

REBUILDING THE TEMPLE

EZRA 4-6; HAGGAI 1-2



CHRIST CONNECTION: Long ago, people built a temple to meet with God. We do not need to go to a temple anymore to be close to God because God sent Jesus to be with us always.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How did God fix what sin broke? God sent Jesus.

KEY PASSAGE: This is our God. We waited, and He saved us. Isaiah 25:9

STORY POINT: God's people rebuilt the temple to worship Him.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

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? 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. The destruction of the temple 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 separating 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.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10-15 MINUTES

Greet preschoolers and open the session



LEARN

25-30 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers the story of the gospel



LOVE

30-40 MINUTES

Lead preschoolers to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

Lead preschoolers to live the mission of the gospel



BONUS

60-65 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers for an additional hour



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a supply of the following items available during all teaching sessions: Allergy Alert, Bibles, washable markers, crayons, scissors (adult use), blunt-tipped scissors, construction paper, copy paper, glue sticks, glue, tape, baby dolls, blocks, play dough, and a beanbag.



WELCOME

Search the rubble

- Big Picture Question Poster
- play money



LEARN

Tell the Bible story

- "Rebuilding the Temple" video (optional)

Review the Bible story

- Bible Story Picture Poster
- sticky notes

Learn and practice the key passage phrase

- Key Passage Phrase Marker



LOVE

Build the temple

- Bible Story Picture Poster
- interlocking blocks



LIVE

Make a house

- heavyweight paper
- craft sticks

Missions activity

- "Jim and Jean Leeper Photos" printable

Snack and transition

- hand sanitizer (optional)
- "Find the Hidden Money" activity page, 1 per child
- Big Picture Cards for Families



BONUS

Say the key passage phrase

- Key Passage Phrase Marker

Make silver coins

- heavyweight paper
- aluminum foil

Match building tools

- toy tools (hammer, wrench, screw driver, tape measure, glove, safety glasses, and so forth)
- large piece of paper



WELCOME Preschoolers

Provide as many learning activities as possible from the Love and Live sections to give preschoolers choices to learn. Incorporate the Bible story, the Christ Connection, story point, and key passage phrase in your conversations as the preschoolers engage in learning activities throughout the session.

Use the following activity to greet children as they enter the room. Talk about the big picture question and answer. After each child completes the welcome activity, encourage him to participate in the activities provided from the Love and Live sections of the leader guide.

SEARCH THE RUBBLE

Display the Big Picture Question Poster within view of children. Hide play money under a pile of blocks. Encourage children to seek and find the money hidden under the “rubble.” Once all the money has been found, hide again and repeat play. Review the big picture question and answer as children play.

SAY “I’m so glad you are here today! You found a lot of money hidden under the “rubble.” In our Bible story today, a king sent a letter telling someone to give the people money so they could keep building the temple. **GOD’S PEOPLE REBUILT THE TEMPLE TO WORSHIP HIM.** Our big picture question and answer asks, **How did God fix what sin broke? God sent Jesus.**”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





LEARN the Bible Story

1 TALK ABOUT THINGS PEOPLE BUILD



Give each child a piece of paper and a crayon. Encourage children to “draw” things people build. Allow children to share their drawings with one another.

SAY “People build all kinds of things, including buildings. In our Bible story today, we will learn about a special building God’s people built. **GOD’S PEOPLE REBUILT THE TEMPLE TO WORSHIP HIM.** Listen carefully to learn how God’s people rebuilt the temple.”

2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Open your Bible to Ezra 4 and Haggai 1. Tell the Bible story using the following summary. You may choose to review the Bible story by showing the video.

REBUILDING THE TEMPLE

SAY “God’s people were happy to be home. They started building a special house for God called a temple. They made the bottom part first. But some people nearby did not want them to build it and made them stop.

God did not want them to stop. He sent a man named Haggai to tell them, “Keep building the temple. God is with you!”

So, the people started building again. A leader in Jerusalem asked God’s people if they had permission to build the temple. The people said yes.

Tattenai wrote a letter to King Darius. The king looked at his papers and saw that another king named Cyrus had already given them permission. So, King Darius told Tattenai, “Let them finish building the temple. Give them money to help! No one should stop them.”

The people were so happy! They worked hard and finished the temple. Then they had a big party and thanked God.”

Christ Connection: Long ago, people built a temple to meet with God. We do not need to go to a temple anymore to be close to God because God sent Jesus to be with us always.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

3 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

Cover the Bible Story Picture Poster with sticky notes. Ask preschoolers to share something they remember from the Bible story, and then remove a sticky note from the picture. Celebrate together when the picture of the temple is revealed.

SAY “What special building did we find under the sticky notes? (the temple) **GOD’S PEOPLE REBUILT THE TEMPLE TO WORSHIP HIM.** We do not need a temple anymore to meet with God. When we choose to trust in Jesus, He is with us wherever we go.”

4 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “The Farmer in the Dell”:

This is our God.
This is our God.
We waited and He saved us.
This is our God.

5 LEARN AND PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at Isaiah 25:9. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Learn the key passage phrase. Say the key passage phrase together while passing a building block.

SAY “God’s people were so happy to be back in Jerusalem. The people knew that God was their God. They waited for Him and He saved them. **GOD’S PEOPLE REBUILT THE TEMPLE TO WORSHIP HIM.** God even used King Darius to help them get the temple finished so the people could worship Him again. Long ago, people built a temple to meet with God. We do not need to go to a temple anymore to be close to God because God sent Jesus to be with us always.”

6 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for using King Darius to help the people finish the temple.

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God because of what we learned

1 MAKE PARTY DECORATIONS

Allow children to use paper, crayons, washable markers, glue sticks, and tape to create decorations for a party. As children finish, hang the decorations around the room and discuss the Bible story.

SAY “**GOD’S PEOPLE REBUILT THE TEMPLE TO WORSHIP HIM.** The people were so happy! They had a big party and thanked God for helping them. You made decorations to celebrate God, too!”

2 BUILD THE TEMPLE

Gather interlocking blocks, toy people figures, and the Bible Story Picture Poster. Encourage children to build the temple using interlocking blocks. Allow children to add people figures. Talk about the Bible Story Picture Poster as they build.

SAY “**GOD’S PEOPLE REBUILT THE TEMPLE TO WORSHIP HIM.** The people were so happy to have their new temple to worship God. This was many years before Jesus was born, so this was the special place the people could go to be close to God. We no longer need a temple to be close to God because God sent Jesus to be with us always.”

3 BUILD AND FREEZE

Invite children to sit on the floor. Distribute several blocks to each child. Instruct children that when you start counting, they are to quickly build a temple with their blocks. When you say, “Stop” and stop counting, they are to stop building and freeze in place. Begin slowly counting as you prompt children to build. Say, “Stop.” Then say, “Keep building, God is with you!” to signal for preschoolers to restart building. Play several rounds.

SAY “How did it feel to be told to stop building before you finished building your temple? [Allow responses.] When God’s people returned home, they started to rebuild God’s temple. But then they stopped because their neighbors did not want them to rebuild it. God sent a prophet named Haggai to encourage the people to finish the temple. He told them, ‘Keep building, God is with you.’ The people started building again. **GOD’S PEOPLE REBUILT THE TEMPLE TO WORSHIP HIM.**”

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE for God out of love

1 MAKE A HOUSE

Distribute a piece of heavyweight paper, craft sticks, and glue to each preschooler. Lead her to use the craft sticks and glue to form a house on her paper. Set out crayons for her to use to draw people, flowers, and other things next to the house she built. Review the Bible story as children work.

SAY “ You made beautiful houses out of craft sticks. God’s people began rebuilding the temple, but they stopped because their neighbors did not like what they were doing. So, they started building houses until the prophet Haggai came to them and said, ‘Keep building, God is with you.’ God wanted His people to obey Him and keep Him first. The people started building again. **GOD’S PEOPLE REBUILT THE TEMPLE TO WORSHIP HIM.** ”

2 MISSIONS ACTIVITY

Print and display the “Jim and Jean Leeper Photos” printable. Mention that Jim Leeper knew at a young age that God wanted him to be a missionary when he grew up. Distribute paper and crayons. Ask preschoolers to draw what they want to be when they grow up. After the activity, pray, thanking God for Jim Leeper’s obedience to God’s plan for his life. Ask God help preschoolers learn more about God and His plan for their lives.

SAY “ What do you want to be when you grow up? [Allow responses.] When Jim Leeper was 12 years old, he knew God wanted him to be a missionary. A missionary is a person who tells other people about Jesus. Jim listened to God and was obedient. Jim told people about Jesus in the countries of Turkey, Germany, and Bosnia. ”

3 SNACK AND TRANSITION



Post an Allergy Alert. Serve the snack. As children eat, review and talk about the Bible story. When children finish their snack, lead them to complete the activity page. As they work, continue talking about the Bible story and emphasize the Christ Connection.

SAY “ Long ago, people built a temple to meet with God. We do not need to go to a temple anymore to be close to God because God sent Jesus to be with us always. ”

Remember to communicate helpful information to the bonus teaching hour leaders. If parents are picking up children at this time, tell them something their child did well during the session. Distribute Big Picture Cards for Families. Encourage parents to engage with the family discussion starters and family activities during the week.



TEACHING HOUR

BONUS Teaching Hour Group Time

1 RECEIVE MAIL



Ask children if they have ever received a letter or package in the mail. Share your own excitement when receiving mail. Ask children to listen closely to find out who wrote a letter to King Cyrus.

2 TALK ABOUT THE BIBLE STORY

Open the Bible to Ezra 4 and Haggai 1. Use the summarized points below to talk about the Bible story:

REBUILDING THE TEMPLE

- God's people were happy to be home and started building a temple for God. But they were stopped by neighbors who did not want them to rebuild.
- God sent Haggai to tell them to keep building because He was with them.
- The people resumed building, and a leader named Tattenai asked if they had permission.
- Tattenai wrote a letter to King Darius. The king found out King Cyrus already gave permission. He told Tattenai to let God's people finish and to give them money.
- The people were so happy! They finished the temple and celebrated with a big party to thank God.

3 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of "The Farmer in the Dell":

This is our God.
This is our God.
We waited and He saved us.
This is our God.

4 SAY THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at Isaiah 25:9. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Learn the key passage phrase. Repeat the key passage several times while children place fist over fist to simulate a building motion.

5 PRAY

Pray, thanking God that because of Jesus, we do not have to go to the temple to be close to God anymore.



TEACHING HOUR

BONUS Teaching Hour Activities

6 PLAY A BLOCK STACKING GAME



Make three piles of blocks on the floor. Group the children into small groups around each pile of blocks. Start a “Ready, Set, Go” race and see which group can make a tower with the blocks the fastest without knocking them over. Repeat play as time allows.

SAY “ The people had not finished the temple because some of their neighbors wanted them to stop building. God sent Haggai to tell them to finish it. Once they started building again, Tattenai wondered if they even had permission to build it. He wrote to the king who told him that not only did they have permission, Tattenai needed to give them some money so they could finish building the temple. **GOD’S PEOPLE REBUILT THE TEMPLE TO WORSHIP HIM.** Once they finished, they had a celebration and thanked God for the temple. ”

7 MAKE SILVER COINS

Cut large circles from heavyweight paper, one per child. Distribute the paper circle and sheets of aluminum foil to children. Demonstrate wrapping the foil around the circle to create a large “coin.” Retell the Bible story as the children work.

SAY “ King Darius discovered that King Cyrus had already given the people permission to rebuild the temple. Once he found that out, he told Tattenai to give God’s people money to finish the rebuilding. The people were so happy! They finished the temple and celebrated with a big party to thank God. **GOD’S PEOPLE REBUILT THE TEMPLE TO WORSHIP HIM.** ”

8 MATCH BUILDING TOOLS

Before the session, set toy tools such as a hammer, wrench, screw driver, tape measure, glove, and safety glasses on a large piece of paper. Use a marker to trace around each item. Remove the items and set them beside the prepared paper. Invite preschoolers to match the tool to the correct outline. Talk about how the preschooler might use each tool or item.

SAY “ Have you ever used a hammer? If you could build something, what would you build? [Allow responses.] God’s people wanted to rebuild the temple. They wanted a special place where they could go worship God. After some time, **GOD’S PEOPLE REBUILT THE TEMPLE TO WORSHIP HIM.** People don’t need to go to a temple anymore to meet with God. Jesus is with us wherever we go. ”

Release preschoolers to parents according to your church’s security procedure. Tell them something their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session.