

LIFE POINT

People at church sing and thank God.

THE PEOPLE SANG**LEADER BIBLE STUDY****CONTEXT AND COMMENTARY FOR PERSONAL STUDY AND PREPARATION**

(For age-appropriate language, use the Bible story on the following pages.)

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People at church sing and thank God.

LEVEL OF BIBLICAL LEARNING

People at church worship by singing, talking to God, and listening to Bible stories.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

Ezra 2:68–3:1-13

BIBLE VERSE

Come, let us worship God. Psalm 95:6

In many cities, construction is often seen as a nuisance that causes traffic delays and forces cars to navigate through tight rows of orange cones. Yet the same buildings that cause criticism while being built are often celebrated when they are complete. Some even hold ribbon-cutting ceremonies to mark the occasion, proving it is much easier to celebrate the finished product than the process involved.

When the Jewish prisoners of Babylon, held captive for nearly 70 years, returned home to Jerusalem, they immediately began to resurrect the city that had been destroyed. Inspired by God, King Cyrus decreed that the people return to rebuild the temple of "the God of Israel" (Ezra 1:1-3). Many of them were returning to a place they only knew through stories, while a few returned to the home they loved and remembered.

Rebuilding the temple was a massive undertaking, but the Israelites continued to worship throughout the entire process. They worshiped God through sacrifice when they participated in the festivals and reentered into the rhythms of their faith. They worshiped God through generosity by giving their valuable possessions to the rebuilding efforts. They worshiped God through work as they rebuilt the altar for the Lord. They worshiped God through remembering what He had done and His promises for the future. They worshiped God through music by singing praises to Him with gratitude in their hearts.

When the foundation of the temple was complete, all the people erupted in praise. They sang, played music, and worshiped God with their voices. Those who remembered the original temple wept, but many others rejoiced. Scripture says their combined voices created a sound that could be "heard far away." The temple was not a finished product, but the people believed the promises of God would be fulfilled.

Take some time to read Ecclesiastes 3 and consider the various seasons of your life. What was your response to God through each season? The Bible is clear: no matter what we face, we should praise God. In our exile, in our grief, and in our joy, He is to be glorified and worshiped (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Philippians 4:4; Psalm 34:1; Job 1:21).

As you pray this week, thank God for walking with you through every season of your life. Ask Him to show you His presence in the finished products, the processes, and everything in between. Ask for a heart of worship that can be "heard far away" so that your worship will reflect God's glory to others.



TELL THE STORY

GROUP TIME

Sing together. Distribute the egg shakers. Play "People at Church." Lead the kids to shake the egg shakers as they sing along with the song. Suggest they shake the shakers over their heads or tap them gently on their knees. Comment that people at church worship by singing, talking to God, and listening to Bible stories.

Learn the Bible verse. Invite a child to open the Bible to the verse strip. Read Psalm 95:6 aloud. Mention that we worship God at church. Encourage the preschoolers to say the verse with you. Sing "Worship Him Together."

Tell the Bible story. Invite the boys and girls to take turns tossing the cube. Lead the children to state how the pictures on the cube relate to your church. Encourage them to mention things they like to do at church. Challenge kids to listen for what the people in the Bible did to worship God. Read the definition from the *temple* word card. Open the Bible to Ezra 2. Display the teaching picture as you tell the Bible story.

The bold lettering is for Twos, and the whole lesson is for Threes-Kinder.

THE PEOPLE SANG

-Based on Ezra 2:68-3:13

The temple (church) had been torn down. The **people** in Jerusalem **wanted to rebuild the temple.** All the people decided how they could help.

Many families helped by giving money to the workers. Other people gave food, drink, and oil to the workers who brought big logs from cedar trees by boat to Jerusalem to be used in building the temple.

The workers worked on the temple. After the first part of the temple was finished the people celebrated. **The church helpers put on their special clothes and brought their trumpets and cymbals. As the church helpers played music, the people sang to God. They thanked Him. The people sang, "God is good. God loves us."**

Everyone was so happy that the church was being rebuilt! Some people shouted joyfully. Other people cried as they celebrated. **Everyone around Jerusalem heard the sound, and they knew that the people were thanking God on this special day.**

Review the Bible story. Pass the teaching picture around the circle. Ask the preschoolers to mention something they remember about the Bible story as they hold the picture. Ask review questions such as, "What were the people rebuilding? How did the people help rebuild the temple? How did the people celebrate that the temple was being rebuilt?"

Learn the Life Point and pray. Invite the kids to repeat the Life Point: "People at church sing and thank God." Invite each child to voice a short prayer if they would like, saying: "God, thank You for _____."

Wrap up. Remind the kids that people at church sing and thank God!



BIBLE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

ART



Provide a variety of art materials. Allow children to decorate two paper plates to create their own cymbals. Recall that people used instruments, sang, and shouted happy words as they celebrated and praised God because the temple was being rebuilt. Say, “(Child’s name) can shout and sing praises to God, too! Let’s use our cymbals to praise God!” Pick a time in your schedule to march around the room, singing and praising God together. Explain that we can sing and praise God at church and at home.

BLOCKS

Using toy cars and trucks allow children to transport blocks (“logs”) from point A to point B. Mark two points in the classroom with blue tape to designate starting and ending points. Say that the people in Jerusalem were happy and celebrated that they were rebuilding the temple (church). Comment that people at church worship by singing, talking to God, and listening to Bible stories.

HOMELIVING

Set up a cash register, play money, baskets, and other items like scarves and jewelry. Play (commercial-free) worship music. Say, “The people of Jerusalem gave their money to help rebuild the temple. The church is not a building; the church is the people! The building cannot worship God; the people worship God!” Encourage children to act out the Bible story and place offerings in the baskets.

NATURE

In a large tub allow kids to build a structure starting with rocks as the base foundation, then add other items such as magnetiles to build the rest of the structure. Say, “The people worked together to rebuild the temple and they worshiped as they built! We can worship God as we work!”

PUZZLES & MANIPULATIVES

Place lacing cards, stacking cups, and Duplos on a table along with the Read To Me Bible. Encourage preschoolers to try each activity. Say, “The people used the different skills God had given them to help rebuild the temple. (Child’s name), you can worship God by singing, reading the Bible, praying, and talking about God with friends at church.”