

Use Week of:

Unit 17 • Session 3

The Temple Was Rebuilt

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Ezra 4–6; Haggai

STORY POINT:

God's people rebuilt the temple to glorify God.

KEY PASSAGE:

Jeremiah 29:11

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? Jesus perfectly reveals God the Father and fulfills what the prophets spoke.

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LEADER Bible Study

At last! God's people returned to Jerusalem, the home of their ancestors. God had given them another opportunity to live as His special people. They got to work right away, completing the foundation of the Lord's temple.

Many of God's people had been born in Babylon, but they had likely heard the stories of their parents and grandparents, stories of a life in the land God had given them. They probably heard of their families' mistakes: ignoring God, worshiping idols, and mistreating the poor. But the Lord had been gracious! He kept His promise to bring His people back to Judah.

Life in Judah wasn't exactly what they had imagined. It was difficult. Their national wealth was gone. The work of rebuilding the temple and the city of Jerusalem was hard. The land was desolate, and crops failed. Their neighbors opposed their efforts. (See Ezra 4:6,11-16.)

God's people were disappointed and discouraged. Rather than fight their enemies, God's people gave up. The temple of the Lord sat unfinished for 16 years. The people made excuses. "Maybe it's not time to rebuild the temple," they reasoned. If that was what God wanted, wouldn't He make it easier for them? (See Hag. 1:2.) God's people moved on to building their own homes.

The prophet Haggai stepped onto the scene and rebuked the people for their misplaced priorities. (Hag. 1:4) He brought words from the Lord, commanding them to finish the work they started. God promised to fill the temple with His glory, and comforted His weary people with this promise: "I will provide peace in this place" (Hag. 2:7,9).

God promised to be with His people and bless them—and not only them, but the whole world through them, keeping the promise He made to Abraham long ago. (See Gen. 12:3.) Through God's servant, Zerubbabel, God would send His Son, Jesus—the greater Servant who is God with us.

The BIBLE Story

The Temple Was Rebuilt

Ezra 4–6; Haggai

After living in Babylon for 70 years, God's people were home! A group had returned to Jerusalem to rebuild God's temple. They had started the work, but their neighbors didn't want them to rebuild the temple, so they stopped building. The people

made excuses. "Maybe it isn't the right time to rebuild the temple," they said. They thought that because the task was difficult, maybe God didn't want them to do it.

God sent the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to encourage the people. So the leaders—Zerubbabel and Joshua—started working on the temple again. At this time, Darius (duh RIGH uhs), the king of Persia, ruled over the land of Judah. The king was in charge of so much land, he put governors in charge of some of the land. A **governor** named Tattenai (TAT ih nigh) noticed God's people had started to rebuild the temple again.

Tattenai talked to Zerubbabel and the others working on the temple. "Do you have permission to rebuild this temple?" Tattenai asked. The workers said, "We do."

Tattenai sent a report to King Darius. This is what Tattenai's



letter to King Darius said: “To Darius the king—This letter is to tell you that **the people in Judah are building the temple of the great God. They said King Cyrus gave them permission to rebuild the temple. Please search the royal records to see if this is true.**”

King Darius’s officials searched the royal records for Cyrus’s order. They found it—a scroll with a record from King Cyrus. This is what was written on the scroll: “Let God’s temple be rebuilt. It will be a place to offer sacrifices. Let its foundation be rebuilt.” King Cyrus had also ordered for the cost of building the temple to be paid for out of the royal treasury.

So King Darius sent a letter back to Tattenai. He gave this order: “Stay away from the workers in Jerusalem. Don’t bother them or try to stop them. Give them whatever they need.”

Tattenai and the other officials obeyed King Darius’s order. The Jewish leaders kept building, and they finally finished the temple of God! The people celebrated and made offerings to God. They chose priests and assistants to serve in the temple.

Then God’s people celebrated the Passover. God’s people were so happy. Now the temple of God was finally complete.

Christ Connection: God’s people rebuilt the temple so they would have a place to worship God. Years later, God sent His Son, Jesus, to be with His people. Now God dwells not in the temple, but directly with His people. Jesus provided something better than the temple; He gives us Himself.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Building blocks:** Before telling the story, write several main points of the story on masking tape. Attach the tape to large building blocks and distribute to kids. At each point in the story, invite the kid holding that block to come up and build upon other blocks.
- **Listen and cheer:** Explain that each time kids hear the word *temple*, they are to cheer. Pause briefly for response and then direct kids to stop as you continue telling the story..

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: The Temple Was Rebuilt

BIBLE PASSAGE: Ezra 4–6; Haggai

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

KEY PASSAGE: Jeremiah 29:11

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? Jesus perfectly reveals God the Father and fulfills what the prophets spoke.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. As kids arrive, ask them to share about a time they were doing something hard and they were tempted to give up.

SAY • Sometimes we have to do really hard things that we don't think we can do. Today we're going to hear a story about how God's people wanted to give up after they began building God's temple.

Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the "Build It Back" activity page. Kids will match the shapes of the missing bits of the temple to the blocks that would fit there.

SAY • After God's people returned to their land, they began rebuilding the temple. Sadly, when enemies tried to prevent them from finishing, they gave up for a while, leaving the temple unfinished. Today we will hear about what God did to help them finish the temple.

- "Build It Back" activity page,
- 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Message from the prophets

Instruct the kids to sit down in a line, each facing forward. Give the kid at the front of the line a piece of paper and a pencil. Write *BIBLE* on a piece of paper and give it to the kid at the back of the line. The kid at the back of the line will then trace with his finger the letter B on the back of the kid in front of him. The second kid will then trace the letter she felt onto the back of the kid in front of her and so on down the line. The first kid in the line will write the letter he feels on the piece of paper. Continue this way until the first kid writes all the letters. Did the kids communicate and write the word *BIBLE* successfully?

SAY • Was it hard to decipher the message just one letter at a time? In our story today, we will hear about a prophet named Haggai. Thankfully God didn't communicate with Haggai just one letter at a time! God's message to His people in today's story would encourage them to do something hard.

OPTION 2: Glory to God

Read a list of actions. Instruct the kids to jump up with their hands outstretched if they think the action glorifies God. Guide them to crouch down low if it doesn't. (Examples: sharing a toy with a friend, telling a lie, being a good listener to a friend, spreading gossip about someone else, and so forth)

SAY • Not everything we do brings glory to God. In today's story we'll hear that **God's people rebuilt the temple to glorify God.**

**LOW
PREP**

• paper

• pencil

• paper

• pen

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



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Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire
• suitcase

[Leader enters dragging a suitcase and looking exhausted.]

LEADER • Man, am I glad to see you kids! My trip home today was awful! For starters, my first flight was super delayed. Mechanical issues or something. I thought we'd never take off. That flight was so bumpy, I thought my eyeballs were going to jiggle right out of my head. When we landed I was glad to be back on solid ground. Then I had a long layover in a strange city, and my next flight was overbooked, so I didn't even have a seat on the plane! I was just about ready to give up and set up a tent in the airport. But I wanted to get home, so I kept asking until they found another available flight. Now here I am: tired and hungry, but home at last!

You know, my crazy traveling day reminds me of another Bible story. It's a story about how God's people rebuilt the temple. It was a difficult process,

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

and they had so many enemies trying to stop them that they almost gave up, but God encouraged them to keep going.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Do you remember our big picture question? *How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? Jesus perfectly reveals God the Father and fulfills what the prophets spoke.* Because Jesus is God the Son, His words, thoughts, and actions were perfectly in line with God the Father and the Holy Spirit. Jesus provided a perfect example of what God is like, because Jesus is God. Every prophecy in the Old Testament will come true through Jesus. Many of them already have!

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review. • Giant Timeline

LEADER • Last week we learned that **God kept His promise to bring His people home.** The Jews had been in exile for 70 years, and finally it was time for them to return and rebuild the temple where they had once offered sacrifices to God. I can't wait to find out what happens next.

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Ezra 4–6; Haggai. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “The Temple Was Rebuilt.”

LEADER • The Jews had a lot of enemies who didn't want them to rebuild the temple. These enemies were

- Bibles
- “The Temple Was Rebuilt” video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Story Point Poster

afraid the Jews would become too strong and rebel against the king of Persia. So the governor wrote letters to King Darius to warn him about what the Jews were doing. It may seem as though the king and the governors had all the power to stop God's people, but let's not forget who was really in charge here—God! God is the One who brought the Jews back to the land He had given them. God was the One directing their steps. **God's people rebuilt the temple to glorify God** and give thanks to Him for the way He had provided for them.

Rebuilding wasn't always easy. In fact, the Jews faced so much opposition that they even gave up for a while! Sixteen years went by when they did no work on the temple at all. Thankfully, God sent the prophet Haggai at just the right time.

Haggai shared the word of the Lord with the people. He encouraged them by reminding them that God was with them and that God would be glorified through their hard work. The people were once again ready to pick up their work.

Have you ever felt like giving up because something was just too hard? Sometimes we all need a little encouragement. We can be comforted with the truth that even when things are difficult, God is still with us.

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Christ connection

LEADER • God sent the prophet Haggai to encourage the people to keep building. That reminds me of our big picture question. ***How is Jesus the perfect Prophet?*** Does anyone remember the answer? That's right!

Jesus perfectly reveals God the Father and fulfills what the prophets spoke.

God's people rebuilt the temple so they would have a place to offer sacrifices to worship God. Years later, God sent His Son, Jesus, to be with His people. Now God dwells not in the temple, but directly with His people. Jesus provided something better than the temple; He gives us Himself. When we trust in Jesus for salvation, He sends the Holy Spirit to live in us. He encourages us and helps us love and obey God.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the "Unit 17, Session 3" questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about why we gather as a church if Jesus is with us everywhere. How has the church helped your understanding of and love for Jesus?

· "Unit 17, Session 3"
Questions from Kids
Video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

Ask for several volunteers who are strong readers to read a short story from the life of Adoniram Judson. Allow volunteers to read one section of the Adoniram Judson stories. Let them read aloud while the rest of the kids listen.

LEADER • Our Bible story teaches us that **God's people rebuilt the temple to glorify God.** Adoniram and Ann Judson chose to glorify God even when things were scary. They remained faithful to God and continued to glorify Him and tell people about Jesus.

· "Adoniram Judson
Stories" printable

Tip: If your group
contains no strong
readers, read the
story to the kids
directly.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Jeremiah 29:11. Then sing "A Future and a Hope."

LEADER • Do you think it would have been encouraging

· Key Passage Poster
· "A Future and a Hope"
song

for God's people to remember the truth of this verse? God had a plan for them, plans for hope and a future. He knew the trials they would face in rebuilding the temple. God didn't promise to make the process easy for them, but He did promise to be with them along the way. A similar promise is true for us today. God has given us hope and a future through Jesus' perfect obedience, sacrificial death, and miraculous resurrection. Because of our Savior we have hope for eternity with God!

Sing (4 minutes)

• "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" song

LEADER • Psalm 107:1 says, "Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his faithful love endures forever." We serve a God who loves us and has given us so many blessings. Let's sing praise to Him now.
Sing together "Great Is Thy Faithfulness."

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • God, we praise You because of Your faithful love. We are so thankful that You care for us even though we don't deserve it. You are so good and faithful. You give us strength when we are weak. You lift us up when we feel like giving up. Thank You for being with us always, especially through difficult times. We love You. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

APPLY the Story



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Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- ball of yarn

Display the key passage poster and lead the kids to read Jeremiah 29:11 aloud. Ask for volunteers to try to say the whole verse from memory. Instruct the kids to stand in a circle. Give one kid a ball of yarn. Explain that she will say the first word of the key passage then toss the ball of yarn to another person in the circle while still holding the end of the yarn. The second kid will say the second word before tossing the yarn ball to someone else while holding a bit of the yarn. Continue this way until the whole verse has been said. Then challenge the kids to untangle themselves!

SAY • Great job, everyone! Let's keep working on our key passage for one more week. Next time we'll all try to say it for memory!

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster
- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970, optional)

Distribute Bibles to all the kids and help them find Ezra 4–6; Haggai. Explain that Ezra is in the Old Testament History division and the Book of Haggai is part of the Minor Prophets. Ask for a volunteer to discuss why it is important to know how to find information in our Bibles (*Everything in God's Word is trustworthy and true.*)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. To which city did God's people return? (*Jerusalem, Ezra 1:2*)
2. Who was the king of Persia when God's people began rebuilding the temple? (*Darius, Ezra 4:24*)
3. What festival did the Jews celebrate when the temple was complete? (*Passover, Ezra 6:19*)
4. How did building the temple bring glory to God?
Guide the kids to understand that the temple was meant to be a place where God's people worshiped Him. True worship of God glorifies Him. Additionally, enemies were trying to prevent them from finishing, so by overcoming those obstacles, God's people showed God's power to support and guide them.
5. The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit lives inside of Christians. How does this change our behavior?
Help the kids see that everyone is made in God's image. We ought to respect one another and ourselves. We should treat each other with dignity, compassion, and love. Because we are vessels of the Holy Spirit, we are empowered to love with God's love.
6. How can you encourage someone who is suffering and ready to give up hope? *Explain that we can offer encouragement from God's Word. Someday, Jesus will return to restore the whole earth and provide a perfect place for us to live and worship Him forever. We face difficult times with hope because of Jesus' promises.*

SAY • God's people rebuilt the temple to glorify God.

They almost quit, but God sent prophets like Haggai to encourage them to keep going. Thankfully, now that Jesus has come, the temple isn't necessary. We can meet with God anywhere simply through prayer!

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

- blankets
- chairs

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment found in Teach the Story.

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Prayer hut

Make simple “huts” by draping blankets over chairs. Invite kids in small groups to sit under the blankets. Explain that you will have a time of prayer for missionaries in Myanmar.

SAY • When Adoniram and Ann Judson arrived in Myanmar, they built a hut and asked people to come to hear the stories from the Bible. These huts were common for people to live in and still are for many of the people there. Most of them are very poor. While sitting under the blankets, ask for kids to discuss ways to pray for missionaries. Ask for volunteers to pray aloud for missionaries all over the world. Thank God for the work of missionaries like Adoniram and Ann Judson.

LOW PREP

- paper
- markers

OPTION 2: Story point scrolls

Form groups of three to five kids and instruct the groups to line up on one side of the room. On the other side of the room, stack paper and provide a marker for each group. When the leader says “go,” the first kid from each team will run to her team’s stack of paper, write the first word from the story point, roll it up like a scroll and bring it back to her team. Then the next kid will run the relay, writing the second word. The teams will continue in this way until each team has written the entire story point.

SAY • In our story, **God’s people rebuilt the temple to glorify God.** They had many enemies who didn’t want them to finish building. The governor of the land, Tattenai, wrote letters back and forth to King Darius making sure the Jews had permission to build the temple. Darius found a scroll in the archives that

said the Jews were allowed to return to their land to build the temple to worship God.

Reflection and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper to each child. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure to send the sheets home with kids alongside the activity page so that parents can see what their kids have been learning.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.

• pencils and crayons
• paper
• Bible Story Coloring Page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's Big Picture Cards for Families to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.