Preschool–Grade 6

The Tabernacle

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: God wants to dwell among His people. We give to Him willingly, from our hearts, and do things His way.
Bible passage: Exodus 25:1–9 and 40:33–38. Read them before class.
Memory verse: "And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them." *Exodus 25:8 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), paper and a pencil for each child, a cotton ball, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board.

1. Opening game: Draw the Pattern (5–10 minutes)

Draw a simple shape on the board where only you can see it (keep the board turned or covered): a tent with a fence around it. Pick one child to come look at it and then describe it, without pointing, to the class while everyone draws. Compare. Ask: *How close did you get? What would have made it easier?* Say: "God didn't just tell Moses about the tabernacle. He showed him the pattern, so it could be made exactly right."

2. Bible story: The Tabernacle (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Exodus 25. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

God calls for an offering. God had brought Israel out of Egypt. Moses went up into the cloud on Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights (Exodus 24:16–18). **Look up Exodus 25:2.** God wanted an **offering** (a gift to God) only from those who gave **willingly with his heart**: because they wanted to, not because they had to. The list (25:3–7) included gold, silver, **brass** (a strong yellow-brown metal), blue, purple and scarlet (bright red) cloth, **fine linen** (thin white cloth), goats' hair, animal skins, **shittim wood** (a strong wood), oil for the light, spices, and precious stones.

Why God wanted it. Look up Exodus 25:8. A **sanctuary** is a holy place set apart for God. **Dwell** means live. The holy God wanted to live among His people! **Look up Exodus 25:9.** God showed Moses the **pattern** (the exact plan), and they were to make it "even so," just like it.

The people gave. The people whose hearts made them willing brought their gifts, men and women alike (35:21–22, 35:29). They brought free offerings every morning (36:3), until the workers said, "The people bring much more than enough." Moses had to tell them to stop (36:5–7)!

Done God's way. Look up Exodus 39:43. Moses looked at all the work, and they had done it just as the LORD commanded, and Moses blessed them. The tabernacle was set up on the first day of the first month in the second year after they left Egypt (40:17). Moses set up the **court** (a big fence of linen hangings) around the tabernacle and the altar, and hung the **gate** (40:33). "So Moses finished the work."

The cloud and the glory. Look up Exodus 40:34–35. A cloud covered the **tent of the congregation** (the meeting tent), and the **glory of the LORD** (His great and holy presence) filled the tabernacle. Moses was not able to go in! **Look up Exodus 40:36–38.** When the cloud was **taken up** (lifted off), Israel traveled on. If it stayed, they stayed. The cloud was on the tabernacle by day and fire by night, where all Israel could see it.

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. God only wanted gifts that were given willingly (25:2). Why do you think that mattered to Him?
2. The people gave so much that Moses had to stop them (36:5–7). What does that tell you about their hearts?
3. Why was it important to make the tabernacle exactly like the pattern (25:9, 39:43)?
4. The holy God wanted to dwell among His people (25:8). How does that make you feel about God?
5. Israel moved when the cloud moved and stayed when it stayed (40:36–37). What would it look like for you to follow God like that?

Recall questions

1. What is a sanctuary? *(A holy place for God, Exodus 25:8)*
2. What did Moses set up around the tabernacle? *(The court, with the hanging of the court gate, 40:33)*
3. What was on the tabernacle by night? *(Fire, 40:38)*

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **sanctuary** means a holy place for God; **dwell** means live; **among** means with, in the middle of. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "God wanted to dwell among His people. God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16), and He dwelt among us (John 1:14). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? '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 to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."

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: give something to God willingly, from your heart: your time, your help, your offering or your best effort.

6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Exodus 24:18: How long was Moses in the mount? *(Forty days and forty nights)*
2. Exodus 25:2: Who should bring the offering? *(Every man that giveth it willingly with his heart)*
3. Exodus 25:3: Name the three metals. *(Gold, silver and brass)*
4. Exodus 25:6: What was the oil for? *(For the light)*
5. Exodus 36:5: What did the workers tell Moses? *("The people bring much more than enough")*
6. Exodus 40:17: When was the tabernacle reared up? *(In the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month)*
7. Exodus 40:34: What filled the tabernacle? *(The glory of the LORD)*
8. Exodus 40:38: Who could see the cloud and the fire? *(All the house of Israel)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You want to dwell with Your people. Help us give to You willingly, from our hearts, and do things Your way. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks what was inside the tabernacle: God told Moses to make an ark, a table and a candlestick for inside (Exodus 25:10–40). This lesson stays with the offering and the cloud; the inside is a lesson for another day.

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