

the safe path ; but a guide is of no use to us unless we follow him.

Lesson—Our lesson tells us how God guided his people home to their own land. Recall last lesson. For a time all went well enough with those people in Jerusalem, but their old home was not what it used to be. The walls of Jerusalem were not rebuilt. The temple services were not so well attended. The people did not trust God enough. Their leader Zerrubbabel died. They forgot God's laws. But their great guide was not forgetting them.

Ezra—God put it into the heart of the scribe named Ezra, who had studied God's laws, to go back to Jerusalem to teach his people God's laws and to help them all he could, ch. 7.

Picture Ezra talking with the king of Persia. He gives Ezra leave to go. Tell of the costly gifts the king gives Ezra for the temple. He also gave him a letter to give to the king's officers whom he would meet on his journey. (Show letter.) These letters told the king's officers to do whatever Ezra asked them to do to help him on his journey, ch. 7 : 11-26.

Departing for the Journey—Tell Ezra's words of thanks, ch. 7 : 27-28. Picture the scene beside the river Ahava as the people

pray to God to be their guide on the long, dangerous journey. Tell ch. 8 : 24-30.

Dangers—Great dangers were to be met,—robber bands, wild animals, rough roads. But God's hand guided and kept them from all dangers (ch. 8 : 13) and they reached Jerusalem in safety.

This journey may be acted by some of the children, or accompanying illustration may be used. Here are the people kneeling in prayer. Now they have started on their journey. See, there are robbers lurking behind those trees (chairs) ready to waylay them and steal their treasures, and there are wild animals here and there which may pounce out upon them and kill them. But God kept all these away from the people who had prayed to him. At last they all reached Jerusalem safely, waving their arms and praising God for guiding them through dangers.

There are "robbers" that meet little people every day. Behind these rocks we'll print the names of some robbers that would steal our *good character*. And here are some wild animals (anger, jealousy, etc.) that would kill our *good thoughts* if God did not keep them away from us.

What the Lesson Teaches Me—God Is My GUIDE.

FROM THE PLATFORM

THE PREPARATION OF THE PEOPLE AND THE GUIDANCE OF THE GOD

Before the returning exiles began their journey back to Jerusalem, Ezra insisted upon their making some sort of preparation for what lay ahead of them. Print on the board, **THE PREPARATION OF THE PEOPLE**. Draw out by questions the form which this preparation took. One important feature of it was the fast. What was the purpose of the fast? Have one of the classes read in concert vs. 21-23. There was another feature of the preparation which was especially practical,—the weighing out of the treasure. To whom was it weighed out? Why was it weighed out? In what way did Ezra impress upon those who were charged with the keeping of the treasure the sacred nature of their task? How did the journey of the exiles end? To what did they attribute the success of their journey? To **THE GUIDANCE OF GOD** (Print as above, adding the word **AND**).