Preschool–Grade 6

The Ark of the Covenant

Sunday School Lesson for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade, 45 minutes

Main point: God wants to meet with His people, and we do things God's way.
Bible passage: Exodus 25:10–22. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel." *Exodus 25:22 (KJV)* Kids learn the first part, up to "the mercy seat".
You need: a Bible, a shoebox, two broom handles or yardsticks, 6 paper strips, a marker, a small box, paper, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the 6 paper strips (see part 4). Put a bookmark in your Bible at Exodus 25:10.

1. Opening game: Carry It by the Poles (5 minutes)

Lay the shoebox across the two broom handles. Two kids hold the ends of the handles, one in front and one behind, and carry the box across the room and back without touching it and without dropping it. Then let the next two kids try. Say: "Today we will hear about a gold box that God told Moses to make, with poles to carry it, just like this!"

2. Bible story: God Tells Moses How to Make the Ark (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Exodus 25, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words:

God's people, the children of Israel, were in the wilderness. Moses went up on a mountain to be with God, and he was there forty days and forty nights (Exodus 24:18). There God talked to Moses (25:1). God said, "Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (25:8). A **sanctuary** is a holy place for God. **Dwell** means live. God wanted to live among His people! And God said they must make everything just like the pattern He showed Moses (25:9). A **pattern** shows you exactly how to make something.

First God told Moses how to make an **ark**. This ark was not a boat. It was a special box, or chest. It was made of **shittim wood**, a kind of wood (25:10). It was about as big as a large toy chest (25:10). **Read Exodus 25:11 from your Bible:** "And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about." **Overlay** means cover. Gold inside, gold outside, and a gold border all the way around the top!

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The story continues: God said to make four gold **rings** for the four corners of the ark, two on one side and two on the other side (25:12). Then they made two long poles, called **staves**, of shittim wood covered with gold (25:13). The staves went through the rings, so the ark could be carried (25:14). And the staves were never to be taken out of the rings (25:15)!

God said to put the **testimony** in the ark (25:16). God would give it to Moses. Later the Bible tells us what it was: two tables of stone that God wrote on with His own finger (31:18).

On top of the ark went a lid of pure gold, called the **mercy seat** (25:17, 25:21). On the two ends of the mercy seat were two gold **cherubims**, one on each end (25:18–19). Their wings stretched up high and covered the mercy seat, and their faces looked toward each other and toward the mercy seat (25:20).

Then God told Moses why. **Read Exodus 25:22 from your Bible:** "And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat." **Commune** means talk together. God wanted to meet with His people and talk with them!

Later, a man named Bezaleel made the ark just the way God said (37:1). Moses put the testimony inside, put the mercy seat on top, and brought the ark into the tabernacle, God's holy tent, "as the LORD commanded Moses" (40:20–21).

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. Who did God tell how to make the ark? *(Moses, Exodus 25:1, 25:10)*
2. What was the ark covered with, inside and outside? *(Pure gold, 25:11)*
3. How was the ark carried? *(With two staves, poles, through four gold rings, 25:12–14)*
4. What went inside the ark? *(The testimony God would give, 25:16; the two tables of stone, 31:18)*
5. What did God say He would do above the mercy seat? *(Meet with Moses and commune, talk with him, 25:22)*

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4. Memory verse: Out of the Box (5 minutes)

Write the first part of the verse on 6 paper strips: *And there / I will meet with thee, / and I will commune with thee / from above / the mercy seat. / Exodus 25:22.* Explain the old words: **thee** means you, **commune** means talk together, and the **mercy seat** is the gold lid on top of the ark. Put the strips in the small box, your "ark". Kids take the strips out one at a time and line them up in order on the floor or a table. Read the verse together. Then put one strip back in the box and say it again. Keep going until the kids can say it with all the strips in the box. Read the whole verse from your Bible once at the end.

5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "God wanted to meet with His people above the mercy seat. **Mercy** means God is kind to us and does not give us the punishment we deserve. God loves you very much. But everyone has done wrong things. The Bible calls that sin: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means none of us is as good as God. Then God did something wonderful: He came to live among us as a man, Jesus! The Bible says, 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us' (John 1:14, KJV). Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us how to obey the gospel, the good news about Jesus: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means we are sorry for our sin and we turn away from it. We are **baptized**, buried all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). **Remission** means God takes our sins away. And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, His own Spirit, and we speak in other tongues, words God gives us, just like the believers did in the Bible (Acts 2:4). Now we can come to God and find mercy: 'Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy' (Hebrews 4:16, KJV)."

Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

This week: spend a few minutes every day talking with God. God wants to meet with you!

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6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **ark of the covenant word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/ark-of-the-covenant-word-search), crossword, maze or worksheet, the craft (vbshq.com/crafts/ark-of-the-covenant-craft), or **Draw the Ark:** kids draw a box with a lid, four rings and two long poles, and color it all yellow, for gold. Check the drawing against the "pattern": gold inside and out (Exodus 25:11), four rings (25:12), two poles (25:13).

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You want to meet with us. Thank You for Your mercy, and that You came to us in Jesus. Help us do things Your way. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks what a cubit is: a cubit is about the length from your elbow to your fingertips, about 18 inches.
If a child asks where the ark is now: the Bible doesn't tell us. Today God meets with His people by His Spirit, wherever they pray.

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