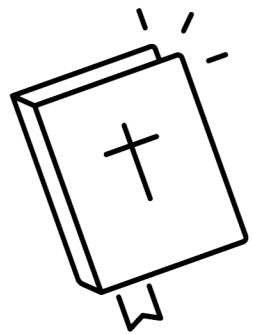
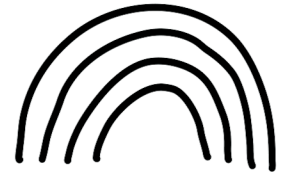


STORIES OF GOD AND ME



THE EXILE & RETURN

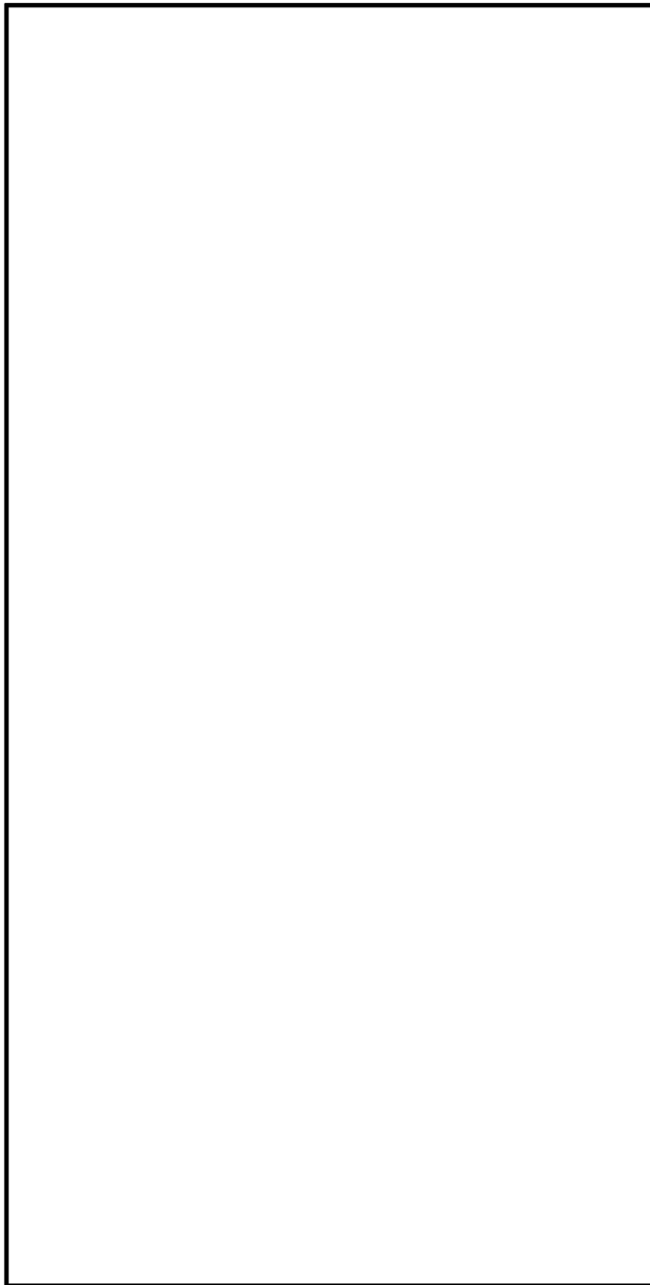


• CHILDREN'S •
• MISSION •



**Draw something you saw or did outside in nature this week.
What's something about this picture that can remind you of God?**

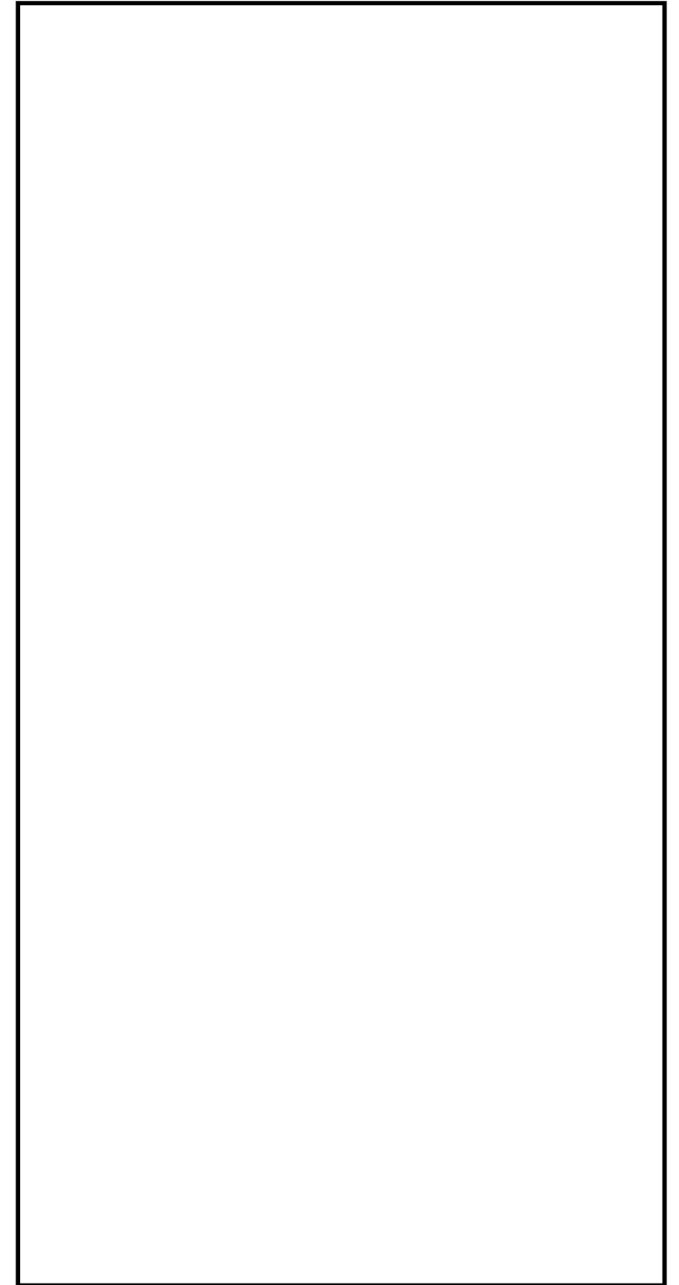
Draw a picture of a time in your life when you felt really happy... What happened? Where were you? Was anyone with you?



Draw or describe a time when you felt like God protected you from something.



Draw a picture of something that you do everyday (or almost everyday). It could be something you choose to do or have to do.



THE EXILE AND RETURN

(2 Kings 25, 2 Chronicles 36, Ezra, Nehemiah)




In those days, the city of Jerusalem was surrounded by a tall wall. Inside the city of Jerusalem was the temple.

The People of God knew that God was in the temple, but they thought it was the only place you could pray to God.

They also thought the city walls would protect them from everything.



Then the city was attacked and destroyed. The King of Babylon's army broke down the walls, burned down the temple and took many of the people away. The People of God looked back at Jerusalem and wondered if they'd ever see it again.

As soldiers marched them through the desert towards Babylon, they had to do EVERYTHING the soldiers said. "Get up! Go there! Eat this! Do that! Go to bed!" It took a long time. They grew weary and some died. They were in exile.  They could not go home.

The people dreamed of their home and temple, sang sad songs and even faced towards Jerusalem when they prayed.



Slowly they began to realise God was in this place too. God's presence came to them when they gathered to tell the old stories, pray and read scriptures.

Many of people were allowed to work in Babylon. They set up little businesses.  Some even worked for the King.

It was a surprise when the King of Persia came with His army and took over Babylon! This new King began to let some of the people go home – some went back to Jerusalem and began to rebuild the temple and the walls.



And then, the People of God were no longer in exile – they could go home. But do you know what happened?

Some decided to stay, because they knew God was there, in the strange and foreign land, too.

LET'S KEEP THINKING ABOUT THE STORY...

I WONDER... which part of The Exile and Return story you like the best..?

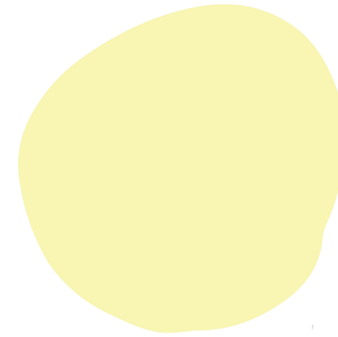
I WONDER... which part of The Exile and Return story is most important?

Doodle your answer here



I WONDER... where you are in this story...

...or which part of this story is about you?



The Exile and Return is part of God's BIG story in the Bible. Draw an emoji here to show how you feel about it.



I WONDER... if you could ask God anything about what happened in this true story, what would you ask?

How many can you find?

Words can be found across, up, down, diagonally, forwards & backwards!

E Y A N H R T M F Q X D E B U
W M H N E X J H Q Y X T C Q I
D C O Y S T E B Y C D P N T F
R T A H Z P R E L B I B E A X
T R V R E B U I L D E W S Z X
P E I K A X S R D X A L E L E
S M M N P Y A U I L H V R K U
I E I P S I L L L O H B P P D
C U I X L K E S T Y V S O U V
U G O R J E M A R Q P L F H G
O O C L O N C O K S I L B Q M
I D P Y K T V R J Z C B X G F
W Y Z M J P S A Q W P Q Y U S
U S Z F Y O B B T F V R A H P
N R U T E R U G V O R C F Y N

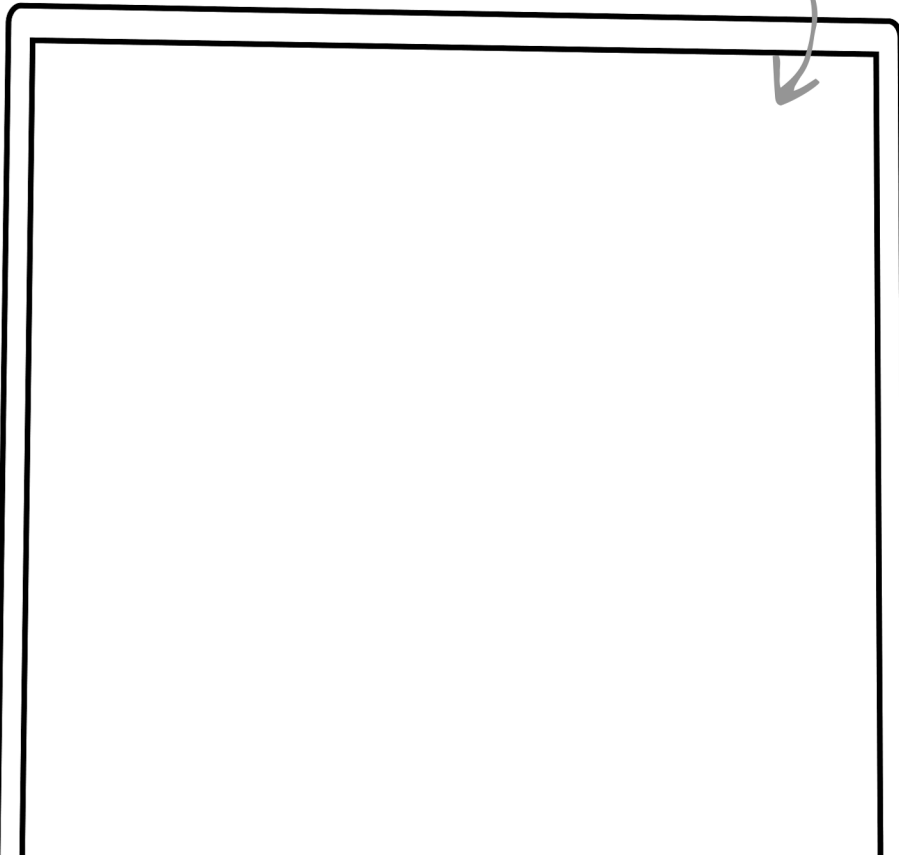
BIBLE
EXILE
GOD
HOME
JERUSALEM
PRAYER
PRESENCE
REBUILD
RETURN
STORIES
TEMPLE
WALLS

Think about the stories you drew in the earlier pages...

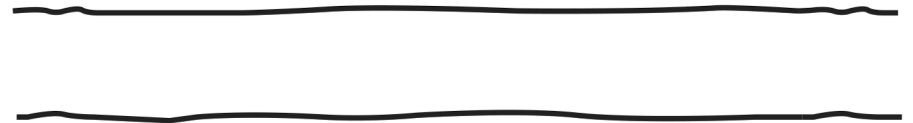
- something you saw or did outside in nature
- a really happy time in your life

- a time when you felt like God protected you
- something that you do almost everyday because you choose to or because you have to

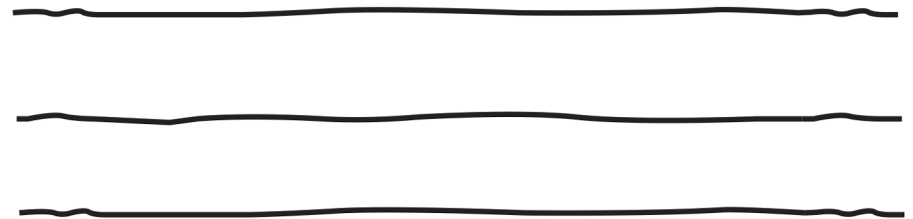
Can you think of a way one of your stories connect to, or remind you of, today's story from the Bible about the People of God's exile and return?



What does that tell you about God?



Is there anything you'd like to say to God?



Draw a map of your street or neighbourhood – include the roads, your home, other buildings, parks...

**You are invited today to use
your map as a way to pray
– to talk and listen to God.**

- 1. Starting from your house, trace your finger or pen around the streets on your map. As you do this, talk to God.**
- 2. When you're ready, pause and take 3 deep breaths for God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.**
- 3. Then trace your way back to your house. But now, as you do this, try listening to what God is saying to you.**