

A DWELLING PLACE

First performed at Sydney Ecclesia (Shaftesbury Road), 2009.

Concept:	God gave Moses the plans to build the Tabernacle. Each part of the Tabernacle and its furnishings has lessons for us.	
Cast:	Puppets: Narrator 1 Narrator 2	Actors: Egyptian 1 Egyptian 2 Israelite 1 Israelite 2 Israelite 3 Israelite 4 Ernie High Priest Abe Ziva Bek Ben Abigail Abner
Acts:	One: Welcome to the wilderness Two: A dwelling place	
Songs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Great and mighty is He” – Todd Pettygrow • “The name of the Lord (Blessed be)” – Clinton Utterbach • “The perfect ten” – Kathie Hill • “Indescribable” – Laura Story and Jesse Reeves 	

Act One: Welcome to the wilderness

Scene One: In Egypt.

- Israelites standing still in the foreground. Egyptians stand behind their doors.
- Short video clip of plagues in Egypt shown on the screen above / beside the stage.
- Two narrators (can be played by puppets) off to one side of stage.

Narrator 2	Woah! That was some scary stuff!
Narrator 1	Sure was: water turning to blood...
Narrator 2	Frogs, lice...
Narrator 1	Flies, livestock dying of disease...
Narrator 2	Boils [shudders] and that hail...
Narrator 1	Locusts everywhere and darkness. Wow! God sent nine plagues to torment the people of Egypt. Each time Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not let the children of Israel go.
Narrator 2	But remember there was one more. God spoke to Moses and said, "I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. After that, Pharaoh will let you and your people go. When he does, he will drive you completely away. Tell the men and women to ask their neighbours for things made out of silver and gold."
Narrator 1	Yes, that's right! After the angel of death passed over there was loud crying in Egypt because someone had died in every home. The Egyptians begged the Israelites to hurry up and leave their country.
Narrator 2	The children of Israel did just as Moses had told them. They asked the Egyptians for things that were made out of silver and gold. They also asked them for clothes.
Narrator 1	Look, here come some of them now!
Egyptian 1	[Knock on Egyptian door] It's you! You have to go! You have to leave to stop all these horrible things happening to us.
Israelite 1	We will leave Egypt but we've been told that we must collect some silver and gold if you have any you can give us.
Egyptian 1	Yes, here you go, take it! Take it quick and leave us!

Israelite 1	Thank you [Door closes]. Wow! I didn't think it would be that easy.
Israelite 3	[Knock on Egyptian door] Hello, we're leaving Egypt soon but we need some silver, gold, and clothes to take with us. Do you have anything we could take?
Egyptian 2	Anything if you're leaving. Take this, and this, and this!
Israelite 4	Thanks very much. [Holding up jewelry] These look very expensive!
Narrator 1	The Lord made the Egyptians treat the Israelites kindly. So they gave them what they asked for. The Israelites took many expensive things that belonged to the Egyptians.
Narrator 2	The Lord rescued the children of Israel out of more than two hundred years of slavery in Egypt.

Song: **Great and mighty is He**

By Todd Pettigrove

Great and mighty is He
Great and mighty is He
Clothed in glory
Arrayed in splendor
Great and mighty is He (x2)

Let us lift His name up high
Celebrate His grace
For He has redeemed our lives
And he reigns on high

Great and mighty is He
Great and mighty is He
Clothed in glory
Arrayed in splendor
Great and mighty is He

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Scene Two: Ernie's bedroom, time travelling back to wilderness

- Ernie (a contemporary boy) is getting in a bed.

Ernie	Night, Mum! Night, Dad!
Adult	Night, Ernie! [Dr Who music and Tardis video clip. Picture of Tabernacle on screen]
Narrator 2	Ernie, wake up! [Ernie snores]
Narrator 1	Come on Ernie, wake up! [Ernie snores louder]
Narrator 1 & 2	Wake up, Ernie!
Ernie	[Ernie jumps up] What? Where am I?
Narrator 1	You've travelled back in time Ernie.
Ernie	How far back?
Narrator 2	To about 2 500 years before Jesus was born.
Ernie	Oh no! I'm gonna miss my soccer game tomorrow! [Pauses and considers] But I have always wanted to time travel like Doctor Who! Hey – what is that? [points to the Tabernacle, speaks to audience] I wonder why it is here and what it means? [looks up and down, side to side and scratches head]
High Priest	[calls out to Ernie] Hello boy. What are you doing here?
Ernie	[startled] My name is Ernie, I was just in bed and then I suddenly realised I wasn't... I'm not really from around here. But I found this amazing thing. [Points at the Tabernacle] It doesn't look like any tent I've ever seen. Who are you? Do you know what this tent is all about? And, why are you wearing a dress?

High Priest	It's not a dress, it's a tunic! [Laughs] Welcome to our camp. You have a lot of questions Ernie! What would you like me to tell you about first – the Tabernacle (points to the Tabernacle) or my clothes?
Ernie	Let's talk about the Tabernacle first. I've never seen such a beautiful tent, who does it belong to?
High Priest	Well you might find this hard to believe, but this tent is a special dwelling place for God.
Ernie	[shocked] I don't think God goes camping – are you sure this tent belongs to Him?
High Priest	Hey everyone [waves] come and help me tell Ernie the story of the amazing Tabernacle...
Abigail	We are in the wilderness. The Lord helped us to escape from the Land of Egypt where we were slaves.
Ziva	The Lord looks after us out here – we know He is here because we can see the cloud that floats above the Tabernacle by day and at night time it is replaced by a pillar of fire.
Abigail	The Egyptians really didn't want us to leave Egypt because we were their slaves! God sent Moses to negotiate our release with Pharaoh the king.
Abe	Pharaoh was stubborn – he really didn't want to let us go, so God sent 10 dreadful plagues to show his power to the Egyptians and convince them to let us go free into the wilderness to worship God.
Ernie	Hey! I remember learning all about the plagues at my Sunday School last year.
Abigail	Sunday school?.... [they look at each other scratching their heads] we've never heard of Sunday School.
Ziva	Anyway, the Egyptians were pleased to get rid of us.... Until they realised their free workers were walking away with lots of Egypt's wealth, then they changed their mind!
Abe	The Egyptian soldiers came after us with chariots and weapons, but our merciful God led us through the Red Sea...
Ben	[interrupts] On dry land!!!

Abe	<p>Yes, on dry land through the middle of the sea - the Egyptian army didn't stand a chance when the water came rushing back!</p> <p>We were safely on the way to the promised land.</p>
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Song: The name of the Lord (Blessed be)

By Clive Utterbach

Blessed be the name of the Lord
 Blessed be the name of the Lord
 Blessed be the name of the Lord Most High
 Blessed be the name of the Lord
 Blessed be the name of the Lord
 Blessed be the name of the Lord Most High

The name of the Lord is a strong tower
 The righteous run into it and they are saved
 The name of the Lord is a strong tower
 The righteous run into it and they are saved

Glory to the name of the Lord
 Glory to the name of the Lord
 Glory to the name of the Lord Most High
 Glory to the name of the Lord
 Glory to the name of the Lord
 Glory to the name of the Lord Most High

Holy is the name of the Lord
 Holy is the name of the Lord
 Holy is the name of the Lord Most High
 Holy is the name of the Lord
 Holy is the name of the Lord
 Holy is the name of the Lord Most High

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Abigail	That's right – we're not slaves any more - we escaped from Egypt, we are free people on the way to the promised land it wasn't even a long trip to get there. Until...
Ziva	Until our stubbornness and pride got the better of us – first we started to question and curse God, then at the border of the promised land we freaked out over a few giants. [shakes head]
Ernie	Giants?? [looks around a bit scared]
Abigail	Even though we could see God's power and mercy around us in so many ways, we rejected Him. And there was lots of complaining...
Ben	LOTS of complaining!
Ziva	Did you know that God REALLY doesn't like complaining?
Abe	He punished us – God said that the generation that escaped from Egypt would not enter the promised land, we would have to wander in the wilderness for 40 years, and that is where you are right now – welcome to the wilderness!
Ernie	Thanks.
High Priest	After we left Egypt, God gave my brother Moses ten rules for us to live by. They are called the ten commandments. He also gave Moses the pattern for this amazing tent called the Tabernacle. It is a very special place built especially for the Lord.

Song: **The perfect ten**

The Perfect Ten

Words & Music by Kathie Hill and Janet McMahan

In a cloud of fire and smoke a mighty voice of thunder broke as God descended to the mountaintop. High upon Mt. Sinai, He gave the rules we should live by as God gave out the "shalts" and "thou shalt nots."

Number one, we've just begun, God should be first in your life.
 Number two's the idol rule: Those graven images aren't nice.
 Number three; God's Name should be never spoken in jest.
 Number four, the Sabbath's for our worship and for rest.
 Number five; we all should strive to honor father and mother.
 Number six, don't get your kicks from killing one another.
 Number seven, life is heaven when you're true to your mate.
 Number eight, don't steal and break this rule for goodness sake!
 Number nine, don't be the kind who goes around telling lies.
 Number ten; don't covet when you see your neighbor's house or wife.

That's the list and God insists we stay away from these sins;
 That is why we memorize commandments one through ten.
 The perfect ten, the perfect ten;
 They're just as true as they were way back when.
 God gave the perfect ten, the perfect ten; Let's say them once again.

Number one, we've just begun, God should be first in your life.
 Number two's the idol rule: Those graven images aren't nice.
 Number three; God's Name should be never spoken in jest.
 Number four, the Sabbath's for our worship and for rest.
 Number five; we all should strive to honor father and mother.
 Number six, don't get your kicks from killing one another.
 Number seven, life is heaven when you're true to your mate.
 Number eight, don't steal and break this rule for goodness sake!
 Number nine, don't be the kind who goes around telling lies.
 Number ten; don't covet when you see your neighbor's house or wife.

That's the list and God insists we stay away from these sins;
 That is why we memorize commandments one through ten.
 The perfect ten, the perfect ten;
 They're just as true as they were way back when.
 God gave the perfect ten, the perfect ten; God gave the perfect ten.
 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9 - The perfect ten!

Act Two: Building a dwelling place

Scene Three – Materials to build the tabernacle

Narrator 2	So the Israelites built a tent?
Narrator 1	<p>Yep. The Lord said to Moses, "Tell the people of Israel to bring me an offering. You must receive the offering for me from all whose hearts move them to give.</p> <p>[Israelites bring these things on stage as they are said]</p> <p>Here are the offerings you must receive from them. gold, silver and bronze blue, purple and bright red yarn and fine linen goat hair ram skins that are dyed red the hides of sea cows acacia wood olive oil for the lights spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet-smelling incense onyx stones and other jewels for the linen apron and chest cloth</p> <p>Have them make a sacred tent for me. I will live among them.</p>
Narrator 2	<p>[surprised] Did you say the Lord, the Most High would live among them? But why? The Lord says, " Heaven is my throne. The earth is under my control. So how could you ever build a house for me? Where would my resting place be? Didn't my powerful hand make everything?"</p> <p>What kind of dwelling place could the children of Israel possibly make for the Lord who created everything?</p>
Narrator 1	<p>The Lord gave Moses very detailed instructions to "Make the holy tent and everything that belongs to it. Make them exactly like the pattern I will show you."</p> <p>He chose a man called Bezalel, He filled him with the Spirit of God and gave him skill, ability and knowledge. He could make beautiful patterns in gold, silver and bronze. He could cut and set stones. He could work with wood. In fact, he could work in all kinds of crafts. God also appointed Aholiab to help him. He gave ability to all of the skilled workers.</p>
Narrator 2	<p>With a plan from God and such skilled workers it must have been beautiful I'd like to see that!</p>

Scene Four: The mirror

- Brother and Sister enter.

Abigail	Abner, just stand there and be a mirror for me.
Abner	Not again! [mirrors her actions] I don't know why you fuss so much with your hair.
Abigail	It was easier when I had that lovely bronze mirror from my Egyptian mistress. Then I could do my hair without listening to your complaining.
Abner	Abigail, we gave the mirror as a free will offering. You know they used the bronze to make the laver so the priests could wash before serving in God's dwelling place.
Abigail	Yes, I know – and I was happy to give it. It's just that sometimes I wish I could see how my hair looks, you want me to look my best don't you?
Abner	Yeah, well we can do your hair but please don't but any make up on today!
Abigail	Do I look pretty?
Abner	Ummm I guess so, that bit that sticks up on the side suits you.
Abigail	I hope you're joking, Abner! [flounces off]
Abner	[to audience] We've been told there are beautiful things inside the Tabernacle, but even from the outside you can see the fine linen curtains and the bronze bases for the posts and the silver sockets around the courtyard. And look at the beautiful curtain, it's blue, purple and bright red – only the very best will do for our God. [exits]

Scene five: Symbols

Ernie	Was all the furniture made of bronze?
Abe	Oh no.... some is even made of gold!
Ziva	Everything in the Tabernacle is a symbol, you know to remind us of things about the Lord.
Ernie	[puzzled] What do you mean?
Ziva	Well, for example, the most precious thing is the Ark of the Covenant. They made it out of wood covered with gold inside AND out. Then they made the lid, the mercy seat, out of pure gold! Then they put gold figures with wings on top – they're called cherubim.
Abe	That's right – pure gold and that's where the Lord dwells, it is like his throne. So it had to be pure gold, nothing else would be good enough or pure enough to represent the glory of God.
Abigail	Moses even hears the voice of the Lord speaking to him from between the two cherubim above the mercy seat on the ark. The ark is inside in the Most Holy place – only the High Priest can go in to it.
Ernie	I see what you mean about being a symbol. But I'm wondering what that smell is...?
Ben	That is the smell of the sacrifices burning on the bronze altar [sniffs]
Abigail	Mixed in with the smell of incense burning on the golden altar of incense.
Ernie	So is the incense a symbol too?
Abigail	That's right – it's a symbol of our prayers rising up to God. The high priest must keep it burning.
Ernie	So, why do you have animal sacrifices?
Ziva	[shocked] – you don't have sacrifices? How do you repent for the things you do wrong?
Ernie	Oh ... well, I guess ... I think it's different for us since Jesus came.
Abe	[puzzled] We don't know about this Jesus, but the sacrifices are part of our daily lives.
Abe	Just like the Tabernacle is at the centre of our camp, just like worshipping our Lord is at the centre of our lives.

Abigail	Except when we forget – which we seem to do sometimes. [shakes head]
High Priest	So Ernie, you wanted to know about my clothes...
Ernie	They are pretty unusual Did God design those too?
High Priest	Yes He did!
Abigail	The Priests are from the tribe of Levi. Their job is to serve in the Tabernacle. Aaron is the first High Priest. God designed these special clothes for the High Priest.
Ziva	Do you see on his turban it says “HOLY TO THE LORD”? His clothes show he is God’s representative. They represent “glory and beauty”.
Abigail	These twelve precious stones on his breastplate stand for the tribes of Israel.
Ernie	Wow! That is amazing!
Abe	Yes, it’s all pretty amazing – the other nations are pretty scared when we set up camp near them – they know that Our God is a living God, not some statue made of wood or metal.
Ben	And even more amazing, the Living God chooses to dwell here in the middle of our camp, with us.
Narrator 1	<p>The cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the Tabernacle. Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it, and the glory of the LORD filled the Tabernacle.</p> <p>In all the travels of the Israelites, whenever the cloud lifted from above the Tabernacle, they would set out; but if the cloud did not lift, they did not set out—until the day it lifted. So the cloud of the LORD was over the Tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel during all their travels.</p>
Narrator 2	I think it’s time for you to go home Ernie.
Ernie	<p>You’re right. [Dr. Who music and video – Ernie gets back into bed]</p> <p>Well, I bet my Sunday School teacher will be impressed with everything I know about the Tabernacle.</p>
Dad	<p>Ernie, are you still awake?</p> <p>[Ernie snores]</p>

Narrator 2	If you could see inside the Tabernacle, it would look something like this... [show video clip of http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQus4je7Jw4]
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Song: **Indescribable**

By Laura Story and Jesse Reeves

From the highest of heights to the depths of the sea
Creation's revealing Your majesty
From the colors of fall to the fragrance of spring
Every creature unique in the song that it sings
All exclaiming

Indescribable, uncontainable,
You placed the stars in the sky and You know them by name.
You are amazing God
All powerful, untameable,
Awestruck we fall to our knees as we humbly proclaim
You are amazing God

Who has told every lightning bolt where it should go
Or seen heavenly storehouses laden with snow
Who imagined the sun and gives source to its light
Yet conceals it to bring us the coolness of night
None can fathom

Indescribable, uncontainable,
You placed the stars in the sky and You know them by name
You are amazing God
All powerful, untameable,
Awestruck we fall to our knees as we humbly proclaim
You are amazing God
You are amazing God

Indescribable, uncontainable,
You placed the stars in the sky and You know them by name.
You are amazing God
All powerful, untameable,
Awestruck we fall to our knees as we humbly proclaim
You are amazing God

Indescribable, uncontainable,
You placed the stars in the sky and You know them by name.
You are amazing God
Incomparable, unchangeable
You see the depths of my heart and You love me the same
You are amazing God
You are amazing God