



Use Week of:

Unit 17 • Session 2

The Captives Came Home

BIBLE PASSAGE: Ezra 1–3

STORY POINT: The prophets told about Jesus.

KEY PASSAGE: Jeremiah 29:11a

CHRIST CONNECTION: Jesus will give us a home with Him.

Bible Story for Toddlers

God's people had lived in Babylon for a long time. God had told His people that He would bring them back to their land. God gave King Cyrus an idea, and the king wrote a message. The king said, "Let God's people go back to their land. Let them rebuild God's temple in Jerusalem." King Cyrus even gave God's people money and animals for the trip. Zerubbabel was the leader of God's people. When the people built the foundation of the temple, they celebrated. Some of the older people who remembered the first temple cried. The sound of people celebrating and crying could be heard from far away.

Babies Gospel Gems

- * God brought His people back to their land.
- * Zerubbabel led the people to build the temple.
- * Jesus brings us to God.

Additional resources are available at gospelproject.com.

For free training and session-by-session help, visit MinistryGrid.com/gospelproject.

BABIES Activities

Look in the Bible

Provide hand-size Bibles for babies to handle. Open your Bible to Ezra 1. Show the Bible story picture as you say the gospel gems in a soothing voice. Read the key passage card.

SAY • God brought His people back to their land. **THE PROPHETS TOLD ABOUT JESUS.** They said Jesus will give us a home with Him. Jesus brings us to God. [*Pray for the babies.*]

2

Sing a Bible story song

Sing to the tune of “B-I-N-G-O”:

“God told prophets about His plan, His plan to send a Savior!

J-E-S-U-S, J-E-S-U-S, J-E-S-U-S!

God’s prophets told about Jesus!”

SAY • God’s prophets had told the people God would bring them home. **THE PROPHETS TOLD ABOUT JESUS.** Jesus will give us a home with Him.

Trace footprints

Remove each baby’s socks. Hold her securely under her arms as another adult helper traces her feet on a large sheet of paper. Trace every baby’s feet on the sheet. Write *We will follow God* or the third gospel gem across the banner. Hang it where parents can see it this unit.

SAY • God’s people had been in Babylon. God brought His people back to their land. Jesus brings us to God. **THE PROPHETS TOLD ABOUT JESUS.**

Build with blocks

Provide soft blocks for babies to practice stacking. You may help babies place a few blocks side by side to make a foundation. Talk about the story.

SAY • Zerubbabel led the people to build the temple. The temple was where people met with God. Jesus brings us to God. **THE PROPHETS TOLD ABOUT JESUS.**

Check diapers, serve bottles if needed, and release babies to parents according to your church’s security guidelines. Give parents today’s big picture card. Repeat the gospel gems and Bible-learning activities for babies who stay a second hour.

TODDLER Activities

Circle time (5 minutes)

Provide small Bibles for toddlers to handle. Say the Bible is God's words. Read the key passage card and guide toddlers to say it. Open your Bible to Ezra 1. Show the Bible story picture as you tell the Bible story. Say the story point and gospel gems. Pray for the toddlers.

Make house art

Cut a house shape out of clear contact plastic for each toddler. Tape it to the table sticky side out. Encourage toddlers to stick tissue paper, shape cutouts, and faux feathers to the house shape. Seal with another piece of contact plastic and trim the excess. Write the Christ connection on each house. Retell the Bible story.

SAY • God brought His people back to their land like He had promised. **THE PROPHETS TOLD ABOUT JESUS.** Jesus will give us a home with Him.

Follow a path

Use yarn to weave a path in the room. Write the gospel gems and Christ connection on sticky notes at various points on the path for you to read to the children. At the end, place a Bible and the Bible story picture. Retell the story.

SAY • God brought His people back to their land. **THE PROPHETS TOLD ABOUT JESUS.** Jesus brings us to God.

Experiment with foundations

Provide a pillow, a book, and a binder for toddlers. Give them a ball to test which foundation is the sturdiest. Retell the Bible story.

SAY • Zerubbabel led the people to build the temple and the altar. **THE PROPHETS TOLD ABOUT JESUS.** Jesus brings us to God.

Drive cars in play sand

Place on a drop cloth a large shallow bin with an inch of play sand. Invite toddlers to roll transportation toys or fingerwalk in the sand. Talk about how people in Bible times traveled by foot, by horse or donkey, or by chariot.

SAY • God brought His people back to their land. **THE PROPHETS TOLD ABOUT JESUS.** Jesus will give us a home with Him forever.

BONUS Teaching Hour

SESSION TITLE: The Captives Came Home

BIBLE PASSAGE: Ezra 1–3

KEY PASSAGE: Jeremiah 29:11a

STORY POINT: The prophets told about Jesus.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Jesus will give us a home with Him.

Transition activity: Finger play about homes

Perform a simple finger play about homes. Repeat a couple of times.

“Here is a nest for a robin. [*Cup palms together.*]

Here is a hive for a bee. [*Clasp hands together in a fist.*]

Here is a den for a bunny. [*Make a hole shape with both hands.*]

Here is a house for me.” [*Make a roof shape with fingers touching.*]

SAY • God brought His people back to their land, and they were so happy to be home! Zerubbabel led the people to build the temple. One day, Jesus will give us a home with Him. **THE PROPHETS TOLD ABOUT JESUS.**

Make tool imprints

Lead toddlers to pat out or roll out play dough. Give the children toy tools (hammer, screwdriver, blocks) to make imprints in the play dough. Briefly retell the Bible story.

SAY • Zerubbabel led the people to rebuild the temple, starting with the foundation. Every building needs a strong foundation. **THE PROPHETS TOLD ABOUT JESUS.** Jesus brings us to God.

Play in a tent

Drape a blanket over three sides of a table for toddlers to play inside. Place storybook Bibles in the tent for toddlers to “read” inside. Retell the Bible story.

SAY • **THE PROPHETS TOLD ABOUT JESUS.** Jesus will give us a home with Him.

Check diapers, serve a snack if needed, and release toddlers to parents according to your church's security procedures. Give parents today's big picture card to reinforce today's Bible story, Christ Connection, story point, or gospel gems throughout the week.