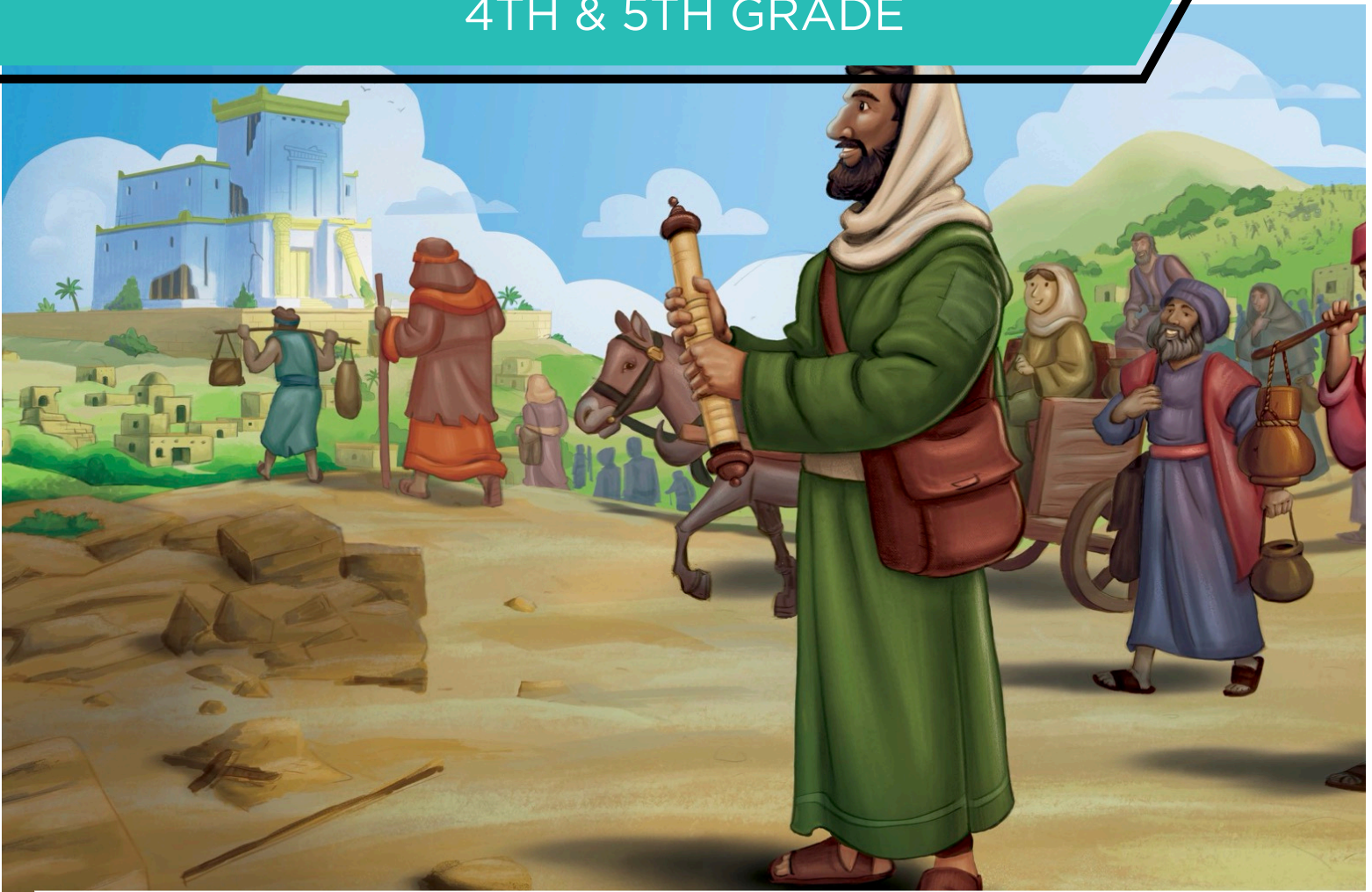


PRETEEN MINISTRY

4TH & 5TH GRADE



FEBRUARY 1, 2026

GOD BROUGHT HIS PEOPLE HOME

EZRA 1-3

CHRIST CONNECTION

Just as God promised, He brought His people back from exile to Jerusalem. **One day, God will bring all His people together**—all who trust in Jesus to save them from sin. There will be no crying that day. The people will worship Him in the new heaven and new earth.

LEADER DEVO

The Bible is described as a book about God fulfilling His promises to His people, and in Ezra 1–3, we see how God fulfilled the promise He made to bring His people home after 70 years in captivity. God used King Cyrus of Persia to issue a decree that allowed the Israelites to return home.

Just as the prophecies of Daniel remind us of God’s control over the kingdoms of the world, so do the first few verses of Ezra. We learn how God “roused” the spirit of King Cyrus to move him to release the Israelites. God’s control over kings and kingdoms was even more evident because Cyrus didn’t send the Israelites home empty-handed. They returned with resources provided by the king and their neighbors. Only God could reverse the Israelites’ fortunes in such a quick way—from exiles with nothing to a returning remnant with resources to rebuild.

God often works through a remnant of people, no matter how large that group may be. Once this remnant of God’s people returned to their homeland, they set about the process of rebuilding Jerusalem and the temple. At the center of their rebuild, the leaders of the people rightly recognized the importance of worship. Just a few months after returning from exile, they began rebuilding the altar of God so they could restart their worship according to God’s commands. They knew the rebuild would only succeed when God’s people turned to Him in proper worship, turning away from their sin and obeying Him.

Before the foundation of the temple was laid, the leaders rebuilt the altar, showing their desire for God’s people to atone for their sin. Through opposition and uncertainty, they established a place for the priests to offer burnt sacrifices on behalf of the people.

Like the remnant of Israelites, we need to remember that true restoration begins with a reconnection of God through worship. We were created to worship God and glorify His name. Encourage kids to remember that before we try to rebuild the outer elements of our lives, we must first prioritize the exaltation of our Savior.

ARRIVAL

When kids arrive, they can play in the game room, Large Group room, or the balcony area. They can go between the areas as they want until Large Group starts. Leaders should be spread out in these areas to watch kids. Use this time to interact with kids and build relationships with them. Ask them about their week, big events coming up, or follow up on a prayer request from the week before.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

THIS MONTH'S MEMORY VERSE

It will be said on that day, "Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

Isaiah 25:9



NEXT BIBLE BUCKS DAY

FEB 22

There are many techniques and tools to help kids (and you!) memorize Scripture.

THIS MONTH'S TOOL: VERSE ABBREVIATIONS

On an index card, write out the first letter of each word in the verse you want to memorize. For example, Isaiah 25:9 will look like:

I W B S O T D B T I O G W H W F H T H M S U T I T L W H W F H L U B G A R I H S

LESSON

God, through the prophet Jeremiah, promised that He would bring His people back to Jerusalem after 70 years of captivity. Just as God promised, King Cyrus of Persia issued a decree, saying:

“The Lord has given me all the kingdoms of the earth. He has appointed me to build him a house in Jerusalem in Judah. Any of his people may go to Jerusalem to build the house of the Lord, the God of Israel. Give your silver, gold, and livestock to them so they may bring these gifts to Jerusalem and offer them to God.”

God’s people prepared to go to Jerusalem and build the Lord’s house. All their neighbors supported them with gifts of silver, gold, livestock, and valuables. King Cyrus also gave back some of the riches that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple of God.

A few months after they arrived in Jerusalem, Jeshua the priest, Zerubbabel, and their brothers began to build the altar of God so that they could sacrifice burnt offerings on it morning and evening according to the law of Moses. They also celebrated all the festivals and holy days as the Lord commanded in the law. Then, they began to buy the supplies needed to rebuild the temple.

Two years after God’s people arrived in Jerusalem, Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and their brothers appointed the Levites to oversee the work on the Lord’s house. Once they had laid the foundation of the temple, the priests led the people to praise God with trumpets and cymbals. They sang, “The Lord is good. His faithful love to Israel endures forever.” All the people gave a great shout of praise.

While most people were happy, some of the older priests remembered the first temple. This new foundation was not as magnificent as the original temple, and they wept loudly. The people could not tell the difference between those who were weeping loudly and those who were shouting for joy.

CHRIST CONNECTION

Just as God promised, He brought His people back from exile to Jerusalem. One day, God will bring all His people together—all who trust in Jesus to save them from sin. There will be no crying that day. The people will worship Him in the new heaven and new earth.

SMALL GROUPS

OUR GOAL

To create opportunities that invite preteens to discover for themselves what it means to own and live out their faith.

DISCUSSION / APPLICATION

- 1) How is King Cyrus different than King Nebuchadnezzar? (Ezra 1:7)
- 2) How did God provide for His people to rebuild the temple and have supplies to meet their needs? (Read Ezra 1:5-7)
- 3) What was the first thing the Israelites built after returning to Jerusalem? Why is that significant? (Ezra 3:1-3)
- 4) How did the people respond once the foundation for the new temple was complete? (Ezra 3:11-13) Why would some people rejoice and others weep?
- 5) Read Philippians 3:20. Where is our citizenship / our ultimate home?
- 6) What does it mean to be in the world but not of the world? (See John 17:14-15)
- 7) What would it look like for you this week to live *in* the world instead of living *of* the world?

PICK UP

After small group, kids can play in the game room, Large Group room, or the balcony area. They can go between the areas as they want until they are picked up. Leaders should be spread out in these areas to watch kids.

Use this time to interact with kids and follow up on any questions or discussions from small group time.

As parents arrive upstairs, direct them to the game room, Large Group room, or balcony to pick their kids up. Make sure to match their security code with their kid's name tag and remove the name tag before they leave!

CLEAN UP

- Put away any supplies used during small group.
- Turn off TVs and lights in the small group rooms.
- Turn off both air hockey tables and put away extra pucks or paddles.
- Gather any balls or other items left out in the game room and put them away in the correct bins.
- Put away any games, books, or supplies in the balcony area.
- Check for any items left behind by kids and put them in the lost and found.

THANK YOU FOR SERVING!