

## The Temple Was Completed

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Ezra 4:1-7; 5:1-5; 6:1-22

**MAIN POINT:** God helped His people rebuild the temple.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Daniel 2:20

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** How can we obey God? We trust God to help us obey Him.

**SMALL GROUP OPENING** (15–20 MINUTES) **LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY** (10–15 MINUTES) **SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES** (20–25 MINUTES)  
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### Leader BIBLE STUDY

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Some time after the temple's foundation was laid, the work stopped. With the encouragement of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, God's people resumed the work of rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem. Approximately 15 years had passed without progress.

At this time, Darius was king of Persia. The Persian Empire was vast, so Darius appointed governors over the provinces. A man named Tattenai watched over the province that included the land of Judah.

Tattenai noticed the work of God's people, and he was concerned. He sent a letter to King Darius. "Is this

allowed?” he asked. “The people say that King Cyrus said they could rebuild the temple and the city. Please investigate this matter.”

King Darius did investigate, and Cyrus’s decree was located in the Babylonian records. Darius instructed Tattenai to allow the people to rebuild the temple and the city.

Point out to preschoolers that God had turned the heart of the king for His people’s favor. (See Prov. 21:1; Ezra 6:22.) The people completed the temple. They dedicated it joyfully and observed the Passover.

God declared in Haggai 2:9 that the glory of this second temple would be greater than the first. This prophecy was fulfilled by the presence of the Messiah, the Son of God. Jesus said that He is greater than the temple. (Matt. 12:6)

In Christ, we find the substance of which the temple was a shadow. The Lord was not confined to a building, yet deity lives fully in Christ. (See Col. 2:9.) Jesus is our High Priest. He entered the most holy place for us. (Heb. 6:19-20) The priest offered the blood of animals, but Christ offered His own blood once and for all. (Heb. 9:25-26) He gives us access to the throne of grace. (Heb. 10:19-22)

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## The Temple Was Completed

*Ezra 4:1-7; 5:1-5; 6:1-22*

**God's people were rebuilding the temple.** They built the bottom of the temple. But **their enemies did not want them to rebuild the temple, so God's people stopped building.**

But God wanted His people to finish the temple. **God sent two messengers—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 land where God's people lived was ruled by the king of Persia. The king's name was Darius (duh RIGH uhs). Darius had 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.** While he waited for the king's answer, God's people kept building.

The helper's letter to the king said this: “Dear King Darius, I wanted to tell you that the people here are working hard to build the temple to their God. I asked if they had permission to build, and 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. Don’t bother them, and don’t try to stop them. Give them anything they need. Anyone who tries to stop them from building the temple will be punished.”**

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 and thanked God.**

Then God’s people celebrated the Passover. God’s people were so happy. God’s temple was finished!

*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. People don’t need to go to a temple anymore to meet with God. Jesus is with us wherever we go.*



**WANT TO  
DISCOVER  
GOD’S WORD?  
GET  
MORE!**

Invite preschoolers to check out this week’s devotionals to discover that because of Jesus, we no longer need sacrifices to draw near to God.

Jesus has given us everything we need for life and godliness.

(2 Pet. 1:3) Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out [www.lifeway.com/devotionals](http://www.lifeway.com/devotionals).

# Small Group OPENING

**SESSION TITLE:** The Temple Was Completed

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## Welcome time

- “It Is Well” song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert download
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play the unit 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

- “Dot-to-Dot” activity page, 1 per child
- pencils or crayons

Lead preschoolers to connect the dots to build the temple. **SAY** • God’s people had built the temple’s foundation, but they stopped building for many years. In today’s Bible story, God’s people finally finished the temple!

## Run a letter relay

Form teams, lined up single file. Place a bin and a stack of paper on a table for each team. Explain that each paper represents a letter. Give a sheet of paper to the first child in each line. Explain that when you say, “Go,” they must walk to their team’s bin, drop the letter in the bin, pick up a new letter from the stack, and walk the letter to the next person in line. The first team to “deliver” all their letters is the winner. Play again as time allows.



- paper
- bins, 1 per team

Option: Use junk mail instead of plain paper for this activity.

**SAY** • In today's Bible story, the king's helper saw the Israelites rebuilding the temple. He sent a letter to the king to ask if what God's people were doing was allowed. The king sent a letter back to his helper. Listen to today's Bible story to find out what the king's letter said.

## Complete unfinished tasks

Provide several half-completed tasks for children to finish.

- Set out some toys and put some in a bin. Invite children to finish putting the toys in the bin.
- Draw a circle on a piece of paper. Ask a preschooler to finish drawing the face.
- Set out lacing cards. Lace the cards halfway and invite preschoolers to finish lacing the cards.
- Build a small tower with blocks. Guide preschoolers to finish the tower.
- Write or draw on a dry erase board and erase half of it. Encourage a child to finish erasing the board.

**SAY** • Last time, we heard how **God brought the Israelites back home** to rebuild the temple. God's people finished the foundation, but then they stopped rebuilding. In today's Bible story, God helped His people finish the temple.

- toys
- toy bin
- paper
- crayons or markers
- lacing cards
- yarn or string
- blocks
- dry erase board
- dry erase markers
- eraser

## Transition to Bible study

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, flip off the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Invite preschoolers to move to the Bible study area, but stop them before they get there. Then invite them to come the rest of the way to the Bible study area.

- countdown video (optional)

# Large Group LEADER

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## Introduce the Bible story

• blocks

Build a foundation using one level of blocks. Display the foundation for preschoolers to see.

**SAY** • God sent His people home to rebuild the temple, but they only finished the foundation, or bottom. Why did they stop? Let's find out in today's Bible story.

## Watch or tell the Bible story

• bookmark  
• Bible  
• "The Temple Was Completed" video  
• Bible Story Picture Poster

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

**SAY** • The Bible is the most special book of all the books in the entire world. The Bible is God's words, and God's words are true. Our Bible story today is in Ezra.

Show the Bible story video "The Temple Was Completed," or tell the Bible story in your own words using the script provided. Use the bolded version for younger preschoolers.

## Talk about the Bible story

• Main Point Poster  
• Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

**SAY** • God's people stopped rebuilding the temple because they were afraid of their enemies. God wanted them to finish, so **God helped His people rebuild the temple.** King Darius said anyone who tried to stop

God's people would be punished. God's people kept building, and soon the temple was finished!

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline or big story circle as you ask the following review questions:

1. What did Haggai and Zechariah tell God's people? (*"Keep building. God is with you."*)
2. How did the king's helper find out Zerubbabel was telling the truth? (*He sent a letter to King Darius.*)
3. How did King Darius discover God's people were telling the truth? (*His servants found the scroll that said King Cyrus had given them permission.*)
4. What did God's people do when the temple was finished? (*They celebrated and thanked God.*)

## Learn the big picture question

**SAY** • *How can we obey God? We trust God to help us obey Him.* God wanted His people to finish the temple, so God used King Darius to protect the Israelites as they worked and to give them all the supplies they needed. Like He helped the Israelites, God will always help us to do what He tells us to do.

• Big Picture Question Poster

## Practice the key passage

Open your Bible to Daniel 2:20. Read the key passage aloud several times. Sing together the key passage song, "Forever and Ever."

• Key Passage Poster  
• "Forever and Ever" song

**SAY** • God is wise and powerful. He works out His good plan. God planned for Jesus to be with His people on earth. We don't need to go to a temple anymore to meet with God. Jesus is with us wherever we go.

## Transition to small groups



# Small Group ACTIVITIES

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- paper
- marker

## Find the scroll

Write the big picture question on a sheet of paper. Roll up the paper like a scroll and hide it somewhere in the room.

Invite preschoolers to search for the hidden scroll. Open the scroll and say the big picture question: ***How can we obey God?*** Lead preschoolers to say the answer: ***We trust God to help us obey Him.*** Hide the scroll and play again.

**SAY** • ***How can we obey God? We trust God to help us obey Him.*** God told His people to rebuild the temple, and then **God helped His people rebuild the temple.** Years before, God had given King Cyrus the idea to make a new law saying the Israelites could go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. Then God showed the new king the scroll so that God's people could have help to finish! When God tells His people to do something, He helps them do it!

- foam blocks
- marker
- golf tees
- toy hammers

Tip: Dip the tees in petroleum jelly for easy hammering.

## Hammer golf tees

Write *temple* and *Jesus* on several foam blocks with a marker. Make circles where the lines connect on each letter. Invite preschoolers to use toy hammers to hammer golf tees into the circles you marked.

**SAY • God helped His people rebuild the temple.** 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 is better than a temple. We don’t need to go to a temple anymore to meet with God. Jesus is with us wherever we go.

## Build the key passage

Gather the same number of interlocking blocks as words in the key passage. Place a strip of tape on each block and write one word of the key passage on each piece of tape. Display the key passage poster.

- Key Passage Poster
- interlocking blocks
- tape
- marker

Assist preschoolers in putting the words of the key passage in order by connecting the blocks. Say each word as a block is added. When the key passage is complete, lead preschoolers in saying the entire key passage together as you point to each word.

**SAY • God is to be praised forever and ever. God helped His people rebuild 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. People don’t need to go to a temple anymore to meet with God. Jesus is with us wherever we go.

## Sponge paint a finished temple

Before the session, cut sponges into rectangles. Cover a table with a plastic tablecloth. Provide a “Temple Foundation” printable for each preschooler. Squirt different colors of paint onto foam plates. Attach a clothespin to a sponge piece and show preschoolers how to use the clothespin as a handle to dip the sponge in paint and then gently press it on their paper. Encourage preschoolers to “finish building”

- “Temple Foundation” printable
- plastic tablecloth
- sponges
- scissors
- clothespins
- washable paint
- foam plates
- smocks

the temple by adding blocks of paint to the foundation. Place artwork in a safe place to dry.

**SAY** • God's people built the bottom of the temple but stopped building because they were afraid of their enemies. God sent Haggai and Zechariah to tell them to keep building because He was with them. **God helped His people rebuild the temple. How can we obey God? We trust God to help us obey Him.** Jesus is with us, too, and He helps us obey God.

## Look at books about construction

• books featuring  
construction tools and  
vehicles

Gather books featuring construction tools and construction vehicles for preschoolers to browse.

**SAY** • The Israelites probably did not have tools that looked like these, but **God helped His people rebuild the temple.** God was with them, and He helped His people finish the job He gave them. The temple was a place where God's people could worship Him. Now, we do not have to go to a temple to worship God. God sent His very own Son, Jesus, to be with His people on earth. Jesus is with us wherever we go.

## Snack

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Guide preschoolers to clean their areas. Take a restroom break and wash hands. Gather preschoolers for snack time. Thank God for the snack.

Serve sheets of fruit leather for snack. Lead preschoolers to roll their fruit sheets like a scroll. Talk about how God planned for King Darius to find the old scroll where King Cyrus had said to let the Israelites go home and rebuild the temple. **God helped His people rebuild the temple.** God used King Darius not only to help God's people finish their work but to protect the Israelites from their enemies and to provide the supplies they needed to finish the temple.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- snack food
- paper cups and napkins

## Transition

When a child finishes his snack, guide him to throw away any trash. He may select a book or puzzle to examine, play quietly with play dough or a favorite toy, or color the Bible story coloring page.

Offer the journal page and invite preschoolers to draw a picture of themselves in their favorite place and Jesus there with them. Remind preschoolers that Jesus is with us wherever we go. Pray for the children.

**SAY** • God, thank You for giving us something way better than a temple built by people. You have given us Your very own Son to be with us! Thank You that Jesus came to earth to rescue us from sin. Help us to turn from sin and trust in Him. Amen.

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

- books
- puzzles
- play dough
- Journal Page printable, 1 per child
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- *Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers*