The Tabernacle: God Dwells Among His People

Willing hearts, shared gifts, and God with us

Ages about 7-11 | Video 5:10 | Group lesson about 25-35 minutes

Central truth God called Israel to build a holy dwelling among their tents. The people freely offered materials and skills. Jesus, the Word made flesh, dwelt among us and remains truly present in the Eucharist.

Learning goals Recall the gifts and work used to build the Tabernacle; explain the cloud as a sign of God's presence; connect the story with Jesus and reverent Eucharistic prayer.

Gather Video access, one handout per child, pencils or crayons, and a Bible.

Watch online Open this video on Servus Dei

Before watching | 2 minutes

Recall the renewed covenant after the golden calf. Ask: How can people use different gifts to serve God together?

Watch and notice

Notice willing offerings, Bezalel and Oholiab, the Ark, the cloud, Mary with Jesus, and prayer before the Eucharistic tabernacle.

Talk together | 6-8 minutes

1. How did the people help build the Tabernacle?
They freely brought materials such as gold, wood, yarn, and oil, and offered their skills and work.

2. Why did Moses tell the people to stop bringing gifts?
The workers already had more than enough materials for the work.

3. What happened when the holy tent was complete?
The cloud covered it and the glory of the Lord filled it. The cloud guided the people on their journey.

4. How does this story help us think about Jesus?
The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus remains truly present in the Eucharist, which is reserved reverently in a church tabernacle.

Then respond and pray Allow 6-8 minutes for a handout or the activity on page 2; finish with the closing prayer.

Lead the response

The Tabernacle: God Dwells Among His People

Short family lesson Watch the video, choose one recall question and one application question, then pray. About 12-18 minutes; the handout is optional.

Choose a handout

Draw & Tell Read prompts aloud. Accept drawing, pointing, dictated words, or spoken responses.

Read & Write Use one story detail, an explanation, and one concrete way to serve or pray. Short or dictated answers are welcome.

Adapt by readiness

Younger children: name one gift from the story and one loving action they can offer.

Older children: compare Exodus 25:8 and John 1:14, then discuss reverence before Jesus in the Eucharist.

Many gifts, one loving work | Optional 4 minutes

Draw a large tent on paper. Around it, add pictures or words for the gifts people brought. Then name a skill or loving action each person can freely offer at home or in the parish. No money or material gift is required.

Look for understanding The child names a willing gift, recalls the cloud, and explains a way to serve God or pray reverently before Jesus.

Closing prayer Lord God, thank you for staying close to your people. Help us offer our gifts with willing hearts and work together in love. Jesus, truly present in the Eucharist, teach us to worship you with reverence. Amen.

At home With a trusted adult, notice the church tabernacle and sanctuary lamp. Spend a quiet moment thanking Jesus for his presence. Follow the parish's instructions and accommodate physical needs.

Handout answer notes Remember: the people offered materials and skills freely. Explain: the cloud signified God's presence and guided the journey. Apply: share a skill, serve with love, and pray reverently to Jesus.

Teach with care

Have a Bible, paper, pencils, and crayons. Preview the film. If visiting a church, arrange the visit with the parish and follow its guidance. Distinguish the portable sanctuary in Exodus from the church tabernacle used to reserve the Eucharist. The film draws a connection through God dwelling with his people; the Ark did not contain the Eucharist. The Eucharist is truly Jesus, not merely a symbol. God is not confined to a building. Gifts are freely offered, and children need not contribute money. Adapt gestures of reverence to ability and parish guidance.

Words to explain Tabernacle: the holy dwelling in the wilderness; also the worthy place where the Eucharist is reserved in a Catholic church. Ark: the sacred chest holding the covenant tablets. Reverence: loving respect for God. Incarnation: the Son of God becoming truly human.

Sources for the leader

Scripture: The holy dwelling and Ark - Exodus 25

Scripture: Willing offerings and skilled workers - Exodus 35

Scripture: Glory fills the Tabernacle - Exodus 40

Scripture: The Word dwells among us - John 1:14

Catholic teaching: Catechism: Christ's presence and the tabernacle, 1374-1379

Willing hearts and helping hands

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Remember the people offering gifts and working together.

Name _____

Adult helper Read aloud. Invite drawing, pointing, or spoken answers. Writing is optional.

1 Draw one gift or skill that helped build the Tabernacle.

2 Draw one loving action you can freely offer to help someone.

Tell How can different gifts help people serve God together?

Pray Jesus, thank you for being close to us. Help me give with love. Amen.

At home Share your picture and one thing you learned about God or following Jesus.

Remember, explain, offer

The Tabernacle: God Dwells Among His People

Use details from the story and your own ideas.

Name _____

1 Remember

What did the people offer for the Tabernacle?

The people offered ...

2 Explain

What did the cloud over the Tabernacle show?

The cloud showed ...

3 Offer

What skill or loving action could you freely offer?

I could ...

Pray Jesus, thank you for being close to us. Help me give with love. Amen.

Go deeper Read John 1:14 with an adult. Who is the Word, and what does it mean that he dwelt among us?