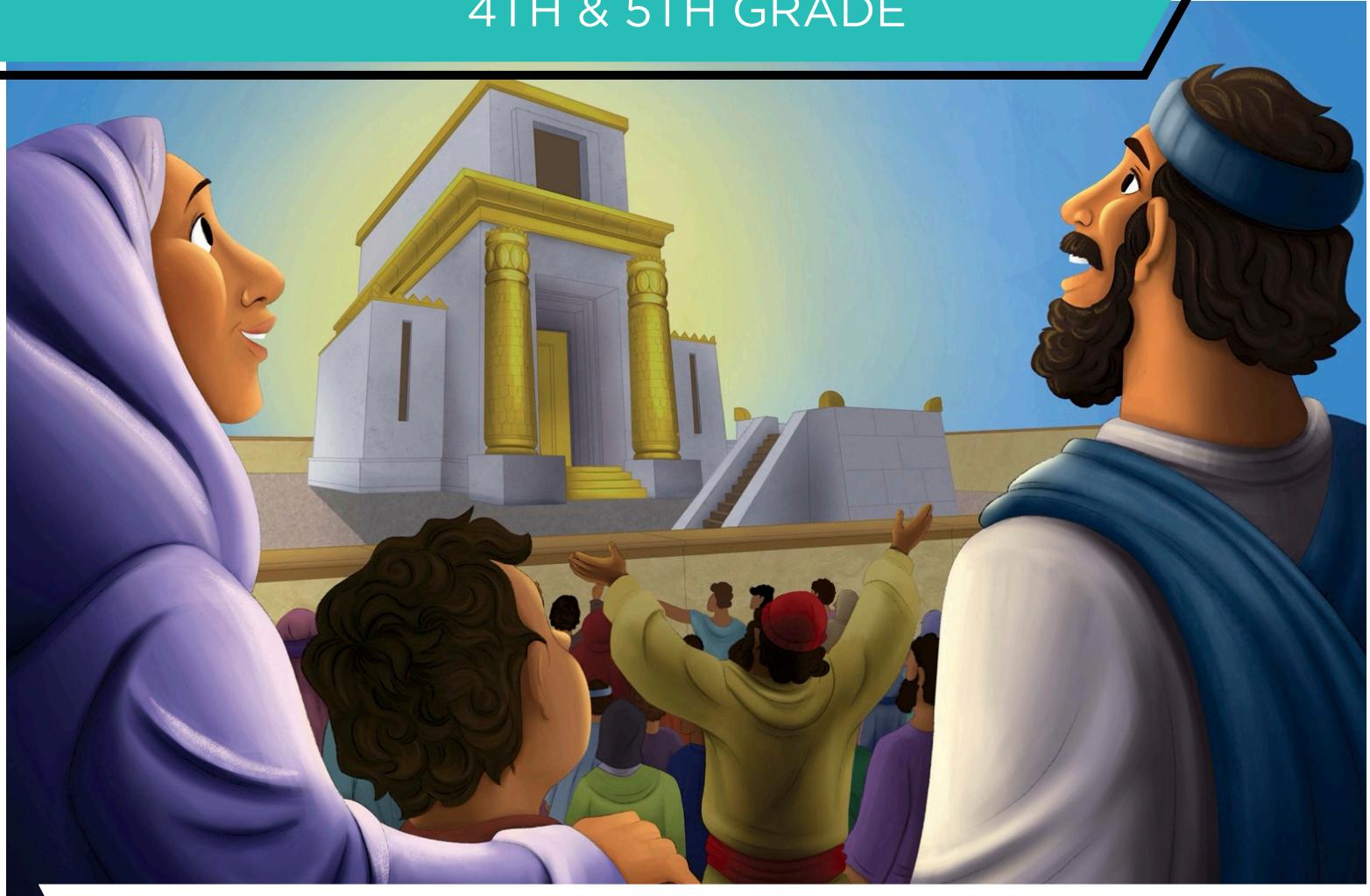


PRETEEN MINISTRY

4TH & 5TH GRADE



FEBRUARY 8, 2026

REBUILDING THE TEMPLE

EZRA 4-6; HAGGAI 1-2

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. **Jesus provides something better than the temple; He gives us Himself.**

LEADER DEVO

Like many projects, rebuilding the temple began with enthusiasm and purpose, but eventually the work stopped. Upon their return from exile, God's people were excited about rebuilding the temple and having a place to worship God. Eventually their passion for rebuilding diminished due to the opposition they faced from their enemies. Instead, the people turned their efforts to work on their own dwellings.

God used the prophet Haggai to remind His people of the importance of rebuilding the temple. Specifically, the prophet asked the people why their houses were completed and adorned beautifully when the house of the Lord lay in ruins. Because of the encouragement of the prophet, the people returned to rebuilding the temple. This time, they would persevere through all of the challenges to complete the rebuild.

So why was the rebuilding of the temple so important for the people of God who had returned from exile? For them, the temple was the place where the presence of God dwelt among them. Following the Exodus, God's manifest presence was experienced by His people in a number of ways. He dwelt with His people in the cloud and fire that guided and protected the Israelites on their journey. He dwelt with His people in a movable tabernacle where they were able to worship. And eventually, God dwelt with His people in Solomon's temple in Jerusalem. When the temple was destroyed, it was symbolic of God removing His presence from His people. When God's people returned, the rebuilding of the temple demonstrated God was with His people, inviting them to return to Him in prayer and worship (2 Chronicles 6:36-39).

Today, we are reminded that our God does not dwell in a house made by the hands of people. When Jesus died on the cross, a symbolic act occurred in the temple. At the moment of Jesus' death, the curtain in the temple that separated the people from God's presence split from top to bottom. The splitting of the curtain demonstrated our new reality that Jesus' death and victory over sin and the grave gives us direct access to the Father. Remind kids that God desires to be with them, and through faith in Christ, believers are promised His presence forever.

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

When God's enemies who lived in Judah heard that the people of God had returned and were rebuilding the temple of the Lord, they decided to stop them.

They wrote a letter to Artaxerxes (ahr tuh ZUHRK seez), king of Persia. The letter said, "Let it be known to the king that the Jews who traveled from your nation have returned to Jerusalem. They are rebuilding the city, finishing its walls, and repairing its foundations. We are loyal to the king, and believe that once the city is finished, the people will not pay taxes to you anymore. Search your record books, and you will discover that the city is rebellious and harmful to you."

The king replied, "I searched our records and discovered that this city has rebelled against kings in the past. Therefore, I order the people to stop building the city until another decree from me." The people stopped rebuilding the temple until King Darius became king of Persia.

God sent the prophet Haggai to speak His words to the people. The Lord said through Haggai, "Is it time for you to live in a nice house, while the house of God lies in ruins? Think carefully of your ways. Rebuild my house, and then I will send rain for the crops and help you prosper. Work, for I am with you! I promise that this temple will one day have more glory than the one that came before!"

The people obeyed and started to build again. Tattenai, the governor of the region, said, "Who gave you the order to rebuild this temple?" Tattenai sent a letter to King Darius that said, "Let it be known to the king that the people of God are once again rebuilding the temple. When I asked them why they were rebuilding, they told me that many years ago, King Cyrus issued an order to rebuild the temple of God. He also gave us the gold and silver that had been taken from the first temple. We have been rebuilding the temple from that time until now."

King Darius searched his royal records and found the order from King Cyrus. He knew the people were telling the truth. He issued a new law: "Leave the people of God alone, and let them rebuild the temple. In addition, you are to use all the tax money from that region to pay for everything that is needed to rebuild the temple. If anyone interferes with this order, they will be punished."

LESSON

The people finished the temple and had a great celebration. They resumed the worship of God at the temple and celebrated the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread. The people were glad and rejoiced in God.

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. Jesus provides something better than the temple; He gives us Himself.

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) What was King Darius' response the first time? (Ezra 4:17-22)
- 2) Read Haggai 1:7-11. What did the prophet Haggai tell the people to do, and what did God promise them?
- 3) Why was it wrong of the Israelites to prioritize their own homes before rebuilding the temple? (Haggai 1:7)
- 4) Why is God worthy of worship and praise? If you can, give an example from your life. (See Psalm 96:4-5)
- 5) After the Israelites told King Darius about the decree from King Cyrus, how did Darius respond? (Ezra 5:6-12)
- 6) Where is God's temple today? (See 1 Corinthians 3:16)
- 7) What does it mean that our bodies are God's temple? What does that tell you about how you should treat your body? (1 Corinthians 3:16-17)

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!