

## Aim of lesson

To see what it means to have God at the centre of our lives, as number one priority, by considering David's love for the ark throughout his life.

## Bible background

1 Samuel 4:3-11; 10-14; 21; 2 Samuel 6; 7 (1 Chronicles 13; 15); 1 Chronicles 28; 29:1-3; Psalm 30; 132.

## Outline of lesson

### The ark in Kiriath-jearim

Ask the class if they remember going to a place when they were younger, a place which they have thought of ever since as the best place in the world; the one they would always like to go back to. Discuss why it was important to them. Was it a holiday? Or a time they spent with their Dad? Or the place where they learned to ride a bike, or just a place that sold the best tasting ice-cream? David had a place like that. It was the place where the ark was, Kiriath-jearim.

If the members of the class are not familiar with these events, remind them how the ark came to be in Kiriath-jearim – see lesson 28, 'Digging deeper'.

### The ark, a symbol of God's presence

In the first section of the workbook use Psalm 132:6-7 to show how David, at home in Bethlehem (Ephrathah), heard of the ark being at Kiriath-jearim and went there to see it. The reference to 'the fields of the wood' (AV), or 'the fields of Jaar', in more modern versions, refers to Kiriath-jearim – 'city of woods'.

Encourage the class to see that the ark must have represented;

- God's presence with them
- God's teaching – the stones on which the law was written were put into the ark
- the record of God's kindness and deliverance to them in the past and
- the place that represented God's mercy and forgiveness; the mercy seat.

Help the class to see David's love and desire for God which was expressed in Psalm 42:1-5. Note also the yearning he must have felt to go to the place representing God's presence whilst he was an outlaw but was unable to go.

The death of Uzzah

In the section where David first tried to bring up the ark to Jerusalem, help the class to see God's mercy as well as his judgement. The Philistines who had put the ark on a cart were not all killed; they knew no better. David and his people did have the law and knew that the priests had to carry the ark on their shoulders; it was not to be driven in a farmer's cart. David's intention had been good. He did not want the ark parked in a field miles from the hub of the life of the nation; he wanted God to be at the centre. He knew that this had been fatally lacking in the days of Saul (1 Chronicles 13:3) and that the nation had spiritually gone downhill because of it.

### The ark is brought to Jerusalem

Go to 1 Chronicles 15, and encourage the class to think about David's care in pitching a tent for the ark, preparing the priests and offerings, the blessing of the people and the feast that he provided for all (1 Chronicles 16:1-3). Ask them to consider what this showed about David's feelings for God. Note how he danced before the Lord, not caring what others thought – Michal in particular.

### God's promises to David

The second page in the workbook is based on 2 Samuel 7. This could be a lesson in itself. Unless you have more than one week to develop this, it is probably best just to answer the questions given and point out the parallel with Christ in the work that Solomon would do in building the temple. The idea of the 'house' being both a building and a family will probably need to be explained.

Although David was told that he could not build the temple, he did all that he could because he really wanted to serve God; it was his joy, not a hard task to be avoided. We should ask ourselves how we feel about serving God.

## Digging deeper

### David's family

This study fills in the background of David's wives and sons, especially Michal and Abigail. It also shows God's real purpose for us – that a man should have only one wife.

## Relevance to our lives

The class may like to discuss where and when they find it easier to pray. Is a routine helpful? A prayer list?

## Prayer

Lord, we want to put you at the centre of our lives because you are greater than anything else; we really want to know you more and to love you more.

## Other suggestions for activities

Psalm 132 could be read dramatically by two members or two groups, in the class. The first half is David's prayer whilst the second is God's answer. It could be read like this;

v 1-2      v 11-12

v 3-5      v 13

v 6-8      v 14-15

v 9        v 16

v 10      v 17-18

A dialogue could be planned between members of the crowd on the day that the ark was taken into Jerusalem, contrasting what had happened the first time with the events of that day.