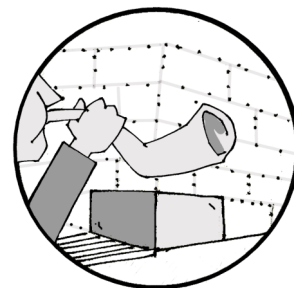


Lesson #2-15**RETURNING FROM EXILE**

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 3—December 25)

Promises Made, Promises Kept

BUILDING TOGETHER

Identify meaningful aspects of your church.

Supplies:

- † Pens or markers
- † Small boxes

Preparation:

1. Gather two small boxes for each member.

Instructions:

1. Step 1: Lay the foundation. **What physical things make your church feel like your worship home? Write or draw those objects and images on one or two of your boxes.**
2. Step 2: Plan the altar. **What is one thing you really value in Sunday worship? Write or draw your answer on one of your boxes.**
3. Step 3: Build together. **Now, combine your ideas! See what you can build as a community. Can**

you make a wall? A flat foundation? A square? A giant tower? What boxes “fit well” together and which ones do not?

4. Step 4: Discuss. **What about the images and values on your boxes? Are there some that fit well together and others that do not? For example: are there some parts of worship well suited to extroverts (the passing of the peace) and others that introverts prefer (silent personal prayer)? How does a community care for the different images and values that its people have?**
5. Step 5: Pray. **As you closing prayer, say a prayer of dedication for your worship space. Feel free to make up your own prayer, or you can use Psalm 30.**