

GOD BROUGHT HIS PEOPLE HOME



Bible Reference: Ezra 1-3

Date: 1/18/26

1st Service

Grade: PreK /Kindergarten

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
 - Kindergarten in Large Group Lesson @ 9:20.....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
- Group Game.....10 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.

- Talk about different types of homes such as apartments, tree houses, castles, and so forth. Distribute a sheet of paper and some crayons to each child. Encourage children to draw a picture of a home. This could be their home, a friend's home, or a home they imagine. Be sensitive to children's home situations and living conditions.
- **SAY** You drew some beautiful homes! In today's Bible story, we will learn that God brought His people back to Jerusalem. After waiting many years, God's people returned home. What do you think their houses looked like? [Allow responses.]

Circle Time and Bible Story

10 minutes

Thinking Activity

- Ask children what their dream home would look like and what types of things it would have inside and outside. Offer suggestions like a swimming pool, a soft serve ice cream machine, or a go-cart track in the backyard.
- **SAY** You came up with some amazing ideas for a dream home! God's people, the Israelites, had to leave their home, but God promised to bring them back. Today, we will hear the story of their journey back to Jerusalem.

Bible Story

- Long ago, God made a promise to His people through a man named Jeremiah. God promised that after 70 years, He would bring His people back to the city of Jerusalem. One day, a king named Cyrus made an announcement. He said, "God has given me all the kingdoms on earth, and He wants me to help build His house in Jerusalem. God's people can go to Jerusalem to help build it. And everyone else should give them silver, gold, and animals to take with them." God's people got ready to go back to Jerusalem and build the house for God. Their neighbors gave them gifts of silver, gold, animals, and other things they needed. King Cyrus even gave back some special treasures that had been taken from God's house long ago. In Jerusalem, a priest named Jeshua, a leader named Zerubbabel, and their friends started building an altar as a special place to give gifts to God. Next, they started buying everything they needed to rebuild God's house. They chose the Levites as special workers to help with the building. When they finished the first part of the temple, the priests and the people were so happy! They played trumpets and cymbals and sang, "The Lord is good. His love for Israel lasts forever." The people shouted with joy. But not everyone was happy. Some older priests remembered the first temple, which was very beautiful, and they felt sad because this new one didn't seem as good. They cried loudly, while others were shouting with happiness. The noise was so loud that you couldn't tell who was crying and who was 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

- Use magnets to place the poster of a suitcase on your whiteboard. Lead children to answer questions as they work together to pack the pictures of clothes into the slit at the top of the picture. Invite each child to answer a review question as he selects a picture of clothing to pack in the suitcase.
- Possible questions:
 - 1. Where were God's people living? (Babylon)
 - 2. How long did they live there? (70 years)
 - 3. What did God promise His people? (they would go back home)
 - 4. What was King Cyrus' idea? (for God's people to return to Jerusalem)
 - 5. What were some of the items the people were given? (gold, silver, animals)
- SAY After 70 years, 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.

Movement Activity

10 minutes

Lead this action song to the rhythm of "We're Going on a Bear Hunt." Guide children to march in place, repeat each line after the leader, and follow the actions.

- Refrain: We're going to Jerusalem / 'cause God kept His promise (point up) / after 70 years! (lift hands in the air) / What do we need? (hold out open hands)
- I know! A hammer / and wood and nails to build with. / Here's how you hammer it: / bang, bang, boom. (swing arm in a hammering motion) [Repeat refrain.]
- I know! Some coins / made of gold and silver. / Here's how you stack them: / one, two, three. (pretend to stack coins) [Repeat refrain.]
- I know! A trumpet / to play some joyful music. / Let's celebrate the Lord / Doot doo doo! (pretend to play a trumpet)
- SAY God always keeps His promises. After 70 years, God brought His people back to Jerusalem. God chose King Cyrus as part of His plan to bring His people home. God chose Jesus as His plan to rescue us from the punishment for our sin.



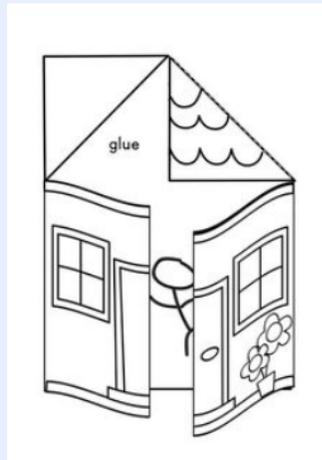


Craft

5-7 minutes

Distribute a paper house cutout, a piece of construction paper, and markers to each child. Help them to glue the back of the house to the construction paper. Glue the roof flaps flat. encourage the children to draw their family inside of the house and to decorate the picture as they wish.

SAY Fantastic job making all of these houses! In today's Bible story, God promised His people He would bring them home, and God brought His people back to Jerusalem. God always keeps His promises. God's people built an altar and a temple to give thanks to God.



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. Necessary supplies are located in your bin.





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, You are so kind. You love us, and You always keep Your promises. Thank You for bringing the Israelites home, and thank You for sending Jesus to fix what sin broke. We love You so much. 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.





Group Game

10 minutes

- Assist children in forming a line, all standing shoulder to shoulder. Encourage children to spread out at a safe distance. Give each child a basic command and encourage her to ask, "King Cyrus, may I?" before each action. (Played like 'Mother, May I?')
- **SAY** The Persian king, Cyrus, knew he was supposed to help build God's house in Jerusalem. He sent God's people there. He told the Persian people to give them silver, gold, and animals to take with them. God's people got ready to go to Jerusalem with their gifts. The king also gave back some special things that had been taken from God's house. Just as God promised, God brought His people back to Jerusalem.

Additional Activities

As Needed

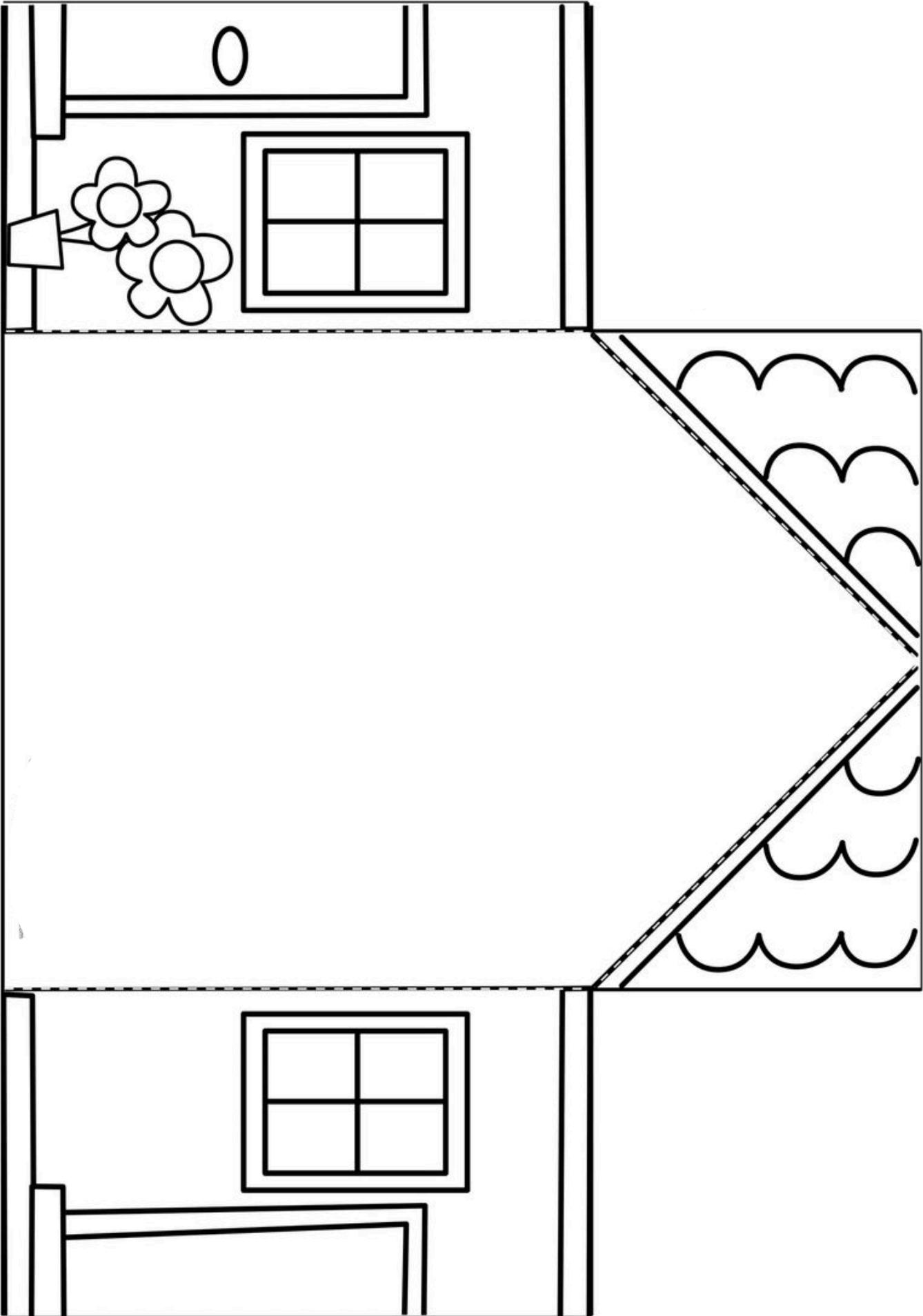
Build Ways to Travel

- Guide children to use blocks to build things related to travel. Suggest they build roads, an airport, a bus station, a train station, or a pier. Add different transportation toys such as cars, buses, trains, planes, and boats for children to play with. Talk about different ways people traveled in Bible times and how we travel today.
- **SAY** What is your favorite way to travel from place to place? [Allow responses.] In today's Bible story, we will learn that God kept His promise to let His people travel back home. God's people had been living in Babylon, far away from their homes. Finally after 70 years, God brought His people back to Jerusalem. How do you think the people felt when they were finally able to go home? [Allow responses.]

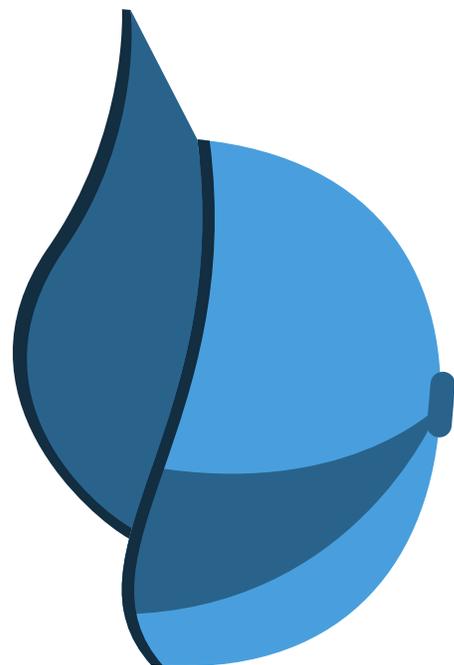
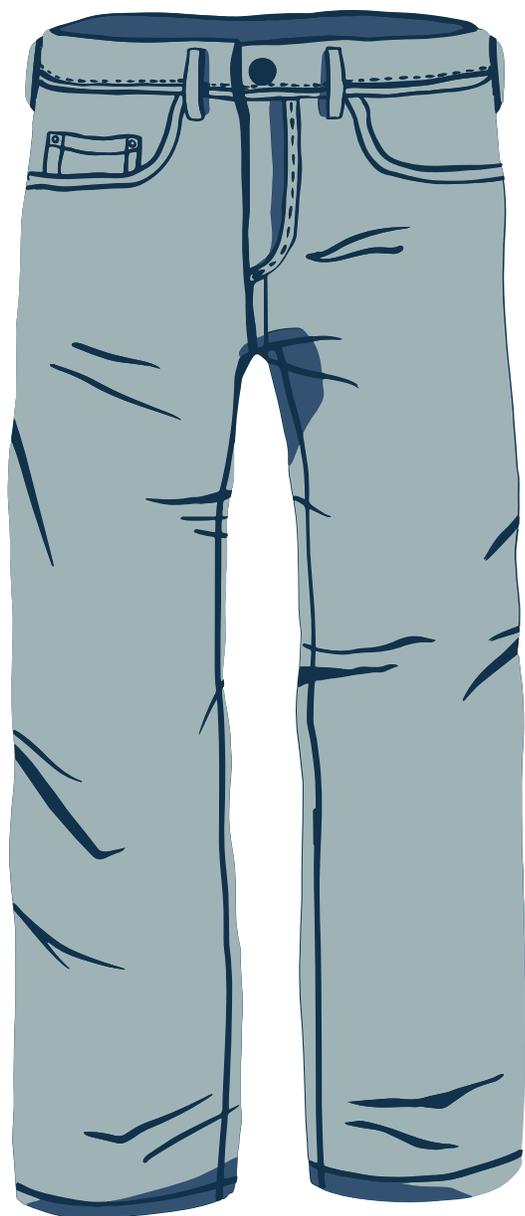
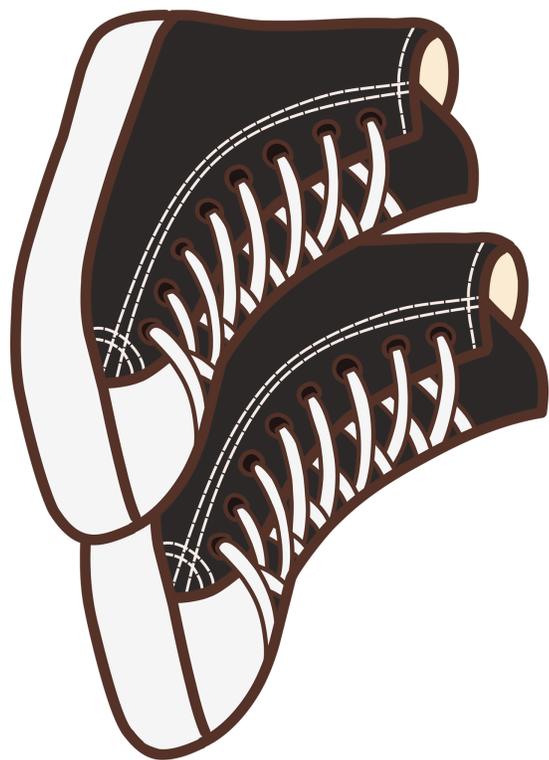
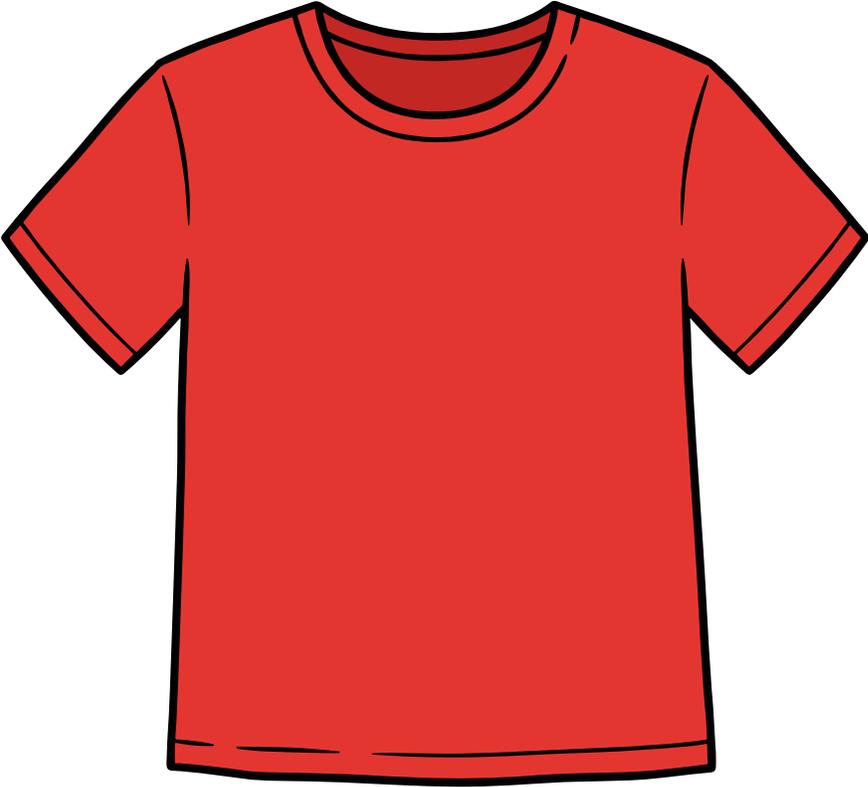
Line Up Craft Sticks

- Before the session, use masking tape to form a simple house shape on the floor by making a large square with a triangle on top. Set craft sticks nearby and instruct children to line up the craft sticks on top of the masking tape to form a house shape. Celebrate together once the house is complete. Remove the craft sticks and repeat the activity. (Note: Prepare more than one house shape if you have a large group, or have children who prefer to work independently.)
- **SAY** You followed the tape and built a house. God wanted King Cyrus to help rebuild God's house, the temple, in Jerusalem. The king told his people to give the Israelites silver and gold to help them in this task. God brought His people back to Jerusalem. The people worked to rebuild the temple. After the first part of the temple was built, the people celebrated! They played cymbals and trumpets and sang, 'The Lord is good. His love for Israel lasts forever!'





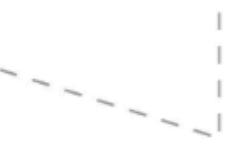
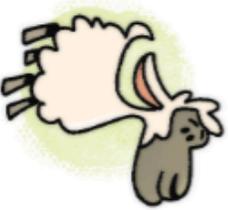
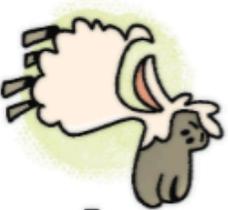
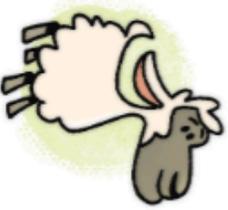
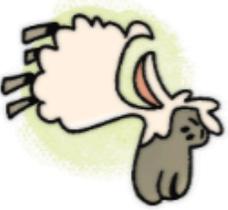
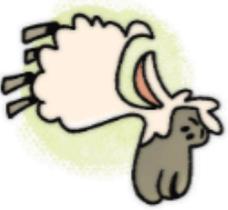
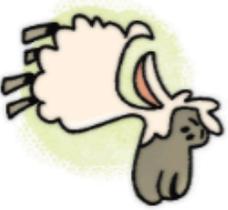
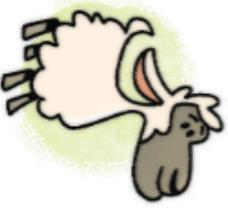
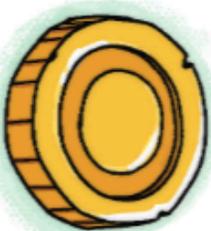
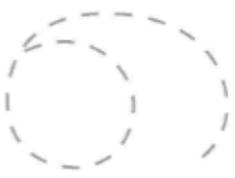






How Many?

INSTRUCTIONS: God brought His people back home to Jerusalem. Count the items God's people were given to take back with them.





God Brought His People Home

Ezra 1-3

STORY POINT:

God brought His people back to Jerusalem.

CHRIST CONNECTION:

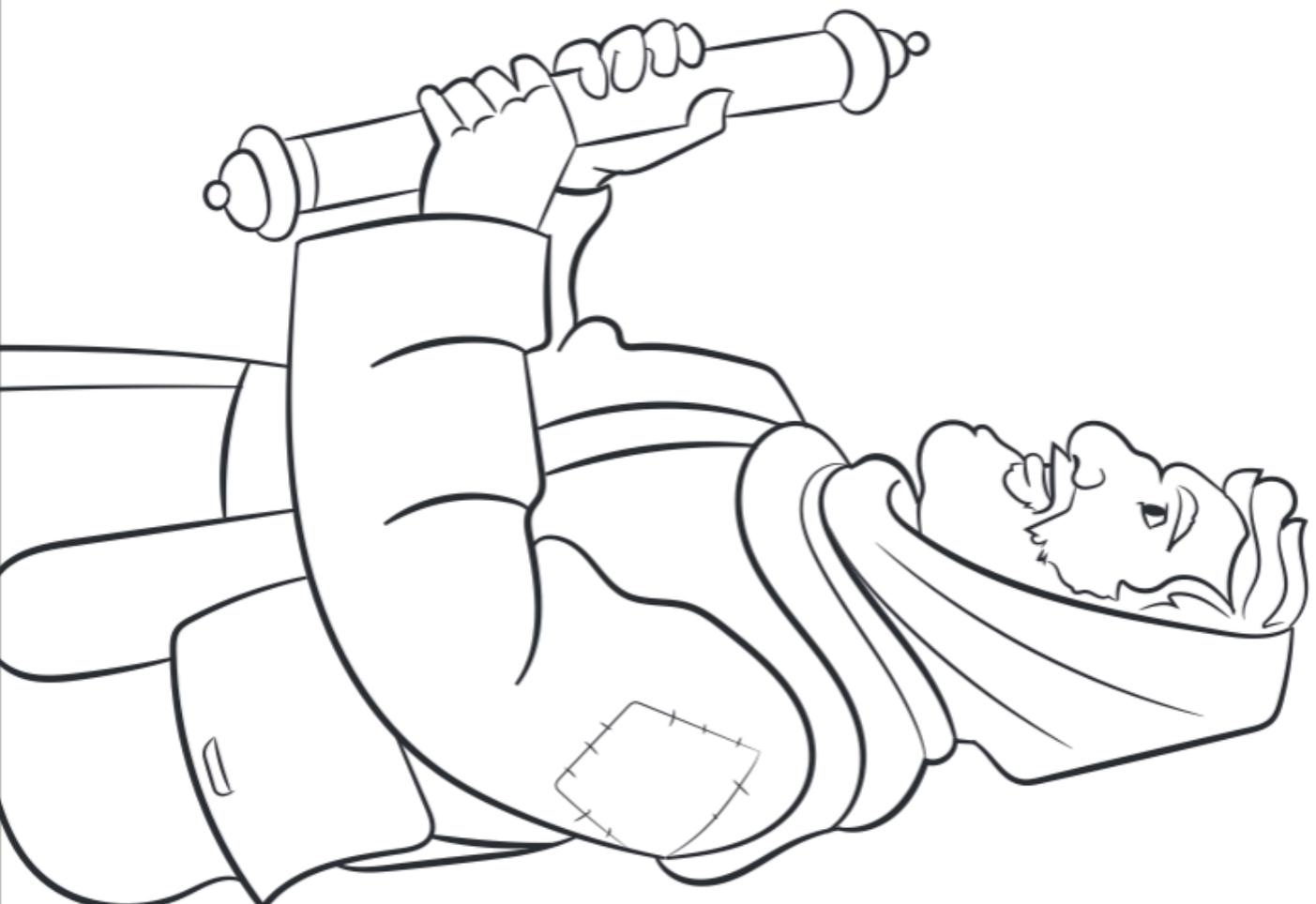
God's people rebuilt the temple so they would have a place to worship God. Years later, God sent His Son, Jesus, to be with His people on earth. When we trust in Jesus, He is with us wherever we go.

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!





**Surely this is our God;
we trusted in him,
and he saved us.**

Isaiah 25:9



UNIT 17 - HOPE AT HOME

Unit Description: After 70 years, the exile was over, and God brought His people home to Judah. Through the prophet Zechariah, God spoke a message of hope to His people about what would happen in the future. The people began to rebuild the temple so that they would have a place to worship God. Years later in Persia, God used Esther to save His people through her bravery and sacrifice.

Younger Preschool Big Picture Question:
How did God fix what sin broke? God sent Jesus.

Older Preschool Big Picture Question:
How did God plan to fix what sin broke? God planned to send Jesus.

