

The Ark and the Temple

I Kings 5–8; 2 Chronicles 2–8

King David set up the ark and the tent of meeting inside the wall of Jerusalem. He wanted to build a house for God, a temple, but God told David that David's son would build the temple. When it was finally built, the theology of the presence of God changed from a theology of God's name (a primarily auditory experience) to a theology of God's glory (a primarily visual experience). God no longer sojourns but abides. Meeting God with openness shifts to an expanding need for certainty about God's presence in a particular place.

How to Use this Parent Page

With your child, begin by looking together at the illustration on the back page and listening as your child recalls—and in a sense *relives*—the experience of today's Godly Play presentation. Invite your child to respond to the drawing. You might say, for example:

- I wonder what you can tell me about this picture?
- I wonder what this picture has to do with today's story?

Just listen. This is *not* a time to quiz children on what they may or may not recall about the lesson, but to be quietly present as they share their own experience. This will be different for each child—one may retell much of the presentation, another recall a single moment that had meaning, and yet another talk about his or

her own creative response. Again, your role is not to correct or supplement what your child tells you, but simply to *listen* in a supportive way. You are supporting the formation of young—sometimes very young—theologians.

Then, if you wish, you can read with (or to) your child the condensed version of today's presentation offered below. Whether you read the lesson or simply listen as your child shares what was received in today's lesson, ask the Wondering questions printed in the left column. Remember, there are many right answers! Be open to what the presentation can mean to you and your child. God will teach you new meanings every day. Conclude by sitting quietly for a moment and then saying "Amen."

The Presentation

Solomon built a temple for God, and everyone had to help. Some went to cut down and bring home great cedar trees. Others cut stones out of the mountains nearby.

The temple began to grow. There was a great hall for people to come close to God, and an inner room, called the Holy of Holies, which was for the ark. The temple was as beautiful as they could make it.

Inside the temple were the same things that helped them get ready to meet God as when they were in the desert. The ark was carried inside by the priests. Wonderfully smelling smoke filled the temple as the incense burned. There was the table with the bread for each of the twelve tribes. And finally, there was the menorah with its seven branches and lamps burning. In front of the temple was the altar as it had been in front of the tent, but now it was bigger. The same was true for the great basin of water, the laver.

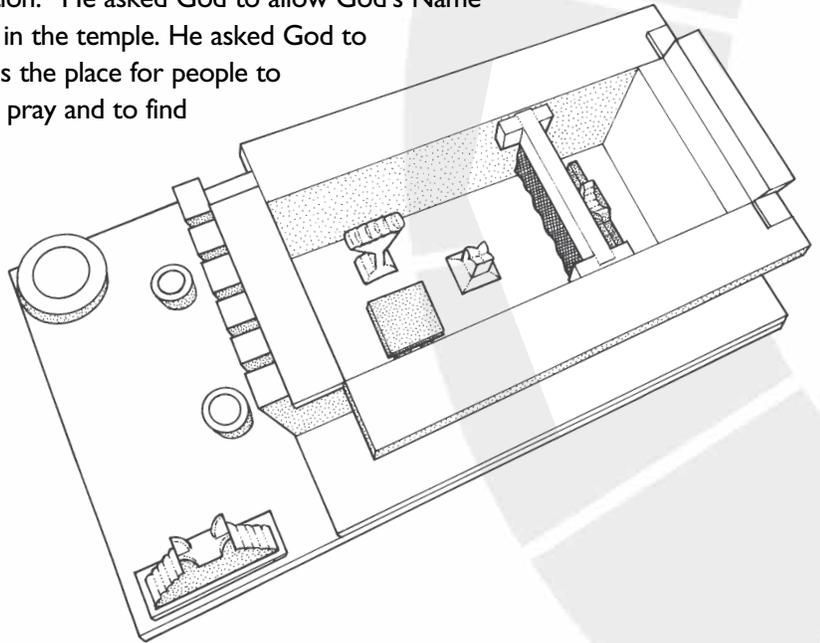
Wondering

- **I wonder** what part of the story you liked best?
- **I wonder** what part of the story is most important?
- **I wonder** where you are in the story? I wonder what part of the story is about you?

On the day the priests first carried the ark inside, a great cloud of dazzling light filled the temple. God was there.

When the temple was completed, King Solomon came before all the people and prayed. He said, “O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to thy servants who walk before thee with all their heart.

“But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built! Yet have regard to the prayer of thy servant and to his supplication.” He asked God to allow God’s Name to abide in the temple. He asked God to make this the place for people to come to pray and to find justice.



Godly Play Sacred Stories

In every Parent Page, we offer information about Godly Play to help you understand both its methodology and purpose. For example, many Godly Play lessons present sacred stories. Sacred stories stimulate our sense of Christian unity and provide raw material for the development of a coherent, mature sense of Christian identity. In sacred stories, we tell the story of God’s People to invite children to become part of that story.

The story of God and God’s People is almost like playing the game of Hide-and-

Seek with God. God calls people into relationship, who then respond by trying to connect with what they experience as an *Elusive Presence*. Both words of this phrase are significant: we cannot fully capture our experience of God in any story or rite—yet it is God’s presence that invites us endlessly to follow what glimpses we find. The very existence of the game communicates to us the existence of a divine Player. This game is played for the pleasure of its playing and not to win or lose, which would end the game. As we seek and find, we could sum up our story with the word *Aha!* Another glimpse!