

## Rebuilding the Temple

Ezra 4-6; Haggai 1-2

## How did God plan to fix what sin broke?

Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah.

In that day they will say, "Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the Lord, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation."

Isaiah 25:9

### Story Point:

God's people rebuilt the temple to worship Him.



### PREPARE HEARTS

- Welcome - Search It
- Starter Activity - Working Together



### ACTIVATE HEARTS

- 9:20 - Bible Lesson in LG2
- Review and discuss the Bible Story
- Reflection and Prayer
- Questions from Kids Video



### ENGAGE HEARTS

- Key Passage Activity - Hot Seat Bible Memory
- Group Activity - Un-Roll the Scroll
- Group Activity - God Speaks

## SHEPHERD GUIDE

Like many projects, rebuilding the temple began with enthusiasm and purpose, but eventually the work stopped. Upon their return from exile, God's people were excited about rebuilding the temple and having a place to worship their God. Eventually their passion for rebuilding diminished due to the opposition they faced from their enemies. Instead, the people turned their efforts to work on their own dwellings.

God used the prophet Haggai to remind His people of the importance of rebuilding the temple. Specifically, the prophet asked the people why their houses were completed and adorned beautifully when the house of the Lord lay in ruins. Because of the encouragement of the prophet, the people returned to rebuilding the temple. This time, they would persevere through all of the challenges to complete the rebuild.

So why was the rebuilding of the temple so important for the people of God who had returned from exile? For them, the temple was the place where the presence of God dwelt among them. Following the Exodus, God's manifest presence was experienced by His people in a number of ways. He dwelt with His people in the cloud and fire that guided and protected the Israelites on their journey. He dwelt with His people in a movable tabernacle where they were able to worship. And eventually, God dwelt with His people in Solomon's temple in Jerusalem. When the temple was destroyed, it was symbolic of God removing His presence from His people. When God's people returned, the rebuilding of the temple demonstrated God was with His people, inviting them to return to Him in prayer and worship (2 Chronicles 6:36-39).

Today, we are reminded that our God does not dwell in a house made by the hands of people. When Jesus died on the cross, a symbolic act occurred in the temple. At the moment of Jesus' death, the curtain in the temple that separated the people from God's presence split from top to bottom. The splitting of the curtain demonstrated our new reality that Jesus' death and victory over sin and the grave gives us direct access to the Father. Remind kids that God desires to be with them, and through faith in Christ, believers are promised His presence forever.

REMINDER: Our VIP meeting is from 8:30-8:40 in C1. Your supply bin will be in your classroom.

### MAIN TAKEAWAYS: We want our kids to:

- \*KNOW that God alone is worthy of our honor and worship.
- TRUST God even when things are hard.
- \*RELY on God's strength instead of their own when they face challenges.



*As children arrive - Welcome them by name and invite them to play with you and the other children. Use this time to get to know your kids - ask them about their week, about their likes and dislikes and about their school, family and friends.*

*Ways to connect - Play a game from the closet, color or draw together, build with legos/blocks, etc.*

*When most kids have arrived for first service (by 9:05ish), ask them to clean up the toys and find a seat at one of the tables to begin the class.*

*\*Pen Pal Kit!!*



### PREPARE HEARTS

#### OPENING QUESTIONS:

#### WELCOME

##### Search It

- Activity page
- pencils
- markers

**What's a project or craft you've worked on?  
Were you ever afraid you wouldn't finish it? Why or why not?**

Invite kids to complete the "Search It" activity page.

Today, we will learn how a new king of Persia searched the royal records to see if God's people could rebuild the temple.



#### STARTER

##### Working Together

- Blindfolds
- Solo cups

Invite three or four volunteers to sit before the group either at a table or on the floor. Place a blindfold on each kid. Then provide the kids with a stack of solo cups. Challenge the kids to work together to create a tower by stacking the cups.... blindfolded!

Invite the remaining kids to offer help by instructing the kids how and where to place the cups. Allow the kids 30-45 seconds to create the tower. Then remove the blindfolds so they can see how they did. Repeat, inviting a new group of kids to create a tower.

**SAY:** What was the most challenging part of building the tower? [Allow responses.] While challenging at times, you all showed that by working together and following instructions you were able to create the tower. Today, we will learn that God's people were working to rebuild the temple. But as they did, they also faced challenges. However, we'll see that when they trusted God, obeyed Him, and worked together, they were able to rebuild the temple.



## ACTIVE MINDS

### INTRODUCE THE BIBLE STORY

(Quick 1 minute review!)

9:20 – 9:35

K - 4<sup>th</sup> Grade in LG2

### BIBLE STORY:

#### Rebuilding the Temple

Bibles, Powerpoint slides

Taught by the Bible Teacher:

Quick Review of where we are in the Big Story of the Bible and Big Picture Question:

**How did God plan to fix what sin broke?** Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah.

Open your Bible to Ezra 4-6 and Haggai 1-2.

#### STORYTELLING OPTIONS / TIPS:

**Active listening:** Encourage kids to make a sad face each time God's enemies try to stop the people and clap each time God makes a way for His people to keep rebuilding.

**Active listening:** Tell the kids to place one fist on top of the other. Any time you say the words "rebuild" or "build" they can reverse their fists with a pounding motion.

When God's enemies who lived in Judah heard that the people of God had returned and were rebuilding the temple of the Lord, they decided to stop them.

They wrote a letter to Artaxerxes (ahr tuh ZUHRK seez), king of Persia. The letter said, "Let it be known to the king that the Jews who traveled from your nation have returned to Jerusalem. They are rebuilding the city, finishing its walls, and repairing its foundations. We are loyal to the king, and believe that once the city is finished, the people will not pay taxes to you anymore. Search your record books, and you will discover that the city is rebellious and harmful to you."

The king replied, "I searched our records and discovered that this city has rebelled against kings in the past. Therefore, I order the people to stop building the city until another decree from me." The people stopped rebuilding the temple until King Darius became king of Persia.

God sent the prophet Haggai to speak His words to the people. The Lord said through Haggai, "Is it time for you to live in a nice house, while the house of God lies in ruins? Think carefully of your ways. Rebuild my house, and then I will send rain for the crops and help you prosper. Work, for I am with you! I promise that this temple will one day have more glory than the one that came before!"

The people obeyed and started to build again. Then Tattenai, the governor of the region, said, "Who gave you the order to rebuild this temple?" Tattenai sent a letter to King Darius that said, "Let it be known to the king that the people of God are once again rebuilding the temple. When I asked them why they were rebuilding, they told me that many years ago, King Cyrus issued an order to rebuild the temple of God. He also gave us the gold and silver that had been taken from the first temple. We have been rebuilding the temple from that time until now."

King Darius searched his royal records and found the order from King Cyrus. He knew the people were telling the truth. He issued a new law: “Leave the people of God alone, and let them rebuild the temple. In addition, you are to use all the tax money from that region to pay for everything that is needed to rebuild the temple. If anyone interferes with this order, they will be punished.”

The people finished the temple and had a great celebration. They resumed the worship of God at the temple and celebrated the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread. The people were glad and rejoiced in God.

## 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. Jesus provides something better than the temple; He gives us Himself.



## REVIEW AND DISCUSS

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Allow time to have the children think and process - however this works best for your class. We want our kids to feel known and heard!

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In small groups (or as a large group), talk through these questions.

When God’s people returned to Jerusalem and began rebuilding the temple, their enemies in Judah wanted to stop them. **Why did King Artaxerxes order the people to stop rebuilding the temple?** Look at Ezra 4:18-21. [Ask a volunteer to read Ezra 4:18-21 aloud.] God’s enemies wrote a letter to King Artaxerxes of Persia, warning him that the Jews were rebuilding their city and might refuse to pay taxes once it was completed. King Artaxerxes discovered that Jerusalem had been rebellious in the past. Because of this, he ordered the construction to stop. The people obeyed the king’s command and stopped rebuilding the temple.

But God’s plans cannot be stopped! Later, God sent the prophet Haggai to encourage the people to start building again. **What did the prophet Haggai tell the people to do, and what did God promise them?** Look at Haggai 1:7-11. [Ask a volunteer to read Haggai 1:7-11 aloud.] Through Haggai, God reminded them that while they were living in nice houses, His temple was still in ruins. He promised that if they obeyed and rebuilt the temple, He would bless them by sending rain for their crops and helping them prosper. The people listened to God’s message and began working again.

God’s people faced challenges again, however, when Tattenai questioned their right to rebuild. **How did God prove He is greater than anyone and His plans will succeed?** Look at Ezra 6:3. [Ask a volunteer to read Ezra 6:3 aloud.] Years before Darius became king, God moved the heart of King Cyrus to allow the people to rebuild the temple. King Darius searched the royal records and found proof that King Cyrus had ordered the temple to be rebuilt. God’s people rebuilt the temple to worship Him. They observed the Passover and rejoiced in God’s faithfulness.



## Reflection and Prayer

Journal Page

Have children use their journal page. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions. Or, just talk about it together.

• **What does this story teach me about God?**

*That God is worthy of all our honor and worship. God's plans cannot be stopped - He is over all things. God gives us strength to do hard things.*

• **What does this story teach me about myself?**

*That I can trust God to help me and give me strength when I am frustrated or scared.*

**Can you think of a time when you faced something hard and felt God giving you strength to get through it? Why do you think God wants us to rely on His strength instead of our own when we face challenges?**

*Guide kids to think about their time at home, school, and with friends, and give examples of how God has helped them do difficult things. Examples may include getting along with a difficult sibling, doing chores even when they don't feel like it, forgiving a friend when they have said something hurtful, or telling the truth about something they've done wrong even if it means they might get in trouble. Help kids see that God's strength never runs out, and He will supply us with everything we need.*



## Questions from Kids Video

USB on TV

Show the "Unit 16, Session 5" questions from kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

- How do we know if we have the Holy Spirit of God in us?
- Through the Holy Spirit, we can worship God anywhere. How do you worship God, no matter where you are?



## ENGAGE HEARTS

Show the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Isaiah 25:9 together.

### Key Passage Activity:

### Hot Seat Bible Memory Verse

- Key Passage Poster
- Slips of paper with words from verse
- Tape

**SAY:** God's people had to wait to rebuild the temple, and they had to wait for His promised salvation. We can rejoice because God has fulfilled His promise through Jesus Christ. Let's work on learning our key passage which reminds us of the promised salvation we have through Jesus.

**\*\*Before the start of class** - tape a word or phrase under random chairs in the classroom.

Ask the children to look under their chairs to see if they are sitting in one of the "hot seats" – a chair that has a word under it.

Whoever finds a word under their chair brings it to the front. The kids must arrange themselves in line, each holding up their word, so that the words are in the correct order.



## Unroll the Scroll

- Paper scrolls
- Markers

Pass out the paper scrolls and markers to groups of four children.

Write the story point on the dry erase board - “God’s people rebuilt the temple to worship Him.”

Have each team open up their scroll and read the story point out loud. Then, using their markers, have them work together to write or draw ways we can worship God in our everyday lives - praying, singing songs, serving others, listening to His Word and doing what it says, obeying our parents/teachers/etc....

Have the kids share their ideas with the class. Then, have them write or draw the reasons why we worship God - He is Holy, He keeps His promises, He loves us, He protects us, He listens and cares for us, etc.

Have them share their ideas with the class.

**SAY:** God was always in charge, and He provided for His people. The temple was rebuilt to worship God. God is always worthy of worship. God is still in charge today and He still provides for His people - for us! We can worship God in many ways as a way of saying “thank you” for loving us and for always keeping His promises.



## God Speaks

- Bibles
- Craft sticks with books of the Bible

Before the session, write the following books on craft sticks:

- Obadiah, Joel, Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

Create four sets. (This will be done for you!)

Form kids into four groups. Provide each group with a Bible and a set of craft sticks out of order. On your start, challenge each group to arrange the craft sticks in the correct order. Allow kids to use their Bible for help. The first team to arrange them in the correct order wins.

**SAY:** The Bible book names you arranged are the 12 Minor Prophets found in the Old Testament. Today, we saw that Haggai was a prophet who God used to speak to His people, encouraging them to keep rebuilding the temple. Today, God speaks to us through the Bible. As we read God’s Word, we discover more about God and His plan to save people from sin. Like the people listened to God’s words through Haggai, God desires that we obey His words in the Bible.