

THE RETURN HOME

Timeless Truth: Putting God's business first brings prosperity.

Bible Basis: Ezra 1:1–7; 3:10–13; Haggai 1:2–11; Zechariah 8:2–22

Key Verse: They will be my people. I will be their faithful God. I will keep my promises to them.
—Zechariah 8:8, NIV

Resource: *The Story for Kids*, Chapter 19: "The Return Home"

PARENT TIPS

Read and discuss the key point from the class your child(ren) attended. Use the Table Talk questions to start a discussion around the dinner table during the week. The Living Faith activity shows your family how to build an edible temple. The Extra Mile looks at a video about what's happening in the Holy Land regarding the third temple and peeks back at the second temple.

GET THE POINT

God's people promise to follow his ways. God wants me to follow Him.

TABLE TALK

- Cyrus, the king of Persia, encouraged God's people to go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the Lord's temple. About 50,000 people went back to start the project. When the foundation was laid, some of God's people cried and others shouted with joy. Talk about a time when you cried tears of joy. Can you remember a time that you shouted with joy?
- People in the surrounding areas didn't want the temple rebuilt. They tried to stop the building. Have you ever known that God wanted you to do something and had others stand in your way? What did you do? What was the end result?
- In the ultimate backfire, governors in nearby areas went to King Darius to see if King Cyrus had truly decreed that God's people could rebuild the temple. They hoped Darius would stop the building. Instead he found Cyrus' decree and made these governors give money and supplies to build the temple. Obviously, God's plan trumped the governors'. How do you think the governors felt?
- Have you ever had a plan backfire?
- What does this story teach about God's plans?

LIVING FAITH

God's second temple wasn't as awe-inspiring as Solomon's temple, but its majesty was renowned. As a family, build your own temple using graham crackers and icing. You'll need a small piece of poster board, a couple of boxes of graham crackers, icing, and candy to decorate it.

An effective icing consists of one pound of powdered sugar, one teaspoon of cream of tartar, and three egg whites. These ingredients need to be beaten on low speed with a hand mixer until the mixture becomes stiff.

Begin by setting up the foundation by smearing a lot of frosting on the poster board. Set several crackers in it as walls. Keep adding walls with a good amount of frosting on the bottom until you've finished your base. Now start building up. Look online for artists' renderings of the second temple or have fun making up your own design. Remember to use plenty of icing as glue to hold everything together. Once you're finished building the structure, let it dry before decorating the outside with more frosting and candy. You can add food coloring to the frosting to create different colors. Use your favorite candy to decorate the temple and remind yourself of the great worth of God's house.

As you build the temple, talk about your church:

- **What is your favorite part of your church?**
- **What's the most memorable thing you've learned about God in the last month?**
- **Is there somebody at church that you should send a special thank-you to? If so, do it.**

EXTRA MILE

Go online and watch the video "Rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem" at:
www.tangle.com/view_video.php?viewkey=74732766a0f003bcba62.

It's about 13 minutes long and quotes some passages from Ezra from this week's chapter of *The Story*. Take special note of the evidence of God's second temple that was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70. By digging through the Holy Land, it becomes very apparent that the Bible is more than just a story—it's God's truth.