

# EZRA TAUGHT GOD'S LAW

EZRA 7-10; NEHEMIAH 8



**CHRIST CONNECTION:** Like Ezra, Jesus also taught people about God's rules. But Jesus did even more! He obeyed all of God's rules perfectly, died for our sins, and came back to life.

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** What is the Bible about? The Bible is about God's plan to save people through Jesus.

**KEY PASSAGE:** These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah.  
John 20:31

**STORY POINT:** Ezra taught God's law to His people.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

## LEADER Bible Study

In His providence, God raised up Ezra to be a leader who realized the people of God needed to do more than just rebuild the buildings and walls in Jerusalem. If all the buildings and infrastructure of Jerusalem were completely rebuilt but the people did not know God and His good commands, then all their rebuilding would be in vain.

Ezra was a faithful scribe and priest who returned to Jerusalem with a clear mission: to teach the law of God to the people. Ezra 7:10 tells us that Ezra determined to know the law, obey the law, and teach the law to the people of God in Jerusalem. Ezra's commitment and desire to teach the law was not merely to speak its truth; he intended to live the truth of it as well.

From dawn until noon, Ezra read from the law of Moses, instructing God's people in His commands and reminding them of God's faithfulness. The response of the people to the reading of the law was overwhelming. They wept when they heard God's Word because they were confronted with the reality of their sin. Ultimately, the people repented of their sins and made a commitment to follow God's law.

Ezra's commitment to living and teaching the law reminds us of the importance of devoting ourselves to knowing, understanding, and living out God's Word. This opens our lives to God's transformative work through His truth and the power of the Holy Spirit who conforms us into the image of Jesus. Through our study of God's Word, we also realize our absolute need for Him. God's Word reveals our sin and reminds us that we are incapable of saving ourselves. Because of God's faithful love, He sent His Son to take our sin upon Himself so that we can be forgiven and receive eternal salvation.

Ezra's ministry reminds us of the power of Scripture to transform lives. God's Word reveals our sin, leads us to repentance, and shows us the way to restoration. Point kids to see how followers of Jesus are called to know, understand, obey, and share God's words as they point others to the gospel.



### 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

Lead preschoolers to love the God of the gospel

#### 30-40 MINUTES



### 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

#### Spell with alphabet blocks

- index cards, 9
- wooden alphabet blocks
- Big Picture Question Poster



### LEARN

#### Speak a message

- small, sturdy step stool
- paper scroll

#### Tell the Bible story

- "Ezra Taught God's Law" video (optional)

#### Review the Bible story

- Bible Story Picture Poster
- paper scroll

#### Learn and practice the key passage phrase

- Key Passage Phrase Marker
- paper scroll



### LOVE

#### Make a celebration treat

- play dough cutters
- play dough rollers

#### Worship with instruments

- assorted rhythm instruments
- worship music

#### Put up a tent

- small tent



### LIVE

#### Paint with cookie cutters

- alphabet cookie cutters
- washable paint
- disposable plates
- art smocks

#### Missions activity

- "Cactus Tracing" printable, 1 per child

#### Snack and transition

- hand sanitizer (optional)
- "Trace the Letters" activity page, 1 per child
- Big Picture Cards for Families



### BONUS

#### Say the key passage phrase

- Key Passage Phrase Marker

#### Serve a special snack

- paper plates
- painter's tape

#### Complete puzzles

- alphabet puzzles



## 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.

### SPELL WITH ALPHABET BLOCKS

Write these words in neat, capital letters on index cards, writing one word on each card: EZRA, GOD, LAW, JESUS, OBEY, WALL, AMEN, SCROLL, BIBLE. Place the Big Picture Question Poster in the center of a preschool height table just inside the classroom door. Arrange the cards and alphabet blocks around the poster. As children arrive, welcome them and guide them to the prepared table. Read aloud the word cards and encourage them to select a card. Show the children that there are letters on the blocks. Help the children spell words by matching the letters on the blocks to the letters on the cards. As the children spell words, point to the Big Picture Question poster and read it several times to the children.

**SAY** “It’s so good to see you today. Let’s read some of the words that you have been spelling with the alphabet blocks. These words come from our Bible story. In today’s story, we will hear how **EZRA TAUGHT GOD’S LAW TO HIS PEOPLE**. Then, God’s people promised to obey Him. The big picture question and answer says, **What is the Bible about? The Bible is about God’s plan to save people through Jesus**. Like Ezra, Jesus taught God’s people His rules. But Jesus was also able to obey God’s rules perfectly Himself.”

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





## LEARN the Bible Story

### 1 SPEAK A MESSAGE

Invite the children to group time. Place a small stool in the center of the floor. Help a child step onto the stool. Give the child the scroll and prompt him to unroll it. Whisper a message into the child's ear and ask him to repeat it aloud. Help the child step down and return to group time. Invite each child to stand on the step stool and say a message, such as "We thank God," "God wants us to obey," "Today is a happy day," "The Bible is God's Word," "God's Word helps us," and "God cares for us."

**SAY** “Great job sharing messages with us! Ezra went back to Jerusalem and taught God’s people how to obey His rules. Listen carefully to learn what Ezra taught the people.”

### 2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Open your Bible to Ezra 7 and Nehemiah 8. Tell the Bible story using the following summary. You may choose to review the Bible story by showing the video.

#### EZRA TAUGHT GOD’S LAW

**SAY** “The walls around Jerusalem were finished! All the people came together to hear Ezra the priest read God’s Word. Ezra stood up high on a platform and opened a scroll. He began to read aloud.

Everyone listened very carefully, and Ezra thanked God. The people lifted their hands. They said, “Amen!” and bowed down low to the ground. Everyone worshiped God together.

Some helpers explained God’s words so everyone could understand. Then the people felt sad. They realized they hadn’t been living the way God wanted. They were sorry for not obeying God.

Ezra told the people, “Don’t be sad! Today is a happy day. Go home and get ready to have a big feast. God makes us strong.”

So, the people went home and got ready. Then they ate yummy food and had a feast! They were happy because God gave them His Word to help them do the right things.

The next day, the people came back to learn more from Ezra. They found out that God wanted them to have a special party to remember how He took care of their families long ago when they lived in tents after leaving Egypt.

Everyone went out and got branches. They made little tents on their rooftops and in their yards. It was the first time they had celebrated like this in a long time, and they were happy because they were doing what God wanted.”

**Christ Connection:** Like Ezra, Jesus also taught people about God’s rules. But Jesus did even more! He obeyed all of God’s rules perfectly, died for our sins, and came back to life.



LEARN

## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### 3 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

Show children the Bible Story Picture Poster. Tell the children that you are going to ask questions, and they should raise their hands if they know the answer. Toss a scroll to a child with a raised hand and ask him to toss it back while answering. Questions: Who read the scroll to the people? (Ezra) Why were the people sad? (They had not been living the way God wanted them to live.) Why did Ezra tell the people not to be sad? (Today is a happy day.) What did the people do to remember that God cared for them after leaving Egypt? (They built tents.) Did it make the people happy to do what God wanted? (Yes)

**SAY** “ After the walls of Jerusalem were finished, **EZRA TAUGHT GOD’S LAW TO HIS PEOPLE**. Like Ezra, Jesus also taught people about God’s rules. But Jesus did even more! He obeyed all of God’s rules perfectly, died for our sins, and came back to life. ”

### 4 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “God Is So Good”:

God’s plan is Jesus.  
God’s plan is Jesus.  
God’s plan is Jesus,  
The Bible tells us so.

### 5 LEARN AND PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Arrange the children in a circle. Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at John 20:31. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage phrase. Read the phrase aloud and lead preschoolers to repeat it. Play music and invite children to pass a scroll around the circle. Stop the music and guide the child holding the scroll to say the key passage phrase. Continue passing the scroll and saying the phrase as time allows.

**SAY** “ The key passage phrase tells us that God’s Word was written so we would know who Jesus is. God promised His people He would send someone to save His people from their sin. Like Ezra in our Bible story, Jesus taught people about God’s rules. But Jesus also followed God’s rules perfectly. ”

### 6 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for Jesus who never sinned and shows us how to follow God.

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





## LOVE God because of what we learned

### 1 MAKE A CELEBRATION TREAT

Distribute play dough, cutters, and rollers to the children. Tell the children that they should make some of their favorite foods with the play dough. Show children how to flatten their play dough with their hands or with dough rollers, and then how to cut it into shapes with the cutters. Demonstrate how to form the dough into balls or long snake shapes with it. As children work with the dough, ask them to tell you some of their favorite foods.

**SAY** 🗨️ What are foods you like to eat at a celebration? [Allow responses.] **EZRA TAUGHT GOD'S LAW TO HIS PEOPLE.** This made the people sad because they realized that they had not been living the way God wanted. They were sorry for not obeying God. But Ezra told the people that today was a happy day. He then told them to go home and get ready to have a celebration feast. 🗨️

### 2 WORSHIP GOD WITH INSTRUMENTS

Play worship music and place various instruments on a tabletop. Invite children to worship God with you. Guide children to play each of the instruments to hear what sounds they make. If needed, demonstrate for the children how to hold, play, and gently return the instrument to the table.

**SAY** 🗨️ Thank you for worshiping God with me with music. In the Bible story, **EZRA TAUGHT GOD'S LAW TO HIS PEOPLE.** They listed every carefully, and Ezra thanked God. Then the people lifted their hands. They said, 'Amen,' and then bowed low to the ground. Everyone worshiped God together—just like us! 🗨️

### 3 PUT UP A TENT

Gather children into a large circle and encourage them to be seated. Place a disassembled tent in the center of the circle. Carefully assemble the tent, encouraging children to assist you. Invite the children to take turns sitting and playing in the tent.

**SAY** 🗨️ Thank you for helping me assemble a tent. Today, we heard a Bible story where everyone got branches and made little tents on their rooftops and in their yards. This was to help them remember that God took care of their families long ago when they lived in tents after leaving Egypt. Like Ezra, Jesus also taught people about God's rules. But Jesus did even more! He obeyed all of God's rules perfectly, died for our sins, and came back to life. 🗨️





## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### LIVE for God out of love

#### 1 PAINT WITH COOKIE CUTTERS

Write the key passage phrase on a sheet of construction paper for each child. Pour a shallow layer of paint on disposable plates for small groups of children. Assist children in putting on art smocks. Distribute key passage phrase papers, plates with paint, and alphabet cookie cutters to children. Demonstrate for children how to dip their cookie cutters into the paint and form letters on their papers.

**SAY** “ When we write words, we use letters like these you have printed onto your papers. Our key passage phrase says, ‘These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah. John 20:31.’ This key passage tells us that the words in the Bible were written so we can know that Jesus came to save people from their sin. ”

#### 2 MISSIONS ACTIVITY

Print a copy of the “Cactus Tracing” printable for each preschooler. Lead children to trace the cactus outline before coloring it. Preschoolers will take home the papers as a reminder to pray for the Bowman family.

**SAY** “ Have you ever seen a cactus? **[Allow responses.]** Cacti grow in the desert. Phoenix is the capital city of the state of Arizona. Phoenix lies in the desert, and it is surrounded by mountains. It has a warm, sunny desert climate where you can find beautiful cacti, but watch out for those sharp needles on the cactus! Those needles help protect the cactus and give it shade from the warm sun. **[Lead a prayer.]** ”

#### 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** “ Like Ezra, Jesus also taught people about God’s rules. But Jesus did even more! He obeyed all of God’s rules perfectly, died for our sins, and came back to life. ”

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

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### 1 SING AND WORSHIP



Before group time, roll a piece of paper into a “scroll” and set chairs up in rows. Invite the children to join you in the group time area for a time of worship. Prompt them to sit in a chair. Begin by leading the children in singing a simple children’s song, such as “Jesus Loves Me.” Say a quick prayer, thanking God that everyone can be together for a time of worship. Then, open the paper scroll to tell the Bible story.

### 2 TALK ABOUT THE BIBLE STORY

Open the Bible to Ezra 7 and Nehemiah 8. Use the summarized points below to talk about the Bible story:

#### EZRA TAUGHT GOD’S LAW

- The walls around Jerusalem were finished, and everyone gathered to hear Ezra read God’s Word.
- The people listened carefully, thanked God, and worshiped Him together.
- Helpers explained God’s words, and the people felt sad because they were not obeying God.
- Ezra told them not to be sad and encouraged them to have a feast and be happy because God makes them strong.
- The people celebrated by having a feast and making little tents, remembering how God took care of their families long ago.

### 3 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “God Is So Good”:

God’s plan is Jesus.  
God’s plan is Jesus.  
God’s plan is Jesus,  
The Bible tells us so.

### 4 SAY THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at John 20:31. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage phrase aloud. Prompt children to stomp their feet as they say each word of the key passage phrase. Tell the children that the Bible is about God’s plan to save people through Jesus.

### 5 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for giving us His Bible to help us learn about Him.



## TEACHING HOUR

# BONUS Teaching Hour Activities

### 6 MAKE A VERSE SCROLL



Write the key passage phrase on a piece of construction paper for each child. Provide children with key passage phrase papers and washable markers. Read the key passage phrase aloud and encourage the children to use the markers to decorate their pages. When children are finished drawing and decorating, help them to roll their papers to form a scroll. Tape the scrolls so that they do not unroll.

**SAY** “ Let’s look at our scrolls and say our key passage phrase, ‘These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah. John 20:31.’ Today we learned how **EZRA TAUGHT GOD’S LAW TO HIS PEOPLE**. Ezra stood on a platform, so everyone could see and hear him, and he opened a scroll. Like Ezra, Jesus also taught people about God’s rules. But Jesus did even more! He obeyed all of God’s rules perfectly, died for our sins, and came back to life. ”

### 7 SERVE A SPECIAL SNACK



Post an Allergy Alert. Enlist the children’s help in setting the table for a special feast. Appoint a couple of children to clear a table. Ask several children to place plates, napkins, and empty cups at every child’s place. Direct a child to place a packaged snack on each child’s plate. Pour some water in each child’s cup. Invite the children to be seated at the table. Say a prayer, thanking God for the food before prompting the children to eat their snack.

**SAY** “ Thank you for joining me for a special feast. **EZRA TAUGHT GOD’S LAW TO HIS PEOPLE**. When the people heard God’s words, they felt sad because they realized they hadn’t been living the way God wanted. They were sorry for not obeying God. Ezra told the people not to be sad. He then told them to go home and get ready to have a big feast. ”

### 8 COMPLETE PUZZLES

Place letter puzzles on a table. Invite a child to put a puzzle together. Select the alphabet puzzle and dump the pieces onto the table. Direct the child to turn over the puzzle pieces. Help her put the pieces back into their appropriate places. As she places the letter pieces, make statements like: E is for Ezra; S is for scroll; B is for Bible; J is for Jesus; L is for law; G is for God; W is for worship, and so forth. When the child has finished, help her select and put together another puzzle.

**SAY** “ [Point to each letter.] E is for Ezra. S is for scroll. **EZRA TAUGHT GOD’S LAW TO HIS PEOPLE**. G is for God. Ezra read God’s word to the people to help them do the right things. Like Ezra, Jesus also taught people about God’s rules. But Jesus did even more! He obeyed all of God’s rules perfectly, died for our sins, and came back to life. ”

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