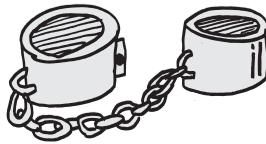


BABYLON



God's people experienced many challenges, including exile. Exile means being forcibly removed from one's homeland. God's people were captured and taken to a strange new land in Babylon. There they lived as prisoners, slaves, and second-class citizens.

Shackles represent the chains that bound the people as they were dragged from Jerusalem into Babylon. Shackles also remind us of how God is connected to us, even when everything changes or falls apart.

2 Kings 25:1-12

The armies of Babylon, led by King Nebuchadnezzar, invaded Jerusalem. The invading army took God's people to Babylon, where they lived in exile. The Babylonian exile was a terrifying time for God's people. They feared that God had been defeated and wouldn't be with them there.

Check out these other Bible passages that connect with the theme of Babylon!

- > **Deuteronomy 31:6-8** What did God promise when the Israelites entered a new land?
- > **Ezekiel 34:11-16** How is God like a shepherd to the scattered people?
- > **Jeremiah 27:8-11** Just how powerful was Babylon anyway?

Talk about it!

Use these questions to connect with each other.

- > When have you felt like you were in exile? What did you do?
- > Who can you turn to when you feel lost or discouraged?
- > How might God's presence support you in tough times?

What are preteens thinking?

Everything is changing for preteens—schools, friends, the way they relate to their parents, and their bodies. This lesson can help them see God's faithfulness in times of uncertainty.

Try this!

God is with us, even when we feel like we are in exile. Welcome an outsider around you. Write a note to someone who is new to your neighborhood or sit with someone who is alone at lunch.

Prayer

God, help us to know that even when we feel exiled or shackled, you are with us. Amen.