



# Weaving God's Promises

## LESSON 9 ***BUILDING ISRAEL, BUILDING THE TEMPLE OF GOD***

### **SUMMARY OF TODAY'S STORY**

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King David was the first king over a united Israel, one nation of 12 tribes under one king and one God. Now Solomon, David's son, sets out to build the Temple where God's people will worship.

After the Temple is completed, Solomon dedicates it to the glory of God.

### **KEY CONCEPTS**

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- Temple of God
- Reverence
- Tribute

### **WHERE YOU'LL FIND TODAY'S STORY**

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#### **In the Bible**

We recommend the *New Revised Standard Version Bible*.

**1 Kings 5:2 – 6:38 (Solomon builds the Temple)**

**1 Kings 8 (Solomon dedicates the Temple)**

#### **In Our Sunday Lectionary**

Today's story is not told in church on any Sunday.

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## WEAVING OUR STORY WITH THE BIBLICAL STORY

The people settle in Israel, the 12 tribes of Israel living on their assigned parts of the Promised Land. The people are given judges to watch over them, because God does not want them to have a king like the other peoples' kings. God is to be their only sovereign.

**Note:** The stories of the judges, like Gideon, Deborah and Samuel, will be covered in the second year of this curriculum, under the theme of Weaving Together the Family of God.

Eventually, the people clamor for a king. Saul becomes their first king, followed by David and then David's son, Solomon.

The long process of building a Temple begins under David, but it is Solomon who is credited with the actual construction of the Temple. In Deuteronomy it is commanded that the Lord should reside in—and be worshiped in—one place. That place will be the Temple in Jerusalem on the mount called Zion.

The Temple is the resting place of the Ark of the Covenant, where the tablets of the Ten Commandments are kept. So it is the Temple that will be the center of worship for Israel and the center of their religious life. Synagogues later spring up as places for religious teaching and some worship, but the center is the Temple in Jerusalem.

The Temple was a grand and beautiful structure, but unfortunately Solomon exacted high taxes and forced labor from the populace in order to build it. This later leads to rebellion by some of the tribes of Israel. The rebellion and civil war conflict eventually split the small nation into two parts: Israel, made up of 10 tribes in the North, which broke away; and Judah, made up of the other two tribes in the South, which supported Solomon's family.

This is the beginning of the disintegration of the state of Israel, the division of the Promised Land.

This story of the creation of the nation of Israel and the building of the Temple tells us how God takes care of us and provides for us. It is the people's sin and faithlessness, lack of trust in God and pride—just as it is our own sin and faithlessness, lack of trust in God and pride that lead to our own alienation from God—that leads to the fall of Israel.

However, for now we will focus on the happy event in Israel's life, the building of the Temple of God. God's chosen people have found their home and are making a home for their God.



## THE EPISCOPAL THREAD

Anglicans can identify with beautiful worship spaces. The noted Episcopal theologian John Westerhoff says in *A People Called Episcopalians* (New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2002) that one of the hallmarks of Anglicanism is an eye toward beautiful worship. Perhaps it is a natural desire for people to want God's place to be a taste of the divine. But the Anglican churches, from the great gothic cathedrals to the simplicity of country chapels, are distinctive by their beauty, and their worship services by their stateliness.

Starting with the Reformation in the sixteenth century, the English church removed some of the more garish of the interior decorations of the Roman Catholic churches. But as befits the Anglican *via media* (middle way), the church did not go as far as the Protestant churches in taking away all ornament and making their worship space plain and unadorned.



## GATHERING

### Check-In

Invite group members to sit comfortably, giving them an opportunity to visit with each other, establish friendships and build community. Relationships are an important dimension of Christian formation, so a few minutes of visiting will enrich their spiritual development. This is also the perfect time to “check in” with your group members by asking them to share how they are feeling at the time or what kind of a week they had.



## PRAYER

### Materials:

- small table with cloth to cover it
- large pillar candle or large Christ candle
- matches
- cross

After all group members have had a few minutes of fellowship time, gather together for a simple opening prayer. Ask one of the members to light a pillar candle while saying these words from Psalm 119:105:

- Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

Explain that you are inviting the light of God to be with all of you. (You might consider posting this verse from psalm 119 in the meeting room).

Invite the member who lit the candle to read this prayer:

- Dear Lord, we thank you for being with us in this house of worship and prayer. Be with us today as we learn more of your love and your mercy. For the many gifts you give us each and every day, we praise you now and forever. *Amen.*

Carefully extinguish the candle.



## TELLING THE STORY

### Set the Scene:

Enlarge the Temple Floor Plan (p. 6) and display the picture so that it can be seen by the entire group.

Have them guess what it represents.

Before you read or tell today’s story, you may want to summarize briefly how the Israelites settled in Palestine and were supervised for many years by wise women and men called *judges*, until finally they demanded to have a king over them, like other people had.

After telling briefly how Saul became the first king of Israel, followed by David and then David’s son Solomon, read the story of the building of the Temple from a Bible or tell it in your own words. With all of the people’s temptations to worship foreign idols and to rely on themselves rather than on God, they still see themselves as God’s chosen people, and they build this grand Temple for the glory and praise of God. Capture this joy in your storytelling.

Let the group hear the story without analyzing it for them or asking them to explore its meaning. For now, we just want them to absorb the story in their heads and hearts and to remember its power. Later, use the discussion or arts time to help the group members draw appropriate and meaningful connections between the story and their own lives.



**ACTIVITIES: ARTS,  
CRAFTS, GAMES,  
DRAMA, ETC.**

Select one or more activities to supplement and enhance today's story. For each lesson, there are five suggested activities, one from each of the REACT categories. For a detailed explanation of REACT, see page 10 of the Introduction. All activities are meant to reinforce the concepts that were central to the day's lesson.

Additional activity ideas can be found on pages 2-6 in the Appendix where we've provided suggestions and directions for a variety of general activities that can be adapted to any lesson. Also included are outreach and service projects that can be done at any time.

**ACTIVITIES FOR THIS WEEK'S SESSION**

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## WEAVING OUR FAITH

### Lesson Box

#### Materials:

- 1 3" x 5" index card for the day's *scribe*
- pen or pencil
- a file box in which to store the cards

Ask for a volunteer or assign a group member to act as *scribe*. Then, ask the group to articulate the most important lesson gleaned from the day's reading. As prompts, you might ask:

- How do we show reverence for God in our services?
- What types of tributes do we offer God?
- Is there a difference between a temple and a church?

Once the group has agreed on its wording, ask the scribe to write the lesson on the card, date it and file it in the box. By the end of the year, you will have a wonderful and thorough summation of the lessons covered in the group members' own words.



Where do you see people in the world not able to worship and pray freely?

### Closing Prayer

Before the group leaves, say a closing prayer to send them into the church worship service or back to their homes with God's love and blessing. Try a simple prayer of thanksgiving, such as this one:

- We thank you, O God, for being with us here in your church, your house of worship, as you were with the Israelites in the Temple that they built for you. Help us to see your presence in all of our doings, so that we may worship you all the days of our lives. This we ask in Jesus' name. *Amen.*

End the lesson with a dismissal that is used in church, such as:

- The peace of the Lord be always with you.

The youth respond:

- And also with you.



## Weaving God's Beloved

### Community

Often, we associate physical spaces with our community. One particular place that is important in God's

Beloved Community are our worship spaces. Our worship spaces provide a place for us to come together to worship and pray.

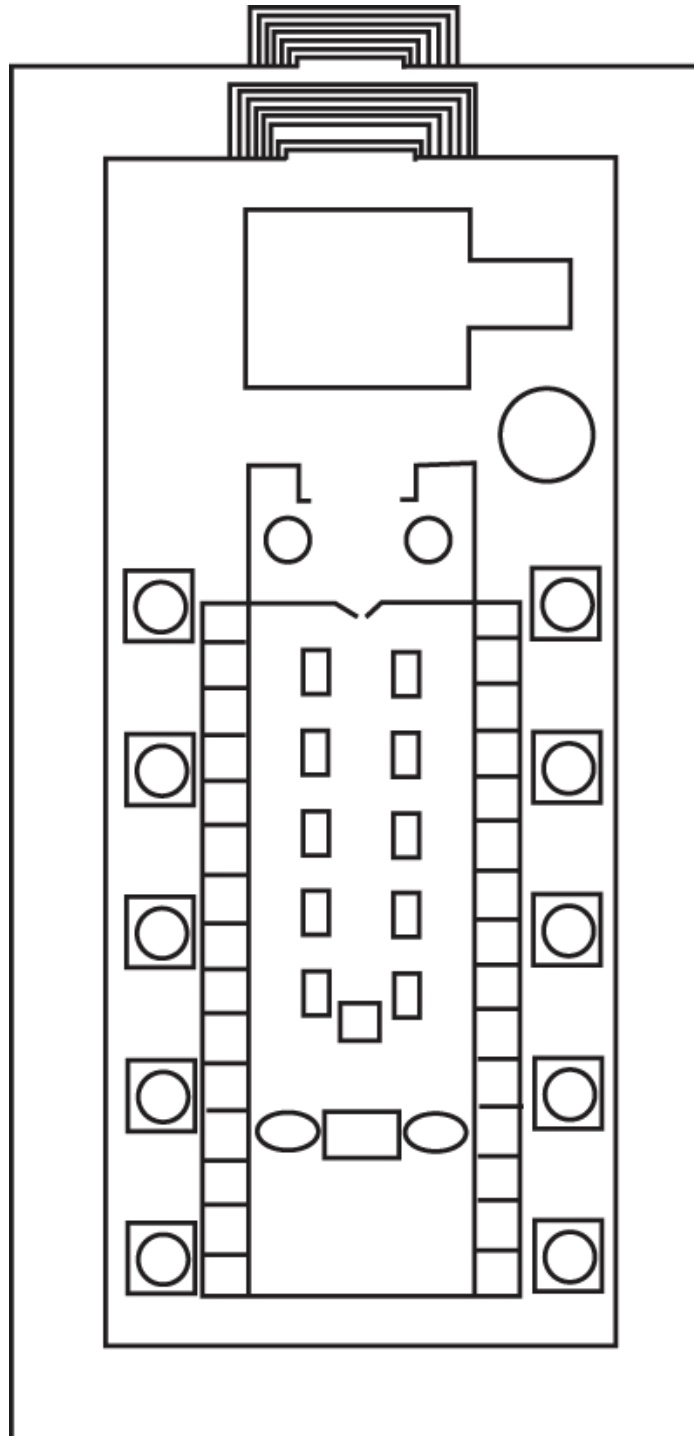
Unfortunately, not everyone, including God's people, is fortunate enough to have a safe place to pray. Part of our hope in creating beloved community is that everyone has a place where they can worship and pray, without fear.

- Can you imagine not having your own place to worship? How would that feel?
- What makes a place sacred?



# Weaving God's Promises

## TEMPLE FLOOR PLAN





# Weaving God's Promises

## WHAT MAKES A GREAT CHURCH?

Group members think about all of the special and unique characteristics of their church and produce a Top Ten List for display to the congregation. (If the group completed the What Makes a Great Town? activity last week, display the two lists side by side.)

### Materials:

- paper
- pens and pencils
- poster board or oak tag
- tape
- optional:* digital cameras and photo printer

### Directions:

1. Pair up participants.
2. Invite each pair to come up with at least 10 things that make their church special.
3. Give pairs 10-15 minutes for this task.
4. Once all pairs have finished their lists, ask them to share their answers with the entire group and create a Master Top Ten List.

### Close:

- Display the Our Church Top Ten List with the Our Town Top Ten List where the entire congregation can enjoy them.

**Note:** If possible, take the group for a walk in and around the church to take photos of its special features. Then, they could make an “Our Church” bulletin board for all to enjoy.



# Weaving God's Promises

## THESE ARE A FEW OF MY FAVORITE THINGS (ABOUT MY CHURCH, THAT IS)

In this activity, the youth conduct a “silent survey” of the congregation about what makes their church so special.

### Materials:

- 3 or 4 sheets of poster board or flip chart paper
- large markers
- masking tape or poster putty
- optional*: digital camera and photo printer

### Directions:

1. Ask one or two of the youth to take photos of the aspects of the church represented in the survey.
2. Print out the photos on photo paper. Post them with the survey boards.
3. Have the remainder of the group list 4 or 5 categories on each piece of poster board; make columns underneath each word.
4. Categories might include (but are not limited to):
  - music
  - newsletter
  - liturgy
  - outreach activities
  - seating
  - facility
  - youth programs
  - educational opportunities
  - website
  - fellowship
5. Display the posters in the coffee area so that all may take part after the service. Participants should place check marks under their favorite things. Group members should be available to explain the nature of the survey.
6. On a separate sheet of poster board, write the question:
  - If you could make just ONE improvement to the church, what would it be?

### Close:

- Leave the survey board on display for at least a week.
- When the congregation has had ample time to express their opinions, take down the boards and review the findings.
- Have group members write an article for the church newsletter or website with the results.

**Note:** This activity will likely take more than one session.





# Weaving God's Promises

## MIX AND MATCH

Participants match questions to answers after having heard the story of “Building Israel, Building the Temple of God.”

### Materials:

- 3" x 5" index cards
- masking tape or poster putty
- paper
- pen or pencil
- snacks and drinks

### Preparation:

Write each question (Q) and answer (A) (pp. 10-11) in this lesson on its own index card or print the pages on card stock or other heavy paper and cut the questions and answers into individual strips.

Make sure you have as many Q's and A's as there are youth in the group (1 of each per youth); delete or repeat Q's and A's as necessary to reach the right number.

Do not match the questions with the answers.

Place all of the cards, face down, on a table, and shuffle them well.

**Note:** Just for fun, there are more answers than questions!

### Directions to participants:

1. Take any two cards or strips but keep them face down. Keep in mind...some of you may have a Q and an A; others may have 2 Q's or 2 A's.
2. Take one card, put masking tape or putty on the back, and, without looking at the writing on it, stick it to your forehead.
3. When you hear me say “Go,” walk around the room and look at one another's cards and match each question to its correct answer.
4. Do not remove the card from your forehead until someone has found its match.
5. Once you are sure that you've matched each question with its answer, tape the pairs onto the wall for review.

### Close:

- Review the Q's and A's to make sure they are correct.
- Reward the group with snacks and drinks for their efforts.

# MIX AND MATCH Q'S AND A'S QUESTIONS

This king built and dedicated the Temple of God.

How many years did it take to build the temple?

The doors were made of \_\_\_\_\_.

What kind of wood came from Lebanon?

The temple was \_\_\_\_\_ cubits long.

The \_\_\_\_\_ held the 10 Commandments tablets.

Another word for angel is \_\_\_\_\_.

A \_\_\_\_\_ is a measure of length.

The builders also used \_\_\_\_\_ in building the temple.

Many carvings were covered in \_\_\_\_\_.

Stone was cut from a huge \_\_\_\_\_.

The temple was \_\_\_\_\_ cubits high.

Mt. Sinai was also known as \_\_\_\_\_.

The people of Israel split into \_\_\_\_\_ tribes.

King \_\_\_\_\_ first thought of building a temple but never started.

The people's first king was named \_\_\_\_\_.

# MIX AND MATCH Q'S AND A'S ANSWERS

Saul

David

Solomon

Seven

Twelve

Olivewood

Cedar

Sixty

Ark

Cherub

Cubit

Horeb

Gold

Thirty

Quarry

Cypress

Silver

Thirty



# Weaving God's Promises

## A LIGHT UNTO MY PATH: MAKING CANDLES IN PRAISE OF GOD

Participants decorate candles to be used in future services or given as gifts (baptism, confirmation, weddings).

### Materials:

- white non-drip candles, about 12" long
- steady holders for the candles
- sheets of decorating wax, assorted colors
- decorating pens (made for coloring wax)
- waxed paper
- matting knives (be very careful!) plastic knives or heavy-duty toothpicks, for cutting the wax designs

### Preparation:

If you do not have decorating wax, it can be ordered from [www.hearthsong.com](http://www.hearthsong.com) or [www.atoygarden.com](http://www.atoygarden.com). Allow at least two weeks for delivery.

### Directions:

1. Give each group member a candle to decorate. The designs are up to them: Biblical, nature, abstract, thematic, holiday, seasonal, etc.
2. Explain that the finished candles will be used in future services or may be given as gifts.
3. The decorating wax is very easy to work with and can be readily cut into many different shapes. Once the design is done, simply apply it to the candle.
4. Decorating pens may be used for additional embellishment.
5. For more information and examples, go to [www.ehow.com](http://www.ehow.com).

### Close:

- As this activity may take more than one session, collect and store the candles for safekeeping.
- Once they are completed, decide as a group how they are to be used.



# Weaving God's Promises

## THIS WAY, PLEASE: TOURING THE CHURCH

Group members tour their church, learning about its architecture, design, artwork and sections.

### Materials:

*optional:* cell phone cameras

### Preparation:

Arrange for a “tour guide” (the rector, the builder, a knowledgeable church member or the group leader) to take the group around the building, indoors and outdoors.

Since this is a great intergenerational activity, invite other people to join your group.

Make sure that the church is not in use at tour time.

### Directions:

1. At the appointed time, lead (or walk with) the group on a tour of the church.
2. Point out such areas as: the narthex, nave, aisles, pulpit, sanctuary/altar, transepts, chancel, sacristy, choir, baptismal font and the apse (in larger churches).
3. Make sure to note the stained glass; ask group members to tell the story represented by each window.
4. Ask some of the youth to take photos of each section as well as of other characteristics they find interesting. You could ask for these photos to be posted on the Church's social media pages as a highlight of how teens see the Church. You could also print some of the photos and display them in your meeting space.

### Discussion:

- Once the tour is done, return to the meeting space for a brief discussion. Some suggested questions:
  - How does the design/layout of the church influence or affect the way you feel when you are in it?
  - How should a church be used?
  - What would you change about the church's design/layout? Why?

### Close:

- Ask one of the group members to write a summary of the tour. Publish it, along with some of the photos, in the church newsletter or on its website.