

## Aim of lesson

To show the efforts and dedication that Solomon and David put into the building of the temple, and to show God’s desire to dwell in the temple of his people today.

## Bible background

1 Kings 5; 6; 8.

## Outline of lesson

### David’s preparation

Remind the class of David’s desire to build the temple and God’s answer to him (2 Samuel 7:2-6, 11-16).

David did not forget about the idea of a temple even though he was not to be the builder. Ask the class to look at 1 Chronicles 22 to find some of the preparations that David made. You may like to read together verse 5 and then ask the class to look through the chapter to make a list of the materials David prepared. This could be done together or in pairs.

### Solomon builds the temple

Having looked at David’s enthusiasm and effort for the building of God’s house; the class can look at Solomon. He makes the building of the temple the first priority of his reign. Shortly after becoming king he begins preparations. In the fourth year of his reign he begins building, and it takes seven years to complete. The class could read 1 Kings 5 together. It is a chapter suitable for three voices, one for Solomon, one for Hiram and one for the narrator.

If you have time, different members of the class could look at different details of the design of the temple and report back to the class, e.g.:

- 1 Kings 6:7 No chiselling done on site
- v15, 18 and 21 The gold-covered carved panelling
- 1 Kings 7:23-26 The bronze sea standing on bulls

The class could also look at the list of furnishings inside the temple in 1 Kings 7:48-50.

### Dedication

1 Kings 8 records the dedication of the temple to God. The workbook could be used here. The first part can be used to consider the thoughts of Solomon at the dedication. He remembers what the temple meant to his father, David. The second space is to summarise some of Solomon’s thoughts in his prayer of dedication. The thoughts in v27 are important to include. Solomon knew that this magnificent ‘house of God’ did not contain God; it only symbolised his presence with his people. The rest of Solomon’s prayer of dedication is a petition asking God to have mercy of his people when they suffer and turn towards the temple to pray for his help.

### God’s greater temple

The next part of the workbook sets out to encourage the class to look at aspects of the spiritual temple which was also promised in words to David. Jesus, as David’s greater son, would build a temple which would never be destroyed. The Old and New Testament references show that God dwells with humble, faithful people who become stones in his temple. Jesus is seen to be both the foundation and the way into this most holy place.

## Digging deeper

### The kingdom on earth

God wanted Solomon, rather than David, to build the temple because he was a man of peace. David, though had built up a very large kingdom which Solomon inherited. There will be a similar, but infinitely better, kingdom when Jesus returns.

### Relevance to our lives

Psalms 15 brings out the holiness in thought and action which needs to be the characteristic of those who want to be part of God’s home. Discuss with the class how we can be holy. Encourage them to think not only about doing what is right and walking away from ideas and actions which are wrong, but also about the forgiveness which God offers us in Christ, without which none of us could be holy.

## Prayer

A large part of this lesson is a prayer. The prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple is one of the well-known prayers in the Bible. The students could think about preparing a prayer of dedication themselves. The appropriateness of this will depend on the age and commitment of the students. Though all our lives belong to God, it is in baptism that we wholly dedicate our lives to his service. The class could write a prayer of dedication with their ideas of what someone about to be baptised might say. Encourage them to see that when dedicating our lives to God all parts of our lives become his, just as the spoons, bowls and walls of the temple become holy.

## Other suggestions for activities

- The class could plan a conversation between workmen building the temple. Some of the reasons for building it and its importance could come out in the dialogue.

- An older class may like to compare the dimensions and furnishings of the temple with those of the tabernacle built at the time of Moses. A good illustrated Bible dictionary will be useful for this.
- The class may like to read about the visit of the queen of Sheba, 1 Kings 10, and describe what she would have seen on her visit: the temple, Solomon's palace, the queen's palace, the fleet, gardens, army, chariots etc.
- The class may like to find out what things led to Solomon's failure in later life: his policy of alliance, foreign wives, religious compromise, love of show, self-indulgence, extravagance.