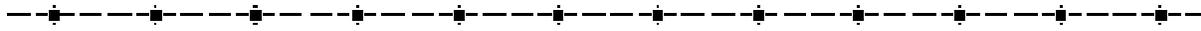


GOD'S BIG PLAN

The Traveling Church Exodus 25 - Deuteronomy 33

Supporting Scriptures: Psalm 78:11, 105; Isaiah 59:1-2; Acts 7:44; Hebrews 8-10



Lesson Goals: To see how the tabernacle points to Jesus.
To see that God desires a relationship with us.

Scripture Memory The Word became a human being and lived here with us. John 1:14a (NIV)

NOTE: Familiarize yourself with this story. Tell it as a STORY, not as “He said. . . She said” or read. To reinforce that these ideas are not your own, hold your Bible as you tell the story.

The Lesson: Let’s review what we have learned so far about God’s Big Plan. (Review the previous stories, encouraging more and more students to share.)

What have you learned about God and His relationships with the people He created? What about Adam and Eve? (God wanted a friendship with them. He walked with them in the garden.) Noah? (He was pleasing to God and God saved him and his family when He flooded the earth.) Abraham? (God chose Abraham out of all the people in the world at that time. He promised him as many descendants and the number of stars in the sky and He promised him a new place.) And Moses? (God saved him as a baby and then spoke to him through a burning bush.) Let’s see what else happened.

READ: Exodus 33:11a (Remember, hold the Bible, opened, throughout the story.)

When we spoke of Moses last, He was on the mountain of God receiving the ten commandments. God talked with Moses like you talk with a friend and while they were there, God told Moses that He wanted to live with His people. He would live in a special place. God didn’t just leave it up to Moses and Israel to plan what this special place should look like. God told Moses exactly what it should look like. Moses wrote down God’s instructions. But how in the world did they build something so special? They were out in the desert and they had just come out of slavery. They didn’t have much, did they? But when they were getting ready to leave Egypt, what did the people do? They asked their Egyptian neighbors for gold and silver and other things and God made the people want to give to them! So these slaves left Egypt loaded down with riches! Moses told the people about this special place for God and then gave them the opportunity to give whatever they felt like giving so that the tabernacle could be built. The people gave and gave until Moses had to stop them because they had given so much.

So the people made this special place just as God told them. It was a tent, shaped like a rectangle. The form was made with wooden poles that could be taken apart when the traveling church needed to be moved because they weren’t going to live in the desert forever. Beautiful curtains were hung on the poles from gold and silver rings. The curtains were made of blue, purple and deep red threads with cherubs on them. Then, the furniture was made. It was made of wood covered with real gold. A special chest was made called the Ark of the Covenant. A top was made for it out of pure gold with large cherubs facing down with wings that reached from end to end. The ten commandments were to be put inside of the chest. Gold rings

were put on the chest that would hold poles. The poles were used to carry the chest because it was so special that no one could even touch it. A table was also made that would always have bread on it. There was a golden lampstand that burned day and night and there was a place to burn incense. All of this went inside the curtained tent. But the chest, even though it went inside the curtain, was behind a special curtain of its own. This curtain separated God from the people. God also gave special instructions about what the priests would wear. They would wear beautiful clothes that would give them honor and respect.

Outside of the tent was a place to wash your hands and a square box made of bronze. This box was called the altar. It didn't look like the stone altars that Noah, or Abraham or Jacob had built, but it was to be used for the same purpose. It was there that animals were offered to be killed. Their blood was spilled in place of the people. It was the people who deserved to die for their sins. These offerings didn't take away their sin, but because of it, God passed over their sins just as He had passed over their homes sprinkled with blood.

When everything was complete, they set up the tent and put everything in place. This was done on the first day of the first month of the second year of their new calendar; just a little less than a year after they left Egypt. And then, a cloud covered the tent and the glory of God filled the tabernacle. As long as God was there, in the form of the cloud, the people camped. When the cloud lifted and began to move, the people followed. On the twentieth day of the second month, the cloud lifted. They were headed for the promised land! But when they had a chance to move right into the new place that God had already promised was theirs, the people didn't trust their leaders. They didn't trust God. The punishment for their disobedience was forty years of wandering around in the desert when they could have already been enjoying their new place.

Review:

Let's review what you have learned. Who would like to retell the story? (Ask your group if anything was left out or told inaccurately.) Would anyone else like to retell the story?

While in the wilderness, God had the people build a special traveling church, the tabernacle, so that He could "dwell among them." Special things were put in the tabernacle. Those things had a special meaning for the future. They show us things about Jesus, God's Son. The lampstand points to Jesus being the Light of the World. The table with bread shows us that Jesus is the Bread of Life, our nourishment and someone we need. The special chest and the lid, called the "mercy seat" show us that even though we deserve death for our own sin, He doesn't give us what we deserve. That's what mercy is, not getting what you deserve.

Just as God promised in the Garden of Eden so many years ago, One Man would come to crush Satan's head. The One who came has been with God from the very beginning. He created with God. The book of John tells us that this One, Jesus, left heaven and became flesh and blood and "tabernacled" among us. As the tabernacle went where the people went, Jesus left heaven and lived with us on earth. He didn't live in the form of a cloud; He lived in a human body. He suffered as we suffer and He was tempted in the very same ways that we are tempted to sin. But Jesus never sinned. So Jesus became the sinless Lamb of God on the cross to make us right with God. He died on that cross to pass over our sins once, for all time. Will you receive His mercy today? Thank Him for not giving you what you deserve. Thank Him for taking the punishment for you. And let the people of Israel be an example. They followed God when He moved in the form of a cloud. Will you follow Him today?

**Planning for Next Week
Lesson 17 - A New Place!
Deuteronomy 34-Joshua**

PRESCHOOL LESSON

SING: “Our God is an Awesome God”

SHARE: The last time we talked about Moses, He was on a mountain and God was giving him the ten commandments. God talked with Moses like you talk with a friend. God told Moses that He wanted to live with His people. He would live in a special place called the tabernacle. God told Moses exactly what it should look like. Moses wrote down God’s instructions. When Moses came down from the mountain, he told the people about this special place for God and then gave them the opportunity to give whatever they felt like giving so that the tabernacle could be built. The people gave and gave until Moses had to stop them because they had given so much.

The people obeyed God and made this special place for Him. It was a tent shaped like a rectangle. It was made with wooden poles that could be taken apart when the traveling church needed to be moved. Beautiful curtains were hung on the poles. The curtains were blue, purple and deep red with cherubs on them. The furniture was made of wood covered with real gold. God had even given special instructions about what the priests would wear. They would wear beautiful clothes that would give them honor and respect.

Outside of the tent was a place to wash your hands and a square box made of bronze. This box was called the altar. It didn’t look like the stone altars that Noah, or Abraham or Jacob had built, but it was for the same purpose. It was there that animals were offered to God.

When everything was finished, they set up the tent and put everything in place. And then, a cloud covered the tent and the glory of God filled the tabernacle. As long as God was there, in the form of the cloud, the people stayed in camp. When the cloud lifted and began to move, the people followed. When the cloud finally lifted, the people knew they were headed for the promised land! But when they had a chance to move right into the new place that God had already promised them, the people didn’t trust their leaders. They didn’t trust God. For not obeying, they were punished. Forty long years they would walk around in the desert. But they could have been enjoying their new place if they had only obeyed.

PRAY: Thank you, God, for wanting to live with us. Help me to obey you.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Memory Verse Activity - Make a paper doll chain and print a word of the verse on each doll.
- Make mini-tabernacles out of shoe boxes.
- Read more about the spies sent to Canaan (Numbers 13-14). Encourage your students to “print” their own newspaper or prepare a news story that can be shared with the others. Guide them to ask the five W’s and an H (who, what, when, where, why and how) to get as much information as possible.
- As a group, draw off the tabernacle and how things were arranged. Or, provide a floor plan of the tabernacle and have your students illustrate what they think the temple furniture might have looked like.
- John 1:14 in the Amplified Bible reads, “And the Word (Christ) became flesh (human, incarnate) and tabernacled (fixed His tent of flesh, lived awhile) among us.” The Message reads, “The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood.” Discuss these verses with your older students. Talk about the similarities between the tabernacle and Jesus.