

**Bible Verse** "The joy of the Lord is your strength"- Nehemiah 8:10b

**The Story:** Many of the Israelites had been forced to live in Babylon after their army had been defeated. Now about 150 years later some Israelites have come back to Israel. Ezra, a priest, was among those who came to Jerusalem. He noticed that the those who had remained in Jerusalem had forgotten God's teaching. Ezra rebuilt the Temple and with Governor Nehemiah the walls that kept Jerusalem safer.

In today's story, the people came to one of the city gates and asked Ezra to read God's word. As all the people quietly listened, they were sad and started to cry because they knew that they had disobeyed God. Ezra told the people that instead of being sorry for not obeying God, they should now be joyful because God was their strength. Governor Nehemiah declared a holy day. The people celebrated God's love, and the reading of the scriptures, by having a feast. People shared their food and drink with the poor and the immigrants who would not have been able to take part otherwise.

**Story Video:** <https://youtu.be/BU-NNIfP11c> God's People Repented Nehemiah 8-13 Jul 25, 2020

**Talk about:** Nehemiah proclaims a feast day to celebrate that the people were once again listening to the words that God told Moses. He tells the people to send a portion to those for whom nothing is prepared. That way the poor in the community and non-Jewish (immigrant) people would also be able to celebrate. How do you include others in your celebrations? What could we as a church family do make sure everyone is included?

**Music Videos:** <https://youtu.be/Z29h7HUcJus> I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy May 28, 2011  
<https://youtu.be/Fu6wL9a6rn4> Kids Worship Songs - Joy of the Lord | Freedom Kids Oct 14, 201

### **Family Craft Idea: Paper Bag Scroll**

**Materials needed:**

Brown paper bag or paper  
2 sticks or dowels

Glue or paper  
String

Cut a brown paper bag so that is a flat piece of paper (or another piece of paper). Write or help your child(ren) write today's bible verse "The joy of the Lord is your Strength" Nehemiah 10b. Glue or tape the paper to a stick or dowel on both ends. Roll it up and tie. Remind your child(ren) that before books the bible was written by hand on large scrolls. Now you can even read the bible on the internet. God is always with us. We can show God's love when we listen and follow God in our actions and words.

## United with Families

January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022

## Coming Home- The Israelites Return

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10

**Bible Verse** "The joy of the Lord is your strength"- Nehemiah 8:10b



**God Sightings:** Think of all the wonderful things you can see; things created by God- our families you, me stars, sun, moon, animals, birds, and everything! We are looking at ways we see what God is doing or has done all around you. A God Sighting might be a hug or a beautiful sunrise or sunset.

**You can be a God Sighting by being kind to others. My God Sighting:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Faith and Prayer:** Faithful God, thank you for loving us always. Wherever we are you are with us: in our homes, at school, in the park or when we are in a strange land. Show us how to care for others. Amen

### For Youth (grade 6 and up)

**Think about:** The people who lived in Jerusalem had stopped following God's ways. Instead, they started to follow the practices of people who did not believe in God. When Ezra and Nehemiah came the people asked to learn more about what God expected them to do. What are ways that you listen to God when you are not in church or faith groups? How do you avoid the temptations of following the crowd rather than following God?

**Music Video:** [https://youtu.be/jRm6A-6F\\_Ow](https://youtu.be/jRm6A-6F_Ow) My God Is (The Joy of the Lord) Aug 18, 2016  
<https://youtu.be/PZSFzq03ILg> The joy of the Lord is my strength (Rend Collective) - St Albans Salvation Army Worship Song Sep 15, 2020