

1 Peter 2:4-10

(Lectionary Year A, Easter 5)

By Beth Barnett

Contextual reading of 1 Peter, drawing focus to the construction of a new temple of living stones.

You will need:

- Set of 33 large wooden blocks of varying shapes and sizes
- One short phrase from the text printed on each of the 33 blocks
- Additional blank blocks

Time required:

7 minutes

Connect

Begin with all of the blocks in a pile in the centre of your gathering, creating a 'building site' for the temple.

Our reading today was written to followers of Jesus who lived in places far away and long after Jesus had lived and died and been raised to life again.

Some of the stories of Jesus, who was Jewish, take place in and around Jerusalem, where there was a magnificent temple.

The Temple in Jerusalem had first been built by the King Solomon.

Context

Invite anyone who would like to help build the blocks into a temple, to come to the building site and start building together as you speak.

Built nearly a thousand years before Jesus' time, this temple was famous for its grandeur and beauty.

Take a moment to admire the construction of the temple.

But what happened to it? It was soon destroyed by invading armies – one after another –the Assyrians, the Babylonians

Invite volunteers to knock the temple down.

Very sad – so of course the Jews rebuilt the temple.

Invite anyone who would like to help rebuild the blocks into a temple to do so as you speak.

But, again more invading armies came, and again the temple was destroyed. The Greeks, then the Romans.

Invite volunteers to knock the temple down.

Again the temple was rebuilt along with the city.

Invite anyone who would like to help rebuild the blocks into a temple to do so as you speak.

In the time of Jesus, the temple was again famous for its beauty – but within 50 years, it had been destroyed yet again.

Invite volunteers to knock the temple down.

And so by the time of the writing of First Peter the temple in Jerusalem was again in ruins and many Jews had fled Jerusalem and were now living in many different cities around the Roman Empire.

Invite participants to take a block, either with writing if they would like to read, or without if they would prefer just to build.

So First Peter talks about a rebuilding of the temple – a place in which God is powerfully present - not with stones, like all the previous temples (which keep getting knocked down) but now a building of people.

So we are going to read this text from First Peter together. Some of the blocks have parts of the passage on them, and some are blank.

Check out your block, make sure you know how to read the phrase that is on it, and have a quick practice. Make sure you notice what number is on your block too. If you aren't sure how to read the words on your block, ask someone nearby to help you – that's what we're here for, to serve one another.

Give about a minute for this.



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Content

Instructions for leader:

Display complete text on screen, or in hard copy.

Invite those who have blocks to one by one, in turn, stand up and read the phrase on their block.

The rest of the gathering repeat that phrase, as the person with the block puts I in place on the 'building site'.

Continue until all blocks with text are used, and the reading is finished.

Finish by saying:

Unlike the previous temples made from stones which were knocked down and had to be rebuilt, this temple of living stones is constantly still being built – wherever there are followers of Jesus.

We are part of the temple that is being built from living stones –so to remind ourselves of that, lets add the extra blocks in. As we read the text together again.

You might like to dismantle this temple more gently, and repeat the reading and building process from before.

Consequence

Prayer:

Thank you Lord Jesus that you are alive,
that we can know you,
that we can be joined into your kingdom,
to know and to show and share the presence of God
with others around us.

Thank you that we belong together and to you.

Amen.



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1 Peter 2:4-10 divided into 33 sections

1 Come to him, a living stone,	2 though rejected by mortals	3 yet chosen and precious in God's sight,
4 and like living stones,	5 let yourselves be built into a spiritual house,	6 to be a holy priesthood,
7 to offer spiritual sacrifices	8 acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.	9 For it stands in scripture:
10 "See, I am laying in Zion a stone,	11 a cornerstone chosen and precious;	12 and whoever believes in him
13 will not be put to shame."	14 To you then who believe,	15 he is precious;
16 but for those who do not believe,	17 "The stone that the builders rejected	18 has become the very head of the corner,"



19 and "A stone that makes them stumble,	20 and a rock that makes them fall."	21 They stumble because they disobey the word,
22 as they were destined to do.	23 But you are a chosen race,	24 a royal priesthood,
25 a holy nation,	26 God's own people,	27 in order that you may proclaim
28 the mighty acts of him who called you	29 out of darkness into his marvelous light.	30 Once you were not a people,
31 but now you are God's people;	32 once you had not received mercy,	33 but now you have received mercy.

