

## GOD'S PRESENCE

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### ILLUSTRATION / DEMONSTRATION

#### PREPARATION:

Make a simple model of the ark of the covenant, using the following directions, which are from the "Live It!" article "Make a Model Ark" on page 107 of the newly revised *NIV Adventure Bible*.

Get a small box and cover it with gold paper. Cut out cardboard angels and color them gold or cover them with gold paper. Then glue them to the top of the box. You can buy small sticks, called dowels, at a hardware or hobby store. Glue them to the side of your box. You could use straws too.

For an illustration to use as a guide, see the "Life in Bible Times" article "The Ark of the Covenant" on page 94 of the *Adventure Bible*. Type the Ten Commandments on a piece of paper, put the paper inside the ark, and replace the cover. Finally, make copies of the instructions from the "Live It!" article on page 107, along with copies of the ark illustration on page 94, to pass out to children after the sermon.

(As an alternative to making a model ark, simply show children the illustration of the ark on page 94.)

#### DURING THE CHILDREN'S SERMON:

Hold up the model ark and tell children, "This is a model of the ark of the covenant. It was kept inside the tabernacle. That was the special tent where God met with his people, the Israelites, as they traveled through the desert from Egypt to the Promised Land. Now, the ark was a very special container that held something precious. Does anyone know what?" After a child has guessed correctly (or after a few wrong guesses), open the ark and hold up the paper, saying, "You're right! It's God's laws, the Ten Commandments. In reality, they were written on two stone tablets, but the important thing is, they were the actual words God said to his people. The ark, with these precious words inside, was a sign to the Israelites that God was with them. Listen to the detailed instructions God gave his people for building it ..."

### SCRIPTURE READING

Open the *NIV Adventure Bible*, telling the children, "This is from the book of Exodus, chapter 25, verses 10–22."

*[The LORD told Moses,] "Have them make a chest of acacia wood—two and a half cubits long, a cubit and a half wide, and a cubit and a half high. Overlay it with pure gold, both inside and out, and make a gold molding around it. Cast four gold rings for it and fasten them to its four feet, with two rings on one side and two rings on the other. Then make poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. Insert the poles into the rings on the sides of the chest to carry it. The poles are to remain in the rings of this ark; they are not to be removed. Then put in the ark the Testimony, which I will give you."*

*“Make an atonement cover of pure gold—two and a half cubits long and a cubit and a half wide. And make two cherubim out of hammered gold at the ends of the cover. Make one cherub on one end and the second cherub on the other; make the cherubim of one piece with the cover, at the two ends. The cherubim are to have their wings spread upward, overshadowing the cover with them. The cherubim are to face each other, looking toward the cover. Place the cover on top of the ark and put in the ark the Testimony, which I will give you. There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the Testimony, I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites.”*

Explain to the children, “A ‘cubit’ was what the Israelites used to measure things. God was telling them to make the ark about four feet long, two feet wide, and two feet high.” Use your hands to show the children approximately how big the ark was. “A ‘cherub’ was a certain kind of angel, as you can see on top of the ark. And when God said, ‘the Testimony,’ he was talking about the Ten Commandments that were written on the tablets of stone and placed inside the ark.”

### FEATURE READING / MESSAGE

Turn to page 94 in the *NIV Adventure Bible*, telling the children, “Here is a ‘Life in Bible Times’ article from the *Adventure Bible*, called ‘The Ark of the Covenant.’”

The ark of the covenant was the most important object in the tabernacle. It was placed in the Most Holy Place, and only once a year, on the Day of Atonement, a priest would go in and pour the blood of a sacrifice on the cover of the ark. The “atonement cover” was made of pure gold and had two gold cherubim on it, facing each other with their wings spread upward. According to Hebrews 9:4 the ark held the two tablets of the law that God had given to Moses, a jar of manna, and Aaron’s rod that had produced buds and flowers and almonds.

After reading the article, tell the children, “Now, what I want you to remember is that the ark, this very special container with God’s words and those other important things inside, was a sign to the Israelites that God was with them. It was there inside the tabernacle, which was always set up right in the middle of their camp, with their tents pitched all around it. Also, the Israelites would carry the ark into battle. It reminded them of God’s presence. And they needed that reminder, didn’t they? Otherwise they might start to think that maybe God had deserted them, and they’d become afraid. Even today, God’s people need to be reminded that he is always with them. Knowing that helps them to be brave, to be strong, and to have faith.”

### APPLICATION

Say to the children, “It might be fun for you to build a model ark and keep it in your bedroom, to remind you of God’s presence in your life. These instructions, which I’ll give you in a moment, will show you how to make one.” Hold up copies of the ark illustration and the instructions for making a model ark. “But an even better way to help you remember that God is always with you is to memorize Bible verses like Hebrews 13:5, in which God says, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’ When you memorize Scripture verses, you’re putting God’s words in another very special container—your heart! Then no matter where you go, whether you’re sleeping in your bed or facing a bully on the playground, you’ll know that God is right there with you.”