

PARENTS' PAGE LESSON 19: 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; Ezra 5:14-17, 6:14-18

Key Verse: "They will be my people. I will be their faithful God. I will keep my promises to them" (Zechariah 8:8).

Resource: *The Story: Teen Edition, The Story for Kids/Children/Little Ones:* Chapter 19

Parent Tips:

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 Lands regarding the third temple and peeks back at the second temple.

Get the Point:

Preschool: God's people promise to follow his ways. God wants me to follow him.

Elementary: God's people promise to follow his ways. God wants me to follow him.

Middle/High School: Serving God can take hard work and effort—but it's worth it.

Table Talk

Preschool/Elementary

- The first people to move back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple became frustrated at its progress and concentrated on building houses for themselves instead. The prophet Haggai told them if they served God first by building his house, then their crops and work would be blessed. Why do you think it's important to put God ahead of your personal needs?
- Do you believe God controls everything?
- Name some things that God controls and how that affects your life?
- God's people pitched in their gold and silver to make God's temple magnificent. Talk about a time when you worked together with friends to accomplish a big task. Did it work better when everyone shared?
- How does it make you feel when you give something of value to another person?

Middle/High School

- 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 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 renown. 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 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 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

It is fascinating to think of the existence of the temple Ezra built, known as the "Second Temple." Today, archeologists are uncovering clues as to where the massive stones came from for the construction, and what types of activities took place in the temple shortly before its destruction.

- On YouTube, look for the 2:15 video called "Discovery of a Second Temple Period quarry in Jerusalem"
- On YouTube, look for the 3:23 video called "Exclusive - Second Temple Treasure Discovered In The Hills"

Watch these videos together and talk about how archeology always proves that the Bible is true.