

3rd-5th Grade Lesson Plan

Sunday, September 20

UNIT 18 | SESSION 2

EZRA TAUGHT GOD'S LAW

EZRA 7-10; NEHEMIAH 8

MAIN POINT / CHRIST CONNECTION: Ezra taught God's law, and the people recognized their sin. Jesus came to fulfill the law and gives us power to turn away from sin through His death and resurrection. Through faith in Jesus, our hearts are changed so we can love and obey God.

MEMORY VERSE of the Month: JOHN 20:31 - "but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." (ESV)

LESSON CONTEXT: This Unit - Nehemiah led God's people to return home from exile and rebuild Jerusalem's walls. Ezra began teaching God's Word, and the people vowed to faithfully obey God. Malachi—the last Old Testament prophet—reminded the people of God's love for them. Malachi also warned God's people to repent of their disobedience and pointed them to the coming Messiah.

Fellowship Time | 9:00-9:15 am / 10:45-11:00 am

FELLOWSHIP TIME

Greet families at the door as they arrive. Allow children time to engage with one another and catch up. Use this time to get to know your students and hear about their week. **What was a good part/hard part or "yay duck"/"yuck duck" of their week?** If you'd like a prompting question for discussion, you can use the one below:

SAY: *When have you needed help understanding how to do something? Maybe you didn't know how to complete a math problem or you didn't understand how to build a project.*

ACTIVITY PAGE

Lead children to choose a desk and give them **an Activity Page and markers** (in Activity Box). You can also give them blank paper to draw or some playdough (in Teacher Box) if you prefer.

SAY: *Today, we'll see how God's people realized their sin when Ezra taught God's law to them.*

REVIEW CLASSROOM RULES

Post the **Rules Poster** (in Activity Box) somewhere in the room.

1. Be kind and respectful
2. Have a heart of obedience
3. Have self control

Group Activity

CHARADES ("DO WHAT IT SAYS")

Before this activity, write out simple actions on sticky notes (in Activity Box), such as pray, brush your teeth, make a bowl of cereal and eat it, play baseball, etc. Place the cards inside a cup. Ask for a volunteer to draw a card from the cup. Quietly assist kids with reading the action listed on the card, if needed. Direct the kid to act out the action listed on the card and challenge the kids to call out their guesses. Allow 20 seconds for the team to guess. Once that action is guessed, ask for another volunteer.

SAY *You all did a great job doing what was on the card. Today, we will see how Ezra taught God's words to the people and told them to do what it said. As we hear our story, we can remember that when we hear God's Word, it's important that we obey it.*

Lesson

Ask students to return to their desks and pass out **Bibles** (in Teacher Box). Let them know of your expectations during the lesson: listening to the teacher, sitting quietly with hands and feet to themselves, etc.

1. Introduce the Lesson + Pray

SAY *I'm so glad you are here! If you brought your Bible, can you please hold it up? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] Today, we will be in the Old Testament books of Ezra and Nehemiah.*

The Word of God is the most important book we will ever read! Not only do we grow to know God through His word, but we also learn how the Bible points us to our need for Jesus. All of Scripture reveals how God planned to send Jesus to save people from sin. As we hear our story today, we can be reminded that knowing and understanding God's Word guides us to live in ways that honor Him.

We'll learn that Ezra returned to Jerusalem and faithfully taught God's law to His people. When the people understood what God's law said, they realized their sin and their need to obey God. Let's pray together.

2. Using Bibles

SAY: *Today, we will learn a story that is found in both the book of EZRA and NEHEMIAH. Ezra comes right before Nehemiah in our bibles! Today we will read from NEHEMIAH*

- *First, find the table of contents in the front of your Bible. Do you think NEHEMIAH is in the Old or the New Testament? [Old Testament]*
- *So, find NEHEMIAH under the Old Testament column and locate its page number.*
- *Turn to that page. We will start in NEHEMIAH chapter 8.*

3. Tell the Bible Story

Open your **Bible** to **EZRA 1** and ask children to turn in their Bibles.

EZRA TAUGHT GOD'S LAW

Ezra was a scribe and a priest, and he knew the law of Moses. He had committed to study the law of the Lord, obey it, and teach it to all God's people.

King Artaxerxes wrote a letter that said, "Any of God's people who want to go back to Jerusalem with Ezra may go. Make sure to bring all the silver and the gold that I and others have given to the God of Israel. And if you need anything else for the house of God, you may use the royal treasury to pay for it."

Ezra praised God, thanking Him for the kindness and generosity of the king. God was with Ezra and strengthened him for the journey to Jerusalem.

After Ezra returned to Jerusalem, he met with some leaders of the people. Ezra learned that some of the people and their leaders had disobeyed God because they did not separate themselves from the surrounding nations and their wicked practices. Ezra tore his clothes and was very upset.

Ezra got on his knees and prayed to God, confessing the people's sin. As he did this, God's people began to gather around Ezra. They cried and confessed their sin too, promising to be faithful to God.

Then Ezra brought the book of the law of Moses and read it before all who could listen with understanding. He read the law from dawn until noon. All the people listened very carefully and lifted their hands and said, "Amen, Amen!" Then they knelt and worshiped God with their faces to the ground.

Then, Levites came to the people and began to explain the law so the people could better understand what was read. The people began to cry as they heard the words of the law, because they realized they had not been obeying God.

Nehemiah and Ezra said, "This day is holy to the Lord your God. Do not be sad! Go and eat good food and drink what is sweet, because today is holy. The joy of the Lord is your strength."

Then all the people had a great celebration with food and drinks because they understood the words of the law that Ezra taught them.

4. Christ Connection

SAY: *Ezra taught God's law, and the people recognized their sin. Jesus came to fulfill the law and gives us power to turn away from sin through His death and resurrection. Through faith in Jesus, our hearts are changed so we can love and obey God.*

Review & Video

Bible Story Video

If you'd like, watch the **Bible lesson video** on the YouTube app on the TV (*YouTube account should be Fellowship Kids (switch accounts on the top of the left sidebar if not) > go to Library on the left side bar > Choose Playlists on the top > choose your classroom).*

Review the Bible Story

Invite kids to think about what the word **courage** means. Prompt kids to share their ideas by raising their hands. Then write their responses on a dry erase board.

Invite children to **open their Bibles to NEHEMIAH 8:1-12.**

SAY -

- 1. Ezra read the law and then the priests explained the text to the people so that they could better understand it. Do we do something like this at church each week?**
 - a. *Yes! In the large church gathering, we read scripture and then our pastor explains the words and talks about them to help us better understand what God is saying in scripture.*
- 2. How did the people respond when they heard God's Word? See verse 9.**
 - a. *The people wept hearing God's Word because they realized that they had sinned and broken God's law.*
- 3. But what did Ezra and the priests tell the people to do instead?**
 - a. *They told the people not to mourn but to feast and celebrate because God had shown them faithful love.*
- 4. What is the only way for our sin to be taken away so that we can also rejoice in the Lord?**
 - a. *Our sin can be taken away when we trust in Jesus and ask him to forgive our sins and give us new, righteous hearts.*

Pray

Ask students if they have any **prayer requests**. Pray about what you learned in the lesson and for any requests.

Memory Verse

Show the **memory verse poster** (in Activity Box). Open your Bible to **JOHN 20:31** and lead the kids to read the verses together. You can also write the verse on the whiteboard so that children can see it more clearly.

“but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”
- JOHN 20:31

SAY EVERY OTHER WORD

Divide the room between girls and boys or equally in half. Have the girls and boys or each side read the verse aloud together, alternating every other word, so girls/first side says the first word, boys/second side says the second word, girls/first side the third, etc. After reviewing it a few times, use a timer to time how fast kids can say it while alternating words.

SAY: *Like God’s people rejoiced in God’s faithfulness to them despite their sin, we can rejoice in the good news of Jesus. Jesus came to save us and give us eternal life!*

Lesson Activity

HIDE YOUR WORD IN MY HEART

Take out the sticky notes that each have one word of Psalm 119:11 written on them. Hide the sticky notes around the classroom. Challenge kids to find each note. Then provide kids with a few Bibles and invite them to look up Psalm 119:11. Challenge kids to then tape the sticky notes on a wall in the correct order of the verse. Read the verse aloud together.

SAY: *Today, we learned that Ezra returned to Jerusalem and faithfully taught God's law to His people. Ezra was committed to reading God's Word and obeying it. The Bible is the story of God's plan to save people through Jesus. The Bible's truth, along with the Holy Spirit's power, also helps us turn away from sin once we are saved. Psalm 119:11 reminds us to hide God's words in our hearts so we can recognize sin and turn away from it. I encourage you to keep hiding God's Word in your heart.*

Dismissal

As parents arrive,

- Match the 4 digit code on the parent's tag to the child's tag
- Check out the child on the tablet by clicking the check box to the left of their name on the roster.
- **Give feedback!** Tell parents how the student did that morning.

Clean Up

- Wipe down tables if any messes were made with activities. [Magic eraser sponges can erase markings on desks.]
- Put teacher and activity items back in the Activity Box or Teacher Box.
- Place the TV remote in the white holder on the dry erase board.
- Return the small Activity Box and your lanyards to the check-in desk.