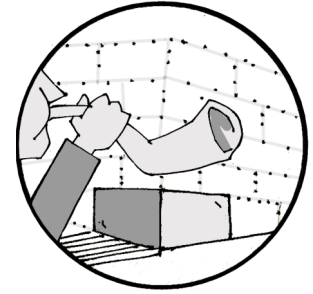


**Lesson #2-15***Returning from Exile*

Ezra 1:1-4; 3:1-4, 10-13

**Key Verse:**

And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD, "For [God] is good, for [God's] steadfast love endures forever toward Israel."

Ezra 3:11

**The Point:**

We should worship God in joy or sadness when God keeps God's promises.

**Unit Theme (December 1—December 22)**

Promises Made, Promises Kept

*Worship with Our Lives*

*Express worship in joy and sadness.*

*You will need:*

- † Bible or hymnal
- † Activity Sheet
- † Scissors, craft sticks, glue or tape, crayons or markers

*Instructions:*

1. Prepare a list of psalms (e.g. Psalm 88, 113) or hymns that express joy and sorrow.
2. Invite participants to cut out and color the faces from the activity sheet. Then they will use glue or tape to attach the faces to each other, with a craft stick in between. This will create a "happy/sad" sign.
3. **In our story today we learned how the people of Israel responded once the temple was built. Some were happy and some were sad. But no matter how they felt, God heard them and loved them.**
4. **When we share our lives with God, that is an act of worship.**
5. **Today we are going to practice worship together. I am going to share a psalm (or hymn), and you are going to lift up your sign, showing either the happy face or sad face.** Read the selected psalms or hymns. If appropriate for your setting, the psalms or hymns (or portions of them) can be recited or sung as a group.
6. **Now we are ready to sit in silence, just resting in God's love for us. Let's take some time to be quiet, to breathe in God's presence.** After allowing the participants to sit for a few minutes, close with an "Amen."

