brite*
OLDER
SMALL GROUP

Elementary

NOVEMBER 29



THE EXILES RETURN

BIBLE PASSAGE: Ezra 1–3; 7; Nehemiah 1–2

FOCUS VERSES: Colossians 3:23–24; Ephesians 2:10; 4:11–12

Summary: The Israelite people had been in exile for 70 years. King Cyrus was stirred by the Lord to let some of the people return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. Ezra later took a second group and encouraged all of the people to turn away from sin and turn to God. Nehemiah heard about how the walls of his home, Jerusalem, were destroyed. He received permission to go back and help rebuild the walls. God used His people to do His work to restore the city.

MONTHLY Memory Verse

Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable.

(PSALM 145:3)

BRITE Idea

God works through His people.

We will go deeper in God's truth by answering these questions:

HE → WE → ME

DOES GOD NEED PEOPLE?
God doesn't need anyone or anything, but He loves us and chooses to involve us in His work.

HOW CAN GOD WORK THROUGH US?
God calls us to share His love and serve others—in our church, in our community and around the world.

HOW IS GOD INVITING ME TO RESPOND?
Kids will reflect and respond to the truth they learned about God.

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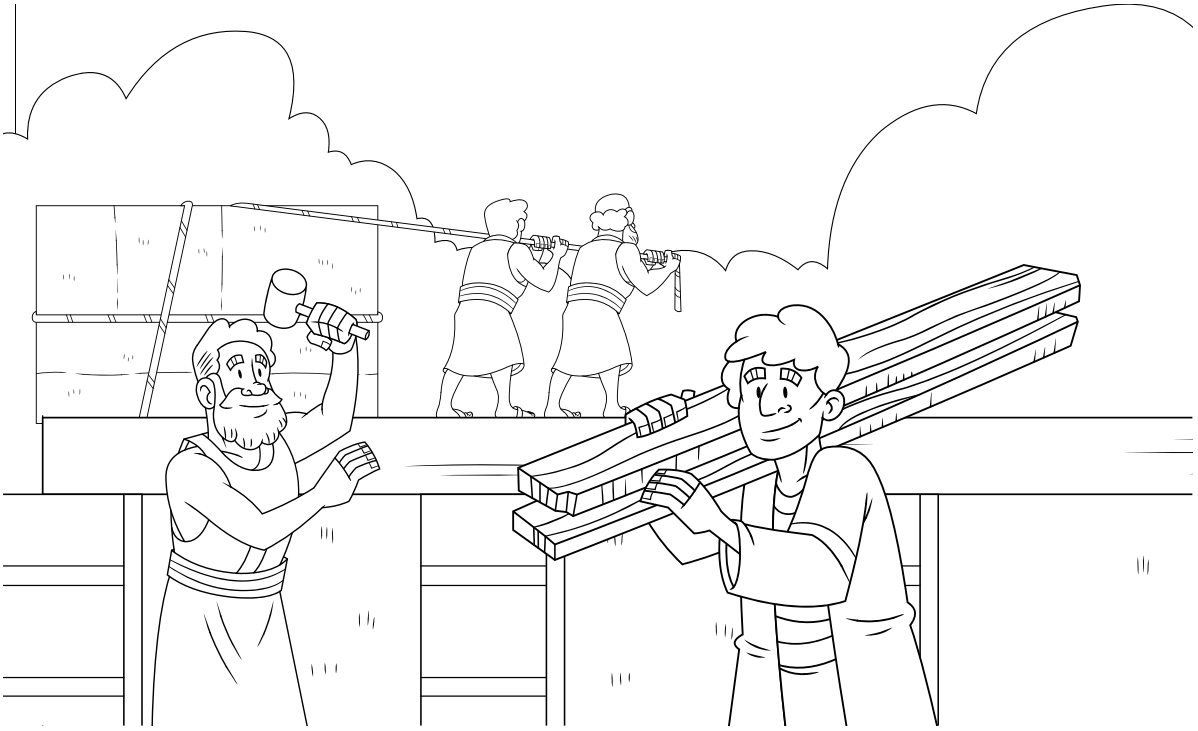
TAKE-HOME ACTIVITIES

ADD TO THE ILLUSTRATION



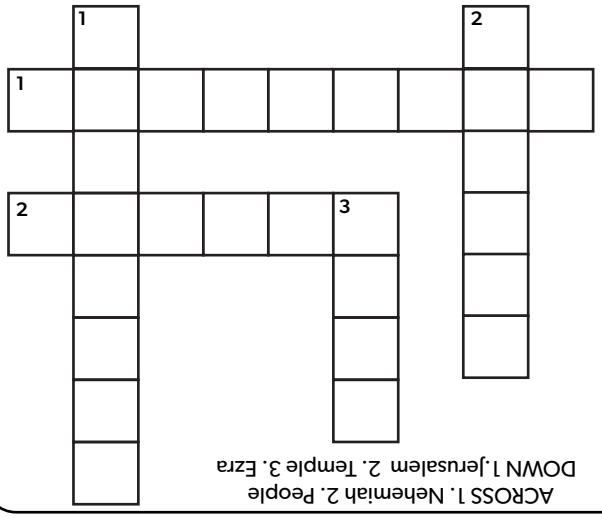
CROSSWORD

DOWN

1. The city God's people returned to rebuild after 70 years in exile.
2. The special building the Israelites rebuilt to worship God.
3. The leader who taught God's Word and called the people to turn back to God.

ACROSS

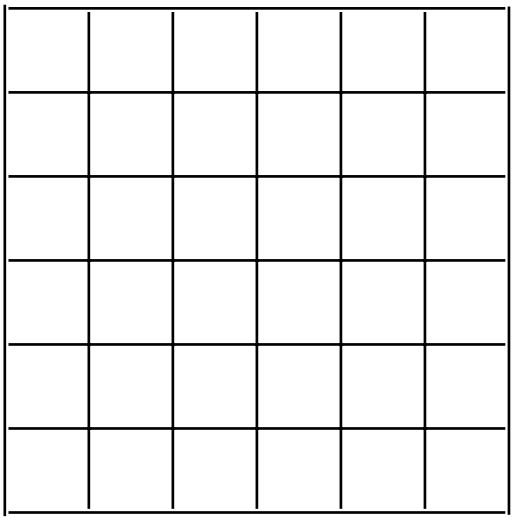
1. The leader who helped rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.
2. God chooses to work through His _____.



ACROSS 1. Nehemiah 2. People
DOWN 1. Jerusalem 2. Temple 3. Ezra

OBSTRUCTION

- Find a partner. One will be "x" and one will be "o".
- Write your shape in a square. Shade in all the squares around it.
- The next player will write their shape in a square and shade the squares around it.
- The first player who can't make a move loses!



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DON'T BE AFRAID

SUPPLIES:
Blindfolds (1 per 2 kids), several chairs

PREP:
Spread out the chairs around your space to create an obstacle course.

ADAPTATION FOR DIFFERENT LEARNERS: Use sunglasses with the lenses blacked out in place of a blindfold for sensory needs. Have a course without chairs for kids with physical limitations.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. *Welcome each kid by name and welcome any new kids to the group.*
2. **Discuss:** What was the best and worst part of your week?
3. **Discuss:** This month we are learning that God is greater than anything! How have you seen God's greatness this week?
4. **Discuss:** Have you ever done something that you were afraid to do? How did you overcome your fear? Did someone help you?
5. **Say:** God sometimes leads us to do things that are uncomfortable or scary, but He often puts people in our lives who help guide us.
6. *Divide kids into pairs. Assign one kid in each pair to wear a blindfold and the other to act as the guide. Position each pair at the start of the obstacle course.*
7. *Explain that the guide may give verbal directions only (e.g., telling their partner to step forward, turn, etc.) and may not touch their partner. Remind blindfolded kids to listen carefully to avoid bumping into chairs.*
8. *Have each pair move through the course.*
9. *Swap partners and have pairs complete the course again.*
10. **Discuss:** Seeing partner, what was it like guiding the blindfolded partner?
11. **Discuss:** Blindfolded partner, was it always easy to hear and follow your partner's directions? Why or why not?
12. **Discuss:** Blindfolded partner, were you ever nervous, even slightly, that you were going to run into a chair? Why or why not?

ACTIVITY WRAP-UP:

God works through His people, and He is with them even when it's hard or scary. Today we are learning about Ezra and Nehemiah, whom God used to lead tasks that weren't easy. But they knew that God was working through them.

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THE EXILES RETURN

BIBLE PASSAGE ***(EZRA 1–3; 7; NEHEMIAH 1–2)***

Summary: The Israelite people had been in exile for 70 years. King Cyrus was stirred by the Lord to let some of the people return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. Ezra later took a second group and encouraged all the people to turn away from sin and turn to God. Nehemiah heard about how the walls of Jerusalem were destroyed. He received permission to go back and help rebuild the walls. God used His people to do His work to restore the city.

Today's Brite Idea is: God works through His people.

MONTHLY Memory Verse

Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised.

(PSALM 145:3)

BIG QUESTION

Who is greater than everything? God!

HE

God loves everyone.

WE

We can serve God.

ME

I can serve God.

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RETURN THE SHAPES

SUPPLIES:
Various colored cardstock paper, scissors (prep), bin

PREP:
Cut the cardstock paper into circles, squares and triangle shapes. Place them around your space.

LEADER TIP: If you have a mixed age group, provide a bin for each shape for older kids to sort the various shapes into.

ACTIVITY INTRO:

Welcome everyone! My name is _____. *Greet each kid by name and welcome any new kids to the group.*

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. **Say:** Today we will learn about God's people who returned home. I put many shapes around our area. Let's work together to gather them and return them to this bin.
2. **Say:** As you get the shapes, I'll call out different movements to do along the way.
3. **Movements to call out:**
    - Hop
    - Big steps
    - Small steps
    - Spin
    - Reach arms up
    - Leap like a frog
    - Waddle like a penguin
    - Wiggle your bodies
4. **Ask:** What was your favorite movement to do?

ACTIVITY WRAP-UP:

You helped return all the shapes to the bin. Today we will learn a Bible story about God's people, who were able to return home. Let's find out how this went and what they learned about following God.

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THE EXILES RETURN

Ezra 1–3; 7; Nehemiah 1–2

BIG QUESTION

Who is greater than everything? God!

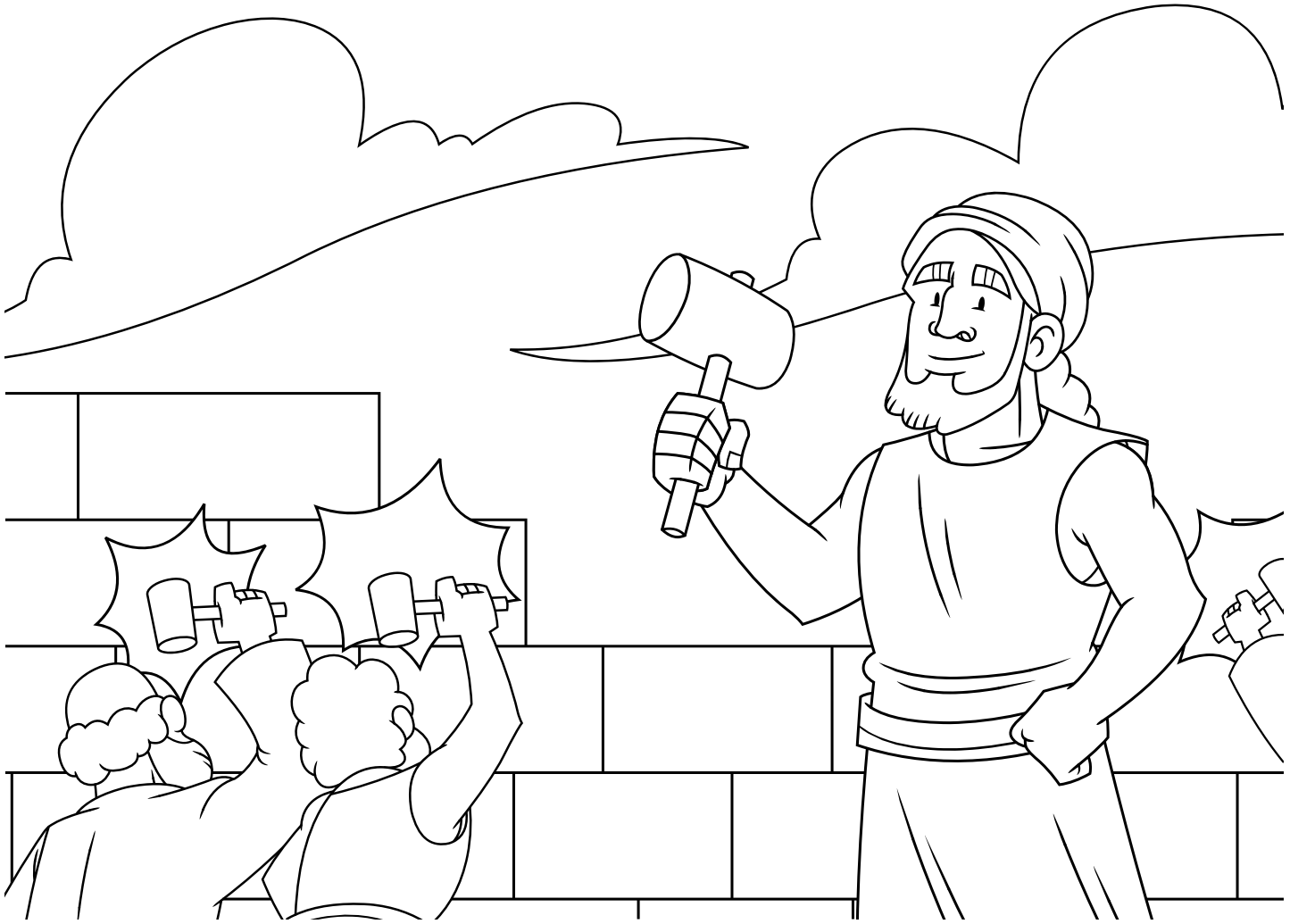
BRITE Idea

God works through His people.

MONTHLY Memory Verse

Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised. (Psalm 145:3)

SCAN ME!
FOR AT-HOME DISCIPLESHIP DISCUSSION



COLOR THE PICTURE

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CHRISTMAS CARD TEMPLATE

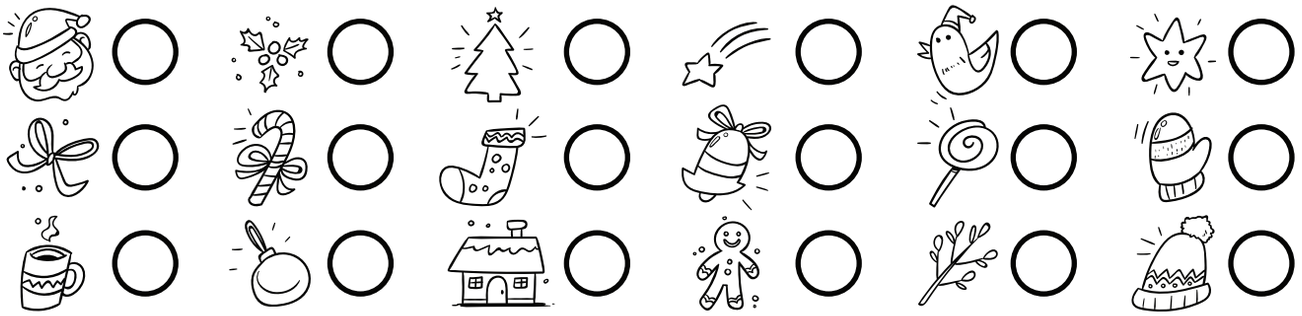


Cut along the dotted line and fold at the center line.

I SPY: CHRISTMAS



Find all the Christmas objects and count them!



THE CHRISTMAS STORY

LUKE 2:1-20 (ICB)

"At that time, Augustus Caesar sent an order to all people in the countries that were under Roman rule. The order said that they must list their names in a register. This was the first registration taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And everyone went to their own towns to be registered.

So Joseph left Nazareth, a town in Galilee. He went to the town of Bethlehem in Judea. This town was known as the town of David. Joseph went there because he was from the family of David. Joseph registered with Mary because she was engaged to marry him. (Mary was now pregnant.) While Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have the baby. She gave birth to her first son. There were no rooms left in the inn. So she wrapped the baby with cloths and laid him in a box where animals are fed.

That night, some shepherds were in the fields nearby watching their sheep. An angel of the Lord stood before them. The glory of the Lord was shining around them, and suddenly they became very frightened. The angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, because I am bringing you some good news. It will be a joy to all the people. Today your Savior was born in David's town. He is Christ, the Lord. This is how you will know him: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a feeding box."

Then a very large group of angels from heaven joined the first angel. All the angels were praising God, saying: "Give glory to God in heaven, and on earth let there be peace to the people who please God."

Then the angels left the shepherds and went back to heaven. The shepherds said to each other, "Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened. We will see this thing the Lord told us about."

So the shepherds went quickly and found Mary and Joseph. And the shepherds saw the baby lying in a feeding box. Then they told what the angels had said about this child. Everyone was amazed when they heard what the shepherds said to them. Mary hid these things in her heart; she continued to think about them. Then the shepherds went back to their sheep, praising God and thanking him for everything that they had seen and heard. It was just as the angel had told them."