

Take a walk or a drive as a family. As you travel, invite kids to name things they see that God created. Remind everyone that God is in control. Jesus will return and rule over everything. Review the story of Obadiah as you return home. Discuss how Edom's pride led them to believe they were in control, but they weren't. Invite everyone to list one thing they saw during today's walk or drive.

The Exiles Returned

Obadiah the Prophet

Obadiah 1-21

Preschool

Key Passage: Zechariah 9:9

Big Picture Question: What is pride? Pride is thinking you are the best.

Christ Connection: *God gave Obadiah a message for His people. The people of Edom were mean to God's people, but God is always in control. He promised to save His people. One day, Jesus will be King over everything. He will make all things right.*

Kids

Key Passage: Zechariah 9:9

Big Picture Question: Why did God judge Edom's pride? Pride steals God's glory.

Christ Connection: *God used Obadiah to give a message to His people. Even though they were mistreated by the people of Edom, God was still in control.*

God showed His people that He is ruler of all the earth, and in the end, Jesus will set up His kingdom and make all things right.



Ask family members to name promises they have made that were hard to keep or that they failed to keep. Talk about how we fail to keep our promises, but God always keeps His promises. Review the big picture question and answer. Discuss promises God has made to His people. Draw a picture depicting one promise God has made.

The Exiles Returned

Zerubbabel Led the Captives Home

Ezra 1:1–2:2; 2:64–3:13

Preschool

Key Passage: Zechariah 9:9

Big Picture Question: Does God keep His promises?
God always keeps His promises.

Christ Connection: *Zerubbabel led God's people home to fix the temple. Jesus came to earth to save God's people. One day Jesus will come back. He will fix up a greater home for all of God's people, and we will live with Him forever.*

Kids

Key Passage: Zechariah 9:9

Big Picture Question: How did God keep His promise to the Israelites? God changed King Cyrus's heart so the Israelites could go home.

Christ Connection: *Zerubbabel led God's people back to the temple to rebuild it. The temple was the place where God met with His people on earth. Jesus came to earth to rescue God's people. One day Jesus will return to restore a greater home for all of God's people, and we will spend eternity with Him.*



Make a list of all the activities your family is involved in. Talk about whether any of the activities are making it harder to put God first. Allow kids to circle the activities that help them put God first. Briefly review what Haggai told the Israelites by talking about the big picture question and the Christ connection.

The Exiles Returned

Haggai, Prophet to Judah

Haggai 1-2

Preschool

Key Passage: Zechariah 9:9

Big Picture Question: How can we honor God? We can put God first.

Christ Connection: *God's people had been away from home for a long time. They didn't have a place to worship God. When they went home, Haggai told them to fix the temple. God promised to be with them. When God sent His Son, Jesus, God kept His promise to be with us.*

Kids

Key Passage: Zechariah 9:9

Big Picture Question: How can we honor God? We can put God first in our lives.

Christ Connection: *God's people struggled to do what God wanted them to do. God chose Zerubbabel to help the people finish the temple. Many years later, God sent His Son, Jesus, to do God's will. Jesus died and rose again to free us from sin so that we can do His will.*



Find Zechariah 9:9 in the Bible and read it as a family. Remind family members that many of the prophets spoke about the coming Messiah. Invite kids to share their favorite Bible story about Jesus. You may want to have a kid's storybook Bible handy to help younger kids pick out a story. Note each story on the journal page. Review the Christ connection and close your time together in prayer.

The Exiles Returned

Zechariah, Prophet to Judah

Zechariah 1-14

Preschool

Key Passage: Zechariah 9:9

Big Picture Question: What did Zechariah say about Jesus? Zechariah said Jesus is coming.

Christ Connection: *God showed Zechariah many visions about things God was going to do. God was going to help His people and give them a special king. Jesus is the King who came humbly on a donkey, just like Zechariah said. Because God kept His promise to send Jesus, we can trust in Jesus to forgive our sins.*

Kids

Key Passage: Zechariah 9:9

Big Picture Question: What was Zechariah's message? Zechariah spoke about the coming Messiah.

Christ Connection: *God was going to help His people and give them a different kind of king. Jesus is the King who came and rode humbly on a donkey, just as Zechariah said. Because Zechariah's prophecy came true in Jesus, we can have hope and forgiveness of sins when we trust in Jesus.*



Gather building blocks, play dough, or graham crackers and icing for each family member. Guide family members to create a building of their choice and share with the family what they designed. Record the type of building each family member created below or take a picture and attach it to the journal page. Talk about why the Israelites rebuilt the temple. Name places your family can worship God.

The Exiles Returned

The Temple Was Completed

Ezra 4:24–6:22

Preschool

Key Passage: Zechariah 9:9

Big Picture Question: Why did the people rebuild the temple? The people rebuilt the temple to worship God.

Christ Connection: *God's people rebuilt the temple so they would have a place to worship God. Years later, God sent His Son, Jesus, to be with His people on earth. People don't need to go to a temple anymore to meet with God. Jesus is with us wherever we go.*

Kids

Key Passage: Zechariah 9:9

Big Picture Question: Why did the people rebuild the temple? The people rebuilt the temple to worship God.

Christ Connection: *God's people rebuilt the temple so they would have a place to worship God. Years later, God sent His Son, Jesus, to be with His people. Now God dwells not in the temple, but directly with His people. Because of Jesus, we don't need a temple anymore.*



Invite kids to name people they know whom God has used in His plan. Encourage kids to think about people they go to school with, attend church with, or see in other life situations. Family members may also name Bible people. Review the story of Esther by allowing kids to tell or read the Bible story. Write a prayer on the journal page asking God to help each family member to be willing to be used by God in His plan to rescue people from sin.

The Exiles Returned

Esther Saved Her People

Esther 1–10

Preschool

Key Passage: Zechariah 9:9

Big Picture Question: How did God use Esther? God used Esther to help save His people.

Christ Connection: *The Jews were in danger, and they needed someone to save them. God made Esther the queen so she could help the Jews. Today, everyone sins and is in danger. We need someone to save us. God sent His Son, Jesus, to save people from sin.*

Kids

Key Passage: Zechariah 9:9

Big Picture Question: How does God use people? God uses ordinary people to carry out His plan.

Christ Connection: *God was in control over*

Haman's evil plan to destroy the Jews.

Like Haman, Satan wants to destroy believers. He thought he had won when

Jesus died on the cross, but God raised Jesus from the dead and defeated Satan once and for all.

