

## LESSON PLAN

### For Lower Elementary Students & Classes

#### Classroom Greeting

Teachers should arrive 10 to 15 minutes before class to greet students and parents by name. Have the day's Bible Message written on the white board or on poster board that all the kids can see. Consider using a repeatable special greeting ("This is the day the Lord has made!") or handshake for your students.



#### Opening Prayer Song

Have kids gather on a rug or in a dedicated meeting space. Take a minute and have students greet each other by name. It helps build community after not seeing each other for a week. The opening prayer song should be sung every week with these young kids — repetition is good.

This is sung to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." Accompaniment music isn't needed.

*Heavenly Father, we love you,  
thanks for everything you do.*

*Open our hearts and open our ears,  
so we can learn from what we hear.*

*Thanks for hearing us when we pray,  
and for loving us every day. Amen.*

#### Introduction to Today's Bible Message

*Teacher's Script (student responses are in bold).*

Today's Bible message is: God makes things happen. God makes everything happen. He makes the sun come up and the stars shine in the sky. He makes the wind blow and the grass grow. What's the message today? **God makes things happen.**

- Raise your hand if you can think of something else God made happen. *(All answers count. Allow several children to answer.)* **God makes things happen.**

God's people had a lot of things happen to them. They didn't trust God, but when God wants something to happen, **God makes things happen.** Today's story is about when God decided it was time for his people to go back to Jerusalem. He made it happen. He made other things happen, too, because **God makes things happen.**

#### Read the Story while Showing the Pictures

Each Bible Story has been divided into four parts, each with an accompanying Poster Picture to be printed on letter-sized paper (or enlarged to ledger-sized paper if a bigger printer is available). The teacher should hold up or point to the relevant Poster Picture while reading the individual part of the story, asking questions while reading.

#### Rebuilding the Temple

##### Based on Ezra 3:1-13

For many years, the Jews did not live in Jerusalem. They couldn't worship in their temple (church) or give offerings to God on their altar. They lived in a place called Babylon under King Cyrus, who was a nice king. *[What kind of king was King Cyrus?]*

##### Picture 1

After many years living away from Jerusalem, King Cyrus let the Jews go back to the city they called home. *[What city did the Jews call home?]* They wanted to go to be able to worship and give offerings to God, but they needed an altar to do that. *[Why did they want an altar?]* The first thing they built was an altar.

##### Picture 2

After building the altar, they needed to fix the rest of the temple (church). It was a big building. Some people didn't want things to change. They didn't want the temple fixed. *[Why didn't they want the temple fixed?]* They didn't want to worship God again. But, like it or not, the temple was being fixed.

##### Picture 3

King Cyrus made sure they had everything they needed to rebuild the temple. They used very large trees and it took many people working hard to get it done. *[What did they need to rebuild the temple?]*

##### Picture 4

When they finally got the bottom of the temple built, the people cheered and shouted with great joy! *[Why were the people cheering?]* They all celebrated playing their instruments, singing, and dancing. It was a great party to thank and praise God. *[Why did they have a big party?]*

##### Bible Message

Do you remember today's Bible Message? **God makes things happen.**

## Optional Activities for Young Children

You can choose one or two of the optional activities, depending on how much time you have. Be sure to leave time to go over the Take-Home Page before students leave.

### a. Fingerplay

A fingerplay is a story or rhyme with hand actions or movement that includes repeated lines to reinforce the story and/or the weekly Bible message.

*Tell the story and have kids do the actions or say the words in bold.*

The Jews were stuck in Babylon for many, many years. Finally, God was sending them home. The people cheered! **(yeah!!!)**

King Cyrus told them they could rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. The people cheered! **(yeah!!!)**

When they finally, they got there. The people cheered! **(yeah!!!)** They wanted to give God an offering, but there was no altar. The people cried, "Oh no!" **(oh, no!)**

The first job was to build an altar. They hammered **(bang, bang, bang)** and sawed **(zzz, zzz, zzz)**.

Soon it was done. The people cheered! **(yeah!!!)**

The next job was to fix the temple. It was big. King Cyrus gave them some really big trees. They said, "Thank you, God!" **(Thank you, God!)**

Some people who lived there didn't want the temple rebuilt. But God wanted the temple rebuilt, so the people hammered **(bang, bang, bang)** and sawed **(zzz, zzz, zzz)**.

When the first part was finally done, the people cheered! **(yeah!!!)** They were so happy that they had a party. The people cheered! **(yeah!!!)** and danced **(dance)**, and shouted, "Thank you God!" **(Thank you, God!)**

### b. Then What Happened?

*Then What Happened* is a learning game that helps kids retell the story and remember it. The rule is that whoever is speaking can only say one sentence or one thing. The teacher reads the starting sentence and then chooses a student to continue the story. The story needs to be in the right order.

*If the younger kids have trouble, cut a Take-Home Page apart and let them put the illustrations (no words) in order while they tell the story.*

START: King Cyrus let the Jews go back to Jerusalem. They wanted to worship God there. Then what happened?

### c. Song

This simple camp song has motions and can be found online.

#### **My God is So Big!**

**My God is so big** (arms up high)  
**so strong** (strong man arms)  
**and so mighty** (strong man arms on waist)  
**there's nothing** (shake finger)  
**my God cannot do.** (clap, clap)

**My God is so big** (arms up high)  
**so strong** (strong man arms)  
**and so mighty** (strong man arms on waist)  
**there's nothing** (shake finger)  
**my God cannot do.** (clap, clap)

**The mountains are his**  
 (make mountain peaks with hands)

**The rivers are his**  
 (wave hands like flowing water)

**The stars are his handiwork too**  
 (hands flash stars in the sky)

**My God is so big** (arms up high)  
**so strong** (strong man arms)  
**and so mighty** (strong man arms on waist)  
**there's nothing** (shake finger)  
**my God cannot do.** (clap, clap)

### d. Young Children's Craft

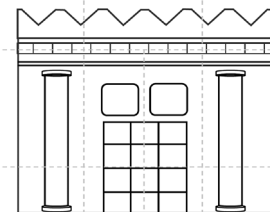
#### **Rebuilding the Temple Puzzle**

- Picture (with dashed lines) copied onto cardstock
- Crayons or markers
- Safety scissors

Copy each puzzle onto sturdy (but cuttable) cardstock. Let students color the picture.

Cut the puzzle pieces apart following the dashed lines. (Older kids can cut their own.) The lines are intentionally placed so students can rebuild the temple.

*Crafts may best be left to the end of class if behavior is a challenge. See the craft summary list for a description of all the younger children's crafts in this unit.*



## Take-Home Page

Repetition is very important to learning. The Take-Home Page allows teachers to review the story at the end of class. Invite children to take a seat at a table, and give each a copy of the Take-Home Page. Use the following questions to guide discussion. If necessary, explain to kids about thought and dream bubbles.

Encourage children to use the Take-Home Page to tell the story to their family.

### Have children point to Picture 1.

- Raise your hand if you can tell me what you see in this picture. *(Allow kids to answer until they start repeating answers or become silly.)*

*Read the words under Picture 1.*

- King Cyrus let the people go back to Jerusalem. What did the people do first?
- What is the altar in the picture? God wants everyone to bring him an offering. What is your offering?



### Have children point to Picture 2.

- Raise your hand if you can tell me what's happening in this picture. *(Allow kids to answer until they start repeating answers or become silly.)*

*Read the words under Picture 2.*

- What are the people building?
- Can you see someone who is unhappy? Why are some people unhappy?



### Have children point to Picture 3.

- Raise your hand if you can tell me what's happening in this picture. *(Allow kids to answer until they start repeating answers or become silly.)*

*Read the words under Picture 3.*

- What are they using to build the temple (church)?



### Have children point to Picture 4.

- Do the people look happy? What are they happy about?

*Read the words under Picture 4.*

- The temple is a big church. Do you think it would take a long time to build?
- What do you say when you shout with joy?



### Have children point to the Bible Message at the top of the page.

Do you remember today's Bible Message? **God makes things happen!**

## Closing Prayer

End class with this closing prayer, repeated each week for memorization.

*Thank you, Jesus, for teaching me.*

*Bless me, my friends, and my family.*

*This week I ask you to keep me safe  
and through the week to grow my faith.*

*Bring me back to learn again,  
and fill my heart with love. Amen.*