

Volume 8 Adult/Kids Connections (SUM 2014)

Unit 22, Session 3: Ezra Read the Law

Nehemiah 8:1-12

Christ Connection:

Preschool: The Bible teaches us about God and Jesus. It helps us know the right things to do. We do wrong things a lot, but when we know and love Jesus, He helps us say no to sin. Jesus died to rescue us from sin.

Kids: God's Word is powerful. When Ezra read God's Word, the people changed their ways and loved God more. The Bible says that Jesus is "the Word." Jesus is God who came to live with people on earth. Jesus has the power to change our hearts.

Adult Connection Point: In Exodus 32, the children of Israel created an image that gave them a distorted vision of God. They worshiped this depiction of God for less than a day before they were involved in immoral behavior. Idolatry distorts our vision and then corrupts our behavior. And when we trace our sinful behavior backward, we often will find a distorted vision of God. We need to read the Bible so that we do not create or fall prey to false views of God. God reveals Himself in words because pictures and images can never contain Him. They conceal more than they reveal. In only one place can you see a picture of God. Colossians 1:15 says that Jesus "is the image of the invisible God." The word *image* equals "icon" here. Hebrews 1:3 offers that the Son is "the exact expression of His nature" (HCSB). We see the real God in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. In Him, we see God in all His glory.

Family Devotion:

Materials: step stool, Bible

Direct your family members to think of a favorite Bible verse, then invite them to locate it. If you have a preschooler, assist with recalling a memorized verse or a short verse that could be repeated. Choose one child to stand on the step stool and read the verse from the Bible. When the child is finished, lead your family to say, "Amen, Amen!" Continue until each family member has stood on the stool and read a verse.

Review the Bible story in Nehemiah 8. Remind your kids that Ezra read the Bible scroll from sunrise until noon to everyone who gathered. During that time, the people stood and listened while others explained God's Word so they could understand.

Ask: "Why do you think the people were weeping when they heard God's Word?" Remark that the people were weeping because they had not obeyed God's Word and had kept on sinning. Instead of weeping, Ezra insisted the people celebrate because the hearts of God's people had changed. They no longer wanted to

keep sinning. In the same way, when we have a relationship with Jesus He will change our heart towards God and others also.

Instruct your family to stand as you read the well-known verse: Nehemiah 8:10. Guide them to repeat, "The joy of the LORD is your stronghold." Then say, "Amen, Amen!"

Pray, thanking God for His Word and for Jesus. Ask God to change your family's hearts so you can love and obey Him.