



GOD'S INCREDIBLE PLAN

Unit 5 • The Journey

UNIT DESCRIPTION

This unit, "The Journey," covers Biblical history from God's command to build the tabernacle to Rahab, the harlot, in Jericho (Ex. 25 - Josh. 6). This is the final stretch of the journey to the Promised Land of Canaan. As throughout history, we will see continuing situations where God uses fallen, imperfect people to work out His Incredible Plan. Regardless of their confidence level, size or career choice, they all trusted God and had willing hearts.

The key thought is discipline. Numbers is the fourth book of Moses. Someone has said that the order of the books is as follows:

1. In Genesis we see man ruined.
2. In Exodus, man redeemed.
3. In Leviticus, man worshiping.
4. In Numbers, man serving...

It was God's plan that the children of Israel should go straight into the land that He had promised them, the land of Canaan, but the people would not. God said that all those at Kadesh over twenty years old, except Joshua and Caleb, would have to die. A new generation arose during the forty years of wandering, but at the end the nation was about as strong in numbers as the day they left Egypt. (Read Numbers 26.)

Moses told of an inheritance.

We see anticipation in Deuteronomy.

Joshua completes what Moses began! God never leaves His work unfinished. Remember the great Craftsman always has another tool sharpened and ready for use. Service awaits everyone. You can always honor God best by taking up your task with a strong and resolute heart that trusts God. [1]

[1] Henrietta Mears, What the Bible is All About, 1983, Regal Books, Ventura, Calif., pp. 64, 65, 82.



GOD'S DWELLING PLACE

God's Incredible Plan • U5#1 1st-3rd Grade • Oct. 26, 2025

Concept

God lives with His people.

Goal

Students will learn that God planned the Tabernacle so the Israelites would have a picture of what He would do thousands of years later to take away our sin. They will learn that God doesn't live in any building- He lives in His people.

Passage

Exodus 25-27 and Exodus 35-38

Key Verse: "The people must build a holy place for me so that I can live among them." Exodus 25:8

Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
<p>Lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bibles, 1/student• 8-piece "Encampment of Israel" flannel illustration• 4 strong magnets <p>Learning Activity #2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Bible verse & Tabernacle item cards, 1-2 sets/room as needed for size of classes</i>	<p>Activity Stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Children's Guide to the Bible, Robert Willoughby</i>• 2-sided copy of tabernacle furnishings, 1 page/class• Copy of tabernacle floorplan on cardstock, 2/class• Markers• Scissors• Glue sticks• "Tabernacle" printed page, 3/CT class• "Jesus" with cross transparency, 3/CT class• Stapler

*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

Background Information/Teacher Helps

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"The immediate objective of the Tabernacle was to bring God near to the Israelites, to reveal His Holiness, and to have fellowship with them. At that point in God's Incredible Plan, the Israelites would certainly, without such visible help, have gone away from Him. Until God came in the flesh in the Person of Jesus Christ, even the most devout believers sought to lay hold of some visible link of communion. Had they been able to see from our point in time, they would have been lifted above the necessity of earthly types and shadows of eternal truths."¹

Old Testament sacrifices could not make perfect in God's sight the worshiper who brought them, nor could they make his conscience completely free. The book of Hebrews makes this clear when it describes Old Testament worship as '...a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience, since they relate only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation' (Heb. 9:9,10).

But the writer of Hebrews goes on to say that Christ has become '...a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation;' (Hebrews 9:11). What the Old Testament sacrifices could not do, Christ had already done before the book of Hebrews was written. Old Testament worship in itself could not save. It could not bring the conscience finally to rest. But Christ's sacrifice can.

... Hebrews states that the Old Testament sacrifices were a pattern of what Christ later was to do in fact. ... According to Hebrews 8:5, Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, 'See,' He says, 'That you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.' God said to Moses, 'Don't you dare make it any other way. It's not your prerogative to change anything. Don't call in somebody who's going to make a different plan.'

... We cannot stress too much that God gave the pattern and that He gave it in order to provide a correct picture of Christ and His work. For if it was to be a pattern of what was to come, it could not be left to men's minds to think it up. God had to give it so that it would be an adequate illustration...of what Christ would do... it was a God-given, correct pattern of what Christ would do.

¹ Martha McCallum, Jane Hamblin, God's Incredible Plan, p. 126.

Set Up

Incorporation Lg. Group

Lesson Lg. Group

- **The week before class:** STUDY! This is an involved lesson, but if well-prepared it will be very effective and exciting for you and the kids. EVERYONE should study and know each part of the tabernacle so the lesson can be taught without use of notes and all can interact with the kids. Briefly make the connections and don't get stuck in a lot of detail.
- **The day of class:** Use the magnets to hang the flannel encampment of Israel illustration (see picture at end of lesson) on the white board and put cardstock pieces on the tray for the Lesson.

Activity Stations:

- **Research**
 - **Instructions:** Read pages 40-41 in the Children's Guide to the Bible to learn about God's Laws and the Tabernacle.
- **Class Craft – Miniature Tabernacle**
 - **Instructions:** The students will make a class tabernacle together. You will have 2 copies of the floor plan and two copies of the furnishings. The students can make both or use extras in case of error. Color and cut out each rectangle of tabernacle furniture with its description. Fold each rectangle along the bottom dotted line of the picture. Glue the name/description onto the proper location on the Tabernacle floor plan so that the picture and the description is at a 90-degree angle.
 - As the students work, discuss with them that God's Incredible Plan was that He would come and live among His people. This was a picture of Jesus who came to earth to show us God's love by dying on the cross for the sins of the whole world. He can now dwell in our hearts. Those who have accepted His gift of forgiveness have Jesus living in them.
- **Tabernacle = Jesus Illustration**
 - **Instructions:** Some students can color the furnishings in the 3 "Tabernacle" printed pages. Place the "Jesus" transparency pages on top of each tabernacle page, stapling on one side so the transparency can be lifted. Discuss with the students that the cross over the tabernacle illustrates how Jesus fulfilled each element of the tabernacle. God planned from the beginning what would happen thousands of years later so we would know He planned everything and He is God.
- **Missions Prayer**
 - **Instructions:** Talk about and pray for the Oasis Giving campaign.

Instructions: Draw a line between the flannel encampment and the cross. As you describe each piece of the tabernacle, pick different students to put the pieces on the cross just as it is on the "Tabernacle = Jesus" craft.

See below the picture of the flannel "Encampment of Israel." Make sure you are familiar with the location and name of each part so you can show where it went in the Tabernacle and where to have students place it on the cross. Since they made the class craft, ask students to show where the piece of furniture was placed in the Tabernacle before they put it on the cross.

While the Israelites were out in the desert after they crossed the Red Sea, they lived in tents so they could pack up and move when God told them to. (Point to the groupings of tents on the flannel.) Who remembers how God told them to move? (Move as pillar of fire at night and a cloud during the day.)

Turn to **Exodus 25** and follow along as I **read verses 1,2,8,9**.

God told Moses to tell the people of Israel to bring certain gifts from which they would make a holy place. Verses 3-7 state exactly the materials they will need to build this holy place. In this holy place God could live among them. Our key verse is Exodus 25:8, "The people must build a holy place for me so that I can live among them." This Holy Tent was called the Tabernacle. "Tabernacle" means "living or dwelling place."

This tent was God's first tabernacle or dwelling place on earth. (Point to the tabernacle in the center of the flannel encampment of Israel.) In the very beginning God lived with Adam and Eve, but when they sinned, He could no longer live with the people He created in His image. God told Moses to build the tabernacle exactly as He said because every detail in it was a picture of Jesus. Let's learn about the Tabernacle and find out what it and Jesus have to do with God living among us.

HOLY OF HOLIES

We're going to begin with the very heart of the Tabernacle called the HOLY of HOLIES. It was the special room in the Tabernacle where Moses met with God. Moses was the only one who was allowed to enter the HOLY of HOLIES and only on one special day of the year.

- The only piece of furniture in the Holy of Holies was the **ARK OF THE COVENANT**. The ark was about the size of a large wooden toy box. The lid of this box was called the **MERCY SEAT**. This is where God would actually meet with Moses or the special priest to accept the sacrifice for the sins of the people. We will learn more about the Ark of the Covenant in a couple of weeks. (Place the Ark of the Covenant on the top of the cross.)
- Between the Holy of Holies and the next room there was a very thick curtain called the veil. The veil made it clear that sinful people had to be separated from the perfect God. When Jesus died on the cross to pay for all our sins, the curtain was torn in half, from the top to the bottom.

- It had to be God who tore the veil because it was too high for people to reach it and too thick to have torn it. The torn curtain showed that our sin no longer separates us from God when we receive His forgiveness. Hebrews 9:11-14 says Jesus was the sacrifice for all sin for all time. It is a picture of Jesus offering His blood for the forgiveness of sins.

HOLY PLACE

Outside the Holy of Holies was the Holy Place where there were three pieces of furniture.

- The **TABLE of SHOW BREAD**. It was also called “bread of the presence” because it was always to be in the Lord’s presence. The table with the bread shows us God wants to live with us and be our God. Jesus said, “The true bread of God is the One who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. I am the bread of life. ...” (John 6:33, 35). (Place on right side of crossbar.)
- The **ALTAR OF INCENSE** is where the priest would offer prayers and praise to God. The incense burned all the time. Who knows what incense is? God commanded the priests to burn incense on the golden altar every morning and evening. Jesus prays for us all the time. Hebrews 7 says Jesus prays continually for us. (Place on left side of crossbar.)
- The **LAMPSTAND** was the only source of light so it was daily filled with oil and never allowed to go out. Jesus said in John 8, “I the Light of the World.” (Place in center of crossbar.)

OUTER COURT

All around the tabernacle was a fancy **CURTAIN**. It was over 7 feet tall so that not even the tallest man could look over it. The big open area inside the curtain was called the Outer Court. There was only one entrance through a gate. (Point to the curtain and the gate.) As they entered through the gate, the Outer Court was the first thing they saw. The **GATE** is even a picture of Jesus. In John 10:9 Jesus said, “I am the gate. All who come in through me will be saved.”

- **BRONZE ALTAR** was the first thing the people would see inside the gate. It was a reminder of our sinfulness. God told the people to sacrifice a perfect animal, usually a lamb, on the Bronze Altar. One time every year the priest would offer a lamb to pay for the sins of the people. John 12 says that Jesus offered Himself as the sacrifice for our sins. (Place on the bottom of the cross)
- **LAVER** – After the lamb was sacrificed, the priest would wash in the Laver before going into the tent or tabernacle where only the priest was allowed. Only the pure or clean may enter the presence of God. Hebrews 10 says when we receive Christ we are made pure or clean. (Place between the bronze altar and the crossbar of the cross.)

Lesson Continued

Remember our key verse, “The people must build a holy place for me so that I can live among them” (Exodus 25:8). Where do you think God lives today? (Allow students to respond.) Do you know that today God doesn't live in a tent or a building? Today the home or tabernacle of God is people, His children. He not only lives among His children, He lives in them. Isn't that great news?! We don't ever have to go to any building to talk to God. God doesn't live in any building—He lives in His people.

God knew even before He created people that we would choose against Him. He planned the Tabernacle so the Israelites would have a picture of what He would do thousands of years later to take away our sin. When we tell God we know we sin and ask Him to count Jesus' death as the punishment we deserve for our sin, He comes to live in our heart and we become God's home or tabernacle. We can talk to God in prayer all the time **NO MATTER WHERE WE ARE!**

Transition

Let's get into small groups.

Learning Activity#1 Sm. Groups

Discussion Questions:

- Can you explain what the Tabernacle and Jesus have to do with the key verse? Why do you think that is important?
- What is the most amazing thing to you about the tabernacle? What did you learn about the tabernacle that you want to tell others?

Let's pray. If you are already God's tabernacle you can thank Him that you have been forgiven for all your sins and that you can talk to Him any time and any place.

Transition

Let's play a game.

Learning Activity#2 Lg. Group

GAME - Build a Tabernacle

Instructions: While one teacher (using the “Tabernacle = Jesus” craft as a guide) quickly places 8 chairs in the room to vaguely resemble the locations of the Tabernacle items, give each student a card with a temple item or a corresponding verse. They will find their counterpart, go to or stay in the location of the item and each share with the class how they fit together.