

# Experiencing God's Holiness

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What does “[holiness](#)” mean to a child who is five years old? God’s holiness is an extremely important theme running throughout the entire Bible and I believe even very young children can experience how special God is.

I’ve recently had an opportunity to teach in a large room so I decided to dedicate one area of the room as a special place where, each week, we sit for a few minutes and talk about how special God really is. I’ve loved how this has brought a new depth to what we are learning and I would encourage you to give this a try sometimes.

## A Holy Space

I didn’t buy anything to set this space up and, with a little imagination, you will be able to find “special” items of your own. I drug in a coffee table from another room. I covered it with some shiny wrapping paper and placed chairs around it. Draping some old sheets and fabric over a room divider formed a small “wall” to make the space cozy. Someone had left some “gold” Christmas tree garland in our supply room so I thought that would add to the feeling of grandeur. A paper crown on a purple pillow emphasized the Kingship of God since we were studying the [Divided Kingdom](#) and the [End of the Kingdom](#).

Even though these were not expensive items I can tell you that the children were in awe of the space. On a side note it occurred to

me that [the Temple that Solomon built](#) was dripping with gold and precious cloths in a way that left everyone awestruck. But, in reality, gold and expensive items are actually worthless in comparison to God's true worth. Perhaps we adults aren't all that sophisticated after all.

# A Holy Attitude

When we sit at the table in this space it is a "set apart" time from the rest of the class period. At other times we might play games and sing action songs and act out the story. There are many ways to glorify God. But, when we go and sit in our holy space we speak more quietly and we all reflect in awe and reverence about God.

# A Holy Conversation

This is a 5 minute devotional time that is not limited to the lesson we are studying for the day. Everything we talk about in this space relates to how special God is. He is approachable but He is different than us. In a child's eyes this space is very special and it is a great launching place to talk about how God is even more special than our idea of precious things.

Each week I try to cover a different aspect of God's holiness and how this has been shown in Scripture. This is not the time to tell another Bible story or try to explain complex topics. I want the children's minds to be fully on God so I talk about concepts they can easily grasp. I try my best to use illustrations to depict these things. For instance, the illustrations below are from [www.freebibleimages.org](http://www.freebibleimages.org)

- [The Tabernacle](#)
- [The Temple](#)
- The Word of God- We open our Bibles and read a verse about God (or they follow along as I read).



# New Depths

This experience has brought a new depth to the lessons I've been teaching. The children have really picked up on the fact that sin is not just "bad behaviour" it is a real offence against who God is. I've been amazed at how often the children have referenced God's holiness as we study other lessons.

- When we talked about idols being erected and even brought into the temple the children were disgusted. They understood why [King Josiah destroyed idols and places of false worship](#). "Don't those people know how much more special God is than statues?"
- When we learned about the prophet [Jeremiah visiting the potter's house](#) and hearing God warn about turning away from him the children understood why God was angry. The kings were not treating him in the way he deserved.

- We learned about how [Jeremiah dictated God's Message onto a scroll](#). As King Jehoiakim listened to the words he cut off pieces of the scroll and threw them into a fire piece by piece. When I mentioned that King Jehoiakim was making a huge mistake one of the children corrected me, "No! the king knew God's words were special. He did not make a mistake, he did it on purpose!"
- Before being led off into Exile the Temple of God was destroyed. The students in my class were so sad to hear this. They understood how serious this was to God.

## How About Making Your Own Temporary Tabernacle?

I was blessed with a room large enough to create a separate space but you could create a special space almost anywhere. Put your "special" items in a basket and lay out the items when it comes time to have your devotional. After all, this is exactly what was done with [The Tabernacle](#). It was set up and taken down wherever the Israelites camped.

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## This Counts at Home, Too?



Years ago I taught a Bible story to a group of children and we began to discuss the concept of kindness. I wanted the children to understand what kindness really was and how they could practice kindness.

One young boy excitedly gave example after example of ways to show kindness. "We could take food to someone who was hungry." "Carrying groceries for an elderly person at the grocery store would be kindness." "We could say kind words."



After he listed a few examples of kindness I asked, “And how could you show kindness to your sister?”

There was a long pause and then, with a horrified expression on his face, he asked, “*You mean, this counts at home, too?*”

If ever there was an example of “the truth hit home” then this was one!

We must share the Bible with children. There is nothing that we could say that would have more eternal impact than the words God speaks. But we cannot be satisfied with only conveying a set of facts or teaching memory verses. God’s word is meant to be lived! Children need to learn and understand ways to live out the things they have learnt in every part of their lives.

One helpful way to help children explore ways to live out their faith is to use a simple method I call [Things Matter](#). Simple items (things) from around your house can be used to draw out conversation about everyday applications of God’s Word.

[Click here for instructions and a 2 1/2 minute “how to” video](#). In the video I use two Bible stories as examples: [Sodom and Gomorrah](#) and the [Building of the Tabernacle](#).

*Obey God’s message! Don’t fool yourselves by just listening to it. If you hear the message and don’t obey it, you are like people who stare at themselves in a mirror and forget what they look like as soon as they leave. But you must never stop looking at the perfect law that sets you free. God will bless you in everything you do, if you listen and obey, and don’t just hear and forget. James 1:22-25, CEV*

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