

Haggai 1

A Note to the Parents/Teachers

In this part of the story, we read that God speaks to the prophet Haggai to tell the people to rebuild the temple of God. In their return to Jerusalem, they have gotten comfortable and settled into their way of life but have forgotten their need for the presence of God.

Call to Worship

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come. You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will, they were created and have their being.” - Revelation 4:8,11

- **Big Idea:** God is building His temple...He wants you to be part of it.

Starter

Evidence of Grace

Ask kids to share ways they've seen God at work lately. Anything, big or small, which is good is from God. Take time to thank God together.

Discussion:

- Have you ever built something or seen someone build something? What did you (or someone else) build, and how did you/they use to do it?

Sing Together

Story

During the time of the prophet Haggai, there were many Jews still living in exile in Babylon. Almost 50 years had passed since the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. Even though the new king Darius allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem and their old homes, most of the generation that had been carried into exile had died; the generation born during the exile only knew Babylon as home. This new generation chose to stay in Babylon to keep the financial security and comfort they had built up during the exile.

There are quite a few people who still decided to return to Jerusalem. When they returned, they found it in ruins. Many homes, stores, gathering places, and, most importantly, the Temple was destroyed. When they returned, they had to rebuild so many things. The first places they started to rebuild were their homes, farms, and gathering places.

In Haggai, the Spirit of the Lord tells the prophet Haggai to tell the people that the time has come for the house of the Lord to be rebuilt. The Spirit tells Haggai to tell the people: “Is it a time for you yourselves to live in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins? Now, the Lord of Armies says this: ‘Think carefully about your ways:

*You have planted much but harvested little.
You eat but never have enough to be satisfied.
You drink but never have enough to be happy.
You put on clothes but never have enough to get warm.
The wage earner puts his wages into a bag with a hole in it.”*

What the Spirit was saying to the people through the prophet Haggai, was calling the people to look at what they are putting their trust in. When they returned to Jerusalem, it wasn't bad that they rebuilt their houses first so that they had somewhere to live. But the people started to settle into their houses, their farms, and their way of life in ways where they were trying to accumulate more for themselves apart from the presence of God. God did NOT want them to return to Jerusalem and go back to how they lived in Babylon. Jerusalem was not to be a new Babylon. Jerusalem was where the presence of God was and needed to return to for the sake of Israel and for the nations.

The temple was the “House of God.” It is where the Spirit of God lived. It was considered the holiest place, a sacred place, a place where people would bring their sacrifices for sins and to worship God because the temple is where the Spirit of God was. The people of Israel would bring their sacrifices to the priests of the temple, and the priests would make the sacrifices on behalf of the people. The priests were the only ones allowed into the holiest place in the temple, called, “The Holy of Holies.”

Jesus

When Jesus died on the cross, the Bible says that the veil in the temple, that separated the Holy of Holies from the people was torn. There was no longer a separation between the presence of God and the people. Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice that fulfilled all of the penalties for sin and therefore paid the price once and for all. The people of God no longer needed a temple for the presence of God to dwell among His people. Now, when we pledge our allegiance to Jesus and become a part of God's kingdom, God's Spirit dwells in us because of Jesus' sacrifice. Now, priests are not the only ones who can enter the presence of God. Jesus calls those who follow Him a kingdom of priests. We can now enter the presence of God because the Spirit of God dwells within us.

[Dialogue Questions - you may use some or all]

- ▶ Why was it important for the temple to be rebuilt?
- ▶ Why do you think God withheld the fullness of the peoples' harvest from them?
- ▶ Why do you think God reminds the people that they are not satisfied, happy, or have enough when it comes to food, clothing, and water?
- ▶ Are there things that you might be finding satisfaction, happiness, or fulfillment in other than Jesus?
- ▶ How are you invited into this story?

Breakout Time

Pray:

God, I know that you are the one true living God who created all things. You created the earth and everything on the earth. You created me. Thank you for sending your Son Jesus so that I can be forgiven of worshipping other things. Forgive me for sometimes worshipping other things than you. I repent. Holy Spirit, please work in my heart to love God and love others in a way that points them to Jesus and your Kingdom. May our hearts be filled with love for you and for others in response to what you have done in and through your Son Jesus and the story you have invited us to now participate in. Help me to think of my community this week and how I can love them well so that they might know you more.

Craft:

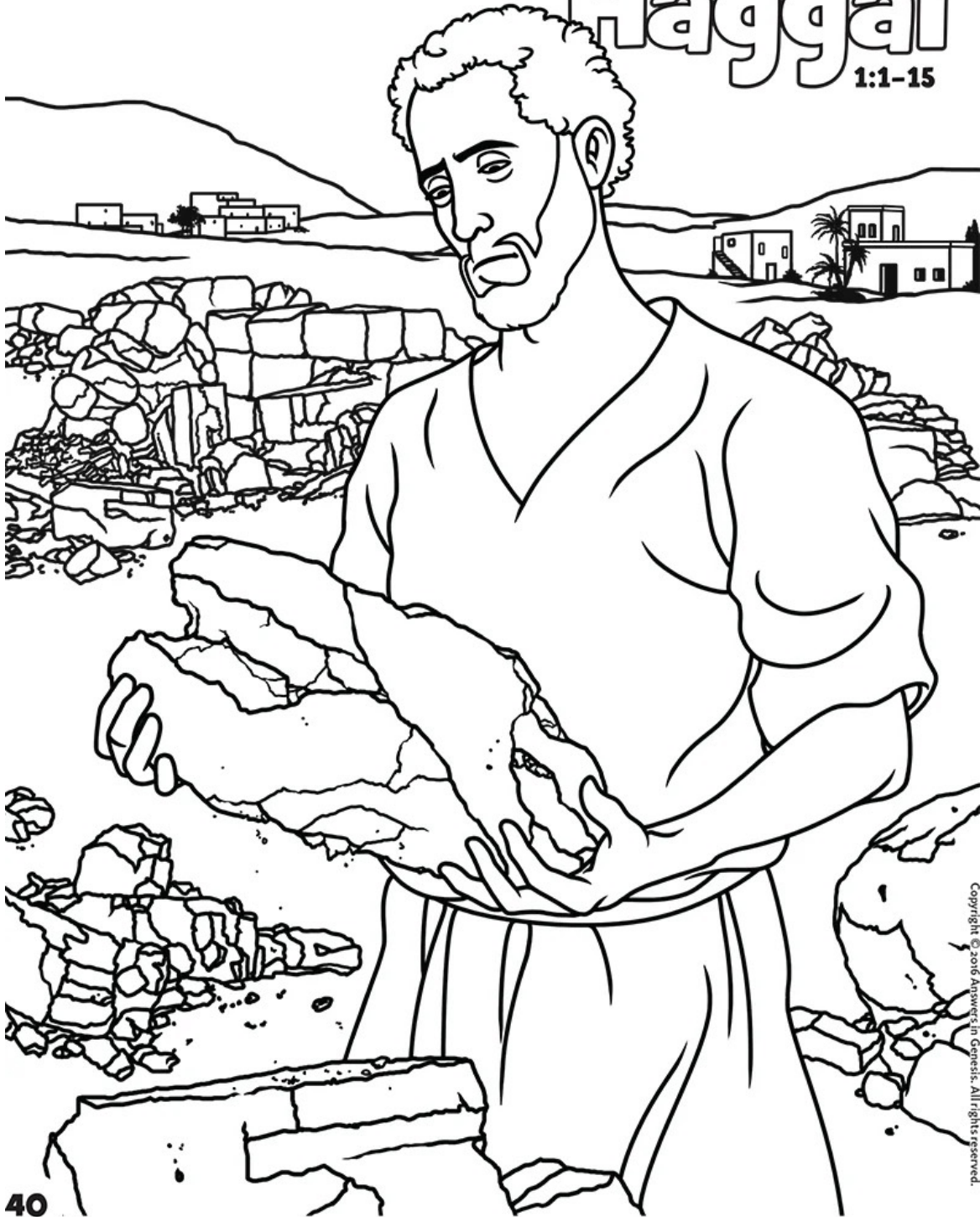
The kids can color the picture below.

BLESS Activity

This week, ask your family how you can practice the Speak rhythm. Maybe as you go to school, go to the store with your parent, go to your sports game or after-school activity, or even in your own home and think about who you might be able to speak the good news that the kingdom of God has come to earth in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Haggai

1:1-15



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