



Date: _____
Series: Pass the Promise
Fall Year 1, Lesson 27

The Festival of Sukkot- Thanksgiving

Take Home Point: *God wants to bless us with joy.
We are to say thank you back to him.

*Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson.

Bible Event: Leviticus 23:33-44, Deuteronomy 16:13-15

Key Verse: Psalm 107:1, "Give thanks to the LORD because he is good,
because his mercy endures forever."

We will help kids know:

- The children will learn about the Festival of Sukkot and its significance to the Israelite people.
- God fills our lives with blessing. It is important to say "thank you" back to him.




We will help kids feel:

- Joyful for all the blessings God gives.
- Thankful!

We will help kids do:

- Build a sukkah.
- Pray with a thankful heart.
- Develop a family mission project.

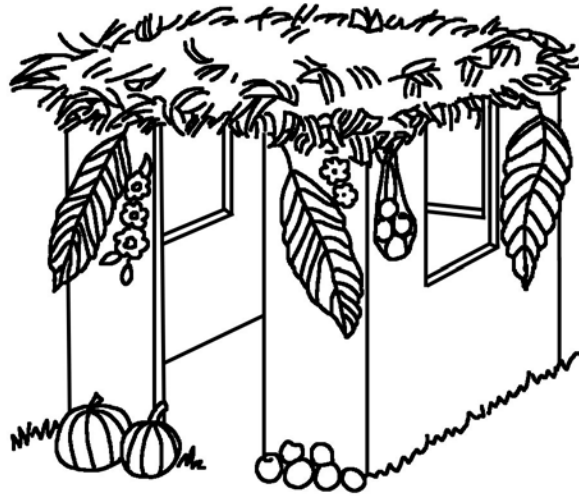
THIS LESSON'S ROADMAP

DESTINATION	PAGE #	DISCOVERIES ON YOUR JOURNEY	SUPPLIES NEEDED
Small Group Warm-Up 	4-5	It is important to say thank you—especially to God. As you ask a child to hand out candy as the kids arrive, see how many thank you responses are given.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bag of penny candy for each group (approximately 20 pieces)
Large Group 	5 8-9 9-10	Overview Puppet Presentation: “Gordy’s Cool New Fort” Dramatic Presentation: “The Feast of Tabernacles”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gordy • sukkah made for the stage (with the roof unfinished) • adult Hebrew woman costume
Small Group Application 	6-7	Pretend you are Hebrews getting ready for the Festival of Sukkot and build a sukkah. As you do, everyone should say something they are thankful for.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • construction paper leaves • construction paper strips to make paper chains • paper leaf for each child to take home • tape, glue stick, and staplers • sheets or blankets may be needed for those shepherds who forgot to bring one from home • chairs or dividers • branches, leaves, fruit, autumn garland, or grape vines butcher block paper (<i>optional</i>) • crayons or markers (<i>optional</i>)

Background Information on the Festival of Sukkot

The festival of Sukkot (sue-COAT) is a joyous festival of thankfulness, similar to our Thanksgiving. It was celebrated after the harvest was gathered in late September or early October. Sukkot is the Hebrew word for “booths.” The singular is sukkah (sue-KAH). This holiday celebrates God’s rich blessings in nature and His protection. God’s Word says in Deuteronomy 16:14 (NIV), *“Be joyful at your Feast...”* and in Nehemiah 8:17 (NIV), *“And their joy was very great.”*

The booths, or tabernacles, remind the people of the booths the Israelites lived in as they traveled through the desert. Leviticus 23:34, 42-43 (NIV) says, *“On the fifteenth day of the seventh month the Lord’s Feast of Tabernacles begins...All native-born Israelites are to live in booths so your descendants will know that I had the Israelites live in booths when I brought them out of Egypt.”* The Festival of the Booths, the Feast of Tabernacles, and the Festival of Sukkot are all titles for the same festival which lasts seven days.



The Old Testament Jewish family prepared for this festival by building a sukkah. It was a small hut with a roof made of leafy tree branches or wooden slats. It protected them from the sun and the heat during the day but allowed them to see the stars at night. They would decorate the outside of the sukkah with flowers, fruit, and paper chains. The families would eat and sleep there for seven days.

In your small group today, you will build a sukkah. Please bring from home a sheet or blanket. To decorate your sukkah, you can also bring branches, leaves, artificial fruit, autumn garland, or grape vines. You may join with one or two other groups close around you, if you wish.

Small Group Warm-Up: 15 minutes



Purpose: Get pointed in the right direction! Build relationships and help guests feel at ease. Do the learning readiness activity that will point your group in the right direction for the lesson.

This activity is designed to remind the children of the importance of saying thank you. Pick an early arriving child to be your helper. Give him a bag of candy that he will share with the other children. Explain to the helper that when he gives each child a piece of candy and she says thank you, he gets a piece of candy for himself. He gets candy *only if* he gets a thank you response. Explain to the helper that this is a secret and not to say anything about it. If no one says thank you, have the helper give you a piece of candy and you will model the appropriate response.

When finished handing out candy, say:

Did you notice that (helper's name) only got a piece of candy sometimes? Were you observant enough to figure out when he got a piece of candy?

If no one can answer, have the helper explain.

How do you think it made him feel if you forgot to say thank you? How do you think it would have made him feel if everyone said thank you?

What are some things in your life for which you are thankful? Who in our lives should we say thank you to? Do we always remember to thank God for everything he gives us?

Today we will learn about the Feast of Tabernacles or the Festival of Sukkot. God commanded the children of Israel to celebrate this feast as a reminder that they had lived in tabernacles while they traveled in the desert. Then we will build a little hut or tabernacle called a sukkah.

Listen to what the word of God says in Leviticus 23:39-43. Listen to how many times you hear the word “celebrate” and hold up a finger for each time you hear that word.

“However, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered what the land produces, celebrate the LORD’s festival for seven days. The first and eighth days will be worship festivals. On the first day take the best fruits, palm branches, the branches of leafy trees and poplars, and celebrate in the presence of the LORD your God for seven days. It is the LORD’s festival. Celebrate it for seven days each year. This is a permanent law for generations to come. Celebrate this festival in the seventh month. Live in booths for

seven days. Everyone born in Israel must live in booths so that generations to come may learn how I made the people of Israel live in booths when I brought them out of Egypt. I am the LORD your God."

How many times did you hear the word "celebrate"? (Four.) When God says something three or more times in the Bible, that means it is very important.

What did God consider so important for his people to do? (Celebrate, have fun, be joyful.)

We will learn more about the Festival of Sukkot in large group. *God wants to bless us with joy. We are to say thank you back to him.

Large Group: 20-30 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids observe what the Bible says. Present the Bible event in creative fashion. Help kids begin to interpret what it means.*

Overview:

Puppet Presentation: "Gordy's Cool New Fort"
Gordy learns what it means to be thankful.

Dramatic Presentation: "The Feast of Tabernacles"
Children will see a model of a sukkah and hear from a Hebrew woman about the Feast of Tabernacles.

Small Group Application: 20-25 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids map out the meaning of the Bible event in their lives. Use the questions to stimulate discussion but don't feel tied to them. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. Include personal examples from your own faith journey. The example of Christ at work in your life will leave lasting impressions of how Christ can work in the children's lives.*

Use your Bibles! Children need to learn how to look up references and follow along when scripture is read aloud. Allow for quality time of prayer at the close of the lesson.

Observation Questions: What happened?

Have kids refer to Leviticus 23: 33-44 for the following.

How many days did the families live in the sukkah or tabernacle?
(Leviticus 23:33. Seven.)

Why did God ask them to live in the sukkah? What was the purpose of this feast? (*Leviticus 23:39-43. They were to be thankful for their rich harvest and remember how God had protected them when he brought them out of Egypt.*)

Interpretation Questions: What does this mean?

How do you think the families felt at this feast? (*Read Deuteronomy 16:13-15. Joyful.*)

Why do you think the people were so joyful? (*God had richly blessed them.*)

Why do you think God asked the people to celebrate this festival? (*It was important that the people give thanks to God for all he had done. God wanted his people to experience joy.*)

Why do you think God told the people to build a special place in which they could celebrate their thanksgiving?

Application Questions: What does this mean to me?

Do you have things that you are thankful to God for?

What is God's greatest blessing of all time for all people? (*Jesus was sent to save us.*)

What kind of offering of thanks can we give back to God?

Application Activity:

"Building a Sukkah"

To make the structure for your hut you may use chairs or dividers to drape sheets and blankets over. Then have the children decorate it with paper leaves and paper chains. Please save one leaf for each child to take home.

We are going to pretend that we are Hebrew people getting ready for the Festival of Sukkot. We will build and decorate a sukkah. We want to do this with an attitude of reverence and worship for God. This is our act of thanksgiving to him.

After the structure is built and you are ready to decorate, say:

As you put a decoration onto the sukkah, you can say something that you are thankful for. But this will be done a special way. You are to say, "Give thanks to the Lord because..." and say whatever you are thankful for. Everyone else responds with "Because his mercy endures forever."

(This is modeling praises found in Psalm 136.)

Option: Have kids make a mural using butcher-block paper and markers or crayons. Title the mural, “Blessings we are thankful for...” Have kids draw pictures of all the things in their lives for which they can give thanks to God. This mural could be used to decorate the sukkah.

Take enough time to build your sukkah but leave plenty of time to explain the activity that they will take home. Have the children sit in the sukkah and say:

Here is a special activity for you to do with your family. Each of you will take home a paper leaf. When you sit down to dinner, pass this leaf around the table. As each person receives the leaf, he is to share about one thing for which he is thankful.

But don’t just end there. God wants us to also *show* our thanks in our actions. See if you and your family can do a thanksgiving mission project. Come up with a way that shows God how much you appreciate what he has done by giving back to someone else. Maybe you can make a basket of food for someone who needs it. Do you know someone who might need some extra help around his house, like raking leaves? All of these are ways of saying thank you to God.

Let’s remember as Psalm 107:1 says, *“Give thanks to the Lord because he is good, because his mercy endures forever.”*

****God wants to bless us with joy. We are to say thank you back to him.***

Prayer Time:

Close with a prayer of thanksgiving especially thanking God that after our life of wandering here on earth, we can finally be him in heaven because of Jesus’ death and resurrection.

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Gordy's Cool New Fort

Puppet Presentation

A sukkah should be assembled onstage.

Gordy: Hey, Mr. King. Check this out! A cool new fort!

Mr. King: **Oh, you mean this.** *(Referring to the sukkah.)*

Gordy: Yeah, a fort. I love to make forts. Then I pretend I'm the good guy beating out the bad guys.

Mr. King: **This isn't a fort, Gordy. It's a sukkah.**

Gordy: Say what?

Mr. King: **Sukkah.**

Gordy: Who are you calling sucker?

Mr. King: **No, it's what the ancient Israelites built. They built a booth kind of like a fort, and the whole family camped in it. There they counted their blessings.**

Gordy: No way! The whole family played in the fort?

Mr. King: **It wasn't play. They camped there to remember how much God had blessed their ancestors when they were camping in the wilderness. They practiced being thankful to God.**

Gordy: Oh. I think I'd rather play forts with the good guys on the inside and the bad guys on the outside.

Mr. King: **You still can. Today you can build a sukkah, climb in it, and count all the blessings you have.**

Gordy: Blessings? Let me see...there's my smarts, my big muscles, my good looks, my modesty...

Mr. King: *(In a correcting tone.)* **Gordy...**

Gordy: Just kidding around. So, do we really get to build a fort...or a sukkah thing?

Mr. King: **Yes, then you get to climb in and give thanks. But first learn how God's people celebrated Sukkah many, many years ago. Here comes**

a special guest that might help all of us understand. We'll talk right after this.

Gordy: Okay. *(exits)*

The Feast of Tabernacles

A sukkah, or tabernacle, with the roof unfinished sits on the stage. A woman comes out carrying several palm leaves and branches.

Aaron! We still need branches for the roof!

(Talking to self.) I don't mind gazing at the heavens tonight, but our neighbors camped above us might not want to gaze on us!

(Looking to heaven.) Lord, every time I look at the heavens, the stars, and all the mystery of the universe, it reminds me of you. You have created it all and you are so wonderful.

(Noticing audience.) Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't see you there. It's been so busy with finishing the harvest and now preparing the sukkah, or tabernacle, for the feast. *(Looking to side.)* Excuse me.

Caleb! Jacob! Put the stones down and go help your father. Gather more branches for the sukkah. *(Looking to heaven.)* Lord, thank you for my sons that are strong and healthy. Thank you for my husband. Most of all, thank you for pouring so many blessings into our family.

(Back to audience.) I'm sorry for the interruption, but there's so much to do. Today is the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles. It is something like your Thanksgiving Day that you celebrate every November.

The Feast of Tabernacles is one of the special festivals that God instructed his people to hold each year. We have wonderful food and laughter. We tell stories of how God has loved us and chosen us to be his people. We tell stories about how God cared for his people when they left Egypt and traveled through the desert to Canaan with Moses.

(Looking to side.) Aaron! Wonderful! Come with the branches, my dear. I'm just chatting here with some of our neighbors.

(Back to audience.) The feast begins after the harvest, when all the fruits and grains have been gathered. Each family makes a sukkah or

tabernacle, like this one here. For seven days we live in the sukkah celebrating and thanking God for all his goodness and blessing. It's a wonderful time full of prayers of thanksgiving. We have wonderful meals together. We celebrate God's goodness!

(Looking to side.) Oh! I must leave you now. Aaron and the boys will soon finish the roof. I must have our dinner feast ready. And to you, have a blessed Sukkot...Oh! Or a Happy Thanksgiving.

Gordy's Cool New Fort

Puppet Presentation Conclusion

Mr. King: Gordy, now it's going to be your turn. When you build your sukkah in your small group, you will want to give thanks especially for your big blessings.

Gordy: Big blessings...like my big fat hamster, Harry? He's so big he can hardly walk. Harry the hamster is so funny...why the other day...

Mr. King: *(interrupting)* No. I mean big blessings that are spiritual blessings.

Gordy: Like what?

Mr. King: The biggest blessing is God's Son Jesus. He is someone who can help us through our wanderings in the wilderness.

Gordy: Now wait a minute. I thought the Hebrews wandered around in the wilderness...not us...unless I am going camping... then I'll find a wilderness.

Mr. King: Gordy, sometimes we think of our *whole life* on earth as a wondering in the wilderness on the way to our heavenly home. Jesus is someone who helps us on our journey.

Gordy: I get it. So Jesus is a spiritual blessing because he is with us wherever we go.

Mr. King: Right. And Jesus gave his life for us on the cross so we could be forgiven. Then someday when we have finished life's journey we end up in heaven. How about praying now and giving thanks for this big spiritual blessing.

Gordy: Sure. Let's pray. Dear God, thank you for everything...especially for the big blessings like Jesus! Thank you for being with us and giving your life

for us, so someday we will end up living with you in heaven. That is a big blessing! But I also thank you for Harry the hamster...he's pretty big too. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Gordy: Bye, kids!

Mr. King: Bye, Gordy.