



THE EXILES RETURN

BIBLE PASSAGE (EZRA 1-3; 7; NEHEMIAH 1-2)

Summary: The Israelite people had been in exile for 70 years. King Cyrus was stirred by the Lord to let some of the people return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. Ezra later took a second group and encouraged all the people to turn away from sin and turn to God. Nehemiah heard about how the walls of Jerusalem were destroyed. He received permission to go back and help rebuild the walls. God used His people to do His work to restore the city.

Today's Brite Idea is: God works through His people.



MONTHLY Memory Verse

*Great is the LORD, and
greatly to be praised.*

(PSALM 145:3)



BIG QUESTION

Who is greater than everything? God!



God loves
everyone.



We can
serve God.



I can
serve God.

LEADER TRAINING: OFFER CHOICES

Preschoolers often act out when they feel powerless or out of control. Give a preschooler a sense of control by offering choices. This encourages independence, teaches decision-making and reduces power struggles.

- **Keep choices limited.** Provide two clear options such as “Do you want to sit on the red chair or the blue chair?” Limiting options helps kids make decisions without becoming overwhelmed.
- **Make both options acceptable.** Each choice should be one that works within the classroom rules so kids can exercise control while the environment stays safe and orderly.
- **Connect choices to God’s truth.** Explain that making good choices is part of following God’s guidance and showing love to others. You might say, “God wants us to share and help our friends, so let’s choose something that shows kindness.”
- **Stay calm and consistent.** Kids build trust when leaders follow through, maintain clear boundaries and respond to choices with patience. Over time, offering choices helps kids grow in confidence in understanding God’s design for their decision-making.

NAVIGATING A BROKEN WORLD: EARNING SALVATION

Almost half of U.S. adults believe that salvation is earned by doing good deeds in their lives.* Salvation by grace alone goes against our human instinct of working to get what we want. Kids naturally default to believing they have to earn God’s favor and go to heaven. You may have kids in your group who feel they must do good things to earn God’s love. In today’s lesson, kids will learn that God works through us and that we can serve Him by serving others and sharing His love. Listen carefully to kids’ responses, pointing them towards the grace of God. Help them see that our works are a response to God’s love and goodness, not an effort to try to earn His favor.

PRESCHOOL GLOSSARY:

Temple: the holy place where God’s people went to worship Him

*For more resources on this topic, check out: britecurriculum.com/resources

1

BELONG

Small Group (15 MINUTES)

GOAL: For kids to experience God's love through a welcoming community

TEAM TOWER

SUPPLIES: Blocks

OR

LET'S HELP OTHERS

SUPPLIES: None

2

BIBLE TEACHING

Large Group (20 MINUTES)

THE EXILES RETURN

(EZRA 1-3; 7; NEHEMIAH 1-2)

SUPPLIES: Bible, teaching slides, teaching pictures (printed/shown from teaching slides), video player, music player, printable pages, scissors (prep), poster board, painter's tape

3

BELIEVE

Small Group (10 MINUTES)

GOAL: For kids to discover who God is by engaging with the Bible

MEMORY VERSE

WIGGLE

SUPPLIES: Egg shakers (1 per kid), music player, Memory Verse Song

OR

RETURN

FROM EXILE

SUPPLIES: Painter's tape

4

BECOME

Small Group (15 MINUTES)

GOAL: For kids to learn to follow Jesus by applying faith to their lives

HELPING HANDS

SUPPLIES: Take-Home page, coloring supplies, paper plates (1 per kid), large washable ink pads (1 per 3 kids), baby wipes, heart stickers (4 per kid)

OR

I CAN SERVE GOD

SUPPLIES: Take-Home page, coloring supplies, 4 balls, 2 stuffed animals



TEAM TOWER

SUPPLIES:

Blocks

PREP:

None

ADAPTATION FOR DIFFERENT LEARNERS: Kids can get easily frustrated when buildings topple. Guide them through a few deep breaths if needed.

ACTIVITY INTRO:

Welcome, everyone! My name is _____. Can each of you tell us your name?

Welcome each kid by name and welcome any new kids to the group.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. **Say:** Today we will build a tall tower together!
2. *Invite kids to gather around the blocks.*
3. **Say:** Let's take turns adding one block at a time to make the tallest tower we can.
4. *Help kids take turns, cheer them on and encourage teamwork.*
5. *If the tower topples, encourage kids to build together again.*
6. **Ask:** What's something you like to build?



ACTIVITY WRAP-UP:

You worked together so well. Today we will learn that God works through His people!



LET'S HELP OTHERS

SUPPLIES:

None

PREP:

None

LEADER TIP: If space is limited, have kids move in slow motions like tiptoeing.

ADAPTATION FOR DIFFERENT LEARNERS: Choose movements that are inclusive of the physical needs of your group.

ACTIVITY INTRO:

Welcome, everyone! My name is _____. Can each of you tell us your name? *Welcome each kid by name and welcome any new kids to the group.*

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. **Say:** God loves when we help each other. We will practice helping!
2. **Say:** We will walk around and I will say, "Find a helper!" When I say this, look for a friend to do what I ask together.
3. *Have kids begin walking around your space.*
4. **Say:** Find a helper!
5. *Encourage kids to quickly pair up with the closest kid next to them.*
6. **Tell each pair a simple helping task to do together:**
 - Give your helper a high five!
 - Hold hands and take three steps together.
 - Touch your elbows together.
 - Spin around slowly with your helper.
 - Pretend to sweep the floor together.
 - Sit down together.
7. **Ask:** What is one way you can help someone this week?



ACTIVITY WRAP-UP:

You did such a great job helping each other! I love how you worked together. We will learn more today about how helping is important.

INTRO:

Play the Countdown Video and guide kids to sit together for large group teaching time.

WELCOME:

Say: Welcome, everyone! You are in the right place today! I'm so excited to share a true Bible story with you.

RECAP FROM *Last Week*

Say: We learned about a man named Elijah who prayed on a mountain for God to show He is real. God answered by sending down fire from the sky!

Show teaching image: Fire Falls.

Say: We also learned that God loved Jonah and the people of Nineveh even though they made wrong choices.

Show teaching image: Jonah Swallowed by the Fish.

Say: Then we learned about a special dream Isaiah had that showed him how great and perfect God is.

Show teaching image: God's Throne.

Say: Last week we learned about three friends who loved God and chose to worship Him—even when it was really hard.

Show teaching image: Fourth Man in the Fire.

Say: Today we will learn a true story from the Bible about God's people who got to come home after living far, far away.



BIG QUESTION



PLAY FIND IT IN THE *Bible Song*

Say: Let's take a look at this month's Big Question. Can you help me do a drumroll? Ready? 1, 2, 3... drumroll!

Show Big Question Teaching Image.

Say: Who is greater than everything? We will find out in today's Bible story!

Play the "Find It in the Bible" song.

Hold up a Bible.

SUPPLIES:

Bible, teaching slides, teaching pictures (printed/shown from teaching slides), video player, music player, printable pages, scissors (prep), poster board, painter's tape

PREP:

Print the printable page and cut out. Tape the poster board in the front of your space.

LEADER TIP:

If there are too many kids to pass the puzzle pieces, walk around and show each piece to the group.

Say: Who can tell me the name of this book? *Allow kids to respond.*

Say: Yes! This book is called the Bible. The Bible is the most important book of all. The Bible is full of true stories about how God takes care of His people and loves them. Today we will hear a story from the Old Testament in the book of Ezra and Nehemiah. The Old Testament is filled with lots of stories about God's creation, His people and the things that happened before Jesus came to Earth.

THE EXILES RETURN

(EZRA 1-3; 7; NEHEMIAH 1-2)

Say: Many of God's people had to live in a faraway place for a long time. Being away from their homes was punishment for living their own way instead of God's way. But God didn't forget His people. One day, God led the king of the faraway land to send some of the captured people back home to Jerusalem to rebuild God's **temple**.

PRESCHOOL GLOSSARY:

Temple: the holy place where God's people went to worship Him

Pass around the puzzle piece with the crown on it so all kids can see.

Once it comes back to you, tape it to the poster board. This will be the top left corner of the picture.

Say: The **temple** was the place where God's people worshiped Him. It had been destroyed in a big battle many years earlier. The king did even more good things! He gave gold and silver to God's people to help pay for the rebuilding of the **temple**.

Pass around the puzzle piece with the gold and silver on it so all kids can see. Once it comes back to you, tape it to the poster board. This will be the top middle of the puzzle.

Say: The king also found some of the things taken from the **temple** and gave them back. God's people went home and started building. After working a little bit, God's people had a big praise party!

Show teaching image: The People Celebrate.

Say: They sang loudly about God's goodness and His great love that lasts forever. When the work on the **temple** was finished, they celebrated again! They had a big celebration and promised God they would honor Him in His **temple**.

Pass around the puzzle piece with the temple on it so all kids can see. Once it comes back to you, tape it to the poster board. This will be the top right of the puzzle.

Say: Later, more of God's people were allowed to go home to Jerusalem. One of them was a priest named Ezra. He loved studying and teaching God's Word. He taught the people to admit the wrong things they were doing and start living the way God wanted them to.

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Say: Even more of God's people returned home! These people saw a big problem—the walls around the city that protected God's people from enemies were broken!

Pass around the puzzle piece with the walls on it so all kids can see. Once it comes back to you, tape it to the poster board. This will be the bottom left of the puzzle.

Say: A man named Nehemiah heard about this and was so sad for his home city. He asked God for help. The king allowed Nehemiah to go home too! Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem and led everyone there to work together to rebuild the walls.

Show teaching image: Rebuilding of the Walls

Pass around the puzzle piece with the hammer on it so all kids can see. Once it comes back to you, tape it to the poster board. This will be the bottom middle of the puzzle.

Say: God worked through many people to bring His people home and to begin to rebuild Jerusalem.

Show teaching slide: Point to Jesus.



POINT TO JESUS

Say: God's people returned to a broken city. They didn't live God's way. But God never stopped loving His people!

Pass around the puzzle piece with the heart on it so all kids can see. Once it comes back to you, tape it to the poster board. This will be the bottom right of the puzzle.

Say: When you and I don't live God's way, it's called sin. We all sin, but God still loves us. He showed His love by sending His Son, Jesus, to die for our sins!

Say: Let's close in prayer as we wrap up our Bible story time together. Reach your hands up really high.

Reach hands up high.

Say: Now clap them together like this.

Clap hands together.

Say: Let's pray.

Pray: God, You never forgot about Your people living far, far away. You love us too! Thank You for always loving us! Amen.



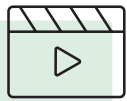
BIG QUESTION

Say: Now it's time to answer our Big Question. Can you all help me do a drumroll?
1, 2, 3... drumroll!

Show the Big Question and Answer Teaching Image.

Say: Who is greater than everything? God!

Say: That's right! The Bible teaches that God is bigger and stronger and greater than anyone or anything!



VERSE VIDEO

*Play Memory Verse
Motion Video after the
verse is read.*

MEMORY VERSE MOTIONS:

Help kids recite and retain the memory verse by teaching it with motions. Before you teach the verse, be sure to explain what it means.

- Great (make a V with your arms)
- is the LORD, (point to the sky)
- and greatly (bring arms in and extend out to one side)
- to be praised. (bring arms in and extend out to the other side)
- Psalm 145:3 (open hands like a book)



MONTHLY Memory Verse

*Great is the LORD, and
greatly to be praised.*

(PSALM 145:3)



REVIEW:

Say: It's been so great being with you today, friends! Before we end our teaching time, let's review what we have learned. Let's all point up really high and say, "God loves everyone."

Have the kids point up and say, "God loves everyone."

Say: Now let's reach our hands out to the side and say, "We can serve God."

Have kids reach out and say, "We can serve God."

Say: Now let's point to ourselves and say, "I can serve God."

Have kids point to themselves and say, "I can serve God."



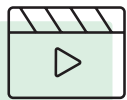
God loves everyone.



We can serve God.



I can serve God.



* Consider showing the Bible Review Video as kids eat snack, are waiting for pick-up, or another time that fits your church's schedule.



MEMORY VERSE WIGGLE

SUPPLIES:

Egg shakers (1 per kid), music player,
Memory Verse Song

PREP:

None

ADAPTATION FOR DIFFERENT LEARNERS: The music and shakers might be too much noise for some kids. Have noise-canceling headphones and a “quiet area” available.

ACTIVITY INTRO:

The Bible teaches us true stories about God. Today we learned that God works through His people. God loves us and helps us to serve others.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. **Say:** Let’s use our shakers while we wiggle to our Memory Verse Song!
2. *Hand each kid an egg shaker.*
3. *Play the Memory Verse Song.*
4. **Lead wiggles while saying the verse:**
 - Great is the LORD, *(shake high)*
 - and greatly to be praised. *(shake low)*
 - Psalm 145:3 *(shake super-fast)*
5. *Repeat the song with different, fun movements such as big circles, tiny shakes, slow shakes, etc.*
6. **Ask:** Why do we praise God?
7. **Ask:** What part of the verse do you remember best?



ACTIVITY WRAP-UP:

God is great, and He loves us! We can worship God because He is worthy of our praise.



RETURN FROM EXILE

SUPPLIES:

Painter's tape

PREP:

Create a simple path on the floor that kids will walk down.

LEADER TIP: If space is limited, have kids walk in place and call out fun motions for them to do, such as "Duck!" or "Jump over the river!"

ADAPTATION FOR DIFFERENT LEARNERS: Kids who cannot navigate the path can be "guides" for the group and choose how they move along the path.

ACTIVITY INTRO:

The Bible teaches us true stories about God. Today we learned that God brought His people home and worked through them to rebuild the temple.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. **Say:** The Israelites traveled a long way home after being gone for many years. We will pretend to walk the path home too!
2. *Point to the taped path.*
3. **Say:** Follow the path using different movements.
 - Tiptoe.
 - Hop like a bunny.
 - Walk like a giant with huge steps.
 - Pretend to fly while flapping your arms as wings.
4. *When kids reach the end, say, "God loves us and brings us close to Him!"*
5. **Ask:** How do you think the people felt when they went home?
6. **Ask:** How does it feel that God loves you?



ACTIVITY WRAP-UP:

God loved His people and brought them home. God loves you too!



HELPING HANDS

SUPPLIES:

Take-Home page, coloring supplies, paper plates (1 per kid), large washable ink pads (1 per 3 kids), baby wipes, heart stickers (4 per kid)

PREP:

Print the Take-Home page (1 per kid).

LEADER TIP: Test out the ink pad on the paper plates ahead of time. For better ink results, avoid plates with a strong wax coating.

ADAPTATION FOR DIFFERENT LEARNERS: Provide markers to trace hands for kids who don't like the feeling of having their hand covered with ink.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. **Say:** We will make handprints on a paper plate to remind us that God can use our hands to help!
2. *Give each kid a paper plate.*
3. *Lay out the washable ink pads. Help kids press their hand into the ink pad and then onto their plate.*
4. *Wipe hands clean.*
5. *Then pass out coloring supplies and heart stickers. Help kids decorate their paper plates.*
6. *Write each kid's name on their craft and set aside for parent pickup.*
7. **Say:** We can use our hands to serve God. This means that we can help others, tell them about God and look for ways we can serve.
8. **Say:** How can we serve God?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What did you learn from today's Bible story?
- Who is greater than everything?
- Why should we serve God?
- How do you know God loves you?

PRAY TOGETHER:

Dear God, thank You for our hands. Help us use them to help others and to serve You. Amen.

ACTIVITY WRAP-UP:

Give each kid a Take-Home page. With remaining time, kids can play in centers or color the Take-Home page.



I CAN SERVE GOD

SUPPLIES:

Take-Home page, coloring supplies, 4 balls, 2 stuffed animals

PREP:

Print the Take-Home page (1 per kid). Place two stuffed animals at the station 2 location and the four balls at station 3.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. **Say:** We will practice serving God by helping others! I have set up different stations around our space. We will take turns at each station.
 - **Station 1:** Cleaning—Pretend to sweep.
 - **Station 2:** Helping—Carry stuffed animals gently.
 - **Station 3:** Sharing—Pass a soft ball to a friend.
 - **Station 4:** Encouraging—Give high fives and say, “Great job!”
2. *Rotate kids through each station. If you have a large group, divide kids into groups of 3-4 and have them rotate through each station.*
3. **Say:** You can serve God everywhere you go! Let’s think of ways that we can serve God this week!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What did you learn from today’s Bible story?
- Who is greater than everything?
- Why should we serve God?
- How do you know God loves you?



PRAY TOGETHER:

Dear God, thank You for letting us serve You. Help us see ways to help others every day. In Jesus’ name, amen.

ACTIVITY WRAP-UP:

Give each kid a Take-Home page. With remaining time, kids can play in centers or color the Take-Home page.

CENTERS:

Set up 3–4 centers around the room for kids to explore and learn as they play. While kids explore the centers, leaders can work with individuals or small groups to make the craft. Set up each center in a separate part of the room, making sure all kids are visible at all times. Show the whole group what is in each center and give simple instructions on what kids should do in each center.

- **Pretend Play:** Provide toy hammers, plastic tools, hard hats and toy wood pieces. Encourage kids to pretend to be Nehemiah’s helpers and rebuild the wall.
- **Sensory Bin:** Provide large pom-poms with cups, scoops and bowls. Remind kids of the walls Nehemiah rebuilt.
- **Match and Sort:** Provide foam shapes and cups for kids to sort by size, shape or color. Have kids think of the supplies Nehemiah would need to rebuild the walls.

BONUS SCRIPT:

Preschoolers learn best through repetition. Use the script below to review the story at any opportunity. You could review the story while kids play in centers, while they work on their craft, during snack time or while waiting for parents.

Say: God’s people had been away from their home for a very long time. But God worked through a king and let the people go back to Jerusalem. Ezra led some of the people home and helped them learn to follow God again. Nehemiah heard that the walls of the city were broken, so he went to help fix them. The people worked together, and God helped them rebuild their home. God works through His people to do amazing things.



BIG QUESTION

Who is greater than everything? God!