



Ten-Minute Family Devotional

week seventy seven

The Temple Is Completed

Gather a few baby photos of each of your children and call them together to show them the pictures. Kids always get a charge out of seeing themselves as babies. After showing them the photos, ask them why we keep photos at all. Explain that we do this to help us remember the special events of our lives so we never forget.

Ask your children if they know how God helped the Israelites to remember the days when Moses led them out of Egypt. The answer is that God commanded them to celebrate the Passover every year. God's directions for the Passover were recorded in the book of Moses (the first five books of the Bible).

Say, "This week you will learn how the Passover tradition was preserved, even through the captivity of the Israelites in Babylon."

day one

Picture It

Two brothers, Bob and Eric Smith, decided to build a tree house with a few scraps of lumber, in a tree at the back of their yard. But when Sam Jones, the boy who lived behind them, saw it, he complained. He said he was going to report them to his father. He claimed the tree they were building in belonged to his family. But Bob and Eric didn't stop building; they were certain the tree was in their own yard. They had no fence between the yards, so it wasn't always clear where one ended and the other began.

When Mr. Smith came home he assured Bob and Eric that the tree was on their property and encouraged them to keep building their tree house. He phoned Mr. Jones, who then scolded Sam for causing trouble and warned him not to bother Bob and Eric again. Then Mr. Jones directed Sam to collect all their scrap lumber and give it to Bob and Eric for their tree house.

Today we will read how the governor in the land tried to stop Israel from completing the temple, but the people didn't listen. They trusted God and continued to build.



Read Haggai 1:1–15 and Ezra 5:1–5.

Think About It Some More

When King Ahasuerus had ordered the people of Jerusalem to stop rebuilding the temple and the city, they had become afraid and stopped working. Instead of rebuilding God's house, the people worked on their own homes and gardens. But God didn't bless their crops so, at harvest time, they didn't collect very much grain.

God then sent the prophet Haggai to give them a message. Haggai told God's people to stop work on their own homes and return to working on God's house, the temple. The people obeyed God's word through the prophet and went back to building God's house.

When Tattenai, the local governor, saw them rebuilding he tried to stop them. But God's people didn't stop. This time they trusted God and kept on building.

Talk About It

Why were God's people working on their own houses instead of rebuilding God's house?

They had grown afraid when their enemies opposed them and had stopped working on the temple.

What did God do to get them to start building his house again?

The Lord withheld rain so their crops did not grow well. Then he sent the prophet Haggai to tell them to start building God's house again.

After the people obeyed God and returned to working on the temple, God sent the prophet Haggai to give them another message. What did he tell them?

Parents, if your children can't read yet, reread Haggai 1:12 – 13 and have them raise their hands when they have the answer.

Pray About It

Thank God for patiently helping Israel rebuild the temple.

day two

Remember It

What do you remember about yesterday's story? What do you think is going to happen today?



Read Ezra 6:1 – 12.

Think About It Some More

Governor Tattenai sent word to King Darius that the Jews were rebuilding the temple. He asked the king to investigate to see if the former king, Cyrus, really had given them permission to rebuild. Tattenai probably thought the Jews were making up that story.

King Darius ordered his servants to investigate to see if it was true. They searched the records of the former king. Sure enough, they found the decree from King Cyrus and read it out loud to Darius. Not only had King Cyrus ordered that the temple in Jerusalem be rebuilt, he had also ordered that the royal treasury pay for it.

King Darius ordered Tattenai to allow construction to continue. And, much to Tattenai's surprise, the king ordered him to pay for everything the Jews needed to finish the job. Tattenai must have been shocked. Instead of getting permission to stop the Jews from rebuilding, the king ordered him to help them.

Talk About It

What prompted King Cyrus to tell the Jews to rebuild the temple to begin with?

See if your children can remember that God told King Cyrus to rebuild the temple. To jog their memory, read 2 Chronicles 36:22 – 23.

What was the punishment the new king, Darius, said would come upon anyone trying to stop the Jews from constructing the temple?

They would pull a support beam out of that person's house, kill them with it, and turn their home into a dung pile—parents you can explain to your children what a dung pile is. It is safe to say that Tattenai didn't want that to happen to him.

What do we learn about God from this story?

We learn that no man can stop God's plan. God can even move the heart of a king to do what God wants him to do. If you notice, Darius includes in his decree a prayer to God, which you can find in verse 12.

Read Proverbs 21:1 and ask your children how it fits into our story.

God was able to steer the heart of Cyrus and Darius to help his people finish the temple.

Pray About It

Praise God for the way he can turn the heart of a ruler to do God's will.

day three

Connect It To Jesus

Can anyone guess how our story is about Jesus or points forward to him?



Read Ezra 6:13 – 22.

Think About It Some More

When the new temple was completed, over 7000 animals were sacrificed as an offering to God for the sins of the people. By killing animals for their sins, they were saying that they knew they were sinners who needed to be saved from their sins.

These sacrifices pointed to the day God would send his Son Jesus to die on the cross. God's people also celebrated the Passover by killing a lamb for each family. They didn't realize it at the time, but the Passover lamb also pointed to Jesus, the Lamb of God. Who would one day come to take away their sins.

Talk About It

Why were the people so happy to see the temple rebuilt?

The temple was God's house where he lived among his people. God's people were happy because they believed God was going to live among them. He could protect them and bless them like in the days of David.

Why did God's people kill animals when they finished the temple?

The way God taught his people to worship him was by sacrificing animals. They also killed animals as sin offerings. By killing those animals, they were confessing their sin before God and asking him to forgive them.

Who does the Passover lamb point forward to?

The Passover lamb pointed forward to Jesus, who died on the cross for our sins.

Pray About It

Thank God we don't have to kill any animals for our sins. Jesus paid the price for our sin once and for all.

day four

Remember It

What has God been teaching you this week through our Bible story?



Read Ezra 7.

Think About It Some More

Once again we see how God was working in the hearts of kings to help his people. King Artaxerxes gave Ezra permission to return to Jerusalem with anyone who wanted to go. On top of that, the king ordered that gold and silver and special gifts be given for use in the temple. When Ezra heard all that the king had ordered to help God's people, he knew that God was behind it all.

Talk About It

KIDS, ask your parents which president or ruler of a foreign country they would be most surprised to see God use to bless his people today.

Parents, think of a ruler of a foreign country who is not serving God that would surprise you if he changed and started serving God. Tell your children why you would be so surprised.

What surprised you the most about what the king said to Ezra?

If you have younger children, reread the king's letter and have them raise their hands when they come across the part that surprised them the most.

Why was Ezra the right person to teach God's people?

Ezra knew the law of God.

Pray about It

Thank God for the way he used foreign kings to accomplish his plan.

day five

Discover It

Today we look at a passage from a psalm or one of the prophets to see what we can learn from it about Jesus.



Read Zechariah 3: 1 – 5.

Think About It Some More

In this prophecy Zechariah is describing a courtroom. There are three people in the courtroom: Satan, the Angel of the Lord (another name for God), and Joshua (who represents all of God's people).

In the prophecy Joshua stands, dressed in filthy clothes, before the king. His dirty clothes represent his and all of our sins. When Satan sees the dirty clothes, he begins to accuse him (he tells Joshua he is a bad person). But God stops Satan and tells him that Joshua had been rescued out of the fire. Then God gives Joshua bright, white, pure, clean clothes to wear.

This vision is a picture of what God does for everyone who trusts in Jesus. When we trust the Lord, our sins (our dirty clothes) are taken away and God gives us clean clothes to wear (the sinlessness or righteousness of Jesus).

Talk About It

Why did Satan accuse Joshua?

Joshua was standing before the king in dirty clothes.

What do the dirty clothes stand for?

The dirty clothes stand for sin.

What do the clean clothes stand for?

The clean clothes stand for the sinlessness of Jesus.

Who does Joshua represent or stand for in the story?

Joshua represents all believers, everyone who trusts in Jesus.

Pray About It

Thank God for taking away our sin and giving the sinlessness of Jesus to everyone who trusts in the Lord.