

Turned to Joy

INSTRUCTIONS: Use the picture clues below to change one letter at a time until you spell *Joy*.

SAD



BIBLE STORY SUMMARY:

- After the walls were built, Ezra read God's law to the people.
- The people were sad when they understood they had sinned.
- Ezra told the people not to be sad, but to celebrate God's faithfulness to them instead.
- God's people repented and promised to be faithful.

KEY PASSAGE: 1 Peter 5:10

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

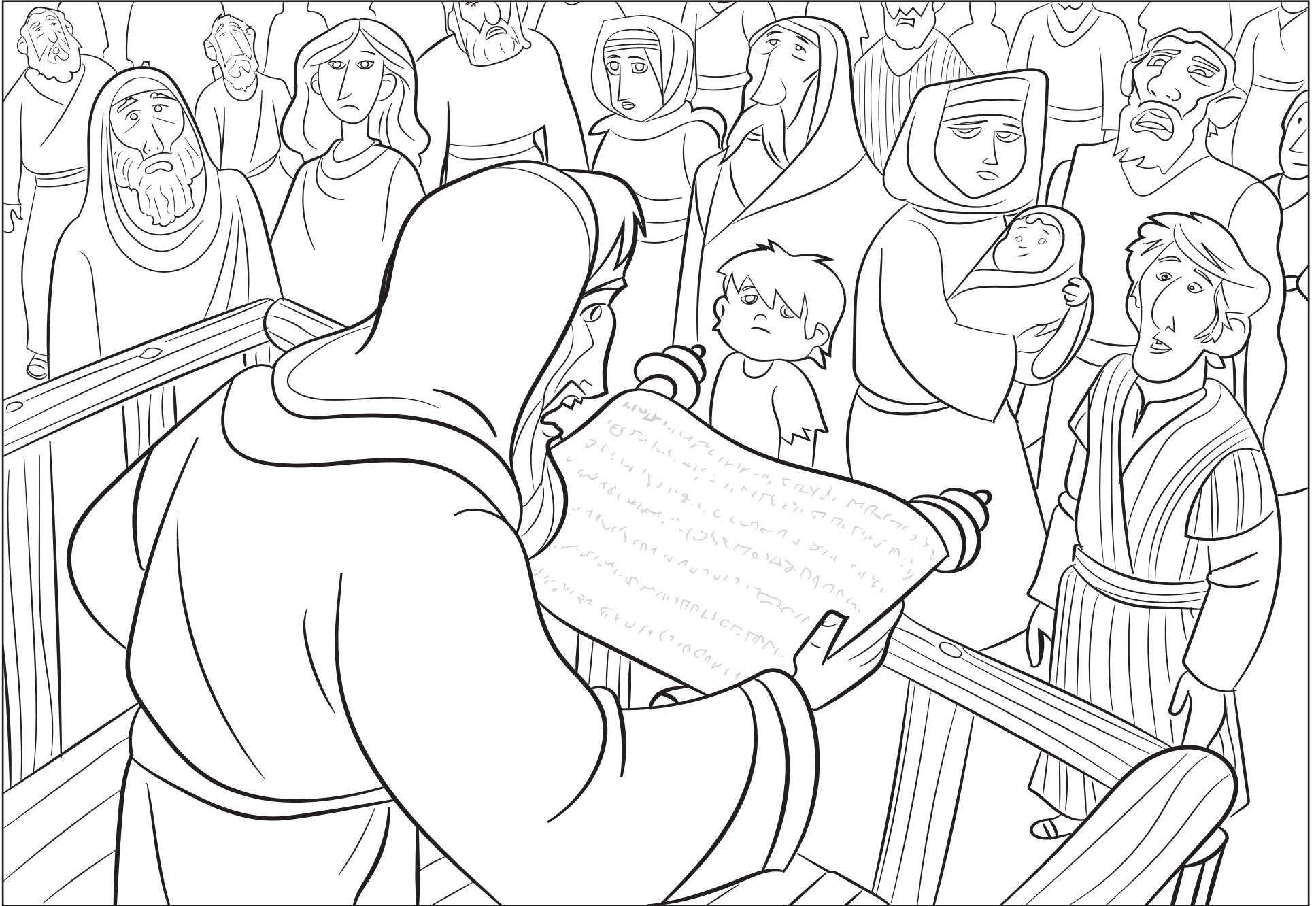
- Why might we feel sad because of our sin?
- Why can we celebrate despite our sin?
- Who can help us better love and obey God?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Throw a party to celebrate God's work in your family. Decorate, serve cake or other desserts, and sing worship songs as a family. Take turns naming specific things God has done for you in the last year.



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Journal Page



- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What does it mean to repent?
- Has God's Word ever changed you? How?
- What might you need to turn away from to better obey Jesus?

God's People Repented

Nehemiah 8-13

STORY POINT: GOD'S PEOPLE REPENTED AND PROMISED TO BE FAITHFUL.

All the people in Jerusalem gathered together early in the morning at one of the city gates. Men, women, and children—anyone who could understand—came to listen to the reading of God's Word.

As the sun was just coming up, Ezra the priest brought out the book of the law. God's words were written on a scroll. Ezra stood on a high wooden platform and began to read.

Ezra read the law for hours, and all the people listened carefully. The people stood up; they had respect for God's Word. Ezra praised God, and the people lifted up their hands. The people in the crowd worshiped God. Some of the leaders explained the law to the people. The people began to cry. The people realized they had sinned.

Ezra, the Levites, and Nehemiah the governor said, "This day is holy to the Lord your God. Do not be sad or cry." Even though the people's sin made them sad, this was a happy day.

Ezra said to them, "Go home and prepare a feast! Eat rich food and drink sweet drinks. Share what you have." And again Ezra said, "Today is holy to the Lord our God. This is not a day to be sad because the joy of the Lord is your strength."

Nehemiah led God's people to repent and confess their sin. They agreed to worship only God and promised to obey Him.

Christ Connection: God's Word is powerful. When Ezra read God's Word, the people loved God more and changed their ways. The Bible says that Jesus is "the Word." Jesus is God who came to live with people on earth. Jesus has the power to change our hearts.



FOLD

Celebrate! | Today we are going to talk about a celebration! Draw a line from the picture to the event that it celebrates.



- **Independence Day**
- **wedding**
- **Christmas**
- **football game**
- **birthday party**
- **Thanksgiving**

Join the Party | Use the information from Nehemiah 8 to create an invitation for the reading of God's Word at the city gate.

YOU'RE INVITED!

Who: _____

What: _____

Where: _____

When: _____

Why: _____

An illustration of a man with a large nose, wearing a blue robe and a white head covering with a gold headband. He is blowing a large silver trumpet. The background is a warm, golden-yellow gradient.