



SESSION 4 of 4

# The Ark of the Covenant

**MEETING AIM**

To reflect on the holiness of God.

**BIBLE PASSAGE**

2 Samuel 6:1-23

**BACKGROUND**

This is an awkward bit of the Bible for all kinds of reasons. What are we supposed to make of King David dancing through the streets in his pants? Isn't God overreacting a little by striking Uzzah dead just for touching the Ark of the Covenant? Is Michal's childlessness really a result of her sneering at David's wholehearted worship? (And come to think of it, exactly how do we pronounce her name?) The answers to these questions are probably all rooted in God's holiness. This session aims to unpack what God's holiness means and how we should respond to it.

**10 GATHERING TIME**

Greet your young people by name as they arrive and share out the refreshments you have provided. As you enjoy drinks and snacks with together, chat about what the young people have done this week. Go on to talk a little about respect. Ask what respect means to them. Who do they respect and why? How do they show that respect?

**10 INTRO ACTIVITY**

**You will need:** a chair

Place a chair in the middle of the room. Explain that, whatever happens, the young people must avoid touching the chair. Have them stand in a circle around the chair and join hands. When you say go, everyone must pull the other people in the circle towards the chair without touching it themselves.

If a player touches the chair, they are eliminated from the game and should step out of the circle. The other players then close up the gap and play again. Continue until only two players remain. (Risk assess this game before the session, so that no one gets hurt.)

**15 BIBLE EXPLORATION**

**You will need:** Bibles; playdough or similar; a table

If you have a large group, divide the young people into groups of five or six for this activity.

Give out the playdough and ask them people to create a model of what happens in 2 Samuel 6. Encourage them to make as many of the characters as they can. (Provide plenty of space on a table for this.) For example, they can show David dancing, Uzzah struck dead, Obed-Edom looking happy, Michal sulking and lots of people watching David. If the young people are confused about what the Ark of the Covenant looks like or why it's so important, encourage them to read Exodus 25:10-22.

When you're happy that the group has produced a decent representation of the action in 2 Samuel 6, call a halt. To lead into the discussion below, point out that different characters in this story are responding to the Ark (and therefore to God) in very different ways. What responses have the group noticed? Why do they think those people responded the way they did?

**10 CHATTING TOGETHER**

Explore the story further by discussing these questions. Break into smaller groups if you have a large number:

- Why does the Ark of the Covenant matter?
- What do you think it means to say that God is holy?
- People in the story respond to the Ark (and therefore to God) in different ways. What do you think of those different responses?
- What consequences do those responses have? (For example, Michal seems to be punished for sneering at the way David worships God and Obed-Edom is blessed.)
- At that point in time, the Ark of the Covenant represented God's presence. Through the Holy Spirit, God is now present in us, wherever we go. How should that affect the way we live?
- How can we live in a way that shows God we respect him?

When you stop and think about it, Uzzah's death is rather troubling. God kills him for touching the Ark, but wasn't Uzzah just trying to stop it getting damaged? Was God overreacting? One response is that Uzzah wasn't taking God's overwhelming holiness seriously enough; that he didn't respect God as he should have. But be prepared to discuss these questions if your young

people bring them up. Also, the Israelites weren't transporting the Ark as God had told them to (see Exodus 25:13-15). Had they carried it properly, it never would have fallen.

**5 CREATIVE RESPONSE**

**You will need:** large candle; matches; heatproof surface

Emphasise how important it is to respect God and acknowledge he is with us. One way of doing this is just to spend time in silence, listening to him.

Light a large candle and place it in the middle of the room. Turn off the lights and pull the curtains, if possible. Allow five minutes of quiet for your young people to listen to God and simply notice he is there with you.

**5 PRAYER**

**You will need:** uptempo music; food; drinks  
Worshipping God sometimes means celebrating, as David does in 2 Samuel 6. Play some uptempo music and encourage the young people to dance and enjoy themselves as an act of worship to God, just as David did. You could serve some food and drinks to make it like a real party.

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