

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!

HE

God loves everyone.

WE

We can serve God.

ME

I can serve God.

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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

PRESCHOOL GLOSSARY:

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

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.

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

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(EZRA 1–3; 7; NEHEMIAH 1–2)

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

PRESCHOOL GLOSSARY:

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

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!

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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)*

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