

Teaching Plan
EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Date: October 15, 2017
Lesson Title: "Equipped"
Lesson Passage: Exodus 25:1-9; 31:1-6

ABOUT THIS LESSON

In our Focal Passage, the Lord tells Moses how to prepare for constructing and furnishing the Tabernacle. As in a modern church building program, Moses must first call upon the people to contribute the materials needed to build and furnish the edifice; then he must assemble the workers with their various skills.

TEACHING/LEARNING GOALS

- (1) Explain the various Old Testament names for the tabernacle.
- (2) Describe the "ark of the testimony."

BEGINNING THE LESSON

Begin with this: To anyone who has ever been involved in a church building program, this week's lesson passage will have a somewhat familiar ring to it. For it begins with an ancient equivalent of a fund-raising program for the purpose of building a place of worship, then goes on to describe the skilled labor needed for the project. The nature of the building is implied in Exod. 25:8, where it is called a "sanctuary" (Hebrew, *miqdash*) which means "a holy place." In other Old Testament passages it is known as the "tabernacle" (Exod. 26:1) and the "tabernacle of the testimony" (Exod. 38:21). One reason this sacred structure was significant is that it was a forerunner of the Temple in Jerusalem that, later, would be the national center of worship for the Jewish people.

TEACHING PROCEDURES

1. *The Lord instructs Moses to ask the people for an offering that will make it possible to construct the tabernacle (Exodus 25:1-2):* The words "every man whose heart makes him willing" shows that the offering is to be a freewill offering. (*Observe that Exodus 35:29 is an interesting commentary on the willingness of the people to respond to an appeal like this.*)

2. Comment on the items listed in Exodus 25:3-7:

(1) The metals listed in v. 3 would come from stocks the people already had in their possession (*read Ex. 35:23,35*). Interestingly, there is no mention of iron, which was used primarily in agricultural tools and weapons of war. Perhaps this was because the Philistines had a monopoly on iron technology at this time.

(2) The woven materials referred to in v. 4 were made by women. The woolen fabrics were classified by the colors of the costly dyes used to make them. (Blue and purple dyes were obtained from two different

species of shellfish found in the Mediterranean.) The Hebrew words translated "scarlet stuff" (v. 4, RSV) refer to a brilliant red dye produced from the eggs of scale insects that feed on oak trees; "twined linen" was an Egyptian cloth of exceptional quality; and "goats' hair" was spun material from "she goats."

(3) "Tanned rams' skins" (v. 5) were ram skins dyed red, as indicated in the KJV. Acacia wood ("shittim wood" in the KJV) had a reputation for durability, which has been confirmed by modern testing.

(4) The "oil for the lamps" (v. 6) was olive oil. The "anointing oil" (v. 6), used to sanctify the Tabernacle, was made by the priests. (This was also olive oil. The spices that were mixed with it are listed in Ex. 30:23-25.)

(5) The gems referred to in v. 7 were to be mounted in the priest's breastplate, which is described in Exodus 28. NOTE: These precious stones are mentioned in connection with the Garden of Eden in Genesis 2:12 and Ezekiel 28:13.

3. Suggest that, in v. 8, the words "that I may dwell among them" provide an important clue concerning the nature of the sanctuary: If the God who met Israel at Sinai was to go with them, a proper dwelling must be provided. This theme is reiterated in Exod. 29:45, "And I will dwell among the people of Israel," and Exod. 29:46, "I am the Lord their God, who brought them forth out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them." NOTE: The Tabernacle, "God's house," was, in some ways, a reproduction of the people's dwellings--with a laver in front of the entrance for the washing of hands and feet (Exod. 30:17-18), a lampstand (Exod. 25:31) and a table for food (Exod. 25:23f.)

4. *Comment on the Lord's instructions to Moses concerning the recruitment of workmen for the Tabernacle building project, in Exodus 31:1-6:* (1) The name Bezalel means "in the shadow of God," that is, "in God's protection." (2) *Note the significant meaning of "I have filled him with the Spirit of God" in vv. 3-4:* Basically, the Spirit of God was the energizing force which gave life and vitality to all human beings. But, also, the Spirit of God was the power that equipped men for their special missions in the world. For instance, the Spirit inspired prophets to speak in the name of God (see *Isaiah 48:16, 61:1*), and equipped David with the wisdom and understanding needed to serve as King of Israel. And, here, we are told that the Spirit of God has endowed Bezalel with the technical skills needed for his work on the Tabernacle. (3) And in v. 6 we are told that Oholiab has similarly been called by the Spirit of God to work on the Tabernacle, and has been divinely equipped for the task.

CLOSING THE LESSON

Share this final thought: This lesson passage suggests that church building programs must involve more than money, materials and construction skills. They require spiritual resources, like prayer and constant dependence upon the guidance of the Spirit of God.