



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 (10 MINUTES)

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

RETURN THE SHAPES

SUPPLIES: Various colored cardstock paper, scissors (prep), bin

2

BIBLE TEACHING

Large Group (15 MINUTES)

THE EXILES RETURN (EZRA 1-3; 7; NEHEMIAH 1-2)

SUPPLIES: Bible, Bible story cards

3

BELIEVE

Small Group (10 MINUTES)

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

REBUILD THE WALLS

SUPPLIES: Building blocks

4

BECOME

Small Group (10 MINUTES)

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

LET'S SERVE GOD

SUPPLIES: Take-Home page, coloring supplies, printable page, washable ink pads, heart stamps, baby wipes



RETURN THE SHAPES

SUPPLIES:

Various colored cardstock paper, scissors (prep), bin

PREP:

Cut the cardstock paper into circles, squares and triangle shapes. Place them around your space.

LEADER TIP: If you have a mixed age group, provide a bin for each shape for older kids to sort the various shapes into.

ACTIVITY INTRO:

Welcome everyone! My name is _____. *Greet each kid by name and welcome any new kids to the group.*

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. **Say:** Today we will learn about God's people who returned home. I put many shapes around our area. Let's work together to gather them and return them to this bin.
2. **Say:** As you get the shapes, I'll call out different movements to do along the way.
3. **Movements to call out:**
 - Hop
 - Big steps
 - Small steps
 - Spin
 - Reach arms up
 - Leap like a frog
 - Waddle like a penguin
 - Wiggle your bodies
4. **Ask:** What was your favorite movement to do?

**ACTIVITY WRAP-UP:**

You helped return all the shapes to the bin. Today we will learn a Bible story about God's people, who were able to return home. Let's find out how this went and what they learned about following God.

THE EXILES RETURN

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

Use the Bible story cards to teach the Bible story or read the script to the kids.



Say: Many of God's people were taken from their homes and had to live in a faraway place for a long time. But God led the king of the faraway land to send some of the people back home. He gave them gold and silver to help pay for the building. God's people went home and started working. Let's all pretend we are using tools to help the people build!

Lead kids to mimic using various tools to build with God's people.

Say: After working a little bit, God's people had a great celebration of praise! They sang loudly about God's goodness and His great love that lasts forever. When the work was finished, they celebrated again! Clap your hands and celebrate!

Say: Later, more of God's people were allowed to go home to Jerusalem. These people saw a big problem—the walls around the city that protected God's people from enemies were broken! A man named Nehemiah heard about the walls and felt really sad. He asked God for help.

Say: The king allowed Nehemiah to go home too! Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem and led everyone there to work together to rebuild the walls. Let's use some more tools!

Lead kids to mimic using various tools to work on the **temple**.



POINT TO JESUS

Say: God worked through many people to bring His people home and to begin to rebuild Jerusalem. God sent His Son, Jesus to save us from our sin. Everyone can choose to follow Jesus and have their sins forgiven. That's how God fixes what is broken inside of us!

PRESCHOOL GLOSSARY:

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

WRAP-UP:



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!



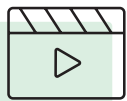
God loves us.



We can
serve God.



I can
serve God.



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)



REBUILD THE WALLS

SUPPLIES:

Building blocks

PREP:

None

LEADER TIP: If you don't have enough building blocks, use plastic or styrofoam cups instead.

ACTIVITY INTRO:

The Bible teaches us true stories about God. Today we learned God works through His people. God loves us so much. Let's do a fun activity where we can work together.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. **Say:** Let's work together to build some walls like the people did in today's Bible story. God loves us and because of this, we can serve Him!
2. *Lay out the building blocks.*
3. *Lead kids to gather around them and work on building a wall.*
4. *Help them use teamwork and be creative.*
5. *As kids build, share how God loves them so much and always will.*
6. **Ask:** Who loves you?

**ACTIVITY WRAP-UP:**

God loves you and me! God loves all of us! We can know God loves us through learning about God in the Bible. The Bible teaches us about God's love and how He sent Jesus to make a way for us to be with God forever.



LET'S SERVE GOD

SUPPLIES:

Take-Home page, coloring supplies, printable page, washable ink pads, heart stamps, baby wipes

PREP:

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

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. **Say:** We can serve God and love others. Today we will make a picture frame to remember this from our Bible story.
2. *Pass out the printable page, coloring supplies, washable ink pads and heart stamps.*
3. *Lead kids to color their printable page and then use the washable ink pads to decorate their picture frame with hearts. Then they can use their fingers to make thumbprints along the frame.*
4. **Say:** When you see this picture frame, you can remember to serve God. We can serve God by helping others, loving them and telling them about God.
5. *If time allows, lead kids to draw a picture of themselves and other kids from the group in the center of the frame.*
6. *Write each kid's name on their craft and set aside for parent pickup.*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Where did the people return to?
- Who does God work through?
- Who can we serve?
- Who will always love us?

**PRAY TOGETHER:**

Dear God, thank You for loving us. Help us to use our hands, fingers and feet to serve others. Help us to use our hearts to love each other. 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.

- **Modeling Dough Center:** Provide modeling dough and modeling dough tools. Lead kids to work together to build something. Share how God's people worked to rebuild in today's Bible story.
- **God's Way Center:** Provide cardstock with arrows drawn on it. Lay out decorating supplies for kids to decorate the arrows. Share how they can follow God.
- **Building Center:** Provide cut paper in triangle and square shapes. Lead kids to make homes with the shapes. Share how God's people got to go back home.

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!