

Tabernacle Model Assembly Guide

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Why do I need this?

You may have wondered about the difference between a low-budget film and a high-budget film. Besides the obvious cast and director, oftentimes it's hidden in the details. These details are so small that most of the audience will probably never notice them, but they help the actors and actresses as they play their roles. The same can be said about the tabernacle of david model. What makes the difference between a good visual aid and a great one? The details.

Note: The Tabernacle Model does not include any paint or paint brushes, but these painting materials can be purchased from your local stores.

This Tabernacle Model Assembly Guide can help you turn your model of the tabernacle from this:



to this:



Is it worth it?

Is it worth all that work? You decide. We think there's no turning back to the unpainted model after we've seen the visual power of the painted one. Does the unpainted model still do its job as a visual aid in teaching about the tabernacle? Of course! But we think the painted one adds a lot of life and realism to the model of the tabernacle. So if you want to find out how we painted our tabernacle model, read on and find out more!

Assembling this tabernacle model set is an exciting team project that everyone can enjoy. And a nicely painted model can be very impressive and sheds new light on your understanding of the tabernacle. Here we've put together some pointers to help you with the painting and the assembly of the model. We've also provided some scriptural references to the different colors used in the tabernacle, so be sure to look them up as needed. The assembly of the tabernacle model can be a great compliment to the free Sunday School lessons on the tabernacle.

Happy tabernacle making!



Tools You Need

Before you start opening the box and taking out its contents and putting the parts together, be sure that you have all the tools you need. In order to build a nicely painted tabernacle model, you must finish painting all the parts before you assemble the pieces. For this demonstration, we've used the following tools:

- Acrylic paint (bottles) in gold, silver, bronze and brown (4 colors) OR you could substitute the gold and bronze with spray paint instead of acrylic paint. The spray paint is more expensive, but much faster to paint (especially if you're making more than one set). The bronze acrylic paint will still be needed in addition to the spray paint.
- Acrylic paint set of the rainbow colors, black and white (8 colors).
- Paint brushes in various sizes.
- Texture spray (fleck stone spray) — 1 can
- A pair of scissors
- Super glue
- Toothpicks
- Glass of water (for washing paint brushes)
- Some paper towels
- Cardboard as a working surface



Step 1 - Spray the Base

To achieve a “desert” feel for the base, use the texture spray, available at most hardware stores and super stores, as well as art and craft supply stores. First find a place with good ventilation (outdoor is great, weather permitting). Apply a layer (enough to cover most of the plastic) of texture on the top surface and the four sides of the base. Do not over apply. Let dry (it may take several hours). Depending on the spray, you may need to apply a second layer.



Step 2 - Paint the Posts

Paint the posts in the following colors:

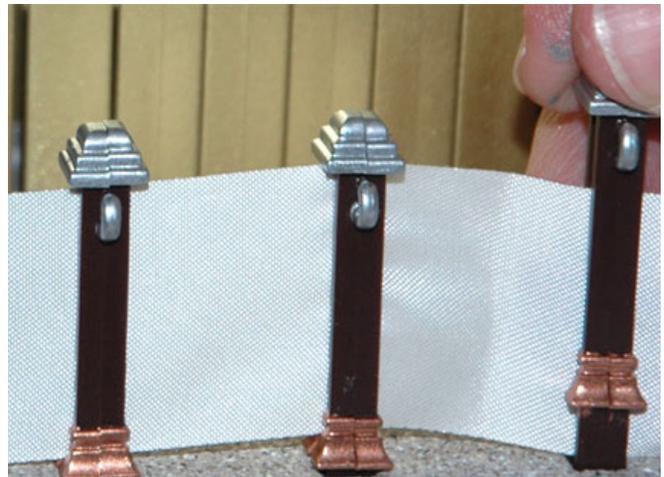
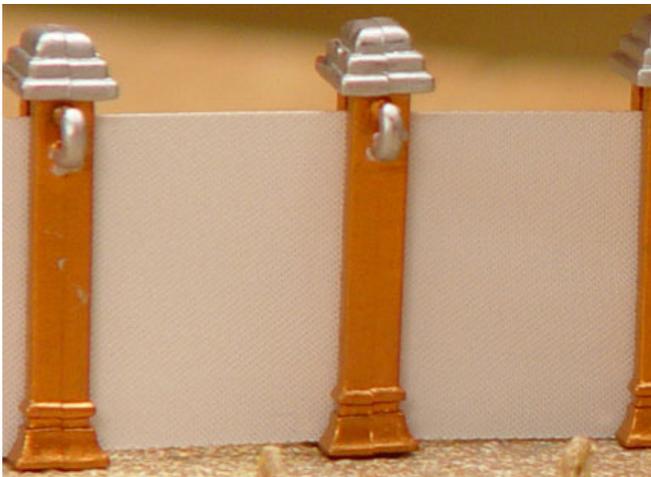
Fence post (cf. Exodus 27:17, 38:10, 11): silver top and hooks with bronze base. Paint the bronze base first and let it dry. Then paint the silver top and hooks.



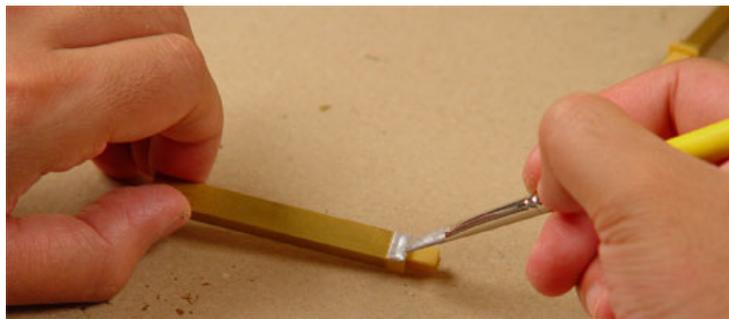
Depending on your interpretation of the passage, the “bronze base” can either include the whole post or just the “base.”



The finished posts should look like one of the following:



Tabernacle frame (cf. Exodus 26:15-29, 36:20-34): gold with silver base. Paint the gold first and let it dry before painting the silver bases.



Tabernacle curtain frame (cf. Exodus 26:32,37, 36:36,38): gold with base of bronze (five frames) or silver (four frames). Paint the gold first and let it dry before applying the gold or silver base.

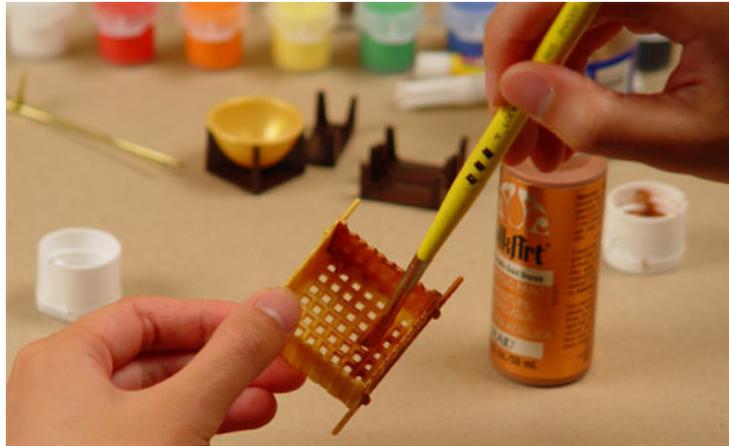


As an alternative to painting with a brush, you could use spray paint.



Step 3 - Paint the Furniture and Animals

Brazen altar & laver: Paint both the brazen altar and the laver (including its stand) bronze. It may take a few layers (apply each layer after the previous has dried). For effect, we also painted the center grate of the altar with some black paint to symbolize the ashes from the burnt offerings.



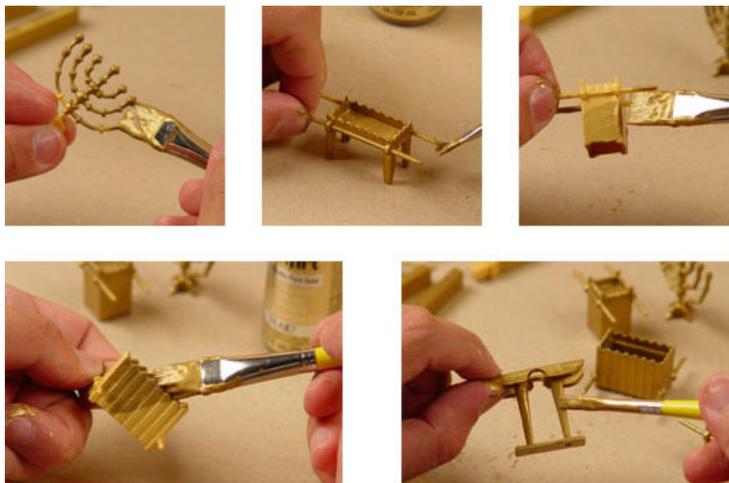
Tables in the courtyard (cf. Exodus 27:19): Though the tables are not specifically mentioned in the Bible, the Bible does say that “all the other articles used in the service of the tabernacle, whatever their function... are to be of bronze” (Exodus 27:19).



Again, you could also use bronze spray paint for the furniture if you choose (see picture on next page).



Furniture in the Tent of Meeting (cf. Exodus 25:10-40, 30:1-10): Paint all the furniture (the menorah, table of showbread, altar of incense, ark of the covenant and the atonement cover) in the tabernacle compound gold. You can also paint the two loaves of bread with a white, mixed with a little brown, paint. Paint the jar of manna gold (Hebrews 9:4). Aaron's staff can be painted brown, while the two stone tablets can be painted gray.



Or use the spray paint.



The sacrificial animals: We painted the sheep with white or tan (mix white with brown/yellow) paint. We recommend white paint even though the original is already white. The paint gives it a more realistic texture instead of the plastic rubbery feel. You can also paint the faces and the legs of the sheep black or tan. And we painted the cows brown. Use a toothpick or an ultra-fine brush to paint the eyes black. For a more realistic depiction of the sacrificial system, mix red paint with some black and apply it to a sheep across the front of its neck. Then paint the same “blood” on the table it’s resting upon.



Step 4 - Paint the Priests

The regular priests (Exodus 39:27-29): Time to move on to the more challenging tasks! First, paint the faces and the hands of all the priests (including the high priest) with a skin color by mixing some yellow, orange and white paint together. Then paint the sashes with red, purple and blue paint (Exodus 39:29). It may be easier to use a toothpick instead of a brush (if you don't have an ultra-fine brush).



After the paint has dried, paint the regular priests with white caps and white robes (like the sheep, the white paint gives them a more realistic texture and less plastic-like look). After the white paint has dried, paint the eyes (again, a toothpick might be more useful here) black and the beards gray or black (or leave it white).

The high priest: First, realize that the high priest will take the most time to paint. If it's your first time, it may take you a couple of hours. So be patient.



Start by painting the “squares” on the ephod with alternating red, purple, blue and gold paint, as well as the pattern of the waist band (Exodus 28:6-8). Then paint the breastpiece with gold first, including the two cords that go over his shoulders.

After the breastpiece has dried, paint four rows of “dots” with three stones in each row in the following colors (Exodus 28:17-20):

Ruby (Red)	Topaz (Yellow)	Emerald (Green)
Turquoise (Bluish Green)	Sapphire (Blue)	Diamond (White)
Jacinth (Red)	Agate (White)	Amethyst (Purple)
Beryl (Bluish Green)	Onyx (Black)	Jasper (Brown)

Paint the circle of the chord on each shoulder with onyx (blackish) color (Exodus 28:9-12). Then paint the bottom half of the ephod (below the squares but above the dots) with blue, as well as the the upper sleeves on both arms (Exodus 28:31). Paint the lower sleeves (the tunic) white (Exodus 28:39, 38:27, 28).

Paint the dots (bells and pomegranates, Exodus 28:34) with alternating gold and red. Finally, paint a blue line (cord) and a gold circle on his forehead (plate, Exodus 28:36-38).





Now you've finished the hardest part of the assembly process! After painting all the objects, we can now proceed to put the pieces together.

Note: An acrylic varnish can be coated on the rubber figures (priests, sheep, cows, Aaron's staff, etc.) to protect the paint from chipping from excessive handling.

Step 5 - Assemble the Outer Fence and Curtain (Exodus 27:9-15)

First put outer posts and the linen curtain around the base. Make sure all the posts go all the way down (the second picture shows a corner post that is not all the way down).

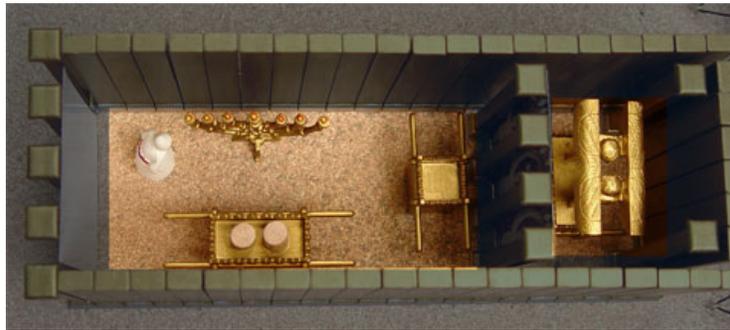


After putting the posts in, hook the brown strings around the hooks on the bottom and the hooks on the post. You can start with either outside the fence or inside the fence.

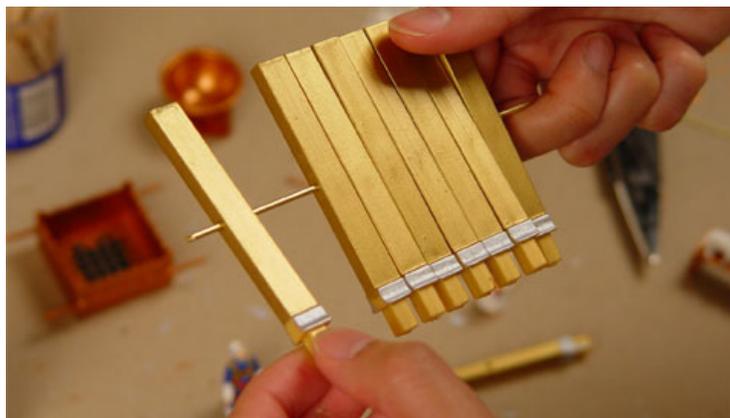


Step 6 - Assemble the Frames and Indoor Furniture

If you're going to glue the objects onto the base (for ease of holding up and using it as a teaching aid without all the pieces falling apart), use the super glue to glue the furniture inside the Tent of Meeting (menorah, table, altar of incense, ark of the covenant) *before* putting the frames around them. Put the furniture pieces in their respective places as shown in the picture (Exodus 40:20-29).



Put the frames around the Tent of Meeting by first inserting the metal poles through it. Six frames on the short side, and twenty frames for both of the long sides.



After that, put the frames into the holes. The frames fit in more tightly than the outer posts, so it may require a hammer to push them down (use a piece of paper towel on top of the frames so you won't chip away the paint with the hammer). Be sure to also put a piece of block wood or a phone book beneath the base when you push down the frames because the base tends to "give" (bend down) when you press it down. By giving it some support on the bottom, it makes it a lot easier to push down the frames.



Step 7 - The Finishing Touches

Add the curtain frames to the Tent of the Meeting, with the five frames with bronze bases in the entrance and the six frames with silver bases around the Holy of Holies. The curtain papers may be glued to the top and the bottom of the frames. Then place the brazen altar on the ramp and the laver in its stand, right between the entrance of the Tent of Meeting and the brazen altar. Place (and glue, if desired) all the other pieces, including the entrance gate, animals, priests, high priest, tables, and the tree in the courtyard.

(See images on the next page)



The final piece is the cover for the tent of meeting. It may be left off because once covered and tied to the hooks, it's difficult to remove and show what's inside. We'll leave it up to you to decide whether you want to do this or not.

Congratulations! You're finished!