

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. Prompt kids to think of a time when something they loved broke. How did they feel? Were they able to put it back together again?

SAY • We have all had something that broke that we wish we could fix and make perfect again. When God's people were taken into exile, the Babylonians destroyed their temple. Today, we will hear how God's people rebuilt the temple 70 years later.

Activity page (5 minutes)

• "Order of Events"
activity page,
1 per kid
• pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete "Order of Events" on the activity page. Kids should number the Bible stories in the order they happened. Then they will arrange each corresponding letter to discover the name of a place in today's Bible story.

SAY • In the Old Testament, the temple was a place where God's people worshiped Him. The temple in Jerusalem had been burned down, but Zerubbabel led God's people back to the temple to rebuild it.

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Playing card temple

Demonstrate how to build a structure out of playing cards. Form two or more groups of kids. Give each group a deck of cards. Challenge them to build a structure. Assign each group a leader to cheer on the group and encourage them as they build. After several minutes, examine the structures.

SAY • Great job building! How helpful or encouraging was your leader? When God's people were rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem, God sent two prophets—Haggai and Zechariah—to encourage the people. Today we will learn more about how and why God's people rebuilt the temple.

**LOW
PREP**

• decks of playing cards, 1 per group

OPTION 2: Hard work matches

Before the session, create two matching sets of cards describing actions that require hard work (*raking the leaves, doing the dishes, vacuuming, folding laundry*, and so on). Distribute the cards among the kids so each player has someone else in the class with the match.

• index cards
• marker

On your signal, kids must walk around the room silently and find their matching partner by only using motions to describe what their hard work action is. Matching partners must complete their action and then take a seat.

SAY • Those actions took some work to complete. Today we will hear a story about how God's people returned home and worked hard to rebuild the temple.

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
· suitcases
· slip of paper

[Leader enters with a large suitcase and a baggage claim ticket.]

LEADER • Hey! It's me, [*your name*], still at the airport.

You are not going to believe what happened.

When I tried to get my big suitcase from baggage claim, someone else tried to take it. He thought it was his suitcase, but I knew it was mine. He kept questioning me about my suitcase. I'm so glad I had my claim ticket. This ticket proved to that other traveler that this suitcase is really mine.

That reminds me of part of today's Bible story. Last time, we left off with God's people having completed the foundation of the temple. Today, we will hear that people living nearby were beginning to question if God's people had permission to rebuild the temple. Don't worry; just like my ticket, they had what they needed to prove that they had permission to build.

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

You will see how God provided proof so His people could complete the temple for His glory.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • God’s people must have been so thankful for the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, who were sent to encourage them. Our big picture question tells us about a prophet even greater than these men: Jesus. *How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? Jesus perfectly reveals God the Father and fulfills what the prophets spoke.*

Giant timeline (1 minute)

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

• Giant Timeline

LEADER • Last week we were in the first couple of chapters in Ezra and learned that **God kept His promise to bring His people home.** God’s people were so excited. They began rebuilding the temple. Some of God’s people praised God, and some of them were sad about the temple foundation.

Today, we are here [*point to “The Temple Was Rebuilt” on the timeline*] and we will see that even though it was hard work and people questioned them, **God’s people rebuilt the temple to glorify God.**

We will learn that after God sent Jesus to earth, His people didn’t need a temple anymore.

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

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Ezra 4–6. 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 • God’s people were excited about rebuilding the temple so they could worship Him. You can see they had one focus: God. When people questioned them, they kept on building so they could celebrate the one true God. God’s people didn’t allow others to discourage or distract them from their goal.

Not only did they keep their focus when they were building, they made sure God was the focus of the celebration when they completed the temple. They didn’t pause to make a name for themselves. As soon as they were done, they made offerings to God and celebrated the Passover.

We see God’s faithfulness throughout this story. The workers found God’s Word on a scroll, God changed a king’s heart, and God sent leaders to encourage His people. God deserves our worship and celebration.

Sometimes we allow ourselves to focus on things we think God should have done but didn’t, and we miss out on the truth that God keeps His promises. Can you think of a time in the last year when God was faithful to you? Were you thankful for His faithfulness at that time?

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided on page 131 to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Christ connection

LEADER • 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. We don’t need a temple anymore. Because of Jesus, we can have eternal life with God forever.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 17, Session 3” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about why we go to church. Guide them to discuss how the church has helped their understanding of and love for Jesus.

• “Unit 17, Session 3” questions from kids video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

Ask for several volunteers to read a short story from the life of Adoniram Judson. Give each child one section of the Adoniram Judson stories. Let them read aloud while the group listens.

• “Adoniram Judson Stories” printable

LEADER • Our Bible story teaches us that **God’s people rebuild the temple to glorify God.** Adoniram and Ann Judson chose to glorify God even when they felt scared. They remained faithful to God and continued to tell people about Jesus.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Jeremiah 29:11.

• Key Passage Poster
• “A Future and a Hope (Jer. 29:11)” song

LEADER • Nothing was going to stop God’s plan to rebuild His temple. Governor Tattenai questioned whether or not God’s people had permission to rebuild the temple. God had a plan to show they had permission all along.

As you sing the key passage song, remember that this same God calls you to trust Him today.

Lead kids in singing “A Future and a Hope (Jer. 29:11).”

Sing (4 minutes)

Open your Bible and read aloud Romans 8:28.

LEADER • I am sure God’s plan didn’t always make sense

• “Always in Control (This I Know)” song

to His people, but God did everything for His glory and their good. The Lord is always in control. Sing together “Always in Control (This I Know).”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Dear God, You work all things together for our good and for Your glory. Help us to see Your glory in our broken world. Help us to believe that whatever the circumstances, You are good. In Jesus’ name we pray. 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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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? Jesus perfectly reveals God the Father and fulfills what the prophets spoke.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- plastic cups
- permanent marker

Before the session, write words or phrases of the key passage on separate plastic cups. Prepare two matching sets.

Display the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Jeremiah 29:11 together.

Form two teams of kids and instruct them to spread out across the room in two lines. Stack each team's key passage cups in random order at the far end of the room. Explain that at your signal, the first player from each team will reach down to grab the first cup in the key passage. She will pass the cup down the line to her teammate at the other end.

The first player will pick up the next cup, pass it down the line, and repeat for all the cups. Continue until players collect all the cups and arrange them in order. Lead kids in saying the key passage together again.

SAY • This key passage tell us that God had a plan for His people. He has a plan for us too. We can always trust His plan because He is all-powerful and good.

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to Haggai 1. Explain that the prophet Haggai recorded four

messages to the Jewish people. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Haggai 1:1-2.

SAY • God used the prophet Haggai to deliver His message to rebuild the temple. This was an important message for God’s people, and Haggai was faithful to deliver the message that would result in God’s glory.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. How did rebuilding the temple bring glory to God? *Help kids conclude that God’s people were determined to rebuild the temple so they could worship God. Seeing the temple rebuilt showed God’s faithfulness. Hundreds of years later, God would send Jesus to dwell among His people so they would no longer need the temple.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read John 1:14.)

2. The Bible tells us that we are God’s temple. How should that impact the way we relate to one another or see ourselves? *Emphasize to kids that if we are in Christ, our bodies are the temple to the Holy Spirit. We should honor our bodies and treat others with respect.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Cor. 6:19-20.)

3. Why is God the best foundation for our lives? *Invite kids to discuss how we can often be tempted to build our foundation on other things (relationships, popularity, etc.), but Scripture tells us that Jesus Christ is the only firm foundation. All other ground is sinking sand.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Cor. 3:11.)

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

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Make a hut

Make simple “huts” by draping blankets over chairs. Invite kids in small groups to sit under the blankets.

SAY • When Adoniram and Ann Judson arrived in Burma,

· Bible
· blankets
· chairs

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

Note: Burma is now commonly known as Myanmar.

LOW PREP

- paper
- pens
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- mirrors (optional)

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

they built a hut and asked people to come to hear stories from the Bible. People in Burma commonly lived in huts. Today, many people still do.

Explain that you will have a time of prayer for missionaries sharing about Jesus in the huts. Lead 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.

OPTION 2: Then and now

Give each kid a piece of paper and a pen. Guide the kids to turn the page sideways and draw a line down the middle of the page (top to bottom across the shorter length). Instruct kids to label the left side of the page *Temple Then* and the right side *Temple Now*.

Show the Bible story picture and encourage kids to refer to the picture to draw the temple on the left side of the page. Then instruct kids to draw a self-portrait on the right side of the page. Consider providing mirrors for kids to look at their own faces.

SAY • Your pictures represent the temple then and now.

God's people rebuilt the temple to glorify God.

The temple gave them 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.

Let's say our big picture question and answer together: ***How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? Jesus perfectly reveals God the Father and fulfills what the prophets spoke.***

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, thanking God for sending Jesus to dwell among us. Pray that kids would recognize their need for a Savior. Ask for ears to hear and hearts to respond to the Holy Spirit's guidance.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "To Build Again" on the activity page. Kids should find and circle the words of today's story point in the picture. Challenge them to also find the hidden scrolls.

• pencils
• Journal Page
• "To Build Again"
activity 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.