LESSON 22

EZRA READS THE LAW TO THE PEOPLE



Aim: **To show the children how studying God's Word feeds us spiritually and enables us to live a life that pleases God and brings us joy.**

Scripture Reading: **Nehemiah 8:1–12, 18; 9:1–3**

Memory Verse: **Exodus 20:16**
(the Ten Commandments)
"You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour."

Presenting the Lesson

Starting Point

What do you do when you have completed a job? Give the children time to respond. Perhaps you sit down for a rest or you begin to do something else. If it's something big that you have finished, you may show it to your friends.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. Nehemiah and the people of Jerusalem had completed the great job of rebuilding the wall of their city. Now that it was safe to live there, everyone was called to a meeting inside the city. Ezra the priest was asked to read God's Word to the people. It would teach them how to live together in the way God wanted (Neh 8:1).
2. **Show Picture 22.** Ezra is standing on a raised platform so everyone can see him. He is holding a scroll, which is what the Old Testament was written on before printing was invented. You can see the rebuilt city walls behind him. Everyone who was old enough to understand came to listen, children too. You must imagine many more people than you can see here; it is impossible to show them all in the picture! Ezra started reading at dawn and went on until midday. The people stood listening all that time (8:2–6)!
3. Every so often Ezra stopped reading and the Levites, who were the teachers, explained God's Word to the people (8:7–8). In the picture the Levites are standing behind Ezra.

   One passage the people would have heard Ezra read was Exodus 20: the Ten Commandments. Let us say together as much of it as we have learnt so far. **Recite Exodus 20:1–15.**

   Now let us learn the next verse of Exodus 20. Let the class recite verse 16.
4. When the people heard what God's Word said they were upset, because they realised how much they had disobeyed his commandments. **Refer to Picture 22 again.** They had deserved to have their city destroyed. Nehemiah told them not to be sad that day, as it was meant to be a day of rejoicing. God had spoken to them and had told them how to live and worship him. Later on the people would have a special meeting to think about their sins and ask God's forgiveness (8:9, 11; 9:1–3).

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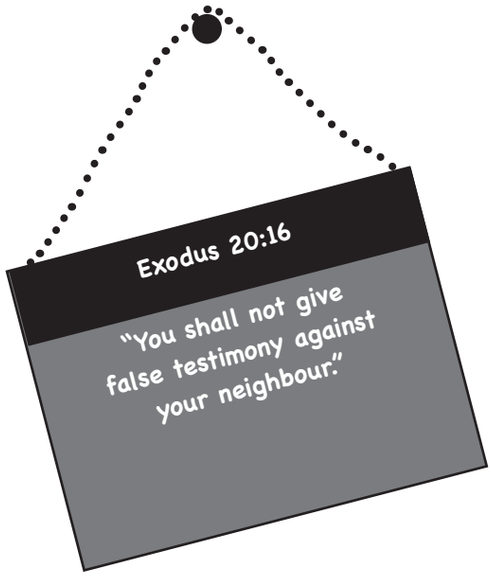
5. So the people left the meeting and celebrated. God had brought them joy. Hearing his Word and understanding what it meant had given them new strength (8:10, 12).

Our Response to the Story

Knowing God's Word gives us joy and strength. I want you to say Exodus 20:1–16 to yourselves during the coming week. If some of you come from the same family or if you can meet, say the verses to each other. It is easier than doing it alone.

Can any of you read, or do you have someone who can read to you? If you have a Bible or a part of the Bible, I am going to give you five to ten verses to read each day. **The Gospels and Genesis are good books to begin with.**

Instil the Memory Verse



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