

THE  
**GOSPEL**  
**PROJECT**  
FOR PRESCHOOL

**A People Restored**

*Preschool Leader Guide*

VOLUME 6



# THE GOSPEL

## GOD'S PLAN for US

**While preschoolers might not be ready to respond to the gospel, use this guide to help young minds begin to grasp big truths about Jesus and the kingdom of God.**



**GOD IS KING.** Ask: "Who is in charge at home? Who is in charge over the whole world?" Explain that God made everything! He is King over everything, and He is in charge.

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**WE SINNED.** Ask: "Have you ever done something wrong?" Tell preschoolers that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin makes God sad.

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**GOD SENT JESUS.** Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16.

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**JESUS LOVES.** Ask: "Do you like presents?" Explain that Jesus gives us the best present. He never did anything wrong, but He was punished in our place. Jesus wants to take away our sin because He loves us.

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*Pray that God will save your preschoolers. As you faithfully teach the Bible, you are planting gospel seeds in children's hearts. Ask God to grow the preschoolers into children who love and trust in Jesus.*

# THE GOSPEL PROJECT<sup>®</sup> FOR PRESCHOOL

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Write the dates for each session here! —

*The Gospel Project for Preschool:  
Preschool Leader Guide*

## Volume 6 A People Restored

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# Bible Study at a Glance

## LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Familiarize yourself with the content and context of the Bible story and how it relates to God's plan of redemption

### Preparation

Pray for your preschoolers and contact families during the week. Gather and prepare session materials.

- Pray for your preschoolers
- Send a parent email
- Print/download printables
- Assemble supplies
- Prepare videos

### Introduce the Story

Engage preschoolers and introduce the day's Bible story.

- Opening Activities
- Activity Page

### Teach the Story

Communicate the day's Bible story and discover God's big story.

- Big Picture Question
- Giant Timeline
- Bible Story
- Missions Moment
- Key Passage
- Sing

#### Say what?

Use the suggested "Say" dialogue to easily move between segments.



## Apply the Story

Reinforce the Bible Story by engaging in fun activities for multiple learning styles.

- Activities
- Snack & Transition

### Suggested times

The times provided allow you to complete the session plan in an hour. Lengthen or shorten the session as needed.



### Missions Moment

Introduce preschoolers to missions and encourage them to take the gospel to the nations with designated missions awareness activities.

## Make it fit

Customize the session plan to fit the needs of your church or classroom.



1 room

- 1) Use “Introduce the Story” to welcome preschoolers to Bible study. Preschoolers may complete an activity together and/or work the activity page.
- 2) Transition to an area within your classroom that can be designated as the “Teach the Story” area. Watch the Bible story video or tell the Bible story. Incorporate any “Teach the Story” elements that fit your space and your time constraints.
- 3) Regroup to the “Experience the Story” area by using a countdown video. Set up activities in one of these ways: as a group, all at the same time; in small groups that rotate through each activity; set up as centers, allowing preschoolers to browse and choose.



1 or more rooms

- 1) Use “Introduce the Story” to welcome preschoolers to Bible study. Preschoolers may complete an activity together and/or work the activity page.
- 2) Use the countdown video or other transition signal as you move your small group to join the other small groups in the “Teach the Story” area. Watch the Bible story video or tell the Bible story. Incorporate any large group elements that fit your space and your time constraints.
- 3) Regroup to the “Experience the Story” rooms where you will reinforce what preschoolers learned from the “Teach the Story” leader. Set up activities in one of these ways: as a group, all at the same time; in small groups that rotate through each activity; set up as centers, allowing preschoolers to browse and choose.

# Unit 16: Hope in Exile

## Unit Description:

After years of living in sin, God's people were sent into exile. The Southern Kingdom of Judah was captured by Babylon. Daniel's visions of the future showed that God is in control at all times. God used faithful people to continue His plan to provide salvation through Jesus.

## Key Passage:

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

## Big Picture Question:

Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.

## Session 1:

### The Fiery Furnace

*Daniel 3*

**Story Point:** God saved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fire.

## Session 2:

### Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

*Daniel 4*

**Story Point:** King Nebuchadnezzar learned that God is greatest of all.

## Session 3:

### Daniel in the Lions' Den

*Daniel 6*

**Story Point:** God saved Daniel from the lions.

## Christmas:

### Jesus Was Born

*Matthew 1; Luke 2*

**Story Point:** Jesus is God with us.

## Session 4:

### Daniel's Dream

*Daniel 7*

**Story Point:** God showed Daniel that God's Son will rule forever.



## **The Fiery Furnace**

God saved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fire.

## **Nebuchadnezzar's Dream**

King Nebuchadnezzar learned that God is greatest of all.



## **Daniel in the Lions' Den**

God saved Daniel from the lions.

## **Jesus Was Born**

Jesus is God with us.



## **Daniel's Dream**

God showed Daniel that God's Son will rule forever.



Use Week of:

## Unit 16 • Session 1

# The Fiery Furnace

### BIBLE PASSAGE:

Daniel 3

**STORY POINT:** God saved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fire.

### KEY PASSAGE:

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.

#### INTRODUCE THE STORY

(15–20 MINUTES)

PAGE 10



#### TEACH THE STORY

(10–15 MINUTES)

PAGE 12



#### EXPERIENCE THE STORY

(20–25 MINUTES)

PAGE 14



Additional resources are available at [gospelproject.com](http://gospelproject.com).

For free training and session-by-session help, visit [MinistryGrid.com/gospelproject](http://MinistryGrid.com/gospelproject).

## LEADER Bible Study

In 587 B.C., the Babylonians laid siege to Jerusalem, and God's people were exiled to Babylon where they would serve an enemy king for 70 years. (See Jer. 25:11.) Among the early exiles was a young man, Daniel, and three of his friends. About 20 years after arriving in Babylon, the three friends faced a test of their faith. King Nebuchadnezzar's law gave them a choice: worship a statue (against God's law) or face death by fiery furnace. (Dan. 3:6)

Three men from Judah—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—refused to bow down and worship the statue. They loved and worshiped the one true God. Only He was worthy of their worship. The Book of Daniel says that the Chaldeans—a group of astrologers and dream interpreters (see Dan. 2:2,4)—took this opportunity to go to the king and tell on Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. But not even the threat of death could convince the three friends to renounce their loyalty to God.

As you teach, lead preschoolers to consider the possibilities: God could keep the friends from being thrown into the furnace. Or, once in the furnace, God could keep them from being harmed. Or if they perished, God would receive them into heaven. The friends' trust in God enabled them to stand firm no matter what—even as they were tied up and thrown into the fire.

Then something miraculous happened. Nebuchadnezzar saw four men in the fire! They were walking around, unharmed! The Lord not only rescued Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, He was with them.

On the cross, people mocked Jesus: "He saved others, but he cannot save himself!" (Mark 15:31). Jesus was not physically unable to save Himself. He chose to do His Father's will, and His love for sinners kept Him there. Jesus chose not to save Himself so that He could save others.



# The BIBLE Story

## The Fiery Furnace

*Daniel 3*

**Nebuchadnezzar** (NEB yoo kad NEZ uhr), the king of Babylon, did not love God. One day, King Nebuchadnezzar **made a tall statue out of gold.** The king's official gave a new rule to all the people. He said, **“Whenever you hear the sound of music, fall to your knees and worship this gold statue.”** Then he said, **“Anyone who does not obey this new rule will be thrown into a very hot fire!”**



So when the music played, everyone in Babylon fell to their knees and worshiped the gold statue. Well, almost everyone. **Three men from Judah did not fall to their knees and worship the statue.** They worshiped God, and they knew God did not want them to worship anyone or anything else. **These men were Shadrach** (SHAD rak), **Meshach** (MEE shak), and **Abednego** (uh BED-nih goh).

**Some of the people told the king that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did not bow down to the statue.** The king was angry! He **called for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and said, “If you do not fall to your knees and worship the statue, I will throw you into a very hot fire!”**

The three friends said, **“King, we worship God. God can save us**

**from the fire. But even if He does not save us, we will not worship the gold statue.”**

Now **the king** was very mad! He made the fire even hotter and **told** some of **his soldiers** to tie up the three friends and **throw** them into the fire. **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego** fell into the fire, all tied up.

**All of a sudden, the king stood up. “Didn’t we throw three men into the fire?”** he asked.

“Yes, King,” his helpers said.

**“Look!”** the king shouted. **“I see four men walking around in the fire!** They aren’t hurt or tied up! The fourth man looks like an angel!”

**Then the king said, “Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego—servants of the Most High God! Come here!”**

**The friends came out of the fire.** They were not burned and did not smell like smoke. **They had not been hurt at all! God was with them, and He had saved them from the fire!**

**The king praised God and made a new rule for all the people. “Anyone who says anything bad about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego’s God will be punished. Only God can save people from death!”** Then the king gave Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego important jobs in his kingdom.

*Christ Connection: God saved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fire. Jesus came to save us in an even better way. Jesus died so we wouldn’t be punished for our sin. He was punished instead. When we know and love Jesus, Jesus saves us so we can be with God forever.*

## **Bible Storytelling Tips**

### **• Listen for it:**

Provide a red, orange, or yellow streamer for each preschooler. Instruct preschoolers to wave their streamer every time they hear the word *fire*.

### **• Wear a costume:**

Dress in Bible times clothes and tell the story from the perspective of one of the three friends. You may also recruit three adults to act out the roles.

# INTRODUCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** The Fiery Furnace

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Daniel 3

**STORY POINT:** God saved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fire.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.

## Welcome time

- "Wherever I Go" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play a theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

## Activity page

- "Who Worshipped God?" activity page, 1 per child
- crayons or markers

Invite preschoolers to circle the men who are not bowing to the gold statue then count them.

**SAY** • Today we will hear about a king who made a rule that people must worship a gold statue. We will also hear about three men who loved God. They chose to obey God instead of the king. Listen to the Bible story to learn their names.

## LOW PREP

- upbeat music
- "Pray Constantly" song (optional)
- "Wherever I Go" song (optional)

## Listen and fall down

Play upbeat music. Direct children to wiggle, jump, sing, and dance while the music plays, but when the music stops, they must collapse onto the floor. Play several rounds as time allows.

**SAY** • In today's Bible story, the king made a tall gold statue. He told the people to fall down and worship the statue whenever they heard music play. Do you

think God wanted the people to worship a statue? No, God wants people to worship and trust Him only. Listen to the Bible story to hear about three men who chose to worship God instead of the statue.

## Drive rescue vehicles

Gather toy fire trucks, ambulances, and police cars. Tape roads onto the floor. Add blocks and fire-colored tissue paper. Invite preschoolers to play out responding to a fire emergency. Talk about things a firefighter does to get people out of burning buildings as children play.

**SAY** • Fire can be very dangerous. In today's Bible story, the king told Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that if they did not bow down to the gold statue he made, they would be thrown into a furnace of fire. Listen to the Bible story to hear how **God saved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fire.**

- toy rescue vehicles (fire truck, ambulance, police car)
- tape
- blocks
- red, orange, yellow tissue paper

## Transition to teach the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, turn the lights off and on, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Dismiss children to Bible study by the color they are wearing. Allow those wearing shirts that are the colors of fire to move to the Bible study area first. Continue naming colors until everyone has gathered together.

- countdown video (optional)

# TEACH the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** The Fiery Furnace

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Daniel 3

**STORY POINT:** God saved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fire.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.

## Introduce the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- Giant Timeline

Place a bookmark at Daniel 3 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

**SAY** • The Bible is the most important book there is. The Bible is God's Word, and God's Word is true! Today's Bible story is from the Old Testament Book of Daniel. Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline. Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

## Watch or tell the Bible story

- Story Point Poster
- "The Fiery Furnace" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

**SAY** • How exciting that **God saved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fire.** God rescued them! Because of our sin, we need someone to rescue us. Jesus came to save us in an even better way. God sent Jesus to take the punishment for our sin. Jesus saves us so we can be with God forever.

- Bible
- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- "Pray Constantly" song
- "Wherever I Go" song

## Practice the key passage

Place the key passage marker at 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18.



Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Create motions for preschoolers to use as they say the key passage. Use the key passage song video for inspiration

**SAY** • Our key passage tells us to give thanks in everything. How thankful Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego must have been that God kept them safe from the fire! Even the king praised God for delivering them!

Sing the key passage song, “Pray Constantly,” and the theme song, “Wherever I Go.”

## Learn the big picture question

**SAY** • Our big picture question asks, *Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.* Praying is talking to God. We talk to God, and He hears us. Praying is a way we worship God. The three friends chose to worship God instead of the statue. Even when they were told they would be thrown into the fire, they trusted God and He saved them.

• Big Picture Question  
Poster



## Missions moment

Show the picture of the Ukegbu (yoo-KAY-boo) family. Read each family member's name while pointing to him or her. Ask children to repeat the names back to you.

**SAY** • The Ukegbus are a missionary family. They moved to a new city so that they could tell people there about Jesus. Their kids are close to your ages! Serenity, Joelle, and Noah went with their parents to Miami because that is where God wanted their family to go.

• “Ukegbu Family  
Photo” printable

## Pray and transition to experience the story

# EXPERIENCE The Story



**SESSION TITLE:** The Fiery Furnace

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Daniel 3

**STORY POINT:** God saved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fire.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.

## LOW PREP

- blocks
- red, orange, and yellow construction paper
- people figures, 4 (optional)

### Build a furnace with blocks

Invite preschoolers to work together to build a furnace with blocks. Encourage them to rip pieces of red, orange, and yellow construction paper to place in the furnace to represent fire. Consider providing four people figures for preschoolers to play out the Bible story.

**SAY** • When the king looked in the fiery furnace, he did not just see Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He saw a fourth person in the fire with them. The fourth person looked like an angel. **God saved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fire.** They were not burned and did not even smell like smoke. Jesus came to save us in an even better way. Jesus died so we wouldn't be punished for our sin. He was punished instead. When we know and love Jesus, Jesus saves us so we can be with God forever.

- "Prayer Prompts" printable, 1 copy for every 2 children
- blunt-tipped scissors
- scissors (adult use) (optional)
- index cards
- markers
- glue sticks
- hole punch
- metal loose-leaf binder rings

### Make a prayer flip book

Print a "Prayer Prompts" printable for every two children. Invite preschoolers to cut out the prompts. Cut out the prompts for younger preschoolers. Make sure each child has eight prompts. Show a child how to glue the prayer prompt picture to an index card. Punch a hole in the upper left-hand corner of the card. Form a flip book by binding cards

together with rings. Provide additional index cards and suggest a child draw other things he can talk to God about. Voice simple prayers with children as they create.

**SAY** • What can you ask God to help you with? Can you think of something to thank God for? ***Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God and we know He hears us.*** Let's pray and thank God that, when we know and love Jesus, He saves us so we can be with God forever.

## Paint with fire colors

Suggest a child draw the three friends and the fourth man onto construction paper. Squirt red, orange, and yellow paint onto foam plates. Put on smocks and roll up sleeves. Provide plastic forks for children to use as brushes. Show a child how to dip the fork into the paint and brush it on the paper to create flames. Point out the friends in the fire painting as she works.

- construction paper
- markers
- red, orange, and yellow washable paint
- plastic forks
- foam plates
- smocks

**SAY** • Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would not disobey God by bowing down and worshiping the gold statue. They believed that God could save them, but even if He didn't, they would not worship the statue. When they were put in the furnace, **God saved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fire.** The king even noticed that there was a fourth person with the men in the fire that looked like an angel. The Bible says that when we sin, we should be punished, but we don't have to be because Jesus came to be punished instead. Jesus came to be with us. He saves us so we can be with God forever.

- Allergy Alert
- hand sanitizer
- foil
- graham crackers
- mini-chocolate chips
- mini-marshmallows
- bear-shaped crackers
- toaster oven
- paper plates

## Bake and taste a snack

Wash or sanitize hands. Tear foil into 8-inch squares. Lead a child to place a graham cracker square in the center.

Top it with mini-chocolate chips and marshmallows. Lay bear-shaped crackers on top. Carefully toast in 350-degree Fahrenheit toaster oven until marshmallows are browned.

Remove and transfer the cooled snack to a child's plate.

**SAY** • The oven's heat melted the chocolate and cooked the marshmallows, but look at the bear-shaped crackers—they haven't burned. When Nebuchadnezzar looked inside the furnace, he saw four men walking around in the fire. The king knew he only put the three friends in the furnace and **God saved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fire.** The king thought the fourth man looked like an angel. God sent the fourth person to be with them. God sent Jesus to save us so we wouldn't be punished for our sin; Jesus was punished instead.



## Play a board game

- preschool-friendly board games

Set out preschool-friendly board games. Invite a group of children to play as they show interest.

**SAY** • The Ukegbu (yoo-KAY-boo) family in Miami, Florida loves to play board games. It's a fun way to spend time together, and they can also invite people over to play with them. They tell their friends in Miami that God loves them very much. You can play games with your friends, too. When you are playing, you can tell your friends that God cares for us and sent Jesus to save us so we can be with Him forever.

## Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Serve puffed cheese-flavored snacks or the snack children made during Experience the Story. Talk about how the snack reminds you that **God saved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fire.**

Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. What did King Nebuchadnezzar tell the people to do whenever they heard music? (*worship a gold statue*)
2. What would happen to anyone who did not worship the statue? (*They would be thrown into a very hot fire.*)
3. Did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego obey the king? (*No, they worshiped only God.*)
4. What happened to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fire? (*Nothing, they were neither hurt nor smelled like smoke. God kept them safe.*)
5. How many men did the king see in the fire? (*four*)
6. ***Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.***

## Transition

When preschoolers finish their snack, they may color the Bible story coloring page, play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question, or sing along to the key passage or theme song.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- puffed cheese-flavored snack (optional)

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- "Pray Constantly" song
- "Wherever I Go" song
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers





Use Week of:

## Unit 16 • Session 2

# Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

### BIBLE PASSAGE:

Daniel 4

### STORY POINT:

King Nebuchadnezzar learned that God is greatest of all.

### KEY PASSAGE:

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.

#### INTRODUCE THE STORY

(15–20 MINUTES)

PAGE 22



#### TEACH THE STORY

(10–15 MINUTES)

PAGE 24



#### EXPERIENCE THE STORY

(20–25 MINUTES)

PAGE 26



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## LEADER Bible Study

Babylon's King Nebuchadnezzar had witnessed the power of the one true God when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were delivered—unscathed—from the fiery furnace. (See Dan. 3.) Daniel 4 records a proclamation from the king, a first-person account for all nations of a dream and its life-changing fulfillment.

Nebuchadnezzar dreamed about a strong, mighty tree that was cut down. Only the stump and roots remained. God got Nebuchadnezzar's attention. His wise men could not explain what the dream meant, but Daniel—who came to Babylon with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—was able to interpret the dream. Like the tree, Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom would be taken away. But the dream gave an element of hope to the king: His kingdom would be restored when he acknowledged God as ruler over everything.

A year later, just when everything seemed to be going right for Nebuchadnezzar, the dream came true. He was walking on the roof of his palace making prideful statements when God suddenly spoke to him. Nebuchadnezzar's arrogance and pride resulted in his humiliation. He was driven away from people, he ate grass like cattle, his hair grew long, and his nails were like birds' claws. After some time, Nebuchadnezzar experienced complete transformation. He looked up to heaven and praised God. He acknowledge God as "the King of the heavens" (Dan. 4:37).

As you teach, emphasize that pride steals God's glory. Point out how God humbled King Nebuchadnezzar to show that God is in control. Nebuchadnezzar learned the lesson we must remind ourselves daily: God is God, and we are not. He alone deserves honor and glory. Rather than proudly seeking our own fame and glory, we seek His fame and glory.

Nebuchadnezzar was a sinful man who exalted himself, and God humbled him. Point children to Jesus—the sinless, eternal Son—humbled Himself, and God exalted Him. We can trust Jesus as King and live for God's glory.

# The BIBLE Story

## Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

*Daniel 4*

**Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon**, shared a message about the wonderful things God had done for him.

One night, the king **had a scary dream**. He asked the wise men in his kingdom to tell him what the dream meant, but the wise men did not know. So the king told **Daniel about his dream**.

**"I saw a big, strong tree**. Its top was in the sky, and everyone could see it. **The tree had beautiful leaves and fruit, and animals lived in and around the tree**. An angel came down from heaven and said, 'Cut down the tree!' **Only the stump and roots would be left**. Then the angel said something strange: the tree's mind would change from a human's mind into an animal's mind. **He said this would happen so that people would know God is ruler over everyone—even kings.**"

The dream made **Daniel** feel afraid too, and he **told the king** what it meant. **"The tree is you. You are great and strong,"** Daniel said.

**"Like the tree was cut down, you will go away from people**. You will live with wild animals and eat grass. **Like the stump was left in the ground, your kingdom will not be completely destroyed; it will be**



given back to you when you learn that God rules over everything.”

One year later, the king’s dream came true. He walked on the roof of his palace and said, “My kingdom is great! I am powerful and wonderful!”

Suddenly, the king heard a voice from heaven: “King Nebuchadnezzar, you will go away from people. You will live with wild animals and eat grass until you learn that God rules over everything.” Nebuchadnezzar went away from people. He ate grass like a cow, his hair grew long like eagles’ feathers, and his nails grew sharp like birds’ claws.

After some time, the king looked up to the sky and praised God. He had learned that God rules over everything. His kingdom was given back to him, and the king worshiped God.

*Christ Connection: Pride is thinking you are great. God showed the king that only God is truly great. Jesus is the King of kings who came to earth and died on the cross. Jesus saves sinners so we can show others that He is greatest of all.*

## **Bible Storytelling Tips**

- **Listen and “dream”:** Invite preschoolers to lie down and close their eyes as if they are dreaming while they listen to the Bible story.
- **Illustrate the story:** Use a dry erase board, chalkboard, or large sheet of paper to illustrate the tree from Nebuchadnezzar’s dream as you tell the story. Erase or rip off all but a stump at the appropriate moment in the Bible story.

# INTRODUCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Daniel 4

**STORY POINT:** King Nebuchadnezzar learned that God is greatest of all.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.

## Welcome time

- "Wherever I Go" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play a theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

## Activity page

- "A Dream About a Tree" activity page, 1 per child
- crayons or markers

Guide preschoolers to draw a line connecting the items in the close-up picture with where they are in the big picture.

**SAY** • In today's Bible story, King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream about a tree. The king did not know what the dream meant so he found someone to tell him its meaning. Listen to the Bible story to hear who told King Nebuchadnezzar what his dream meant.

## LOW PREP

### Play "Where Does it Live?"

Demonstrate body movements to represent a tree, ground, and water.

- *tree*: Stretch arms upward for tree.
- *ground*: Touch the floor.
- *water*: pretend to swim.

Teach movements to children and practice them a few times. Say the name of an animal and guide boys and girls



to show you with their movements where the animal lives. Call out animals such as bird (*tree*), raccoon (*ground*), shark (*water*), cow (*ground*), squirrel (*tree*), and so forth.

**SAY** • In today's Bible story, King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream about a big, strong tree. The tree had beautiful leaves and fruit, and animals lived in and around the tree. None of the king's wise men could tell him what the dream meant, but Daniel could. Listen to the Bible story to hear what King Nebuchadnezzar's dream was about.

## Sort feathers

Gather an assortment of craft feathers. Set out bins and invite preschoolers to sort the feathers by placing like feathers in the same bin.

· craft feathers  
· bins

**SAY** • Does anyone remember King Nebuchadnezzar from our Bible story about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. When **God saved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fire**, King Nebuchadnezzar praised God and made a new rule that anyone who said anything bad about God would be punished. In today's Bible story, something happened to Nebuchadnezzar and his hair grew long like eagles' feathers. Listen to the Bible story to hear what happened to King Nebuchadnezzar and why.

## Transition to teach the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, turn the lights off and on, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. When children come to the Bible study area, help boys and girls think of different things they might find in a tree.

· countdown video  
(optional)

# TEACH the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Daniel 4

**STORY POINT:** King Nebuchadnezzar learned that God is greatest of all.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.

## Introduce the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- Giant Timeline

Place a bookmark at Daniel 4 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

**SAY** • The Bible is God's Word, and the stories in it are true. Today's Bible story is from the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament part of the Bible.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline. Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

## Watch or tell the Bible story

- Story Point Poster
- "Nebuchadnezzar's Dream" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

**SAY** • God wanted King Nebuchadnezzar to understand that only God is truly great. **King Nebuchadnezzar learned that God is greatest of all.** Jesus is the King of kings. No earthly king will ever be as great as King Jesus. Jesus came to earth and died on the cross. King Jesus saves sinners so we can show others that He is greatest of all.

## Practice the key passage

Place the key passage marker at 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Practice the motions you created for the verse in the previous session.

**SAY** • Pride is thinking you are great. People who are prideful forget that they need God and that everything good they have comes from God. We need God every moment of every day. Our key passage reminds us to pray every moment of every day and to give thanks to God in everything.

Sing the key passage song, “Pray Constantly,” and the theme song, “Wherever I Go.”

- sticky notes
- marker
- Bible
- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- “Pray Constantly” song
- “Wherever I Go” song

## Learn the big picture question

**SAY** • Daniel told King Nebuchadnezzar what God wanted him to learn. Daniel trusted that what God said, He would do. Everything Daniel told the king about the dream happened the way God said it would. Daniel trusted God. We can trust that God hears us when we talk to Him. ***Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.***

- Big Picture Question Poster



## Missions moment

Ask preschoolers a few questions about their families and invite them to respond by raising their hands.

**SAY** • Let’s watch a video about the Ukegbu (yoo-KAY-boo) family. They are a missionary family telling people about Jesus in a city called Miami, Florida.

Show the “Missionaries in Miami” video.

- “Missionaries in Miami” video

- Suggested questions:
- How many brothers and sisters do you have?
  - Does your family like music?
  - What food is your family’s favorite?

## Pray and transition to experience the story

# EXPERIENCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Daniel 4

**STORY POINT:** King Nebuchadnezzar learned that God is greatest of all.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.

## LOW PREP

### Sing “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands”

Lead preschoolers in singing the song “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands.” If you are unfamiliar with the tune or lyrics, look them up online before the session. Consider creating motions to go with the lyrics.

**SAY** • God made everything! He owns it all, and He is in control of all of it! **King Nebuchadnezzar learned that God is greatest of all.** Jesus is the King of kings who came to earth and died on the cross. Jesus saves sinners so we can show others that He is greatest of all.

### Decorate a tree branch

- Allergy Alert
- branches (8-12 inches long), 1 per child
- dowels (optional)
- duct tape
- markers
- yarn
- blunt-tipped scissors
- decorative tape
- chenille stems

Gather an 8- to 12-inch tree branch for each preschooler. If branches are not available, use dowels instead. Cover sharp edges on the branches with duct tape. Show a child how to draw on the wood with a marker or wrap it with yarn. Help a child tear and attach decorative tape to the branch or wrap it with a chenille stem. Remind preschoolers how the angel in King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream said to cut down the tree.

**SAY** • This branch reminds me of King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. The big tree in his dream was cut down. The

stump that was left showed what would happen to him. The king thought he was the greatest of all, but he soon learned that his kingdom would be taken away from him for a time. God sent him to live with wild animals until **King Nebuchadnezzar learned that God is greatest of all.** The king worshiped God and understood that God rules over everything.

## Make a “Great God” tree

Before the session, cut out green leaf shapes from construction paper. Draw a simple tree with branches but no leaves on a large sheet of paper. Hang the tree at a preschooler’s height. Invite preschoolers to name ways God is great. Write each of their thoughts on a leaf. Place a tape loop on the back of a leaf. Encourage a preschooler to hang his leaf on the tree.

- permanent marker (adult use)
- scissors (adult use)
- green construction paper or real leaves
- large sheet of paper
- tape

**SAY** • Wow! We really do have a great God! Pride is thinking we are great, but when we remember how great God is, we see how small we are. Only God is truly great. **King Nebuchadnezzar learned that God is greatest of all.** Jesus is the King of kings who came to earth and died on the cross. Jesus saves sinners so we can show others that He is greatest of all.

## Build with blocks and pray

Print and cut out “Prayer Prompts.” Tape the prompts to several blocks. Encourage boys and girls to build with these and other blocks. When a child stacks a marked block, read the prompt and talk about prayer. Ask a child to tell about something he would like to thank God for. Suggest other things a child can talk to God about. Say a brief prayer.

- “Prayer Prompts” printable
- scissors (adult use)
- blocks
- tape

**SAY • King Nebuchadnezzar learned that God is greatest of all.** Isn't it amazing that this same God wants us to talk to Him? *Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.* Being able to talk to God is such a gift, and He actually has the power to answer our prayers!



### **Pretend to go to the beach**

- beach towels
- beach equipment

Spread beach towels on the floor. Set out beach equipment such as goggles, floats, or sand toys. Invite preschoolers to join you at “the beach.” Encourage them to pretend to put on sunblock, surf, relax on the towels, swim around the room, or sit on a float. Remind preschoolers that the city of Miami has many beaches. Explain that the Ukegbu family loves to go to the beach.

**SAY •** We’ve been learning about the Ukegbu family who lives in Miami. Serenity, Joelle, and Noah are beach kids! They love to go to the beach. People from many countries live in Miami. The missionaries there teach people that God is the greatest of all and loves them very much.



## Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Serve fruit that is grown on a tree for snack. Mention that King Nebuchadnezzar dreamed about a big tree that had beautiful leaves with fruit growing on it. One year later, his dream came true. **King Nebuchadnezzar learned that God is greatest of all.**

Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. Who told King Nebuchadnezzar what his dream meant? (*Daniel*)
2. Why did God send Nebuchadnezzar away? (*because of his pride; He thought he was greater than God.*)
3. What did Nebuchadnezzar learn about God? (**King Nebuchadnezzar learned that God is greatest of all.**)
4. What did God give Nebuchadnezzar after he learned God is greatest of all? (*his kingdom back*)
5. ***Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.***

## Transition

When preschoolers finish their snack, they may color the Bible story coloring page, play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question, or sing along to the key passage or theme song.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- fruit grown on a tree (optional)

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- "Pray Constantly" song
- "Wherever I Go" song
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers



Use Week of:

## Unit 16 • Session 3

# Daniel in the Lions' Den

### BIBLE PASSAGE:

Daniel 6

**STORY POINT:** God saved Daniel from the lions.

### KEY PASSAGE:

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.

#### INTRODUCE THE STORY

(15–20 MINUTES)

PAGE 34



#### TEACH THE STORY

(10–15 MINUTES)

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#### EXPERIENCE THE STORY

(20–25 MINUTES)

PAGE 38



Additional resources are available at [gospelproject.com](http://gospelproject.com).

For free training and session-by-session help, visit [MinistryGrid.com/gospelproject](http://MinistryGrid.com/gospelproject).

## LEADER Bible Study

The fifth chapter of Daniel ends with the death of King Belshazzar when the Persians took over Babylon and Darius was put on the throne. Babylon was on the decline—no longer the powerful, prosperous empire it once was. By this time Daniel was an old man, probably in his early 80s. He served the new king as one of the three leading supervisors in the kingdom.

Daniel was very good at his job—so good, in fact, that King Darius planned to put him in charge of the entire kingdom. The other supervisors and governors were jealous of Daniel. They watched for him to do something wrong so they could complain to the king. Read Daniel 6:4. Daniel was “trustworthy, and no negligence or corruption was found in him.”

Through the malevolent persuasion of the king’s leaders, King Darius passed a law that no one could pray to anyone but him, the king, for 30 days. But Daniel continued to pray boldly to God.

Guide preschoolers to imagine how Daniel might have felt. Was he worried about getting caught? Did he have nightmares about being eaten by lions? Even the king’s threat of death did not stop Daniel from praying. The jealous officials turned him in, and Daniel was thrown into the lions’ den.

As you teach preschoolers, emphasize that Daniel was faithful to God—the true King—and God rescued Him. God’s protection of Daniel served to show all the people that the God of Daniel “is the living God, and he endures forever; his kingdom will never be destroyed, and his dominion has no end” (Dan. 6:26).

God also calls us to trust and obey Him no matter what. God sent His Son, Jesus, to rescue us from something much more dangerous than lions. Jesus rescues us from sin and death. Pray that through your faith, and that of the preschoolers you lead, “may the name of God be praised forever and ever” (Dan. 2:20).

# The BIBLE Story

## Daniel in the Lions' Den

*Daniel 6*

Babylon had a new king. His name was Darius (duh RIGH uhs). King Darius picked Daniel to be one of his helpers. Daniel worked hard, and he was good at his job. The king liked Daniel. He **decided to give Daniel a better job.**

**The other helpers were not happy that Daniel was going to get a better job.**

They watched Daniel very carefully. They wanted to catch him doing something wrong so they could tell on him. But Daniel did what was right.

The helpers knew Daniel loved God and obeyed Him. They knew Daniel prayed to God, so **they made a mean plan to get Daniel in trouble.**

The helpers went to the king. “King, we think you should make a law that says **everyone can only pray to you for 30 days.**” Of course, every law needs a punishment for breaking it, so the men said, **“Anyone who breaks the law will be thrown into the lions’ den!”**

**King Darius made the law:** people can only pray to the king. **Daniel knew the new law meant he could not pray to God during that time. But Daniel went into his house and prayed to God three times every day, just like he had always done.**



The men spied on Daniel and saw him praying to God. Then they **hurried to the king**. “**Daniel broke the law! We saw him praying!**” they said.

King Darius was sad. He **did not want to put Daniel in the lions’ den, but that was the law**. “I hope God saves you,” the king told Daniel. **And Daniel was thrown into the lions’ den**.

That night, the king could not sleep. He did not eat. He sat in his palace and thought about Daniel with the lions.

As soon as the sun came up **the next morning, the king hurried to the lions’ den**. He hoped Daniel was OK. “**Daniel!**” he called out. “**Did God save you from the lions?**”

“**Yes!**” said Daniel. “**God sent an angel to shut the lions’ mouths! I am safe!**”

King Darius was so happy. **Daniel came out of the lions’ den**. He wasn’t hurt. Daniel had trusted God to keep him safe. **The king made a new law**. The law said **that everyone must respect God**. God had saved Daniel and kept him safe from the lions.

*Christ Connection: God saved Daniel from the lions. God is powerful! God sent His Son, Jesus, to save us from something more dangerous than lions. Jesus rescues us from sin and death.*

## **Bible Storytelling Tips**

• **Sit in a lions’ den:** Print several copies of the “Lion” printable. Tape the photos to the backs of chairs. Then form a circle with the chairs. Invite preschoolers to sit in the “lions’ den” as you tell the Bible story.

• **Respond to key words:** As you tell the Bible story, guide boys and girls to touch the tops of their head as if they are wearing a crown each time you say *king*. Fold hands together whenever prayer is mentioned. Roar like a lion when lions are mentioned. Each time *Daniel* is spoken, say, “Go, Daniel!”

# INTRODUCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Daniel in the Lions' Den

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Daniel 6

**STORY POINT:** God saved Daniel from the lions.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.

## Welcome time

- "Wherever I Go" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play a theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

## Activity page

- "Lions Everywhere" activity page, 1 per child
- crayons or markers

Invite preschoolers to circle the lion in each row that is different from the others.

**SAY** • These lions do not look scary, but real lions are very dangerous. In today's Bible story, Daniel had to make a choice. The choice that honored God meant he could have to go into a whole den of lions. Do you think Daniel chose to honor God? Listen to the Bible story to find out.

## LOW PREP

## Play "Follow the Law"

Make up some new "classroom laws" for preschoolers to follow. Call out commands and lead children to do what you say. Tell children to hop, touch an ear, turn around, or say, "God is powerful!" Allow preschoolers to take turns making new laws for the group to follow.

**SAY** • Today we will hear about a law that King Darius



made that Daniel could not follow. The law said that people could only pray to the king. Anyone who disobeyed the law would be thrown into a den of lions. Listen to our Bible story to hear what happened when Daniel obeyed God instead of the king's law.

## Set up a zoo

Place toy zoo animals, people figures, craft sticks, and chenille stems in an area with blocks. Guide preschoolers to build enclosures and set up people figures to be zookeepers or visitors to the zoo. Provide index cards and markers. Challenge an older preschooler to spell *ZOO* and make signs for the zoo's entrance and exit. Talk about visits to the zoo and inquire about an animal's diet and behavior.

- toy zoo animals
- people figures
- blocks
- craft sticks
- chenille stems
- index cards
- markers
- tape

**SAY** • Many animals at the zoo can be very dangerous to people. Daniel knew that if he disobeyed the king's new law and prayed to God, he could be thrown into the lions' den. Daniel knew what could happen, but he kept on praying to the one true God anyway. Listen to the Bible story to find out what happened to Daniel in the lions' den.

## Transition to teach the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, turn the lights off and on, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Encourage boys and girls to roar like lions as they move to Bible study.

- countdown video (optional)

# TEACH the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Daniel in the Lions' Den

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Daniel 6

**STORY POINT:** God saved Daniel from the lions.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.

## Introduce the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- Giant Timeline

Place a bookmark at Daniel 6 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

**SAY** • Today's true story from the Bible is in Daniel. The Book of Daniel tells about what God did through an Israelite named Daniel and his friends when they lived in Babylon far away from their homeland.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline. Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

## Watch or tell the Bible story

- Story Point Poster
- "Daniel in the Lions' Den" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

**SAY** • Daniel obeyed God and kept on praying, even when he knew he could be thrown into the lions' den. God is powerful. **God saved Daniel from the lions.** God sent His Son, Jesus, to save us from something more dangerous than lions. Jesus rescues us from sin and death.

## Practice the key passage

Place the key passage marker at 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Invite preschoolers to say the key passage like lions.

**SAY** • Praying was very important to Daniel. He went to his house three times every day and prayed to God. God wants us to talk to Him all day long and thank Him for His goodness to us.

Sing the key passage song, “Pray Constantly,” and the theme song, “Wherever I Go.”

- Bible
- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- “Pray Constantly” song
- “Wherever I Go” song

## Learn the big picture question

**SAY** • Daniel trusted God. He kept on praying, even when he was thrown into the lions’ den. When we talk to God, He hears us. ***Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.*** God is powerful. He saved Daniel from the lions, and He sent Jesus to rescue us from sin and death.

- Big Picture Question Poster



## Missions moment

Display the picture of The Brook church.

**SAY** • What sort of things do you learn at church? [*Allow responses. Then point to the picture.*] Missionaries Muche and Diamone Ukegbu (yoo-KAY-boo) started a church called The Brook in Miami, Florida. People in the church are learning that God can save them from sin. People from many different countries go to The Brook church. Let’s pray for the Ukegbus and the people of Miami.

- “The Brook Photo” printable

## Pray and transition to experience the story

# EXPERIENCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Daniel in the Lions' Den

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Daniel 6

**STORY POINT:** God saved Daniel from the lions.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.

## LOW PREP

### Sing a song

Lead preschoolers in singing the lyrics below to the tune of "London Bridge Is Falling Down." If you are unfamiliar with the tune, look it up online before the session. Consider making up motions for the song.

"Daniel prayed to God alone, God alone, God alone.

Daniel prayed to God alone, which was against the law.

Daniel in the lions' den, lions' den, lions' den.

Daniel in the lions' den, trusted God to save him.

An angel shut the lions' mouths, lions' mouths, lions' mouths.

An angel shut the lions' mouths. God saved Daniel.

We will pray and trust in God, trust in God, trust in God.

We will pray and trust in God; we know God hears us."

**SAY •** The men saw Daniel praying and told the king.

When Daniel was thrown into the lions' den, do you think he kept on praying? Daniel knew that God heard his prayer, and he trusted God to keep him safe. The king even made a new law that everyone must respect God. ***Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.***

## Create lion art

Print and cut out the “Lion Faces” printable. Prepare enough lion faces for each child to have several. Write the story point on a sheet of paper for each child. Show a child how to glue a lion’s face to the inside of a cupcake liner to make a lion’s mane. Guide him to use glue stick to attach the lion head to the paper. Encourage him to draw Daniel safe in the lions’ den and decorate his picture. Add additional lions to the den.

- “Lion Faces” printable, several per child
- paper
- yellow or brown cupcake liners
- markers
- glue sticks

**SAY** • Daniel did not stop praying to God even with the new law. King Darius was sad that Daniel had to be put into the lions’ den for breaking the law; he hoped God would save Daniel. The next morning King Darius hurried to see that **God saved Daniel from the lions.** God is powerful! God sent His Son, Jesus, to save us from something more dangerous than lions. Jesus rescues us from sin and death.

## Make a prayer wall

Open a Bible to 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 and read it. Write *Pray Constantly* on a sheet of paper and tape it to a wall. Below the sign, tape off a frame or hang a decorative bulletin board border. Provide index cards or fun-shaped sticky notes and markers. Encourage preschoolers to draw something they can talk to God about on an index card or sticky note. Encourage them to attach their drawings to the prayer wall.

- Bible
- tape
- index cards
- markers
- sticky notes
- bulletin board border (optional)

**SAY** • We can talk to God about anything at any time! ***Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.*** God want us to talk to Him about everything. He loves to hear the prayers of His children. He is a kind and generous God who always

keeps His promises. We can trust Him! God always answers prayers according to His will. God will always give His children what we would have asked for if we knew everything He does.

## Pray in “Daniel’s house”

- large cardboard box
- scissors or utility knife (adult use)
- pillows or cushions

Tip: Stop by a home improvement or appliance store and ask for an appliance box.

Before the session, use scissors or a utility knife to cut a door and windows in an appliance box to make “Daniel’s house.” Place pillows or cushions inside. Invite preschoolers to play out going in the house to pray.

**SAY** • Even after the king made the new law, Daniel went into his house and prayed to God three times every day, just like he had always done. **God saved Daniel from the lions.** God is powerful! God sent His Son, Jesus, to save us from something more dangerous than lions. Jesus rescues us from sin and death.



## Make and send cards

- construction paper
- stickers
- stamps
- markers
- large envelope

Find the address of missionaries your church supports or contact a missions agency, such as the International Mission Board or the North American Mission Board, to find out how to send cards to missionaries.

Set out construction paper, stickers, stamps, and markers. Invite preschoolers to make cards to send to missionaries. Gather the cards and send them in one large envelope to the missionaries with a note saying your church is praying for them.

**SAY** • Let’s pray for the missionaries who will receive these cards. Let’s ask God to encourage them and use them in His kingdom work! ***Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.***



## Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Print and cut out extra “Lion’s Face” printables. Attach a face to the center of a paper plate with a tape loop for each child. Serve baby carrots. Show a child how to arrange his carrots to create a mane around the lion’s face. Talk about how **God saved Daniel from the lions** and the king made a new law that everyone must respect God.

Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. Did Daniel stop praying to God when the king made the new law? (*No, Daniel kept on praying to God.*)
2. What was Daniel’s punishment for praying to God instead of the king? (*He was thrown in the lions’ den.*)
3. What happened to Daniel in the lions’ den? (**God saved Daniel from the lions.**)
4. What new law did King Darius make? (*Everyone must respect God.*)
5. ***Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.***

## Transition

When preschoolers finish their snack, they may color the Bible story coloring page, play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question, or sing along to the key passage or theme song.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- “Lion’s Face,” printable (optional)
- paper plates (optional)
- clear tape (optional)
- scissors (adult use) (optional)
- baby carrots (optional)

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- “Pray Constantly” song
- “Wherever I Go” song
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers



*Use Week of:*

## Christmas, Session 3

# Jesus Was Born

### BIBLE PASSAGE:

Matthew 1; Luke 2

### STORY POINT:

Jesus is God with us.

### KEY PASSAGE:

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.

**INTRODUCE THE STORY**  
(15–20 MINUTES)  
**PAGE 46**



**TEACH THE STORY**  
(10–15 MINUTES)  
**PAGE 48**



**EXPERIENCE THE STORY**  
(20–25 MINUTES)  
**PAGE 50**



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For free training and session-by-session help, visit [MinistryGrid.com/gospelproject](http://MinistryGrid.com/gospelproject).

## LEADER Bible Study

Throughout the Old Testament, God reminded His people through the prophets of His promise to one day send a Rescuer. People cannot save themselves; instead, God planned to save sinners by sending His Son. God revealed that He would come from the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and He would bless the nations. (Gen. 12:3; 17:19; 28:14) He would come from David's family, and His kingdom would last forever. (2 Sam. 7:12-13) He would be born in Bethlehem to a virgin (Micah 5:2; Isa. 7:14).

But after God's people returned home from exile in Judah, God was silent. For 400 years, God remained quiet. The silence was broken in Luke 1 when an angel told Zechariah he would have a son—John. John would be the forerunner of the Messiah, preparing people for the Promised One. At just the right time, Jesus was born. The Old Testament whispers, “He’s coming ... He’s coming ... He’s coming ...” and the declaration of Luke 2 is, “He’s here!”

Help preschoolers understand the significance of Jesus' birth. Jesus' birth is not just the beginning; rather, it is a pivotal fulfillment in the story of God's rescuing sinners. God's people could not save themselves, so God came to them. This tiny baby was the hope of the world. He would grow up to show people what God is like and to lay down His life to provide forgiveness and eternal life to all who trust in Him.

After Jesus was born, an angel appeared to the shepherds and said, “Don’t be afraid, for look, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is Messiah, the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11).

Jesus' birth was God's gracious gift to us—God with us, for His glory and our peace.

# The BIBLE Story

## Jesus Was Born

*Matthew 1; Luke 2*

Joseph found out Mary was going to have a baby, but Joseph knew it was not his baby; Mary and Joseph were not married yet! Then **an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream.**

**The angel said, “Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. Mary is going to have a son. Name Him Jesus because He is going to save His people from their sins!”**

**This happened just like the prophet said it would: “They will name Him Immanuel,” which means “God is with us.” When Joseph woke up, he did just what the angel said.**

**When Mary was pregnant with Baby Jesus,** a ruler named Caesar Augustus wanted a list of all the people who were living in the land. He sent out an order: “Everyone must return to his hometown to be counted!” Since **Joseph** was part of King David’s family, he **and Mary traveled to Bethlehem,** the city of David.

**While they were there,** Mary was ready to have her baby. Mary and Joseph **looked for a safe place to stay, but every place was full. So Mary and Joseph found a place where animals were kept, and that is where Mary had her baby. Joseph named the baby Jesus, and Mary wrapped Him in cloth** so He would be snug and warm, **and she laid Him in a**



manger.

Nearby, some shepherds were watching their sheep out in the fields. All of a sudden, an angel of the Lord stood before them. A bright light shone around the shepherds, and they were scared!

But the angel said, “Do not be afraid! I have good news for you: Today a Savior, who is Messiah the Lord, was born for you in the city of David.” Then the angel said, “Go find the baby. He will be wrapped in cloth and lying in a manger.”

Suddenly, many angels appeared. They praised God and said, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people He favors!”

So the shepherds went straight to Bethlehem to find Baby Jesus. They found Him, and they told others about Him. Everyone who heard about Jesus was surprised and amazed. Mary thought about everything that was happening and tried to understand it. The shepherds returned to their fields, and they praised God because everything had happened just as the angel had said.

*Christ Connection: Jesus was born like God said He would be. Jesus is Immanuel—God with us. God’s Son came into the world to save people from sin so we can be with God forever.*

## Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Use manger scene figures:**  
Place manger scene figures that the story mentions in a gift bag. As you tell the Bible story, retrieve the figure the story mentions. Arrange figures for children to see.
- **Use pictures:**  
Show pictures from the “Christmas Story Scenes” printable as you tell the Bible story.

# INTRODUCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Jesus Was Born

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Matthew 1; Luke 2

**STORY POINT:** Jesus is God with us.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.

## Welcome time

- "Wherever I Go" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play a theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

## Activity page

- "Where Is Jesus?" activity page, 1 per child
- crayons or markers

Invite preschoolers to use the key to find and circle Baby Jesus.

**SAY** • In today's Bible story, an angel appeared to some shepherds in a field. The angel told them to go find the Savior who had been born on that day in the city of Bethlehem. The angel told them the Baby would be wrapped in cloth and lying in a manger. We will hear more about how God sent His Son to earth in our story.

## LOW PREP

- child-sized chairs
- paper plates (optional)
- paper (optional)
- scissors (adult use) (optional)

## Go on a trip

Arrange child-sized chairs to serve as the seats of a vehicle. You may set up seats to form a car, van, bus, or airplane. Consider offering a paper plate or cut out a paper circle for a child to use as a steering wheel. Talk about various trips boys and girls may have taken. Pretend to visit a large city



or travel through the rolling countryside. Play out flying on an airplane and pretend to look out windows at the ground below.

**SAY** • In today's Bible story, a young couple, Joseph and Mary, had to take a trip when Mary was about to have a baby. A ruler named Caesar Augustus wanted a list of all the people who were living in the land. He sent out an order telling everyone to return to his hometown to be counted. Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem. Mary had her baby there. Listen to the story to hear where in Bethlehem Mary had her baby.

## Corral sheep

Form a line on one side of the room. Place the basket in the middle of the room. Give each preschooler a cotton ball.

- cotton balls
- basket or bin

Explain that the cotton balls are sheep and the basket is a sheep's pen. Allow preschoolers to toss their sheep toward the sheep's pen. Tell them to count how many tosses it takes them to get the sheep in the pen.

**SAY** • Someone who takes care of sheep is called a shepherd. In today's Bible story, an angel appeared to some shepherds who were watching their sheep out in the fields. We will hear what the angel said to the shepherds in our story.

## Transition to teach the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, turn the lights off and on, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Hang a strand of Christmas lights in the room. Turn on the lights as a signal to move to Bible study.

- Christmas lights
- countdown video (optional)

# TEACH the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Jesus Was Born

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Matthew 1; Luke 2

**STORY POINT:** Jesus is God with us.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.

## Introduce the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- Giant Timeline

Place a bookmark at Matthew 1 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

**SAY** • Our stories lately have been from the Old Testament Book of Daniel. Because Christmas is coming soon, today's story is from the other part of the Bible, the New Testament. Let's hear the true story of Christmas from the Books of Matthew and Luke.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline. Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

## Watch or tell the Bible story

- Story Point Poster
- "Jesus Was Born" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

**SAY** • Long before Jesus was born, the prophet Isaiah said Immanuel would be born. *Immanuel* means God with us. **Jesus is God with us.** God's Son came to earth as a baby. God lived on earth as a real person. Jesus never did anything wrong the whole time He lived on earth, but He was punished for our sin. Jesus saves us from sin so we can be with God forever.

## Practice the key passage

Print each word of the key passage on an index card and arrange the cards on a wall. Place the key passage marker at 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Give flashlights to boys and girls. Show them how to shine the light on the first word of the verses. Say each word of the verses while pointing to it, as children follow with their flashlights. Practice several times.

- index cards
- tape
- flashlights
- Bible
- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- “Pray Constantly” song
- “Wherever I Go” song

**SAY** • A bright light shone on the shepherds when they heard the angel. The shepherds found Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus. They worshiped God and thanked Him for sending His Son. We can give thanks to God when we pray.

Sing the key passage song, “Pray Constantly,” and the theme song, “Wherever I Go.”

## Learn the big picture question

**SAY** • Through the whole Old Testament part of the Bible, God reminded His people of His promise to send someone to rescue them. God kept that promise when He sent Jesus. God always does what He says. That’s a reason to pray! ***Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.***

- Big Picture Question Poster



## Missions moment

**SAY** • Christians all over the world celebrate that Jesus came to earth. Let’s listen to the Christmas story. You may not recognize what they are saying, but other people speak these languages.

Show the “Christmas Story in Other Languages” video.

- “Christmas Story in Other Languages” video

## Pray and transition to experience the story

# EXPERIENCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Jesus Was Born

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Matthew 1; Luke 2

**STORY POINT:** Jesus is God with us.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.

## LOW PREP

- birthday party hats  
(optional)
- noisemakers  
(optional)

### Sing “Happy Birthday” to Jesus

Invite preschoolers to sing the “Happy Birthday” song with Jesus’ name after “Happy birthday, dear [name].” Consider providing birthday hats and noisemakers if available. Invite children to blow the noisemakers and shout “hooray!”

**SAY** • We celebrate Jesus’ birthday at Christmas because His birthday is the most special birthday in all of history! Jesus was born like God said He would be. **Jesus is God with us.** God sent His Son from heaven to earth. Jesus came into the world to save people from sin so we can be with God forever.

### Pass the present

- gift bag
- Bible
- Key Passage Marker
- Christmas music

Gather children in a circle. Mark the key passage in a Bible and place it in a decorative gift bag. Play a Christmas song and begin passing the gift bag around the circle. Pause the music. Invite a child to take the Bible out of the bag and open it to the key passage marker and say the key passage. Return the Bible to the bag and continue to play.

**SAY** • This key passage reminds us that we can talk to God any time. One of the things we can do when we pray is say “thank You” to God. God gives us His Word in the Bible. God gave us His Son when He sent Jesus to earth. **Jesus is God with us.** God’s Son came into

the world to save people from sin so we can be with God forever. That is the best present of all to say “thank You” for!

## Make a prayer ornament

Print the “Prayer Ornament” printable onto heavy paper so that there is one ornament for each preschooler. Cut out the ornament shapes and punch holes. Provide decorating materials such as dot stickers, markers, and glitter glue. When a child finishes decorating, allow her to help you tie a ribbon through hole. Open a Bible to the key passage and read it. Point to the big picture question and answer printed on the ornament. Talk about the importance of prayer.

**SAY •** *Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.* God loves us so much that He sent His one and only Son into the world. **Jesus is God with us.** God showed His love for us when He sent Jesus to earth to be punished for our sin. We can trust Him to hear and respond to our prayers.

- “Prayer Ornament” printable, 1 for every 4 preschoolers
- heavyweight paper
- scissors (adult use)
- hole punch
- markers
- dot stickers
- glitter glue
- ribbon

## Care for a baby

Pour about 2-inches of water into a large plastic tub. Show a preschooler how to place a doll in the water and bathe it. Dry the baby and wrap it in soft cloths. Read books to the baby. Sing a lullaby.

**SAY •** Can you imagine God coming down from heaven to earth as a tiny baby? It is hard to imagine, but that is what really happened. God knew we needed to be rescued from sin, and He sent His very own Son to save us. **Jesus is God with us.** Jesus knows what it is like to be a human being. Even though Jesus never

- plastic tub
- water
- plastic baby doll
- small washcloths
- hand towels
- strips of soft cloth
- books

sinned, He took the punishment for our sin when He died on the cross. When we trust in Him, we can be with God forever.



• nonbreakable manger  
scenes

## Play with manger scenes

Set out nonbreakable manger scenes for preschoolers to play with. Ask preschoolers to name the figures in the manger scenes. Encourage them to retell the Bible story with the figures.

**SAY** • These scenes help us remember how Jesus came to earth. He was born as a baby. He spent His first day on earth in a place where animals were kept, not a fancy palace. He was born to an ordinary woman, not a queen. **Jesus is God with us.** He came to earth and lived like we live, but He never sinned. Jesus died on the cross and rose again so we can be with God forever. Sadly, many people do not know this good news. God uses people like us and missionaries to go and tell people all over the world the story of Jesus.



## Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Serve a snack that a baby would eat. Mash bananas or taste applesauce. Talk about how Jesus ate soft food because even though **Jesus is God with us**, He was also born a little baby who grew up to save people from sin.

Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. How did Joseph find out Mary's baby would be God's Son, Jesus? (*An angel told him.*)
2. What does *Immanuel* mean? (*God with us*)
3. Where did Mary and Joseph stay when they got to Bethlehem? (*in a place where animals were kept*)
4. What were some things the angel told the frightened shepherds? (*"Good news: a Savior is born! He is wrapped in cloth lying in a manger. Go find this baby."*)
5. What did the shepherds do next? (*They found Baby Jesus and told others about Him.*)
6. ***Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.***

## Transition

When preschoolers finish their snack, they may color the Bible story coloring page, play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question, or sing along to the key passage or theme song.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- mashed bananas (optional)
- applesauce (optional)

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- "Pray Constantly" song
- "Wherever I Go" song
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers

Use Week of:

## Unit 16 • Session 4

# Daniel's Dream

### BIBLE PASSAGE:

Daniel 7

**STORY POINT:** God showed Daniel that God's Son will rule forever.

### KEY PASSAGE:

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.

#### INTRODUCE THE STORY

(15–20 MINUTES)

PAGE 58



#### TEACH THE STORY

(10–15 MINUTES)

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#### EXPERIENCE THE STORY

(20–25 MINUTES)

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## LEADER Bible Study

Daniel 7 is considered one of the most important chapters in the Old Testament. This chapter and the chapters that follow describe a series of visions and prophecies about the future of God's people. This message gave hope to God's people in captivity.

Today's Bible story takes place in the first year of King Belshazzar's reign. (Dan. 7:1) Belshazzar was the son of King Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel encountered Belshazzar in chapter 5. Daniel was about 82 years old when he was thrown into the lions' den; chapter 7 rewinds the clock to tell of a dream Daniel had when he was about 67.

In a vision parallel to Daniel 2, Daniel saw four beasts. Each beast represented an earthly kingdom. The first creature was like a lion but had eagle's wings. This creature represented the kingdom of Babylon. The second creature was like a bear, and it had ribs in its mouth. This creature represented the kingdom of the Medes and Persians. The third creature was like a leopard with four wings on its back and four heads. This creature represented the kingdom of Greece. Finally, the fourth creature was strong and destructive. It had 10 horns, and this creature represented the kingdom of Rome.

Then Daniel saw God—the Ancient of Days—sitting on His throne. Daniel watched as God killed the fourth creature and took away the power of the others. As complicated as it may be, Daniel's vision reveals an ultimate reality: "These huge beasts ... are four kings who will rise from the earth. But the holy ones of the Most High will receive the kingdom and possess it forever" (Dan. 7:17-18).

Emphasize to the preschoolers you teach that they will see all sorts of rulers and powers and authorities in the world, but the Bible is clear: God is ruling over them all. The kingdoms of earth will last for a short time, and the kingdom of Jesus will come and last forever.

# The BIBLE Story

## Daniel's Dream

*Daniel 7*

When Belshazzar (bel SHAZ uhr) was the king of Babylon, **Daniel** had a strange dream. This dream was a message from God. In the dream, Daniel saw four big creatures come up from the sea. Each was different from the others.

The first creature was like a lion. It also had wings like an eagle. The second creature was like a bear. It had three ribs in its mouth. The third creature was like a leopard. It also had four wings on its back and four heads. The fourth creature was strong and scary; it had large teeth and destroyed everything in its way. It also had 10 horns.

Then Daniel saw a place in heaven with thrones. God sat down on a throne to judge the creatures. His hair and clothing were white like snow and His throne was like fire. God took away the creatures' power.

God let the first three creatures live for a short time, but the creature with horns was killed.

Suddenly, God's Son came. God gave Him power to rule over everything. He was the king, and people from every nation and language served Him. His kingdom would last forever; it would never be destroyed.

Daniel was frightened by the dream, but God told Daniel what the



dreams meant. The four creatures were four kings on earth. They would rule for a time, but then God would give His people the kingdom forever and ever.

Daniel did not tell anyone about his dream, but he wrote down everything he saw.

*Christ Connection: Jesus is King over everything. God lets people rule for a short time, but one day Jesus will come back and set up His perfect kingdom. Everyone who trusts in Jesus will be in His kingdom, and it will last forever.*

### **Bible Storytelling Tips**

- **Sit on a throne:**

Sit in a big, fancy chair as you tell the Bible story.

- **Display art:**

Show the Bible story picture and point to each creature from Daniel's dream as you describe it in the story.

# INTRODUCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Daniel's Dream

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Daniel 7

**STORY POINT:** God showed Daniel that God's Son will rule forever.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.

## Welcome time

- "Wherever I Go" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play a theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

## Activity page

- "Daniel's Dream" activity page, 1 per child
- crayons or markers

Guide preschoolers to color the shapes with a cross-shape inside them.

**SAY** • Do you see the letters? *J-E-S-U-S*. Do you know whose name that spells? Jesus! Jesus is King over everything. One day, Jesus will come back to earth and set up His perfect kingdom that will last forever. Daniel learned more about that in today's Bible story. Listen to find out more.

## LOW PREP

- a stuffed animal or other comforting object

## Tell about a dream

Gather children and sit in a circle. Hold a stuffed animal and tell about a strange dream, real or fictional. Give the stuffed toy to a child and ask him to make up a story about a crazy dream. Continue to pass the animal and tell about made up silly stories.

**SAY** • People often dream about crazy things like running



in slow motion or going outside in their underwear. Sometimes dreams can be very silly, and sometimes they can be a little scary. Daniel dreamed about some big creatures, but then he saw God sitting on a throne in heaven. Daniel trusted God, and God helped Daniel to know what the dream meant.

## Make play dough creatures

Set out play dough and play dough tools. Challenge preschoolers to create creatures with play dough. Explain to preschoolers that a creature is simply something created. We are God's creatures because He made us. Ask preschoolers about their creatures as they work.

- play dough
- play dough tools

**SAY** • These are very interesting creatures you all made! In today's Bible story, Daniel had a dream about four creatures. The creatures came up from the sea and each one was different from the others. Honestly, they were pretty strange creatures, but God used Daniel's dream and the creatures in it to tell us something important about the future. Listen to the Bible story to hear what God wants us to know.

## Transition to teach the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, turn the lights off and on, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Set an alarm clock or a countdown timer that sounds like a wake-up alarm to signal that it is time to move to Bible study.

- countdown video (optional)
- alarm clock or countdown timer

# TEACH the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Daniel's Dream

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Daniel 7

**STORY POINT:** God showed Daniel that God's Son will rule forever.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.

## Introduce the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- Giant Timeline

Place a bookmark at Daniel 7 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

**SAY** • God speaks to us through the Bible. That makes the Bible the most important book there is. Today's Bible story comes from the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament part of the Bible.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline. Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

## Watch or tell the Bible story

- Story Point Poster
- "Daniel's Dream" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

**SAY** • What a strange dream, but God used Daniel's dream to tell something important. God lets people rule for a little while, but God rules over all of them. **God showed Daniel that God's Son will rule forever.** One day, Jesus will come back and set up a perfect kingdom. Jesus will rule over this kingdom, and when we trust in Jesus to save us from sin, we get to be part of His everlasting kingdom!

## Practice the key passage

Set a special chair in front of the group. Place the key passage marker at 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Invite children to take turns sitting on the “throne” while saying the verse.

**SAY** • Paul wrote the words in our key passage to tell believers how to live while waiting for Jesus to come back and set up God’s perfect kingdom. We are to pray constantly and give thanks in everything while we wait for Jesus to come back and rule forever.

Sing the key passage song, “Pray Constantly,” and the theme song, “Wherever I Go.”

- chair
- Bible
- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- “Pray Constantly” song
- “Wherever I Go” song

## Learn the big picture question

**SAY** • Who can answer our big picture question? ***Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.*** What a gift to pray to the God who rules over everything! He is a good God we can trust to hear us.

- Big Picture Question Poster



## Missions moment

**SAY** • The four creatures in Daniel’s dream represented four countries. Often people in different countries speak different languages. Do you know anyone who speaks a different language? [*Allow responses.*] In Miami, people speak many different languages all in one city! The Ukegbus have friends who speak many different languages.

Show the “The Brook in Miami” missions video.

- “The Brook in Miami” video

## Pray and transition to experience the story

# EXPERIENCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Daniel's Dream

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Daniel 7

**STORY POINT:** God showed Daniel that God's Son will rule forever.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.

## LOW PREP

• timer

### Do a timed challenge

Lead preschoolers to lift their hands above their heads and wave their hands in air for 10 seconds. Then lead preschoolers to repeat the action for 20 seconds. Then for 30 seconds. Choose another action such as touching your toes, running in place, or hopping up and down.

**SAY** • Was it easy to do the action for 30 seconds? You may have felt like you were doing an action for a long time, but actually it was a very short time. Jesus is King over everything. **God showed Daniel that God's Son will rule forever.** Everyone who trusts in Jesus will be in His kingdom, and it will last forever.

- chair
- colored paper
- tape
- stickers
- decorative tape
- self-adhesive jewels
- metallic crayons and markers
- Bible

Tip: Follow your church's security procedures for photographing children.

### Build a throne

Cover the flat surfaces and legs of a chair with colored paper. Encourage preschoolers to work together to decorate the paper with stickers, decorative tape, self-adhesive jewels, and metallic crayons or markers.

Open a Bible and find the key passage. Read it. Invite a child to sit on the throne with the Bible in their lap and say the key passage after you. Consider taking a photograph of each child on the throne to share with families.

**SAY** • In Daniel's dream, he saw a place in heaven with thrones. God sat down on a throne to judge the

creatures. God took away the creatures' power. God showed Daniel the creatures were four kings on earth. **God showed Daniel that God's Son will rule forever.** God lets people rule for a short time, but one day Jesus will come back and set up His perfect kingdom. Everyone who trusts in Jesus will be in His kingdom, and it will last forever.

## Blow paint creatures

Mix water and paint in a bowl. Put on smocks and roll up sleeves. Give a child a sheet of paper. Invite her to stick googly eyes on her paper. Demonstrate how to use an eyedropper to add a few drops of paint around the googly eyes. Show a child how to blow through the straw, directing her breath through the straw and toward the paint to spread the paint away from the eyes and across the paper to make a body. Talk about the strange-looking creature she is creating. Set aside completed paintings to dry.

**SAY** • What strange creatures Daniel dreamed about! But then Daniel saw God sitting on a throne in heaven. God took away the creatures' power. The dream was about things that will happen one day. **God showed Daniel that God's Son will rule forever,** and everyone who trusts in Jesus will be a part of His forever kingdom.

- smocks
- construction paper
- self-adhesive googly eyes
- washable paint
- foam bowls
- water
- plastic spoons
- eyedroppers
- straws

Tip: Watch children closely to make sure they do not use the straw to drink the paint mixture.

## Play out a worship service

Set chairs in rows. Fashion a podium with large blocks. Open a Bible to the Book of Daniel and point to Daniel's name. Consider procuring a portable electronic keyboard and invite children to take turns playing a few notes. Sing simple worship songs. Pass an offering basket. Take turns

- chairs
- large blocks
- Bible
- offering basket
- portable electronic keyboard (optional)

standing at the podium. Ask a child to recall facts from today's Bible story. Lead a child to say a prayer.

**SAY** • We gather as a church to worship God together every week. We hear from God's Word and remind each other of who God is and what He has done for us. One day, we won't have to remind each other because Jesus will come back and set up His perfect kingdom. We will get to worship Him together with people from every nation and language. Do you remember our big picture question? ***Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.*** When Jesus comes back, we won't pray anymore because we will get to talk to Him face to face.

## LOW PREP

- "Spanish Phrases" printable
- scissors (adult use)
- basket or bag
- electronic tablet or device with a translator app (optional)
- Spanish-speaking guest (optional)



## Speak Spanish

Print and cut part the "Spanish Phrases." Place the phrases in a basket or bag. Invite children to take turns drawing a phrase from the basket. Read the phrase and help the child say the Spanish phrase. Consider using a translator app to translate and pronounce the key passage or big picture question and answer. Invite a guest who speaks Spanish to read the Bible story, if available.

**SAY** • Spanish is just one of the languages that the Ukegbu family hears in Miami. They are learning Spanish so that they can tell people about Jesus. In Daniel's dream, he saw people from every nation and language serving God's Son, Jesus. People who speak English, Spanish, Russian, French, and every other language will serve Jesus forever in His kingdom. **God showed Daniel that God's Son will rule forever.** Everyone who trusts in Jesus will be in His forever kingdom with Him.



## Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Serve fruit snacks. Use the “Prayer Prompts” printable and encourage boys and girls to say a brief prayer each time a child tastes a specific-colored snack. ***Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.***

Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. What came out of the water in Daniel’s dream? (*four big creatures*)
2. When Daniel saw heaven with thrones, who sat down on a throne and took away the creatures’ power? (*God*)
3. Who did God give the power to rule over everything forever? (*God’s Son*)
4. Who told Daniel what the dreams meant? (*God*)
5. How long will God’s Son’s kingdom last? (*forever*)
6. ***Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.***

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- fruit snacks (optional)
- “Prayer Prompts” printable

## Transition

When preschoolers finish their snack, they may color the Bible story coloring page, play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question, or sing along to the key passage or theme song.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- “Pray Constantly” song
- “Wherever I Go” song
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers

# Unit 17: Return to the Land

## Unit Description:

After the Israelites' disobedience led to 70 years of exile in Babylon, God kept His promise to bring His people home to Judah. Prophets encouraged the people to rebuild the temple. The prophet Zechariah told of a future King who would come humbly on a donkey. God later kept His promise to send King Jesus.

## Key Passage:

Jeremiah 29:11

## Big Picture Question:

How is Jesus the perfect Prophet?  
God speaks to us through Jesus.

## Session 1:

**Obadiah the Prophet**

*Obadiah*

**Story Point:** God promised to take care of His people.

## Session 4:

**Zechariah the Prophet**

*Zechariah*

**Story Point:** Zechariah said the Messiah is coming.

## Session 2:

**The Captives Came Home**

*Ezra 1–3*

**Story Point:** God kept His promise to bring His people home.

## Session 3:

**The Temple Was Rebuilt**

*Ezra 4–6; Haggai*

**Story Point:** God's people rebuilt the temple.



### **Obadiah the Prophet**

God promised to take care of His people.



### **The Captives Came Home**

God kept His promise to bring His people home.



### **The Temple Was Rebuilt**

God's people rebuilt the temple.



### **Zechariah the Prophet**

Zechariah said the Messiah is coming.



Use Week of:

## Unit 17 • Session 1

# Obadiah the Prophet

### BIBLE PASSAGE:

Obadiah

**STORY POINT:** God promised to take care of His people.

### KEY PASSAGE:

Jeremiah 29:11

### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? God speaks to us through Jesus.

#### INTRODUCE THE STORY

(15–20 MINUTES)

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#### TEACH THE STORY

(10–15 MINUTES)

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#### EXPERIENCE THE STORY

(20–25 MINUTES)

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Additional resources are available at [gospelproject.com](http://gospelproject.com).

For free training and session-by-session help, visit [MinistryGrid.com/gospelproject](http://MinistryGrid.com/gospelproject).

## LEADER Bible Study

The conflict between Edom and Israel originates in the story of Jacob and Esau. The twins struggled in the womb, and their mother Rebekah asked God why. God explained that from her womb would come two nations, and the older would serve the younger. (Gen. 25:23)

The nation of Israel descended from Jacob (the younger), and the nation of Edom descended from Esau (the older). God promised to Jacob the same promises He made to Abraham (Gen. 28:15), but Esau was a godless man who despised God's promises. (Heb. 12:16)

For centuries, the two families were at odds. When Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, the king of Edom refused to let the Israelites pass through his country to get to the promised land. (Num. 20:14-21) Edom fought against Israel on several occasions. (See 2 Chron. 20:2; 28:17; 2 Kings 8:20-22.)

The Book of Obadiah is God's message about Edom in response to their sin—specifically their gloating over the Babylonian invasion of Jerusalem. When the Babylonians invaded Jerusalem, the people of Edom didn't help. Like an envious brother, Edom was glad to see Judah overcome. In fact, Edom was a guilty participant in the action against Judah. (Obad. 11)

The prophet Obadiah detailed the charges against Edom, announced their guilt, and handed down the sentence from the Lord: Edom would be totally destroyed. No remnant of Esau's family would remain. On the other hand, Obadiah said God's people would be restored.

God said the people of Edom would get what they deserved. "As you have done, it will be done to you; what you deserve will return on your own head" (Obad. 15). God's rule is just. The fate of the Edomites might as well be ours. But here's the reality: As you have done, it was done to Christ; what you deserve was returned on His head. Jesus is King, and one day He will deliver His people from their enemies once and for all.

# The BIBLE Story

## Obadiah the Prophet

*Obadiah*

**Obadiah** (oh buh DIGH uh) **was a prophet.** He listened to God, and then he told the people what God said. **God had a message for the people who lived in Edom** (EE duhm). **Edom was a country next to Judah, where God's people lived.** The people in Edom were not friends with God's people. They did not love God and worshiped things that were not God.

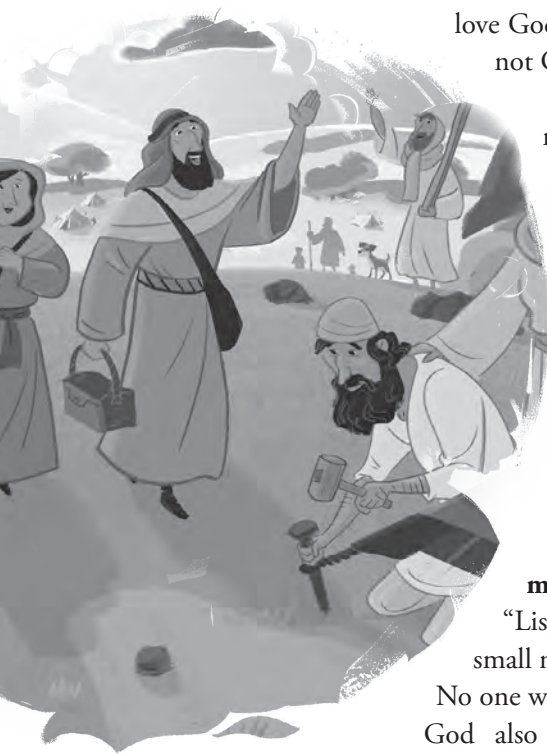
The people in Edom lived in the mountains. They thought, These mountains will protect us, and we are strong.

When the army from Babylon attacked Judah, God's people needed help. Did their neighbors in Edom help? No! They just watched. Some of them even went into Judah and took things that did not belong to them.

Obadiah shared God's message for Edom. God said, "Listen to Me! I will make you into a small nation. You will not be important. No one will like you."

God also said, "The mountains cannot protect you. They cannot keep you safe from My punishment."

**Obadiah told the people of Edom that God was going to let their enemies attack them and take away everything they had.** Even Edom's





friends would be mean to them.

**God said, “You were mean to My people in Judah. When My people needed help, you did not help them. You laughed at them and were happy they were in trouble. You did the wrong thing, and I will punish you. Every bad thing you did to others will be done to you.”**

**God said that the bad things happening to His people in Judah would not last forever.** God would help His people. “But your punishment will be forever,” God told Edom. “You will be destroyed.”

The last part of Obadiah’s message from God was good news for God’s people. **God said, “My people will have the land that belongs to Edom.”** Even though the army from Babylon took God’s people away from their homes, they would not be away forever. **God promised to take care of His people.**

*Christ Connection: The people of Edom mistreated God’s people. Later, God’s people mistreated His Son, Jesus. Jesus died on the cross to be punished for people’s sin. We can trust Jesus to make wrong things right.*

## **Bible Storytelling Tips**

• **Point to a map:** Display the “Old Testament Mediterranean Map” from the Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970). Point to Jerusalem and mention that Jerusalem was in Judah. Show preschoolers that Edom was next to Judah. Point to Babylon when you mention how Babylon attacked Judah. Point to Edom again when you mention how God would give the Edomites land to His people.

• **O is for Obadiah:** Invite preschoolers to make an *O* with their arms by clasping their hands over their heads and rounding out their elbows. Instruct preschoolers to make the *O* every time they hear Obadiah’s name in the Bible story.

# INTRODUCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Obadiah the Prophet

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Obadiah

**STORY POINT:** God promised to take care of His people.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Jeremiah 29:11

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? God speaks to us through Jesus.

## Welcome time

- "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play a theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

## Activity page

- "Hidden Pictures" activity page, 1 per child
- crayons or markers

Invite preschoolers to use the key to find and circle the items hidden in the picture.

**SAY** • Good job finding all the hidden items! All these items are things we use to talk to one another. In today's Bible story, God had something to say to the nation of Edom. God used His prophet Obadiah to give them a message.

## LOW PREP

## Speak up

Invite preschoolers to sit in a circle on the floor. Choose one child to stand up. Whisper a true statement about God in the standing child's ear. Use the following statements or create your own.

- God made the world.
- God saves people.
- God loves you.

- God takes care of us.
- God sent Jesus.
- God wants us to obey Him.
- God protects us.

Lead the child to say that truth aloud to the rest of the group. Repeat with each child.

**SAY** • We told each other messages about God. In our Bible story today, a prophet named Obadiah gave a message from God to the people who lived in the nation of Edom. God also had a message for His people. Listen to the story to find out what God said.

## Hunt for items in a sand box

Fill a large plastic bin with play sand. Hide a variety of items one might find on land such as small stones, pieces of bark or small wood sticks, artificial leaves or flowers, seashells, small pine cones, seed pods, acorns, small plastic animals and insects. Invite children to search for items in the sand.

**SAY** • Today, we will hear a Bible story about a prophet named Obadiah. Obadiah gave God's people a message from God. God said His people would return to their land and that God would make everything right. Listen to what else God said through Obadiah in today's Bible story.

- large plastic bin
- clean, dry play sand
- small nature items (small stones, pieces of bark or small wood sticks, artificial leaves and flowers, seashells, small pine cones, seed pods, acorns, or small plastic animals and insects)

## Transition to teach the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, turn the lights off and on, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Guide children to skip as they move to Bible study.

- countdown video (optional)

# TEACH the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Obadiah the Prophet

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Obadiah

**STORY POINT:** God promised to take care of His people.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Jeremiah 29:11

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? God speaks to us through Jesus.

## Introduce the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- Giant Timeline

Place a bookmark at Obadiah 1 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

**SAY** • The Bible is a true book. It tells us everything we need to know about God. Our Bible story comes from the Book of Obadiah in the Old Testament part of the Bible. Obadiah is a short book, just one chapter long. Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline. Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

## Watch or tell the Bible story

- Story Point Poster
- "Obadiah the Prophet" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

**SAY** • God gave His people a message through the prophet Obadiah. **God promised to take care of His people.** God also told the people of Edom that they would be punished for mistreating God's people. Later, God's people mistreated Jesus. Jesus died on the cross to be punished for people's sin. We can trust Jesus to make wrong things right.

## Practice the key passage

Place the key passage marker at Jeremiah 29:11. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Create motions for preschoolers to use as they say the key passage. Use the key passage song video for inspiration.

**SAY** • Our key passage reminds us that God has a plan. Obadiah told God's people that God planned to bring them back to their land. God also has a plan for us and for our future. When we turn from our sin and follow Jesus, we can know our future is good.

Sing the key passage song, "Jeremiah 29:11," and the theme song, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness."

- Bible
- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- "Jeremiah 29:11" song
- "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" song

## Learn the big picture question

**SAY** • Obadiah was a prophet. God used Obadiah to talk to His people and Edom. ***How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? God speaks to us through Jesus.*** Today, we do not need a prophet to hear from God. God speaks to us through His own Son, Jesus.

- Big Picture Question Poster



## Missions moment

Show preschoolers the picture of Adoniram Judson.

**SAY** • This is a missionary named Adoniram Judson. He lived a long time ago. He was one of the very first missionaries from America. He went to a country called Burma, which is now called Myanmar, because the people there had never heard of Jesus. Missionaries today are still telling the people there that God takes care of His people.

- "Adoniram Judson Photo" printable

## Pray and transition to experience the story

# EXPERIENCE The Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Obadiah the Prophet

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Obadiah

**STORY POINT:** God promised to take care of His people.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Jeremiah 29:11

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? God speaks to us through Jesus.

## LOW PREP

• painter's tape or  
construction paper

### Hopscotch the story point

Use painter's tape or pieces of construction paper to make a hopscotch court on the floor. Show children how to hop in and out of the boxes. Say the story point as they hop from square to square. Encourage them to say the story point with you.

**SAY** • Great hopping! What did we say as you hopped?

[*Wait for a response from the children.*] **God promised to take care of His people.** God *does* promise to take care of His people. The people of Edom mistreated God's people, and God punished Edom for what they did. Later, God's people mistreated His Son, Jesus, but God did not punish people for their sin, Jesus was punished instead. Jesus died on the cross so we can be saved from sin.

### Decide what is missing

• 5-10 items, such as  
a marker, crayon,  
small toy, Bible, toy  
car, block, puzzle  
piece  
• cloth or piece of  
paper

Lay 5 to 10 different small items on a table. Invite preschoolers to examine the items. Cover the items with a cloth or piece of paper. Encourage preschoolers to close their eyes. While their eyes are closed, quickly remove one item and hide the item from view. Guide children to open their eyes. Lift the cloth. Encourage them to guess the item you took away. Repeat several times. You may choose to add



the removed item back or remove all the items one by one.

**SAY** • When God's people needed help, Edom did not help them. Some of the Edomites even took things that belonged to God's people! **God promised to take care of His people.** Obadiah gave God's message to the people of Edom. God was going to punish them for hurting His people. One day, God will send Jesus back and make all the wrong things right.

## Paint a landscape with a paper bag

Write the words *God promised to take care of His people.* on the bottom of a sheet of white construction paper for each preschooler. Place small amounts of brown, green, and tan paint on a paper plate. Give children a small paper lunch bag and guide them to crumple the bag into a ball. Show children how to "sponge" the paint with the crumpled bag and press it onto the white construction paper. Encourage preschoolers to create a mountain landscape.

**SAY** • The people in Edom lived in the mountains. They thought, *These mountains will protect us, and we are strong.* The mountains may have protected them from other people, but they could not protect them from God. **God promised to take care of His people.** God's people would one day return their land, and God would give them the land that belonged to the Edomites.

## Explore a communication center

Print the words: *Obadiah, God, Jesus, care,* and *promise* on index cards. Set out pencils, markers, paper, envelopes, stickers, toy cell phones, a computer keyboard, and/or a toy microphone. Encourage preschoolers to pretend to send

- marker
- white construction paper, 1 per child
- brown, tan, and green washable paint
- foam plate
- paper lunch bag, 1 per child

- index cards
- pencils
- markers
- stationery paper, envelopes
- stickers
- toy cell phones
- computer keyboard
- toy microphone

messages to their friends using the paper, cell phones, or keyboard.

**SAY** • Obadiah gave God's message to His people. **God promised to take care of His people.** Like Obadiah, we can tell other people messages about God. We can tell them that God will take care of them. We can tell them that Jesus died on the cross to be punished for our sin. We can tell them they can trust Jesus to make wrong things right.



## Search for tigers in the jungle

- "Tigers" printable
- tape
- flashlights
- jungle sounds sound effect (optional)

Print the "Tigers" pictures and display them around the room. Consider playing jungle sounds from a phone or computer if available. Explain that missionary Adoniram Judson lived in the jungle in a country called Burma and had to watch out for tigers.

Invite preschoolers to line up and follow you on a search for tigers. Give preschoolers flashlights. Dim the lights. Walk cautiously around the room. Encourage preschoolers to shine a flashlight on a tiger picture when she sees one.

**SAY** • Aren't you glad that we don't have to watch out for tigers when we go home? Missionaries have faced some really scary things to tell people about Jesus. **God promised to take care of His people,** and He takes cares of His missionaries and us too. Let's pray and ask God to keep the missionaries around the world safe.

## Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Serve O-shaped cereal for snack. Talk about how Obadiah's name starts with the letter *O*. God spoke to the nation of Edom and His people through Obadiah. **God promised to take care of His people**, but to punish Edom for mistreating His people in Judah.

Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. What was Obadiah's job? (*He was a prophet. He listened to God. He told people what God said.*)
2. Did Edom help God's people when Babylon attacked them? (*No, they just watched. Some took things.*)
3. What did God say He would do to Edom? (*let their enemies take away everything they had*)
4. What did God say He would do for His people? (*He would give them Edom's land. They would come home from Babylon. He would take care of them.*)
5. ***How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? God speaks to us through Jesus.***

## Transition

When preschoolers finish their snack, they may color the Bible story coloring page, play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question, or sing along to the key passage or theme song.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- O-shaped cereal (optional)

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- "Jeremiah 29:11" song
- "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" song
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers



*Use Week of:*

## Unit 17 • Session 2

# The Captives Came Home

### BIBLE PASSAGE:

Ezra 1–3

**STORY POINT:** God kept His promise to bring His people home.

### KEY PASSAGE:

Jeremiah 29:11

### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? God speaks to us through Jesus.

#### INTRODUCE THE STORY

(15–20 MINUTES)

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#### TEACH THE STORY

(10–15 MINUTES)

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#### EXPERIENCE THE STORY

(20–25 MINUTES)

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## LEADER Bible Study

God's people had been living in Babylon for 70 years. Some of God's people had died in Babylon. Some of their children and grandchildren were born in Babylon and grew up there. But Babylon was not their home.

Before the people of Judah were exiled, God had spoken through the prophet Jeremiah. These are the words of the Lord: "These nations will serve the king of Babylon for seventy years" (Jer. 25:11). Then the Lord said, "When seventy years for Babylon are complete, I will attend to you and will confirm my promise concerning you to restore you to this place" (Jer. 29:10). The time had come for God's people to go back home.

Cyrus, the king of the Persian empire, had overthrown Babylon. Cyrus took over the kingdom, including the lands of Israel and Judah. In the following year, the Lord did something miraculous in Cyrus's heart. He prompted Cyrus to issue a decree: All the Jewish exiles are free to return to their ancestral homes.

The exile was over! God's people were free to return to their own land. They were free to live as God's special people. The first group of Judean exiles returned home under the leadership of Zerubbabel (zuh RUHB uh buhl). Zerubbabel was the grandson of King Jehoiachin, who had been taken to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar. (See 2 Kings 24:8-13.)

Ezra 2:64-65 says nearly 50,000 people traveled back to Judah. When they got to Jerusalem, they began working to rebuild the temple that the Chaldeans had destroyed. (See 2 Chron. 36:19.)

Explain to preschoolers that the temple was the place where God met with His people. Jesus came to earth to rescue God's people from sin. When Jesus returns, He will restore the earth and will dwell with His people forever.

# The **BIBLE** Story

## The Captives Came Home

*Ezra 1–3*

God's people were in Babylon, far away from their homes and land. But God had made a promise. God had said that the people would have to stay in Babylon for 70 years, but then He would bring His people back home. God always keeps His promises.

After 70 years, God gave King Cyrus an idea. Cyrus said, "Let God's people go back to their land. Let them rebuild God's temple in Jerusalem."

This was good news! Before, God's people had to stay in Babylon like prisoners. Now they were free! They could finally go home. So the people got ready to go. **King Cyrus and the other people living in Babylon gave them gifts like gold, silver, and animals.**

**A man named Zerubbabel** (zuh RUHB uh buhl) **led God's people back home.** Some of the people had never seen Jerusalem because they had been born in Babylon. When they got to Judah, **each family set up its house. Then the people met together in Jerusalem to start rebuilding God's**

**temple.**

God had special laws for how to build the temple, and God's people were careful to obey them. The priests made the altar in the





same place the old altar had been. Then they made offerings and sacrifices to God.

**The people started building.** First, they needed money to buy supplies. God's people gave money to the men in charge of building the temple. They paid people to bring big logs to Jerusalem. **The workers made the foundation, or the bottom, of the temple.** The foundation was very important. A strong foundation makes a building strong.

**The people were so happy that the foundation was done! The priests put on special clothes. The people shouted and sang songs to God. "God is good! He is loving and always will be!" they said. What a happy day for God's people.**

Not everyone was happy though. Some of the older people remembered what the first temple had looked like long ago, before it had been knocked down. The people were sad, and they cried loudly. The sounds of people shouting and crying was so loud that it could be heard far away.

*Christ Connection: Zerubbabel led God's people home to fix the temple. Jesus came to earth to save God's people. One day Jesus will come back. He will fix up a greater home for all of God's people, and we will live with Him forever.*

## **Bible Storytelling Tips**

- **Use the "Family Line of Jesus" poster:** Display the "Family Line of Jesus" poster (005802967). Point to Zerubbabel when he is mentioned in the Bible story.
- **Walk and talk:** Go on a walk in your church and tell the Bible story. Walk a little way, then stop. Read a paragraph of the story. Walk a little way more, stop. Read the next paragraph. Continue until the story is complete—ending back in your room.

# INTRODUCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** The Captives Came Home

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Ezra 1–3

**STORY POINT:** God kept His promise to bring His people home.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Jeremiah 29:11

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? God speaks to us through Jesus.

## Welcome time

- “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play a theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church’s security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

## Activity page

- “Get the Captives Home” activity page, 1 per child
- crayons or markers

Invite preschoolers to complete the maze to get God’s people home.

**SAY** • God’s people were in Babylon, far away from their homes and land. But God had made a promise. God had said that the people would have to stay in Babylon for 70 years, but then He would bring His people back home. We will hear how God kept His promise to His people in today’s Bible story. God always keeps His promises.

## LOW PREP

- painter’s tape

## Follow the road home

Use tape to mark a path around the room on the floor, making sure that the path ends where it begins. Encourage children to walk the path without falling off. Suggest they walk forward, heel to toe, backward, hopping on one foot, in pairs, or holding a toy. Repeat the activity as time allows.

**SAY** • Walking around the room did not take us very long, but some of it, like walking backward, was hard to do. In today's Bible story, God brought His people home to Judah from Babylon. They had to walk for a long time, and they had to carry all that they owned. It was not an easy trip, but they were happy to be home. Listen to the Bible story to hear what they did when they got home.

## Count items into groups of 10

Lay plastic counters, large buttons, crayons, stones, or other manipulatives in a bin on the table. Invite preschoolers to count out 10 items and place the 10 items in a small bowl. Encourage children to continue until they have 7 bowls with each containing 10 items. Help as needed.

**SAY** • Seven groups of 10 equals 70. Seventy items looks like a lot, but can you imagine 70 years! God's people were in Babylon for 70 years. That's a long time! Finally the time had come for God's people to go home. We will hear about that in today's Bible story.

- quantities of small items for counting (crayons, large buttons, plastic counters, stones)
- bin
- bowls, 7

## Transition to teach the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, turn the lights off and on, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Encourage children to pretend to count to 10 out loud together as they walk to the Bible study area.

- countdown video (optional)

# TEACH the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** The Captives Came Home

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Ezra 1–3

**STORY POINT:** God kept His promise to bring His people home.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Jeremiah 29:11

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? God speaks to us through Jesus.

## Introduce the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- Giant Timeline

Place a bookmark at Ezra 1 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

**SAY** • Our Bible story comes from the Book of Ezra. Like all the stories in the Bible, this story is true. After being gone for many, many years, God brought His people home just like He promised to do.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline. Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

## Watch or tell the Bible story

- Story Point Poster
- "The Captives Came Home" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

**SAY** • **God kept His promise to bring His people home.**

God brought His people back from Babylon to Jerusalem after 70 years of being away. Zerubbabel led God's people to begin fixing the temple when they got back to their land in Jerusalem. One day Jesus will come back to earth. He will fix up an even greater home for all of God's people, and we will live with Him forever.

## Practice the key passage

Print the words or phrases of the key passage on index cards. Put them in a small suitcase or backpack. Place the key passage marker at Jeremiah 29:11. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Invite children to take turns drawing cards out of the suitcase. Work together to put the key passage in order. Point to each word as you read the verse aloud.

**SAY** • Our key passage reminds us that God has a plan for His people. God planned all along to bring His people home. We can have hope knowing that God has a good plan for us too!

Sing the key passage song, “Jeremiah 29:11,” and the theme song, “Great Is Thy Faithfulness.”

- index cards
- marker
- small suitcase or backpack
- Bible
- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- “Jeremiah 29:11” song
- “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” song

## Learn the big picture question

**SAY** • Our big picture question asks, *How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? God speaks to us through Jesus.*

One day Jesus will come back. He will fix up a greater home for all of God’s people, and we will live with Him forever.

- Big Picture Question Poster



## Missions moment

Hold up a Bible for preschoolers to see.

**SAY** • Some people do not have a Bible. Missionaries help them read God’s Word in their language so they can learn about God. Let’s learn about the Karen (kah-REN) people. Missionary Adoniram Judson helped the Karen people learn that the Bible is God’s Word. Show the “Karen People of Myanmar” missions video.

- Bible
- “Karen People of Myanmar” video

## Pray and transition to experience the story

# EXPERIENCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** The Captives Came Home

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Ezra 1–3

**STORY POINT:** God kept His promise to bring His people home.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Jeremiah 29:11

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? God speaks to us through Jesus.

## LOW PREP

- walking rope (optional)

Tip: Follow your church's security procedures for leaving the classroom.

### Walk around the church building

Lead children on a walk around the building where your church meets. Point out areas of interest. As you travel, encourage children to hold hands and make sure that adult leaders walk both in front of and behind the children. Use a walking rope if available. Return to your classroom.

**SAY** • Our church gathers to worship God together in this building. Before they were taken captive in Babylon, God's people worshiped Him in the temple. The temple was destroyed when Babylon captured the people of Judah. **God kept His promise to bring His people home**, and Zerubbabel led God's people home to fix the temple. Jesus came to earth to save God's people. One day Jesus will come back. He will fix up a greater home for all of God's people, and we will live with Him forever.

### Pack a moving box

Encourage children to gather up small toys, toy dishes, and books from around the classroom. Show them how to carefully wrap toys individually in the tissue paper and place them gently into the box. When they have wrapped all of the items, show them how to seal the box with tape and write the contents on the front of the box.

- small toys
- toy dishes
- books
- tissue paper
- small cardboard box
- masking tape
- marker



**SAY** • When people move to a new home, they have to carefully pack all of their things in boxes. They wrap them carefully to keep them safe to travel. God's people had been living in Babylon for 70 years. King Cyrus allowed them to go back to their home in Judah. They walked for a long time and had to carry all of their belongings with them. **God kept His promise to bring His people home.**

## Make a suitcase

Print a copy of the "Suitcase" printable on heavyweight paper for each child. Invite preschoolers to cut out the pattern. Cut the patterns ahead of time for younger preschoolers. Show children how to fold the pattern in half to create a suitcase that opens. Guide children to open their suitcase and draw items with crayons or markers that they would pack if they were moving. Encourage them to decorate the outside of their suitcases with stickers, crayons, or markers.

**SAY** • If you had to move what would you pack in your suitcase to take with you? God's people had to move everything they had in Babylon back to Judah. King Cyrus also gave them gifts of gold, silver, and animals to take with them. On the front of your suitcase it says, **God kept His promise to bring His people home.** Someday Jesus will come back. He will fix up a greater home for all of God's people, and we will live with Him forever.

- "Suitcase" printable, 1 per child
- blunt-tipped scissors
- heavyweight paper
- crayons
- markers
- stickers

## Make trail mix

Invite each child to select a trail mix ingredient. Help them pour some of the ingredient into the large mixing

- Allergy Alert
- large mixing bowl
- large spoon
- cups
- assorted trail mix ingredients, such as dry cereal, dried fruit, fish-shaped crackers, pretzels, mini-marshmallows, chocolate chips, or sunflower seeds

bowl. After each addition, lead the children to take turns stirring the bowl with the spoon until it is mixed up. When children have finished adding ingredients, scoop out a cup of mix for each child. Set them aside for snack time.

**SAY** • Many people like to make trail mix as a snack for when they travel. **God promised to bring His people back home**, and He did. They traveled home to Jerusalem and began to fix the temple. One day Jesus will come back and will fix up a greater home for all of God's people, and we will live with Him forever.



## Pass the Bible

• Bible

Explain to preschoolers that when the Karen (kah-REN) people hold a Bible, they treat it very carefully. As a sign of respect, they always use two hands when giving or receiving something.

Invite preschoolers to spread out around the room. Explain that you will give the Bible to someone and that person will then walk to a friend and give him or her the Bible. Demonstrate how to give and receive the Bible using two hands. Guide preschoolers to pass the Bible to a friend, making sure that every preschooler has a turn.

**SAY** • Missionaries were the first people to give the Karen people Bibles. Today, many of them can hear Bible stories, like the one we heard about how **God kept His promise to bring His people home**. Let's all be careful with our Bibles and be thankful for God's Word.

## Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Serve the trail mix that was made earlier for snack. Talk about how many people make trail mix to eat when they go on a trip. **God kept His promise to bring His people home.** They traveled from Babylon to their home in Jerusalem so that they could rebuild the temple.

Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. How long did God's people live in Babylon? (*70 years*)
2. Who led the people back to their home in Jerusalem? (*Zerubbabel*)
3. What did the people start building when they got back to Judah? (*the temple*)
4. Why were some people sad and crying when the temple's foundation was done? (*They remembered what the first temple looked like.*)
5. ***How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? God speaks to us through Jesus.***

## Transition

When preschoolers finish their snack, they may color the Bible story coloring page, play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question, or sing along to the key passage or theme song.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- trail mix (optional)

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- "Jeremiah 29:11" song
- "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" song
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers



*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.

### KEY PASSAGE:

Jeremiah 29:11

### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? God speaks to us through Jesus.

**INTRODUCE THE STORY**  
(15–20 MINUTES)  
PAGE 96



**TEACH THE STORY**  
(10–15 MINUTES)  
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**EXPERIENCE THE STORY**  
(20–25 MINUTES)  
PAGE 100



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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*

God's people were happy to be home. They had lived in Babylon for a very long time, but the king had let them go home. They walked all the way home to Jerusalem to rebuild God's temple. The people had started to work on the temple, but their neighbors said, "Stop building the temple!" So God's people stopped. Building the temple was hard. Maybe God doesn't want us to build it, they thought.

But God did want His people to finish the temple. God sent two prophets—Haggai and Zechariah—to talk to the people. Haggai and Zechariah said, "Keep building. God is with you." So God's people started to work on the temple again.

The king of Persia ruled over the land where God's people lived. The king's name was Darius (duh RIGH uhs). Darius put a helper in charge of the land where God's people lived.

The king's helper saw God's people working. He asked their leader Zerubbabel, "Do you have permission to rebuild this temple?"

"Yes," said Zerubbabel. The helper sent a letter to King Darius to find out if Zerubbabel was telling the truth. The helper's letter to the king said this: "Dear King Darius, the people here are working hard





to build the temple to their God. They said King Cyrus said they could build. Please find out if this is true.”

**King Cyrus had been king before Darius. When a king made an important decision, someone wrote it down on a scroll. So Darius looked for the old scroll. His servants found it! The scroll said, “Let God’s people rebuild the temple.”** God’s people had told the truth!

King Cyrus had also said, “Help God’s people pay for the temple. Give them money from the royal bank to buy supplies.”

**So King Darius wrote a letter to his helper. He said, “Stay away from the workers at the temple. Do not bother them or try to stop them. Give them anything they need.”**

The king’s helper obeyed King Darius’s order. **God’s people kept building, and soon the temple was finished!** What a happy time! **The people celebrated the Passover and thanked 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 on earth. Jesus gave us something better than the temple; He gave us Himself. Jesus is with us wherever we go.*

## **Bible Storytelling Tips**

- **Build and tell:**  
As you tell the Bible story, build a small structure with blocks.
- **Play out building:**  
As you tell the Bible story, act out building activities, such as hammering, sawing, carrying wood, laying brick, painting walls, and so forth. Encourage preschoolers to copy your actions.

# INTRODUCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** The Temple Was Rebuilt

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Ezra 4–6; Haggai

**STORY POINT:** God's people rebuilt the temple.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Jeremiah 29:11

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? God speaks to us through Jesus.

## Welcome time

- "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play a theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

## Activity page

- "What Does Not Belong?" activity page, 1 per child
- crayons or markers

Guide preschoolers circle the things that do not belong in the picture of God's people rebuilding the temple.

**SAY** • Good job finding the silly things in the picture! God's people were happy to be home. When they first got home to Jerusalem, they began rebuilding God's temple. But once they got the foundation done, they stopped. In today's Bible story, we will hear how God helped His people finish His temple.

## LOW PREP

## Play "I'm building a church"

Invite the children to sit down in a circle. Begin by saying, "I'm building a church today, and I need a \_\_\_\_\_." Fill in the blank with a type of tool that you would use along with a hand motion that describes that tool. Encourage the next child to say, "I'm building a church today, and I need a \_\_\_\_\_." Say your original

statement again. Continue around the circle until every child has had the opportunity to add a tool and a hand motion. Be prepared to offer suggestions of tools and to help preschoolers remember their friends' tools. Tool ideas include a hammer, saw, screwdriver, wrench, brick, bulldozer, wheelbarrow, sledge hammer, and paintbrush.

**SAY** • Today, we gather as a church to worship God in different buildings like church buildings, schools, and homes. In today's Bible story, **God's people rebuilt the temple** so they would have a special place to worship God.

## Examine and play with plastic tools

Lay out several plastic tools and/or a child's tool bench. Talk to the children about how the different tools work and how they help to build buildings, including churches. Encourage the children to pretend to build a building with the tools.

- plastic tools
- tool bench

**SAY** • In our Bible story last week, God's people built the foundation, or bottom, of the temple. Do you think they used tools like these? In today's Bible story, God's people had stopped building the temple. Listen to the Bible story to hear if God's people finally finished rebuilding the temple.

## Transition to teach the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, turn the lights off and on, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Encourage children to stomp their feet like jack-hammers as they move to Bible study.

- countdown video (optional)

# TEACH the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** The Temple Was Rebuilt

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Ezra 4–6; Haggai

**STORY POINT:** God's people rebuilt the temple.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Jeremiah 29:11

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? God speaks to us through Jesus.

## Introduce the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- Giant Timeline

Place a bookmark at Ezra 4 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

**SAY** • The Bible is God's Word. It tells us true stories about God and His people. Today's Bible story is from the Old Testament Books of Ezra and Haggai.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline.

Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

## Watch or tell the Bible story

- Story Point Poster
- "The Temple Was Rebuilt" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

**SAY** • God's people had stopped rebuilding the temple. God sent Haggai and Zechariah to encourage the people to keep going. God was with them. God even used the King of Persia to make sure the people had everything they needed! **God's people rebuilt the temple.** Now they had a place to worship God. Years later, God sent Jesus to be with His people on earth. Jesus gave us something better than the temple; He gave us Himself. Jesus is with us wherever we go.

## Practice the key passage

Write each word or phrase of the key passage on piece of masking tape on a block. Place the key passage marker at Jeremiah 29:11. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Show preschoolers the blocks. Invite them to help you put the words of the verse in order. Say the verse several times as you build.

**SAY** • God planned all along to bring His people home and that they would rebuild the temple. God's plans for His people are always for their good!

Sing the key passage song, "Jeremiah 29:11," and the theme song, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness."

- blocks
- masking tape
- marker
- Bible
- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- "Jeremiah 29:11" song
- "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" song

Tip: Write the key passage on a large sheet of paper for children to match the blocks to.

## Learn the big picture question

**SAY** • God spoke through the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to tell the people to keep building because He was with them. Years later, God sent Jesus to be with His people on earth. *How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? God speaks to us through Jesus.*

- Big Picture Question Poster



## Missions moment

**SAY** • God wants all people to worship Him just like He wanted His people to worship Him in the temple. God sent missionary Adoniram Judson to tell the people of Burma, which is now called Myanmar, about Him so they could worship God too. I need your help to tell a story about Adoniram Judson.

Listen close so you know what to do.

Tell the "Adoniram Judson Story," directing preschoolers to complete the actions.

- "Adoniram Judson Story" printable

## Pray and transition to experience the story

# EXPERIENCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** The Temple Was Rebuilt

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Ezra 4–6; Haggai

**STORY POINT:** God's people rebuilt the temple.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Jeremiah 29:11

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? God speaks to us through Jesus.

## LOW PREP

• blocks

### Build a church with blocks

Place several varieties of building blocks in different areas around the classroom, such as on the floor or on small tables. Lead the children to work in teams of two to three to build churches or a temple with the blocks.

**SAY** • We pretended to build a church or a temple with our blocks. **God's people rebuilt the temple** so that they would have a place to worship God. Even when other people tried to stop God's people from building the temple, Haggai and Zechariah said, "Keep building. God is with you." Jesus gave us something better than a temple; He gave Himself. Jesus is with us wherever we go.

### Paint with a brick

Place a brick on a plastic tablecloth on a table top. Invite a child to select a tempera paint color. Help her to paint a thin layer of paint on one side of a regular masonry brick with a large paintbrush. Then help her place a piece of construction paper on the painted side of the brick and press down on the paper with her hands to form an impression of the brick on the paper. Lift the paper off the brick and set it aside to dry. When the paint is dry, write *God's people rebuilt the temple* on her paper.

- masonry brick
- plastic tablecloth
- washable tempera paint
- large paintbrushes
- construction paper
- smocks
- marker



**SAY •** Good job following directions. **God's people rebuilt the temple** using bricks and stones and many other building materials. They had to follow directions and work together so that they would have a place to worship Him. God sent Jesus to be with His people on earth. Jesus gave us something better than a temple; He gave us Himself. Jesus is with us wherever we go and we can worship Him wherever we want.

## **Play in a pretend construction yard**

Arrange construction vehicles, play hard hats, and small stones on the floor in a corner of the room. Encourage preschoolers to wear the hard hats. Suggest they use the construction vehicles to haul the stones and to dump the stones out on the floor in their make-believe construction site.

- various construction vehicles
- children's plastic hard hats
- smooth river rocks

**SAY •** **God's people rebuilt the temple**, but they did not have construction vehicles to help them out like we do today. They had to work hard together with their hands to finish it. When they did finish, they celebrated and praised God. Jesus gave us something better than the temple. He gave us Himself. Jesus is with us wherever we go. We don't have to wait to worship Him at church, we can worship Him wherever we go.

## **Hammer "nails"**

Place a 3- to 4-inch thick piece of foam on a table top. Encourage a preschooler to sit down in a chair at the table next to the foam board. Show him how to place a golf tee into the foam and gently tap it in with a plastic hammer until it is completely pounded down. Assist as needed with

- 3- to 4-inch thick packing foam
- plastic hammers
- golf tees

holding the golf tee or tapping the hammer.

**SAY** • You had to work hard to pound the nail into the foam. King Darius gave God's people money and supplies so that they could finish the temple. **God's people rebuilt the temple** together. When the temple was finished, they were so happy. They had a big celebration and worshiped God. Years later, God sent Jesus to be with His people on earth. Jesus gave us something better than the temple; He gave us Himself. Jesus is with us wherever we go. We can worship Him anytime and in any place.



## Worship on a blanket

- blanket
- towels or pieces of fabric

Spread a blanket out on the floor. Invite preschoolers to sit with you on the blanket. Give each preschooler a towel or piece of fabric large enough to cover his or her head. Tell preschoolers that you will worship together on the blanket, and when you say it's raining, they should hold their fabric over their head. Sing a song together and read a Bible story. Throughout the activity, stop at random moments and tell children that it's raining or that the rain stopped.

**SAY** • Many believers around the world do not have nice buildings to worship God in. The Karen people sit on a blankets to worship God together. It rains a lot where the Karen people live. If they are worshipping and it starts to rain, they just hold a towel or scarf over their heads. When I said, "It's raining," you held your fabric over your heads. When I said "The rain stopped," you put your fabric in your laps. That's what the Karen people do, and they don't stop worshipping God.

## Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Serve miniature marshmallows and pretzel sticks for snack. Show children how to stick the pretzel sticks into the marshmallows to build structures. Talk about how the **God's people rebuilt the temple.**

Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. What did God's people rebuild in today's Bible story?  
(*the temple*)
2. What were the names of the two prophets God sent?  
(*Haggai and Zechariah*)
3. Who helped God's people by telling his helper to give the people whatever they needed for the temple?  
(*King Darius*)
4. What did God's people do when the temple was finished? (*They celebrated the Passover.*)
5. ***How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? God speaks to us through Jesus.***

## Transition

When preschoolers finish their snack, they may color the Bible story coloring page, play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question, or sing along to the key passage or theme song.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- miniature marshmallows (optional)
- pretzel sticks (optional)

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- "Jeremiah 29:11" song
- "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" song
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers



*Use Week of:*

## Unit 17 • Session 4

# Zechariah the Prophet

### BIBLE PASSAGE:

Zechariah

### STORY POINT:

Zechariah said the Messiah is coming.

### KEY PASSAGE:

Jeremiah 29:11

### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? God speaks to us through Jesus.

#### INTRODUCE THE STORY

(15–20 MINUTES)

PAGE 108



#### TEACH THE STORY

(10–15 MINUTES)

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#### EXPERIENCE THE STORY

(20–25 MINUTES)

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## LEADER Bible Study

Zechariah was a priest who had been born in Babylon. He had returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel. At this time, the prophet Haggai was bringing God's message to His people. The Judean exiles were struggling to finish rebuilding God's temple. In fact, several years had passed without progress on the temple when God called Zechariah to prophesy to His people.

Zechariah's message was twofold: first, look back and remember the past. Second, look forward and prepare for the future. God wanted His people to learn from the mistakes of their parents and grandparents who had ignored the prophets' warnings. Zechariah set out to encourage the people.

The Book of Zechariah is organized into eight visions, four messages, and two oracles. The visions Zechariah saw each symbolized something God would do—such as rebuild Jerusalem, judge Israel's enemies, and remove national sin. (See Zech. 1–6.) A couple of years later, God spoke to Zechariah again. This time, God spoke four messages to respond to a question the people had about fasting. (Zech. 7:3)

In the last six chapters, Zechariah changed the subject to the future of God's kingdom. Chapters 9–12 are rich with Messianic prophecy; the words are quoted often in the New Testament. Compare Zechariah 9:9 with John 12:15; Zechariah 11:13 with Matthew 27:9; and Zechariah 12:10 with John 19:37.

As you teach preschoolers about Zechariah, emphasize God's promise: "A king is coming." Zechariah's visions were significant to the reality of God's people at that time, but a greater reality awaited. Zechariah pointed to Jesus, the coming deliverer who would be struck and pierced to take away sin. God would deal with His people's enemies. He would cleanse His people. "They will call on my name, and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are my people,' and they will say, 'The LORD is our God' (Zech. 13:9). Under the rule of King Jesus, our future is incredibly bright.

# The **BIBLE** Story

## Zechariah the Prophet

*Zechariah*

When God's people stopped rebuilding God's temple, God sent prophets to give His people a message. Zechariah (ZEK uh RIGH uh) was one of the prophets who told the people what God said.

God said, "Come back to Me, and I will come back to you." God wanted His people to remember Him and put Him first. "Do not be like your parents and grandparents and great-grandparents," God said. "I sent prophets to tell them to stop disobeying Me, but they did not listen."

One night, God gave Zechariah more messages for His people. The messages came in eight visions—like dreams, but Zechariah was awake. Each vision was a new message that said what God was going to do.

Zechariah saw a man on a red horse. The man rode his horse around the earth. He looked to see what was happening. Everything was quiet. God said He was going to punish His people's enemies, and the people would finish building God's temple.

Then Zechariah saw four horns. God's people had four enemies. Zechariah saw four men. The men would win against the enemies.

Then Zechariah saw a man with a rope. He used the rope to measure





things. The man tried to measure the city of Jerusalem, but it was too big.

Then Zechariah saw Joshua the priest. Then he saw a golden lampstand and then a flying scroll.

Then Zechariah saw a woman in a basket. Then he saw four chariots. What strange visions! **Everything Zechariah saw in the visions was a special message from God.**

God told Zechariah, “Make gold and silver crowns. Put them on Joshua the priest.” Joshua looked like a king, but he was not the special king God planned. God said that the true special king would come one day and bring peace. There would be no more fighting.

“Be happy and shout for joy! Your King is coming,” God said. “He is a good King. He is riding on a donkey.”

*Christ Connection: Zechariah saw that God was going to help His people and give them a special king. Jesus is the King who came humbly on a donkey, just like Zechariah said. God kept His promise to send Jesus. We can trust in Jesus to forgive our sins.*

## **Bible Storytelling Tips**

- **Count on your fingers:** Use the subject headings in a Bible to help you number the eight visions in the Bible story script. As you begin each of the eight visions, hold up that many fingers. Invite the preschoolers to hold up that same number of fingers and to repeat the number with you. Use some excitement in your voice as you count.
- **Use props:** While telling the Bible story, use blocks, a pillow, and a streamer. When telling about how God's people stopped building the temple, build with blocks and suddenly stop. When mentioning the visions, lay your head on the pillow but keep your eyes open. Shake a streamer when telling about Jesus' coming.

# INTRODUCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Zechariah the Prophet

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Zechariah

**STORY POINT:** Zechariah said the Messiah is coming.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Jeremiah 29:11

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? God speaks to us through Jesus.

## Welcome time

- "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play a theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

## Activity page

- "Match the Shadows" activity page, 1 per child
- crayons or markers

Invite children to draw a line connecting each object to its shadow.

**SAY** • Our Bible story today is about God's prophet named Zechariah. God gave His message to Zechariah, and Zechariah gave God's message to the people. One of the ways God gave Zechariah His message was through visions. Visions are like dreams, but Zechariah was awake. Some of the items on our activity page were in Zechariah's visions. We will hear more in our Bible story.

## LOW PREP

- copy paper
- scissors (adult use)

## Find who has the scroll

Cut a strip of copy paper. Roll up the strip tightly. Invite children to sit in a circle on the floor. Show them how to hold their hands behind them. Instruct them to close their eyes. Tiptoe around the circle and put the tiny "scroll" in a

child's hand. Invite the children to open their eyes, keeping their hands behind their backs. Allow children to take turns guessing who is holding the scroll. Repeat as time allows.

**SAY** • In today's Bible story, God gave the prophet Zechariah eight visions. A vision is like a dream, but Zechariah was awake. Each message was a special message for God's people. God was letting His people know what He was going to do. In one of those visions, Zechariah saw a flying scroll! Listen to our Bible story to hear what else God showed Zechariah.

## Put items in a basket

Set a basket on a table. Scatter items, such as cut pieces of rope, small plastic horses, miniature baskets, small scrolls, a donkey, and a plastic Jesus figure, beside the basket. Give a child a pair of tongs. Invite her to use the tongs to place the items in the basket. When she finishes, encourage her to use the tongs to take the items out of the basket and arrange them on the table for another child to take a turn.

**SAY** • Today we will learn about a man named Zechariah. Zechariah was a prophet. Prophets tell people what God says. God showed Zechariah things like a horse, a rope, scrolls, and baskets. Each thing Zechariah saw was a special message from God.

- large basket
- tongs
- various items (cut pieces of rope, small scrolls made from paper, smaller baskets, small plastic horses, small plastic donkey, small plastic Jesus figure)

## Transition to teach the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, turn the lights off and on, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Encourage the children to trot like a horse as they move to Bible study.

- countdown video (optional)

# TEACH the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Zechariah the Prophet

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Zechariah

**STORY POINT:** Zechariah said the Messiah is coming.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Jeremiah 29:11

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? God speaks to us through Jesus.

## Introduce the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- Giant Timeline

Place a bookmark at Zechariah 1 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

**SAY** • The Bible is God's Word. The Bible is true and tells us about God. Today Bible story is from the Book of Zechariah. Zechariah was a messenger from God who listened to God and told the people what God said.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline. Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

## Watch or tell the Bible story

- Story Point Poster
- "Zechariah the Prophet" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

**SAY** • Zechariah was a prophet who God sent to give His people messages. God gave Zechariah visions that were special messages from God. **Zechariah said the Messiah is coming.** This special King would help His people. Jesus is the King who came humbly on a donkey, just like Zechariah said. God kept His promise to send Jesus. We can trust in Jesus to forgive our sins.

## Practice the key passage

Place the key passage marker at Jeremiah 29:11. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the verse aloud. Toss a beach ball or beanbag back and forth with the children while saying the words of the verse together.

**SAY** • God gave Zechariah visions about things that would happen in the future. God had a plan to bring a special king to help His people. That King is Jesus! We have a future to look forward to because of Jesus! Sing the key passage song, “Jeremiah 29:11,” and the theme song, “Great Is Thy Faithfulness.”

- beach ball or beanbag
- Bible
- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- “Jeremiah 29:11” song
- “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” song

## Learn the big picture question

**SAY** • Zechariah was one of the prophets who told the people what God said. We no longer need prophets to tell us what God says because we have Jesus.

*How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? God speaks to us through Jesus.*

- Big Picture Question Poster



## Missions moment

**SAY** • Zechariah said the Messiah is coming.

Today, we tell people that the Messiah has come and will come again! The Messiah is Jesus! Some people have never heard about Jesus.

Point to Myanmar (west of Thailand) on a world map. Then point to where you live.

**SAY** • Myanmar is very far from where we live. If we left today, we would still not get there by tomorrow. Many years ago, Adoniram Judson traveled all the way to Myanmar to tell the people there about Jesus.

- world map

## Pray and transition to experience the story

# EXPERIENCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Zechariah the Prophet

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Zechariah

**STORY POINT:** Zechariah said the Messiah is coming.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Jeremiah 29:11

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? God speaks to us through Jesus.

## LOW PREP

• painter's tape

### Go and come back

Use painter's tape to make a triangle on the floor. Stand in the triangle. Direct the preschoolers to spread out around the room. When you say "Come back to me," preschoolers should come back to you in the triangle. When you say "Spread out," preschoolers should spread back out around the room. Play several rounds. Consider allowing children a turn at saying come back and spread out.

**SAY** • God told Zechariah to say to His people, "Come back to Me, and I will come back to you." We are sinners. We do things that make God sad, but when we do, we can come back to God. We can tell Him we are sorry. He will always forgive us, not because we say we are sorry, but because of Jesus. **Zechariah said the Messiah is coming.** Jesus is the Messiah who died on the cross to rescue us from sin.

## LOW PREP

### Sing a song

Lead preschoolers to sing the following lyrics to the tune of "Oh My Darling Clementine." If you are unfamiliar with the tune, look it up online before the session.

"Zechariah, Zechariah, tell me, tell me, what you saw.  
Zechariah, Zechariah, tell me, tell me, what you saw.'  
'Saw Messiah, saw Messiah, riding on a donkey's back.



Saw Messiah, saw Messiah, riding on a donkey's back.  
'It was Jesus! It was Jesus! He's the good King that you saw!'

It was Jesus! It was Jesus! He's the good King that you saw!' ”

**SAY • Zechariah said the Messiah is coming.** God said,  
“Be happy and shout for joy! Your King is coming.  
He is a good King. He is riding on a donkey.” Jesus  
is the King who came humbly on a donkey, just like  
Zechariah said. God kept His promise to send Jesus.  
We can trust in Jesus to forgive our sins.

## Compare prophecies

Cut two strips of paper from three different colors of paper to create six bookmarks. Write the following references on matching paper strips and place them appropriately in six different Bibles.

- Zechariah 9:9 and John 12:12-15
- Zechariah 11:13 and Matthew 27:9-10
- Zechariah 12:10 and John 19:33-37

Set out the marked Bibles. Invite a preschooler to find two Bibles with matching bookmarks. Open up each Bible. Help a child point to a verse. Read the verses. Point out how the New Testament verses show Jesus fulfilled Zechariah's prophecy.

**SAY •** Long before Jesus was born, **Zechariah said the Messiah is coming.** Zechariah saw that God was going to help His people and give them a special king. Jesus is the King who came humbly on a donkey, just like Zechariah said. God kept His promise to send Jesus. We can trust in Jesus to forgive our sins.

- marker
- construction paper,  
3 colors
- scissors (adult use)
- Bibles, 6

- smocks
- index cards
- marker
- non-menthol shaving cream

## Draw in shaving cream

Print the words *Zechariah, God, Donkey, King, and Messiah* on index cards. Put on smocks and invite children to sit at a table. Set the index cards on the table. Read the words to children pointing to the first letter of each word. Spray a small mound of non-menthol shaving cream in front of each child on the tabletop. Show children how to use their fingers to draw the letters *Z, G, D, K, and M* in the shaving cream. Encourage them to also draw scenes from the Bible story if they wish.

**SAY • Zechariah said the Messiah is coming.** Zechariah saw that God was going to help His people and give them a special king. He would be a good King and He would bring peace. Jesus is the King who came humbly on a donkey, just like Zechariah said. God kept His promise to send Jesus. We can trust in Jesus to forgive our sins and we can have peace with God through Him.



## Make tea bag gift cards

- index cards or pieces of heavyweight paper
- scissors (adult use) (optional)
- markers
- tea bags
- clear or decorative tape
- stamp or sticker with church information (optional)

Write *The Messiah has come. He is Jesus!* on index cards or pieces of heavyweight paper. Invite preschoolers to decorate a card with markers. Consider providing a stamp or sticker with your church's information to place on the card. Help a child tape a tea bag to his card when he finishes decorating. Challenge him to give gift to a friend.

**SAY •** The Karen people love to serve tea to their guests. We can share the good news about Jesus and some tea with our cards! Our cards say *The Messiah has come. He is Jesus!* **Zechariah said the Messiah is coming.** Jesus is the Messiah God promised to send. We can trust in Jesus to forgive our sins.

## Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Serve megaphone-shaped corn chips for snack. Talk about how a megaphone helps us be heard when we need to speak loudly. **Zechariah said the Messiah is coming** and that He will bring peace to everyone.

Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. What is the name of the prophet in today's Bible story? (*Zechariah*)
2. What did God want His people to do? (*remember Him and put Him first, obey Him*)
3. How many visions did Zechariah have? (*eight*)
4. What were these visions? (*special messages from God*)
5. Was Joshua the priest the special king God planned to send? (*no*)
6. What would this special king bring? (*peace*)
7. ***How is Jesus the perfect Prophet? God speaks to us through Jesus.***

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- megaphone-shaped corn chips (optional)

## Transition

When preschoolers finish their snack, they may color the Bible story coloring page, play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question, or sing along to the key passage or theme song.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- "Jeremiah 29:11" song
- "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" song
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers

# Unit 18: The People Restored

## Unit Description:

Even after returning home, the Israelites struggled to obey God completely and to worship Him. Nehemiah led the people to rebuild Jerusalem's walls and Ezra began teaching God's Word again. Malachi, the last Old Testament prophet, warned the people to repent because the Messiah was coming soon. The stage was set for the arrival of Jesus.

## Key Passage:

1 Peter 5:10

## Big Picture Question:

Who is in control of everything?  
God is in control of everything.

## Session 1:

### Esther Saved Her People

*Esther*

**Story Point:** God used Esther to rescue God's people from their enemies.

## Session 4:

### Malachi the Prophet

*Malachi*

**Story Point:** Malachi said a messenger would get people ready for the Messiah.

## Session 2:

### The Walls Rebuilt

*Nehemiah 1–6*

**Story Point:** Nehemiah led God's people to rebuild the walls.

## Session 3:

### God's People Repented

*Nehemiah 8–13*

**Story Point:** God's people promised to obey God.



## **Esther Saved Her People**

God used Esther to rescue God's people from their enemies.



## **The Walls Rebuilt**

Nehemiah led God's people to rebuild the walls.



## **God's People Repented**

God's people promised to obey God.



## **Malachi the Prophet**

Malachi said a messenger would get people ready for the Messiah.



Use Week of:

## Unit 18 • Session 1

# Esther Saved Her People

### BIBLE PASSAGE:

Esther

**STORY POINT:** God used Esther to rescue God's people from their enemies.

### KEY PASSAGE:

1 Peter 5:10

### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.

**INTRODUCE THE STORY**  
(15–20 MINUTES)  
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**TEACH THE STORY**  
(10–15 MINUTES)  
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**EXPERIENCE THE STORY**  
(20–25 MINUTES)  
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Additional resources are available at [gospelproject.com](http://gospelproject.com).

For free training and session-by-session help, visit [MinistryGrid.com/gospelproject](http://MinistryGrid.com/gospelproject).



## LEADER Bible Study

The Babylonian captivity ended when Cyrus, the king of Persia, took over Babylon and let God's people go home. Some of God's people—now called Jews (people from Judah)—traveled back to Judah to rebuild the temple, the city, and their lives. Others, however, stayed in Persia where life among the pagans was relatively comfortable.

The king of Persia was now Ahasuerus (uh haz yoo EHR uhs), also known by his Greek name, Xerxes (ZUHRK seez). Esther was a young Jewish girl who became queen of Persia. The former queen had defied the king and was promptly replaced.

Esther had been an orphan, so her cousin Mordecai adopted her. Mordecai kept in touch with Esther while she lived in the palace. One day, the king gave Haman the Agagite a very important position in the kingdom. The king even commanded the people to bow down to Haman. But Mordecai refused.

Haman was a descendant of Agag, king of the Amalekites. The nations of Israel and Amalek did not get along. Haman was angry, but instead of just punishing Mordecai, he planned to kill all the Jews in the kingdom.

In today's Bible story, Mordecai turned to Esther for help. After all, she was in a position of power, and the Jews were her people. The stakes were high, but Esther approached the king and explained her people's plight. Review the details in Esther 7.

Note how Esther described Haman: "The adversary and enemy is this evil Haman" (Esth. 7:6). We too have an adversary—the Devil. He prowls around like a lion, seeking people to devour. (1 Pet. 5:8) He loves nothing more than to destroy believers and hinder the work of God. Satan thought he had succeeded when Jesus died on the cross, but God—working frequently behind the scenes—raised Jesus from the dead and defeated Satan once and for all. (See Heb. 2:14-15.)

# The **BIBLE** Story

## Esther Saved Her People

*Esther*

Some of God's people were in a land called Persia. Persia was ruled by King Ahasuerus (uh haz yoo EHR uhs). The king chose Esther to be his queen. Esther was one of God's people who were called Jews because they were from the land of Judah. Esther did not tell the king that she was a Jew.

One day, Esther's cousin Mordecai (MAWR duh kigh) heard some bad news. Haman, one of the king's leaders, had a very evil plan to destroy the Jews. Mordecai was scared! Mordecai was a Jew; he did not want his family and friends to be killed. Mordecai and all the Jews cried.

Esther saw that the Jews were upset. "Why are you crying?" Esther asked. She sent someone to ask Mordecai what was wrong. Mordecai told the messenger about Haman's evil plan.

Mordecai said, "Ask the king to stop Haman. Ask him to save us!"

Esther wanted to help her people, but the king had a rule: No one can go to the king unless the king asks that person to come first. If anyone broke the rule, the punishment was death. The only way to not be punished was if the king held out his scepter. That meant, "You may live."



**Esther was afraid. Mordecai reminded Esther that she was a Jew. Maybe Esther had become the queen just for this time—so she could save her people!**

**Esther asked all the Jews to not eat or drink for three days. Then Esther went to the king. He saw Esther and held out his scepter. That meant she would live!**

**“What can I do for you?” the king asked. “I will give you anything—up to half of the kingdom.”**

**Esther asked the king and Haman to come to a feast. When they were done eating, the king said, “What can I do for you? I will give you anything—up to half of the kingdom.”**

**Esther said, “Come to my feast tomorrow.”**

**The next day, the king and Haman went to Esther’s feast. When they were done eating, the king said, “What can I do for you? I will give you anything—up to half of the kingdom.”**

**Esther said, “There is a plan to kill me and my people.”**

**“Who made that plan?” the king asked.**

**“This evil man—Haman!” Esther said.**

**The king was angry. He ordered Haman to be taken away. Then the king made a law to keep the Jews safe from their enemies.**

*Christ Connection: God’s plan was to send the Messiah into the world through Abraham’s family. Haman’s evil plan could not stop God. God had a plan for Esther to rescue His people. By saving the Jews, God made the way for His Son, Jesus, to come into the world.*

## **Bible Storytelling Tips**

- **Show how they feel:** Print and give each child a “How Do You Feel?” printable. Review the different feelings shown briefly. Stop at several points in the story and let the children point to how the person in the story is feeling.
- **Act it out:** Assign preschoolers to play the parts of the king, Esther, Mordecai, and Haman. Create signs to hang around their neck and/or bring costumes for them to wear. Be sure to provide the king a scepter.

# INTRODUCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Esther Saved Her People

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Esther

**STORY POINT:** God used Esther to rescue God's people from their enemies.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Peter 5:10

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.

## Welcome time

- "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play a theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

## Activity page

- "Find and Circle" activity page, 1 per child
- crayons or markers

Invite preschoolers to circle all the pictures that make them think of a king or queen.

**SAY** • You found the pictures that made you think of kings and queens. A king usually has the best of everything. He would not use a broken china plate! A king today might have tennis shoes for exercising, but that is not what he wears all the time. Kings in Bible times did not have tennis shoes because they were not invented yet. Today we will hear about a queen and king from the Bible.

## LOW PREP

## Act out ways to help

Encourage the children to think of ways they can help their families. Invite one child at a time to act out one way to help for the other children to guess. Whisper ideas (sweeping, dusting, folding towels, putting clothes in

drawers, taking care of a younger sibling, and picking up toys) to children who have a hard time thinking of a way to help.

**SAY** • God gave us families! We can help our families in many ways. Today we will hear about a woman who helped her family in a very special way. She did not just help her family; she helped all of the Jewish people in her country.

## Prepare a feast

Push two tables together. Guide children to cover the tables with a tablecloth and decorate it for a feast. Talk about what foods they would prepare for a very special feast as they set the table. Ask children about special meals they have shared with their whole family or at church.

**SAY** • We eat every day, but some meals are really special. Today we will hear about a queen inviting the king to a feast! That must have been a special meal with delicious food and beautiful decorations. The queen wanted to talk to the king about something very important. We will hear what happened in our Bible story.

- tablecloth or sheet
- nonbreakable vase of flowers
- battery-operated candles
- plastic plates and cups
- napkins
- plastic silverware

## Transition to teach the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, turn the lights off and on, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Encourage children to walk upright and royally as if they are kings and queens as they move to Bible study.

- countdown video (optional)

# TEACH the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Esther Saved Her People

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Esther

**STORY POINT:** God used Esther to rescue God's people from their enemies.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Peter 5:10

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.

## Introduce the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- Giant Timeline

Place a bookmark at the Book of Esther in your Bible.

Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

**SAY** • We know the Bible tells true stories about His people.

The Book of Esther in the Old Testament tells about a time that God used a queen to save His people.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline.

Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

## Watch or tell the Bible story

- Story Point Poster
- "Esther Saved Her People" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

**SAY** • Esther loved her cousin and her people, the Jews. She wanted to save them, but she was afraid to approach the king. Esther and the Jews did not eat for three days. The king held out his scepter to Esther so she could talk to him. **God used Esther to rescue God's people from their enemies.** By saving the Jews from Haman's evil plan, God made the way for Jesus to come into the world to save us all.



## Practice the key passage

Place the key passage marker at 1 Peter 5:10. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Create motions for preschoolers to use as they say the key passage. Use the key passage song video for inspiration.

**SAY** • Our key passage says “God will restore you.” God knew the Jewish people would have hard times, but He promised to protect them and care for them. God used Esther to protect His people from Haman’s evil plan.

Sing the key passage song, “God Will!,” and the theme song, “Great Is Thy Faithfulness.”

- Bible
- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- “God Will!” song
- “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” song

## Learn the big picture question

**SAY** • Our big picture question asks, *Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.* Haman made an evil plan, but Haman’s plan could never stop God’s plan. God used Queen Esther to stop Haman and rescue His people from their enemies. God has plans for our lives, too.

- Big Picture Question Poster



## Missions moment

Explain that you will say a word or phrase and children should raise their hand if that word describes them. Use the characteristics in the margin or create your own.

**SAY** • God makes everyone different, and everyone is important to Him. Let’s watch a video about a missionary family. Look for ways that the family members are different from one another.

Play the “Meet the Hite Family” missions video.

- “Meet the Hite Family” video

- Characteristics:
- boy
  - girl
  - dark hair
  - light hair
  - dark skin
  - light skin
  - like vanilla better than chocolate
  - like drawing better than blocks
  - like inside more than outside.

## Pray and transition to experience the story

# EXPERIENCE The Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Esther Saved Her People

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Esther

**STORY POINT:** God used Esther to rescue God's people from their enemies.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Peter 5:10

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.

## LOW PREP

### Answer "Who am I?"

Say the following statements and invite children to guess the person. When a child knows the answer, she should remain quiet and touch her nose. Say the answers together.

- The king chose me to be his queen. Who am I? (*Esther*)
- I made a plan to destroy the Jews. Who am I? (*Haman*)
- I told Esther that God may have made her queen to help her people, the Jews. Who am I? (*Mordecai*)
- We did not eat or drink for three days. We hoped God would use Esther to save us from Haman's evil plan. Who are we? (*the Jews*)
- I held out my scepter so Esther could talk to me. Who am I? (*King Ahasuerus of Persia*)
- I kept My promise to My people and saved them through Queen Esther. Who am I? (*God*)
- God sent Me to earth as part of the Jewish people. I died on the cross and rose again to rescue people from sin. Who am I? (*Jesus*)

**SAY** • God's plan was to send the Messiah into the world through Abraham's family. Haman's evil plan could not stop God. **God used Esther to rescue God's people from their enemies.** This was part of His plan all along. By saving the Jews, God made the way for His Son, Jesus, to come into the world.

## Make a queen Esther puppet

Before the session cut 1-inch pieces from gold chenille stems and 1-inch pieces from black or brown yarn. Print a “Queen Esther” printable on heavyweight paper for every two children. Cut out the puppets before the session for younger preschoolers. Give each preschooler a puppet.

Guide them to draw a face and color clothing. Invite them to cut out their puppets then glue on sequins, yarn for hair, and a chenille stem piece for a crown. Tape a craft stick on the back of each puppet. Encourage children to tell the Bible story using their puppets. Consider recording their versions of the story and sending parents their child’s video.

**SAY** • The king chose Esther to be his queen. The king did not know God was in control of his choice. ***Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.*** God made Esther queen, and **God used Esther to rescue God’s people from their enemies.**

- “Queen Esther” printable, 1 for every 2 children
- heavyweight paper
- gold chenille stems
- black or brown yarn
- scissors (adult use)
- markers
- blunt-tipped scissors
- sequins
- glue
- smartphone (optional)
- tape
- craft sticks

Tip: Follow your church’s security procedures for recording children.

## Play “King Ahasuerus”

Cut a star shape out of yellow or gold paper. Tape the star to the end of a ruler or marker to create a scepter. Invite a child to be *king* and stand in front of the group. Line up the other children at the opposite end of the room. When the *king’s* back is to the group, all the children will walk forward. When the *king* turns around with his scepter held down, all the children must freeze. Anyone the *king* sees moving must go back to where they started. The first person to reach the *king*, is the next *king*. Play several rounds.

**SAY** • King Ahasuerus could punish people who came to see him unless he asked them to come. Queen Esther must have been afraid to go to the king, but God was with her. The king held out his scepter and

- yellow or gold paper
- scissors (adult use)
- ruler or marker
- tape

Option: If weather and space permit, consider playing outside or in a hallway.

asked what he could do for her. **God used Esther to rescue God's people from their enemies.** God was in control!

## Dress like royalty

- toy crowns or tiaras
- costume jewelry
- dress-up clothes
- nonbreakable mirrors

Provide toy crowns, tiaras, and jewelry. Gather jewel-toned fabrics and adult-sized clothing to serve as “royal” clothes.

Invite children to dress up as kings and queens.

**SAY** • God's plan was to send the Messiah into the world through Abraham's family. Haman's evil plan could not stop God. God had a plan for Esther to rescue His people. By saving the Jews, God made the way for His Son, Jesus, to come into the world. ***Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.*** God used Esther to rescue God's people from their enemies.

- “Children” printable
- tape
- nonbreakable mirror

Note to Leaders:  
Tell parents that this month you will be accepting donations of new crayons, colored pencils, coloring books, and other small classroom supplies to give to a class for children with special needs. Preschoolers will wrap the supplies for this mission project later in the month.



## Talk about how people are special

Tape the “Children” photos around the room.

Display a mirror. Walk around the room together and stop in front of the pictures. Ask preschoolers to describe what they see. Be sensitive to children with special needs in your group, but speak openly about the fact that some people use a wheelchair or crutches. Some people might not be able to see or hear like they do. When you get to the mirror, let children look at themselves and describe what they see.

**SAY** • We are all alike in some ways and all different in other ways, but God made all of us and uses all of us in His great plan. He wants us all of us to know that we are special, that He loves us, and that He sent Jesus to rescue us from sin.

## Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Before the session, dip the end of a large pretzel rod in melted chocolate for each preschooler. Add a few sprinkles and allow to dry. Offer a pretzel rod to a child. Comment that the pretzel rod reminds you of a scepter. The king held out his scepter and allowed Esther to approach him. **God used Esther to rescue God's people from their enemies.**

Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. Whom did the king chose to be his queen? (*Esther*)
2. What bad news did Esther's cousin Mordecai hear? (*Haman had an evil plan to destroy the Jews.*)
3. Why was Esther afraid to go to the king? (*The king had a rule that no one could go to the king unless he asked the person to come.*)
4. What new law did the king make? (*He made a law to keep the Jews safe from their enemies.*)
5. ***Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.***

## Transition

When preschoolers finish their snack, they may color the Bible story coloring page, play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question, or sing along to the key passage or theme song.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- large pretzel rods (optional)
- melting chocolate (optional)
- sprinkles (optional)

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- "God Will!" song
- "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" song
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers



*Use Week of:*

## Unit 18 • Session 2

# The Walls Rebuilt

### BIBLE PASSAGE:

Nehemiah 1–6

**STORY POINT:** Nehemiah led God's people to rebuild the walls.

### KEY PASSAGE:

1 Peter 5:10

### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.

**INTRODUCE THE STORY**  
(15–20 MINUTES)  
**PAGE 134**



**TEACH THE STORY**  
(10–15 MINUTES)  
**PAGE 136**



**EXPERIENCE THE STORY**  
(20–25 MINUTES)  
**PAGE 138**



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For free training and session-by-session help, visit [MinistryGrid.com/gospelproject](http://MinistryGrid.com/gospelproject).



## LEADER Bible Study

Nehemiah was a Jew living in Persia. He served as the king's cupbearer. When the Persian Empire conquered the Babylonians, King Cyrus allowed God's people to return to Judah. Two or three million Jews had originally been deported, but only a remnant—50,000 people—returned. They set up their homes and rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem.

But when God's people faced opposition in rebuilding the rest of Jerusalem, they stopped. Some 70 years passed, and the walls and gates around the city were still ruined.

City walls and gates were very important in Bible times. Thick walls protected a city from its enemies and provided a sense of safety and security. Gates were the center of city life, the meeting place for commercial and social transactions. Without these structures, the surviving remnant of God's people struggled and was vulnerable to attack.

Nehemiah traveled from Persia to Jerusalem to lead the effort in rebuilding Jerusalem's walls. His leadership was effective. Nehemiah 3 describes all the people working together to rebuild the gates and walls. But it wasn't long before Nehemiah met opposition from local governors. God's people armed themselves and kept working. They completed the wall in just 52 days.

Note how their enemies reacted: "All the surrounding nations were intimidated and lost their confidence, for they realized that this task had been accomplished by our God" (Neh. 6:16).

Now God's people were protected from their enemies. Help preschoolers see that God provided the way for us to be protected from our enemies, sin and death: He sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins. When we repent and trust in Jesus, He frees us from sin and death. We still sin, but we are no longer slaves to sin. (See Rom. 6:17-18.) We may die a physical death as a result of sin, but we have eternal life. (See John 11:25-26; Rom. 6:23.)



# The BIBLE Story

## The Walls Rebuilt

*Nehemiah 1–6*

Long ago, a man named **Nehemiah** (NEE huh MIGH uh) **lived in Persia**. Persia was the place where many of God's people stayed after they were freed from Babylon. Some of God's people went home to their country called Judah. **Nehemiah was one of God's people. He had an important job in Persia serving the king.**

One day, some men came from Judah. Nehemiah asked them, "How are God's people doing?" "The people are in trouble," they said. "The walls around the city are broken down, and the gates have been burned down."

Nehemiah cried and prayed to God when he heard this bad news. The king saw that **Nehemiah was sad**. "What's wrong, Nehemiah?" the king asked.

Nehemiah said, "The city where my family is from is in trouble. The walls around the city are broken, and the gates have been burned down." **So the king sent Nehemiah to Jerusalem to rebuild the city.**

In Jerusalem, **Nehemiah led the people to rebuild Jerusalem's wall and fix the gates in the wall.** Everyone in the city worked together on the walls. **Before long, the wall was halfway rebuilt!**



**Some men who lived nearby did not like God's people, and they did not want them to have new walls to keep them safe. The men made fun of God's people and made a plan to attack them.**

Nehemiah did not want the people to be afraid. "God is great and powerful!" **Nehemiah said. "If our enemies attack us, God will fight for us."** So God's people kept working. **Some of the men stood guard with weapons, and others worked on the wall.** The people were always ready to fight, just in case.

Nehemiah was a good leader for God's people. He helped them when they had problems, and he told them to trust God. **Before long, the wall was finished! The gates and the walls were fixed, and God's people were safe. The people's enemies were afraid because they knew that God was with His people.**

*Christ Connection: Nehemiah helped God's people fix the walls around their city. The walls protected the people from their enemies. Jesus protects us from our enemies. When we know and love Jesus, He keeps us safe from sin and we will live with Him forever.*

#### **Bible Storytelling Tips**

- **Invite a guest to play Nehemiah:**

Invite a man to visit your class, dressed as Nehemiah. Tell the story and let Nehemiah play out parts of the story such as crying, praying, and working on the wall.

- **Look at a map with Jerusalem's walls:**

Print the "Jerusalem's Walls" printable. Show the children how the wall surrounds the city and had many gates. Read some of the names of the gates. Comment that the wall and gates helped keep the city safe so the people were in trouble when the walls were broken and the gates burned down.

# INTRODUCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** The Walls Rebuilt

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Nehemiah 1–6

**STORY POINT:** Nehemiah led God's people to rebuild the walls.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Peter 5:10

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.

## Welcome time

- "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play a theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

## Activity page

- "Name and Match" activity page, 1 per child
- crayons or markers

Encourage children to name the tools on the left side of the page and then draw a line to match the tool to the person who needs it to do the job.

**SAY** • In today's Bible story, God's people got to work rebuilding the walls around their city. Some of their enemies did not want God's people rebuilding the walls, so the workers not only carried tools, but weapons! Listen to the Bible story to find out if the people had to use their weapons.

## LOW PREP

- gray or tan construction paper
- blue construction paper
- glue or glue sticks
- blunt-tipped scissors
- markers

## Make a picture of a city

Encourage children to cut rectangles from gray or tan construction paper and glue them on blue paper to make a city. Suggest that they use markers to draw windows and doors on their houses and buildings. Talk about the area where you live and discuss if it is a city, town, or rural area.

Name the closest city to you if you don't live in a city.

**SAY** • You worked hard to make your cities! Cities often have buildings that are close together and many people live there. Long ago, cities had walls around them to keep the people safe. We will hear about a city with walls today in our Bible story.

## Build a cup wall

Form teams of three. Give each team about 25 paper cups. Explain that when you say “go,” children are to work together to build a wall for their team. Encourage the teams to talk about how they will build their walls for a minute or so before you say “go.”

· paper or plastic cups, 25 for every 3 children

**SAY** • Great job building your walls! [*Describe how the walls are alike and different. Comment on each wall's stability or design.*] All the teams had good ideas! In Bible times, many cities had walls around them to protect the cities. They had gates that could be closed too. Today we will learn about a city that had problems with its walls and gates.

## Transition to teach the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, turn the lights off and on, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Guide preschoolers to pretend to work as they move to Bible study. Call out jobs like carrying bricks, sawing, or hammering.

· countdown video (optional)

# TEACH the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** The Walls Rebuilt

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Nehemiah 1–6

**STORY POINT:** Nehemiah led God's people to rebuild the walls.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Peter 5:10

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.

## Introduce the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- Giant Timeline

Place a bookmark at Nehemiah 1 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

**SAY** • We know that the Bible tells the true story of God's people the Jews. Our story today is from the Book of Nehemiah in the Old Testament. God used Nehemiah to help protect His people.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline. Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

## Watch or tell the Bible story

- Story Point Poster
- "The Walls Rebuilt" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

**SAY** • Nehemiah was sad that the walls and gates around Jerusalem were still broken. The king allowed Nehemiah to go home to rebuild the city. **Nehemiah led God's people to rebuild the walls** around their city. The walls protected the people from their enemies. Jesus protects us from our enemies. When we know and love Jesus, He keeps us safe from sin and we will live with Him forever.

## Practice the key passage

Place the key passage marker at 1 Peter 5:10. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Form two groups. Lead the first group to say the first part of the key passage and the second group to say the second part. Say the reference together. Point to the groups and have them repeat their parts in order several times.

**SAY** • You worked together to say the key passage like God's people worked together to rebuild Jerusalem's walls. God brought His people home after being prisoners for a long time. He helped them rebuild the temple, and then He helped them rebuild their walls.

Sing the key passage song, "God Will!," and the theme song, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness."

- Bible
- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- "God Will!" song
- "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" song

## Learn the big picture question

**SAY** • Our big picture question asks, *Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.* The people were afraid of their enemies who did not want them rebuilding their walls, but Nehemiah reminded the people God was in control and would be with them. They kept working, and God kept them safe.

- Big Picture Question Poster



## Missions moment

Display the "Hite Family Photo." Say each family member's name and age as you point to him or her.

**SAY** • This is the Hite family. They share the love of Jesus with people who have special needs. Some of their children have challenges, too. They know that God is in control of their family.

- "Hite Family Photo" printable

## Pray and transition to experience the story



# EXPERIENCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** The Walls Rebuilt

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Nehemiah 1–6

**STORY POINT:** Nehemiah led God's people to rebuild the walls.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Peter 5:10

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.

## LOW PREP

- dry erase board or large sheet of paper
- dry erase marker or marker

### List ways to help

Encourage children to name ways that they can help others in their city or town. Write their suggestions on a dry erase board or large sheet of paper. Guide preschoolers to think of tasks, such as picking up trash on the playground, collecting food for hungry people, smiling at people who seem sad, recycling bottles and other materials, and telling people about Jesus.

**SAY** • Nehemiah lived in Persia. He did not live in Jerusalem, but he still loved Jerusalem because he was one of God's people. He asked the men who came from Jerusalem about the city and how God's people, the Jews, were doing. They told him sad news! Nehemiah was sad, but God made a way for him to help! **Nehemiah led God's people to rebuild the walls** around their city. We can help others where we live as well. You named many good ways to help! God can use us to help our city, just as He used Nehemiah.

- "Jerusalem's Walls" printable, 1 per child
- laminator or sheet protectors
- play dough

### Build with play dough

Before the session, print copies of the "Jerusalem's Walls." Either laminate the maps or slip each one into a sheet protector. Give a preschooler a map. Guide him to use play

dough to form walls around the edge of the city. Review the story and ask questions about the story as children build.

**SAY** • Nehemiah was very upset when he heard that the walls around the city were broken and the gates were burned. When the king found out why Nehemiah was upset, he sent Nehemiah to Jerusalem to help.

**Nehemiah led God's people to rebuild the walls.**

The walls protected the people from their enemies. God's people were safe! Jesus protects us from our enemies. When we know and love Jesus, He keeps us safe from sin and we will live with Him forever.

## Explore with blocks

Provide several kinds of blocks, such as interlocking logs or bricks, 1-inch cubes, wooden blocks, cardboard blocks, and so forth. Guide children to build a section of wall with each kind of block. Push the walls and compare which ones are the strongest and which ones fall the easiest. Ask which walls were easiest to build and which ones were hardest. Consider searching "walls of old Jerusalem" on a smartphone or tablet. Show preschoolers the images. Ask preschoolers what material it looks like the walls are made of. Talk about how strong the walls would be.

**SAY** • Jerusalem had a wall around it for protection.

Nehemiah was upset when he heard that the walls around the city had been broken down and the gates had been burned. **Nehemiah led God's people to rebuild the walls.** They worked very hard and God helped them. The walls protected the people from their enemies. Jesus protects us from our enemies. When we know and love Jesus, He keeps us safe from sin and we will live with Him forever.

• several kinds of blocks (interlocking logs or bricks, 1-inch cubes, wooden blocks, cardboard blocks, and so forth)  
• smartphone or tablet (optional)

- puzzles featuring construction items

## Work construction puzzles

Set out a variety of puzzles featuring construction vehicles, tools, or scenes for preschoolers to work. Review the Bible story as preschoolers work.

**SAY • Nehemiah led God's people to rebuild the walls.**

Nehemiah and the people probably did not have tools or equipment like this to rebuild the walls, but God helped them and kept them safe! ***Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.***

- yellow construction paper
- scissors (adult use)
- black crayon
- yellow or orange markers
- glue stick

**Note to Leaders:** Tell parents that this month you will be accepting donations of new crayons, colored pencils, coloring books, and other small classroom supplies to give to a class for children with special needs. Preschoolers will wrap the supplies for this mission project later in the month.



## Make sun prayer reminders

Before the session, cut yellow construction paper into 1-inch-by-4-inch strips. Use a black crayon to write *Pray for the Hites and Taiwan Sunshine* on a paper plate for each preschooler. Give each preschooler a paper plate and a yellow or orange marker. Invite them to color the paper plate to make a sun. Then preschooler may glue the yellow strips to the edges of the plate to make sunbeams. Encourage preschoolers to take their suns home and put them in a place to remind them to pray for the Hite family and the school where they serve.

**SAY • Taiwan Sunshine** is the name of the school where the Hite family works with children with special needs. Children with special needs are hearing how Jesus loves them and keeps them safe from sin at Taiwan Sunshine. Let's pray for the children in Taiwan and the Hite family as they share the good news about Jesus.

## Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Before the session, cut sugar wafers in half with a sharp knife. Serve six to eight pieces to each child for snack. Suggest that they build a wall with the cookies. Comment that **Nehemiah led God's people to rebuild the walls** around their city, Jerusalem. He knew the people needed the walls for protection.

Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. Why was Nehemiah sad? (*God's people were in trouble. Their city wall and gates were broken.*)
2. Who led the people to rebuild the walls and fix the gates? (*Nehemiah*)
3. Who did Nehemiah say would fight for the people? (*God because He is great and powerful*)
4. Why were their enemies afraid when the wall was finished? (*They knew that God was with His people.*)
5. ***Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.***

## Transition

When preschoolers finish their snack, they may color the Bible story coloring page, play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question, or sing along to the key passage or theme song.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- sugar wafers (optional)
- knife (adult use) (optional)

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- "God Will!" song
- "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" song
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers

Use Week of:

## Unit 18 • Session 3

# God's People Repented

### BIBLE PASSAGE:

Nehemiah 8–13

**STORY POINT:** God's people promised to obey God.

### KEY PASSAGE:

1 Peter 5:10

### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.

#### INTRODUCE THE STORY

(15–20 MINUTES)

PAGE 146



#### TEACH THE STORY

(10–15 MINUTES)

PAGE 148



#### EXPERIENCE THE STORY

(20–25 MINUTES)

PAGE 150



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## LEADER Bible Study

Ezra was a priest in Babylon at the end of the exile. More than 50 years after the first group of exiles returned to Jerusalem and completed and dedicated the temple, Ezra led a second group back to Jerusalem.

Just as God had been with Nehemiah, He was with Ezra—granting him favor with the Persian king. The king gave Ezra permission to go to Jerusalem. He provided Ezra with a letter and access to resources to ensure safe travel. (See Ezra 7:11-26.)

Ezra traveled to Jerusalem with a purpose. God's people had spent 70 years in exile, and they needed to be reminded how to live. As a scribe, Ezra was an expert on the law of Moses, and he had “determined in his heart to study the law of the LORD, obey it, and teach its statutes and ordinances in Israel” (Ezra 7:10).

Under Nehemiah's leadership, the people had rebuilt Jerusalem's walls. They gathered together at the Water Gate to hear the law of Moses. Men, women, and children—anyone who could understand—came to listen to the reading of God's Word.

From early morning until midday, Ezra read from the book of the law of Moses. He stood on a high wooden platform where everyone could see and hear him. Ezra opened the book of the law, and everyone stood up. The Levites helped the listeners understand the words of the law. The people reacted strongly to hearing and understanding the law of Moses. Verse 9 says the people wept. The law revealed their sin, and they repented.

God's Word is powerful. The law reveals our sin and how short we fall of meeting God's standard. As you teach preschoolers, help them recognize that we cannot meet God's requirements. We need a Savior. God sent Jesus to obey the law perfectly and die for our sins. We can trust in Him for salvation.



# The BIBLE Story

## God's People Repented

*Nehemiah 8–13*

The walls around Jerusalem were finally finished. The people had worked very hard, and God had helped them.

One morning, the people got together. Men, women, and children came to hear Ezra (EZ ruh) the priest read God's Word.

The sun was just coming up when Ezra carried out God's Word so he could read it. God's words were written on a scroll. Ezra stood on a tall platform and opened the scroll. Everyone could see it.

Ezra began to read God's Word aloud. The people in the crowd listened carefully. Everyone stood up. Ezra praised God, and the people lifted up their hands.

"Amen! Amen!" the people said. Then they bowed down with their faces close to the ground. All the people worshiped God together.

Some of the leaders there explained God's words to the people. They helped the people understand what Ezra read. When the people understood God's Word, they were sad. The words from God were about how to live, and the people had not been living the way God wanted them to live. They were sorry for disobeying God.

Ezra, his helpers, and Nehemiah (NEE huh MIGH uh) the governor





said, “**This day is special. Do not be sad. Do not cry.**” This was a happy day.

Ezra said, “**Go home and get ready to have a feast! Eat good food and drink good drinks. Share what you make with people who don’t have any food or drinks.**”

Then Ezra said again, “**Today is a special day. Be happy! God makes us strong.**”

**So the people did what Ezra told them to do. Nehemiah led the people to turn back to God. They promised to worship only God and obey Him.**

*Christ Connection: The Bible teaches us about God and Jesus. It helps us know the right things to do. We do wrong things a lot, but God can change our hearts and help us say no to sin. Jesus died to rescue us from sin.*

### **Bible Storytelling Tips**

- **Stand on a low table or wooden box to tell the story:**

Show the Bible story picture poster and point out that Ezra stood on a platform to read the Bible scroll. Comment that today you will stand as you tell the story to remind the children that the people looked up and listened to Ezra.

- **Pretend to be the people of Jerusalem:**

Invite the children to pretend to be the people of Jerusalem and stand as they listen to the story, raise their hands, bow to worship, look sad, and be happy.

# INTRODUCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** God's People Repented

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Nehemiah 8–13

**STORY POINT:** God's people promised to obey God.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Peter 5:10

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.

## Welcome time

- "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play a theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

## Activity page

- "Find the Bibles" activity page, 1 per child
- crayons or markers

Invite preschoolers to circle the Bible in each picture.

**SAY** • What book are these people looking at or reading in all these pictures? [*Allow responses.*] The Bible! Did you know the Bible is the most important book there is? The Bible teaches us about God and Jesus. It also helps us know the right things to do. In today's Bible story, God's people heard His Word. Listen to hear how they felt after they heard God's words.

## LOW PREP

- paper plates, 2 per child
- crayons or markers

Option: Provide cutouts of pictures of food for children to glue on their plates.

## Draw your favorite foods

Give each child two paper plates. If paper plates are not available, simply draw a circle on a sheet of paper. Invite preschoolers to draw their favorite foods on the paper plates. Offer to label the foods if preschoolers desire. Encourage children to give one paper plate of food to another child. Talk about times that your church gathers for

fellowship meals. Remind the children that families prepare food at home and bring it to share with others.

**SAY** • I wish the food you drew was real! We could have a feast! In today's Bible story, the priest Ezra told the people to get ready for a feast. He told them to eat good food and drink good drinks and to share what they made with people who didn't have any food or drinks. Listen to the Bible story to hear why Ezra told the people to celebrate.

## Make a coffee filter sun

Give each preschooler a flattened paper coffee filter. Guide a child to use yellow, orange, and red markers to color their coffee filter. Invite a preschooler to set his colored coffee filter on a towel. Invite him to use a spray bottle to spray the filter with water. Point out how the colors blend together. Set aside his "sun" to dry.

**SAY** • In today's Bible story, God's people—men, women, and children—got together early in the morning when the sun was just coming up. It was a special day. Listen to the Bible story to hear what made this day so special.

- paper coffee filters, 1 per child
- yellow, orange, and red markers
- old towel
- spray bottle
- water

## Transition to teach the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, turn the lights off and on, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Ask preschoolers what is their favorite thing to do at church as they move to the Bible study.

- countdown video (optional)

# TEACH the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** God's People Repented

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Nehemiah 8–13

**STORY POINT:** God's people promised to obey God.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Peter 5:10

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.

## Introduce the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- Giant Timeline

Place a bookmark at Nehemiah 8 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

**SAY** • Last week our Bible story was from the first part of Nehemiah. This week our story is from the last part of Nehemiah. Nehemiah is in the Old Testament part of the Bible. The Bible is God's Word, and it is true!

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline. Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

## Watch or tell the Bible story

- Story Point Poster
- "God's People Repented" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

**SAY** • When the people understood God's Word, they realized they had not been living the way God wanted them to live. They were sorry for disobeying God. **God's people promised to obey God**, but they needed God to change their hearts. We do wrong things too, but Jesus died to rescue us from sin. When we turn from our sin and trust in Jesus, God changes our hearts and help us say no to sin.

## Practice the key passage

Write the key passage on a sheet of paper, roll it up like a scroll, and secure it with yarn. Place the key passage marker at 1 Peter 5:10. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Invite children to take turns opening the scroll and “reading” the key passage to the group. Offer assistance as needed for those who cannot yet say the verse from memory.

- Bible
- paper
- yarn
- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- “God Will!” song
- “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” song

**SAY** • Our key passage says God will restore His people.

God restored His people in today’s Bible story. God’s people were not living the way God planned for them to live. God used His Word to show them what it looks like to live as His special people.

Sing the key passage song, “God Will!,” and the theme song, “Great Is Thy Faithfulness.”

## Learn the big picture question

**SAY** • Our big picture question asks, *Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.* God made the world and keeps it going, so He knows how life works best. God tells us the right things to do in the Bible, and when we trust in Jesus, God changes our hearts to help us live that way!

- Big Picture Question Poster



## Missions moment

**SAY** • God told the Hite family to go to a country called Taiwan and share the love of Jesus with children who have special needs. They obeyed! Watch this video about the school where the Hites work.

Show the “Taiwan Sunshine” missions video.

- “Taiwan Sunshine” missions video

## Pray and transition to experience the story

# EXPERIENCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** God's People Repented

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Nehemiah 8–13

**STORY POINT:** God's people promised to obey God.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Peter 5:10

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.

## LOW PREP

• walking rope  
(optional)

### Visit the sanctuary

Follow your church's security procedures for leaving the classroom. Walk together to the sanctuary. Use a walking rope if possible. Ask preschoolers to point to where the pastor stands to preach. Look for Bibles. Sit down and talk about ways we worship at church. Comment that God wants us to worship Him.

**SAY** • Our pastor stands on the platform here to read from the Bible and to help us understand God's Word. Ezra stood on a tall platform and read from the Bible scroll. When they heard God's Word, **God's people promised to obey God.** We will find out next week that they did not keep that promise. The Bible teaches us about God and Jesus. It helps us know the right things to do, but we still do wrong things a lot. We need God to change our hearts and help us say no to sin. Jesus died to rescue us from sin.

### Worship by singing

• rhythm instruments  
• worship music  
• "God Will!" song  
(optional)  
• "Great Is Thy  
Faithfulness" song  
(optional)

Set out rhythm instruments. Play familiar worship songs. Encourage children to choose an instrument and play as they sing. Review the Bible story and list ways the people worshiped God in the story. Ask preschoolers to name other ways they can worship God.



**SAY** • We come to church to worship God. We sing songs, listen to the Bible stories, pray, and learn more about God and Jesus. In our story today, how did the people worship? They listened to Ezra read the scroll; they lifted their hands to praise God; they bowed down to pray. **God's people promised to obey God.**

## Make a Bible scroll

Before the session, cut paper into 5-by-11-inch lengths. Then glue a craft stick on each 5-inch end. Give each preschooler a prepared scroll. Encourage them to draw a picture from a favorite Bible story. Show preschoolers how to roll the scrolls from both ends. Tie a piece of yarn around each preschooler's scroll.

- paper
- scissors (adult use)
- jumbo craft sticks
- glue
- markers
- yarn
- Bible

**SAY** • Ezra read God's Word from a scroll. Now, we have all God's words to us in a book. [*Show the Bible.*] We can read the Bible from a printed book like this. We can even read the Bible on a phone or computer! Knowing God's words in the Bible is so important. When the people heard God's Word, they realized they had not been living the way God wanted them to live. **God's people promised to obey God.** We do not live the way God wants us to live all the time either, but God can change our hearts and help us say no to sin. Jesus died to rescue us from sin.

## Play a worship matching game

Print and cut apart the "Ways We Worship" images. Hide one set of the cards in a plastic bin filled with shredded paper. Encourage children to choose a card and look for the matching worship card in the plastic bin. Comment that we are obeying God when we sing worship songs (pray, read

- "Ways We Worship" printable
- scissors (adult use)
- plastic bin
- shredded paper

the Bible, give an offering, and so forth).

**SAY** • When the people heard Ezra read God's Word, they worshiped God. They listened carefully. They stood up. They lifted up their hands. They said, "Amen! Amen!" They bowed down with their faces close to the ground. **God's people promised to obey God.** We worship God in many ways, too. The Bible teaches us about God and Jesus. In the Bible we learn how God sent Jesus to die to rescue us from sin. The more we know about God and Jesus, the more we want to worship and obey them!

- objects with different textures (sandpaper, cotton ball, silky fabric, stone, and so forth)
- opaque bags
- Braille Bible or book (optional)

**Note to Leaders:** Tell parents that this month you will be accepting donations of new crayons, colored pencils, coloring books, and other small classroom supplies to give to a class for children with special needs. Preschoolers will wrap the supplies for this mission project later in the month.



## **"See" with your hands**

Gather objects of different textures and place them in an opaque bags such as paper bags or pillowcases. Form a circle on the floor. Invite a child to close her eyes and feel inside one of the bags. Encourage her to notice how the object feels and describe it to the group. Allow each preschooler a turn to feel an object. Show preschoolers a Braille Bible or book, if available. Guide them to close their eyes and feel the dots on the page. Close in prayer, thanking God that He loves all people.

**SAY** • People who cannot see with their eyes use their hands to figure out what things look like. People who are blind can read with their fingers, using a special language called *Braille*. Raised dots represent different letters. People who cannot see may read a Braille Bible. All of us need to know God's words in the Bible. The Bible teaches us about God and Jesus. It helps us know the right things to do. We do wrong things a lot, but God can change our hearts and help us say no to sin. Jesus died to rescue us from sin.

## Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Serve strips of fruit leather and a few pretzels for snack. Encourage the children to wrap the ends of the fruit leather around two pretzels to make a scroll. Remind the children that when they heard words read from the Bible scroll,

### **God's people promised to obey God.**

Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. Who read God's Word aloud? (*Ezra*)
2. What did the people do as God's Word was read? (*listened carefully, bowed down, worshiped*)
3. Why were the people sad? (*They were sorry for disobeying God.*)
4. What did Ezra tell the people to do? (*Do not be sad. Go home and have a feast and share with others.*)
5. What did the people promise to do? (*worship only God and obey Him*)
6. ***Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.***

## Transition

When preschoolers finish their snack, they may color the Bible story coloring page, play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question, or sing along to the key passage or theme song.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- fruit leather (optional)
- pretzel sticks (optional)

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- "God Will!" song
- "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" song
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers



*Use Week of:*

## Unit 18 • Session 4

# Malachi the Prophet

### BIBLE PASSAGE:

Malachi

**STORY POINT:** Malachi said a messenger would get people ready for the Messiah.

### KEY PASSAGE:

1 Peter 5:10

### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.

**INTRODUCE THE STORY**  
(15–20 MINUTES)  
**PAGE 158**



**TEACH THE STORY**  
(10–15 MINUTES)  
**PAGE 160**



**EXPERIENCE THE STORY**  
(20–25 MINUTES)  
**PAGE 162**



Additional resources are available at [gospelproject.com](http://gospelproject.com).

For free training and session-by-session help, visit [MinistryGrid.com/gospelproject](http://MinistryGrid.com/gospelproject).

## LEADER Bible Study

After many years living as prisoners in Babylon, God's people had returned to Judah. They had worked hard and overcome opposition to rebuild the temple and the walls around Jerusalem. Surely God would restore them ... finally! But nothing happened. As they waited, they faced drought and economic uncertainty. God's people probably didn't feel like God had blessed them at all.

"It is useless to serve God," they said. "What have we gained by keeping his requirements?" (Mal. 3:14). Did God still care? It wasn't long until God's people fell back into the same patterns of sin that led to their exile in the first place: idolatry, covetousness, hypocrisy, arrogance, and abuse of the poor.

But God did still love His people. He had been working out His divine plan of redemption, and He never gave up on them. God sent a message to His people through the prophet Malachi.

Malachi was the last of the Old Testament prophets. He spoke to God's people approximately 100 years after the end of the Babylonian captivity. Malachi's message from God was a wake-up call.

God communicated through Malachi that the people's lack of blessing didn't mean that God didn't care. God exposed His people's sin and made clear that their actions merited a curse. God's people needed to repent and turn back to God. "But for you who fear my name," God said, "the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings" (Mal. 4:2).

Explain to preschoolers that 400 years of silence followed Malachi's prophecy; God did not communicate to His people. This period brings us to the New Testament, when the silence would be broken by the last prophet before Jesus, John the Baptist. His words about Jesus in John 1:29 offered hope to all who heard: "Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

# The BIBLE Story

## Malachi the Prophet

*Malachi*

The Jewish people were home in the promised land. They had worked hard to rebuild the temple and fix the walls around the city. The people were ready for God to bless them. They waited, but nothing happened. Some of the people were sad. They wondered if God really loved them.

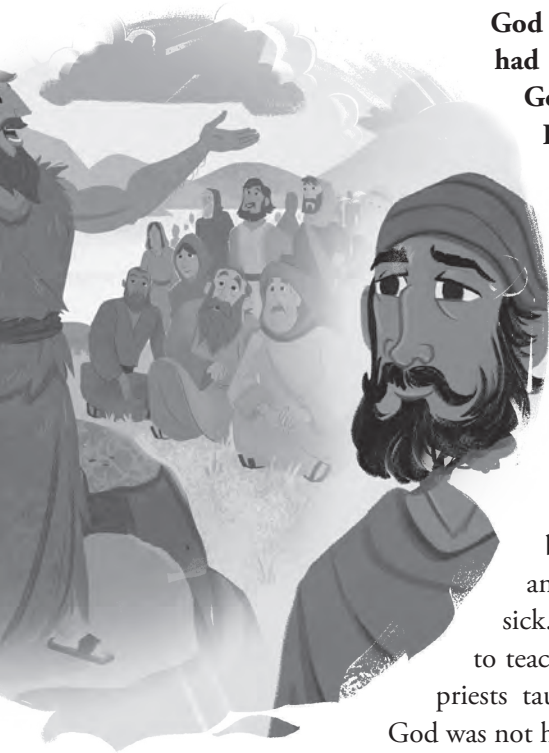
God did love His people! They had been doing wrong things, and God wanted His people to obey Him. So God sent the prophet Malachi (MAL uh kigh) to talk to His people. God gave Malachi a message, and then Malachi told the people what God said.

Malachi told the people what they had been doing wrong. The priests were supposed to make sacrifices to God. God deserved the very best sacrifices, but the priests gave animals that were stolen, hurt, or sick. The priests were also supposed to teach the people about God, but the priests taught things that were not true.

God was not happy.

Then Malachi gave a warning. He said that a day was coming when God would judge people on earth. God said, "I am going to send My messenger, and he will get people ready for Me."

The messenger God was going to send would have a very big job.





**The messenger would say, “Another messenger is coming! Get ready!” The other messenger would be God’s special Messenger, the Messiah God promised to send.**

What else did God’s people do wrong? Well, some of God’s people were robbing God! When God gave people good gifts—like money and wealth—the people kept it all for themselves. They did not share. They forgot that everything belongs to God.

God said, “Give what you have! Just a little bit of it. See what happens. I will give you even more blessings—more good things than you can count!”

What else did God’s people do wrong? Well, some of God’s people were saying things about God that were not true. They said, “Serving God is no good. People who do not serve God have better lives than we have.”

**“A day is coming,” God said, “when everyone who is wicked will be punished. They will see that it is good to serve God. People who honor Me will be happy, and they will jump and play like calves.”**

*Christ Connection: Malachi was a messenger for God. He said another messenger was coming. That messenger was John the Baptist. John’s job was to get people ready for the last Messenger, Jesus! Jesus is God’s Son. He came to rescue people from sin.*

## **Bible Storytelling Tips**

### **• Respond with thumbs-up or thumbs-down:**

As you tell the story, encourage the children to hold their thumbs up when the Bible story is about good things and to turn their thumbs down when sad or bad things happen in the story.

### **• Invite repetition:**

Pause and invite preschoolers to say the phrase, “A messenger?” every time that the word *messenger* is said in the Bible story. After they say, “A messenger?”, say, “Yes! A messenger!” Then continue with the story. Consider underlining the word *messenger* on the Bible story script and make sure you pause to prompt the children.



# INTRODUCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Malachi the Prophet

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Malachi

**STORY POINT:** Malachi said a messenger would get people ready for the Messiah.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Peter 5:10

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.

## Welcome time

- "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play a theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

## Activity page

- "Obey God" activity page, 1 per child
- crayons or markers

Invite preschoolers to circle the children obeying God and to draw an *X* over the children not obeying God.

**SAY** • Good job deciding who was obeying or disobeying God in the pictures. God loves people and gives them rules to live by. God's rules are good rules. He made everything, so He knows how life works best. In today's Bible story, God's people were not obeying Him, so He sent a messenger to talk to them.

## LOW PREP

Messages:

- God loves people.
- God's rules are good.
- God wants people to obey Him.
- Jesus rescues people from sin.
- Serving God is good.

## Pass a message

Form a circle. Choose a preschooler to be the messenger. Whisper a message in his ear. Use a message in the margin or create your own. Encourage the messenger to choose whom to say the message to next, a child on his right or left. Encourage that child to whisper the message to the next child. Whisper the message around the circle. The last

person to hear the message will say it out loud. Compare what was spoken to the original message you whispered. Choose a new child to start a new message.

**SAY** • In today's Bible story, God sent a man named Malachi to give His people a message. Malachi said another messenger was coming. That messenger would get people ready for the most special Messenger. Listen to the Bible story to hear who these other messengers were.

## Compare pairs of objects

Hold up a bruised apple. Ask preschoolers if the bruised apple would taste good. Show a fresh apple. Ask which apple would taste better. Continue comparing each pair of items. Discuss which of each pair is better. Comment that the bruised, worn, and broken items may still be good, but they are not the best.

**SAY** • I like cookies, even broken ones, but if I open this bag of cookie pieces, I will probably get crumbs everywhere. Eating these whole cookies would be much neater. Look at the apples, I could cut off the bruised part and throw it away, but I can eat this whole apple. In our Bible story today, we will hear how God's people were not giving Him their best. Let's listen to hear what God tells them.

• several pairs of items (one good and one flawed, such as a good apple and a bruised apple, a new book and a worn-out book, full bag of cookies and bag of broken cookie pieces, new crayons and broken crayons)

## Transition to teach the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, turn the lights off and on, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Invite preschoolers to "jump like calves" as they move to Bible study.

• countdown video (optional)

# TEACH the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Malachi the Prophet

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Malachi

**STORY POINT:** Malachi said a messenger would get people ready for the Messiah.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Peter 5:10

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.

## Introduce the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- Giant Timeline

Place a bookmark at Malachi 1 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

**SAY** • Today's Bible story is from the Book of Malachi. The Old Testament is made up of 39 books. Malachi is the last one. Malachi is short. It only has four chapters. Show the children the four chapters in Malachi in the Bible. Point out how the New Testament begins after Malachi. Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline. Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

## Watch or tell the Bible story

- Story Point Poster
- "Malachi the Prophet" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

**SAY** • God sent Malachi to talk to His people. He told the people what they were doing wrong. Malachi told them that God wanted His people to obey Him. He told them another messenger was coming. **Malachi said a messenger would get people ready for the Messiah.** That messenger was John the Baptist. John's job was to get people ready for Jesus.

## Practice the key passage

Place the key passage marker at 1 Peter 5:10. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Invite preschoolers to take turns saying the key passage from memory. Offer assistance as needed.

**SAY** • God's people were suffering. They thought that God did not care about them. God did care about His people! They had been doing wrong things, and God wanted His people to obey Him. God planned to bless and restore His people when they turned away from their sin and turned back to Him.

Sing the key passage song, "God Will!," and the theme song, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness."

- Bible
- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- "God Will!" song
- "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" song

## Learn the big picture question

**SAY** • Do you remember our big picture question and answer? ***Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.*** His people waited for God to bless them. When nothing happened, they wondered if God really loved them, but God was working out His good plan to give them, and us, the best blessing of all—Jesus! Jesus came to rescue us from sin.

- Big Picture Question Poster



## Missions moment

**SAY** • Often missionaries go to other countries to tell people about Jesus. The Hite family went to a country called Taiwan. Watch this video from Logan Hite. Listen for how we can pray for his family.

Show the "Hey from Logan Hite" missions video. Then review prayer requests and lead preschoolers in prayer.

- "Hey from Logan Hite" video

## Pray and transition to experience the story

# EXPERIENCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Malachi the Prophet

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Malachi

**STORY POINT:** Malachi said a messenger would get people ready for the Messiah.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Peter 5:10

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.

## LOW PREP

### Play a quiet game

Invite preschoolers to sit in a circle. Choose a preschooler to go first. Instruct her to walk around the circle and gently tap a quiet person on the shoulder. Then she will take that child's spot while he walks around the circle and gently taps another quiet person. Continue playing as time allows.

**SAY • Malachi said a messenger would get people ready for the Messiah.** God was quiet for 400 years after Malachi gave God's message. Then God sent the messenger whom Malachi told about. That messenger was John the Baptist. John's job was to get people ready for the last Messenger, Jesus! Jesus is God's Son. He came to rescue people from sin.

### Think about the way people feel

Give each child a "How Do You Feel?" chart and nine pom-poms. Help children point to and name the different feelings. Encourage them to make a face and show how they look when they feel each emotion. Retell parts of the Bible stories from this unit and give present-day examples of different emotions. Encourage the children to place a pom-pom on the emotion in each example. Continue telling Bible or present-day stories until the children have covered all the emotions.

- "How Do You Feel?" printable, one per child
- pom-poms, 9 per child

**SAY** • God's people were happy they had rebuilt the temple and fixed the walls around their city. They were sad when they wondered if God really loved them. God did love them, and He loves us too! God wanted the people to know that Jesus was coming to rescue them from sin. He wanted them to obey Him and He promised to give them more blessings than they could count! Do you think they were surprised that God wanted to give them so many blessings? The people needed to remember ***Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.***

## Build a blessing wall

Help children name good gifts or blessings that God gives to us. Write each blessing on a sticky note. Encourage children to put each note on a different block then stack the blocks to make a wall. Print *Our Blessing Wall* on a sheet of construction paper and hang it over the block wall. Pray, thanking God for the blessings He give us. Consider leaving up the wall for children to show their parents at pickup.

- blocks
- sticky notes
- fine-point markers
- sheet of construction paper

**SAY** • You named many good gifts, or blessings, that God has given us. The greatest blessing God has given us is His very own Son! **Malachi said a messenger would get people ready for the Messiah.** Jesus is the Messiah God promised to send! God sent Jesus to earth to rescue people from sin.

## Pretend to give an offering

Hide play money around the room before the session. Give each child an envelope. Guide them to cut off the flap then fold the envelope in half to create a wallet. Invite children to decorate their wallets. Lead children to search for the

- play money
- envelopes
- blunt-tipped scissors
- markers
- stickers
- offering plate or basket



play money and place it in their wallets. Show the basket or offering plate and encourage them to give part of their money. Comment that in the Bible story, the people gave animals as offerings to God, but today we give money as our offering.

**SAY** • God had given His people good gifts to share—like money and wealth, but the people kept it all for themselves. ***Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.*** God is in control of everything because everything belongs to God. God says if we give what we have, He will give us more good things than we can even count!



## Wrap gifts for children with special needs

- donated crayons, colored pencils, coloring books, and other school supplies
- wrapping paper
- scissors (adult use)
- tape
- plain gift bags (optional)
- markers (optional)
- stickers (optional)

Gather donated crayons, colored pencils, coloring books and other school supplies collected this month. Allow preschoolers to help you wrap the supplies, letting them help you fold wrapping paper and tape it in place. You may also provide plain gift bags for preschoolers to decorate with markers and stickers.

If possible, consider planning a class outing to deliver the supplies to a class for children with special needs in your church or at a school in your church's neighborhood. Invite preschoolers and their families. Encourage interaction between your group and the children with special needs.

**SAY** • Let's pray for the children who will get these school supplies. Let's pray that God will remind them how important they are to Him and how He wants to use them in His plan!

## Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Serve crackers with spray cheese for snack. Spray the letters *G*, *O*, and *D* on crackers for each child. Encourage preschoolers to put the crackers in order to spell *God*. Ask, ***Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.*** Remind the preschoolers that **Malachi said a messenger would get people ready for the Messiah.**

Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. Whom did God send to talk to His people?  
(*Malachi*)
2. What did Malachi tell the people? (*what they had been doing wrong and that a messenger would come to get people ready for the Messiah*)
3. What did God say would happen to people who honored Him? (*They will be happy and jump and play like calves.*)
4. ***Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything.***

## Transition

When preschoolers finish their snack, they may color the Bible story coloring page, play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question, or sing along to the key passage or theme song.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- crackers (optional)
- spray cheese (optional)

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- “God Will!” song
- “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” song
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers

## Volume 1: In the Beginning

### Unit 1: God Created Everything

Session 1: God Created the World (*Genesis 1*)  
Session 2: God Created People (*Genesis 1–2*)  
Session 3: Sin Entered the World (*Genesis 3*)  
Session 4: Noah and the Ark (*Genesis 6–9*)  
Session 5: The Tower of Babel (*Genesis 11*)  
Session 6: The Suffering of Job (*Job*)

### Unit 2: God Formed a Nation

Session 1: God's Covenant with Abraham (*Genesis 12; 15; 17*)  
Session 2: Abraham and Isaac (*Genesis 22*)  
Session 3: Isaac and Rebekah (*Genesis 24*)  
Session 4: God's Promise to Isaac (*Genesis 25–26*)

### Unit 3: The Nation Grew

Session 1: Jacob and Esau (*Genesis 27–28*)  
Session 2: Jacob and Rachel (*Genesis 29–31*)  
Session 3: Jacob's New Name (*Genesis 32–33*)

## Volume 2: Out of Egypt

### Unit 4: God's People in Egypt

Session 1: Joseph Sent to Egypt (*Genesis 37*)  
Session 2: Joseph Explained Dreams (*Genesis 39–41*)  
Session 3: Joseph Saved His Family (*Genesis 42–46; 50*)  
Christmas: Jesus Was Born (*Isaiah 9; Luke 2*)  
Session 4: Moses Was Born and Called (*Exodus 1–4*)  
Session 5: The Plagues and the Passover (*Exodus 5–12*)  
Session 6: The Red Sea Crossing (*Exodus 13–15*)

### Unit 5: Toward the Promised Land

Session 1: Bread from Heaven (*Exodus 15–17*)  
Session 2: Jethro Helped Moses (*Exodus 18*)  
Session 3: The Ten Commandments (*Exodus 19–20*)

### Unit 6: Worship in the Wilderness

Session 1: The Golden Calf (*Exodus 32; 34*)  
Session 2: The Tabernacle Was Built (*Exodus 35–40*)  
Session 3: Rules for Sacrifice (*Leviticus*)

## Volume 3: Into the Promised Land

### Unit 7: Wandering in the Wilderness

Session 1: Joshua and Caleb (*Numbers 13–14*)  
Session 2: The Bronze Snake (*Numbers 20–21*)  
Session 3: Balaam and Balak (*Numbers 22–24*)  
Session 4: Moses' Farewell (*Deuteronomy 31–34*)

### Unit 8: Conquering the Land

Session 1: Crossing the Jordan (*Joshua 1–4*)  
Session 2: The Battle of Jericho (*Joshua 2; 6*)  
Session 3: Taking the Land (*Joshua 10–11; 24*)  
Easter: Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection (*Matthew 26–28*)

### Unit 9: The Cycle of Judges

Session 1: Israel's Unfaithfulness (*Judges 1–3*)  
Session 2: Deborah and Barak (*Judges 4–5*)  
Session 3: Gideon (*Judges 6–8*)  
Session 4: Samson (*Judges 13–16*)  
Session 5: Ruth and Boaz (*Ruth*)

## Volume 4: A Kingdom Provided

### Unit 10: Samuel and King Saul

Session 1: Hannah and Samuel (*1 Samuel 1–3*)  
Session 2: The Ark Was Captured (*1 Samuel 4–6*)  
Session 3: Israel's First King (*1 Samuel 8–15*)

### Unit 11: Great King David

Session 1: David Was Anointed (*1 Samuel 16–17*)  
Session 2: David Showed Mercy (*1 Samuel 24*)  
Session 3: God's Covenant with David (*2 Samuel 6–7*)  
Session 4: David's Kindness (*2 Samuel 9*)  
Session 5: David Sinned and Was Restored (*2 Samuel 11–12; Psalm 51*)  
Session 6: David's Psalm (*Psalms 23*)

### Unit 12: Wise King Solomon

Session 1: Solomon Asked for Wisdom (*1 Kings 2–3*)  
Session 2: Wisdom for God's People (*Proverbs; Ecclesiastes; Song of Songs*)  
Session 3: Solomon Built the Temple (*1 Kings 6–8*)  
Session 4: The Kingdom Divided (*1 Kings 11–12*)

## Volume 5: A Nation Divided

### Unit 13: Elijah and Elisha

- Session 1: Elijah and the Widow (*1 Kings 17*)
- Session 2: Elijah at Mount Carmel (*1 Kings 18–19*)
- Session 3: Elijah and Elisha (*2 Kings 2*)
- Session 4: Elisha and the Army (*2 Kings 6–7*)

### Unit 14: The Northern Kingdom of Israel

- Session 1: Jonah, Prophet to Nineveh (*Jonah*)
- Session 2: Hosea, Prophet to Israel (*Hosea*)
- Session 3: Israel Taken Captive (*2 Kings 17*)

### Unit 15: The Southern Kingdom of Judah

- Session 1: Isaiah, Prophet to Judah (*Isaiah 6; 53*)
- Session 2: Hezekiah and Josiah (*2 Chronicles 29; 34–35*)
- Session 3: Jeremiah, Prophet to Judah (*Jeremiah*)
- Session 4: Habakkuk the Prophet (*Habakkuk*)
- Session 5: Judah Taken Captive (*2 Chronicles 36*)
- Session 6: Ezekiel Gave Hope (*Ezekiel 37*)

## Volume 6: A People Restored

### Unit 16: Hope in Exile

- Session 1: The Fiery Furnace (*Daniel 3*)
- Session 2: Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (*Daniel 4*)
- Session 3: Daniel in the Lions' Den (*Daniel 6*)
- Christmas: Jesus Was Born (*Matthew 1*)
- Session 4: Daniel's Dream (*Daniel 7*)

### Unit 17: Return to the Land

- Session 1: Obadiah the Prophet (*Obadiah*)
- Session 2: The Captives Came Home (*Ezra 1–3*)
- Session 3: The Temple Was Rebuilt (*Ezra 4–6; Haggai*)
- Session 4: Zechariah the Prophet (*Zechariah*)

### Unit 18: The People Restored

- Session 1: Esther Saved Her People (*Esther*)
- Session 2: The Walls Rebuilt (*Nehemiah 1–6*)
- Session 3: God's People Repented (*Nehemiah 8–13*)
- Session 4: Malachi the Prophet (*Malachi*)

## Volume 7: Jesus the Messiah

### Unit 19: Into the World

- Session 1: From Adam to Jesus (*Matthew 1; Luke 3; John 1*)
- Session 2: John Was Born (*Luke 1*)
- Session 3: Jesus Was Born (*Luke 2*)

- Session 4: Jesus Was Dedicated (*Luke 2*)
- Session 5: Jesus as a Child (*Matthew 2; Luke 2*)

### Unit 20: Prepare the Way

- Session 1: Jesus' Baptism (*Matthew 3; Mark 1; Luke 3; John 1*)
- Easter: Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection (*Matthew 26–28; 1 Corinthians 15*)
- Session 2: Jesus' Temptation (*Matthew 4; Mark 1; Luke 4*)
- Session 3: John Pointed to Jesus (*Matthew 3; John 1; 3*)
- Session 4: Jesus Called Disciples (*Matthew 4; 9; Mark 1–3; Luke 5–6*)

### Unit 21: Among the People

- Session 1: Jesus' Early Miracles (*Mark 1*)
- Session 2: Jesus Taught in Nazareth (*Luke 4*)
- Session 3: Jesus and Nicodemus (*John 3*)
- Session 4: Jesus and the Samaritan Woman (*John 4*)

## Volume 8: Jesus the Servant

### Unit 22: Jesus the Healer

- Session 1: Jesus Healed Ten Men (*Luke 17*)
- Session 2: Jesus Healed a Woman and a Girl (*Mark 5*)
- Session 3: Jesus Healed a Man Who Was Lame (*John 5*)
- Session 4: Jesus Healed a Man Who Was Blind (*John 9*)

### Unit 23: Jesus the Teacher

- Session 1: The Sermon on the Mount (*Matthew 5–7*)
- Session 2: The Cost of Following Jesus (*Matthew 8; 16; Luke 9; 14*)
- Session 3: Jesus Taught About Prayer (*Luke 11; 18*)
- Session 4: Jesus Taught About Possessions (*Luke 12*)
- Session 5: The Good Shepherd (*John 10*)

### Unit 24: Jesus the Miracle-Worker

- Session 1: Jesus Calmed a Storm (*Matthew 8; Mark 4–5; Luke 8*)
- Session 2: Jesus Fed a Crowd (*Matthew 14; Mark 6; Luke 9; John 6*)
- Session 3: Jesus Walked on Water (*Matthew 14; Mark 6; John 6*)
- Session 4: Jesus Showed His Glory (*Matthew 17; Mark 9; Luke 9*)

## Volume 9: Jesus the Savior

### Unit 25: The Kingdom to Come

- Session 1: Kingdom Parables (*Matthew 13*)
- Session 2: Three Parables (*Luke 15*)
- Session 3: Jesus' Hard Teachings (*John 6*)
- Session 4: Jesus Raised Lazarus (*John 11*)

### Unit 26: To the Cross

- Session 1: Jesus' Triumphal Entry (*Matthew 21; Mark 11; Luke 19; John 12*)
- Session 2: Jesus Was Questioned (*Matthew 22; Mark 12; Luke 20*)
- Session 3: The Last Supper (*Matthew 26; Mark 14; Luke 22; John 13*)
- Session 4: Jesus Was Arrested (*Matthew 26–27*)
- Session 5: Jesus' Crucifixion (*Matthew 26–27; John 18–19*)

### Unit 27: Out of the Grave

- Session 1: Jesus' Resurrection (*Matthew 28; John 20*)
- Session 2: The Emmaus Disciples (*Luke 24*)
- Session 3: Jesus Appeared to the Disciples (*Luke 24; John 20*)
- Session 4: Jesus Returned to Heaven (*Matthew 28; Acts 1*)

## Volume 10: The Mission Begins

### Unit 28: The Holy Spirit Empowers

- Session 1: The Holy Spirit Came (*Acts 2*)
- Session 2: Peter Healed a Man (*Acts 3–4*)
- Christmas: Jesus Was Born (*John 1*)
- Session 3: Faithful in Hard Times (*1 Peter 1–2*)
- Session 4: Living Like Jesus (*2 Peter 1*)

### Unit 29: The Early Church

- Session 1: Ananias and Sapphira (*Acts 4–5*)
- Session 2: Stephen's Sermon (*Acts 6–7*)
- Session 3: The Good News (*Romans 5–6*)
- Session 4: Doers of the Word (*James 1–2*)

### Unit 30: The Church Grew

- Session 1: Philip and the Ethiopian (*Acts 8*)
- Session 2: Paul Met Jesus (*Acts 8–9*)
- Session 3: New Life in Jesus (*Colossians 2–3*)
- Session 4: Guarding the Truth (*2 Corinthians 11*)

## Volume 11: The Church United

### Unit 31: From Jews to Gentiles

- Session 1: Peter and Cornelius (*Acts 10*)
- Session 2: Barnabas in Antioch (*Acts 11*)
- Session 3: Jesus Is Better (*Hebrews 1–8*)
- Session 4: The Hall of Faith (*Hebrews 11*)
- Easter: Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection (*Matthew 26–28; John 20*)

### Unit 32: Making Disciples

- Session 1: Peter Escaped from Prison (*Acts 12*)
- Session 2: Paul's First Journey (*Acts 13–14*)
- Session 3: The Church Divided (*1 Corinthians 1–6*)
- Session 4: Letters to Church Leaders (*1–2 Timothy; Titus*)

### Unit 33: A Firm Foundation

- Session 1: The Jerusalem Council (*Acts 15*)
- Session 2: Paul's Second Journey (*Acts 15–18*)
- Session 3: No Other the Gospel (*Galatians 1–3*)
- Session 4: Paul Gave Hope (*1–2 Thessalonians*)

## Volume 12: All Things New

### Unit 34: Fight the Good Fight

- Session 1: Paul's Third Journey (*Acts 18–21*)
- Session 2: Paul Was Arrested (*Acts 21–23*)
- Session 3: Together in Jesus (*Ephesians 2–3*)
- Session 4: Running the Race (*Philippians 3*)

### Unit 35: Finishing Strong

- Session 1: Paul Before Rulers (*Acts 24–26*)
- Session 2: Paul's Shipwreck (*Acts 27–28*)
- Session 3: Brothers in Christ (*Philemon*)
- Session 4: Children of God (*1 John 2–3*)
- Session 5: Defending the Faith (*Jude*)

### Unit 36: Come, Lord Jesus

- Session 1: John's Vision of Jesus (*Revelation 1*)
- Session 2: Letters to the Seven Churches (*Revelation 2–3*)
- Session 3: Before the Throne (*Revelation 4–5*)
- Session 4: Jesus Will Return (*Revelation 19–22*)

## Coming Next Volume!



### Jesus the Messiah

God's plan to save people from sin came into sharper focus as Jesus was born at last. From the beginning, Jesus proved that He is the Son of God and that all that was written about Him by the prophets was true. Jesus grew up and began to prepare for His ministry. When Jesus was baptized, God confirmed His sonship. Jesus was subsequently tempted by Satan, but He did not sin. As Jesus traveled throughout Judea, His personal encounters with ordinary people changed their lives in extraordinary ways. Jesus revealed that He was God the Son in human form, living among God's people and bringing salvation in Him alone.



#### From Adam to Jesus

*Matthew 1; Luke 3; John 1*



#### Jesus' Temptation

*Matthew 4; Mark 1; Luke 4*



#### Jesus' Early Miracles

*Mark 1*



# The Gospel Project® for Preschool

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