



UNIT 17 | SESSION 2 | JANUARY 11-12, 2020

## 2s-3s Lesson

# The Captives Came Home

**Bible Passage:** Ezra 1-3

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

**Key Passage:** “I know the plans I have for you ... plans ... to give you a future and a hope”  
Jeremiah 29:11.

**Christ Connection:** One day Jesus will come back. He will fix up a greater home for all God’s people.

**KID CONNECT:  
30 MINUTES**

**LARGE GROUP:  
15 MINUTES**

**SMALL GROUP:  
15 MINUTES**

## LEADER BIBLE STUDY

God spoke 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.

## KID CONNECT

### WELCOME TIME

(VIDEO: ARRIVAL MUSIC)

Play intro music in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow the KidCity check-in procedures. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

### FOLLOW THE ROAD HOME

(1 roll of masking or painters' tape per class)

Guide children to follow the path of tape on the floor, making sure they end where they begin. 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. They had to walk for a long time, and they had to carry all their things with them. 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.

## LARGE GROUP

### COUNTDOWN

(VIDEO: COUNTDOWN)

Show the countdown video as the children clean up and transition to Large Group.

### WORSHIP

(VIDEO: JESUS LOVES ME, VIDEO: JEREMIAH 29:11)

Sing "Jesus Loves Me" and "Jeremiah 29:11."

### INTRODUCE THE BIBLE STORY

(CG: GIANT TIMELINE)

(Bible, Bookmark)

Place a bookmark at Ezra 1 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. 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 people through His Son, Jesus.

## WATCH THE BIBLE STORY

(VIDEO: THE CAPTIVES CAME HOME, CG: BIBLE STORY PICTURE, CG: STORY POINT)

SAY • God's people lived far away from their homes for a long time. God brought the people back home. Each family set up its house. They were happy to be home and thanked God. Let's watch our Bible story to see what happened.

Show the Bible story video.

SAY • God kept His promise to bring His people home. God's people begin fixing the temple when they got back to their land. Some people were so happy to be home that they sang praises to God! Other people were sad because they remembered what the old temple looked like and felt sorry for disobeying God.

## CHRIST CONNECTION

SAY • One day Jesus will come back to earth and make everything right. 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

(CG: KEY PASSAGE)

(Bible, Key Passage Marker)

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. Watch the key passage song for an example.

SAY • "I know the plans I have for you (*point to temples*) ... plans (*display arms in front*) to give you a future and a hope (*rainbow arms from left to right*)" Jeremiah 29:11. 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!

## PRAY AND TRANSITION TO SMALL GROUP

## SMALL GROUP

**Bible Passage:** Ezra 1-3

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

**Key Passage:** “I know the plans I have for you ... plans ... to give you a future and a hope”  
Jeremiah 29:11.

**Christ Connection:** One day Jesus will come back. He will fix up a greater home for all God’s people.

## BUILD WITH BLOCKS

(1 set of blocks per group)

Provide blocks for preschoolers to practice stacking. You may help preschoolers place a few blocks side by side to make a foundation. Talk about the story.

SAY • God’s people built the temple. The temple was where people met with God. Jesus brings us to God. One day Jesus will come back. He will fix up a greater home for all God’s people.

## FINGER PLAY ABOUT HOMES

(no supplies needed)

Here is a nest for a robin. [*Cup palms together.*]

Here is a hive for a bee. [*Clasp hands together in a fist.*]

Here is a den for a bunny. [*Make a hole shape with both hands.*]

Here is a house for me. [*Make a roof shape with fingers touching.*]

SAY • God brought His people back to their land, and they were so happy to be home! The people built the temple. One day, Jesus will give us a home with Him.

## KEY PASSAGE WITH MOTIONS

Say the key passage using motions. Repeat several times and encourage children for trying.

“I know the plans I have for you (point to temples) ... plans (display arms in front) to give you a future and a hope (rainbow arms from left to right)” Jeremiah 29:11.

## GOSPEL GEMS

(1 Bible Story Picture per group, 1 Key Passage Card per group)

Provide small Bibles for preschoolers to handle. Say the Bible is God’s words. Read the key passage card and guide preschoolers to say it. Open your Bible to Ezra 1. Show the Bible story picture as you tell the Bible story. Say the story point and gospel gems. Pray for the preschoolers.

- God brought His people back to their land.
- Zerubbabel led the people to build the temple.

- Jesus brings us to God.

## **CONNECT WITH PARENTS/INFLUENCERS**

**(Big Picture Card & Story Point coloring page (optional), 1 per child)**

Two & Three-year olds may color the optional Story Point coloring page as parents arrive. Encourage parents/influencers to review the Preschool Christ Connection with their child this week.