Week 9 (and 10): Jesus, The Branch Who is King and High Priest of God's Temple

This is a two-part lesson taking you through the tabernacle model fulfilled by Jesus as royal priests who love as our High Priest has loved us. You can do the outer court on week 9 and the inner court on week 10 or do them both on the same night as an extended worship encounter. (Allow 2-3 hrs. if doing both.)

Supplies:

- Communion elements, dish tub or large basin for foot-washing, 2 towels, wash cloth (boil water before guests arrive which should ensure you have warm water for foot washing when its time)
- If also doing Part 2, see the supplies list below and set up the tabernacle before beginning part 1
- Music player, tissues, copies of the family lessons (both lessons 9 and 10 are after Part 2 below)

Worship: We enter the gates of the tabernacle with thanksgiving and praise to Jesus for his sacrifice and to offer our lives as living sacrifices. Play the song "My King Forever" by Josh Baldwin. (A link can be found on the worship playlist at the bottom of the Puzzle Piece 9 page at TillingMinistries.com.) Kneel or take whatever posture feels appropriate for worship before God's throne.

Prayer: Holy Spirit, we invite you to come and lead us into a deeper revelation of Jesus, our High Priest who made atonement for our sins so we could be made holy to the Lord as a royal priesthood.

Part 1 – The Outer Court: (If you're doing part 1 and 2 together, set up the tabernacle objects and point to the outer court and lighter representing the altar.) The first object we come to in the outer court of the tabernacle is the altar of sacrifice. Jesus satisfied the purpose of the altar which was to atone for sin and become a place for the worshiper to give offerings to God.

Remaining in the Word: Encourage people to have their Bible open as you read.

1. **Read John 6:53-56.** Jesus said, *"I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you. **54** But anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise that person at the last day. **55** For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. **56** Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him."*
   Discuss: Why do we need to symbolically eat Jesus' flesh and drink his blood when we take communion to remain in Jesus? How does remaining in Christ give us access to God both now and in eternity? (Jesus is our High Priest who is seated in heaven, so as we remain in him, we have access as a royal priesthood to God's presence in the heavenly realm through prayer.)
2. **Read Hebrews 9:11-14.** *"So Christ has now become the High Priest over all the good things that have come. He has entered that greater, more perfect Tabernacle in heaven, which was not made by human hands and is not part of this created world. **12** With his own blood—not the blood of goats and calves—he entered the Most Holy Place once for all time and secured our redemption forever. **13** Under the old system, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer could cleanse people's bodies from ceremonial impurity. **14** Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God."*
   Discuss: According to this passage, what is the dual purpose of Christ's shed blood? (Our redemption and cleansing of our conscience.) Why does the writer of Hebrews say we are given the gift of a clean conscience? How differently do we worship when we feel guilty versus feeling clean and forgiven?

Communion (Read aloud): As we take the bread representing Jesus' flesh offered for us and drink the cup, receive a clean conscience by the blood of Jesus so you can remain in him and worship with joy. **(Distribute the bread and juice.)** We identify with Jesus' death and life as we read the words of Paul in Galatians 2:20, *"My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."* Spend some time in prayer and worship, then receive the bread of Jesus' body and cup representing his blood to cleanse your conscience and fill you with Jesus' life.

Wash Basin (Read aloud): The outer court also contained the wash basin where the priests washed their hands and feet before entering the Holy Place of the tabernacle. Though the priests were required to bathe, they still needed to wash their hands and feet which inevitably became dirty. When Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, he said, *"Unless I wash you, you won't belong to me" (John 13:8).* He declared that like the priests, they were already made clean but simply needed their feet washed. He was about to go into heaven to open the way for us to enter as priests, but instead of telling us to wash our feet, he tells his disciples in John 13:14-15, *"Since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. **15** I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you."* Why?

Jesus said, *"I tell you the truth, slaves are not greater than their master. Nor is the messenger more important than the one who sends the message. **17** Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them" (John 13:16-17).* Priests are made holy to go low and serve, not sit above everyone as too holy to get dirty. Jesus was flipping the script they knew about the priesthood. Secondly, Jesus was demonstrating the type of work that priests do: they make people clean so they can enter God's presence with a clear conscience. Jesus' body and blood we receive in communion remind us we are cleansed from sin, and baptism into Christ washes the old life away so we're a new creation as a Spirit-filled believer. Yet we still encounter the dirt of the world in our walk with the Lord and need continual cleansing. As we come to the Lord in prayer, we invite Jesus to wash the pain and dirt of the world that has stained us. We invite <u>him</u> to do it so it's not our act of striving to get clean, but a gift we receive from him. As a royal priesthood, we do likewise by serving one another in love, helping each other get clean.

Instructions for Foot Washing:

- **Fill the wash basin with hot water and set a rag in it**, changing the water as needed. If possible, <u>play soft worship music in the background</u> to encourage an atmosphere of prayer. The leader should go first by laying down one towel beneath the basin to keep water from sloshing out and laying another towel across their lap as they kneel down. Invite a volunteer to place their feet in the water.
- As you use the rag to wash one foot, pray aloud for the person to receive cleansing from all pain and ugliness they've encountered that week. As you wash the other foot, ask Jesus to give the person a clean conscience as a gift, delivering them from any spirit of striving to be made acceptable through human effort. Release any specific words the Holy Spirit gives you to bless that person.
- When you're finished, invite that person to wash the next person's feet and continue until everyone has had an opportunity to wash and be washed (including you). Those who are waiting are encouraged to pray and receive the ministry of cleansing from Jesus with joy.
- **If continuing on, see underlined instructions in part 2 prep for writing prayer requests while people wait for foot-washing to finish.** If stopping here, share in prayer partners how washing impacted you and how the ministry of being a royal priest is loving others as our High Priest loves us. Invite the Holy Spirit to help you intercede as you pray for each other. Hand out the family lesson for week 9 if stopping here, as well. (<u>The week 9 and week 10 family lessons are below Part 2</u>.)

Part 2 (or Week 10): The Holy Place of the Temple

In part 2 we will set up a model of the tabernacle objects with symbolic objects in the shape of a cross, then journey through it in prayer. This can be set up on a table where everyone can see it or on the floor if you're in a circle and don't have a table. If you have gold plates and bowls to represent the gold furniture, that's great, but whatever you have works because we're just going for symbolism.

Supplies: lighter (like you would use to light a grill) to represent the altar, communion elements and foot-washing basin from part 1, plate with 12 pita bread, scriptures from the scripture page below cut into strips and placed on top of the bread, olive oil in a small bowl, scented candle, box with removable lid (box and lid wrapped separately in gold paper is a nice touch, but just a box will do), Bible placed in the box, slip of paper and pen for each person. Arrange the tabernacle items as shown below:

BOX/BIBLE
CANDLE/PRAYER SLIPS
OLIVE OIL CUP PITAS/SCRIPTURE
WASH BASIN
COMMUNION
LIGHTER

Prep: <u>As people finish foot-washing (for 2-part version) or as people arrive (for week 10), have people write down their name and a prayer request on a slip of paper.</u> Collect them and place them next to the candle. After explaining the tabernacle model, the prayer slips will be used for intercessory prayer.

Part 2 – The Holy Place (Read aloud): Communion and foot-washing are physical reminders of what Jesus has done for us. The Father knows that we need physical points of connection, so just as the tabernacle was a physical place, God invites us to encounter him through physical activities like baptism and communion. Since we have been sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, just as the priests were sprinkled with blood, and have been washed by the living water of the Holy Spirit, set apart as holy to the Lord, we are able to enter God's presence in the Holy Place. We worship in the Spirit and in truth, approaching the throne of grace as one with Christ because we remain in him. As we now journey into the Holy Place with symbolic objects presented as visual cues, please keep in mind that these are merely symbolic objects that point to Jesus who fulfills their purpose as the way to the Father.

Remaining in the Word:

1. **Read Hebrews 9:1-5 and <u>point to the tabernacle items as you come to them</u>.** *"That first covenant between God and Israel had regulations for worship and a place of worship here on earth. **2** There were two rooms in that Tabernacle. In the first room were a lampstand* (<u>point to oil cup</u>), *a table and sacred loaves of bread on the table* (<u>point to pita plate</u>). *This room was called the Holy Place. **3** Then there was a curtain, and behind the curtain was the second room called the Most Holy Place. **4** In that room were a gold incense altar* (<u>point to candle</u>) *and a wooden chest called the Ark of the Covenant, which was covered with gold on all sides* (<u>point to box</u>). *Inside the Ark were a gold jar containing manna, Aaron's staff that sprouted leaves, and the stone tablets of the covenant* (<u>lift lid and point to Bible, the book of God's covenant</u>). **5** *Above the Ark were the cherubim of divine glory, whose wings stretched out over the Ark's cover, the place of atonement."*
2. **Hebrews 10:19-22 invites us to now enter in as royal priests who have been made holy in Christ.** *"And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the*

blood of Jesus. ***20*** *By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place.* ***21*** *And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God's house,* ***22*** *let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water."*

Journey Through the Holy Place (Read aloud): According to Hebrews, we enter *"heaven's Most Holy Place"* when we pray. Hebrews 8:5 reveals that the tabernacle was patterned after God's throne room in heaven. Jesus fulfilled each object in the tabernacle as the way to the Father, so the tabernacle points to Jesus and reveals how we worship in the Spirit and in truth. Jesus also called the temple God's house, so we picture the Holy Place as our Father's living room with a lamp, table of food, and fragrant fire.

1. **Point to the Bread of the Presence/pita plate and read aloud:** Inside the sanctuary or Holy Place, there was a table on which were placed 12 loaves of bread each week, called the Bread of the Presence table. It represented God's fellowship with his people, and the priests would eat the bread in God's presence. Jesus said that he is the *"true bread from heaven" (John 6:32).* The bread represents both the presence of Jesus and the teaching of Jesus. In Matthew 4:4 Jesus said, *"The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"* We enjoy God's presence in the Holy Place whenever we pray and read the scriptures as our daily bread.
   Activity: Invite each person to go to the Bread of the Presence plate and tear off a piece of bread, representing the fellowship you enjoy with God, then pick up a scripture card to take back to your seat. Invite the Word to minister to you, teach you, and fill you with his presence as your daily bread. Ask the Lord, "What do you want me to know today?" and listen for his response. (<u>If you have soft worship music or instrumental music in the background, this may help some to relax and listen</u>.) Allow 5 minutes or so for people to meditate on the word and receive.
2. **Point to the cup of olive oil and read aloud:** Similar to a candelabra, the seven-branched menorah had seven cups that the priests filled with oil to light the sanctuary. Jesus said, *"I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life" (John 8:12).* Jesus enables us to walk in the light of God's truth by giving us the Spirit of truth who appears in heaven as the seven torches before God's throne. The sevenfold Spirit who rests on Jesus and on us is described in Isaiah 11:2 as *"the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord."* He is associated with oil which Jesus said we must have in our lamp in order to shine brightly in the darkness when he returns. As the High Priest over God's house, Jesus continually fills us with oil, as pictured in Revelation 1. Just as God instructed Moses to anoint Aaron with oil to serve as priest, Jesus taught us to ask and receive by faith the anointing of the Holy Spirit.
   Activity: Go to the cup of oil to anoint anyone who comes forward. (P<u>lay "The Blessing"</u> found on the Puzzle Piece 8 page at Tillingministries.com during the activity.) Invite anyone who wants more oil of the Holy Spirit in their lamp to come to the lampstand and be filled by Jesus. As a royal priest in Christ, anoint their forehead with oil from the cup and speak the priestly blessing over them: *"May the Lord bless you and protect you.* ***25*** *May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you.* ***6*** *May the Lord show you his favor and give you his peace" (Numbers 6:24-25).* Ask the Holy Spirit to anoint them with his *"wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge and the fear of the Lord" (Isaiah 11:2).* Pray for each person to receive whatever gift the Spirit wants to give them.

Point to the scented candle and read aloud: The tabernacle was patterned after God's throne room, and Revelation 8:4 mentions an altar before God's throne: *"The smoke of the incense, mixed with the prayers of God's holy people, ascended up to God from the altar."* The altar represents prayer. Hebrews 4:16 tells us to go right into God's throne room with confidence because when we need something, our spiritual position is right there at the altar. In the tabernacle, the coals to fuel the incense burner came from the altar of sacrifice (point to the lighter). Jesus taught us to pray using his name because it is his sacrifice that empowers our prayers (use lighter to light the candle). When we pray and intercede as royal priests with belief that God hears us because we're in Christ, it smells like incense, a fragrant aroma to God. As royal priests, we both receive the ministry of Jesus' intercession and partner with him to intercede for others through the Holy Spirit who helps us pray. **Activity (Have another worship song handy to play softly in the background during this activity):** Invite people to come to the candle representing the incense altar and pick up a slip of paper with someone's prayer request, then go back to their seat. We're going to practice loving each other as Christ loves us by interceding for one another according to the intercession of Jesus. Lead the group through the following steps, pausing between them for a minute or two:

- Give thanks to God for who he is as your Redeemer, Father, Bridegroom, Shepherd, High Priest, etc., and present the prayer request to him. Pray for the person to encounter God in whichever aspect of his nature is connected to the request. (For example, pray for someone with a financial need to encounter the Father, a broken relationship to be redeemed, etc.)
- Ask the Holy Spirit to bring any scriptures to mind so you can pray God's will over the situation, then pray with faith that God will keep his promise.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to show you how Jesus is interceding and loving the person you're praying for. Listen with your eyes and ears for pictures or words to drop into your spirit. Pray according to what you see and ask for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.
- Write down on the back of the card whatever scriptures or words/pictures the Lord gave you. (Give the card to the person before you leave.)

3. **Point to the box and lift the lid to reveal the Bible inside which represents the covenant promises of God contained in the ark of the covenant (read aloud):** In the tabernacle, there was a curtain separating the Holy Place from the ark of the covenant where God's presence dwelled, but in our model there's no curtain. It was torn when Jesus died to symbolize the opening he made in the spiritual realm for all who are in Christ to come to the Father. Jesus said, *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (NLT).* We go into the Father's presence through the veil of Jesus' body by becoming one in spirit with him. We enjoy God's presence, learn from him, and talk to him just like Moses talked to God in the tabernacle. We are now the temple where God's Spirit dwells, and God's glory fills his temple. So as we worship, we expect to encounter God's glory. Every name of God and covenant promise in the Bible is available to us as we worship in spirit and in truth.

Close the night with a worship encounter (read aloud): As we draw near to the Father he promises to draw near to us. As we encounter his glory in the temple we encounter his goodness, for when Moses asked to see God's glory he responded, *"I will make all my goodness pass before you, and I will call out my name, Yahweh, before you" (Exodus 33:19).* As you worship, invite the Father to show you his goodness and how he is loving you today. **(Play "Show me Your Glory" from the link found in Puzzle Piece 9 at TillingMinistries.com.)** After worship, pray a blessing over your group and instruct them to give the prayer cards back to the person they prayed for. Hand out both family lessons, if needed.

Scriptures for Part 2 to cut into strips for the Bread of the Presence activity. If you have more people in your group than the number of scriptures below, print enough copies to have one scripture per person.

"Since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most" (Hebrews 4:14-16).

"Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us" (Romans 8:34).

"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. **27** And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God" (Romans 8:26-27).

"You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9).

"God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. **20** We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. **21** God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:19-21).

"And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. **20** By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place. **21** And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God's house, **22** let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10:19-22).

"For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6).

"I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice – the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him" (Romans 12:1).

The Branch Who is High Priest and King Family Lesson

Learn who Jesus is as both our High Priest and King rolled into one.

Bible Verse: Zechariah 6:12-13 "Here is the man called the Branch. He will branch out from where he is and build the Temple of the Lord. **13** Yes, he will build the Temple of the Lord. Then he will receive royal honor and will rule as king from his throne. He will also serve as priest from his throne, and there will be perfect harmony between his two roles" (NLT).

Supplies: Flour tortilla or gluten free wrap for each person, mayonnaise, Dijon or regular mustard, <u>two</u> kinds of meat (deli ham, turkey, chicken, roast beef, etc.), shredded cheese, lettuce, more toppings like chopped tomato, sliced avocado, bacon bits, etc. Set out all supplies and chop veggies before you begin.

Activity: Make a wrap representing Jesus' dual roles as High Priest and King rolled into one. Read the explanations aloud, adding your own words as needed to help small children understand the concepts.

1. **Set out a tortilla for each person.** Jesus is the bread of life, the foundation upon which we build our lives just like this flatbread is the foundation for our wrap.
2. **Combine mayonnaise with a small amount of Dijon or regular mustard** (in a three-to-one ratio or 1 T. mayo mixed with 1 tsp. mustard). Our small amount of mustard represents faith in who Jesus is as our High Priest. Jesus said even a little faith as small as a mustard seed opens the door to miracles. In the Old Testament, the High Priest offered sacrifices on behalf of the people so they could remain spiritually clean before God. Our white mayonnaise reminds us of God's promise in Isaiah 1:18, *"Though your sins are like scarlet, I will make them as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, I will make them as white as wool."* When we add our small "mustard seed" of faith to God's promise to wash away our sins, it flavors our lives with hope.
3. **Lay down a piece of deli meat.** We lay down our first piece of meat to remind us that Jesus came first as our High Priest to lay down his life as a sacrifice for our sin. In the Old Testament, priests offered animals as sacrifices to God. The blood of the animals made atonement for sin which means that what the people had done wrong would be forgiven as if it had never happened. Isn't that good news! The even better news is that by becoming the sacrifice and being raised from the dead, Jesus fulfilled that sacrificial system so we can be made right with God without having to sacrifice animals.
4. **Sprinkle some shredded cheese on the meat.** We've sprinkled cheese on our wrap to remind us that the High Priest would sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice on the ark of the covenant, called God's mercy seat. As our High Priest, Jesus brought his own blood to God in heaven to pay for our sins so we can receive mercy when we mess up. He did this because he loves us and wants us to receive mercy. Hebrews 4:15 says, *"This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin."* Jesus understands our weaknesses, has compassion on us when we mess up, and pleads for us to receive mercy as our High Priest.
5. **Put some lettuce on top of the cheese.** Hebrews 4:16 is another "lettuce" scripture that tells us how we should respond to God's offer to draw near through Jesus. *"<u>Let us</u> then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (NIV).* Because Jesus is our High Priest, standing with us before God, we don't have to be afraid to come to God in prayer. We can expect grace, mercy, and help because Jesus is our High Priest.
6. **Place another kind of meat on top of the lettuce.** This meat represents Christ's other role as King. Hebrews 10:12-13 says that *"our High Priest offered himself to God as a single sacrifice for sins, good for all time. Then he sat down in the place of honor at God's right hand. **13** There he waits until his*

enemies are humbled and made a footstool under his feet." Jesus is seated at God's right hand as King over all who worship Jesus as God's Son. What is he doing while he waits to return as King over the whole earth? Zechariah 6:12 prophesied, *"Here is the man called the Branch. He will branch out from where he is and build the Temple of the Lord."* While Jesus waits to return as King, he is building God's Temple on the earth as our High Priest. Where is God's temple?

7. **Sprinkle any additional toppings like bacon bits, chopped tomato, sliced avocado, etc.** 1 Peter 2:5 says, "*You are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. What's more, you are his holy priests."* We are now God's temple because his Spirit lives in us, and we are his holy priests who represent him to the world. The toppings represent the "living stones" of the church and the variety of gifts the Spirit gives us to help us share the good news of Jesus with people. When we share Jesus with someone and they receive him, it's like adding another living stone to God's spiritual temple.
8. **Roll up the wrap.** Zechariah 6:13 says of Jesus, the Branch, *"Yes, he will build the Temple of the Lord. Then he will receive royal honor and will rule as king from his throne. He will also serve as priest from his throne, and there will be perfect harmony between his two roles" (NLT).* In the Old Testament, Israel had a separate High Priest and King, but just like we rolled up our wrap, Jesus is our High Priest and King rolled into one perfect leader. When God's temple covers the whole earth because people everywhere receive Jesus, he will return to reign over the whole world as High Priest and King. Revelation 6:4 says that when Jesus returns, the sky will be rolled up like a scroll, just like we rolled up our wrap like a scroll. There will be no more separation as heaven comes down to earth, just like there's no more separation between us and God because Jesus, our High Priest, made a way for us to connect with God's presence anytime in prayer.
9. **Assemble your wraps to look like branches coming out of one center wrap.** Jesus is called "the Branch" in the Old Testament because he comes from the family line of King David like a new branch growing out of a tree stump. He branches out through us to spread the good news of his coming Kingdom. In John 15:5 Jesus says, *"I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing."* Jesus tells us to remain connected to him like branches of a vine, coming to God in prayer with confidence that he receives us and will help us represent Jesus to the world.
10. **Pray for God to bless the food you're about to eat, then play the song, "The Blessing." (You'll find it in the worship section at the bottom of the Puzzle Piece 8 page at TillingMinistries.com.**) This song is based on the High Priest's blessing in the Bible. As our High Priest, Jesus releases this blessing over us and invites us to sing it over each other.

Jesus is the Temple Family Lesson

Learn how Jesus fulfilled the Temple requirements as the way to the Father, enabling intimate prayer.

Bible Verse: John 14:6. "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (NLT).

Supplies: Two slices of bread and 1 slice of cheese for each person plus two more slices of bread on plates, another slice of cheese, a shaker of garlic salt or garlic powder, a small bowl of melted butter plus a brush for spreading it, a cup of grape juice, and a small bowl of water. You'll also need a griddle or frying pan for cooking grilled cheese sandwiches.

Activity: Make a tabernacle out of grilled cheese sandwich ingredients representing Jesus' fulfillment of the tabernacle objects that were the way to the Father in the Old Testament. Gather supplies before beginning and read the explanations aloud as you go through the instructions.

Set out the following objects in the shape of a cross: a piece of bread at the bottom, a cup of grape juice above it, then a small bowl of water, another piece of bread on a plate as the cross piece on the right, a bowl of melted butter as the left cross piece, a shaker of garlic salt (or garlic powder) in the middle just above them, and a piece of cheese at the top of the cross. This is our tabernacle replica.

CHEESE
GARLIC SALT
BUTTER BREAD
WATER
JUICE
BREAD

Introduction (Read aloud): When God made a covenant with Israel in the wilderness, he instructed Moses to set up a tabernacle so he could live among them. Hebrews 8:5 tells us that the tabernacle was a copy of God's throne room in heaven. Our simple tabernacle replica will help us picture the tabernacle as we learn how Jesus made a way for us to go right into God's presence when we worship.

1. **Give each person a piece of bread.** The tabernacle had an outer court, sort of like the front yard of a church, only in the outer court was an altar for sacrificing animals. The priests in the Old Testament ate some of the meat that was sacrificed as holy to the Lord. Jesus fulfilled the purpose of the altar by becoming the sacrifice for who makes us holy. Jesus said, *"Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. [57] I live because of the living Father who sent me; in the same way, anyone who feeds on me will live because of me. [58] I am the true bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will not die as your ancestors did (even though they ate the manna) but will live forever" (John 6:56).* This confused his disciples until he told them at Passover that the sacrifice of his body was represented by bread which we eat when we take communion.
2. **Tear off some of the bread at the bottom of the cross for each person, representing Jesus' sacrifice.** When we eat the bread representing Jesus' body, Jesus says we remain in him and he remains in us. Just like the bread we eat becomes part of us, Jesus lives inside of us by the Holy Spirit. When we eat the bread in communion, we remember that Jesus offered his body to God as a sacrifice on the cross where he died so that we could live forever. Hebrews 10:5 says that *"when Christ came into the world, he said to God, "You did not want animal sacrifices or sin offerings. But*

you have given me a body to offer." The sacrificial system was temporary and pointed to Jesus who fulfilled it out of love for us so we could be with him forever. **(Eat the bread.)**

3. **Point to the cup of grape juice.** Likewise, Jesus taught that the cup represents his blood that was shed for us. When we think of blood we think of death, but God taught that the life of an animal is in its blood. So when the priests sprinkled blood on the altar, God saw life offered to him. Hebrews 9:22 says that *"according to the law of Moses, nearly everything was purified with blood. For without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness."* As we drink the cup of juice that Jesus said represents his blood, we receive forgiveness and eternal life because we're receiving the life of Jesus that is found in his blood. **(Share the cup or pour some into individual cups to drink.)**
4. **Point to the water cup.** The next object in the outer court was a washbasin where the priests would wash their hands and feet before entering the sanctuary of the tabernacle. This points to our baptism into Christ when our sins are washed away and we are filled with the living water of the Holy Spirit. It is by receiving the Holy Spirit that we are able to access God's presence. The Holy Spirit makes holy to the Lord, just like the priests were holy to the Lord. (If you'd like, you can dip your fingers in the water bowl to represent baptism.)
5. **Give each person another piece of bread.** We received the sacrifice and Spirit of Jesus in the outer court to make us holy like the priests, so we can now go into the sanctuary which was only open to priests. Inside the sanctuary or Holy Place, there was a table on which were placed 12 loaves of bread each week, called the Bread of the Presence. It represented God's presence with his people, and the priests would eat the bread in God's presence just like we share meals together. Jesus said that he is the *"true bread from heaven" (John 6:32).* The bread represents both the presence of Jesus and the teaching of Jesus. In Matthew 4:4 Jesus said, *"The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"* We enjoy God's presence in the Holy Place whenever we pray and read the scriptures as our daily bread.
6. **Brush some melted butter on each person's bread slices.** The melted butter represents the oil that filled the cups in the lampstand of the sanctuary. Similar to a candelabra, the seven-branched menorah had seven cups like our bowl that the priests filled with oil to light the sanctuary. Jesus said, *"I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life" (John 8:12).* Jesus enables us to walk in the light of God's truth by giving us the Holy Spirit to guide us into truth. The Holy Spirit is associated with oil which Jesus said we must have in order to shine like a lamp when he returns. We put butter on our bread to symbolize the anointing of the Holy Spirit that was on Jesus and is on those who ask for it.
7. **Sprinkle some garlic salt on each of your slices of bread.** The garlic salt represents the altar of incense that filled the sanctuary with fragrant smells and kept the priests healthy, just like our garlic salt is fragrant and gives health to our bodies. The tabernacle was patterned after God's throne room, and Revelation 8:4 mentions an altar before God's throne: *"The smoke of the incense, mixed with the prayers of God's holy people, ascended up to God from the altar."* The altar represents prayer. Hebrews 4:16 tells us to go right into God's throne room with confidence because when we need something, our spiritual position is right there at the altar. In the tabernacle, the coals to fuel the incense burner came from the altar of sacrifice (point to the first piece of bread). Jesus taught us to pray using his name because it is his sacrifice that empowers our prayers. When we pray in faith with belief that God hears us because we're in Christ, it smells like a fragrant aroma to God.
8. **Give each person a slice of cheese.** As always, the cheese represents the love and presence of God the Father that binds us to him. In the tabernacle, there was a curtain separating the altar from the ark of the covenant where God's presence dwelled, but in our model there's no curtain. Do you

know why? The curtain was torn when Jesus died to symbolize the opening he made in the spiritual realm for all who are in Christ to come to the Father. Jesus said, *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (NLT).* We go into the Father's presence through the veil of Jesus' body by becoming one in spirit with him. Just like God came down to dwell in the tabernacle, he has now come by his Spirit to dwell inside believers in Jesus. We are now the temple where God's Spirit dwells so we can enjoy God's presence. We can learn from him and talk to him anytime, just like Moses talked to God in the tabernacle. When we talk to God, we learn how he loves us and loves others.

9. **Put your sandwich on a griddle or frying pan to cook over medium heat until the bread is browned on both sides and the cheese melts.** Pray in the name of Jesus and ask the Father to fill you with his presence, oil, light, truth, and guidance. Thank Jesus for his sacrifice and for giving you a love sandwich!

Pick a worship song from this week's lesson (Puzzle Piece 9 at TillingMinistries.com) and worship as a family, inviting God's presence to fill your home.