

Session Two



A Home for God

O Holy Spirit, may my understanding be always obedient to thy heavenly inspirations and the teachings of the holy Catholic Church, of which thou art the infallible Guide; may my heart be ever inflamed with love of God and of my neighbor; may my will be ever conformed to the divine will, and may my whole life be a faithful following of the life and virtues of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and thee be honor and glory forever. Amen.

STEP 1: HOME PREPARATION

In this session, we will begin our study of the Old Testament Tabernacle as the template for sharing the Catholic Faith. No matter your thoughts or trepidations about the Old Testament, what you are about to learn is exciting.

Maybe studying the Old Testament seems pointless to you—it is “old,” after all—but Jesus said a person who wants to understand the kingdom of God “is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old” (Matthew 13:52). We need both the old and the new to be able to share our Catholic Faith, because the Catholic Church was designed and built on the foundation of the Old Testament Tabernacle but is *fulfilled* in the Holy Spirit.

When I was a Protestant, the worship service in my church was nothing like the Old Testament, so I always wondered why God would go to such trouble to prepare his Chosen People for the Church in Christ if worship was not supposed to be anything like what they had known in the Old Testament. It was largely the connections between the Old Testament Tabernacle and the Catholic Church that drew me into the Faith. These beautiful connections are vital to understanding, embracing, and *communicating* why we worship the way we do.

Some think that Catholic rituals and practices are old fashioned or outdated, but Catholic worship and practice is prescribed by God himself, rooted in the Old Testament Tabernacle, modeled after the worship occurring in heaven, and reflected in the individual soul.

A HOME FOR GOD

Depending on the translation you have, your Bible probably includes chapter and paragraph headings in bold print. These are a convenient way to determine the content of an entire book or section of Scripture without reading every word.

KEY SCRIPTURE



“And let them
make me a
sanctuary,
that I may
dwell in
their midst.”

— **Exodus 25:8**

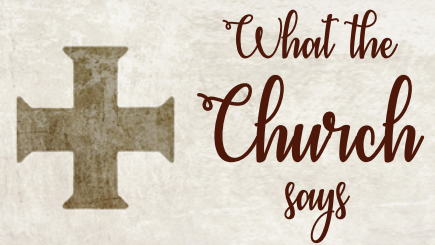
- 1 Turn to the book of Exodus, where we will spend this session. Exodus (meaning “departure”) is the account of Israel’s departure from enslavement in Egypt. Using your chapter and paragraph headings, write out a rough outline of the whole book of Exodus. Make special note of the content in **Exodus 25–30**.

On Mount Sinai, God gave Moses explicit instructions for living in the closest possible relationship to him: the laws and Ten Commandments, a liturgical schedule, rubrics for worship, and the elaborate, detailed instructions for the Tabernacle and furnishings that skilled workmen carried out.

After reading through **Exodus 25:1–8**, take a look at this session’s Key Scripture on page 6 and circle the words you consider most important.

- 2 The word “tabernacle” literally means “to dwell.” Notice, also, the use of the word “sanctuary,” which means “a retreat” in Hebrew. What are your thoughts about that?

- 3 Besides the fact that it would be his home with the people, why do you think God was so specific regarding how everything should be built and used? You can also read **Hebrews 8:5** to help you answer this question.



“The person who is ignorant of any one of the testaments of the Catholic Holy Bible hobbles to Christ on one foot.”

— **St. Augustine**



The Tabernacle
taught the people
how to worship
properly.

*Proper
worship*

*was meant to
include liturgy,
ritual, and
ceremony.*

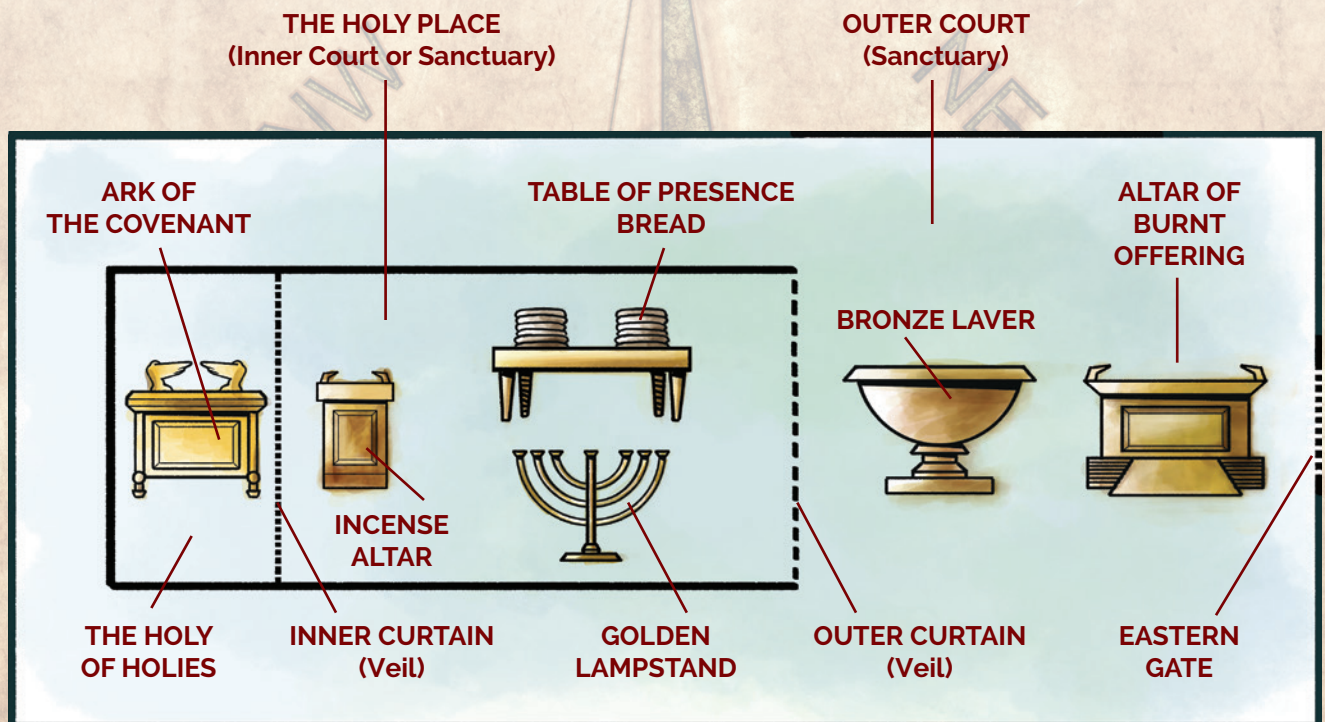
THE OLD TESTAMENT TABERNACLE

God specified the design of the Tabernacle, its liturgical worship, and its elements in such great detail because the earthly Tabernacle was patterned after the one in heaven. The Old Testament Tabernacle was a copy of the sanctuary in heaven and the prototype of the Church to come. In the Bible, we see that God desires a certain kind of worship. That means worship is not about me, what I like, or whether I am being entertained or satisfied by what is happening. There is a place for all of that in the Church, but it is not in worship. Worship is about God, what he wants, what glorifies and satisfies him most, and especially what draws us into the closest possible relationship with him. Our worship is preparation and participation in heavenly worship.

- 4 With what would the Tabernacle be built (see Exodus 25:1-2)? Read through **Exodus 35:20–36:7**. Does anything strike you about this account? Explain.

TABERNACLE STRUCTURE

Now, let's take a look at the furnishings in the Tabernacle. In Scripture, the term "tabernacle" sometimes indicates the entire Temple area. Other times it refers to the tent sanctuary itself. The layout of the sanctuary is depicted on page 9.



5 The Tabernacle included some fascinating facilities, which we will explore in detail throughout this study. Take some time now to familiarize yourself with each facility in the Tabernacle by reading its description and matching it to its corresponding reference.

A. Exodus 30:1-10

C. Exodus 27:1-8

E. Exodus 25:31-40

B. Exodus 25:23-30

D. Exodus 25:10-22

F. Exodus 30:17-21



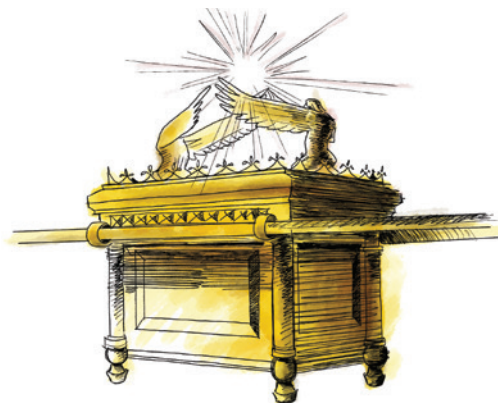
_____ **Golden Lampstand**



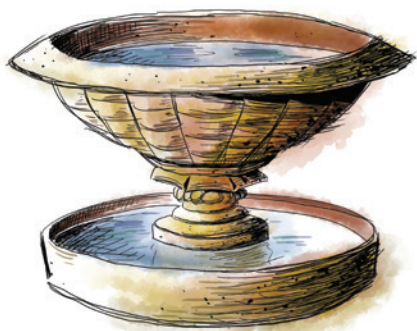
_____ **Altar of Burnt Offering**



_____ **Table of Presence Bread**



_____ **Ark of the Testimony**



_____ **Bronze Laver**



_____ **Altar of Incense**

After Moses faithfully supervised the people's obedience to God's instructions regarding building and assembling the Tabernacle, something miraculous happened. Read **Exodus 40:34-35**: "Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting, because the cloud abode upon it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle."

6 Glory! Literally! This type of manifestation of God's presence in the Bible is called a *theophany* (*theo-*, meaning "god," *-phany* meaning "to show"). The presence of God was literal, and the people saw it in the pillar of cloud resting on the throne from within the Tabernacle. They called this cloud the "Shekinah" glory (shuh-**kee**-nuh). *Shekinah* also means "to dwell." Can you imagine what it would have been like for God's people to see this miraculous accommodation of his glorious presence for his people to witness? What are your thoughts?

7 What was the miraculous function of this pillar of cloud and fire, according to **Exodus 40:36-38**?

But the Old Testament Tabernacle and the worship centered there were simply the skeleton, the bare structure, of what would one day become a living, breathing Tabernacle. It was not until those Old Testament "days were completed" that mankind got an inkling that God had always intended something spectacularly new.

In the theophanies of the Old Testament, the cloud, now obscure, now luminous, reveals the living and saving God, while veiling the transcendence of his glory—with Moses on Mount Sinai,¹ at the tent of meeting,² and during the wandering in the desert,³ and with Solomon at the dedication of the Temple.⁴ In the Holy Spirit, Christ fulfills these figures (CCC 697).

¹ Cf. Ex 24:15-18.

² Cf. Ex 33:9-10.

³ Cf. Ex 33:9-10.

⁴ Cf. 1 Kings 8:10-12.



“ He who dwells in the highest heavens in an invisible abode possesses also a tabernacle on earth. His tabernacle is his Church still on its journey. It is there he must be sought because in the tabernacle is found the way that leads to his abode. ”

— **St. Augustine**

THE NEW TESTAMENT TABERNACLE

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father” (John 1:14).

The designation of Jesus as “the Word” indicates that he is the Word of the Law, given to Moses on Mount Sinai, in the flesh. Please circle the words “dwelt” and “glory” in the verse above.

8 What are your thoughts?

In Jesus, the true and final Tabernacle, God dwelt again with man, and the special glory of the LORD rested on him, just as the pillar of cloud in the Old Testament anticipated.

Remember that the Jews had a very special designation for this cloud and presence, calling it *Shekinah* glory, meaning “to dwell,” and the Gospel of John says he and the other apostles were witnesses of this glorious manifestation of God in Jesus.

9 It is this truth that influences his commentary about Jesus in **John 2:19-21**. Turn there now and record a summary here.

It is for this reason the Church can say: “Christ is the true temple of God, ‘the place where his glory dwells’” (CCC 1197).

I am
a tabernacle of
God!



THE CHURCH IS THE TABERNACLE FULFILLED

10 The Church tells us that, “by the grace of God, Christians also become the temples of the Holy Spirit, living stones out of which the Church is built” (CCC 1197). Why is this so, according to **1 Corinthians 12:12-14**?

11 “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own” (1 Corinthians 6:19). What are your thoughts on this passage?

In a very real sense, everything true of the Old Testament Tabernacle is also true of us, because ***we are tabernacles, too***. The Church is a spiritual temple, the mystical body of Christ. It is the presence of God *fulfilled* on the earth through us.

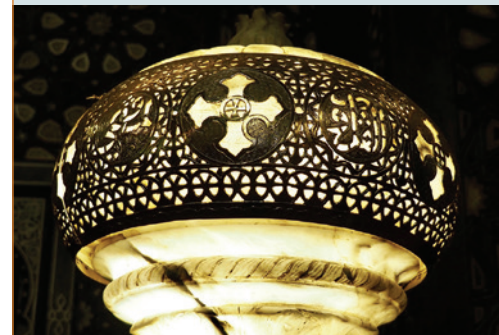
Now, in the New Testament, God dwells in living tabernacles, as he planned to do from the foundation of the world. In fact, it is said that this desire of God to tabernacle, incarnate, with mankind is what caused the rebellion of the fallen angels. Not a “fix” for sin, the Incarnation was God’s desire and intention all along.

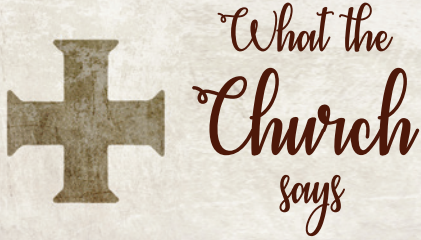
The Church is made of living stones. God dwells in Christ by nature, and he dwells by participation in me and you. When we gather together in our own church to worship, God is present in and through us all. The skeleton of the Old Testament tabernacle law has been fulfilled in Jesus, our own bodies, and our church, all of which foreshadow the heavenly temple.



“God’s tender love is ineffable. He offers Himself to those who with all their faith believe that God can dwell in the human body and make it his glorious abode.”

— **Pseudo-Marcarius**





“ Our Lord’s Body is called the temple, because as the temple contained the glory of God dwelling therein, so the Body of Christ, which represents the Church, contains the Only-Begotten, who is the image and glory of God. ”

— Origen



LET'S REVIEW

This is why the Tabernacle is able to concisely communicate our Faith:

- God is always calling man to worship in his presence.
- God explains how to worship him properly, in a way that draws us into the closest possible relationship to him.
- God longs to make a home in us.
- God is completely consistent: New Testament worship and practice is built on the foundation of the Old Testament.
- In the Old Testament Law, God gave detailed instructions for whole-life liturgical worship centered around the Tabernacle.
- The Old Testament Tabernacle was a copy of the sanctuary in heaven and the prototype of the Church to come.
- New Testament worship should resemble both Old Testament and heavenly worship.
- Jesus is the new and final Tabernacle of worship. The Church is his body, built of “living stones.”
- The only religious group that contains every piece of proper worship commanded by God is the Catholic Church.

YOU ARE NOW READY FOR THE **SESSION TWO VIDEO**.

STEP 2: VIDEO PRESENTATION

Session Two: A Home for God

- The old Law and the new law
- Matthew 13:52 – “Every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”
- Moral and natural law are binding to us
 - Moral law given in Ten Commandments/ten plagues
- Ceremonial law regulates liturgy and ritual worship, not morality.
 - Commemorates decisive event of salvation
 - Changed from Passover to crucifixion, death, and Resurrection
- The Old Testament is the blueprint; the New Testament is the living tabernacle
- Judicial precepts govern civil activity of people
- Application: Observing New Testament law is not legalism; it is love. Change with circumstances and conditions

STEP 3: SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION

INVITATION

In addition to equipping you to confidently share your faith with those you know and love, the goal of this program is for you to come to sense more deeply through the Tabernacle that Jesus is a living, breathing part of your life—if you allow him to be. Thomas à Kempis taught,

Whatever be the affair, enter with Moses into the tabernacle to ask advice of the Lord, you will sometimes hear the divine answer and return instructed in many things present and to come. For Moses always had recourse to the tabernacle for the solution of doubts and questions, and fled to prayer for support in dangers and the evil deeds of men. So you also should take refuge in the secret chamber of your heart, begging earnestly for divine aid.⁵

Notes

[illegible]

⁵ Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2003), 86.

God Prompt — LOVE the Word™

L

LISTEN: “And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst” (Exodus 25:8).

O

OBSERVE: In what areas of your life do you most need God’s presence, help, or instruction?

Have you invited him there? Explain.

In what specific areas might God want to work in your life through this study as you make room for him there?

What are your goals for this study?

What is the most significant statement or Scripture you read today? What does God want you to do in response?

V

VERBALIZE: Lord, the areas of my life that need you most are ...

My deepest desires about these areas are ...

From what I understand you to be saying so far about them, your will seems clear here ...

But not so clear here ...

E

ENTRUST: *Lord, I believe it is your desire to tabernacle with me, to be present in my life and circumstances. Help me learn to make my heart a sanctuary in which you can be comfortable and fully present. I commit these challenges to you in the coming weeks and ask for direction in these areas. I believe. Help my unbelief.*

