

LIFE POINT

People at church sing thanks to 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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LEVEL OF BIBLICAL LEARNING

People at church sing, talk to God, and listen to Bible stories.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

Ezra 2:68-3:13

BIBLE VERSE

Come, let us worship God. Psalm 95:6

In many cities, construction of new buildings 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

Finger Play: With index fingers point to self and say, “ One, two this is true, God loves me.” Point to each child and say, “God loves (child’s name).

Open Bible and say, “This is our Bible and every word is true.”
With your Bible open share the story:

THE PEOPLE SANG-*Ezra 2:68-3:13*

The temple (church) had been torn down.

The people gave money and other valuable gifts to rebuild the temple building.

The workers worked on rebuilding the temple.

The people were very happy. They celebrated.

The people sang songs, played music, and shouted to show love to God.

Sing the scripture verse to “Here we go round the mulberry bush,” including the reference.

Sing the verse throughout the morning to the children.

With one or two babies at a time sing James 5:15 to the tune of Happy Birthday including verse reference with the Bible open.

Sing the scripture verse throughout the morning to the children as you play in each of the following activities.



BIBLE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

ART

Provide construction paper, pre-cut paper squares, Q-tips, glue to build a wall shape. Play music while children create their art projects. As needed, help children glue the squares onto their pieces of construction paper. While they are gluing, say “God helped the people rebuild the church.”

Infant Adaptation: Stack blocks, knock down and rebuild. Say, “God helped the people rebuild the church.”

BLOCKS

Provide Magna-tiles (babies could use soft blocks).

Allow children to play with Magna-tiles and help them build a church. Say “God helped the people work hard to rebuild the church.”

HOMELIVING

In the kitchen area, display play food on the small table. Also have dolls available. Set up a simple “meal time” where children feed dolls or sit together, and the teacher models saying “Thank You, God” before children pretend eating. Children can learn that we thank God for what we have in everyday moments.

Infant Adaptation: Make a fist with your right hand, thumb up. Make your left hand flat and motion your right hand onto your flat palm. Pray and say, “Thank you God for our snack! God gives us all we need! Amen!”

MUSIC

Shakers, little drums, drumsticks.

Let children explore and play instruments freely, encouraging them to shake, tap, and make sounds while the teacher models simple rhythms and repeats “Thank You, God,” guiding them to play softly and joyfully. Say “People sang because they were very happy when the temple (church) was finished!”

BOOKS

Provide board books about church, singing, or gratitude.

The teacher can read to the children, using an expressive voice, pausing to repeat “Thank You, God” and encouraging children to clap or point. Say “In church we sing and thank God together.”