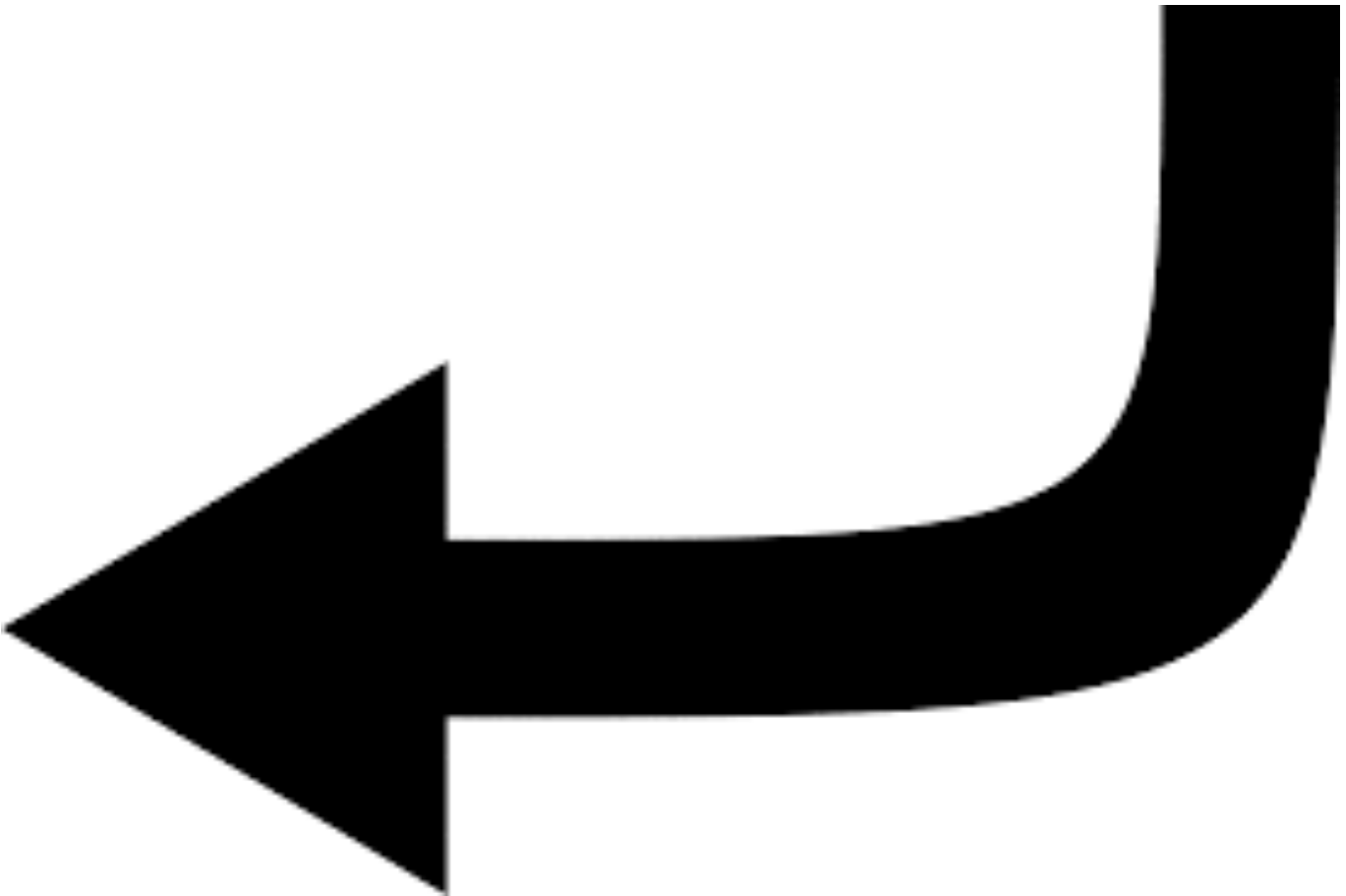
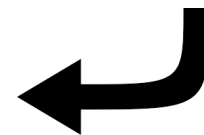


Era 9:  
Return





## Return Lesson

1. Welcome: have the students build a temple/tower/structure with the given supplies. (toothpicks, foil, marshmallows, etc.)
2. Worship: What stood out to you?
3. Word: Last week, we discussed the Exile, where the Babylonians came in and took the Jewish people (Southern Kingdom, Judah) back to the country of Babylon to become just like them. **Do you remember what all they made them change when they got to Babylon?** Everything! They spent 70 years in captivity in Babylon until a Persian king, Cyrus, let them return to their land.

Lets talk about Cyrus for a bit. After a lot of mean people, King Cyrus came to power and God made his heart tender to the Jewish people. He told them they could return home to rebuild the temple that the Babylonians destroyed. But not only that, he would give them money and things that had been stolen from them when they were forced to leave. He told them, "Go home and rebuild your temple."

Look at the map (for their notebooks) and put a star on Jerusalem and an X on Babylon. Have them trace the journey with their finger, discussing what it must have been like to make them journey and then return after longing for home for 70 years.

So packed up and went home. All 50,000+ of them!

Read Nehemiah 1: 1-12. Preface by telling him this book was written in 1st person and we are getting a chance to really understand what it was like to enter back into their homeland where everything was destroyed. Nehemiah is the King's cupbearer and is so sad at what he sees when they return. (I always picture Simba returning and the Pride lands being burned and destroyed by Scar in the Lion King.)

**How is Nehemiah feeling?**

**What is he asking of God?**

Nehemiah acknowledges that God said if his people disobeyed him, he would scatter them (vs.8). And he did.

**What does Nehemiah say of God in vs. 9?** That if the people return to Him and keep his commandments, he will bring them back to a place together and will dwell among them.

Watch the video on Nehemiah. (Nehemiah the Cupbearer-PursueGOD Kids)



What do you think about Nehemiah?

Did he obey God even though it seemed like a scary and big thing to do?

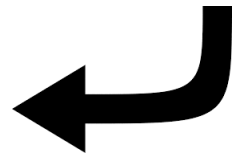
What can we learn from Nehemiah and the people of Israel?

We are going to mess up in life. Sometimes a little, sometimes a lot. But God is always the same. He told his people that he would scatter them if they disobeyed him, and he did. But he was faithful to bless his people when they turned back to him.

He will do the same thing for us. Sometimes our lives may look like the wreckage Nehemiah and Simba saw. Like things are just too far gone and we will never be able to rebuild things. But with Jesus as our Lord, we can always get a fresh start. Jesus lays our foundation and we get to build upon when he has done for us.

Thank God for that today.

Color the coloring page included at the end of the lesson.



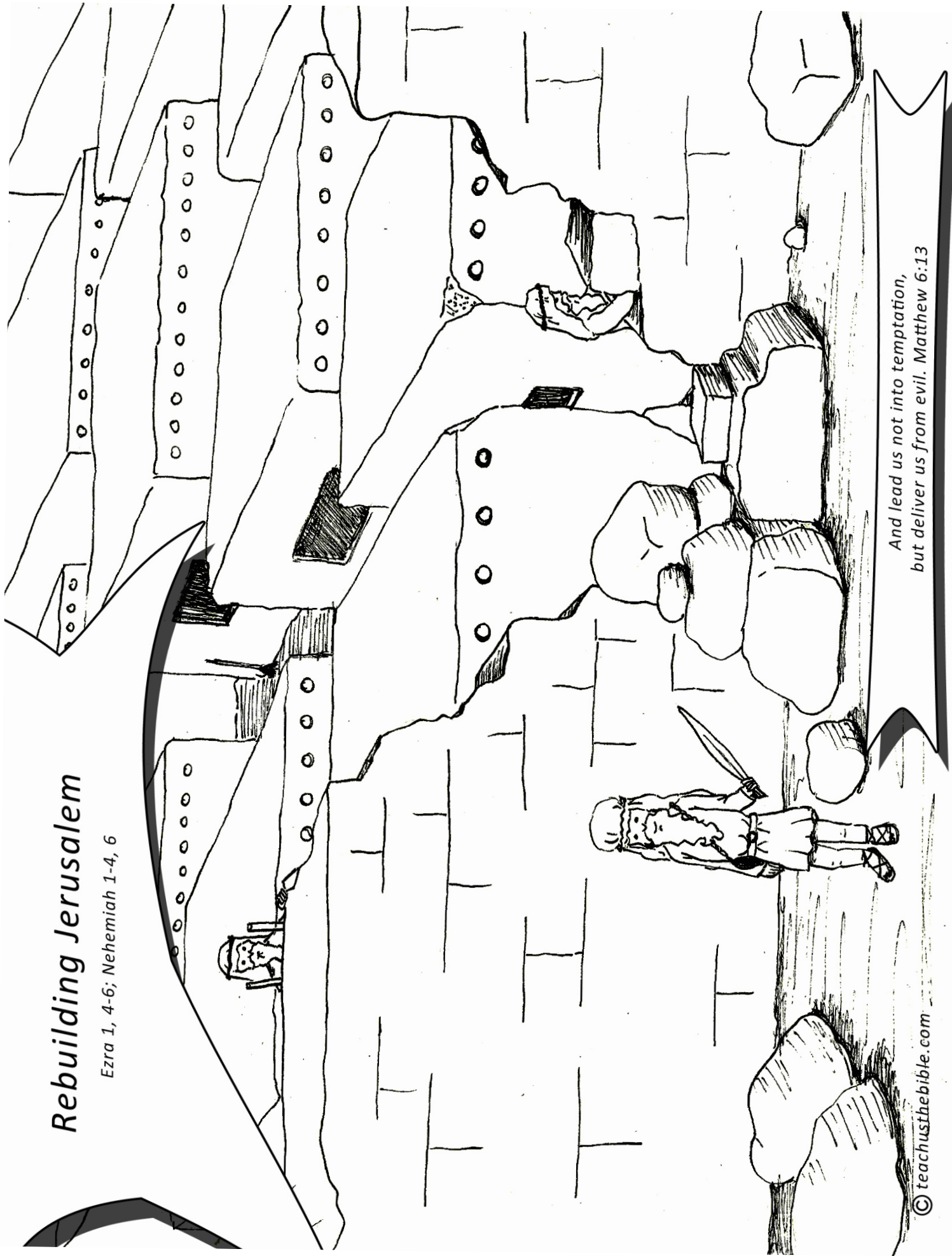
Here is a map of the journey for the Jewish people from their homeland, Jerusalem to Babylon, then back to their home.

Put a star on Jerusalem and an X on Babylon.



# Rebuilding Jerusalem

Ezra 1, 4-6; Nehemiah 1-4, 6



And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil. Matthew 6:13