

Unit 17, Session 1
God Delivered His People (Ezra 1)



Dear families,

Rest. It's a word that conjures up different thoughts in different people from different circumstances. For some, rest brings to mind a desire to momentarily break from the chaos of life to sleep, relax, and even recover. For others, rest is an unrealistic hope as they navigate a non-stop schedule of busyness. Yet for others, the word rest suggests an uneventful, quiet life of the mundane.

Whether it's a nap, a vacation, or boredom that comes to mind when you think of rest, it is likely a word that triggers some desire or response. And almost universally, the thought of rest is primarily physical.

The Bible teaches that rhythms of rest are good and even necessary for us; however, the Bible's primary teaching on rest refers to the spiritual. In Ezra 1, God's remnant is instructed to recover from their exile with ... work.

This work would be costly, demanding, and long; but this work actually aimed to bring rest. How could this be so? Because their work was to build the place where they would encounter the living God, the One who gives true rest to the soul.

In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take up my yoke and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Though God clearly teaches us the benefits of a rhythm of physical rest—Sabbath—He ultimately uses physical rest to teach us of our need for a greater spiritual rest—a rest for our soul, a rest that comes in understanding that we cannot save ourselves, but God has done everything necessary through Christ to save us. We are invited into this rest through the substitutionary atonement of Jesus.

The people of God are instructed in Ezra 1 to begin the arduous work of building God’s dwelling place. But this work would ultimately lead to their place of rest—in God’s presence.

We too may find ourselves physically exhausted from the demanding work of faithfully following the Lord in the context He has placed us. But take heart, there is rest for your soul in the presence of God and the person of Christ.

Check out *The Gospel Project At Home* for resources designed to help you lead a family worship experience as well as suggestions for morning and evening prayer times and family activities.

FAMILY TALKING POINTS

CHRIST CONNECTION

This is the big idea of how this week’s Bible story points to Jesus.

- **Babies & Toddlers:** God keeps His promises. God chose King Cyrus as part of His plan. God chose Jesus as His plan to rescue and bring us home to His kingdom forever.
- **Younger Preschool:** God keeps His promises. He chose King Cyrus as part of His plan to bring His people home from Babylon. God chose Jesus as His plan to rescue sinners and bring us home to His kingdom forever.
- **Older Preschool:** God keeps His promises. He chose King Cyrus as part of His plan to bring His people home from Babylon. King Cyrus reminds us of Jesus. God chose Jesus as His plan to rescue sinners and bring us home to His kingdom forever.
- **Kids:** God always keeps His promises. God chose to use King Cyrus in His plan to graciously deliver His people from exile. King Cyrus’ action to free the people reminds us of Jesus, whom God chose to rescue sinners and bring us to our true home in His kingdom of grace.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION & ANSWER

This is an important biblical truth that your child will encounter each week of this unit.

- **Younger Preschool:** Can God be trusted? Yes, we can trust whatever He has said.

- **Older Preschool:** Can God be trusted? Yes, God cannot lie, so we can trust whatever He has said.
- **Kids:** Can God be trusted? Yes, God cannot lie or ever be wrong, so we can trust whatever He has said.

KEY PASSAGE

This is a Bible verse that relates to what your child will encounter each week of this unit.

- **Babies & Toddlers:** Trust in the Lord. Jeremiah 17:7
- **Younger Preschool:** The person who trusts in the Lord is blessed. Jeremiah 17:7
- **Older Preschool:** The person who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence indeed is the LORD, is blessed. Jeremiah 17:7
- **Kids:** The person who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence indeed is the LORD, is blessed. Jeremiah 17:7

**** Next week:** Zechariah Gave Hope (Zechariah 13–14)