

## Exile—Lamenting What Holds Me Captive

### 1) Ritual

Altar cloth, candle, prayer.

### 2) Check-in

You will have extra time to do blessings and bruises, joys and struggles during activity time.

### 3) Review the Story

Please invite your kids to share their first impressions from today's Bible story.

#### GOD'S BOTTOM LINE PROMISE

"Do not fear, for I am with you; I will gather you." [Isaiah 43:5]

#### BACKGROUND [2 Chronicles 36]

When our ancestors revolted in 597 B.C.E., King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon invaded, kidnapped, and enslaved them. He destroyed Jerusalem utterly, burning the temple and tearing down the city walls. Our ancestors were exiled from their home. This exile was a bleak period in the life of God's people. The prophets reflect upon the heart-wrenching horror and grief of our ancestors with many laments recorded in the Bible. The prophets also remind our ancestors, God is still God and will remain faithful, gathering God's people back home in due time. [Adapted from [enterthebible.org](http://enterthebible.org)]

#### VIDEOS

- *Read Scripture: Lamentations* (The Bible Project): This video discusses the destruction of Jerusalem, our ancestors being kidnapped into exile, and the emotional devastation it caused. <https://youtu.be/p8GDFPdaQZQ>

### 4) Start with Sharing—Times of Suffering the Consequences

**Bonus Ice-Breaker:** Talk about a time you ignored warnings and suffered the consequences of your actions. What happened? How did you feel? What brought you through?

### 5) Activity—Chains of Lament and Mercy

*Lament:* a passionate expression of grief or sorrow. Write on the strips blue and purple paper answers to the lament questions below (top right corner of the reverse of the discussion sheet). Making loops of each strip, staple together a chain of lament. These colors represent hurts and bruises. **BRING THESE WHOLE CHAINS TO THE ATRIUM AFTER SMALL GROUP. WE ARE COLLECTING THEM FOR A PROJECT.**

† OH GOD! MY GOD! ... (What is hurting?)

† WHY!? OH WHY!? ... (What is confusing?)

† HOW LONG MUST I SUFFER? ... (What is frustrating?)

† ANSWER ME! I'M DYING! ... (What is taking your life?)

*Mercy:* compassion or forgiveness shown when even when it is undeserved. Write on the strips of green and yellow paper answers to the mercy questions below. Making loops of each strip, staple together a chain of mercy. **BRING THESE WHOLE CHAINS TO THE ATRIUM AFTER SMALL GROUP. WE ARE COLLECTING THEM FOR A PROJECT.**

† What is healing you?

† What is clear & purposeful?

† What is bring you peacefulness?

† What is forgiving and life-giving?

### 6) Further Discussion—Back to the Story

If you have time, read the Bible verses and discuss the questions.

### 7) Pray and Bless

Prayers can be statements and not just requests. Simply name before God in prayer the kids' bruises and struggles, joys and blessings. End by blessing them.



THE STORY OF OUR PEOPLE  
**EXILE**  
2 CHRONICLES 36

Write or draw about things you liked or learned from the story. What surprised you? What do you wonder about?

Blessings and Bruises; How were you with God today? How was God with you today? Questions? Wonderings? Write or draw here.

START WITH SHARING

- + When have you lost something you valued? Or had it taken away from you?
- + Talk about a time you ignored warnings and suffered the consequences of your actions. What happened?
- + What do you imagine was the worst part of our ancestors' experience of being forced to abandon their home with little hope of returning?
- + When was a time that you felt like you had been banished, exiled, or driven away?



GOD'S BOTTOM LINE PROMISE

*"Do not fear, for I am with you; I will gather you."* [Isaiah 43:5]



“By the rivers of Babylon—there we sat down and there we wept when we remembered [our home in] Zion.” [Psalm 137:1]

•When have you felt so homesick you could cry?



“O that my head were a spring of water, and my eyes a fountain of tears, so that I might weep day and night for the slain of my poor people!” [Jeremiah 9:1]

•When you're sad, what do you do? Call a friend? Go for a walk? Act like nothing is wrong? Write in your journal? Something else?

**Lament:** a passionate expression of grief or sorrow.

Follow up the prompts with laments of your own.

- 😞 OH GOD! MY GOD! ...  
(What is hurting?)
- 😞 WHY!?! OH WHY!?! ...  
(What is confusing?)
- 😞 HOW LONG MUST I SUFFER? ...  
(What is frustrating?)
- 😞 ANSWER ME! I'M DYING! ...  
(What is taking your life?)



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2 CHRONICLES 36

**You are a precious child of God! And we love you very much!**