



Materials I Need:

Legend:



= Option 1, Appropriate for 1st – 2nd Grade



= Option 2, Appropriate for 3rd – 6th Grade

Memory Work:

For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the Lord and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel. Ezra 7:10

Person	Ezra
People	Jews Returning to Jerusalem
Prophecy	Return & Restoration
Principle	God Keeps His Promises

Aim Questions:

1. Why hadn't God brought the Israelites out of captivity yet? (*Waiting for them to repent, turn from their sin.*)
2. For what important event did God use Cyrus? (*To issue decree for Israelites to rebuild temple, to aid with treasury funds, even to put it all in writing.*)
3. What was the first thing the people built when they returned to Jerusalem? (*An altar.*)
4. Why did the people build an altar before they built the temple? (*They wanted to put God first; they were afraid of people around them; they wanted God's protection and help.*)
5. What were some of the ways people from the surrounding land tried to stop the rebuilding of the temple? (*Harassed workers, tried to frighten, required proof of their right to build.*)
6. Can God only use Christians to do His will? (*No. He uses whomever He pleases. He used King Darius and King Cyrus in our story today.*)
7. What's important for us to learn from today's story? (*God is in control; nothing can stop God's will; God is still just as powerful today and can help us with any problem.*)




Hook:




Sweet Rewards (*Incentive*). Explain that you plan to reward students for class participation. When students participate in any task or discussion, reward them generously with sugar cubes. Discourage students from eating them because they will be needed later for a "building project." Each student or group will need 72 cubes to complete the project. (*See Building project in LOOK time.*)



Fair Trade? (*Discussion*) Give a small treat such as a sticker or candy to the class members. Now tell them they have a choice - to keep what they have or to trade for what you have. (*Don't tell them what you have.*) If they want to trade, they must decide now (*not once they see what it is*). Have the ones who want to trade stand. You may now give them what you have which is simply twice the amount which they started with. **DEBRIEF:** Why did or didn't you trade? Show students that Israelites, too, didn't want to give up the "good life" for an unknown future. Listen to today's Adventure to learn how the Israelites had to trust God for the unknown.


 **God is Sovereign (Discussion).** Review the “principle” for the book of Daniel (*The Most High is Sovereign Over the Kingdoms of Men*). Our story today begins with a very good illustration of this truth. King Cyrus makes a wonderful decree and puts it in writing. (*Remember the law of the Medes and the Persians?*) Even the fact that God caused him to put the decree in writing will prove to be important years later.


 **A Cure for Homesickness (Discussion).** Have you ever been away from home and become homesick? Describe how you felt. What was it that you missed most? How did you feel when you were home again? This is how the Judean captives must have felt when they were allowed to go back to Jerusalem and live in their homeland once again.





Book:

Presentation Ideas -

 **Search the Records (Activity).** In our story, King Darius had the records searched to find out what Cyrus truly had decreed. Using Faith Bible’s Doctrinal Statement, have students search the church distinctives to see what our church decrees. What is the job of an elder? What is the procedure for church discipline? What does the church believe about creation according to the early chapters of Genesis? What does Faith Bible Church believe about the Bible?

 **Building Tools (Discussion).** Compare building tools of Ezra’s time with the power tools of today. Discuss how tools are used and how long it would take.

 **Rebuilding the Temple (Overhead).** “But many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid, while many others shouted for joy,” Ezra 3:12, **3EZR41.GF1.**

 **Distress, Deliverance, & Promise (Poem).** Have the students listen carefully to how God always keeps His promises, **3EZR41.GF2.**

Bible Adventure -

For the last several months we have been concentrating on God’s special messengers, the prophets. We have heard their voices ring out, warning God’s people of the devastating consequences to come from their refusal to turn from their sin. Remember with me the very specific prophecies of Jeremiah in which he told the people they would be in captivity for 70 years. Jeremiah kept hammering the message home in spite of the peoples’ unbelief. He also passed on a wonderful promise from God. You can find it in Jeremiah 29:10-14 (*have a student or teacher read this passage*).

"This is what the Lord says, ‘When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the Lord, and I will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you, declares the Lord, and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.’"

When Jeremiah wrote these words, God’s people were on the brink of terrible suffering and trial, events

which would change their lives forever. God held out to them this light at the end of a very dark tunnel, "Hang on. Learn from these years of captivity. Change your minds and your hearts about your sin, and at the end of it all I'm going to do something wonderful for you. I'm going to bring you back to the Jerusalem you love so well. My relationship with you will be restored. I have great plans for you." Looking at the situation from a human point of view, this may not have looked to God's people to be likely to happen. Babylon had fallen into the hands of the Persians. Why should they let their captives go? Don't forget we're dealing with the Lord of the Universe here. Nothing, absolutely nothing, is impossible for Him.

Ezra was a priest and a scribe living at the time of the amazing events you're going to hear about today. He begins his book the same way 2 Chronicles ends, telling us that God stirred up or moved in the heart of Cyrus, the great Medo-Persian king. One hundred years before the Jews were even taken captive, Isaiah foretold how God would rise up and use Cyrus to help His people. He even called Cyrus by name. Now, as Ezra wrote, God's plans were becoming a reality. Cyrus issued a decree that God's people were to be allowed to return to Jerusalem and that God had told him to rebuild the temple there. Surprisingly, some of the people had become settled in Babylon and did not want to leave their house and riches behind. But God had moved in the hearts of others, making them eager to go and start the work. Even more surprising, Cyrus gave them the items that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple! That these items were still around and had not been melted down or destroyed was truly amazing. That Cyrus would give them up goes beyond what we can understand. The hand of God was unmistakably at work there. Around forty-two thousand people were in this first group of exiles returning to Jerusalem, led by Zerubbabel.

After they were settled, the first thing God's people did was to build God's altar and begin to offer sacrifices to Him. They did this before they even began to lay the foundation for the new temple. Why do you suppose this was so important to them? Ezra wrote that God's people were afraid of the people in the lands about them. They knew they needed God's protection. They had also learned something from their years of captivity--it is always best to do things God's way! Their desire to build the altar first showed that they wanted to put their relationship with God before anything else.

Now the people were ready to start work on the temple. The builders, supervised by the Levites, laid the foundation for the new temple. The first step in having God's temple back was finished! The people all gathered at the site to praise God for what had been accomplished. It was a joyful, noisy scene as the people were shouting their praise out to God and sharing with each other how good and loving God is. But there were also people there who were not joyful. The older people, who could remember the beauty and richness of the temple of Solomon, thought this new temple was a poor substitute. They wept as they remembered what they had lost. The praising and shouting went right on, though. God's people did not need a building in which to worship. They knew that the important thing was not their surroundings but their heart attitudes.

Soon after this some people from the surrounding land, who were really enemies of God's people, came and wanted to be a part of the building project. These people were not interested in true worship of the true God but possibly wanted to use their influence to turn God's people away from their devotion to Him. But the Jewish leaders would not let these people help, knowing what was in their hearts and that they were not God's people. Then the people in the surrounding lands harassed the workers and tried to frighten them into quitting the project. They kept doing this all through the reigns of kings Cyrus and Darius. The people became so discouraged that all work on the temple gradually stopped. They began working on their own houses and forgot about the building of God's house. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah went among the people, delivering a simple message from God, "Rise up and rebuild the temple." God's people obeyed. Fourteen years after the temple foundation was laid, work on the temple began again. It wasn't long, though, until God's enemies began their evil work again. A Persian governor named Tattenai grew suspicious of the work going on and questioned the Jews, "Who authorized you to rebuild this temple and restore this structure?" Of course the people answered that it was King Cyrus who had done so. It didn't take long for Tattenai to send a letter to King Darius asking him to check the records and see if this was so. The king's answer came back that Cyrus did indeed authorize the rebuilding of the temple and had, in fact, gone so far as to decree that the rebuilding should

be paid for out of his own treasury. Darius warned his subjects to stay away from the temple and to not interfere with the work in any way. He told Tattenai to be sure God's people had everything they needed to continue to offer up sacrifices to their God. He promised a horrible punishment to anyone who would dare to interfere with the work in any way.

If you get nothing else from Ezra's recordings, it should be obvious that God is pleased to work out His will on earth using men as his tools. Anyone from a mighty king to a common man might be the tools He chooses. He has used men who did not know Him. King Darius and King Cyrus were perfect examples of this. Even though they ruled over a vast kingdom and commanded thousands of people, it was still easy for God to change their hearts so that His will could be accomplished. God is not at all intimidated by man's playing at greatness! He is not intimidated by His enemies' attempts to stop His will, either. Were his enemies able to stop the rebuilding of the temple? No way! Nothing can stand in the way of God's will--nothing! When we give in to fear or let our enemies frighten us enough to keep us from what we know is God's will for us, we are giving in to the sin of unbelief. We're saying, "God isn't big enough to handle this situation." But God proves over and over again in the pages of the Bible, like He did in Ezra's time, that He is more than able (*anyone feel a song coming on?*) to handle it. He wants to prove to His children that He keeps His promises.

So how do we get over that sin of unbelief? We can start by going to the Bible, where all His promises to us are recorded. We can memorize them so we can think about them all day long. We can strengthen our relationship to God by talking with Him all the time, not just at mealtime or bedtime. We can come confidently before His throne and ask for His help in our everyday lives. God really wants us to ask. We can worship with God's people and draw on the encouragement we get as we see God working in others' lives too.

Draw confidence that the God who was so mighty in the lives of His people in Ezra's day is the same God who works in the lives of His people today. God's plans will be accomplished. No matter who or what may seem to be in His path, He is able.



Look:



Who Can God Use? (Worksheet) God delights in using those who know Him to accomplish His will on earth. But He can use anyone. There are several characters in today's story. Circle the ones who were used to do God's will. Put an X over the ones who probably did not know Him, **3EZR41.GF3**.



Building Project (Craft). Build a "temple" with sugar cubes and glue. Work individually or in groups. Although this project is easy enough to be done by each student, it would be less costly to work in groups. Each "temple" requires 72 sugar cubes. Start by cutting out a copy of the Temple Foundation Plan. Glue it onto heavy paper, then build. This new temple was patterned after the one that was destroyed by Babylon but was not nearly as grand. Many older people who remembered that temple were disappointed, **3EZR41.GF4**.



Where's the Decree? (Worksheet) Find Cyrus' lost decree, **3EZR41.GF5**.



Weird Worship (Song). Read Ezra 3:11-13. Divide the class into two groups. Have each group choose a praise song to sing together. Have both groups sing these two songs at the same time - loudly. This is a little bit like the worship when the foundation was laid. This created confusion in Ezra 3:11 and 12. That is not what God wants. 1 Corinthians 14 talks about tongues, but the principle is that God wants us to worship in an orderly fashion.



Story Scramble (Worksheet/Booklet). Items needed for each student:
1/2 sheet of construction paper folded in half for book cover
1/2 sheets of plain white paper folded in half for inside sheets

Have the Bible students assemble their Ezra books and staple at edge. These can either be side fold or top fold booklets. They are now ready to cut apart the scrambled story from the worksheet and assemble in the right order. The title goes on the cover. Encourage them to illustrate each story line and sign their names on the back, **3EZR41.GF9**.

Rebuilding the Temple Begins (Worksheet).



Read the story and find the seven tools used to rebuild the temple, **3EZR41.GF10**.

Find the names on the map and fill in the blanks using the codes to see what the Jews did after their long trip home, **3EZR41.GF11**.

Haggai and Zechariah Encourage the Temple Builders (Worksheet).



Circle the 10 things that are different in the second picture, **3EZR41.GF12**.

Write the name of each picture in the boxes. The darker boxes spell the name of one of prophets who encouraged the people of Jerusalem. Use the math code to find out what else he told them, **3EZR41.GF13**.



Took:

Ways to Worship (Worksheet). The returning Israelites worshipped God in many ways. We worship in many of the same ways. Put appropriate checkmarks by each form of worship. Can you think of any other ways to worship? **3EZR41.GF6**


What Can I Do? (Discussion) Ezra tells us how God was served and worshipped in the temple by these groups of people: Priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, and temple servants. What were some of the jobs of service to God that were done by these people? In the body of Christ we all have a function, a job to do. God has given us gifts and abilities to do the job He has planned for us. What are some jobs that kids might do in service to God? What jobs might students do when they become adults?


That's the Truth (Object Lesson). Put cookies or some other snack in a bag or a box. Show the closed container to your students. Take suggestions about what might be in the bag or box. Choose a suggestion that's very believable (*but not edible*), and have students vote on whether they believe this item is in the box. Does the outcome of this vote have any effect on what we will find when we open the box? God has told us certain things about Himself in His Word. He has made many promises. He kept His promise to bring the captives back to Jerusalem. There weren't very many people who believed (*let alone remembered*) this promise, but popular opinion didn't change God's plan one bit. Some people say that if you believe something, then it's true for you. Is that correct? You'll be glad it isn't when you see what's in the bag!

Know the Enemy (Discussion/Role-play). How did Israel's enemies try to defeat them? 4:2 - Let us join you; 4:4- discouragement and fear; 4:5- slander; 4:6- accusation; 4:13,16- slanderous speculation, loss of revenue; 5:3- question your authority. Have students try some of these methods in role-play to try to discourage their teachers in their teaching. This will help them recognize the tactics of the enemy in the future. Then, have them encourage their poor teachers before they finish.

Write it Down! (Worksheet) If you were President of the United States, what laws do you think God would like you to make? Create a "law" on your decree paper. Share it with the class, **3EZR41.GF7**.

Tools of the Trade (Discussion). Bring in different kinds of construction tools (*i.e. hammer, tape measure, level, prybar, saw*). Discuss how each are used in the construction trade today. What are some tools God uses to make His will happen in "building" our lives?

 **Daily Walk (*Devotional*)**. Encourage students that we need to “find” God’s Word in our lives on a daily basis. God’s Word is where we find His promises to us! This will review this week’s lesson, **3EZR41.GF8**.

 **Jumpin’ P’s (*Jump Rope Ditty*)**. Here is an Ezra jump rope ditty to help you remember what he was all about.

The Person is Ezra
The People -- Israelites in Jerusalem
The Prophecy -- Return & Restoration
The Principle -- God Keeps His Promises!
These are the 4 P’s
Got ‘em from Ezra
Now it’s time to jump out!

Rebuilding the Temple



Distress, Deliverance, Promise

*Imagine your terror if you can,
In your strength consider this, Oh man:
It will be your very longest day on earth in
Pain, fear and terror in giving birth.*

*But I am your God, and I'll set you free:
You won't have to experience delivery.
Instead, you'll serve David your king, and Me.
My discipline, justice and peace you'll see.*

*Your exile will not be a forever duration:
I'll restore everything and return to my nation.
Fear not, your children will live in peace,
Their slavery, troubles and fears will cease.*

*Right now you are desolate, hurt beyond healing.
But I am your God, in love I'm revealing
My plan against those desiring you end:
Your health restored, their destruction won't mend.*

*I'll restore your fortune, My palace will stand.
Thanksgiving and rejoicing will be heard in your land.
Your children will be as in days of old,
I'll draw them to Me and their love will be bold.*

*I am you god and my anger will be spent
On those who are wicked and won't repent.
In the days to come you will listen and hear Me.
Your leaders will be men whom I will draw near Me.*

*I am your God, My heart is for you.
That My love will accomplish this is true.*

WHO CAN GOD USE?

God delights in using those who know Him to accomplish His will on earth. But He can use anyone. There are several characters in today's story. Circle the ones who were used to do God's will. Put an X over the ones who probably did not know Him.



CYRUS, KING OF PERSIA



JESHUA, THE HIGH PRIEST



ZERUBBABEL, LEADER OF ISRAEL



HAGGAI, THE PROPHET



ZECHARIAH, THE PROPHET



DARIUS, KING OF PERSIA



TATTENAI, GOVERNOR OF TRANS-EUPHRATES

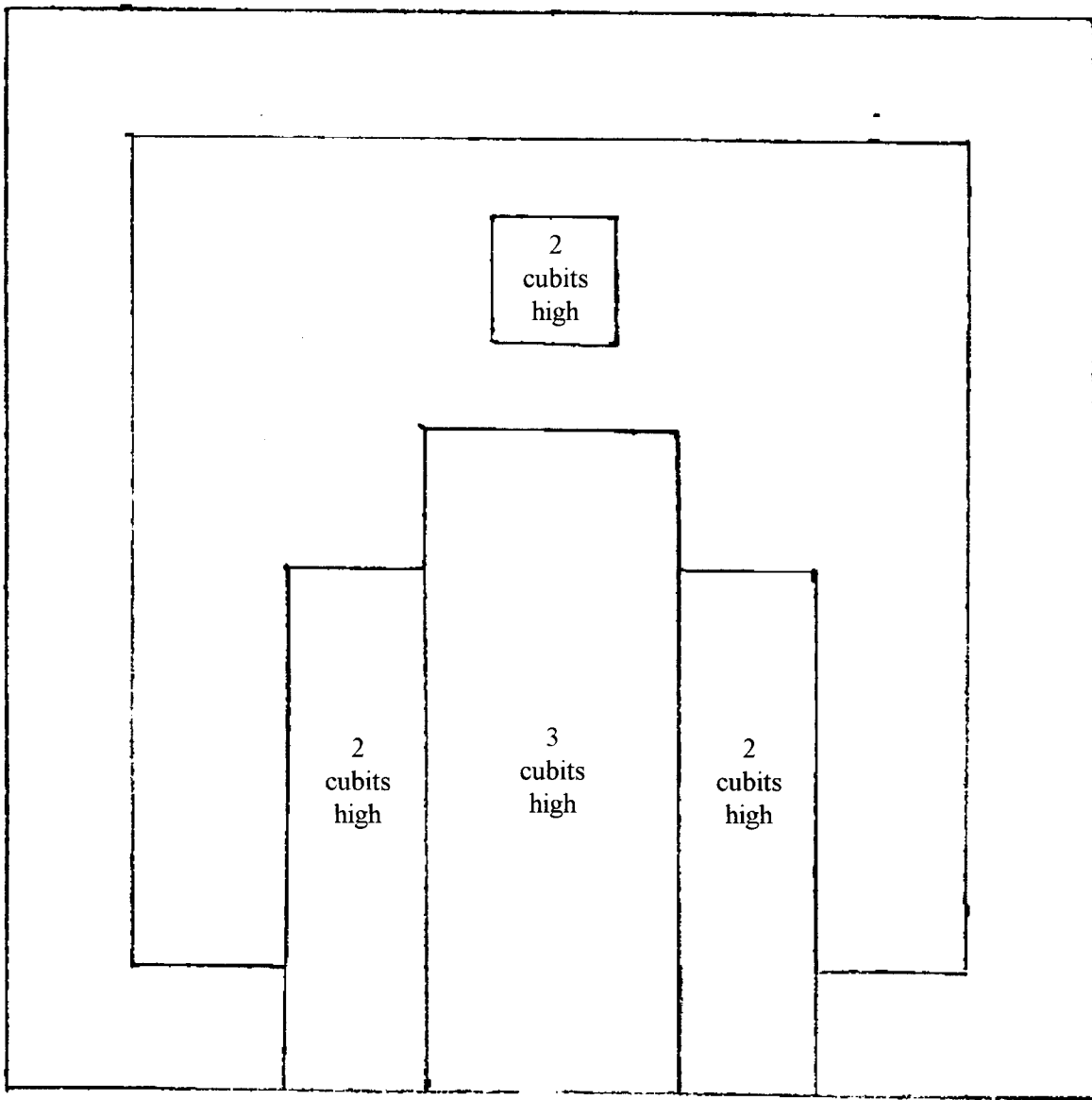
Building Project

You will need:

72 sugar cubes, glue, & heavy construction paper

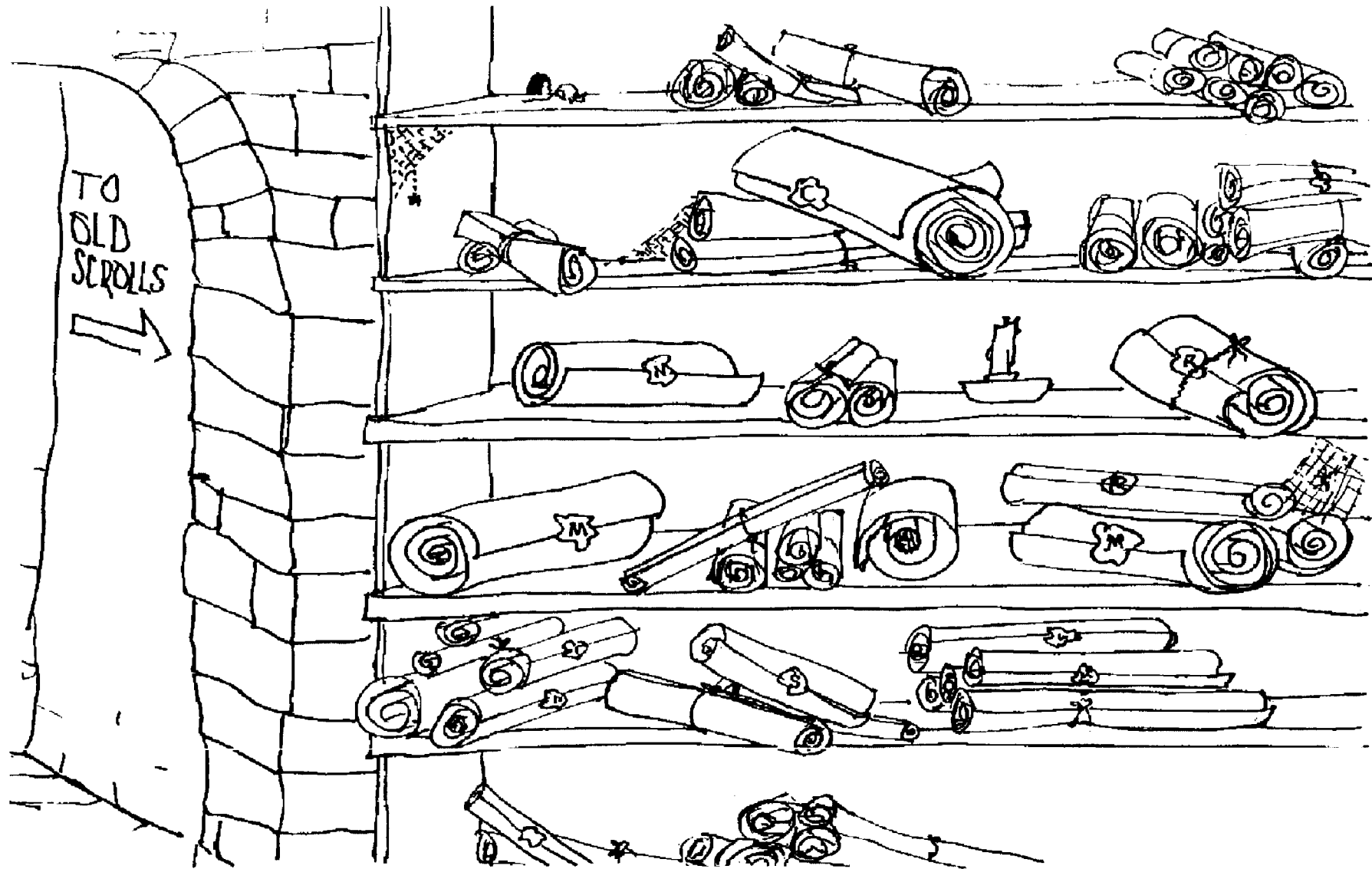
Instructions:

Cut out the copy of the Temple foundation and glue on heavy paper.
Build according to plan laid out on foundation. Keep your walls straight! Have fun!!







Cyrus' Lost Decree

Where's the decree? Clue: It's stamped with his seal.



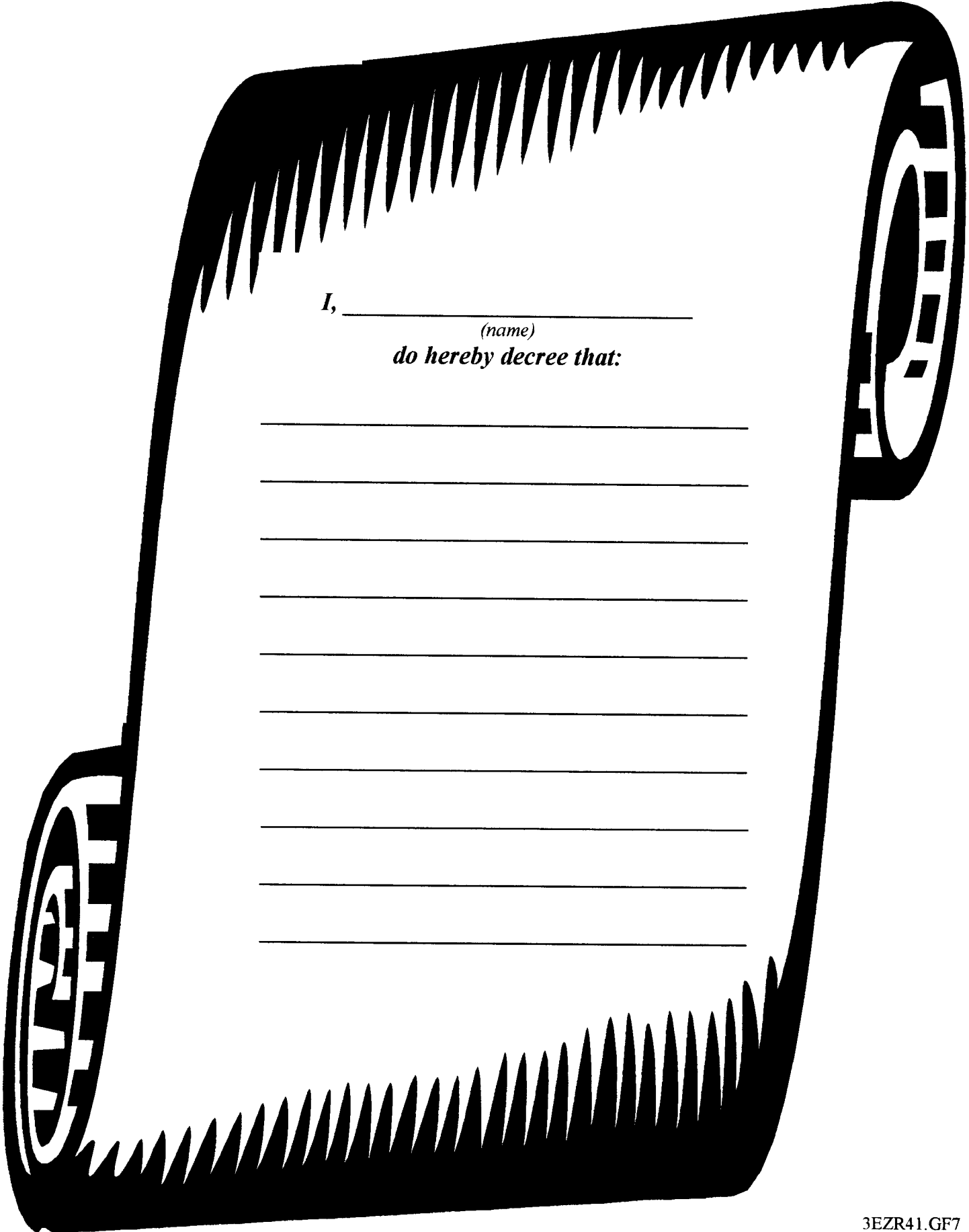
Worship Study

The returning Israelites worshipped God in many ways. We worship in many of the same ways. Put appropriate checkmarks by each form of worship. Can you think of any other ways to worship?

		Ways the Israelites Worshipped	Ways We Worship
Gifts & Offerings Ezra 3:5,7		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sacrifices Ezra 3:2,3		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Instrumental Music Ezra 3:10		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Singing Ezra 3:11		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spoken Praise (shout) Ezra 3:11		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work & service Ezra 3:8-10, 4:3		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Celebrate Passover Ezra 6:19		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reading & Studying Scripture		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communion		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baptism		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Why is some of our worship different?

Write it Down!



I, _____
(name)
do hereby decree that:

What holiday dinner did the Jews observe? Do you know when it was first observed?

FRIDAY
Read Ezra 6:19

Which two prophets encouraged the rebuilding of the temple? Have you encouraged anyone to do something good this week?

WEDNESDAY
Read 5:1 - 2

What did the Lord promise to do for the Israel exiles in Babylon?
 Does God always keep His promises?

MONDAY
Read Ezra 1:1, Jeremiah 29:10

The enemies of the Jews did not want God's temple rebuilt. What are some of the things the enemy did to stop the building? The devil uses these same tricks to stop us from doing what God wants us to do.

TUESDAY
Read Ezra 4:1 - 5.

FRIDAY
Read Ezra 1:7, 6:5

What returned with the exiles that was necessary for them to have to worship God in the temple?

SATURDAY
PRAY
for your teachers !
for the teaching Pastor!
for the Elders!
for the President!

DAILY WALK



FBC ORIGINAL 3EZR41.GF8

Story Scramble



Cut out the following story strips, put them in order and glue on the appropriate pages of your Ezra Book. Illustrate with pictures to make the Israelites' story come alive.

King Darius tells people to let the rebuilding of the temple continue.

The Jews are questioned about the rebuilding of the temple.

The Israelites build an altar to God.

The Israelites begin to lay the foundation.

Temple articles are returned to the people.

God works in Cyrus' heart to free the people.

The Israelites shout and sing praises.

**The Book
of Ezra**

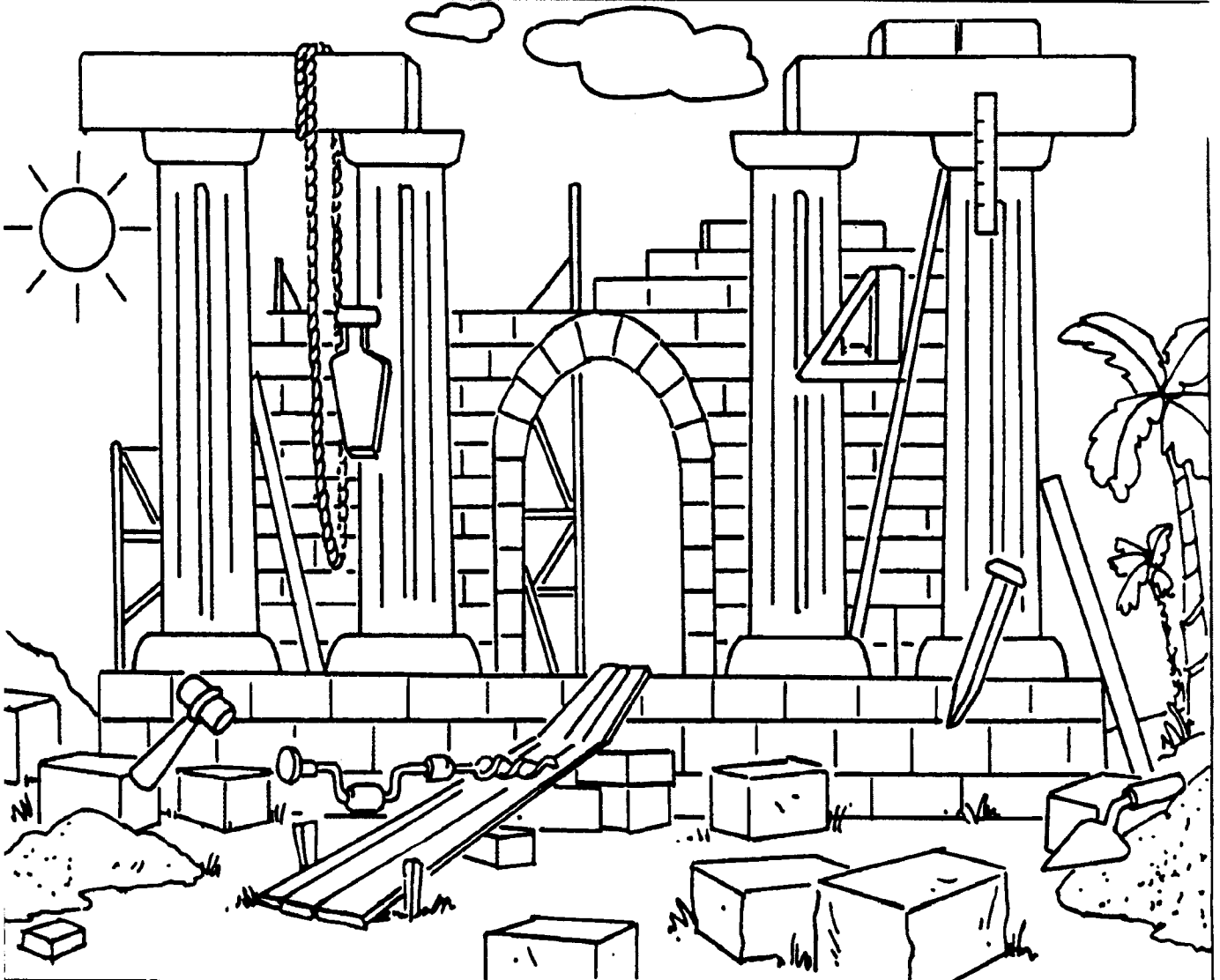
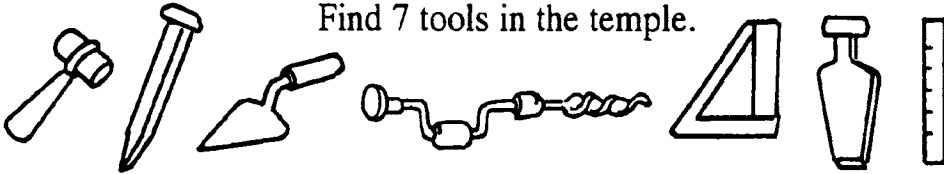


Rebuilding the Temple Begins

Read the story.

Jerusalem's neighbors were ☹️ that the Jews were back. They tried to STOP them from hammers ing the temple. The neighbors sent a letter to the king. The king sent a letter back. The hammers ing did STOP for awhile. Then God sent prophets to help them get started again.

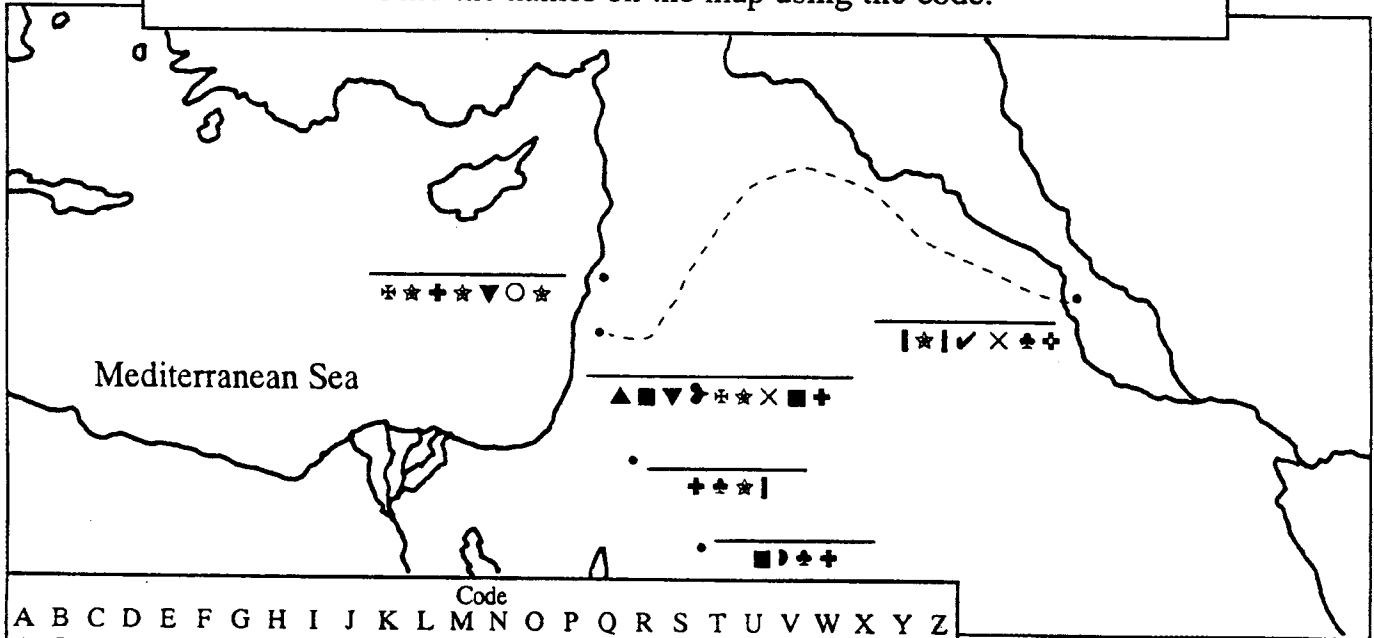
Find 7 tools in the temple.



Rebuilding the Temple Begins

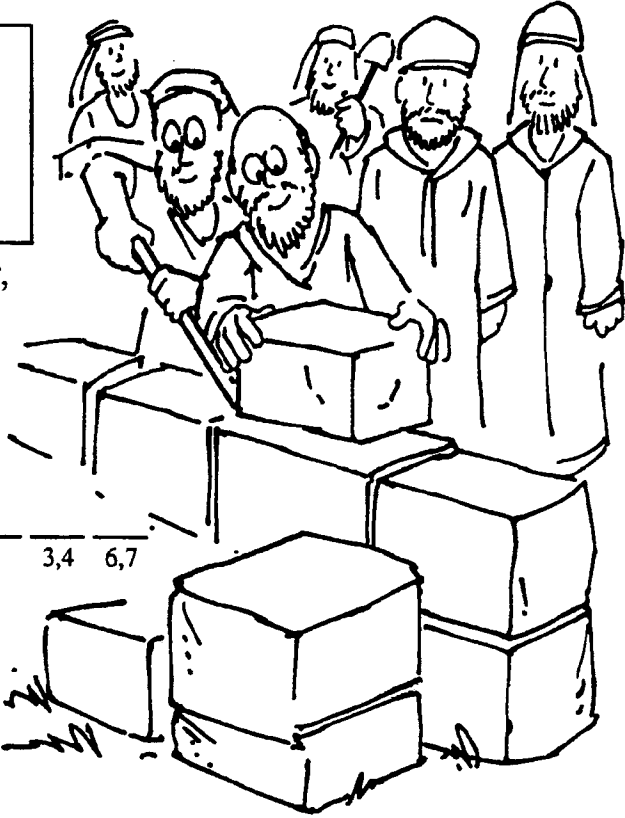
The faithful Jews began the long journey home.

Find the names on the map using the code.



Use the circle code to fill in the blanks. Example: 4,5 = L

A	B	C	E	F	G	I	L	N	O	R	S	T	U	W
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8							



Jeshua, the high priest, and Zerubbabel, the governor,

built an 1 4,5 7 1 6 of God for

6,7 1 2 6 4 3 4 2 2,3 6,7 and

1,2 7,8 6 5 7 5,6 3 3 2,3 6 4 5 3,4 6,7

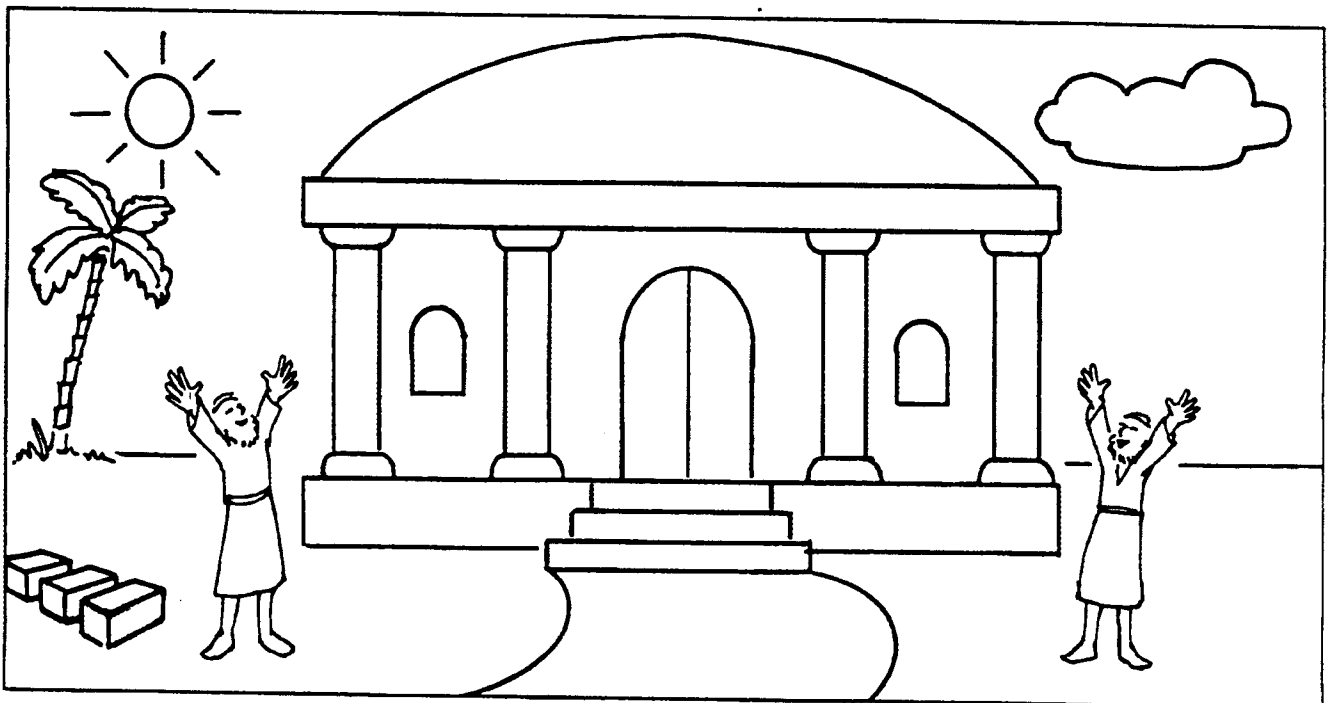
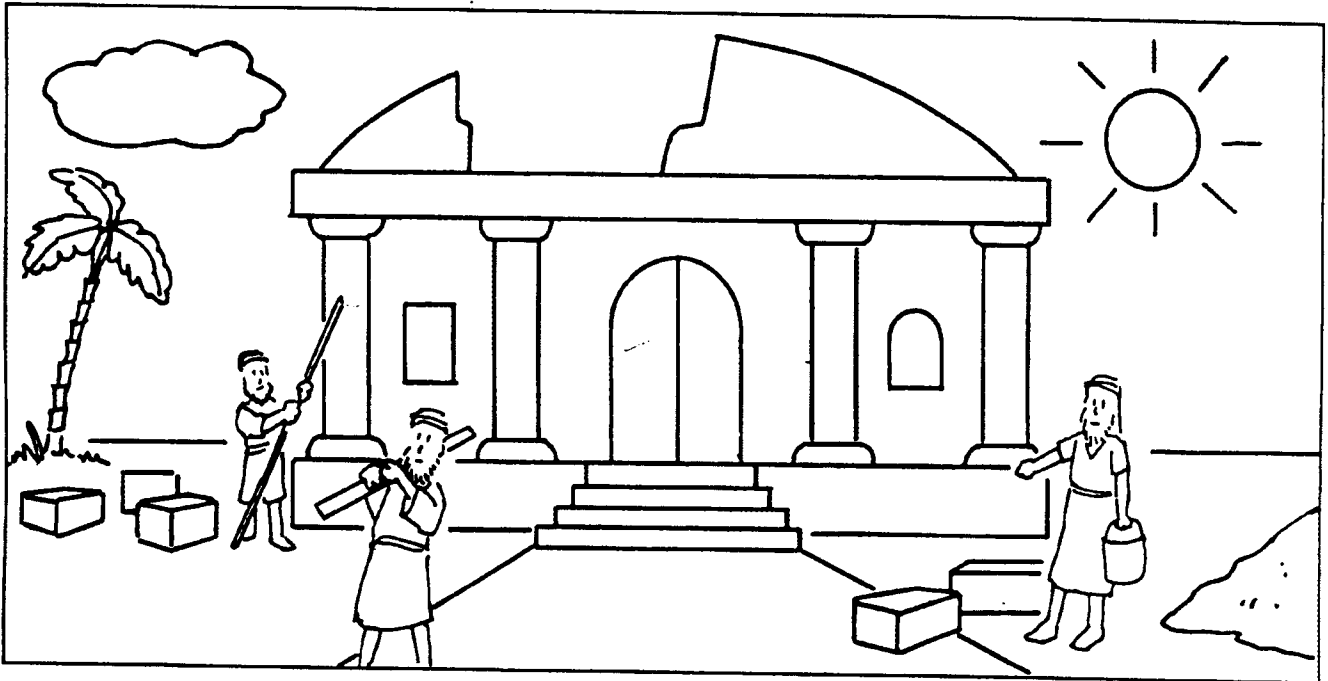
The people celebrated the 3 2,3 1 6,7 7 of

7 1 1,2 2,3 6 5 1 2 4,5 2,3 6,7

Haggai & Zechariah Encourage the Temple Builders

When the people finished the temple, they were happy.

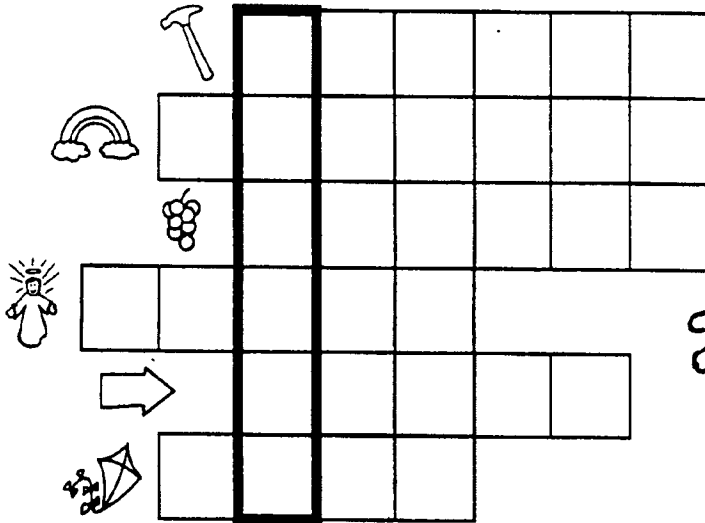
Circle 10 things that are different in the second picture.



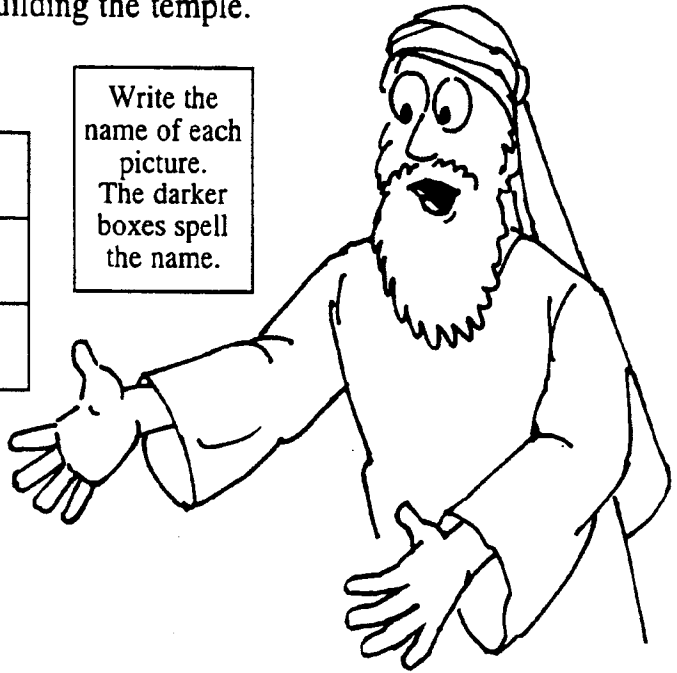
Haggai & Zechariah

Encourage the Temple Builders

God sent 2 prophets to encourage the people of Jerusalem to begin rebuilding the temple.



Write the name of each picture. The darker boxes spell the name.



One of the prophets was _____.

Answer each math problem. Look at the code for the correct letter.

Code	
10 = A	1 = N
15 = C	12 = O
20 = D	14 = P
25 = E	3 = R
30 = F	7 = S
5 = G	9 = T
2 = H	11 = U
4 = I	13 = V
6 = L	17 = W
8 = M	

He told them they planted $\frac{4+4}{2 \times 3}$ $\frac{5+6}{12 \div 3}$ $\frac{3 \times 5}{3 \times 3}$ $\frac{10 \div 5}{3 \times 3}$ and harvested $\frac{6 \times 5}{2 \times 3}$ $\frac{3+1}{3 \times 3}$ $\frac{2 \times 3}{5+1}$ $\frac{5+1}{20+5}$ $\frac{4 \times 5}{6-5}$ $\frac{6+6}{4-3}$ $\frac{3 \times 3}{2 \times 6}$ $\frac{15+2}{5+6}$ $\frac{5+5}{2+3}$ $\frac{2+1}{1+1}$ $\frac{4 \times 2}{8 \div 4}$ $\frac{15-3}{15-3}$ $\frac{4+2}{4+2}$ $\frac{10+15}{10+15}$ $\frac{4+3}{4+3}$ $\frac{2 \times 2}{2 \times 2}$ $\frac{1+0}{1+0}$. They wore clothes, but were $\frac{6+3}{6+3}$ $\frac{5-3}{5-3}$ $\frac{20+5}{20+5}$ $\frac{2 \times 4}{2 \times 4}$; put the wages they earned in purses with $\frac{12+2}{12+2}$ $\frac{8-5}{8-5}$ $\frac{8+4}{8+4}$ $\frac{3+4}{3+4}$ $\frac{7+7}{7+7}$ $\frac{22+3}{22+3}$ $\frac{2+1}{2+1}$. God had caused their work $\frac{10-9}{10-9}$ $\frac{9+3}{9+3}$ $\frac{6+3}{6+3}$ because they had not His $\frac{25+5}{25+5}$ $\frac{8-4}{8-4}$ $\frac{8-7}{8-7}$ $\frac{2 \times 2}{2 \times 2}$ $\frac{5+2}{5+2}$ $\frac{6+3}{6+3}$ $\frac{5 \times 5}{5 \times 5}$ $\frac{4 \times 5}{4 \times 5}$ $\frac{1+1}{1+1}$ $\frac{7+5}{7+5}$ $\frac{8+3}{8+3}$ $\frac{6+1}{6+1}$ $\frac{22+3}{22+3}$ yet.