

Story Time - Read the story to the children
Lesson 123: THE PEOPLE CONFESS THEIR SIN
EZRA 10:1-17

Ezra was praying and confessing. He was crying and bowing down in front of God's Temple. While Ezra was doing that, a large group of the Israelites--men, women, and children--gathered around him. They were crying. Then Shecaniah son of Jehiel, one of the descendants of Elam, spoke to Ezra and said, "We have not been faithful to our God. We have married the people living around us, when the LORD told us not to. But, even though we have done this, there is still hope for Israel. Now let us make an agreement before our God to send away all these women that we married and their children. We will do that to follow the advice of Ezra and the people who respect the laws of our God. We will obey God's law. Get up, Ezra. This is your responsibility, but we will support you. So be brave and do it." So Ezra got up. He made the leading priests, the Levites, and all the Israelites promise to do what he told them to do. Then Ezra went away from the front of God's house. He went to the room of Jehohanan son of Eliashib. While Ezra was there, he didn't eat any food or drink any water. He did that because he was still very sad. He was very sad about the Israelites who came back to Jerusalem. Then he sent a message to every place in Judah and Jerusalem. The message told all the Jewish people who had come back from captivity to meet together in Jerusalem. Those who did not come to Jerusalem in three days like the officials and elders said would lose all their property and be removed from the group. So in three days all the men from the families of Judah and Benjamin gathered in Jerusalem. And on the twentieth day of the ninth month, all the people met together in the Temple yard. They were trembling (which means shaking because they were upset) because of the reason for the meeting and because it was raining very heavily. Then Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, "You people have not been faithful to God. You have married foreign women. You have made Israel more guilty by doing that. Now you must confess your sins to the LORD, the God of your ancestors. You must obey His commandments. Separate yourselves from the people living around you and from your foreign wives." Then the whole group who met together answered Ezra. They shouted, "Ezra, you are right! We must do what you say. But there are many people here. And it is the rainy time of year, so we cannot stay outside. This problem cannot be solved in a day or two because we have sinned in a very bad way. Let our leaders decide for the whole group that is meeting here. Then let

every man in our towns who married a foreign woman come here to Jerusalem at a certain time. Let them come here with the elders and judges of their towns. Then God will stop being angry with us." Only a few men were against this plan. They were Jonathan son of Asahel and Jahzeiah son of Tikvah. Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite also were against the plan. So the Israelites who came back to Jerusalem accepted the plan. Ezra the priest chose men who were family leaders. He chose one man from each tribe. Each man was chosen by name. On the first day of the tenth month, the men who were chosen sat down to study each of the situations. And by the first day of the first month, they finished discussing all the men who had married foreign women so that they could make their decision.

123. THE PEOPLE CONFESS THEIR SIN
(EZRA 10:1-17)



"Now confess to the LORD God of your fathers, and obey His will."
EZRA 10:11

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EZRA 10:1-17

MEMORY VERSE:

"Now confess to the LORD God of your fathers, and obey His will." EZRA 10:11

TRUE OR FALSE

1. Ezra was praying and confessing and bowing down before the Temple of God.
TRUE or FALSE
2. When Ezra got up and went into the room of Jehohanan the son of Eliashib, he ate and drank a lot of food and water. TRUE or FALSE
3. Ezra did not eat any food or drink any water because he was sad.
TRUE or FALSE
4. They sent a message to every place in Judah and Jerusalem telling all the people who came back from captivity to meet in Jerusalem. TRUE or FALSE
5. The people were happy about the meeting and because of the heavy rain.
TRUE or FALSE

ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

1. Why did they have the meeting? Was it because the people had sinned?
2. What sin did the people do? Did they marry foreign women (which means women from other countries)?
3. What did Ezra tell the people they needed to do? Did he tell them to confess their sins to God and to obey His will?
4. What else did he tell them to do? Did he tell them to separate themselves from these other foreign people (which means to get away from them)?
5. Did the people say they were going to do these things right away? No – they said it would take some time to do these things.

Lesson 123

Confessing our Sins to God

Discuss with the children about confessing and what it means to confess our sins to God. Ask if anyone knows what it means to confess.

Ask the children to give examples of some sins that people commit. List them on paper or on the board.

Now perhaps confess one of your own sins (for example, Today, I was angry at someone and didn't want to forgive them, or I told a lie when I was a child about _____), then go around the room asking if anyone else has sinned, then lead the children in a prayer confessing your sin to God, and asking His forgiveness, then ask God to forgive all of us our sins.

Then explain how God is always faithful to forgive all our sins when we confess them to Him and ask His forgiveness.

Explain how we can ask God to help us to be stronger so that we won't sin.

OPTIONAL CRAFT

Stay in the Light

The world is full of darkness. We need to stay close to the light of God's Word and be separated from this world. As a reminder of this have the children make a light bulb and put the memory verse in the center.

You will need yellow and gray construction paper, glue, markers or crayons, and glitter. Using yellow construction paper, have the children cut out light bulb shapes (approximately 6 inches). Next, have them cut out small gray squares for the base of the light bulb. Have the children write the memory verse in the center of the light bulb. As an option, use glitter to make the light bulb look shiny.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to remain separate from the world. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.