



UNIT 18 | SESSION 2 | FEBRUARY 8-9, 2020

4th-5th Lesson

The Walls Rebuilt

Bible Passage: Nehemiah 1-6

Story Point: God used Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem's walls.

Key Passage: "The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast." 1 Peter 5:10

Christ Connection: God protected us from being separated from Him by sending Jesus. Jesus makes it possible for us to have a relationship with God.

Big Picture Question: Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth.

**KID CONNECT:
10 MINUTES**

**LARGE GROUP:
30 MINUTES**

**SMALL GROUP:
20 MINUTES**

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Nehemiah was a Jew living in Persia. He served as the king's cupbearer. When the Persian Empire conquered the Babylonians, King Cyrus allowed God's people to return to Judah. Two or three million Jews had originally been deported, but only a remnant—50,000 people—returned. They set up their homes and rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem.

But when God's people faced opposition in rebuilding the rest of Jerusalem, they stopped. Some 70 years passed, and the walls and gates around the city were still ruined.

City walls and gates were very important in Bible times. Thick walls protected a city from its enemies and provided a sense of safety and security. Gates were the center of city life, the meeting place for commercial and social transactions. Without these structures, the surviving remnant of God's people struggled and was vulnerable to attack.

Nehemiah traveled from Persia to Jerusalem to lead the effort in rebuilding Jerusalem's walls. His

leadership was effective. Nehemiah 3 describes all the people working together to rebuild the gates and walls. But it wasn't long before Nehemiah met opposition from local governors. God's people armed themselves and kept working. They completed the wall in just 52 days.

Note how their enemies reacted: "All the surrounding nations were intimidated and lost their confidence, for they realized that this task had been accomplished by our God" (Neh. 6:16).

Now God's people were protected from their enemies. Help kids see that God provided the way for us to be protected from our enemies, sin and death: He sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins. When we repent and trust in Jesus, He frees us from sin and death. We still sin, but we are no longer slaves to sin. (See Rom. 6:17-18.) We may die a physical death as a result of sin, but we have eternal life. (See John 11:25-26; Rom. 6:23.)

KID CONNECT

WELCOME TIME

(VIDEO: INTRO/OUTRO MUSIC)

Greet each kid as he or she arrives and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to talk about the hardest thing they have ever accomplished. (turning in a difficult school assignment, winning a basketball game, and so on) How did they feel when they finished? What kept them from giving up?

LARGE GROUP

COUNTDOWN

(VIDEO: COUNTDOWN)

Show the countdown video as you transition to Large Group. Set it to end as the session begins.

LARGE GROUP GAME

(SFX: GAME INTRO MUSIC, CG: BUILD THE BASEPLATE IMAGE, SFX: FUN MUSIC)

BUILD THE BASEPLATE

(2 LEGO Baseplates (halfway completed), 1 Bucket full of LEGOS, 2 Blindfolds, Table)

SAY • It's game time again! I need 4 volunteers, 2 boys and 2 girls. (*choose 4 kids*) Ok, but we're going to switch things up this time. Rather than boys vs. girls, we are going to have you two (*point to a boy and girl*) be on a team going against you two (*point to the other boy and girl*). Yep! Let's find out which team is better at building with LEGOS! Here's how this will work, each team will have one of these (*hold up LEGO Baseplate*), as you can see, we have already completed part of it for you. Your job is to finish the rest where we can't see any of the green baseplate anymore...but all the pieces have to fit perfectly - AND you have to work as a team! One person from each team will be the "LEGO Finder" and have to search through this

bucket to find the right pieces and pass them to their teammate who we will call the “LEGO Builder”. Oh, and did I mention that the “LEGO Finder’s” will be blindfolded? Yep! We couldn’t make this TOO easy! Ok, whichever team is the first to fully cover their baseplate is the winner! Got it? Let’s Build the Baseplate!

WORSHIP

(VIDEO: NOT AFRAID, VIDEO: GOD IS FOR US)

SAY • Let’s worship God!

INTRODUCE THE SESSION

(CG: WALL IMAGES 1-5)

(No Supplies)

SAY • Hey guys. So last week we talked about games where you can build stuff. This week I want us to focus specifically on walls. I’m going to show you some pictures of different video games with walls and if you know it, yell out which game it is.

WALL IMAGE 1: FORTNITE

WALL IMAGE 2: MINECRAFT

WALL IMAGE 3: MARIO KART

WALL IMAGE 4: PAC-MAN

Good job! Why are walls important? *Take responses from the kids.* Yes, walls are important mainly as a barrier of protection. Also, my wall at home is important because it holds my board games. Check it out!

WALL IMAGE 5: HUGE BOARD GAME LIBRARY

The walls around Jerusalem were important, too. They helped keep God’s people safe. Let’s take a moment to review what we’ve been learning.

GIANT TIMELINE

(CG: GIANT TIMELINE)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY • Last week, we learned about Esther and the Jewish people who remained in Persia while the temple was being rebuilt in Judah. God made Esther queen to protect His people in Persia. Several years went by after Esther saved the Jews from Haman’s evil plan. Some of God’s people, including Nehemiah, continued to work for the king of Persia.

In today’s Bible story, Nehemiah learned that the walls and gates around Jerusalem had been destroyed and were no longer keeping God’s people safe. Their enemies were a real threat, but God had a plan for His people. Check it out.

TEACH THE BIBLE STORY

(CG: BIBLE STORY PICTURE, CG: STORY POINT, CG: QUESTION 1, CG: QUESTION 2)
(Bible)

Teach the Bible story “The Walls Rebuilt.”

SAY • Have you ever watched a friend go through something hard but weren’t sure how to help? That is probably similar to how Nehemiah felt when he heard that God’s people were in danger. But the king of Persia was kind to Nehemiah and sent him to Jerusalem to help the Jews rebuild the wall around the city.

That was not the end of their trouble, though. Other people did not want the walls rebuilt. God’s people had to trust that rebuilding the walls was God’s plan for them. They trusted that God would keep them safe while they obeyed Him.

When God asks us to do something, He doesn’t guarantee that it will be easy or that everyone will agree. We can listen to God through His Word and trust that His words are true. When we trust God, we will obey Him—even when other people try to get us to stop. God’s people knew that they needed to rebuild the wall, even when their enemies were surrounding them. God empowered them to continue, even in a difficult situation. God used Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem’s walls.

QUESTION 1: What does this story teach us about God?

SAY • God’s people had to trust that rebuilding the walls was God’s plan for them. They trusted that God would keep them safe while they obeyed Him. When God asks us to do something, He doesn’t guarantee that it will be easy or that everyone will agree. We can listen to God through His Word and trust that His words are true.

QUESTION 2: How do we show we trust in God?

SAY • When we trust God, we will obey Him—even when other people try to get us to stop. God’s people knew that they needed to rebuild the wall, even when their enemies were surrounding them. God empowered them to continue, even in a difficult situation. God used Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem’s walls.

KEY PASSAGE

(CG: KEY PASSAGE)
(Bible)

Show the key passage slide. Open the Bible and lead the kids to read 1 Peter 5:10 together.

SAY • Do you notice the word restore in the middle of the key passage? Restore means “to repair” or “to bring something back to what it originally was.”

In today's story, God helped Nehemiah restore the walls around Jerusalem. But did you know that God can restore us too? Because of sin, people have a broken relationship with God. But God sent Jesus to take the punishment for our sins. When we trust in Jesus as our Savior, He restores our relationship with God.

CHRIST CONNECTION

(CG: CHRIST CONNECTION)

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

SAY • Nehemiah led the people to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem to protect them from their enemies. God had a plan to protect His people in Jerusalem and He has a plan to protect us. God protected us from being separated from Him by sending Jesus. Jesus makes it possible for us to have a relationship with God.

PRAY AND DISMISS TO SMALL GROUPS

SMALL GROUP

Bible Passage: Nehemiah 1-6

Story Point: God used Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem's walls.

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Christ Connection: God protected us from being separated from Him by sending Jesus. Jesus makes it possible for us to have a relationship with God.

Big Picture Question: Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth.

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU?

(Slip of Paper, 1 per kid, Paper Plate, 1 per kid, Bowl, 1 per group, Blindfold, 2 per group)

Before the session, write different emotions on slips of paper and place them in a bowl. Form two teams of kids. A kid from each team will choose a slip of paper and will have 30 seconds to draw the emotion without using any words. However, the kids must draw the emotion on the plate while blindfolded. Every correct guess earns a point. Teams can strategize by selecting a new player to draw the emotion each round or by using the same player to draw. Play as many rounds as time will allow.

SAY • Today, you had a chance to express emotion through art. Nehemiah experienced a number of different emotions in our story today. And it's a good thing he was willing to express

them! He was sad when he heard reports of the trouble his people were in and took action by praying and then asking for permission to rebuild. He was also confident in God's power to give his mission success when his enemies challenged him. God used Nehemiah's emotions to help guide him to do God's plan.

DISCUSSION

(Bibles)

SAY • Even when the walls were literally crumbling around God's people, God had a plan to restore them and keep His people safe. God used Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem's walls. God's plans are always good.

- Do you think God protects us today? Why or why not?
- In the past have you experienced or seen evidence of God's protection? If so, when?

Distribute Bibles. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Nehemiah 1. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Nehemiah 1:3-4. When Nehemiah heard that God's people were in danger in Jerusalem, he was sad. Nehemiah wanted to help, but he was in Persia—far from Jerusalem.

Choose another volunteer to read aloud Nehemiah 1:3-4 again. Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

- What was the first thing Nehemiah did after hearing about Jerusalem? Help kids find Neh. 1:4, which says Nehemiah "mourned and fasted and prayed." Nehemiah had the greatest tool of all—prayer! We can approach every situation with prayer. God hears us when we pray. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Thess. 5:16-18.)
- What feelings might prompt you to pray? Suggest that kids can pray through all of their feelings—joy, sorrow, confusion, and so on. Point out that in his prayer, Nehemiah thanked God and praised Him. Nehemiah prayed even though he was sad and confused. God heard Nehemiah's prayers and answered them. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ps. 34:17.)
- What situation do you need to pray about this week? How can you remind yourself to pray? Encourage kids to share their thoughts. Emphasize that God wants us to pray about everything! God knows all things, but He welcomes us to come to Him with all of our questions, cares, and concerns. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Col 4:2.)

LEARN TO PRAY

(Paper, 1 per kid, Pens, Markers)

Distribute a sheet of paper to each kid. Using pens or markers, have kids draw a target with six circles. Then have them fill in the target with prayer requests using pencils. In the outer circle, have them write a country to pray for; in the next circle, a family in their neighborhood. The rest of the circles can represent people in their lives—perhaps a teacher at school, then a friend, then a

family member. In the center, have kids write something they'd like to pray for themselves. Encourage kids to pray for the people they listed for one or two weeks, then erase them and write any answers to prayer. They can then fill in new countries, families, and so on.

REFLECTION AND PRAYER

(Journal Page - 1 per kid, Pencils)

Ask the kids the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

If time allows, have kids complete the Journal Page provided with this session.

CONNECT WITH PARENTS/INFLUENCERS

(Older Kids Activity Page, 1 per kid)

Hand each 4th-5th grade kid an Older Kids Activity Page and encourage them to do it at home with their family this week.

OPTIONAL TAKE HOME:

(Preteen Learner Guide Option)

For 5th Graders that would like some additional God Time this week.