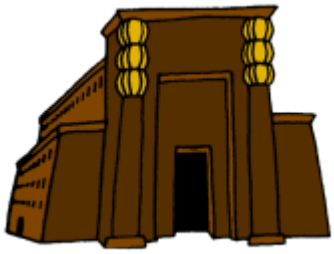
Solomon Builds the Temple



Scripture Reference: 1 Kings 6:1-9:9

Suggested Theme: God is pleased by people who worship him with pure hearts. Beautiful church buildings mean nothing if the worshippers don't love God.

Memory Verse: "God is spirit. Those who worship God must worship in spirit and truth." John 4:24, ICB

Story Overview:

Solomon built a fantastic temple for the Lord. This temple replaced the Tabernacle tent that had been used since Moses' time. After the temple was completed, the Lord reminded Solomon that this huge, beautiful temple would mean nothing if the people ever turned away from Him.

Background Study:

Please take time to read through today's scriptures carefully. Your visualization of the temple's splendour will help you get the story across to your children.

Approximately four years had passed since Solomon became king. Solomon began his building projects with his firmly established claim to the throne. The palace and temple would take 20 years to complete.

The temple's construction was probably the most significant event of Solomon's reign. After the war-torn years of the judges, Saul and David, Israel finally began to enjoy the "rest" God had promised. Building the temple symbolized this peace and stability.

One of David's greatest desires was to build a temple for God. Even though David was Israel's most godly king, God did not want David to build the temple. The house of God's peace was not to be built by a warrior king. Therefore, the job fell to King Solomon, who was not known for his military might but for his godly wisdom.

Solomon conscripted approximately 30,000 men from all of Israel to help harvest the timber from Lebanon. They were divided into three shifts. The shifts alternated monthly so that the men spent one month in Lebanon and two months at home during the years it took to harvest the timber (1 Kings 5:13-14).

Solomon also conscripted more than 150,000 labourers from the descendants of the land's previous inhabitants. These labourers quarried and transported all the stone for the temple (2 Chronicles 2:17-18).

The temple was filled with beautiful carvings of flowers and plants and cherubim (winged creatures). Expensive materials such as cedar and olive wood, bronze and gold were used throughout.

The two weeks (seven days followed by seven more days) of festivities to dedicate the temple were glorious and filled with fanfare and ceremony. This was a special time in the history of the nation of Israel.

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Considering this, it is interesting that the Lord waited until all the crowds had been sent home before He appeared to Solomon with a special message. Perhaps the Lord did not want the new message lost in the fanfare. He mainly wanted Solomon to take note of the MOST important reason that the temple was built – GOD. The Lord told Solomon that He would reject the temple if Solomon or his descendants did not walk in the ways of the Lord.

Solomon and the Israelites sought a worthy dwelling place for their God. And the temple they built was indeed magnificent. The Lord made it known that his presence was there, but his presence was conditional. Even Solomon understood that the Lord was not limited to a building.

The Lord showed His presence in the temple. Today, the Lord shows His presence in the hearts of believers. The Lord is still not limited to a physical building (1 Corinthians 3:9-17 and Ephesians 2:19-22). We miss the most important part if we focus our spiritual lives on a beautiful church building.

Way to Introduce the Story:

Find pictures of all different types of church buildings or temples and bring them to your session today. You might even have the children describe or draw their ideal church building. Guide the discussion toward the idea that the kind of building is not the important thing. GOD is the most important.

The Story:

The Ark of the Covenant was a special box made from gold. This is the box that was made during the time of Moses. Inside the ark were the two tablets of stone on which the 10 Commandments were written. Ever since the time of Moses, the Ark of the Covenant had been kept in a special tent – the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was where the priests came to offer sacrifices and worship the Lord. All of the people of Israel knew that the Tabernacle was a special place for God. The Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant had been moved from place to place.

King David thought he would build a beautiful building, or temple, for the Lord. He thought the Ark of the Covenant should be kept in a building instead of a tent. That way, it would stay in one place instead of moving around. But the Lord did not want David to build the temple. He wanted David's son, Solomon, to build it.

When King David died, Solomon became the new king. King Solomon made many plans for the temple, and the temple he built was very special. It was made of special stone on the outside and cedar wood on the inside. The cedar wood walls had beautiful carvings of cherubim (winged creatures), palm trees and flowers (reminding one of the Garden of Eden). The floor of the temple was made of solid gold.

There were two main rooms. The biggest room was the Holy Place, and only priests could enter it. A smaller room with gold walls was also called the Most Holy Place. Only the High Priest could go to the Most Holy Place. Inside this room, there were two large cherubim carved from olive wood. Their wings stretched from one side of the room to the other. Solomon even had these cherubim statues covered with gold. All of this beautiful gold and the beautiful carvings would show how wonderful God was. It took thousands of workers seven years to build the temple.

When the temple was finished, Solomon sent the priests to get the Ark of the Covenant and the special furniture in the Tabernacle Tent. The priests put the Ark inside the Most Holy Place—the new temple—and placed all of the special furniture inside the temple. There were special lamp stands, a table, an incense altar, and a basin.

When the Ark and special furniture were placed inside the temple, a huge cloud filled the Most Holy Place. The cloud was so thick that the priests could not see enough to do their jobs. Everyone knew that the

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presence of the Lord was in the Temple.

Solomon invited all of the people to come to the temple for a special dedication. The celebrations for the temple lasted for two weeks (seven days followed by another seven days). There were many speeches and special prayers. Finally, Solomon told everyone it was time to go home.

After everyone had left, the Lord spoke to Solomon, “I am pleased with the temple you have built for me, Solomon. Just remember one thing. The temple is beautiful and everyone will think of me when they come here. As long as you and the people obey me and follow my teachings then the temple will be a wonderful place. But if you or the people disobey me then all of the gold and beautiful carvings will be worth nothing.”

King Solomon promised the Lord that he would always follow him. Solomon understood that it did not matter how beautiful the temple was; if God was not in it, then it did not matter how beautiful it was. The temple was nothing without God.

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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using various methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible, but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection or other group participation.

Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing, so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Click here for visual aids and more storytelling methods.

View this slideshow and download it from the original source:
https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/solomon-temple/

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Review and Reflection Questions:

Review questions help children remember and know the facts of a story. Reflection questions encourage them to internalise the meaning and implications for their lives. Asking at least one of each type of question can help strengthen a child’s spiritual development and help them connect to God. Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.

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Review:

- Who was the first king who wanted to build a temple? (King David)
- Why did God not want King David to build the temple? (God wanted a peaceful ruler to build the temple, but King David had been a mighty warrior)
- How long did it take to build the temple? (Seven Years)
- How many rooms were in the main part of the temple? (Two – the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place)
- What was the special box that was placed in the Most Holy Place? (The Ark of the Covenant)
- How did the people know God came to live in the temple? (A large cloud descended on the temple and filled it)

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- What would happen if Solomon and his descendants did not follow God? (God would not live in the temple anymore)
- (Trick Question) Which part of the temple was the most important? (God!)
- How can we worship God today? (singing, praising God for who He is and what He has done, loving God, loving people, making artwork for Him, thinking about God and His good ways, obeying God, having a heart like God's, thanking God for His blessings and creation, etc.)
- What did you learn about God from this story?

Reflection:

- What do you think the temple smelled like? What did it sound or feel like?
- The temple included beautiful decorations, carvings of cherubim (winged creatures), palm trees, and flowers, and even gold floors. What part of the temple would you most want to see?
- What is your favourite part of the place where you worship God?
- Solomon and the Israelites spent seven years building the Temple for God. How do you think they felt when they finished building the Temple?
- Do you think you could work on one project for God for seven years?
- Solomon built a beautiful building called the Temple for God to live in. Have you ever made something for God or done something in God's honour to worship Him?
- God lived in the temple during the time of Solomon, but God doesn't only live in a temple anymore. Now He can live in people (us!) through the Holy Spirit. Is there anywhere we can go where God isn't with us?
- If we didn't have a building in which to worship God, could we still worship God? Where could we go to worship?
- God was pleased with the Temple Solomon built, but He cared even more that Solomon and his family continued to follow and obey Him. Do you think Solomon and his family will continue obeying God?
- Does your family follow and obey God? Let's pray for our families to follow, love and obey God. (Suggestion: pray together for all of the children's families to follow God)

Prayer:

It is important to guide children in learning how to pray. In prayer, children can connect with God and learn that He hears and answers them. God can become a life-long friend who is with them every moment of their lives. Try using a variety of prayer methods from time to time so that the children can learn to connect with God in different ways. Note that you can pray at any time throughout your lesson. A variety of prayer methods are found here.

Song Suggestions:

- Building Up the Temple Song
- Read Your Bible, Pray Everyday Song
- Refer to the Song Page on this website for more song options.

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Activities and Crafts:

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- How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation.
- Visit the activities and songs pages for additional activities and crafts.

Activities:

- Use bible encyclopaedias or search online to find pictures depicting Solomon's temple. Remember, it was the original temple. Later, we will study how Solomon's temple was destroyed and a new (and less majestic) temple was built. The second temple is the one we read about in the New Testament.
- Have a visitor come and talk about unusual places where they have attended Sunday worship assemblies (for example, outside, in a tent or someone's home). Help the children understand that the church building is not the centre of worship.
- Find Jerusalem on a map.
- Older children might find pictures of modern-day Jerusalem interesting. A substantial Muslim mosque (The Dome of the Rock) has been built on the temple site.
- Younger children can trace the words "King Solomon Built a Temple." Printable worksheet.
- Provide various building materials and let the children build their own temple. You could use actual wood and nails or any building toys such as blocks or Legos.
- The temple was a beautiful place that God instructed Solomon to build to represent the holiness of his presence. Create a "special and holy" place in the room where you are teaching where children can pray and talk about how holy and special God is.

Invite the children to respond to this story using the adaptable "God's Story" printable reflection page. Free printables for this story.

Crafts:

- Draw or paint self-portraits and write out 1 Corinthians 3:16 on the picture.
- Older children can build a model of the temple.
- For younger children, copy or draw a picture of the temple and guide them in pasting shiny paper, fabric or jewels around the edges as a frame. Any craft method, such as paints and glitter, would also work. Alternatively, write words such as "Solomon's Temple, God's Special Place" in the middle of a paper and have the children decorate to make a frame around that. See the links below to find colouring pages depicting the temple.

Print and use these free bookmarks, trading cards or timelines. Free printables for this story.

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Other Online Resources:

- Colouring page and puzzle worksheets-building the temple (Calvary Curriculum)
- Colouring page and puzzle worksheets dedicating the temple (Calvary Curriculum)
- Video: “Solomon’s Temple Explained” excellent virtual tour of the temple (Youtube video just over 10 minutes)
- Short 3D videos of the temple. The last video edit on each page is a compilation:

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