

June 29, 1997

Ezra 1 - 6

4's, 5's & K

3EZR41PK

The God of Israel Keeps His Promises!

Materials I Need:

Memory Work:

The Prophet - Ezra

The Principle - God had a promised plan for the Promised Land.

The People - Exiles returning from Babylon to Jerusalem

God's Attribute - The God of Israel keeps His promises.

Aim Questions:

1. Ezra was not a prophet of God. What did Ezra and Zerubbabel do for God? (They were leaders who took groups of Israelites back to Israel.)
2. Who else did the God of Israel use to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem? (King Cyrus and King Darius)
3. Who tried to stop the Israelites from building the temple? (The people living around Jerusalem did everything they could think of to stop the Israelites from rebuilding the temple and the city.)
4. Who has more power, the God of Israel or the Persian governor and king? (The God of Israel has power to keep His promises.)
5. Why were the Israelites so happy when they built the temple? (God had kept His promise.)

 Hook:


Nature Mobile: Take a nature walk to collect items for the mobile, including a small tree branch. Tie a piece of ribbon to each object you find. Suspend the branch from the ceiling. Tie nature items to the tree branch. Talk about the things in nature we might see if we were on a camping trip. The Israelites will be going on a long camping trip in our Bible Adventure today. I wonder what they will see?


Creative Discussion Center: Discuss moving topics together. Pull the children's names out of a basket or put numbers under their chairs and go in order of their numbers. Discussion topics: (1) What would you say if your dad came home and said that you were moving to a new city? (2) If you had to move and couldn't take everything with you, what would you decide to take? (3) What do you do in the car when you and your family are on a trip together?


Packing Relay Center: Divide the children into two teams. Provide a large sack of items to pack for a trip and a suitcase for each team. The team that passes the item from child to child into the suitcase first is the winner. You could make it more difficult by having them try on each item before passing.

Building Blocks Center: Ask for the blocks bin from the Children's Department to make the foundation to a building. At first, let the children build any structure they want. After awhile, pretend to take some of the gold or silver you brought with you from Babylon and pay the lumber men for some wood for the temple. Measure the blocks with a ruler and talk about what kind of building it

should be. "How do we know how to build it? We look in the Bible." Pretend to look in the Bible to find out how big the temple should be and how many rooms it should have.

 **E-Z-R-A Musical Chairs: (3EZR41ECGF2)** Place chairs in a circle, the number of chairs equaling one less than the number of children. Tape GF2 pictures of Ezra to the backs of two or more chairs. The children step from chair to chair as they say the E-Z-R-A chant. When they say the last "Ezra," the children sit in a chair. The child who could not sit in a chair will stay in Babylon (the center of the circle). The children who are sitting in the chair with an Ezra picture will become one of Ezra's helpers on the trip to Jerusalem.

 **Camping Creatures:** Give each child a bag of plaster. Follow the directions on the package, and pour water into each bag. Close the bags, and help the children squish the water into the dry plaster. Have the children mold the plaster (with the bag still closed) into shapes they can hold through the plastic. Encourage them to make shapes like the GF6 animals or other items they might see on a camping trip. In just a couple of minutes, the plaster will firm up. While the children are holding their plaster shapes, ask: "What do you think your creation will look like? Is it hard to wait for it to be ready? How do you think the Israelites felt as they waited for so many days to see Jerusalem?" When the creations have hardened, take them out of the plastic bags, and have the children decorate them with markers. Help children decide what their new creations are. For example, their creations may resemble animals, plants, people, rocks, flowers or mountains. Set the new creations aside to dry thoroughly.

 **Large Muscle Center:** Sing "Johnny Works with One Hammer," putting Ezra's name or the children's names in place of "Johnny."

Ezra works with one hammer, one hammer, one hammer. (Sit on the floor with legs extended. Raise your right fist up and down as though pounding a nail.)

Ezra works with one hammer, then he works with two. (Raise both fists in a pounding motion.)

Ezra works with two hammers, two hammers, two hammers.

Ezra works with two hammers, then he works with three. (Continue pounding both fists and add one leg going up and down)

Ezra works with three hammers, three hammers, three hammers.

Ezra works with three hammers, then he works with four. (Add the second leg to the first three motions.)

Ezra works with four hammers, four hammers, four hammers.

Ezra works with four hammers, then he works with five. (Add head going up and down along with the arms and legs.)


Ezra works with five hammers, five hammers, five hammers.

Ezra works with five hammers, then he goes to sleep. (Lie on floor and pretend to sleep.)




Book:

Presentation Ideas -

 Show an enlarged 3EZR41ECGF3 map and put tent stickers from next week's 3EZR42ECGF9 page as you show where the Israelite families settled.

 Color and show the 3EZR41ECGF4, 3EZR41ECGF5, 3EZR41ECGF6 & 3EZR41ECGF7 pictures as you tell the Bible Adventure.

 Do the EZRA Cheer several times at the beginning and ending of the Bible Adventure.
E-Z-R-A, What's the book we read today?
Ezra! Ezra! Ezra!

Bible Adventure -

What prophet knew it was time for the Israelites to go back home to Israel because the seventy years were over? (Show the GF4 picture of Daniel praying.) How did Daniel know it was time? (Show the 3DAN40ECGF1 review picture. Daniel knew that Jeremiah had said it would be seventy years of captivity.) The Most High God is the God of Israel who always keeps His promises. Ezra is the name of the new book we are learning from today. "E-Z-R-A!" It's a short name and it's the name of a man.

Ezra was not a prophet. Ezra was a leader used by God to get the Israelites back home to Israel. He took a group of Israelite exiles home to Jerusalem and helped them rebuild the city.

We know the God of Israel had a plan for His set apart people and His set apart place, don't we? We have learned about God's plan for His holy hill and His set apart people. God kept His promise to punish the people who would not stop worshipping idols. Now He's keeping His promise to bring His people back to Israel. God's heart always loves Israel and His plans for Israel never change.

(Show the 3EZR41ECGF4 picture.) God moved in the Persian King Cyrus' heart to send the Israelites back home to Israel. King Cyrus wrote a letter that said, "The God of heaven has told me to build a temple for Him at Jerusalem. Anyone who wants to go back and build the temple of the Lord can go now. The people who stay around Babylon must send silver, gold, animals, food and money to help build the temple. I will even send the gold and silver dishes and goblets that belong in the temple, the ones King Belshazzar was using the night the hand wrote on the wall." People were amazed at the announcement from the king. They said, "Wow! We can go back home! God is keeping His promise to Israel." *(Show the GF1 picture.)*

Not everyone wanted to leave their new homes in Babylon. They liked their homes. Their gardens were growing. They didn't want to pack up and leave. They couldn't take all their stuff with them. The kids would have to decide what toys to take and what to leave with their friends. They also knew it would be a hard trip. They would have to walk 900 miles, camping out every night. There were people living in Jerusalem who wouldn't want them there. They wouldn't want to give up land in Jerusalem for these people moving in. The Israelites in Babylon talked and thought about it and most of them decided to stay in Babylon. But God moved in the hearts of 50,000 Israelites and they chose to obey the Lord God and go back to build a new temple.

Zerubbabel and Jeshua became the leaders of the first group of Israelites who packed to go. They packed the temple dishes and gathered the things they would need for the trip. They packed their belongings on horses, mules, camels and donkeys. Old people and young people were quickly ready to be on their way. What a difficult trip it was, but God was with them every day. They walked and sang praise songs in their hearts to God. The God of Israel was keeping His promise!

When the Israelite exiles arrived in Jerusalem, tears rolled down the cheeks of the old men who remembered God's temple before it was burned down. What an empty place it was now! The young men had smiles on their faces because they were eager to get started clearing the rubble out and building the new temple. Zerub-ba-bel cleared the rub-ba-ble!

The Israelites moved to the towns where their fathers and grandfathers had lived. The Benjamites moved to their land. The descendants of Dan moved to their land. The descendants of Manasseh moved to their land. *(Show a GF3 map and put a tent on each area as you show where they settled.)* When the families were settled in their new homes, they all came back to Jerusalem and built the altar for sacrificing the animals, as God had said. What a happy day for the Israelites! They could worship God again, just as He had commanded.

The men knew what to do to build the temple on the same spot where it had burned down seventy years earlier. Zerubbabel gave money to carpenters so they could buy wood for the temple. The workers dug a deep hole in the ground and carried large stones to lay in the ground. They worked quickly because they were eager to get the job done. When the builders finally laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, all the Israelites stopped their work and had a celebration. *(Show a GF6 picture.)* The priests wore their special robes and played their trumpets and cymbals. They praised the Lord for being the God of Israel who keeps His promises. The young men shouted for joy and the old men wept loudly for joy. The noise was so loud that the sound was heard far away.

When the people living around Jerusalem heard what was happening, they came to Zerubbabel and said, "Let us help you build the temple. We have been sacrificing to your God, too." That sounds good, doesn't it? Zerubbabel knew that these people were not worshipping the God of Israel. They were worshipping idols, so he said to them, "No. We don't want you to help us. We must do this the way God has said."

When the enemies of the God of Israel heard this, they got very upset and said, "Then we will stop you from building the temple. You just wait and see!" They hired people full-time to do whatever they could

to stop the building. (*Show a GF7 picture.*) They even wrote a letter to the new king of Persia and said, "The Jews who came back to Israel are trouble for you. They will not pay taxes to you if you let them rebuild the city. They will fight against you and you'll be sorry." King Xerxes sent a letter back to the enemies of God saying, "You are right! Tell the Jews to stop building right now!" (*Stop and look around with a surprised, sad look.*) What a sad day in Jerusalem! What about God's promise? How could this be happening? The Israelites stopped building because they were afraid of the Persian officials. For ten years they didn't build! Ten years! There was great sadness in the Israelites' hearts. They wondered why the God of Israel wasn't keeping His promise to rebuild the temple.

God sent the Israelites two new prophets to stir them up to begin building again. The prophets said, "God told us to build the temple. King Cyrus told us to build the temple. Let's start building." Zerubbabel and God's prophets started building, no matter what anyone said.

The governor of Persia, Tattenai, came to Jerusalem and said to Zerubbabel, "Why are you building? Who gave you permission? What are the names of the men constructing this building?" They thought that would stop the building, but the eye of God was watching over the elders of the Jews and they were not stopped until Tattenai could get a message sent to the new king Darius of Persia.

Tattenai wrote, "King Darius, the Jews are working on their temple again. They say that King Cyrus told them to build. Would you please check the records and see what we should do?" King Darius sent men to find the letter that King Cyrus had written. When they found it, King Darius wrote back and said, "The Jews are supposed to be building the temple. Not only are they supposed to build it, but you are supposed to pay for everything. Get going on it!" And that is how God moved in Israel to keep His promise to rebuild the temple.

Isn't God powerful? He has the best plan and even though He lets us wait for awhile, He always keeps His promises.

Prayer: Most High God, Your words are the truth and never change. You know the plans You have for all of us and You keep Your promises. I want to love and serve You with my whole heart. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Look:



“God Moves Peoples’ Hearts” Center: (3EZR41ECGF4) Let each child place five small hearts on the hearts of Daniel, King Cyrus and the three people who went back to Jerusalem. Talk about how God worked in all these people to keep His promise to bring His people back to Israel. Cut small hearts with a paper punch in the shape of a heart or ask the Children’s Department for small hearts.



Camping Craft Center: (3EZR41ECGF8 & 3EZR41ECGF9) Color the GF8 tent, cut it out according to the instructions and glue it to a piece of construction paper. Cut around the GF9 figures and glue them around the tent as shown in the sample. Talk about the group of people Zerubbabel led back to Jerusalem and what they might have seen along the way. Talk about how happy they look because they are following God to the promised land.



Marching Footprints Center: (3EZR41ECGF11) Place foot shapes around the room in a path. March on the path, clapping and singing “Oh When the Saints Go Marching In” using the following words:

Oh, when the saints went marching home,
Oh, when the saints went marching home,
Oh, it was a happy day,
They were trusting God alone.



Snack Center: Let the children put several spoonfuls of trail mix in a baggie to take on their trip to Jerusalem. If the weather is good, go outside and pretend to build a campfire. As the children eat their snack, sing camp songs together.

Songs:



Over the River

Over the river and through the woods, to Jerusalem we go!
 We trust God today to show us the way
 Because He loves us so!

Over the river and through the woods, onto the Holy Hill!
 The temple we'll build, His promise fulfilled
 The God of Israel! (or, We want to do God's will!)



The Israelites Trusted in God Alone (To the tune: "The Ants Go Marching In")

The Israelites trusted God alone,
 Hooray! Hooray!
 The Israelites trusted God alone,
 Hooray! Hooray!
 They traveled to Jerusalem far away,
 They trusted in God every step of the way.
 And they all went marching back, to the land, to the promised la-and.



Goin' to Jerusalem Activity Center: While sitting on the floor in a circle, begin by patting hands alternately on thighs to imitate a walking sound. Children repeat each line after teacher.

I'm goin' to Jerusalem.
 I'm not afraid!
 I've got my Bible--(*Clap hands together and open them on "Bi-ble."*)
 I'm not afraid!

Oh look! There's a creek!
 Can't go over it!
 Can't go 'round it!
 Can't go under it!
 Gotta go through it! (*Move arms like swimming.*)

Oh look! There's a mud swamp!
 Can't go over it!
 Can't go 'round it!
 Can't go under it!
 Gotta go through it!
 (*Make sucking sounds with mouth.*)

Oh look! There's a bridge!
 Can't go through it!
 Can't go 'round it!
 Can't go under it!
 Gotta go over it!
 (*Pound fists on chest to make thumping sound.*)

Oh look! There's a field of wheat!
 Can't go over it!
 Can't go 'round it!
 Can't go under it!
 Gotta go through it!
 (*Rub palms together to make swishing sounds.*)

Oh look! There's Jerusalem!
 Yeah! We're here!
 (*Wave arms in the air.*)



God Is So Good

God is so good. God is so good. God is so good; He's so good to me.
God gives us food. God gives us food. God gives us food; He's so good to me.
God keeps His promise. God keeps His promise. God keeps His promise; He's so good to me.



Oh, The Lord's Been Good to Me (Tune: "Johnny Appleseed")

Oh, the Lord's been good to me
And so I thank the Lord
For giving me the things I need,
The sun and the rain and the appleseed.
The Lord's been good to me. Amen. Amen. Amen-amen-amen. Amen.



Hear Oh Israel

C F C C F C G
Chorus: Hear Oh Israel The Lord Our God is one Lord...

Traditional verses:

C F C F CFCFC
Group 1: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart...

Group 2: *echo*

Sing verses twice: 2. soul...
3. mind...
4. strength...

Alternate verses:

C F C F CFCFC
Group 1: God has brought us back just as He said He would...

Group 2: *echo*

Sing verses twice: 2. We will build God's house atop His holy hill.
3. We don't need to fear for God is on our side.



Took:



Know and Do: (3EZR41ECGF1 & 3EZR41ECGF9) We know that God promised the Israelites that He would keep His promise to bring them back to Jerusalem. God always keeps His promises. The children can glue GF9 animals to the GF1 picture to remind the children what the Israelites might have seen on their long journey. We do want to trust God to keep His promises to us. Review Ezra's name by saying the Ezra cheer. Pray around the table, thanking God for keeping His promise to take care of us. Each child can pray a simple prayer, "Thank You for keeping Your promises."



Promise Necklace: (3EZR41ECGF10) Copy the GF10 page on cardstock so that there is one "necklace" per child. Color the shoes to look like the shoes the children are wearing today. Punch a hole through the top of the "necklace" and let the children put string or yarn through the hole so that the necklace fits over their heads. This will remind us that God kept His promise to take the Israelites through the long journey back to Israel. God keeps His promises to us, too.

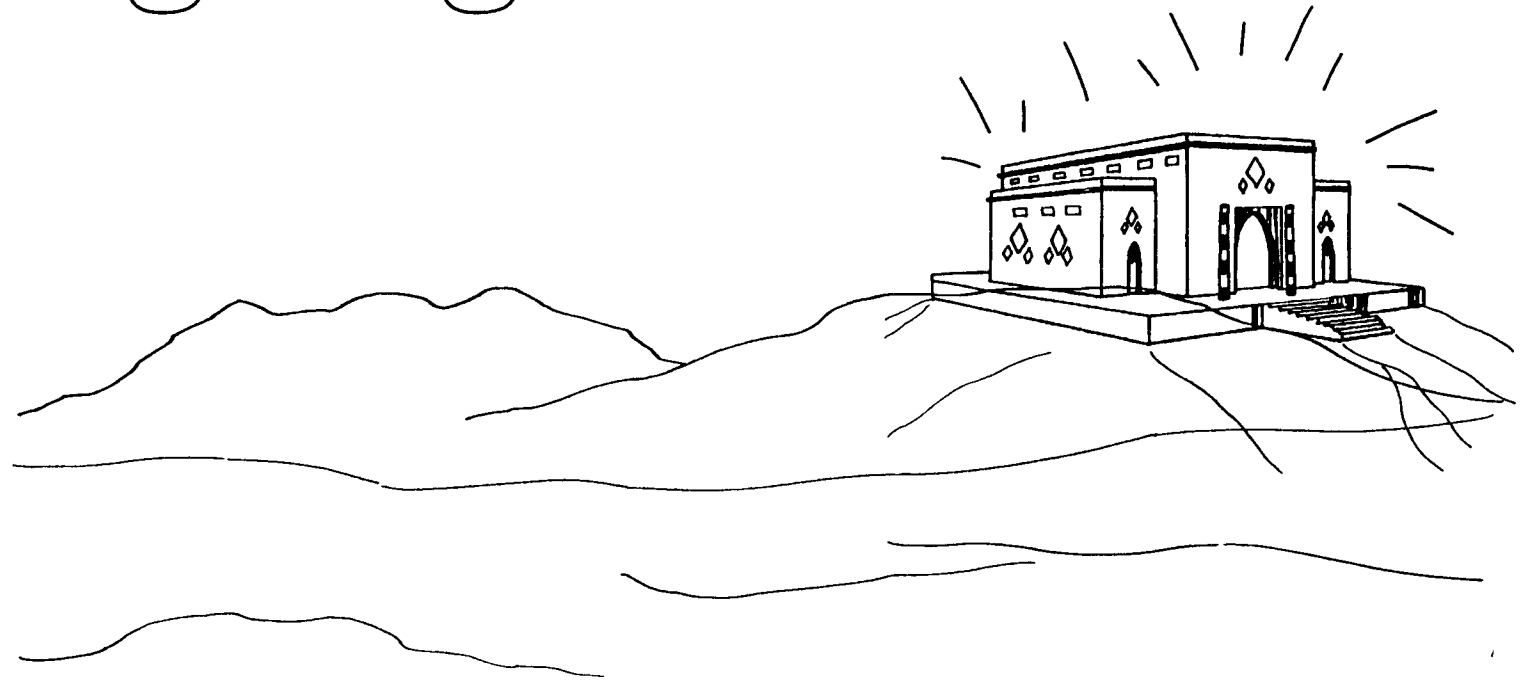


Celebration Center: Get out the musical instruments for a real celebration. Of course, the children will want to praise God in an orderly way. The Israelites waited ten years to celebrate the building of the temple. Explain to the children that we will count to ten before we play our instruments and sing. Anyone who does not wait for the count of ten must give up his musical instrument. "Let's all count to ten and then sing a praise song!" Sing "God is so Good," "Oh, the Lord's Been Good to Me" or "Praise Him! Praise Him, All Ye Little Children."



70 years!

We're going home!

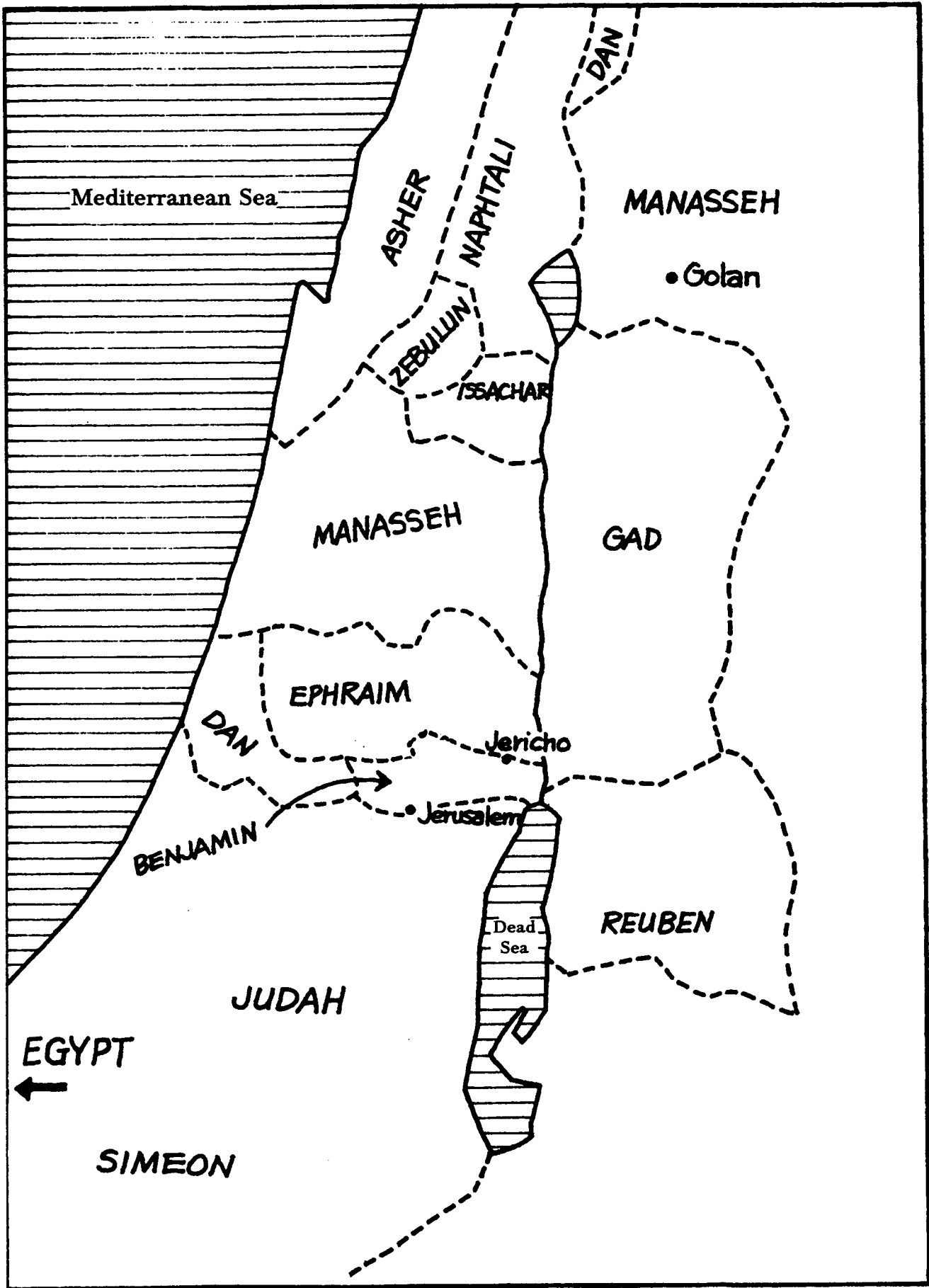


Ezra was a priest and teacher of God's Law.

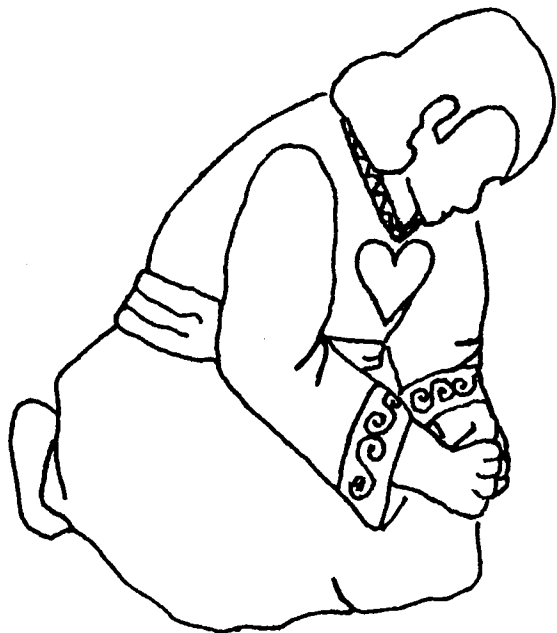


Ezra took the second group of exiles back to Jerusalem.

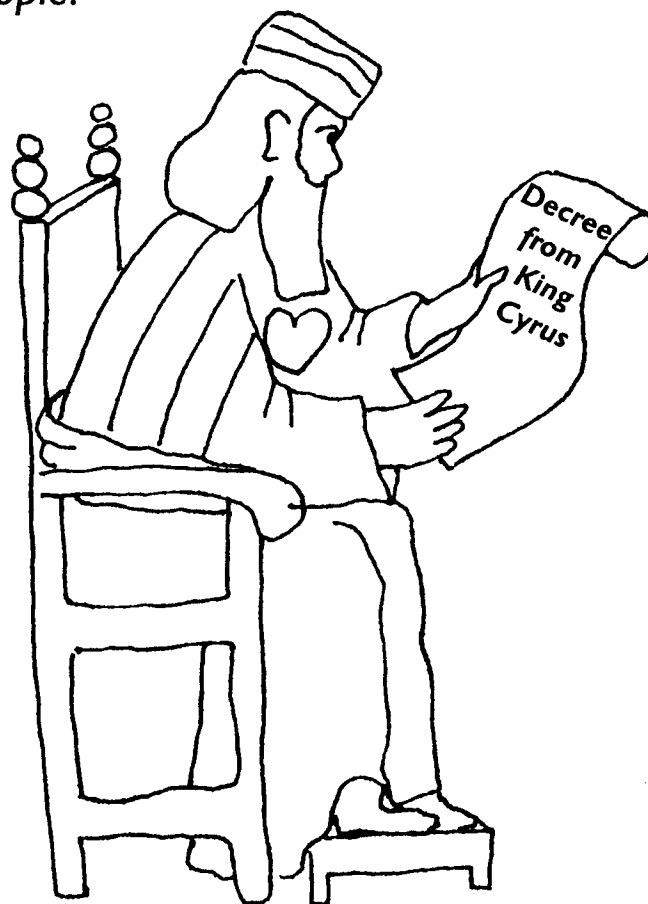
The Israelites went back to the land God had promised them.



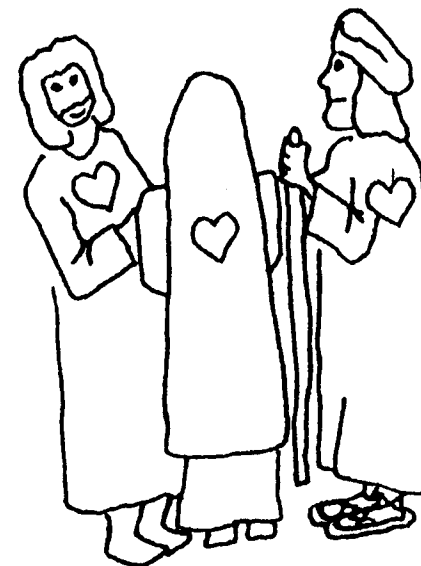
God kept His promise to take the Israelites back to Israel.



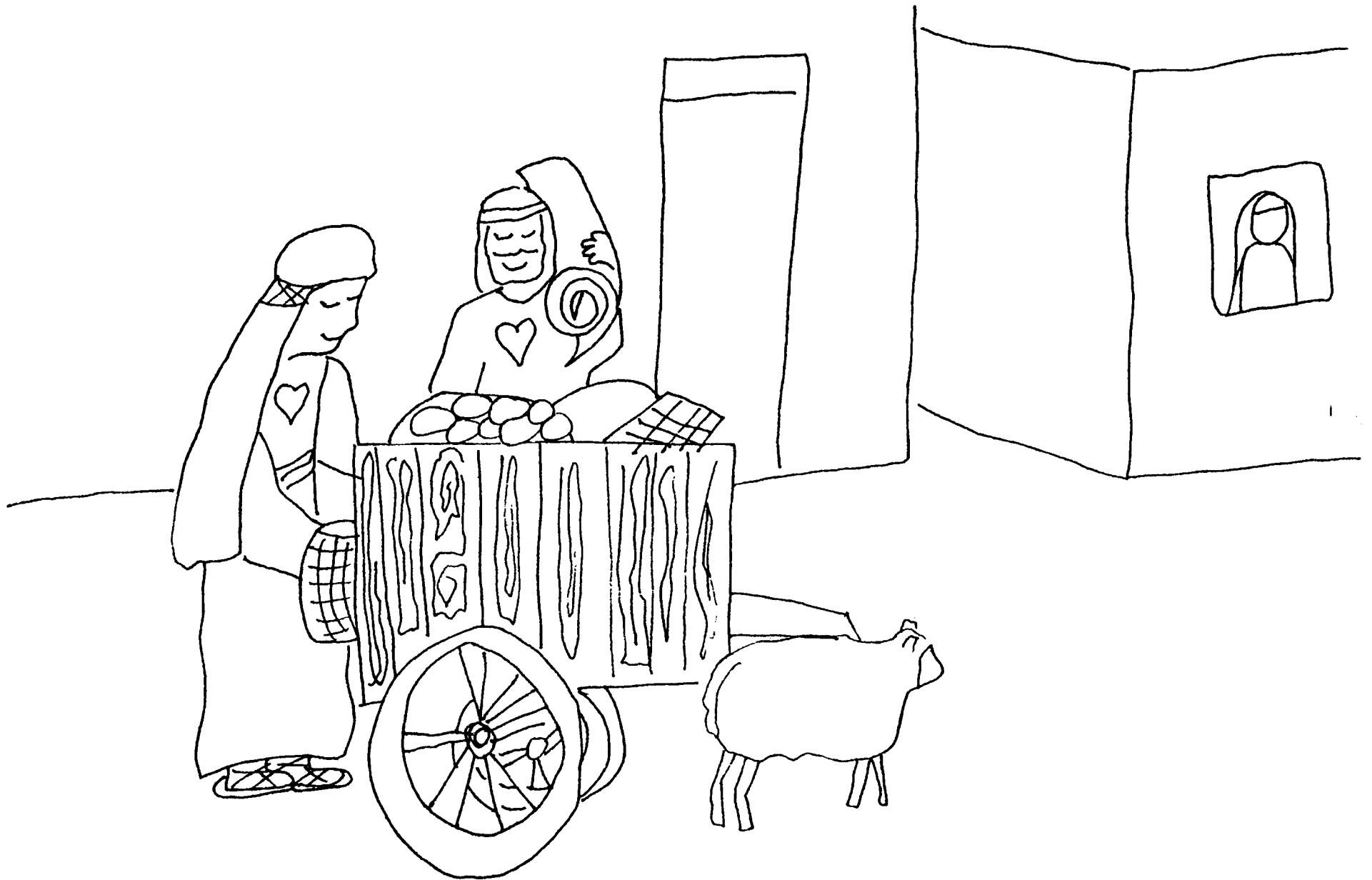
God moved in Daniel's heart to pray for His people.



God moved in King Cyrus' heart to sign a decree that would send the Israelites back to Jerusalem.



God moved in the hearts of 50,000 people to go back to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel.



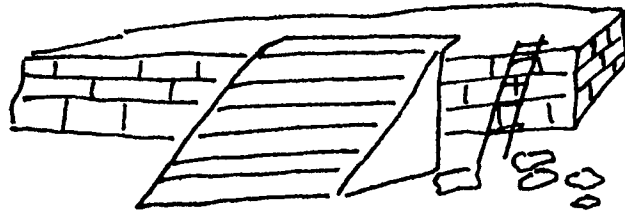
**God moved the hearts of some Israelites to go back to Jerusalem.
Find the people in the picture whose hearts want to go and the person who doesn't.**

When the builders laid the temple foundation, the Israelites praised the Lord!

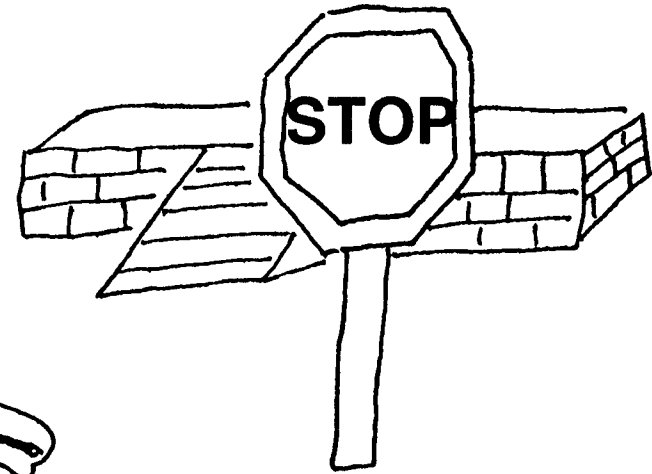
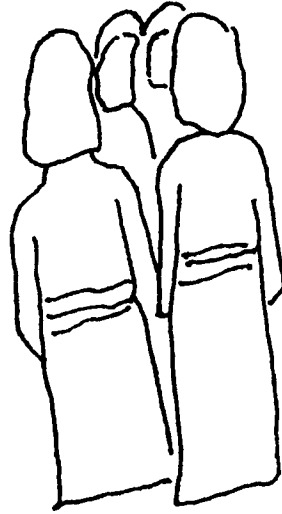
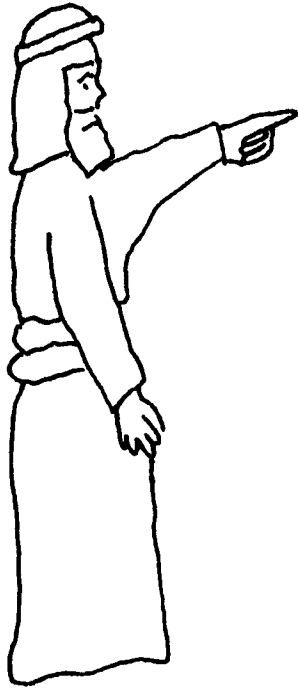


With praise
and
thanksgiving
they sang
to the
God of Israel,
"He is good;
His love
lasts forever."

Many of the
older men,
who had seen
the former
temple,
wept aloud
when they
saw the
foundation of
the temple
being laid.



The enemies of Judah offered to help build the temple. Zerubbabel said, "You have no part with us in building a temple to the God of Israel."



The enemies of Judah wrote to King Xerxes who stopped the Israelites from building the temple.

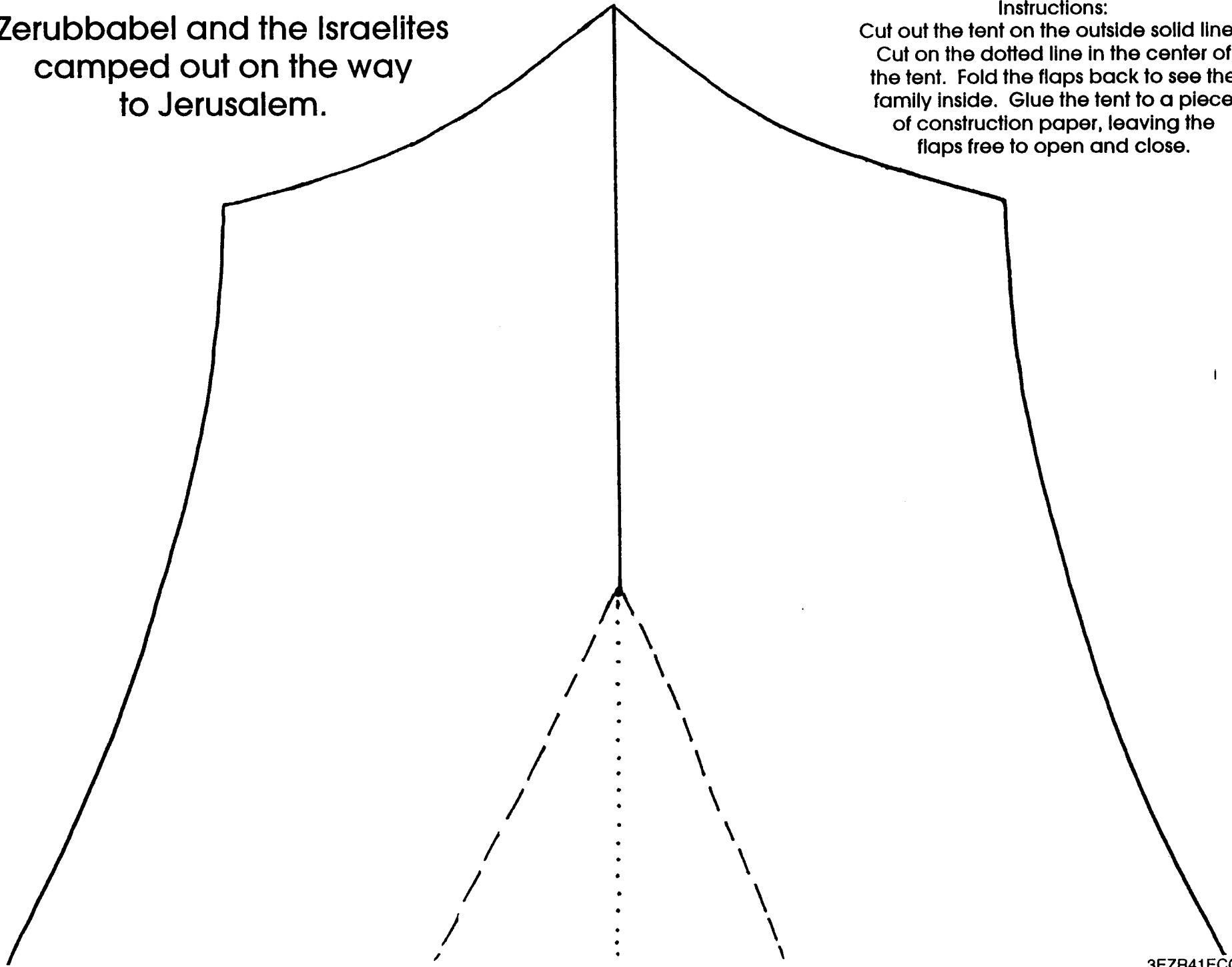


King Xerxes stopped the temple building for

10
years!

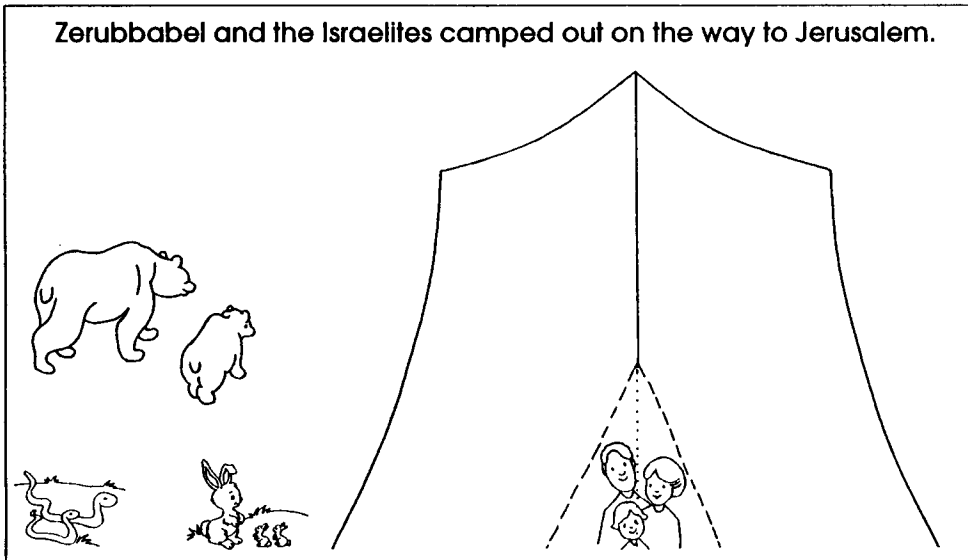
Zerubbabel and the Israelites
camped out on the way
to Jerusalem.

Instructions:
Cut out the tent on the outside solid lines.
Cut on the dotted line in the center
of the tent. Fold the flaps back to see the
family inside. Glue the tent to a piece
of construction paper, leaving the
flaps free to open and close.

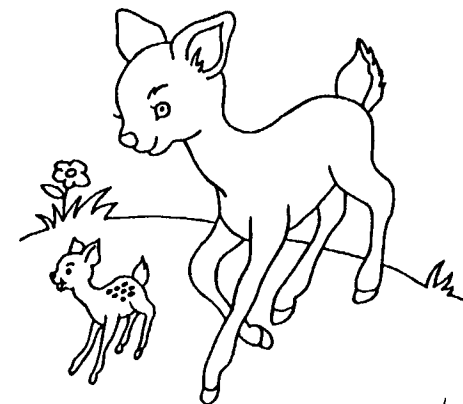
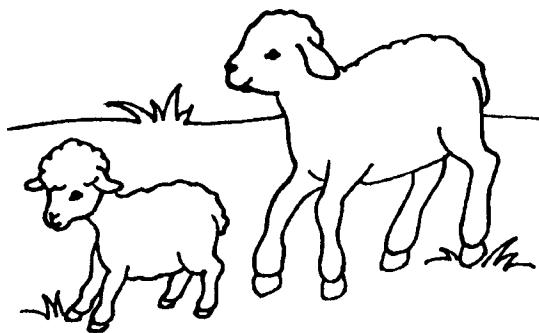
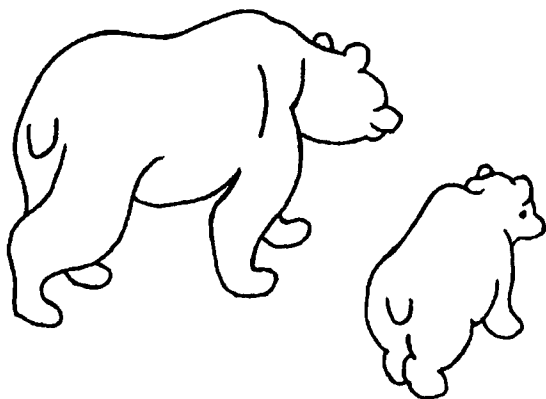
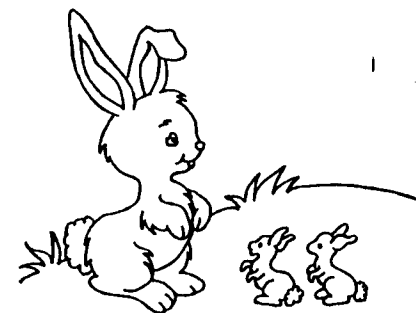
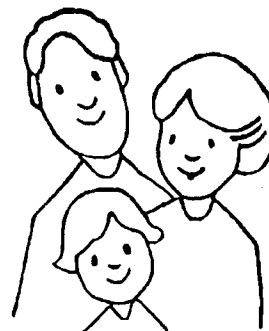
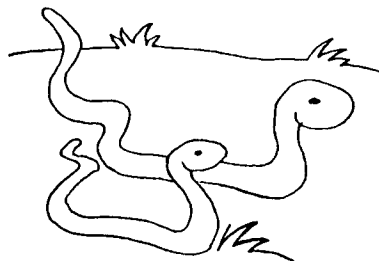


Zerubbabel and the Israelites camped out on the way to Jerusalem.

Zerubbabel and the Israelites camped out on the way to Jerusalem.



Instructions:
Cut out the GF5 tent as instructed. Glue it to a 9" x 12" or 11" x 14" piece of construction paper. Glue the family inside the opening of the tent. Cut out and glue animals to the page as desired. Glue the word strip to the page as shown in the sample.
Talk about the group Zerubbabel led back to Jerusalem and what they might have seen along the way.



Promise Necklace

Copy this page on cardstock so that there is one "necklace" per child.
Color the shoes to look like the shoes you are wearing today.



Marching Footprints

Place foot shapes around the room in a path.
March on the path, clapping and singing
one of the songs from the lesson.

