

Aim: The Sanctuary was functional, practical and symbolic

Note: Most children do not really understand symbolism until somewhere between the ages of 10 and 13; they can only repeat what they have learned about symbols or things-that-remind-us-of-other-things. On the other hand, teenagers and adults can understand the reasoning behind symbols, extend and build on the ideas presented and think of their own object lessons.

God gave very precise plans for the Sanctuary, its furniture, and its services and sacrifices etc. Some of those plans have been kept for us in the Bible. (*Some has obviously been lost: for example, the measurement of the corner panels of the Sanctuary building.*)

God's plans are always perfect and his plans for the Sanctuary were perfect too; they were practical and at the same time, symbolic.

The Sanctuary was designed so it could easily be disassembled and transported.

How was the furniture designed to make it easy to transport? How was it to be transported?

The furniture (Ark, table of showbread and altars) were covered by the priests and carried by Kohath family of Levites. The furniture had rings on the side through which carrying poles were inserted. Exodus 25:12-15; 25:26-28; Exodus 26:6-8; Exodus 30:4-5; Numbers 4:1-16

How were the curtains, wall panels and pillars transported?

The curtains and walls etc. were transported on carts. Numbers 7:6-8

The Levites were responsible for transporting the Sanctuary; Numbers 3:17 gives the names of the family groups of the Levites: Gershon, Kohath and Merari. Each group had different responsibilities in caring for and transporting the Sanctuary. Numbers 3:25-26; 30-32; 36-37.

The Sanctuary was designed to be beautiful

(Depending on your group you might get them to look up each verse, draw a picture about each verse, draw a picture of the inside of the sanctuary or just colour in and discuss the craft page)

- Exodus 35:30-35 – God gave the workers special talents to do artistic work
- Exodus 36:8, 35, 37^{NIV} – The ceiling, centre and front curtains were made of "finely twisted linen and blue, purple and scarlet yarn, with cherubim woven into them."
- Exodus 36:20-24, 34 – The wall frames were acacia wood covered with gold, with silver bases.
- Exodus 36:36 - The posts supporting the centre curtains were overlaid with gold and had silver bases.
- Exodus 36:38 – The posts supporting the front curtain were at least partly overlaid with gold and had bronze bases.

God is so much greater than we can ever imagine. Imagine trying to explain an elephant to an ant; the ant could never completely understand, and nor can we completely understand God. The Sanctuary was designed to help teach people about God and His plan for Salvation.

Over the years, people have spent countless hours studying the verses about the Sanctuary and have found many different symbols and allegories in it. (An allegory is something that teaches about something else.)

Here are some examples:

- Jesus is our High Priest – Hebrews 4:14
- Jesus is our sacrifice – Hebrews 10:10
- Some people have compared the area in front of the sanctuary with this earth where Jesus was sacrificed. The Holy place in the Sanctuary can be compared to Heaven where Jesus went after he arose, and the Most Holy Place refers to the work of the Judgement that Jesus started doing in 1844.
- The walls teach us about Jesus who was both God and human. The walls were made of wood, which eventually weathers and rots away – just like our human bodies wear out and will eventually rot; but they were covered in gold which lasts forever – gold like a king's crown – and Jesus was also God, the King of the universe who will last forever.
- The curtains also teach us about Jesus. They were made of blue, purple and scarlet. Blue was the colour to remind the people of the Law of God, purple was the colour of kings and scarlet or red is the colour of blood. Jesus was our example of how to keep the law of God; He is the King of the universe and was sacrificed for our sins.