

The Ark of the Hebrew Covenant **History Happened Here Series**

Subject Areas: Social Studies, World History, World Religions

Synopsis: Tells the Bible stories relating to the Ark of the Covenant and explores the mystery of its location today. Stories include God's command to Moses to build the Ark of the Covenant to hold the 10 Commandments; the Battle of Jericho; the plague suffered by the Philistines after stealing the Ark, and David's return of the Ark to Jerusalem. Describes the tabernacle, where the Ark was kept until it was moved to the inner sanctum of Solomon's temple. Discusses the ceremonial uses of the Ark of the Covenant on Yom Kippur. Concludes with several theories of location of the Ark of the Covenant.

Learning Objectives:

- Objective 1)** Students will be able to recall Bible stories relating to the Ark of the Covenant
- Objective 2)** Students will be able to explain the significance of the Ark of the Covenant in Judaism
- Objective 3)** Students will be able to examine theories about the location of the Ark of the Covenant

Vocabulary:

Ark of the Covenant, depository, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, sacred, temple, marauders, prophet, pact, covenant, moral, vessel, acacia wood, cherubim, Levites, plague, tabernacle, Holy of Holies, holy, sins, inner sanctum, Wailing Wall

Pre-Viewing Questions and Activities:

- 1) Locate the Judean Desert, Mount Sinai (in Egypt), and Jerusalem on a map.
- 2) Explore students' prior knowledge of the Ark of the Covenant. What is the Ark of the Covenant? What was its purpose? What was its significance? Where was it kept? Where or how have they heard about it?

Post-Viewing Questions and Discussion:

- 1) What was the basic idea of the Hebrew Covenant? What did God agree to do for the Israelites? What did the Israelites agree to do for God?
- 2) When was the Ark of the Covenant built? Why was it built? What was kept inside it? What did it look like? Who was allowed to carry the Ark of the Covenant? Why couldn't others approach it?
- 3) What happened at the Battle of Jericho? How did the Israelite soldiers win the battle? Why do you think they took the Ark with them into battle?
- 4) How did the Philistines get the Ark of the Covenant? What happened to them once they had the Ark? What did they do with it? Who found the Ark after the Philistines discarded it? Where was it found?

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- 5) Where was the Ark of the Covenant kept? What was the name of the inner room of the tabernacle? Who entered the Holy of Holies? On what occasion did the High Priest enter the Holy of Holies? What did he do in the inner room?
- 6) When was the Ark of the Covenant moved from the tabernacle? Where was it placed in the temple? How long did it remain in the temple? When was the temple destroyed and by whom?
- 7) What are some of the possible locations of the Ark of the Covenant today? What should be done with the Ark if it is found?
- 8) The Merriam Webster dictionary defines the word “ark” as “the sacred chest representing to the Hebrews the presence of God among them”. If the Ark of the Covenant represents God’s presence among the Israelites, what does the treatment of the Ark of the Covenant reveal about the God of Judaism?

Additional Activities:

- 1) Read the instructions for making the Ark of the Covenant in the Bible (Exodus 25:10-22). The ark was about 3 ¾ feet long and 2 ¼ feet wide and high. Measure this distance to show the size of the Ark. Do you think the re-creation of the Ark in the program was accurate, according to these instructions?
- 2) Divide the class into groups to research the theories presented in the program about the location of the Ark of the Covenant. Each group should present their findings to the class. Point out the possible locations of the Ark on a map. Once all three theories have been presented in greater detail, have a class discussion about the evidence for and problems with each theory. Which theory is most probable? Do you believe any of these theories?
- 3) Investigate the history and traditions of Yom Kippur. Has observance of the holiday changed since the Ark of the Covenant was lost? How is it celebrated today?
- 4) Research the religious beliefs of the ancient Canaanites, Philistines and Babylonians. Contrast their beliefs with those of the ancient Israelites.

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