

HILLSIDE STUDENTS

Exile

CONNECT

 Set out snacks! Add new students to the groups app! Take Attendance!

 Play **Silent Line Up!** Ask students to line up in a specific order without talking (e.g., by height, birth month, or alphabetical order by first name). Students must use gestures, signals, or other non-verbal cues to communicate and arrange themselves. Once the line-up is complete, have them confirm if they did it correctly

WATCH

 **Set up Discussion:** Have you ever felt out of place before? Maybe you've struggled to fit in with a group of people or felt like the odd-one-out. That's a feeling that is familiar for all of God's people. Exile has been the reality since the fall of Adam and Eve. We were meant to live with God in paradise but have been exiled from His presence as a result of our sin ever since. Because of God's faithfulness, we experience moments of return through repentance and obedience. Let's watch the video to learn more!

 **Pre-Video Question:** Have your group answer one or both questions below!

- If you had to wear a mascot costume for the rest of your life, which mascot would you choose?
- Would you rather fight 100 duck-sized horses or one horse-sized duck?

Split up into smaller groups and navigate the discussion below:

READ + DISCUSS

- What stood out to you from the video?
- Have one or two students summarize in their own words what "*Exile*" and "*Return*" mean based on the video.
- **Read John 14:2-3.** What is Jesus talking about?
- What is the promise Jesus is offering us in this passage?
- **Read Revelation 21:3-4.** What does John tell us things are going to be like?
- How does knowing this change the way you live today?
- **Read Galatians 6:9-10.** What opportunity do you have this week to "do good to all people"?
- What opportunity do you have this week to return or turn to following God with your actions? Who is one person who you want to help keep you accountable?

HILLSIDE STUDENTS

Exile

The Bible is full of stories of exile and return. All throughout the Old Testament, God's people followed sin cycles in which they would turn away from Him, fall into sin, and face exile—both physically and spiritually. Exile is being taken away from a place you belong, and for Israel, it represented separation from God's presence, often seen in events like the exile to Babylon. However, each time this happened, God remained faithful. He called His people to repent and return to Him and His promises of rest, hope, and restoration.

Even today, we are all lost in this world – like Peter says in 1 Peter 1:1, we are “elect exiles”. We were created in the image of God to live with Him forever; we do not belong in a world of sin. Yet, until Christ returns again to restore all things, bringing an end to our exile and bringing us to our eternal home, we are pilgrims wandering in a land that is not our own. Meanwhile, our role as Christ's ambassadors is to live on mission for Him.

Mark 13: 35-37 ³⁵ “Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. ³⁶ If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. ³⁷ What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’”

John 14:2-3 ² *My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?* ³ *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”*

Revelation 21:3-4 ³ *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death^[a] or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”*

Galatians 6:9-10 ⁹ *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”*