

Kids' Chronicle

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Ezra does God's work in Jerusalem

By JOE SARNICOLA

Once there was a scholar named Ezra. He was an expert in the laws of the Lord, as they had been given to Moses. He was also a righteous man. The Lord blessed him in every way and Emperor Artaxerxes followed his advice and provided him with whatever he needed.

The emperor wanted Ezra to go to Jerusalem to see if the people there were following the ways of God. He gave Ezra money to buy whatever would be needed for the journey and many supplies and items that were to be used in the temple when Ezra arrived in Jerusalem. A team of musicians, soldiers, and workers went with him. Artaxerxes wrote a letter which explained everything he wanted Ezra to do. All who interfered with Ezra's work or who refused to follow his instructions would be punished by forfeiting their property, exile from the country or death.

Before Ezra left he prayed with the people who would be going with him. "God has been good to us. The Emperor himself has provided for us to make sure that God's work is being done in Israel. May the Lord give us the strength and courage we need to carry out our task."

Ezra also commanded the people to



Illustration by Kathy Welsh

fast and pray for protection as they traveled. "We will fast and pray that God will keep us safe in our travels. I assured the emperor that God would watch over us, so we would not need an army to accompany us. If we continue to have faith, no harm will come to us."

Ezra discovered there were no Levites to serve as priests in the temple of Jerusalem as instructed by Moses, so he commissioned a search until enough of them could be found and trained, and he also hired more than two hundred people would serve as workers in the temple. The Levites and other priests were given charge of the silver, gold, and valuable utensils that would become the temple treasury until they arrived in Jerusalem. Before entering the city, Ezra and his people rested for three days. The people of Jerusalem and the surrounding area declared a celebration and brought gifts and offered sacrifices in

the temple in honor of what God was doing.

After he and his people had established the temple according to the emperor's instructions, Ezra would teach in the city square every day and the crowds of people would sit around him and listen. The people were so inspired by Ezra's talks about God and his love that they began to cry.

Ezra had his priests reassure them that this was an occasion for joy, not sorrow. "The Lord will give you a joy that will help you in everything you do. Let us rejoice together."

The people obeyed Ezra's instructions to build temporary shelters to live in during what was called the Festival of Shelters, based on the laws of Moses. The people built huts out of branches and celebrated that festival for the first time since Joshua had done so. The festival lasted for a full week and ended with a special ceremony, according to law.

Ezra encouraged the people to fast and pray regularly and he taught them regularly for the entire time he resided in Jerusalem.

Read more about it: Ezra 7, Nehemiah 8.

Q&A

1. Why did Ezra go to Jerusalem?
2. What does it mean to fast?



Bible Accent

In order to make studying the Bible easier, scholars have divided it into the following categories:

Old Testament (Genesis to Malachi):

Pentateuch or Law Books: Genesis - Deuteronomy

Historical Books: Joshua - 2 Maccabees

Wisdom Books: Job - Sirach

The Prophets: Isaiah - Malachi

New Testament (Matthew - Revelations):

Gospels: Matthew - John

Acts of the Apostles

Letters of Paul: Romans - Philemon

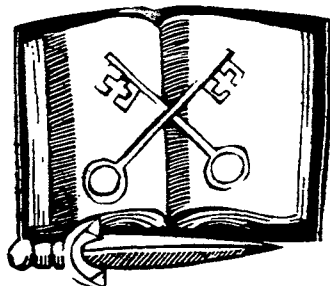
Universal Letters: James - Jude

Revelations



St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

Elizabeth Ann Seton was the first person born in the United States to be named a saint. She was born in New York City two years before the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Although not a Catholic by birth, she became a convert shortly after the turn of the nineteenth century. She established a school for girls in Baltimore and founded a new religious order to staff it. She called the order The Sisters of Charity, after the order of Saint Vincent De Paul. We remember Elizabeth on January 4.



Bible Trivia

What was the name of Ezra's father? (Ezra 7)

Send answer to: Catholic Courier Bible Trivia, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y., 14624. Please include your name, address and school name.

All entries must be received by February 9, 1995. A winner will be selected at random from all the correct entries submitted.

Last month's winner was Jesse DiLallo of Union Springs Central School. He knew Joseph took his family to Egypt after they left Bethlehem.

Fill in the blanks

Fill in the blanks to discover how Psalm 23 begins. Answers can be found on page 5.

_____ Psalm 23:1.

1. Acts 2:25: "I saw the _____ before me."
2. John 20:28: "My Lord and _____ God."
3. Matthew 3:17: "This _____ my own dear son."
4. Mark 6:34: "They were like sheep without a _____."
5. Mark 6:34: "_____ kingdom of God is yours."

★ ★ ★ ★ MOVIE ★ TRIVIA ★ ★ ★ ★

WIN ONE YEAR OF RENTALS FROM



RULES: ALL ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY MIDNIGHT, FEBRUARY 3. Random drawing of correct entries to be held February 6 by Catholic Courier Representatives. Entries must be returned by mail to: Catholic Courier, Movie Trivia, 1150 Buffalo Rd., Rochester, NY 14624-1899. Winner will be notified by mail. Prize is one year of Wegmans Video Rentals, membership is free and is required. Prize is not exchangeable for cash or other merchandise.

Question: Name the Pumpkin King of Halloween Town.

Answer: _____
 Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Last month's winner: David Hassellcus of Rochester correctly identified Jurassic Park, directed by Steven Spielberg, as the Universal Pictures 1993 film, centered on a theme park featuring living dinosaurs drawn from prehistoric DNA.

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