

**TREASURES FROM THE TENT--DAY FOUR**  
**“The Altar of Incense, Ark of the Covenant**  
**and Fellowship with God”**  
**Grades 4-6**

**Exodus 25:10-22, Heb. 4:12-16,**  
**Rev. 2:17, Exodus 30:1-10, 34-38**

**Materials Needed:** Incense  
Good smelling objects  
Story pictures

**Objectives:** As a result of this lesson, I want my student

**To Know:** The Ark of the Covenant was accessible only to the High Priest, only once a year and only with the blood of the atoning sacrifice. The Ten Commandments, jar of manna and Aaron's rod which all showed God's holiness were covered by the mercy seat.

The altar of incense was directly in front of the Holy of Holies and a very costly fragrance was continually burned.

**Basic Teaching:** One can confidently enter the presence of a Holy God without fear because Jesus' atoning sacrifice has made access to a merciful God. Therefore, one should offer prayers to God which are fragrantly pleasing to Him.

**To Respond:** by confidently entering God's presence offering prayers which are pleasing to Him.

**Tabernacle Time:**

- I. The Ark of the Covenant
  - A. Covered with gold
  - B. Only the High Priest could enter
    - 1. Once a year
    - 2. Only with blood of a sacrifice
  - C. Inside the Ark
    - 1. Jar of manna
    - 2. Aaron's rod
    - 3. Ten Commandments
  - D. The mercy seat
    - 1. Covered the Ark
    - 2. Was covered by two cherubim

**Approach:** Have good things for the kids to smell. (Possibly before hand put some room deodorizer or potpourri in the room to make the whole room smell good when the

students enter.) You might want to play a game where a child closes his or her eyes, smells the object and then tries to guess what it is. Good smelling objects might include: An orange, some cinnamon, strawberries, a flower, etc. Ask: Do you like to smell good things? I want you to imagine that you are going to bring something to God that smells really good. What would be the best smell that you could bring? (Have students suggest answers.) For the Tabernacle, God told Moses exactly what He wanted that would smell so good to Him. He had a special altar overlaid with gold.

## II. The Altar of Incense

- A. Overlaid with gold
- B. Directly in front of the Ark but separated by a curtain

Show picture of the altar of incense.

Why do you think there was this curtain still there? God was very holy and only the high priest could go in to the very throne room where God Almighty was. How often could he go in? (Review from Tabernacle Time.) How do you think the priests might have felt when they were standing right there on the other side of the curtain right by this altar?

## C. Incense was burned

- 1. Only God's special recipe
- 2. Continually

This altar was called the Altar of Incense because a special incense that God had given the ingredients for was burned there. Explain what incense is (have some to show if possible).

Just imagine the priest standing there, knowing that he was burning the incense that God had said to bring. He knew that THIS was the incense God enjoyed smelling.

God wanted us to know that there are some things He enjoys even more than things that smell good. Do you know what God REALLY enjoys?

Have a student read Psalm 141:2.

Have your students take a piece of paper at this point and write down three things that they would like to pray about. Tell them that you will not have them read them aloud so they can be honest with their answers.

## III. The Fragrance of Prayer

Then say, "There are some prayers

Proverbs 15:8

Psalms 66:18

James 4:3

It might be helpful to make wordstrips of the key ideas of each of these kinds of prayers or write them on a dry erase board. Example: "You are wonderful, God, because..." "I was wrong, God, when ..." "Thank You, God, for..." "I need help with..."

A. Not all prayers smell good to God

1. The prayer of the wicked

2. The prayer of someone who is holding on to sin in their heart

3. The prayer that is selfish

B. The kind of prayers God likes

1. Adoration

2. Confession

3. Thanksgiving

Psalms 51:17

that smell Soooo good to God, but there are other prayers that He REALLY does not like at all. I want us to look at some and then you can see what kind you have written on your list."

Have students look up each of the verses in the left hand column. Have them give you an example of what a prayer might sound like from someone like that.

Do you know the kind of prayer God does like? He loves it when we tell Him how wonderful He is. Why is God wonderful? (Have students give some answers and try to steer the answers or rephrase the answers in terms of God's attributes. Ex: "God gave me what I asked Him for." You could say, "Yes, God takes care of us. He is faithful." Or "He really does care because He loves us." After your students have shared answers, lead them in a prayer of adoration.

God also loves to hear the prayer of confession. How is this different from a wicked person coming and offering a sacrifice and prayer? (They don't really mean it.) When we are truly sorry for what we have done and we go to God and tell Him what we have done, and that we were wrong, He is happy with that prayer. (You might give a moment of silent prayer for your students to confess to God.) God also loves the prayer of thanksgiving. Let's think of twenty

It doesn't have to be twenty things, but the idea here is to move quickly with the thanksgiving time and get an overall feel of thankfulness.

#### 4. Supplication

- a. For others
- b. For myself

things that we are really thankful to God for giving to us. (Lead in a prayer of thanksgiving.)

The last type of prayer that smells so good to God is when we call to God when we or someone we know about need help or are afraid. He likes us to talk to Him and pray for other people.

#### **Conclusion:**

God loves it when those who are in His family offer prayers to Him. Do you pray to God? What kind of things do you say when you pray?

Look at the list you made at the beginning. Did you just ask God for a lot of things? Or did you thank Him? Did you tell Him how wonderful He is? Did you ask Him to help other people and give them what they need?

Are your prayers something that smell good to God or do they stink to Him? He is a great and wonderful King and He has made it possible for us to come right up to His throne and talk to Him and give Him prayers that are pleasing to Him. Let's talk to him right now.

After you have concluded, hand out fold-up calendar to help them remember how they can give God prayers that smell really good to Him. Remind them of the JOY it gives God when His children pray in the way He has said.