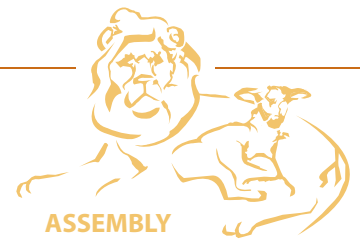


## THE EXILES RETURN

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: EZRA 3:1-13



*The following are some ideas for creative ways that you can present this material.*

## LESSON IDEAS

### CONSTRUCTION BEGINS

**Supplies:**

- 30 real bricks
- felt board
- masking tape

Prior to class set the bricks up in a 10'x 5' rectangle. Mark off the rectangle's corners with tape and then scatter the bricks around the class.

Read Ezra 3:1-13 to the children and use a felt board to show the people gathering to rebuild the temple. Tell the children that they are the builders and the classroom is the temple ruins. Tell them you want each person to find a brick to lay in the foundation.

One by one have the children individually or in pairs carry the bricks to the tape mark. (As they comment about the heaviness of the bricks you can mention that the foundation is the bottom of the temple wall and it needs to be heavy and strong to support the wall.)

When the foundation is laid have all the children shout as they did in Zerubbabel's day. Explain to the class that the older priests were sad because of how much more wonderful the first temple was. Pick some of the class to pretend to cry while the others shout.

Ask the children why the temple was important and then explain that it was where God lived. The temple represented God's presence with them. The temple also was the center of Jerusalem and marked the return to their former city but laying the foundation was only a start.

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### CELEBRATE WITH CYMBALS

**Supplies:**

- Strips of purple cloth to represent the vestments of the priests
- kazoos for trumpets
- a few sets of cymbals (pan lids can work in a pinch),
- a small CD player and a familiar celebratory worship chorus

Use this activity in conjunction with the previous one or separately.

Read the story of the rebuilding of the altar and then the temple from Ezra 3. When you get to verse 10 tell the children that when you give the signal they are going to shout. The priests (boys with purple sashes) are going to come forward with trumpets (kazoos) and cymbals then we will worship and praise the Lord because of the completion of the temple

foundation. Explain to the class that the older priests were sad because of how much more wonderful the first temple was. Pick some of the class to pretend cry while others shout.

Read Ezra 3:10-11. Play the worship chorus and celebrate.

### FULL OF GOLD

**Supplies:**

- Felt board with Solomon's temple
- grey felt rectangles to represent the stones in the foundation of the new temple

Read today's scripture and place the grey stones on the felt board as you do.

- Why were some people celebrating and others crying? (The temple reconstruction had begun but Zerubbabel's temple was nothing like Solomon's.)

Read 2 Chronicles 3:1-7 and have the children raise their hands every time they hear something in the old temple which was not in this temple. Soon they will realize why the older priests were crying.

Explain to the class that Solomon's temple was destroyed because the people had turned away from the Lord to worship other gods. Now all the people had to use as a foundation was stones -- no gold, no gems, and no cypress wood. (They would eventually get some of these but the new temple would never match the old.)



## THE EXILES RETURN

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: EZRA 3:1-13

### Where Is Jesus?

*Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.*

After the foundation of the new temple had been started the older men who had seen Solomon's temple began to weep. (Ezra 3:12-13). In Haggai 2:2-9, God speaks to Israel regarding their sadness over the new temple and how it doesn't measure up to that of Solomon. Haggai encourages Zerubbabel telling him that God's Spirit remains with His people. One day God will shake the heavens and the earth and then the glory of the house of God will be greater than even Solomon's temple.

Would the Temple of God be destroyed and rebuilt again? This shaking referred to another temple. Zerubbabel would die before the temple Haggai prophesied about would come. Jesus said to a group of Jews, "Destroy this temple and I will rebuild it in three days" (John 2:18-25).

Jesus is the new temple. When we become Christians we become a part of Christ's body – the church, and so we become a part of the new temple, see 1 Corinthians 3:16-17. God's

