites were asked to bring offerings to build God's tabernacle. They responded with such enthusiasm that they actually brought too many gifts. Moses had to ask the people to stop offering. And they did not just bring ordinary gifts. They brought items that included gold, silver, fine linens, and yarn as well as gem stones. What would have caused this kind of outpouring? The Bible says that the people's hearts were stirred and their spirits were willing (Ex 35:20-22). This means that they offered with a thankful and happy heart, even giving things that were pre-

cious and expensive. They did all this because they loved God. This is the kind of attitude God is pleased with.

In his first letter to the Thessalonians, we can see how much Paul longed to be with his brethren (1 Thess 2:17; 3:1-2, 5). It was a longing that stemmed from his love and concern for God's people. Just as the Israelites gave offerings willingly to build God's tabernacle, Paul's longing was motivated from his love for God. This is a kind of love that is genuine and hard to find. Today, people do things for God for various reasons: to gain status within the church, to receive praise, or to boast about increased membership. But God does not look upon any of these works as true offerings, because they are not done with pure motives. God wants not only a cheerful giver, but someone who is doing things out of a pure heart. He searches out the heart and knows our every thought. Let us remember the examples of the Israelites and Paul and serve God with uncompromised love.



Bible Story

Offerings to Build the Tabernacle

After the Israelites received the Ten Commandments, they continued on their very long journey to the promised land. They walked during the day and slept during the night. At night, they did not have nice houses to sleep in like we do. They slept in tents that they had to set up each night and pack up each morning. So every night they unpacked and rolled out their blankets for sleeping. Then in the morning, they packed everything up and continued on their journey. Even though it was a hard life, God took care of the Israelites during their journey. God was always with them. He needed a place to live among the people and for the people to worship Him. So God told Moses to tell the people to make Him a special dwelling place, called the tabernacle.

Since this was God's special place among the people, where they would worship Him, it had to be different from the tents that the people lived in. So God gave special instructions as to how to build His special tent. God told the people exactly what to use and how to build it. What do you think God needed to build His dwelling place? To build this tabernacle, God needed gold, silver and bronze, blue, purple and red yarn, beautiful cloths, goat hair, animal skins, wood, olive oil, spices, gems and certain types of stones. Where would all these things come from? They would come from God's people. So Moses told the people what God needed. But God only wanted these gifts from those people who were happy to give.

The people went back home to their tents. Many people remembered how God loved them and took care of them. They remembered how God had taken them away from the land of Egypt where the mean king made them work very hard. They remembered that God gave them water to drink when they were thirsty and food to eat when they were hungry. And even now, God was leading them to a better land.

Can you imagine the excitement each family felt for the chance to give God a gift to help build His house? The families went into their tents and thought about what they could give to God. They wanted to give the very best that they could give.

One mother might have said, "These gold and silver necklaces are more useful to help build God's

house so I am willing to give these to God."

The father might have said, "These gems and stones are perfect for decorating God's house. I am more than willing to offer these to God."

The children might have said, "This is my favorite bronze bowl, but I am happy to give it to God to make His house beautiful," and "I just chopped these beautiful pieces of wood and I want to give them to God!"

The grandfather could have said, "I will be happy to give God these animal skins to cover the tabernacle and keep it dry."

The grandmother might have also said, "I spun this red and purple yarn that can also decorate God's house to make it beautiful. I am happy to give too!"

The People Offer Their Best Gifts

So the next morning, people came from all over the camp to Moses' tent and brought gifts. Men, women, and children who were happy to give came carrying gifts for God. The people put their gifts in a pile. There were piles of gold rings and earrings and other jewelry. There were baskets full of pretty gems and stones. There were tall stacks of beautiful wood. There were heaps of blue, purple, and red yarn as well as very nice cloth and piles of animal skins. The people gave all these gifts cheerfully. All day long, people came bringing their best gifts.

After collecting the offerings, Moses gave them to the workmen and said, "Here are the gifts the people cheerfully gave to God. Use these things to build God's tabernacle." And the workmen started building the way God had told them to.

But the people continued to bring more gifts morning after morning. Now there was too much! The workmen did not know what to do with all the extra material.

They told Moses, "The people are bringing more than enough to build the tabernacle."

Then Moses gave an order throughout the camp, "Please stop bringing gifts. We have more than enough to build God's tabernacle."

The people still wanted to give gifts to God but because Moses ordered them to stop, they stopped. But isn't it amazing that so many people wanted to help God build His special place to live? And they all did it with a happy heart. No one felt bad that they had to give up their necklace or their expensive stones.

Now that the people stopped bringing the offerings, the workmen could concentrate on building the tabernacle.

Bezalel and Aholiab Chosen to Help

Moses told the people, "God has chosen Bezalel and Aholiab to help build the tabernacle. They know how to work with their hands to make beautiful things. They can make designs with gold, silver and bronze. They know how to cut gems and stones to make them shine and sparkle. They can cut wood into the right shape. Most of all, Bezalel and Aholiab can teach other people. They can teach other people to cut and use yarn to sew beautiful designs."

Then Bezalel, Aholiab, and every person who knew how to work with their hands started to build the tabernacle. God let them know how big and small to make parts of the tabernacle and how many decorations to make. They made the tabernacle exactly as God told them and they worked very hard. They melted the gold, silver and bronze to shape it into useful parts such as rings and hooks. They also hammered the gold into pretty designs.

Bezalel might have said, "Hammer this gold into the shape of an angel with wings spread upward. Use this gold to make a lampstand to hold six lamps. Next make plates, dishes, and bowls out of gold."

And Aholiab might have said, "Use the blue, purple and red yarn and very nice cloths to make curtains. Sew the edge of the curtain with blue yarn. Make sure the curtains are 45 feet tall and 6 feet wide."

They also made some special clothes out of the

yarn and cloth and decorated them with gold and precious gems and stones for the priests to wear.

The men good at cutting wood used the wood to make furniture for the tabernacle. And some men covered the wood with gold. Other men made coverings for the tent from the animal skins. They worked very hard, but they were happy to serve God.

The Tabernacle is Finished

Finally, Bezalel, Aholiab, and all the workmen finished their work. They made everything exactly as God had said to make it. They brought everything—the furniture, the decorations, the coverings, the curtains, and the special clothes—to Moses.

Moses checked the work and said, "You all did a great job. You made everything the way God wanted. May God remember your happy hearts and your hard work. May God bless all of you."

Now it was Moses' job to put everything together in the right place as God had wanted. God told Moses how to set up the tabernacle. God told Moses where to put the furniture, where to put the lampstand and bowls, how to hang the curtains and coverings, and who was to wear the special clothes. Moses followed God's instructions and at last the tabernacle was finished.

Then a cloud covered the tabernacle and God's bright light filled it. God was very pleased. Now God had a place to dwell among His people and a place for the people to worship Him. Everyone shouted, "This is the house of God!" and they sang songs of praise and worshiped God.



Check For Understanding

1. **What did God want the people to build for Him so He could live among them?** (A tabernacle.)
2. **When Moses told the people the things God would need to build the tabernacle, what did they do?** (Many men, women and children brought out their best offer-

ings.)

3. **When the people kept on giving their gifts, what did Moses tell them?** (He said there were enough gifts so they could stop.)
4. **What kind of a giver does God like?** (He likes people who give with a cheerful heart.)
5. **What does it mean to be a cheerful giver?** (It means to give willingly and happily.)

6. **What did God do when the tabernacle was finished?** (A cloud covered the tabernacle. God was pleased that the tabernacle was

built according to His plan. Now there was a place they could worship God every day!)



Life Application Story

I Want To Put God First

It's seven o'clock Sunday morning and the Lim kids are waking up earlier than their mom and dad. Julius, Benjamin and Susie tiptoe downstairs into their family room to watch a cartoon movie they checked out of the library a few days ago.

The three children quickly settle into the sofa of their family room to enjoy the new movie.

The movie is indeed very funny, making the three Lim children laugh out loud, loud enough to wake up the rest of the sleeping family. Half-way through the movie, Anna, Mr. and Mrs. Lim all walk downstairs.

"Good morning, children!" calls out Mr. Lim over the animated music from the TV set.

"What is so funny?" asks Mrs. Lim as she gives each of her children a good morning hug before moving to the kitchen to get the breakfast ready.

"Oh, good morning, Dad...Mom," the three children answer without moving their eyes from the TV screen. "It's this really funny cartoon we checked out from the library," Ben replies.

"Well, children, before Anna sits down to watch the cartoon also, let's turn off the movie for now," asks Mr. Lim, "I need to talk to you all."

Julius, Ben and Susie all let out a cry, "Aw, nooo... but this is the fun part..." just as Anna pushes the "off" button on the remote control.

Mr. Lim continues, "You children know what our family does every day to show that God is important to us, don't you? Who can tell me?"

"We have our family Bible reading and prayer," Julius responds quickly.

"That's right," Mr. Lim nods and continues, "And that's no exception today as well. We will spend time with God first. Then, after our breakfast, we can talk about what we all want to do because your Mom and I have nothing special planned for today. So, if you want to finish this cartoon, you may. But I want you each to be sure to finish all your homework and piano practice first before you turn

the TV set on again. Do you understand?"

"But, Dad... come on, please? Can we skip the family Bible time today? We really want to finish the movie first," pleads Ben.

"Yeah, Dad. Do we have to read the Bible every day?" pouts Susie.

"Well, let me ask you this, kids. What do you think if your Mom and I talked to you only two minutes a day or only when we want you to take out the trash or clean up your room? Will you be able to tell that we love you?" asks Mr. Lim.

"No way, Dad," says Anna. "I'd be real sad if you and Mom talked to me only a little bit a day or only when you want me to do something!"

"You're right Anna," replies Mr. Lim. "We always want to spend time with those people we love. That's why Mom and I want to do things with each and every one of you because we love you and we enjoy just being with you. So, it is the same with our loving Father in heaven. He loves us very much and wants us to spend time with Him. If we say that we love God, then it is only natural that we spend time with God in reading His words and praying or talking to Him."

"And you know what?" Mrs. Lim joins in the conversation as she sits besides Mr. Lim, "God loves to see us putting Him first before anything or anybody. That is why we always do our Bible reading first thing in the morning. We want to let God know that He is so important to us that we want to spend time with Him before we eat our breakfast or start our day with our businesses."

"So, who wants to join Mom and I in telling God how much we love Him?" Mr. Lim asks.

All the children raise their arms excitedly in the air and cry out in unison, "We do!"

Questions to Think About:

1. **How does the Lim family put God first?** (They always read the Bible and pray before every breakfast.)
2. **What did the children want to do instead?** (They wanted to watch the cartoon movie.)
3. **How do you show that God is first in your life?** (Allow students to answer.)



Activity 1

The Israelites Give Cheerfully

Look at the picture of the Israelites giving offerings to God's tabernacle. Can you write down four things they gave? Color in the picture.



Activity 2

How Can We Serve God With Our Actions?

Look at each picture. How is each person serving God with their actions? Complete the sentence by matching the right word in the box. Which ones can you do?



Activity 3

Offering Box

Materials:

1. large empty can with lid or shoe box with cover
2. scrap papers, glitter, stickers
3. glue
4. scissors

Directions:

1. If your class doesn't already have an offering box or it needs to be updated, use this lesson as a good opportunity to make an offering box with the students.
2. Use the scraps, markers and stickers to decorate the box or can. The students can also write words on the box that describe God.
3. Be sure to cut a slit on the lid or cover to make an opening to insert the money or coins the students will offer.

Activity 11:1

The Israelites Give Cheerfully

Look at the picture of the Israelites giving offerings to God's tabernacle. Can you write down four things they gave? Color in the picture.

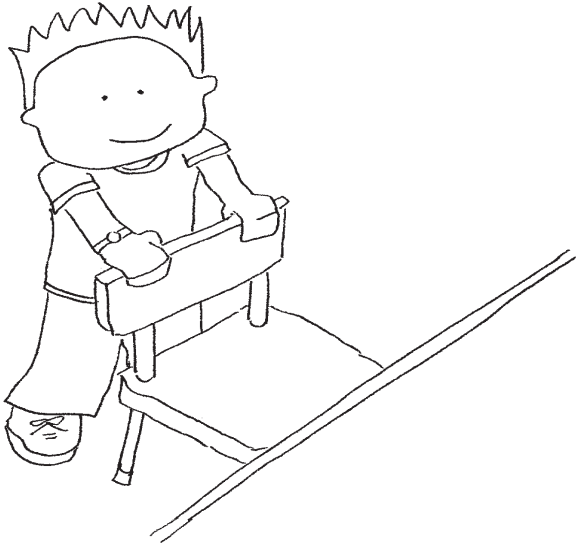


1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Activity 11:2

Serving God With Our Actions

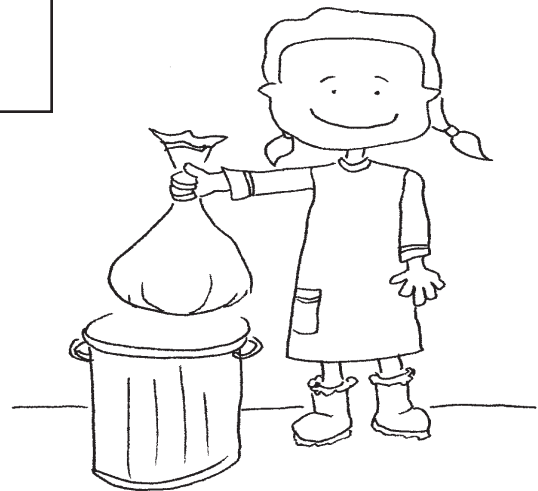
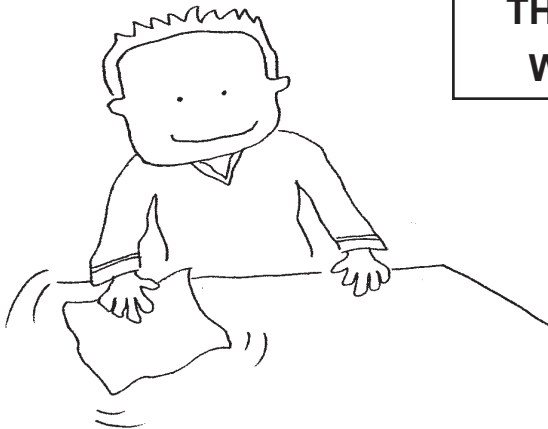
Look at each picture. How is each person serving God with their actions? Complete the sentence by writing the right word from the word box. Which ones can you do?



1. I can _____ the chairs in.

2. I can _____ the Bibles.

**CLEAN
PUSH
THROW
WIPE**



3. I can _____ the table.

4. I can _____ the trash out.