

The Glory of the Lord

Exodus 40:34-38

The Big Idea: God is both holy and near, to lead us to a better country.

Read the passage

Story Summary for Children:

After the tabernacle was finished, God came down to dwell in it as he had promised. The Israelites knew God had arrived because there was a cloud above the tent in the daytime, and at night there was a fire in the cloud. When it was time for the people to move, the cloud would lift and go before them. God used this sign so that the Israelites would know when they should move and when they should remain in their camp.

Family Lesson Discussion Questions:

1. What tent was finished in this part of the story? (the tabernacle)
2. Who came to live in the tabernacle? (God)
3. How did the Israelites know that God was in the tent? (by the appearance of the cloud by day and the fire in the cloud by night)
4. How did God tell the Israelites to relocate? (when the cloud was on the tent, they stayed, but when it lifted, they packed up and moved)

Family Lesson Application Questions: (God is in charge, and he guides our life decisions.)

1. Who decides what is good or bad? How do you know right from wrong?
2. Do you know why we live the way we do? (because God tells us how to live our lives, and we believe that he tells us what is best for us)
3. Do you know how we can find out what God wants us to do? (see “parents application” and “children’s application” notes below for help with answering this question)

Memory Verse: *“Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.”* (Hebrews 11:16)

Parents: Focus in on two ideas: 1) Our decisions are not subjective. We have a standard that comes from God. 2) How do we know what God wants (or the will of God)?

Parent Application: Do you find yourself saying, “That’s just the way we do it. When you grow up, you can do it your own way” to your children? That suggests to our children that our decisions are purely subjective. Certainly our children can and will make their own decisions, but we don’t want to communicate that we live our lives our way and they can live their lives their way. The problem with the above phrase is that we are communicating personal subjectivity and not the authority of God.

Second, do you answer the “why” question? Most teachable moments and “on the job training” happen by answering the “why” question. Does your child ask, “Why is there a cross in front at church?”, “Why do we go to church?”, “Why do we pray before we eat?” Answer these questions thoughtfully, not haphazardly.

Children’s Application: Here’s a little help in bullet form with what to say about how to know what God wants.

- We have to read and know the Bible. The Bible is God’s letter to us. It has stories, lessons, and teachings that show us how we should live. It tells us what is good and what is bad, what is right and wrong, and the types of things that should be important to us.
- We pray and ask God what he thinks. God doesn’t always talk with a loud voice like we do, but when we pray and talk to God, he often talks back to us.
- We also ask other people that love and follow God what they think. A lot of times there are other people who are really wise and can give us some good advice.
- After we have done all this, we trust God to take care of us.

The Story of Jonah—Read the story of Jonah to help illustrate the idea that we should do what God wants us to do.

A Look Ahead: Next week the Big Idea will be, “Our mission is to turn unchurched people into fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.” Ask your family, “What is the most important thing in life?”