How to Teach the Tabernacle

David Gooding
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Teach the Tabernacle

Teach the Tabernacle? To children? It sounds absurd, unrealistic. Understandably so, when the chapters of the Bible which describe it seem, at first sight, to contain nothing but long lists of obscure details about an ancient building. Just the very kind of thing to bore children stiff! It is difficult enough even for an adult so much as to visualize what the building looked like.

But, there's no denying it would be different - different from the normal run-of-the-mill lessons that the child gets. What's more, the lessons which one would normally use the Tabernacle to convey are not some remote matters of ancient history, but the straightforward, basic doctrines of the Christian faith, of which the Tabernacle is a God-given and brilliant illustration. Of course, if one wants to, one can take it further; for older children, for instance, one can put the Tabernacle into its historical context, and link it up with whatever else they know of ancient history - or with the history of art. More important still, it helps children (and teachers!) to see the link between the Old Testament and the New. But it needn't be complicated or boring.

And then, look at the splendid opportunity it offers for the use of visual aids. There are available nowadays flannelgraphs, large pictures, models, construction kits for children to make their own models, and sets of smaller pictures which the younger children can colour.

This book, then, is for the teacher. Its illustrations will allow the teacher immediately to visualize what the Taber-
nacle and its furniture looked like. The "lessons", too, are for the teacher. They are not written with children of any particular age-group in mind nor are they offered as containing each one the precise amount of material necessary for one lesson in class. They offer rather the raw material which teachers can adapt for themselves according to their own ideas and the needs of different classes.

*David Gooding*
Lesson 1

MAIN SCRIPTURE TEXT: Exodus 25.8.
"... let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell in their midst."

The Tabernacle

Lead in. Find out if any of the children have ever gone camping or slept in a tent. The lesson is to be about the tent God used when God went camping, and the reason why God went camping.


MAIN IDEAS

1. When the Israelites escaped from Egypt they had to take a long journey through a desert to get to Palestine, and on the way they had to live in tents. God loved them and wanted to be near them so close that they would know He was really with them. So He asked them to make Him a tent and to put it right in the middle with all their own tents round it. Then He came and dwelt in that tent, and travelled all through the desert with them, protecting, guiding, blessing them.

Apply the idea. God loves us the same as them. He wants us to let Him guide us and travel with us all the way through life.

2. Later on in history God had many other houses in which He lived among men: Solomon’s temple (1 Kings 6-7); the temple built by Ezra and Nehemiah; the temple built by Herod the Great, which was the one to which the Lord Jesus went and in which He taught when He was on earth. He loved the Temple and called it My Father’s house (John 2.16). He would not allow anyone to defile it.
Apply the idea. The Lord Jesus also called heaven My Father's house (John 14.2). So the Tabernacle with its beautiful colours and gold and silver helps us to think how beautiful heaven is. God wants one day to take us to His home in heaven; but He warns us that nothing unclean shall enter it ... but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life (Revelation 21.27).

MAIN IDEAS - for the present and future.

1. THE CONTRAST emphasized by the New Testament for the present age is:

   The Most High dwells not in houses made with hands (Acts 7.48).

Nowadays God dwells

   a) In the hearts of those who trust Him.

   The Lord Jesus said: If a man loves Me, he will keep My word: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make our home with him (John 14.23).

   The Apostle Paul said to the Christians at Corinth: Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? (1 Corinthians 6.19).

Apply the idea. The Lord Jesus wants us to make Him a home in our hearts, but He will not force an entrance. If we wish Him to enter, we must open the door and let Him in. He says: Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any one hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will eat with him, and he with Me (Revelation 3.20).

   b) Wherever Christians meet together in the name of the Lord Jesus.

   The Lord Jesus said: Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them (Matthew 18.20).

Apply the idea. We should always take every opportunity of meeting with other Christians to pray and praise. We should not leave off assembling ourselves together, as
some people get into the habit of doing (Hebrews 10:25).

2. When the Lord Jesus left His disciples and went back to heaven He said, In My Father’s house are many rooms ... I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will take you unto Myself, that where I am, there you may be also (John 14:2,3).

Apply the idea. God wants us to be with Him forever. If we make Christ a home in our hearts now, when He comes again, He will take us to His Father’s home in heaven.
Lesson 2

MAIN SCRIPTURE TEXT: John 1.29.

Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

The Altar of Sacrifice

Lead in. Show the children a large picture of the Tabernacle with all the tents round it. Get the children to pretend they are living in these tents. Point out the beautiful colours on the gate of the Tabernacle, and suggest that all would like to find their way in to God’s beautiful home and to come near to God. So start on the way, pass through the gate, and the first thing to be met is the Altar of Sacrifice. What is it for?


MAIN IDEAS - from the past.

1. It reminded the people that they had sinned and needed forgiveness before they could enter God’s home.

Illustrate the idea

a) People put a door-mat at the door of their houses; when we see it, it reminds us to look at our shoes and see if they are muddy, and if they are, to wipe them before we enter. So God put this altar at the gate to remind the people that they were dirty and unclean through sin, and must be cleansed before they could enter His home.

b) If we have done something wrong, and disobeyed our parents or teacher, we feel afraid to meet them until it is forgiven. So with God.

c) If we have got into debt, we are in danger of being sent to prison unless the debt is paid. The Bible says that sin is debt: see Luke 7.41-47; Matthew 18.21-35. Not until the debt of our sin is paid, can we have peace with God, or enter heaven at last.
2. It showed that God loved the people though He hated their sin.

The wages of sin is death, Romans 6.23. The people had deserved the wages. But God allowed them to bring a lamb which died instead of them, so that they could be forgiven.

Describe for the children what happened when a man brought a lamb for a sin-offering. The details are given in Leviticus 4.32-35.

Main Points. 1. The Lamb must be without blemish - the innocent was to die for the guilty. 2. The man had to lay his hand on the head of the lamb and then it was killed - the man admitted that it was for his sins personally that the lamb died.

Main Ideas

- for the present.

CONTRAST 1 - between the Old Testament sacrifice of animals and the sacrifice of Christ.

For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. Consequently when Christ came into the world, He said, Sacrifices and offerings Thou hast not desired, but a body hast Thou prepared for Me; ... we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Hebrews 10.4-10).

Illustrate the relation between the Old Testament sacrifices and the sacrifice of Christ by talking about the difference between toy money and real money. Everybody, including the child, knows that toy money is not real, that it will not pay real debts. But it is useful in teaching a child the idea of cost and value and payment, and so prepares him for the function of real money. So the Old Testament lambs prepared people to understand why the Lamb of God had to come and die.

CONTRAST 2 - between the constantly repeated offering of the Old Testament sacrifices, and the sacrifice of Christ which was offered once and never has to be re-offered.

And every [Jewish] priest stands daily at his service offer-
ing repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, He sat down ... (Hebrews 10.11-12).

Point out the reasons which the New Testament gives why the sacrifice of Christ does not need to be re-offered:
1. The offering was itself perfect, Hebrews 9.13-14; 10.4-10.
2. It perfects those whom it sanctifies, Hebrews 10.14.
3. Where a man has full forgiveness, he does not need any more offerings, Hebrews 10.18.
4. As there is only one judgment, so Christ needed to be offered only once, Hebrews 9.27-28.

APPLICATION OF THE WHOLE LESSON.

The question will arise: if Christ has died for the sins of the world, is everyone automatically forgiven? The answer, of course, is no. Those only are forgiven who repent and trust Christ. The need to come to Christ and trust Him can be illustrated by the use of the tabernacle, or temple, altar as a place of refuge. A man who had accidentally killed someone, or had offended the king and now repented of it, could flee to the altar and take hold of its horns. There he would be safe; but if he did not flee for refuge, he was liable to execution. See the story of Adonijah in 1 Kings 1.50-53.
Lesson 3

MAIN SCRIPTURE TEXT: Titus 3.5,6.

... not because of works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Ghost, which He poured out upon us richly ...

The Laver

Lead in. Stress the importance of cleanliness and of washing. Need to wash away not only dirt we can see but also germs we cannot see. The danger of germ carrying: outbreaks of food-poisoning and typhoid fever occur through people handling food without first washing their hands. Dirt can lead to death.

Then continue with the idea that the children are pretending to be living in the tents around the Tabernacle, and are wanting to come to God. They have come in through the gate, passed the altar, and now they meet the laver.

Description of the laver: Exodus 30.17-21; 38.8.
Position: Exodus 40.30-32.

MAIN IDEAS

1. The laver was filled with water. When men became priests they had to bathe all over; and thereafter, whenever they came into the Tabernacle to serve God, they had first to wash their hands and feet.

Apply the general principle.

1. The laver reminds us that we are all unclean. Our hands are unclean through doing wrong things. Our lips are unclean through speaking wrong things. And before we can serve God we must be cleansed. Quote, for example, such scriptures as Psalm 24.3-4: who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in His holy place? He that has clean hands, and a pure heart ...

2. The laver reminds us that though we have made ourselves
unclean, God has made provision for our cleansing. Quote, for example, David’s prayer for cleansing: Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean, wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow, Psalm 51.7.

MAIN IDEAS

- for the present.

**CONTRAST 1** - Between physical defilement and spiritual defilement. The Lord Jesus said, Not that which enters into the mouth defiles the man, but that which comes out of the mouth, this defiles the man, Matthew 15.11. Tell in your own words the story of the Pharisees who were always very careful about washing their hands before eating, and complained to the Lord Jesus that His disciples were eating bread without first washing their hands. Point out what the Lord Jesus said about spiritual defilement, how that it is much more serious than physical defilement, Matthew 15.1-20; and that spiritual defilement comes, not from outside, but from inside: Out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings; these are the things which defile the man (Matthew 15.19,20).

**Illustrate** spiritual defilement by germs and viruses which we cannot see with the naked eye, but which can poison us. So when we lie, or steal or hate, it poisons us, even though we cannot see it. Or point out that when people quarrel the happy atmosphere is spoiled and becomes tense and gloomy. With older children point out that when we nurse spite and revenge and envy in our hearts, it makes us sour inside and can injure our health.

**CONTRAST 2** - Between cleansing by water and cleansing by the Holy Spirit. Quote the words of the Apostle Peter, I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit, Acts 11.16.

**Explain** that water can only cleanse our bodies, it cannot reach our hearts, which the Lord Jesus says are the source of our spiritual defilement. To cleanse our hearts from spiritual defilement we need a spiritual power.
Give as an example of someone whose heart was cleansed by the Holy Spirit, Paul and his experience of conversion and regeneration. From his own description in the Epistle to Titus 3.3-7 point out -

(a) what kind of man Paul was before he was saved (v.3);
(b) the principle of salvation: not because of works which we did ourselves (v.5);
(c) the power that cleansed him: the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit (v.5).

Explain how we receive the Holy Spirit when we trust in the Lord Jesus, by quoting the experience of the centurion Cornelius, Acts 10.44.

The greatest illustration of the cleansing that takes place once and for all at conversion, and of the constant cleansing that takes place thereafter is the story of Christ’s washing of His disciples’ feet, John 13.1-11. Tell the story in your own words. Emphasize the difference between “being bathed all over” (at conversion) and “washing the feet” (daily by the Word of God applied to our lives by the Holy Spirit).

Some people - even adults - find it difficult to see the difference between cleansing by blood and cleansing by water. It will help the teacher to put the lesson across clearly, if he considers the following (without, of course, troubling the children with this detail - unless it is thought desirable with older children).

In the Tabernacle court there were two vessels:
- Altar: providing cleansing by blood.
- Laver: providing cleansing by water.

The New Testament also speaks of both kinds of cleansing:

John 1.7, The blood of Jesus, His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Ephesians 5.25-26, Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word ...
A tramp in a drunken brawl murders a man. Suppose the President grants him a pardon. The tramp will then escape the penalty of the law and will go free. But if he is ever to be fit to live with the President in the President's home as his friend, he will need more than pardon. He will need to have his character changed and to be cleansed from his evil and dirty habits. So Christ by His blood brings us forgiveness (Ephesians 1.7); and also by the power of the Holy Spirit He cleanses us, gives us new life and a new nature (1 Peter 1.22-25) and fights within us the daily battle against sin (Galatians 5.16-18).

Let us draw near ... having our hearts sprinkled (i.e. with blood) from an evil conscience, and our body washed with pure water, Hebrews 10.22.
Lesson 4

MAIN SCRIPTURE TEXT: Hebrews 7.25.

Consequently He is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through Him, since He ever lives to make intercession for them.

The Incense Altar

Lead in. When we love someone, we love to talk to him, to tell him all we have been doing and what we hope to do, and to seek his advice. So God loves us to talk to Him - and this talking to God we call prayer.

Point out where the Incense Altar stood - in front of the Veil, which, in turn, hung in front of God’s throne, the Ark and Mercy seat. At this altar the priests stood when they talked to God in prayer.

Description of the Incense Altar: Exodus 30.1-10.

MAIN IDEAS

1. When the people prayed, their representative, the priest, used to offer incense on the Incense Altar. This was what Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, was doing, when the angel appeared to him and said, Thy prayer is heard, (Luke 1.8-23).

The idea of offering incense was that the people were sinful, and could not ask God for anything on the ground of their own merit. So they offered their prayer to God surrounded, so to speak, by clouds of sweet-smelling incense, so that their prayer might come in to God amid the fragrance of the incense. See also the scene at the Incense Altar in Revelation 8.3-5.

2. Though all the people could pray to God at any time, they had a special priest, called the High Priest, to represent them before God. When he went to pray to God for the people, he wore on his breast a breastplate in which there
were twelve precious stones, and on each stone there was written a name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel (Exodus 28.13-29); so that he carried their names on his heart before God.

MAIN IDEAS

- for the present.

CONTRAST 1 - We have no more merit than the Israelites had. We cannot claim answers to our prayers on the ground of our merit, any more than they could. But we can offer our prayers in the name of the Lord Jesus, as He Himself told us to do (John 16.24); so that our prayers come before God and are heard by Him and are granted because of the merit of the Lord Jesus.

CONTRAST 2 - Christians have a High Priest to pray for them, just like the Israelites did. But the Christians' High Priest is not a mere man on earth, subject to weakness and death, but the Son of God Himself (Hebrews 7.23-28). Because He ever lives, He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him.

At the same time He is a real man, who once lived on this earth and was tempted in all points like we are, yet without sin. This means He understands what it means for us to be tempted, and this makes Him a sympathetic and merciful High Priest to whom we may come fearlessly at any time (Hebrews 4.14-16).

Explain the double purpose of our Lord's intercession:

1. He prays for us to maintain our faith so that nothing shall be able to break our faith and separate us from the love of God. Quote the example of the Apostle Peter: though he fell under temptation, yet his faith did not fail, because Christ had prayed for him (Luke 22.31-32).

2. He prays for us as our Advocate when we fall and sin, so that God does not reject us (1 John 2.1-2).

Illustrate this by describing how an advocate pleads for a defendant in a law-court. An earthly advocate tries to minimize the seriousness of his client's offence, and to make as many excuses as he can for him. Not so Christ our Advocate. He is
the righteous. He never tries to minimize our sin. He can admit the worst, since His sacrifice is sufficient to atone for it all. Nor does He have to plead our merit; for the basis of our forgiveness is not our merit, but His sacrifice.

**Emphasize:**

1. that the child can come direct to the Lord Jesus in prayer at any time and in any place, and find mercy and grace to help in time of need. Quote the words, *Let us come boldly to the throne of grace ...*, Hebrews 4.16.

2. the assurance of salvation that our Lord’s intercession brings to the believer. Read the words of Paul about our Lord’s intercession in Romans 8.31-39.

**Read** our Lord’s intercessory prayer, John 17.1-26.
Lesson 5

MAIN SCRIPTURE TEXT: Matthew 27.50-51.

And Jesus cried again with a loud voice, and yielded up his spirit. And behold, the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom.

The Veil

Lead in. Return to the idea of a journey from outside in towards the Presence of God. So far we have come through the gate, passed the Altar of sacrifice, passed the Laver, passed the Incense Altar. But now as we attempt to move forward, we find the way barred by a wall of linen, brilliantly coloured with blue, purple and scarlet, on which are woven figures of Cherubim. This wall of linen is called the Veil. Point out to the children the Veil in the picture, and note specially its position between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place.

Description and function of the Veil: Exodus 26.31-35.

MAIN IDEAS

The veil served a double purpose:

(1) The first purpose of the Veil was to keep men out from the presence of God. The Cherubim on the veil remind us of what happened in the Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve sinned, God drove them out of the garden and placed the Cherubim and the flame of a sword to keep the way of the tree of life. So in the Tabernacle man was not allowed to come into the immediate presence of God. The way into the Holiest was not yet made manifest (Hebrews 9.6-8).

Explain the reasons for this:
a) God's indignation against sin. His righteousness demands that sin be banished and punished.
b) Man, while the debt of his sin remained unpaid, could not
bear to be in the presence of God.

Illustrate this ... (1) from the children’s own experience of the
feeling of shame. When we have done something very bad,
and it is discovered, if our parents or teachers expose us in
front of other people, we feel so ashamed that we wish we
could run away and hide. So if we appeared before God with
our sins unforgiven, the light of God’s presence would make
us so ashamed that we could not live.

(2) from the experience of even a holy man
like Isaiah the prophet (Isaiah 6).

c) Their sacrifices of animals could never take away sins,
could never satisfy their consciences that their sins had
been all completely forgiven (Hebrews 10:1-4). So men
were never sure that they were fit to enter God’s presence
either in the Tabernacle or in heaven.

(2) The second purpose of the Veil was to allow men to come
into the Holy Place. If there had been no Veil, the priests
would not have dared to enter even the Holy place; for
with no Veil separating the two compartments, the Holy
place and the Most Holy place would have been one, and
anyone entering the Holy place would have been at once
in the immediate presence of God. So God had the Veil
put in position to screen the Most Holy place so that men
could come into the Holy place, to the Lampstand, the
Table and the Incense Altar and enjoy these lovely things
and find out as much about God as possible, and come as
near as possible. And as men looked at the Veil with its
beautiful colours, blue, purple and scarlet and the Cheru-
bim, they could begin to learn something of God’s holi-
ness and beauty.


The Epistle to Hebrews 10:20 indicates that the Veil in the
Tabernacle found a counterpart in the flesh, that is the hu-
manity of Christ. So you can use the Tabernacle and the Veil
as an illustration of what happened when our Lord was on
earth. Just as God’s presence was screened by the Veil, so in
Christ all the fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily (Colossians 2.9). And just as men could come near and look at the beautiful Veil behind which was God's presence, so when men came near Christ, looked into His face and watched His deeds and heard His words, they could see what God was like.

**Emphasize**, however, that Christ's life could not save us. Many people wrongly imagine that if we admire Christ's life and try to imitate it, this will gain us entry to heaven. So point out that, like the Veil, Christ's life, being so sinless and beautiful, simply shows us how sinful and unclean we are; it, therefore, served to bar our way to heaven. Unless we could come up to His standard, His life would condemn us as unfit for God's presence.

In this way lead on to the necessity of Christ's death, and so to the next stage of the lesson:

**MAIN IDEAS**

The main contrast is, of course, that for the Christian the Veil has been completely removed and the way into God's presence made open. See Hebrews 9.6-8 and contrast with it 10.19-22.

So begin with what happened when Christ finished the work of suffering for sin. Explain that in Christ's day not the Tabernacle, but a great and glorious temple, called Herod's Temple, was in use in Jerusalem. But like the Tabernacle it too had a Veil. It was this Veil that was torn down by God: *And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom* (Matthew 27.50-51).

The rending of the Veil was an exceedingly significant act.

**Explain:**

1. **Why it happened when Christ died** - that is, it happened, not when He was preaching, not when He was doing miracles, but when He died. It was because *He died for our sins* (1 Corinthians 15.3); and because He completely finished the work of suffering the wrath of God against sin and God was satisfied with His sacrifice, God tore down the Veil to show that for those who trust Christ the way
into His presence is completely open. Study the flow of
the argument in Hebrews 10.11-22, and notice the con-
nection between Christ’s perfect sacrifice and our boldness
to enter the Holiest.

2. What it means for us to enter the Holiest.

Because you have been talking about the earthly Taber-
nacle, and the rending of the literal veil in Herod’s Temple, a
child may think that for us to enter the Holiest means to enter
church. So point out that Christ has not entered into a holy
place made with hands ... but into heaven itself (Hebrews
9.24). Likewise for us boldness to enter into the Holiest
through the veil means that we are able to enter in mind,
thought and spirit into God’s presence in heaven, and to be
utterly sure that our sins have been forgiven and that God
accepts us.

Point out, too, that if those who trust Christ already
have freedom and boldness to enter God’s presence in
spirit now because of Christ’s perfect sacrifice, there can
be no uncertainty about their going to heaven when they
die. Press home the assurance of God’s welcome in the
words of Sacred Scripture, Having, therefore, brethren,
boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus ...
let us draw near ... (Hebrews 10.19,22).
Lesson 6

PART ONE

MAIN SCRIPTURE TEXT: Hebrews 4.16.

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace ... 

The Ark and the Mercy Seat

Lead in. Every earthly king has a throne. Every government has to have laws. Talk about the need for laws and what happens when people break them.

In the Tabernacle the Most Holy Place was God's throne-room and the piece of furniture standing there was God’s throne. There were two parts to it:

(1) The Ark. Description: Exodus 25.10-16.

Position: Exodus 26.33-34.

The Ark was an oblong chest covered inside and out with gold. In it were kept the two tables of stone on which were written the Ten Commandments. These were God's laws. They are called The Old Covenant.


The Mercy seat was a slab of solid gold, on each end of which were golden cherubim. From here God spoke His commands and gave His guidance to the Israelites. Here, too, the High Priest came to meet with God once a year on the Great Day of Atonement.

Now if we were going to meet a President or a King, we should need to know how we were to approach him. In this lesson we are to learn how to approach God.

MAIN IDEAS - from the past.

From the Old Covenant we learn how holy God is. We
learn this from the laws of that Covenant, the Ten Commandments.

This is not an easy lesson to put across. Many people have the idea that God’s law is like a school examination: if they manage to keep 70% of it, they imagine they have done very well, and God will be pleased with them as a teacher would be pleased with a child who scored 70% in an examination. This is not only wrong, but dangerous. If a child never learns how holy God’s law is, he will never realize his need of salvation. He will always hope that if he does his best to keep God’s law, he will enter heaven at last. So

Use the New Testament statements about the Law.

1. James 2.10. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.

At first this may seem unfair to a child. So use one or two illustrations.

(a) If a crane is lifting a heavy load by means of a big chain, if all the links in the chain break, the load will fall. But if only one link breaks, the load will still fall.

(b) A man is being chased by a lion. He comes to a very deep chasm fifteen feet wide and 100 feet deep. He tries to jump across the chasm. Suppose he manages to jump it all except one foot. What happens? One foot is not much compared with the other fourteen. But to miss by one foot is as fatal as to miss by five feet or ten feet.

So if we break only one of God’s laws once, we have fallen short of perfection, we have sinned.

2. Romans 3.20. For no human being will be justified in His sight by works of the law, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

Again this is difficult to get across. People naturally think that God gave us the law so that we should keep it in order to win acceptance with God. So illustrate the purpose and function of the law, as stated in the above verse, by comparing the law with a thermometer. When we are ill the doctor uses a thermometer to find out our temperature and to show us how ill we are. But no-one swallows
a thermometer in order to get better.

So God's law exposes our sin and shows us how sinful we are, so that we should repent and receive Christ as Saviour. To try to win salvation by keeping God's law, is like swallowing the thermometer in order to get better. Indeed it is worse. It makes out that Christ's death was unnecessary: For if justification were through the law, then Christ died to no purpose (Galatians 2.21).

MAIN IDEAS

- for the present.

The great CONTRAST is between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. (The difference is so vital to a proper understanding of Christianity, that the teacher would do well to study the major passages in the New Testament which deal with the subject, e.g. Hebrews 8. 6-13; 10.14-18; 2 Corinthians 3; Galatians 3.10-29).

Deal then with

1. The Institution of the New Covenant.

2. The Benefits of the New Covenant.
   Hebrews 10.14-18; 2 Corinthians 3.
   In contrast with the Old Covenant which condemns us, the New Covenant brings us forgiveness, life and holiness.

3. The Terms of the New Covenant.
   Galatians 3.15-20; Hebrews 8.6-13.
   The difference between the Old Covenant and the New in this respect is legal and technical, but it can be illustrated quite simply.

Old Covenant - a two-party covenant.

Illustration: Take two men, a farmer and a builder. The farmer wants the builder to build him a house. The builder says it will cost $20,000. So they make an agreement, or covenant. And both have equally a part to fulfil:

1. The builder has to build the house;
2. The farmer has to pay $20,000.
If the builder does not build the house, he does not get the money; and if the farmer does not pay the $20,000, he does not get the house.

So it was with the Old Covenant: God had His part to do, and the people had theirs:
1. The people had to keep the law.
2. God was then to bless the people.

But, of course, the people failed to keep the law and so broke the covenant. And so God rejected them. See Hebrews 8.9.

New Covenant - a one-party covenant.

Illustration: a man makes a will in which he leaves $10,000 to his nephew. Only the man has a part to fulfil: he does all the giving. The nephew has nothing to fulfil: he simply receives the $10,000 as a gift - that is, if he wants it. If not, he can refuse it.

So it is with the New Covenant. That is why it is sometimes called a Testament, or Will. In the New Covenant Christ does everything: He bore the curse of the broken law for us (Galatians 3.13); He gives us forgiveness, and His Holy Spirit writes God's laws on our hearts and gradually makes us holy (Hebrews 10.16-18).

It does not mean, of course, that all the world is automatically saved. Men can reject Christ and His gifts, if they please. But we have nothing to do to earn or merit the benefits of His covenant. Hence it is that God's throne is called the Throne of Grace, and we are exhorted to approach it boldly.
Lesson 6

PART TWO

MAIN SCRIPTURE TEXT: John 5.24.

 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

The High Priest

Lead in. One day we shall all have to stand before God’s throne. Will He accept us and welcome us into His home and heaven? Or will He reject us because we have sinned? Of course, we all hope He will accept us. But can we be sure? Yes! The Lord Jesus has told us how we can be sure that we shall not come into judgment. And God in His kindness wants us to understand the way to come to Him acceptably. So in the Tabernacle He has given us a beautiful illustration of this. The Most Holy Place was God’s throne room, and the Ark and Mercy seat formed His throne. It is a picture of God’s throne in heaven. Once a year the High Priest was invited by God to enter the Most Holy Place and meet God. We are to learn what preparations he had to make and what he had to do when he entered God’s presence.

MAIN IDEAS

This part of the lesson is simply a re-telling in the teacher’s own words of what happened on the Day of Atonement. The ceremonies are described in detail in Leviticus 16. The teacher should read through the whole chapter, though the children need only be told the main features. Then the teacher should familiarize himself with the Epistle to Hebrews, especially 9.11 - 10.22, where the similarities and contrasts between what the Jewish High Priest did on the Day of Atonement and what our Lord has done are detailed.
Now have the children looking at a large picture of the Tabernacle so you and they can follow the movements of the High Priest through the different parts of the Tabernacle.

**THE SACRIFICE FOR THE HIGH PRIEST**

1. The High Priest first offered a sacrifice for his own sins (Leviticus 16.6,11-14).

Here there is a very important contrast with Christ. He was sinless and had no need to offer a sacrifice for Himself. See Hebrews 7.26-28.

**THE SACRIFICE FOR THE PEOPLE**

1st Appearance of the High Priest.

The High Priest came out of the Presence of God into the court where everybody could see him, approached the Altar of Sacrifice and in the sight of all the people offered a goat as a sacrifice for their sins. Leviticus 16.15.

2nd Appearance of the High Priest.

This time he appeared, not before the people, but in the Presence of God. That is, he took the blood of the goat which he had offered and brought it into the Most Holy Place and sprinkled it on the Mercy seat and before the Mercy seat. Leviticus 16.15. So trace his journey on the picture from the Altar in the court, through the Holy Place, drawing aside the Veil and entering the Most Holy Place.

3rd Appearance of the High Priest.

Having sprinkled the blood in the Most Holy Place, he retraced his steps, going out past the Veil, through the Holy Place, to the Altar of sacrifice. There he took another goat, put both his hands on its head and confessed over it all the sins of the people. Then the goat was taken out into the desert never to return. Leviticus 16.20-22.

**MAIN IDEAS**

- for the present.

1st Appearance of our Lord.

*He has appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself* (Hebrews 9.26).
That is, our Lord came down from heaven to our earth where men could see Him and at Calvary offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sins. The difference between His sacrifice and those offered by the Jewish High Priest is that they had to repeat their sacrifices every year, and some of them every day, but He only had to offer Himself once (Hebrews 7.27; 9.25; 10.11-14).

2nd Appearance of our Lord.

For Christ has entered, not into a sanctuary made with hands, a copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf (Hebrews 9.24).

Just as the Jewish High Priest took the blood of the sin offering into the Most Holy Place and sprinkled it upon and before the Mercy seat, so our Lord after His death on the cross and His burial, rose again and went back to heaven. He entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption (Hebrews 9.12).

It is important to point out that just as the Jewish High Priest went into the presence of God as a representative of the people and when God accepted him, God was accepting the people whom he represented, so Christ has entered God’s presence on the behalf of all who trust Him. If God has accepted Him - and there is no doubt He has - that means that God has accepted all who trust Him.

Again, when it says that Christ entered heaven taking His own blood, it does not mean, of course, that He took His literal and actual blood into heaven. The New Testament is using the picture language of the Tabernacle. The Jewish High Priest sprinkled the blood upon and before the Mercy seat. What he was saying by this act was this: he was admitting that the people had broken God’s holy law which was written on the tables of stone in the Ark beneath the Mercy seat. The penalty for breaking the law was death. The people therefore deserved to die. But their sacrifice had died for them. And the blood was the symbol and token that the
sacrifice had died and the penalty of the law had been carried out.

So we have sinned. We deserve the penalty of God’s law. We deserve to be banished from God’s presence. How then can we meet God? The answer is that Christ has already died for us. He has already suffered the penalty of sin. Now He appears in the presence of God for us. God is satisfied with His sacrifice. The judgment of our sin has been fully suffered by Christ. God has therefore accepted Christ and in accepting Him, has accepted all who trust Him. That is why the Lord Jesus says that those who trust Him will not come into judgment. He has already borne the judgment for them.

3rd Appearance of our Lord.

*Christ having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear the second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him* (Hebrews 9.28).

When the Jewish High Priest had sprinkled the blood in the Most Holy Place, he came out and appeared before the people again. So our Lord, having entered heaven, will one day come again. Unlike the High Priest who then had to deal with the second goat for the sin offering, our Lord, when He comes again will not have to offer any more sin-offerings. He will come to save His people, that is to redeem their bodies and take them to His Father’s home in heaven. See Philippians 3.20-21.
Lesson 7

MAIN SCRIPTURE TEXT: John 8.12.

I am the light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

The Lampstand

Lead in. Talk about physical light. What a wonderful thing it is. It makes it possible for us to see things. For older children use a prism to show that white light is made up of many colours. Point out that the colour we see in things is really in the light. Refer to what the children have learned about this in Physics (if they have), and point out that life is impossible without light.

Then talk about the metaphorical use of words for light and darkness.

(a) Mentally. We talk about ‘light’ on difficult problems. A problem is dark when we cannot “see” through it.

(b) Emotionally. We talk about a dark tragedy (not a bright tragedy, etc.)

(c) Morally. We talk about a dark or black crime (not a bright crime).

So lead on to the Lampstand in the Tabernacle. Description: Exodus 25.31-40.

MAIN IDEAS

1. The ornamentation of the Lampstand.

   The Lampstand was made to look as if it were a living tree. It had buds (knobs), blossoms and almonds both in its central stem and in its six branches; that is, it had the three stages of life: bud - the potential of life; blossom - the beauty of life; almond - the maturity of life. So the
Lampstand reminded the Israelite of God, the great Source of life.

2. The function of the Lampstand.

It carried the seven oil lamps which gave the light in the Holy Place. This reminded people that God, the Source of life, is the Source of light. He is the source of physical light: see Genesis 1.3; and of spiritual light: see Psalm 27.1; Isaiah 60.19. To older children point out that those who deny the existence of God, have no light on the meaning and purpose of life, for, without a Creator, life has no ultimate meaning, but is a freak of chance, and has no ultimate purpose.

3. The material that gave the light.

The light in the lamps was provided by burning oil. In the Prophecy of Zechariah 4.1-6 we have the description of another Lampstand which used oil for the light. And the lesson God taught the prophet through the vision of this oil-filled lampstand was Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts (verse 6). Human wisdom and might are altogether inadequate without the light and power of God’s Holy Spirit.

MAIN IDEAS

- for the present.

CONTRAST 1 - Nowadays we do not need a golden lampstand to remind us that God is light, for we know there has come into our world the Lord Jesus Christ - He is the Light of the World.

To show the children what Christ means when He says I am the light of the world, use the incidents and conversations recorded in John 8.

Christ the Light

-exposes sin.

Illustrations. If you go into the garden and turn over a large flat stone or piece of rotten wood, you will generally see a lot of insects, which when the light shines on them, scurry away and try to hide, because they do not like the light. If you are in a dirty room without any light, you
cannot see the dirt; but when the light shines in, you can. If you have been in a dark room for a long time, and someone suddenly switches on the light, it hurts your eyes, and at first you do not like the light.

Now tell the story in John 8.1-11; and show how Christ wonderfully exposed the sinfulness of the self-righteous Pharisees. Point out that the Pharisees ran away from the light because they did not like being shown up as sinners. Men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil (John 3.19). But to run away from the Light is to plunge further into darkness. And to run away from the Light, is to admit that one is a sinner and afraid of being exposed.

Christ the Light - shows the way to forgiveness of sins.

Continue with the story and show how when the woman remained in the Presence of Christ as a self-confessed sinner, He forgave her saying, Neither do I condemn you; go, and sin no more. Compare with this the words of the Epistle to Romans 8.1 and 34. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus ... Who is He that condemns? Is it Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead ... who indeed intercedes for us?

Christ the Light - shows the way to deliverance from the habit of sin.

Quote John 8.31-36. Emphasize the importance of the constant reading of Sacred Scripture.

Christ the Light - shows the way to victory over death.

Quote John 8.51-58. ... if anyone keeps My word, he will never see death. This does not mean that he will never die physically. It is speaking of eternal death, which is to be separated from God, who is Light, into complete spiritual darkness. The believer in Christ will never see death in this sense. The Light, i.e. Our Lord Himself, will always be with him. So Christians can be bold in the face of physical death.
CONTRAST 2 - Nowadays we do not need oil-lamps as the Israelites did in the Tabernacle, for Christ gives all who trust Him the Holy Spirit to enlighten their minds and to explain to them the things of God. (See 1 Corinthians 2.10-13).

If we have the Holy Spirit within us, we can shine for God amid the spiritual darkness of the world (see Philippians 2.15-16).

But some people think they are Christians when really they are not, for they have never trusted the Saviour, and never received the Holy Spirit.

Illustrate this by telling the Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25.1-13). Five virgins had lamps, but no oil. We need to make sure that we have personally trusted Christ and received the Holy Spirit; otherwise we shall be like lamps that have no oil; we shall have no genuine Christian testimony. Indeed, Paul says, Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him. (Romans 8.9).
Lesson 8

MAIN SCRIPTURE TEXT: John 6:51.

I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live forever.

The Table

Lead in. The main ideas are easy to put across since food is a very common and well appreciated thing in children’s experience. Talk about:

1. the necessity of food to maintain life. Here one can also talk about famine stricken countries, and encourage the children in any scheme for famine relief that the school may have.

2. the pleasure of eating. God could have made us like machines, like motor cars which have to be filled with gasoline, but get no enjoyment from it. But in His kindness God gives us good appetites and then satisfies us with food in a way that gives us enjoyment.

3. sharing food as a basis and expression of friendship and fellowship. Talk about birthday parties and similar occasions when children invite their friends to share a meal.


MAIN IDEAS - from the past.

Every week twelve loaves of bread were put on the table and left there before God for His pleasure and enjoyment. Then at the end of the week the priests took away the old loaves, put fresh ones in their place and ate the old ones reverently in a holy place. It was God’s way of saying -

(1) that He wanted to be friends with the people. He and His people shared the same table and the same bread.
(2) that He was the supplier of their food. There were twelve loaves, one for each tribe. God loved all His people and wanted to have fellowship with them all. He did not want them to be hungry. He loved to satisfy them. See Psalm 103.5 and 104.27.

Now from the idea of physical hunger move on to that of spiritual hunger. Point out that not only do our stomachs get hungry, but so do our hearts. We long for things like love, friendship, companions, mental and spiritual satisfaction, and when we are denied these things our hearts ache. Quote the words of the Lord Jesus, *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.* Matthew 5.6.

But literal and physical bread cannot satisfy spiritual hunger, so lead on to

**MAIN IDEAS** - for the present.

**CONTRAST 1 - Not literal, physical bread, but spiritual.**

The passage that especially deals with this is John 6.25-71. The teacher will find it helpful to read the whole. But here are a few of the leading ideas:

(a) *verse 32.* Christ refers to Himself as the *true* Bread. NOT true, as distinct from false; but real and perfect as distinct from symbols and tokens. (Compare ch.15.1, *I am the true Vine*). All other enjoyments and satisfactions were meant to lead us to Christ. Tell the story of the men who took the loaves and fishes which Christ gave them, but refused Christ and His spiritual food (6.1-11,26,27,66). Illustrate to the children what this means:

1. It is like children who come to your birthday party just to get your cakes, but have no time for you and do not want to be friends with you.

2. It is like a girl who takes an engagement ring from a young man just to get the gold and the diamonds, but has no intention of marrying him.

It is just as foolish to take all the lovely things that God gives us in life, but have no time for Christ.

(b) *verses 38-40, 50-51.* Physical bread maintains physical
life. So Christ the true, spiritual Bread guarantees eternal life to all who trust Him. He will lose none.

(c) verses 53-58. If our stomachs are hungry, it is no use merely knowing about bread, or even seeing a loaf of bread; we have to eat the bread, if it is going to do us any good. So with Christ. If we wish to have eternal life, it is not enough merely to know about Christ, we must eat and drink Him, we must personally receive Him as our very own Saviour, we must believe on Him. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.

(d) verses 63,68-69. The bread Christ gives us is not literal, physical bread, of course, but spiritual bread. We receive this bread when we hear and believe His words.

CONTRAST 2 - Not a literal, material table, but a spiritual one. The Israelite priests, if they wished to eat the Bread of Presence, had to go into the Tabernacle to the Table of wood and gold on which the bread rested. But how are we to get the spiritual bread which Christ offers? Christ Himself tells us. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with Me. Revelation 3.20. Quite obviously, the door is not a literal door, but the door of our hearts. Explain, therefore, what it means to hear Christ knock on our heart’s door, and what it means to open the door and let Him in.
The lessons so far have been mainly concerned with getting across facts from the Old Testament and the doctrines of the New Testament which those facts illustrate.

But the aim in putting across facts and doctrines should always be to lead the child to personal faith in Christ. Use the concluding lesson with this in view.

As an illustration of the necessity of personally taking that step of faith that unites a person with Christ and brings him into all the blessings of salvation, use the gate of the Tabernacle.

Description of the wall round the Tabernacle and of the gate: Exodus 27.9-19.

Point out

(1) that the wall was white, but the gate was beautifully coloured so that it should be attractive and so that everyone could see where it was.

(2) that there was only one gate.

(3) that if anyone wished to see and enjoy the beautiful things in God's house, he had to enter this one gate.

Then use this as an illustration of the way into salvation.

(1) Christ is the way in. I am the door; if any one enters by me, he will be saved ... John 10.9. ...our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand ... Romans 5.1-2. Through Him we both [Jew and Gentile] have access in one Spirit to the Father. Ephesians 2.18.
(2) Christ is the only way in. I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but by Me. John 14.6. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. Acts 4.12.

(3) Be careful not to mistake the way in. Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. Matthew 7.13-14. Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the householder has risen up and shut the door, you will begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, open to us!’ He will answer you, ‘I do not know where you come from.’ Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.’ But He will say, ‘I tell you, I do not know where you come from; depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity!’ Luke 13.24-27.

(4) What it means to enter. We who have believed enter that rest. Hebrews 4.3.

Illustrate this by actual examples of men who were led by Christ and His Apostles to enter the gate into salvation. In the story of Nicodemus (John 3.1-16) and the story of the Roman jailer (Acts 16.27-34) we see men actually in the process of entering.
The Tabernacle
And Its Furnishings

In the Most Holy Place was the ark of the covenant. Only the high priest could enter there and only once a year.

Near the veil was the golden altar of incense.
Only the priest could enter the Tabernacle proper. The first object there was the table of showbread.

To the left in the Holy Place was the Lampstand.
The altar of burnt offering was the first thing seen inside the court.

The priests washed at the laver.
The view of the court of the Tabernacle