

# A TENT FOR GOD

God with His  
People  
Exodus 25:1–19;  
40:1–8, 34–38  
1445 BC

## OVERVIEW

**BIBLE TRUTH**

God dwells with His people.

**BIBLE VERSE**

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. John 1:14

**LEARNER GOAL**

I understand that God is here among us.

**LAW & GOSPEL**

My sin makes me unholy; I am unworthy to stand in God's presence.

**God cleanses me, makes me holy, and dwells in me through the sacrifice of Christ.**

**SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT**

Moses begins the process of building a portable house for the Lord by gathering offerings from the Israelites. God provides detailed instruction for the creation of the ark of the covenant as well as the other fixtures of the tabernacle. When the tabernacle is finally assembled, the glory of the Lord descends on the tabernacle in the form of a cloud. As long as the presence remains, the people remain in that place.

## LESSON PREP

**BASIC** Read Exodus 25:1–19; 40:1–8, 34–38 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

**MORE TIME** Read the leader devotion, found in the digital resource center.

**IN DEPTH** Look at the picture and chart of the tabernacle and its furnishings on pages 139 and 141 of *TLSEB*.

## SUPPLY LIST

**FOR THIS LESSON**

- Objects to represent artifacts from the tabernacle (see “Learn” section)
- Items for Tabletop Tabernacle (see “Live” section)
- Two backpacks, stuffed toys, slippers, Bible story books
- Blue, purple, and red paper or yarn, angel stickers
- Berries or Jell-O cubes, whipped topping, bowls, spoons
- Two bins; a variety of purple, blue, and red cloth; old jewelry
- Items for Dramatic Church Play (see “Live” section)

**FOR EVERY LESSON**

- Bible
- Device with prepped music
- Copies of downloadable activity page
- Copies of Enduring Faith Page
- Supply Box

# LAUNCH

Plan your lesson by reading through the options in each section. Choose the activities that will best fit your learners, and mark those boxes to guide you as you teach the lesson.

## BEGIN

- Follow the Order of Opening Worship, use the Lesson Opening, or do both (part of the planning resources in the digital resource center).
- Sing songs, using music found in the digital resource center or your own favorite songs.

## SAY

- Hi, boys and girls. I wonder who likes to go to God's house, the church? What is something you do there? Today, we'll hear about a special church built by God's people in the Bible.**
- What do camping and the circus have in common? (Both use tents.) Why are tents good for both those things? (They are used for traveling, easy to move.) We don't think of going to church in tent, but in our Bible account today, we're going to learn about how God used a tent to make a place of worship.**

## PRAY

Dear God, thank You for our church. It's a special place to be. Thank You for sending Jesus to die and rise for us. Amen.

# LEARN

Show your Bible, and remind the children that all the stories in God's Word are true.

## TELL THE BIBLE NARRATIVE

Choose one of the options on the next page to tell the Bible narrative.

### DO THIS!

Use one or both of the following activities to talk about the Bible narrative.

- FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE YOUNGER** Start by talking about what makes a place special. Have students talk about their favorite special place. Then, talk about how God gave His people a very special place to be with Him. Read the narrative and stop at the boldfaced sentences to talk about each part of the tabernacle.
- FOR A MIX OF AGES** In several small boxes, put some "artifacts" from the temple such as blue, purple, and red pieces of fabric; animal skins (fake leather); a golden angel; some wooden poles or sticks. Talk about what archaeologists do, and then tell students to pretend that they are archaeologists at an ancient site of the tabernacle. Have students first speculate what their item might be for, and then have them read or listen to **Exodus 25:3–8** for a more specific listing of items in the tabernacle. Use the picture and chart on pages 139 and 141 of *The Lutheran Study Bible* to help you guide them.

## TALK ABOUT IT

Choose the questions that best fit the learning level of your group.

- What did the people bring to make the tent-church? What special things did God tell them to make for it?
- How did God show that He was with His people?
- Is God still with us today, even though He doesn't lower a cloud over our church?

## KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Guide discussion, using these key points.

- The people brought silver and gold, colorful cloth, precious stones, wood, and leather. These were used to make lampstands, silver bowls, curtains, and the ark of the covenant.
- God filled the tent-church in a big cloud.
- God is still with us today, of course! He even sent His Son, Jesus, to dwell among us. He gives us His Holy Spirit to live in our hearts.



### CHRIST CONNECTION

God sent Jesus to dwell among us and to be the once-for-all sacrifice for our sin.

# BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

STORYTELLING DIRECTIONS: Have children make a thumbs-up when indicated.

God asked His people to build a big tent-church to help them remember that He was right there with them.

God told them His plans for the tent-church. He told them how big to make it. He told them what materials to make it from. And He told them what furniture to put in it. The people were so happy God forgave them.

The people wanted to show God they loved Him. Some people gladly brought gold and silver for the tent-church. (*Thumbs up.*) Then, they brought more! Some people brought red and blue and purple cloth. (*Thumbs up.*) Then, they brought more! Some people brought wood and leather and precious stones. (*Thumbs up.*) Then, they brought more! Finally, Moses said, “Stop. Don’t bring any more. We have plenty!” What a blessing!

The people gave their time and worked hard to build their tent-church too. **They made golden candlesticks and polished silver bowls.** They said, “We want the best for God.” (*Thumbs up.*) **People sewed the red, blue, and purple cloth into beautiful curtains.** They said, “We want the best for God.” (*Thumbs up.*) **People pounded the stones into place. They nailed the wood poles together and hung the curtains.** They said, “We want the best for God.” (*Thumbs up.*)

God told the people to put the special things in the tent-church. They put the ark of the covenant behind big curtains. **The ark was a beautiful box covered with gold.** Two gold angels sat on top of it. Inside the ark were the Ten Commandments and other special church things.

**God also told Moses to put a table with special bread, a lampstand with seven lights, an altar of incense, and a wash basin in the tent-church.** Then, He said to put an altar for sacrifice near the door of the tent-church.

When the special tent-church was finished, **God came in a big cloud. It filled the tent-church during the day.** When night came, a fire burned inside the cloud. This was the way God showed that He was with His people. (*Thumbs up.*) When God wanted His people to move to a new place, He led the way in the cloud. The tent-church was the special place God lived with His people. It was called the tabernacle.

God is with us too. He gives us a special place to be with Him too. It is our church! (*Thumbs up.*) God gives us special things in church—His Word, Baptism, and the Lord’s Supper. Through these gifts, He shows how much He loves us. We can trust Jesus’ promise to be with us always. He loves us so much!

# BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR OLDER CHILDREN

After God led the Israelites to Mount Sinai and gave them the Ten Commandments, **the Lord told Moses to build a special place called the tabernacle**, or the tent of meeting.

The tabernacle was a large, fancy tent. Inside this tent in the front was a special item **called the ark of the covenant.** This special box was covered with gold and had a golden lid with two angels carved on top. God told Moses to put the two stone tablets with the Ten Commandments and a jar of manna inside the ark.

**A thick curtain would be set up in front of the ark to keep people from looking at it.** This curtain reminded them their sins had separated them from God. And they could not come to God on their own. They needed someone special to stand between God and them to take away their sins.

That person would be God’s own Son. But until He came, Moses’ brother Aaron and his sons would stand in His place. We call them priests. The trouble was that Aaron and his sons were sinners too, just like you and me, just like your pastor. None of them could stand before God unless God’s Son took away their sins too.

**So God told Moses to use sacrifices to take away the sins of the priests and the people. Animals like sheep, goats, and bulls would die in place of the priests and**

**the people.** They would be brought to the front of the tabernacle, where they would be killed and burned on a bronze altar outside the door. All of these sacrifices and offerings pointed ahead to the day when Jesus would go to the cross and die in our place.

**The ark inside the tabernacle was very important.** It reminded the Israelites that God had come down to live with His people. That was why the tabernacle was a tent. As the Israelites traveled to the Promised Land, **the priests would take down the tent and carry it with them.** They would carry the ark with two long poles. It pointed ahead to the Son of God, who came to live with us and go from place to place teaching about God’s promise.

**A cloud covered the tabernacle**, and the glory of the Lord filled the tent of meeting. **When it was time to move, the pillar of cloud rose from the tabernacle.** The priests covered the ark with the thick curtain and some other cloths. Then, the Levites carried the ark and the rest of the tent. When the pillar of cloud stopped, the priests set the tent back up and brought in the ark.

**God was with His people in the tabernacle.** Later, Jesus would come to be with His people and die and rise again for our sins so that we could live with God forever.

# LIVE

Choose from the following activities and crafts to help connect Bible learning to life.

## Tour the Church

Take your class on a field trip to the sanctuary. Explain church furnishings (pulpit, altar, banners, Church Year colors, stained glass windows, etc.). Examine an offering plate, Communionware, and stoles. *Option:* Do a virtual field trip. Take pictures of these items in your church on your device to show. Ask students what they like best about worship.



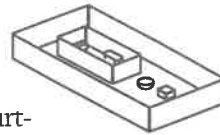
## Packing Game

Pack two small backpacks with similar items (stuffed toy, slippers, Bible story book) and put on one side of the room. Divide children into two teams. Say, **God's people were traveling through the desert. God told them to make a tent-church so they could pack it up and take it with them. Let's play a packing game.** Have the first child in each line run to a backpack, bring it back to the team, and unpack it. Have the next child repack and return the backpack to its original position. Repeat until everyone has had a turn.



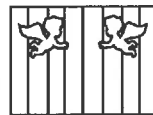
## Tabletop Tabernacle

Tape pieces of red, blue, and purple tissue paper on the outside of an open box—this will be the courtyard of the tabernacle. Inside, put a shoe box without the lid (so children can see inside) for the tabernacle. To that box, let children add a doll-house-size table with pieces of bread, a small bowl of water (basin), birthday candles (lampstand), a little box painted gold (ark), a small perfumed box (altar of incense), and a box for the burnt offering. Talk about each one.



## Tabernacle Curtain Craft

Show children how to glue red, purple, and blue strips of paper or yarn to white construction paper to make the curtain of the tent-church. *Option:* Dip thin strips of yarn in blue, purple, and red paint and press them onto the paper. When dry, have children attach angel stickers to top of curtain to represent the cherubim embroidered onto the curtain fabric.



## Cloud Snack

Put berries or Jell-O cubes into small bowls. Top with whipped topping. Talk about how God came to be with His people in a cloud in the tabernacle.



## Tabernacle Materials

In one bin, set out a variety of purple, blue, and red cloth (the colors used in the tabernacle).



Have the children use their sense of sight and touch to sort by color or patterns or texture. In another bin, set out old jewelry and have children sort the gold from the silver. Talk about the beautiful things used to make God's house special.

## Dramatic Church Play

Set out chairs, hymnals, Bibles, candles, an offering plate or basket, a basin for a baptismal font, a doll, and other church items. Set out a long scarf for a stole and a cross children can wear to pretend they are a pastor. Have children playact things they do in church.



# LEAVE

## SAY

God was with His people and dwelt with them as they wandered in the wilderness. God is with us, too, no matter where we go.

## PRAY

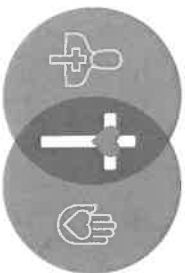
Dear Jesus, thank You for coming here to dwell among us. Thank You for sending the Holy Spirit, who continues to dwell in our hearts and give us faith. Thank You for loving us so much. In Your name we pray, Jesus. Amen.

## A TENT FOR GOD

LESSON 2

Exodus 25:1-19; 40:1-8, 34-38

GOD DWELLS WITH HIS PEOPLE.



### CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

#### IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

God demonstrates His desire to dwell with me through His Word and Sacraments.

#### CALLING: WHY AM I HERE?

I can experience the presence of God as I study His Word and partake of the Sacrament of the Altar.

### GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE

See how this lesson builds on previous learning for each age.

#### ADULT

I can connect God's presence among His people in the tabernacle with His presence among His people today.

#### YOUTH

I can describe how God dwells with me just as He dwelled with the Israelites.

#### ELEMENTARY

I understand that God is here among us.

#### EARLY CHILDHOOD

I know God is with me.

### BIBLE VERSE

The Word became flesh and  
dwelt among us.

John 1:14

### SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

Moses begins the process of building a portable house for the Lord by gathering offerings from the Israelites. God provides detailed instruction for the creation of the ark of the covenant as well as the other fixtures of the tabernacle. When the tabernacle is finally assembled, the glory of the Lord descends on the tabernacle in the form of a cloud. As long as the presence remains, the people remain in that place.

### TAKING IT HOME

- ▶ *On the Go*—If you were an archaeologist on a dig, what artifacts do you think you might find from today's Bible account?
- ▶ *At Mealtime*—The tent where God dwelt among the people was called a tabernacle. What is a place you plan to go this week? How can you ask God to be there with you?
- ▶ *Something to Do*—What items in your church show God's presence there? Draw a picture or make a word cloud that expresses "the glory of the Lord" and "[God] will walk among you."
- ▶ *Before Bed*—Name some places you traveled to today. Pray as a family together, thanking God for being with you always.

The

WORD

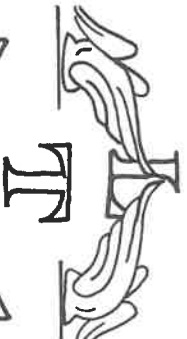
BECAME

FLESH

AND

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JOHN 1:14

**Leader Devotion LESSON 2**  
**A TENT FOR GOD—GOD WITH HIS PEOPLE**  
**EXODUS 25:1–19; 40:1–8, 34–38**

**BIBLE TRUTH**

God dwells with His people.

**BIBLE VERSE**

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. John 1:14

**LAW & GOSPEL**

My sin makes me unholy; I am unworthy to stand in God's presence.

**God cleanses me, makes me holy, and dwells in me through the sacrifice of Christ.**

**DEVOTION**

In April 2019, one of the most famous cathedrals in the world—Notre-Dame de Paris—suffered a massive fire. The cathedral had been built between 1163 and 1345, and many people many feared for the worst. But once the flames were extinguished, it appeared that most of the destruction was limited to the roof structure. The intricate stained glass windows were spared major damage.

Around the world, believers gather in many different kinds of churches to worship the true God. From magnificent cathedrals to modest storefront churches, every church serves as a gathering place for believers. “The glory the Lord continues in Word and Sacrament, through which Christ lives in and with us” (TLSB, p. 163).

**Pray:** “Immortal, invisible, God only wise, In light inaccessible hid from our eyes, Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days, Almighty, victorious, Thy great name we praise.” Amen (LSB 802:1).

# LESSON 2 OPENING

## A TENT FOR GOD—GOD WITH HIS PEOPLE

Good morning, boys and girls. I have some photos to show you. Do you recognize this building? *Show a photo of your church and let a volunteer identify it.* What do we do in this building? *Worship God, confess our sins and receive forgiveness, hear His Word, celebrate the Sacraments, pray to and sing praise to God.* There are lots of churches in the world, but each one is generally different from the others. Some Christians worship in small wooden buildings. *Show a picture of such a church.* Some worship in large stone buildings called cathedrals. *Show a picture of a cathedral.* Some Christians in Nicaragua worship in buildings with open sides and thatched roofs, much like a picnic shelter. *Show a picture of an open church.* Churches come in all shapes and sizes.

When Jesus was born and while He lived on earth as a man, there was an impressive stone church in the capital city of Jerusalem. It was called the temple, and it was the central place of worship for God's people. There, they prayed and offered sacrifices for their sins. It was a beautiful building that everyone greatly admired. Even the disciples pointed out its lovely features to Jesus, but Jesus wasn't impressed. He knew that in forty years from that time, the Roman army would come and destroy it so that one stone wouldn't be left standing on another.

On one occasion, Jesus spoke with a Samaritan woman. She did not worship at the temple in Jerusalem but at a local place. She wondered whether Jesus would condemn her for the location and shape of the church she worshiped in. This is what Jesus said about what God really wanted. *Read John 4:24.* It doesn't much matter if you are worshipping in a small or large church building, a simple wooden structure, or a fancy temple.

Jesus is saying that what matters about worship is not the place but the faith that moves us to worship God. Those who worship in small churches and those who worship in large churches share a common faith in Jesus Christ as the Savior from sin. This sincere faith in the one true God is God's gift to us through the power of the Holy Spirit and the proclamation of God's Word.

You will be learning today about a special church where the children of Israel worshiped as they journeyed from Egypt to the land God had promised them. Like our church, it was a place where God promised to be with His people, to hear their prayers, and to forgive their sins. God bless your study of His Word.

**Pray:** Dear heavenly Father, thank You for sending Your beloved Son, Jesus, to be the full and final sacrifice that we count on for the forgiveness of our sins. Please send us Your Holy Spirit to increase our faith, so that we worship You in sincerity and truth. Amen.

### LESSON TEXT

Exodus 25:1–19; 40:1–8, 34–38

### BIBLE TRUTH

God dwells with His people.

### FAITH FOCUS

The Third Commandment

### LAW & GOSPEL

My sin makes me unholy; I am unworthy to stand in God's presence.

**God cleanses me, makes me holy, and dwells in me through the sacrifice of Christ.**

### BIBLE VERSE

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.  
John 1:14

### VISUAL HELPS

Photos of your church and several others (some small and simple, others larger and ornate)

Bible

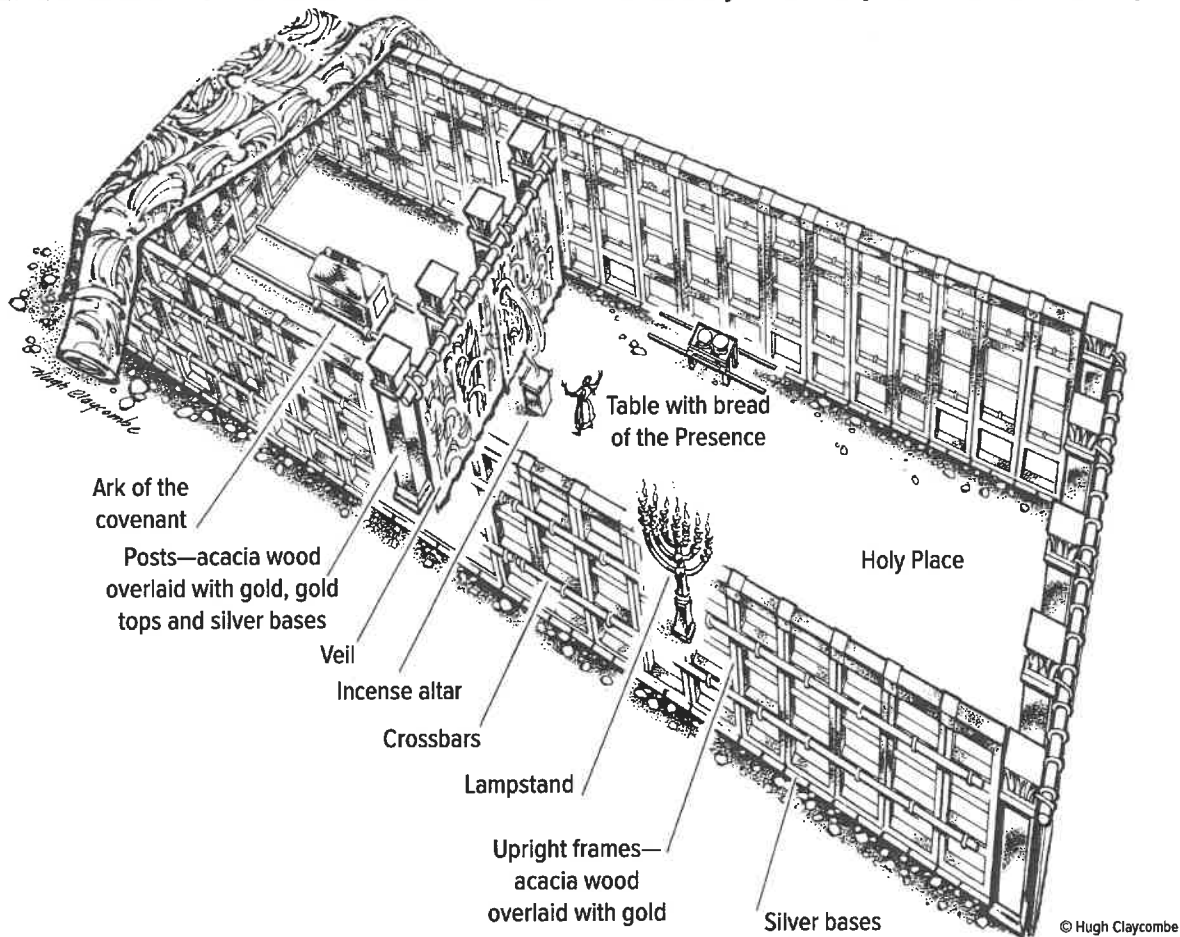
# A TENT FOR GOD—GOD WITH HIS PEOPLE

## Unit 5, Lesson 2

### God with Us

The tabernacle was the movable house (tent) where God dwelled and where the Israelites worshiped Him while they traveled to the Promised Land.

**Directions:** Circle items in the tabernacle that are similar to items you see in your church sanctuary.



What items do you see in your church sanctuary that are not in the tabernacle or that are there in a different form?

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Your church sanctuary contains a cross, a Bible on the altar and perhaps in the pews, a baptismal font, and the paten (plate) and the chalice used for Holy Communion to hold the bread and wine. How are each of these items connected to how God is with us today?

Bible \_\_\_\_\_

Cross \_\_\_\_\_

Baptismal font \_\_\_\_\_

Holy Communion \_\_\_\_\_