Preschool–Grade 6

The Tabernacle

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

Main point: God wants to be with His people. We give to Him gladly 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, building blocks or paper shapes, a cotton ball, 7 paper strips, a marker, tape, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the 7 paper strips (see part 4). Put bookmarks in your Bible at Exodus 25:8 and 40:34.

1. Opening game: Follow the Pattern (5 minutes)

Build a simple pattern with blocks or paper shapes (red, blue, red, blue, yellow) where everyone can see it. Give each table the same blocks and say: "Make it exactly like mine." Then make a harder one. Ask: *Was it easy to copy it exactly? What happens if you change it?* Say: "Today God shows Moses a pattern for something very special, and the people make it exactly His way."

2. Bible story: God's Tent (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 had brought the children of Israel out of Egypt. Now they lived in tents in the wilderness. Moses went up on Mount Sinai into the cloud, and he stayed there forty days and forty nights (Exodus 24:16–18).

The LORD told Moses to speak to the people, "that they bring me an offering" (25:2). An **offering** is a gift for God. God wanted gifts only from people who gave **willingly**, from their hearts, because they wanted to (25:2). They could bring gold, silver, brass (a strong metal), blue, purple and red cloth, fine linen (soft white cloth), wood, oil for the light, and pretty stones (25:3–7).

Why? 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 right in the middle of His people! It would be a big tent called the **tabernacle**. God told Moses to make it just like the **pattern** He would show him (25:9).

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The story continues: The people were happy to give. They brought so much that the workers told Moses, "The people bring much more than enough!" Moses had to tell everyone to stop bringing gifts (36:5–7)! The workers made everything just as the LORD commanded, and Moses blessed them (39:42–43).

Then Moses set up the tabernacle. He put up a fence of linen cloth all around it, called the court, with the altar inside, and he hung up the gate. So Moses finished the work (40:33).

Read Exodus 40:34 from your Bible: "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle." *(Hold the cotton ball up high.)* God's **glory** means His greatness and His holy presence. It was so great that even Moses could not go in (40:35)!

When the cloud went up from the tabernacle, the people packed up and moved on. When the cloud stayed, they stayed (40:36–37). The cloud was there by day, and fire was on it by night, so all the people could see that God was with them (40:38).

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. What did God ask the people to bring? *(An offering, a gift for God, Exodus 25:2)*
2. How did God want them to give? *(Willingly, from their hearts, 25:2)*
3. Why did God want a sanctuary? *(So He could dwell among them, 25:8)*
4. What covered the tent when it was finished? *(A cloud, 40:34)*
5. When the cloud went up, what did the people do? *(They moved on, 40:36)*

4. Memory verse: Seven Strips (5 minutes)

Tape the 7 strips up in order: *And let them / make me / a sanctuary; / that I may / dwell / among them. / Exodus 25:8.* Explain the old words: **sanctuary** means a holy place for God; **dwell** means live; **among** means with, in the middle of. Read the verse together. Then take one strip away and read it again. Keep taking strips away, one each time, until the kids can say the whole verse by themselves.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "God wanted to dwell among His people. 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. Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). He came and dwelt among us (John 1:14). 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)."
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 gladly: your best singing in church, your offering, or your help.

6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **Tabernacle word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/the-tabernacle-word-search), the Tabernacle craft (vbshq.com/bible-stories/the-tabernacle), or **Follow the Cloud:** hold the cotton ball up high and kids walk around the room. Bring it down to rest, and everyone stops and sits down "in their tents" (Numbers 9:18). Play several rounds, fast and slow.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You want to be with us. Help us give to You gladly 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 why Moses couldn't go in: the Bible says the cloud stayed on the tent and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle (Exodus 40:35). God's glory was so great that even Moses stayed outside. God is holy and great, and He still wanted to be with His people.

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