

Disciples Mission Week

SEPTEMBER 8-13, 2026



**Disciples
in Mission**
Everyone. Everywhere.
Every Need.

Children Worship Wonder & Welcome

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The People of God in Community

Adapted from *Exile and Return* by Sonja M. Stewart & Jerome W. Berryman, *Young Children & Worship* (Isaiah 58:6 - 10).

Children Worship Wonder & Welcome video link will be provided closer to the event and will be available [here](#).

This story was written for use during Disciples Mission Week 2026, for Disciples Home Missions. It can be used in worship, Christian Education, or other devotion settings, with all ages.

Walk slowly to the desert box and move it to the circle. Return to the sacred story shelf to get the tray with the Exile and Return materials. Carry it carefully with two hands to the circle and place it beside you. Sit quietly while you feel the story forming in you. Then say:

This is the desert box.

Trace the edge of the desert box.

Inside is a small piece of the desert...So many important things happen in the desert that we just have to have a small piece of it in our room.

Slowly move your hands over the sand, smoothing and molding it, as the sand is transformed into the desert.

The desert is a strange and wild place. At night it is very cold, but in the day, it is burning hot. There is almost no water at all...The desert is always changing. The wind comes and as it blows it shapes and molds. So, the desert is never the same.

Pause, place your hands in your lap, and sit back a moment. Draw a four-inch square in the sand. Put the people of God in the square as you say:

This is the city of Jerusalem, the Holy City of God. The People of God had lived in Jerusalem for a long time...

One day the king from another land came to Jerusalem. He wanted the Holy City for himself. So, he and his army took it from the People of God. They burned the Temple, the house of God, and they tore down the walls around Jerusalem.

Smudge the outline of the square.

And the people of God were taken to a strange land...

Move the people from the city across the desert.

...the land of Babylon. They could not go home.

Place a heavy chain across the middle of the box.

They were in exile.

Then a new king came to Babylon and took it for himself. This king began to let the people of God go back to Jerusalem.

Move all but two of the people from the desert to one end of the chain and say:

When the people returned to Jerusalem, they tried to remember The Ten Best Ways to Live, but sometimes they forget who they are, and how to show God love.

Move the people back to the area where Jerusalem was but spread apart from one another.

Some thought God wanted them to say prayers. Some thought God wanted them to worship in a certain way. Some thought God wanted them to refrain from eating food.

Move the people close together in a circle, as if in worship and say:

Who would show them the ways that God wanted them to live, again?

Present Isaiah and say:

Isaiah was a prophet. Prophets listen to God so they can show us the way. Isaiah was a prophet who listened and spoke the word of God.

Spread the figures slightly apart.

Isaiah reminded the people that God wanted them to care for one another.

Spread the figures a bit further apart so they can each experience something different.

Some people were carrying heavy burdens.

Place a stone beside one figure.

Some people felt trapped.

Place a string/cord around another figure.

Some people were hungry.

Cause one of the people to fall over, as if fainting from hunger.

Some people had no home, nor family, nor protection.

Move one figure distinctly outside the rest of the group.

Through prophets like Isaiah, God showed the people the best ways to live.

Touch or point to Isaiah.

Isaiah reminded them that they should...

Remove the stone and place it back in the basket.

... help carry heavy loads...

Remove the string/cord from the figure and place it back in the basket.

... help people become free...

Stand up the figure that had "fallen over."

... share food with those who need it...

Move the outsider back into the group, into a circle, with Isaiah as part of the circle.

... welcome people in, and care for those in need.

Move ALL the people closer together.

God spoke through Isaiah and said...

"When you care for one another, light comes."

"When you help those who suffer, light comes."

"When you share with those in need, light comes."

Place a candle in the middle of the people and light it with a match (or place an electric candle, turned on, in the middle of the people).

The light came.
The people could see one another
more clearly.
The people could see the way
before them.

*Sit back and look at the community
gathered around the light before asking
the wondering questions, below.*

Wondering Questions

- I wonder what the people were thinking/feeling when they heard these words?
- I wonder how Isaiah felt telling these things to the People of God?
- I wonder how it feels to carry a heavy burden?
- I wonder how it feels when someone helps you?
- I wonder how it feels to be hungry and receive food?
- I wonder how it feels to be welcomed?
- I wonder why helping others is connected to The Light?
- I wonder if the people changed as they gathered around The Light?

- I wonder if God's people still need to hear these words?
- I wonder if you wonder anything about this story?
- I wonder what part of this story you like best?
- I wonder what part of the story is most important?
- I wonder where you are in this story?
- I wonder what parts we could leave out and still have all we need?

Materials

- Desert box
- People of God (from OT stories)
- Isaiah (from Advent stories)
- Heavy chain (from Exile and Return)
- Basket for people
- Basket for cord/string and rock
- Skinny taper candle (and matches if using a real candle)
- Tray for materials