

Story Time - Read the story to the children

Lesson 126: EZRA READS THE LAW

NEHEMIAH 8:1-9:5

All the Israelites met together in the seventh month of the year. They were united and in complete agreement. They all met together in the open place in front of the Water Gate. All the people asked Ezra the scribe to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had given to the Israelites. So Ezra the priest brought the law before those who had met together. This was on the first day of the month. It was the seventh month of the year. Men, women, and anyone old enough to listen and understand were at the meeting. Ezra read in a loud voice from the Book of the Law from early morning until noon. He was facing the open place that was in front of the Water Gate. He read to all the men and women, and to everyone old enough to listen and understand. All the people listened carefully and paid attention to the Book of the Law. Ezra stood on a high wooden stage. It had been built just for this special time! On his right side stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah. And on his left side stood Pedaiah, Mishael, Malkijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam. So Ezra opened the book. All the people could see him because he was standing above them on the high stage. As he opened the Book of the Law, all the people stood up. Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people held up their hands and said, "Amen! Amen!" Then all the people bowed down and put their faces low to the ground and they worshiped the LORD. These men from the tribe of Levi taught the people about the law as they were all standing there. The Levites were Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, and Pelaiah. They read the Book of the Law of God. They made it easy to understand, and explained what it meant. They did this so that the people could understand what was being read. Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and teacher, and the Levites who were teaching the people spoke. They said, "Today is a special day to the LORD your God. Don't be sad and cry." They said that because all the people had begun to cry as they were listening to the messages of God in the law. Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy the good food and sweet drinks. Give some food and drinks to those who didn't prepare any food. Today is a special day to our Lord. Don't be sad, because the joy of the LORD will make you strong." The Levites helped the people to calm down. They said, "Be quiet, calm down, this is a special day. Don't be sad." Then all the people went to eat the special meal. They shared their food

and drinks. They celebrated that special day. They were happy that they could hear the reading of God's law and were now able to understand it. Then on the second day of the month, the leaders of all the families went to meet with Ezra, the priests, and the Levites. They all gathered around Ezra the teacher to study the words of the law. They studied and found these commands in the law. The LORD gave this command to the people through Moses: In the seventh month of the year, the Israelites must go to Jerusalem to celebrate a special festival. They must live in temporary shelters. And the people are supposed to go through all of their towns and Jerusalem and say this: "Go out into the hill country and get branches from different kinds of olive trees. Get branches from myrtle trees, palm trees, and shade trees. Use the branches to make temporary shelters. Do what the law says." So the people went out and got tree branches. Then they built temporary shelters for themselves. They built shelters on their own roofs and in their own yards. And they built shelters in the Temple yard, in the open place near the Water Gate, and near Ephraim Gate. The whole group that had come back from captivity built shelters. They lived in the shelters they had built. Since the days of Joshua son of Nun up until that day, the Israelites had not celebrated the Festival of Shelters like this. Everyone was very happy! Ezra read to them from the Book of the Law every day of the festival from the first day of the festival to the last day. The Israelites celebrated the festival for seven days. Then on the eighth day, the people met together for a special meeting, as the law says. Then on the 24th day of that same month, the Israelites gathered together for a day of fasting. They wore sackcloth (which is simple clothes made out of very rough material!) and put ashes on their heads to show they were sad and upset. Those people who were true Israelites separated themselves from foreigners. The Israelites stood and confessed their sins and the sins of their ancestors. They stood there for about three hours, and the people read the Book of the Law of the LORD their God. Then for three more hours they confessed their sins and bowed down to worship the LORD their God. Then these Levites stood on the stairs: Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Kenani. They called out to the LORD their God with loud voices. Then these Levites spoke again: Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodia, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah. They said, "Stand up and bless the LORD your God forever and ever! Blessed be your glorious name, which is lifted above all blessing and praise!"

126. EZRA READS THE LAW
(NEHEMIAH 8:1-9:5)



“So Ezra opened the book. All the people could see him because he was standing above them on the high stage. As he opened the Book of the Law, all the people stood up. Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people held up their hands and said, “Amen! Amen!” Then all the people bowed down and put their faces low to the ground and they worshiped the LORD.”

NEHEMIAH 8:5-6

126. EZRA READS THE LAW

NEHEMIAH 8:1-9:5

MEMORY VERSE:

"Stand up and bless the LORD your God forever and ever! Blessed be your glorious name, which is lifted above all blessing and praise!" NEHEMIAH 9:5

TRUE OR FALSE

1. All the people asked Ezra the scribe to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had given to the Israelites. TRUE or FALSE
2. When Ezra opened the book for all the people to see, all the people sat down. TRUE or FALSE
3. And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people said Amen! Amen!. TRUE or FALSE
4. The Levites read from the book of the Law and said it very fast so that the people could not understand it. TRUE or FALSE
5. Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites told the people that the day was a special day to the LORD, and that they should not cry or be sad. TRUE or FALSE

ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

1. Did Nehemiah tell the people to go eat and drink to celebrate this special day?
2. What did he tell them to do for the people who didn't bring any food or drink? Did he tell them to share with the other people?
3. What did they find in the Law that they should do and build? Was it to celebrate the Festival of Shelters? What did they build?
4. Did the people go and stay in these temporary shelters? Do you remember how long they stayed in them? Was it seven days?
5. After they celebrated the Festival of Shelters (It is also called the Feast of Booths) what did the Law say they should do? Was it to have a meeting?
6. What did the people do on the 24th day of that same month? Did they put on special clothes called sackcloth, and put ashes on their heads? What did that mean when they did that? Did it mean they were sad and sorry for their sins?

Lesson 126 Craft

Make your own Temporary Shelters!

Materials:

Graham crackers

Stick pretzels

Jellybeans or other candies (cake decoration candies work well too!)

A good thick icing (you can take canned icing from the store and add powdered sugar to it to thicken it!)

Directions:

Glue a 3-sided 'shelter' together with icing, then glue pretzels across the top and dab some icing on the bottoms of the cake candies/decorations/jellybeans to add to the top.

You now have an edible "Booth" or Shelter!



OPTIONAL CRAFT

Mini-Scrolls In our story today, Ezra read the law from scrolls. Using the enclosed template, cut out the scripture strips of Deuteronomy 30:8-10. Make as many copies as the number of children in your class. Using one straw for each child, instruct them to cut it in half. At the ends of each scripture strip, tape the straw placing one half of the straw at each end. Write for them or allow the children to write their name on the back of the scroll. Roll both ends to make a scroll. Reinforce the importance of God's Word. The study of God's Word should be a priority.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY Lesson 126

Looking In a Mirror

Have your class sit down in a circle. Ask the children to remember when they woke up this morning and looked into a mirror; what did they see? Did anything need to be changed from what they saw? What did they do about what they saw in the mirror? What do mirrors help us to see? Before class, set a small mirror in a Bible. Pass the Bible around from child to child and open it to the place where the mirror is. Tell each of them not to shout out what they see. When everyone has had an opportunity to see it, then ask the class as a whole what they saw (a mirror). Read James 1:22- 25. How is the Word of God like a mirror? What kinds of things do we see? What can we do about those things we see in our lives that need changing?

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to read God's Word and do what it says. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.

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Deuteronomy 30:8-10

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