

GOD BROUGHT HIS PEOPLE HOME



Bible Reference: Ezra 1-3

Date: 1/18/26

Grade: PreK /Kindergarten

2nd Service

Memory Verse:

“Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us.”
Isaiah 25:9

Big Picture Question:

How did God plan to fix what sin broke? God planned to send Jesus.

Christ Connection

- God kept His promise and brought His people back to Jerusalem. One day, God will bring all His people together in a new, perfect place where no one will cry anymore, and everyone will worship Him forever.

Schedule

- Welcome/ Intro Activity.....5 minutes
- **Kids Worship @ 11:00**.....15-20 minutes
- Circle Time and Bible Story.....10 minutes
- Movement Activity.....10 minutes
- Craft.....5-7 minutes
- Music.....5 minutes
- Global Partner Feature.....5-7 minutes
- Prayer and Bible Verse.....10 minutes
- Snack/ Discussion Time.....5-7 minutes
- Additional Activities.....As Needed

Notes and Reminders

As you prepare for this week’s lesson, consider how you could make the story interactive for the children. Perhaps you could have them act out the story as you narrate. *Maybe* you could come up with motions for children to do at specific points. If you would like any additional props or materials in your room, email kaitlyn.hawbaker@lefc.net



SHEPHERD BIBLE STUDY

The Bible is described as a book about God fulfilling His promises to His people, and in Ezra 1–3, we see how God fulfilled the promise He made to bring His people home after 70 years in captivity. God used King Cyrus of Persia to issue a decree that allowed the Israelites to return home.

Just as the prophecies of Daniel remind us of God’s control over the kingdoms of the world, so do the first few verses of Ezra. We learn how God “roused” the spirit of King Cyrus to move him to release the Israelites. God’s control over kings and kingdoms was even more evident because Cyrus didn’t send the Israelites home empty-handed. They returned with resources provided by the king and their neighbors. Only God could reverse the Israelites’ fortunes in such a quick way—from exiles with nothing to a returning remnant with resources to rebuild.

God often works through a remnant of people, no matter how small that group may be. Once this remnant of God’s people returned to their homeland, they set about the process of rebuilding Jerusalem and the temple. At the center of their rebuild, the leaders of the people rightly recognized the importance of worship. Just a few months after returning from exile, they began rebuilding the altar of God so they could restart their worship according to God’s commands. They knew the rebuild would only succeed when God’s people turned to Him in proper worship, turning away from their sin and obeying Him.

Before the foundation of the temple was laid, the leaders rebuilt the altar, demonstrating their desire for God’s people to atone for their sin. Through opposition and uncertainty, they established a place for the priests to offer burnt sacrifices on behalf of the people.

Like the remnant of Israelites, we need to remember that true restoration begins with a reconnection of God through worship. We were created to worship God and glorify His name. Encourage kids to remember that before we try to rebuild the outer elements of our lives, we must first prioritize the exaltation of our Savior.



JUNIOR SHEPHERD HIGHLIGHT

The Bible tells the story of how God keeps His promises. In Ezra chapters 1–3, we see God keeping His promise to bring His people back home after they had been captives for 70 years. God used King Cyrus of Persia to make a law that allowed the Israelites to return to their land.

These verses remind us that God is in control of all kings and nations. God stirred King Cyrus's heart and led him to help the Israelites. Cyrus didn't just let them go—he also gave them supplies, and their neighbors helped them too. God quickly changed their situation. They went from being prisoners with nothing to a small group returning home with what they needed to rebuild. Only God could make that happen.

God often works through a small group of faithful people, called a remnant. When this group returned home, they started rebuilding Jerusalem and the temple. The leaders knew that worship was the most important thing. So before rebuilding the temple, they rebuilt the altar so they could worship God the way He commanded. They understood that their work would only succeed if they obeyed God and turned away from sin.

Even though they faced fear and opposition, they rebuilt the altar so priests could offer sacrifices for the people. This showed they wanted to follow God and be made right with Him.

In the same way, we should remember that real change in our lives starts with worshiping God. We were created to worship Him and honor His name. Before we try to fix or rebuild other parts of our lives, we should put God first and focus on worshiping Him.



OUTLINE



Welcome and Intro Activity

5 minutes

Welcome the children and mark them as present on the attendance sheet on the clipboard by the door.

- Instruct the children to cover their eyes while you hide the gold and silver items from your bin around the room for children to find. Tell children to look for the gold and silver items. After they find all the items, hide the items again as time allows. As children search for items, review the big picture question and answer.
- SAY I'm so glad to see you today! The gold and silver items you found are important to our story. Many years before our story took place, the people of God disobeyed Him. God's people were taken into exile to a land far away from Jerusalem. But He promised they would come back one day. In our story today, God brought His people back to Jerusalem. God kept His promise and brought His people home. One day, God will bring all His people together to a new, perfect place where no one will cry anymore. Everyone will be happy and worship God forever. Sin has broken our relationship with God. How did God fix what sin broke? God sent Jesus.

Circle Time and Bible Story

10 minutes

Thinking Activity

- On your whiteboard, list items that children share make them happy.
- SAY Let's fill the whiteboard with things that make us happy. What makes you happy? [Allow responses.] There are lots of things that make people happy. This is a great list! In our story today, God brought His people back to Jerusalem from exile in Persia, where they had been for 70 years. The people were so happy to be going home to Jerusalem! Let's find out what happened.

Bible Story

- A long time ago, God made a promise. He told His people that after a long time, they would go back to their special city called Jerusalem. One day, a king named Cyrus said, "God wants me to help build His house in Jerusalem. God's people can go there to help. Everyone else should give them silver, gold, and animals to take with them." God's people got ready to go back to Jerusalem to build God's house. Their neighbors gave them gifts of silver, gold, and animals. The king even gave back some special things that had been taken from God's house. In Jerusalem, a priest named Jeshua and a leader named Zerubbabel started building an altar where they could give gifts to God. Then they began to build God's house. Special helpers called Levites worked with them. When the first part of God's house was done, everyone was so happy! They played music and sang, "God is good. He loves us forever." They shouted with joy. But some older people were sad. They remembered the first temple, which was very beautiful, and they felt sad because this new one was not the same. They cried loudly while others were happy and cheering.





Christ Connection

- God kept His promise and brought His people back to Jerusalem. One day, God will bring all His people together in a new, perfect place where no one will cry anymore, and everyone will worship Him forever.

Review Activity

- Display the Bible Story Picture Poster and reference to prompt discussion. Remind children that when we go on a trip, we need to take supplies with us. Take turns having children share the item they would take. Repeat until each child has a turn. Discuss the items God's people took with them on their journey.
- SAY That was a fun game, wasn't it? We could all name something we would take with us if we had to move to a new place. In our Bible story, we learned that God brought His people back to Jerusalem after they were away for many years. The Bible tells us the people were given gifts of gold, silver, and animals to take back with them. They worked to rebuild God's house. God kept His promise and brought the people home. One day, God will bring all His people together to a new, perfect place where no one will cry anymore, and everyone will be happy and worship God forever.

Movement Activity

10 minutes

Designate one area in the room as "home." Choose an area on the opposite side of the room for children to stand. Choose a way in which the children will travel "home" (walking, skipping, hopping, giant steps, and so forth). Say "go home," and encourage the class to travel to the designated wall with you. Repeat with different ways of traveling as time allows. Adjust the movements based on the skill level of your class.

SAY We moved our bodies in different ways to travel home! Which movements did you enjoy doing? [Allow responses.] In today's Bible story, God's people traveled home to Jerusalem. They built an altar to worship God for keeping His promises. God has also promised that one day He will bring all His people together in a new, perfect place where no one will cry anymore, and everyone will worship Him forever.



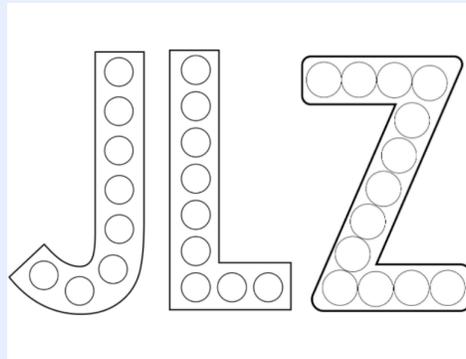


Craft

5-7 minutes

Distribute the 'JLZ' craft sheet and dot markers to each child. Encourage the children to fill each letter with a different color to show the difference between the letters. Discuss the shape of the letters and the sounds the letters make when we read them. Repeat the names Jeshua, Zerubbabel, and Levites as children work.

SAY The Bible says that a priest named Jeshua and a leader named Zerubbabel started building an altar where they could give gifts to God. Once the altar was built, they began to build God's house. Special helpers, called Levites, worked with them. The Bible also tells us the name of Someone else whose name begins with J. It's in the answer to our big picture question, How did God fix what sin broke? God sent Jesus. Jesus also begins with J.



Music

5 minutes

You will find music and other video resources on the USB which is already plugged into the TV. Feel free to play the videos in any order you like! You may distribute the Activity Page for the children to complete at this time, if they would prefer to sit and listen to the music.

Friends From Afar

5-7 minutes

You will find today's activity for Friends from Afar in the Binder on the counter. The information for this month's Global Partner family and an activity to learn about where they are serving are included.





Prayer and Bible Verse

10 minutes

Prayer (Use these words, or your own, to pray about today's Bible lesson. Take time to listen to prayer requests from the children and pray for them as well!)

- God, we trust You and the promises You make. We look forward to the day when there will be no more tears or sadness—only joy and worship of You. Help us live in a way that honors You. Amen.

Bible Verse

- Say the key passage phrase together as you walk in place as if going on a long journey.
- SAY God's people had been in exile in Persia far away from Jerusalem for many years. Finally, God brought His people back to Jerusalem. They waited for God to save them from exile and He did. They were able to return to Jerusalem and begin rebuilding God's house.

Snack and Discussion Time

5-7 minutes

Have children sanitize their hands before passing out snacks and cups of water. During this time, you can connect with children and discuss questions regarding the lesson.

1. What did you like about the Bible story? (Answers will vary.)
2. What were some things in the Bible story that made God's people happy or sad? (Answers will vary.)
3. Where did God bring His people? (God brought His people back home to Jerusalem.)
4. How did the people feel when they finished the first part of the temple? (Some people were happy and celebrated, and other people were sad and cried loudly.)
5. Why did God bring His people back to Jerusalem? (To keep His promise to rebuild the temple.)
6. How did God plan to fix what sin broke? God planned to send Jesus.

SAY After 70 years, God brought His people back to Jerusalem. King Cyrus allowed God's people to return and rebuild God's house, the temple. God's people received gifts of gold, silver, and animals from their neighbors. In Jerusalem, the people built an altar and began rebuilding the temple. God kept to His promise and brought His people back home to Jerusalem.





Additional Activities

As Needed

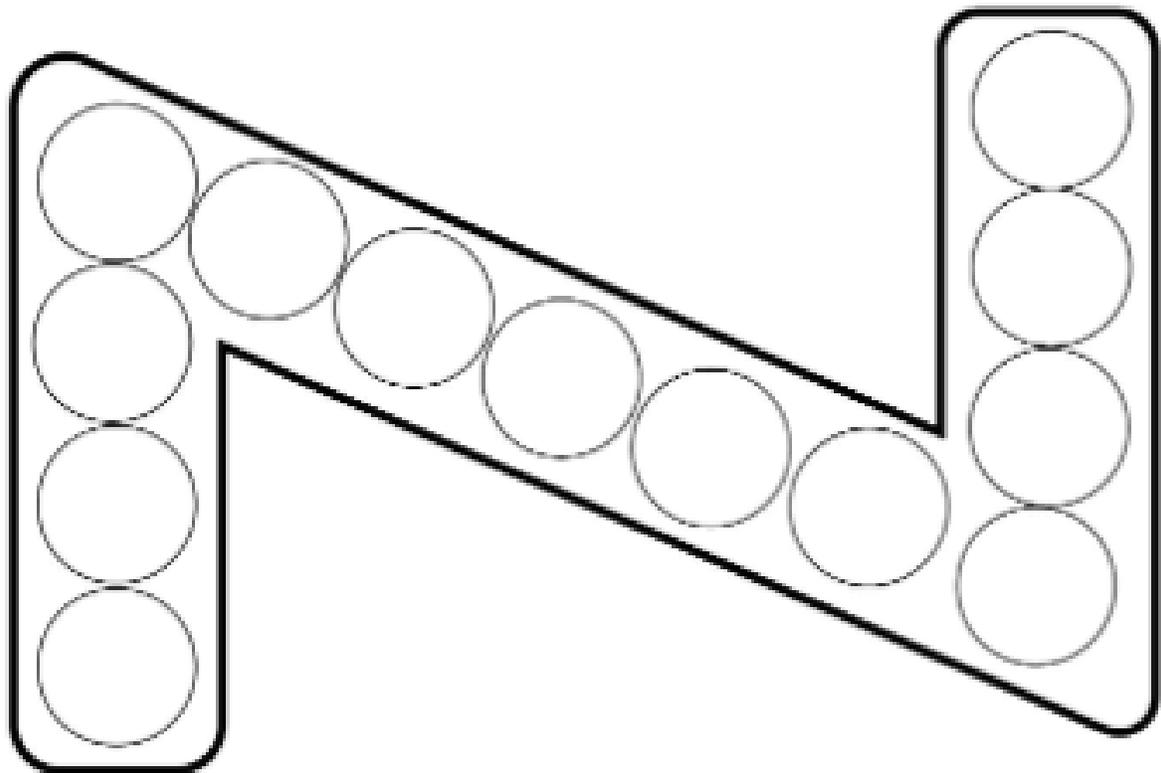
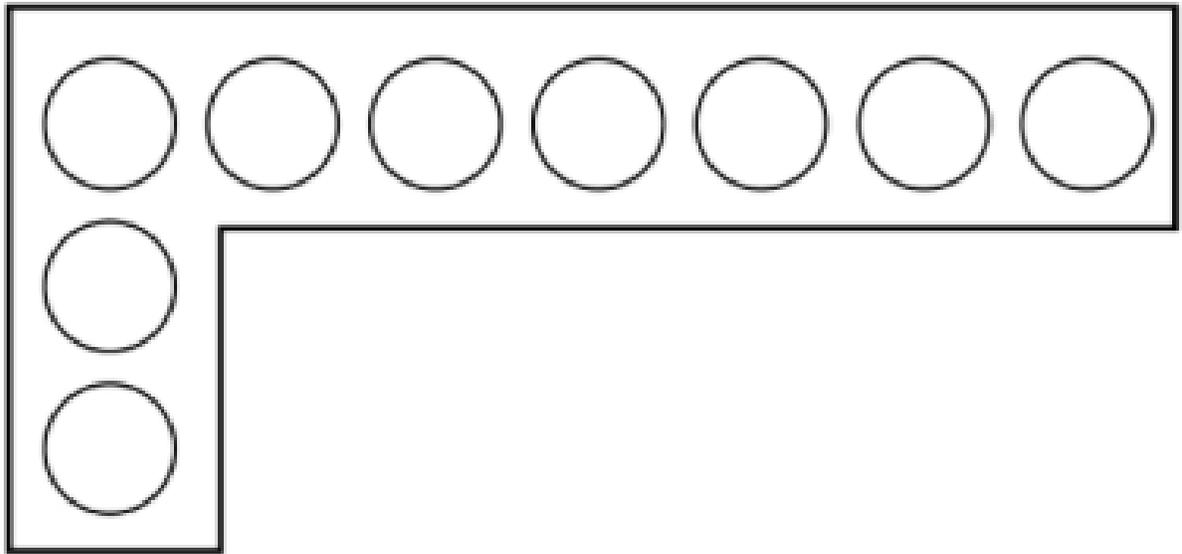
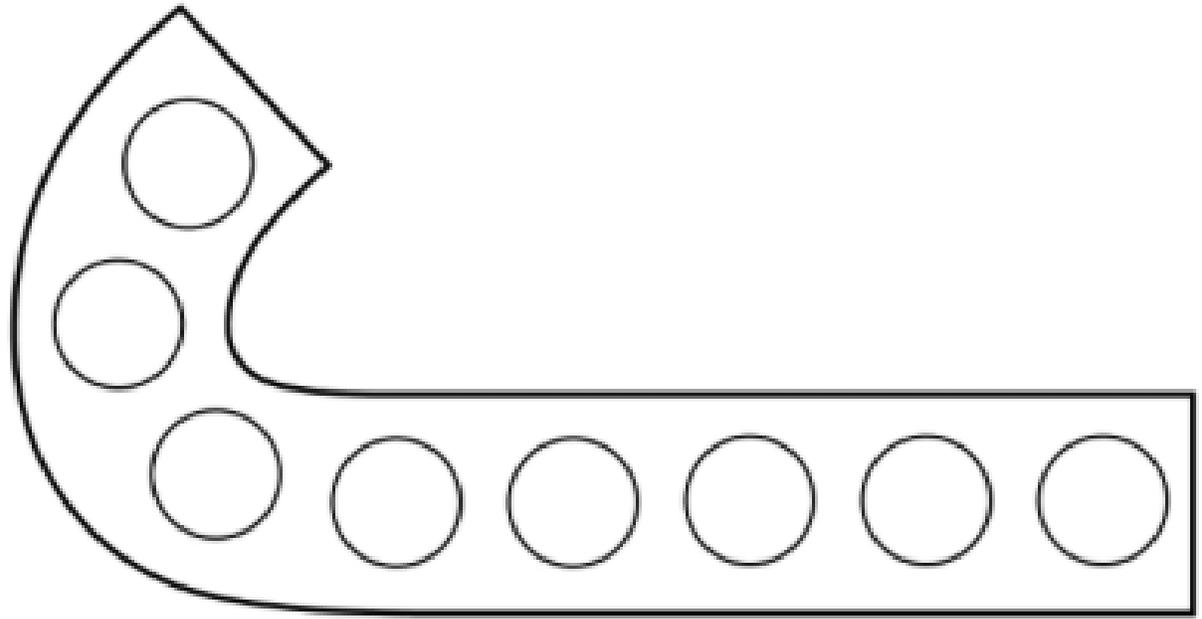
Play Four Corners

- Label each corner of the room with a different home-related word, such as kitchen, bedroom, bathroom, living room. Explain that you will stand in the middle of the room and ask a question. Children will move to the corner of the room where they do that thing. Play for as long as there is interest.
- Some questions include:
 - Where do you sleep?
 - Where do you eat dinner?
 - Where do you read books?
 - Where do you play with toys?
 - Where do you cook food?
 - Where do you brush your teeth?
 - Where do you take a bath?
 - Where do you get a drink of water?
- **SAY** Wow! That was really fun! There are so many different things we do at home. After 70 years of being far away, God brought His people back to Jerusalem, which was their home. God kept His promise when He brought His people home. God always keeps His promises. God kept His promise when He sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross and come back to life to rescue us from our sin.

Stamp Coins in Play Dough

- Set play dough and play coins on a table. Lead children to use a rolling pin or their hands to flatten their play dough. After the play dough is flattened, demonstrate how to press a coin in the dough and then remove it to reveal the coin's imprint. Repeat for as long as time and interest allow. Remind children to not put the coins in their mouths.
- **SAY** What color are these coins? (silver) Coins are money. What kind of things can you buy with coins? [Allow responses.] King Cyrus told his people to give God's people silver, gold, and animals. Their neighbors gave them these things for their journey and to help them rebuild their city. Many Israelites were so excited that God brought His people back to Jerusalem. One day, God will bring all of His people to a new, perfect place to worship Him forever.







God Brought His People Home

Ezra 1-3

STORY POINT:

God brought His people back to Jerusalem.

CHRIST CONNECTION:

God's people rebuilt the temple so they would have a place to worship God. Years later, God sent His Son, Jesus, to be with His people on earth. When we trust in Jesus, He is with us wherever we go.

KEY PASSAGE:

Isaiah 25:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

How did God plan to fix what sin broke? God planned to send Jesus.

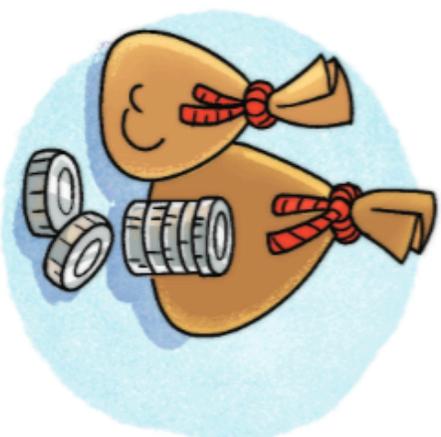
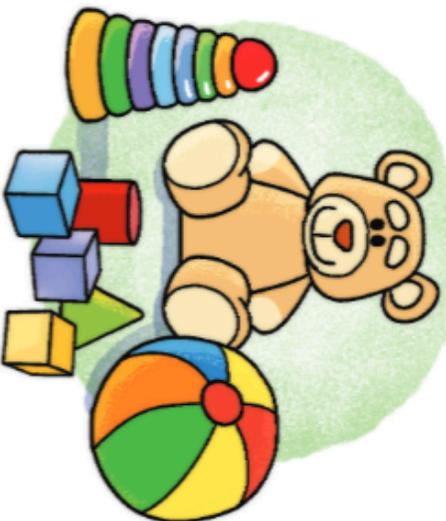
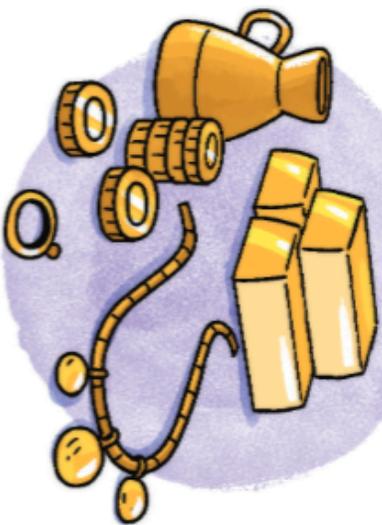


Scan the QR code for resources to use at home!



Circle Gifts

INSTRUCTIONS: Circle the kinds of gifts that were given to God's people before they went home to Jerusalem.



Kitchen

Bedroom

Bathroom

Living Room