God’s Big Story: Exile

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| scripture focus |
| 2 Chronicles 36:15-21; Daniel 9:11-19 |

big picture

After King David, the Israelites did not choose life; they did not love God or love their neighbor well. Many bad kings ruled over Israel, and they led God’s people to worship idols, hurt each other, and practice injustice. The Law alone couldn’t bring God’s people life, because they didn’t follow it. God sent many prophets to warn them, but they ignored the prophets and kept on making terrible choices. Finally, the consequence God warned about came true: Jerusalem was conquered by Babylon, and God’s people were driven to a strange land to live in exile. There, they longed for rescue, and they called out to God to forgive and restore them. And God heard. Throughout the exile, God’s steadfast love continued, and Daniel’s story is just one example of how God showed his faithfulness to both the Israelites and their captors. But that’s not all – God had an even grander plan to rescue and restore: one that would encompass not just God’s own people, but spill over to include the entire creation.

|  | storybooks | bible readings |
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| read aloud | *Jesus Storybook Bible:* p.152-159\* (“Daniel & the Scary Sleepover”)  *Psalms for Young Children:*  Psalms 13, 28, 69, 88, 130 | 2 Chronicles 36:15-21  Daniel 9:11-19  Lamentations 3:19-24  Psalms 13, 79, 85, 130, 137 |
| discuss/ ask | Why do you think the Israelite people chose not to follow God & God’s instructions? What was their consequence?  God gave the law to the Israelites in order to bring them life – but instead, they were conquered and exiled. Why didn’t the law bring the Israelites life?  Do you think that God abandoned the Israelites when they went into exile? Why or why not? If not, then how did God continue to show faithfulness in their exile?  How do you think God is going to rescue the Israelites?  When have you experienced a consequence for doing something you shouldn’t have done? What happened? How were things made right again? | |
| do together | Build up Jerusalem with blocks or Legos & miniature figures, then have the enemy army of Babylon come in and destroy it and lead the miniature figures into exile. Emphasize that this was a consequence for not choosing life, but that God had a plan to watch over the Israelites, rescue them, and restore them. | |

\*This storybook Bible does not cover the Israelites’ disobedience & exile, so you may want to “read” that story into the first page of the children’s Bible before going on to the story of Daniel.