



UNIT 18 | SESSION 3 | FEBRUARY 15-16, 2020

4th-5th Lesson

God's People Repented

Bible Passage: Nehemiah 8-13

Story Point: God's people repented and promised to be faithful.

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's Word is powerful. When Ezra read God's Word, the people loved God more and changed their ways. The Bible says that Jesus is "the Word." Jesus has the power to change our hearts.

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

Ezra was a priest in Babylon at the end of the exile. More than 50 years after the first group of exiles returned to Jerusalem and completed and dedicated the temple, Ezra led a second group back to Jerusalem.

Just as God had been with Nehemiah, He was with Ezra—granting him favor with the Persian king. The king gave Ezra permission to go to Jerusalem. He provided Ezra with a letter and access to resources to ensure safe travel. (See Ezra 7:11-26.)

Ezra traveled to Jerusalem with a purpose. God's people had spent 70 years in exile, and they needed to be reminded how to live. As a scribe, Ezra was an expert on the law of Moses, and he had "determined in his heart to study the law of the LORD, obey it, and teach its statutes and ordinances in Israel" (Ezra 7:10).

Under Nehemiah's leadership, the people had rebuilt Jerusalem's walls. They gathered together at the Water Gate to hear the law of Moses. Men, women, and children—anyone who could understand—came to listen to the reading of God's Word.

From early morning until midday, Ezra read from the book of the law of Moses. He stood on a high wooden platform where everyone could see and hear him. Ezra opened the book of the law, and everyone stood up. The Levites helped the listeners understand the words of the law. The people reacted strongly to hearing and understanding the law of Moses. Verse 9 says the people wept. The law revealed their sin, and they repented.

God's Word is powerful. The law reveals our sin and how short we fall of meeting God's standard. As you teach kids, help them recognize that we cannot meet God's requirements. We need a Savior. God sent Jesus to obey the law perfectly and die for our sins. We can trust in Him for salvation.

KID CONNECT

WELCOME TIME

(VIDEO: INTRO/OUTRO MUSIC)

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to fill out attendance sheets and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to discuss what brings out different emotions in them. What makes them happy? What makes them sad? How do their faces and their actions show those emotions?

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, SFX: FUN MUSIC)

ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS - BATTLE ROYALE EDITION

(No Supplies)

SAY • It's game time again! Everybody stand up. We are going to play a game called Rock, Paper, Scissors - Battle Royale Edition. It's Battle Royale because all of you are playing it - even Small Group Leaders! OK, everyone go ahead and pair up with someone for the first round. You will have only one chance to beat your opponent. Everyone knows how to play, right? Rock beats Scissors, Scissors beats Paper and Paper beats Rock. If you tie, just go again until someone wins and if you win, remain standing and find a NEW opponent. If you lose, you

MUST sit down. We will do this over and over until 1 person is left. They will claim the title “Victory Royale”! Ready? Let’s do it!

WORSHIP

(VIDEO: O TASTE & SEE, VIDEO: THIS IS LIVING NOW)

SAY • Let’s worship God!

INTRODUCE THE SESSION

(CG: IMAGE OF MONOPOLY)

(No Supplies)

SAY • Hey guys! Welcome back to KidCity. We have been talking about games. Video games AND board games. Who here likes playing board games? What are some of your favorite ones? *Choose a few kids to share their favorite board games and respond accordingly.*

Those are some awesome games! Let me ask you something else. What do you think would happen if you and your family or friends tried to play a game without reading the rules? Do you think it would go well? For example, what if I tried to play Monopoly without reading the rules? How would I know what to do with the properties I buy? How would I even know how to buy properties? It would be pretty chaotic! Rules and instructions are very important.

That reminds me of this week’s Bible story. It has to do with God’s people listening to and learning God’s Word. Which are instructions on how to live life...

GIANT TIMELINE

(CG: GIANT TIMELINE)

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

SAY • Last week, we learned that the walls and gates around Jerusalem were destroyed. These walls were important because they kept God’s people safe from their enemies. God’s people often faced others who did not agree with them. Nehemiah was far away, still working for the king of Persia, but when he heard that God’s people were in danger, he was sad. The king allowed Nehemiah to go back to Jerusalem. God used Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem’s walls.

In today’s story, we will fast forward 52 days to the time when the walls and gates were finally repaired. The people of Jerusalem gathered together to listen to God’s Word and to celebrate. Check it out.

WATCH THE BIBLE STORY

(VIDEO: GOD’S PEOPLE REPENTED, CG: BIBLE STORY PICTURE, CG: STORY POINT, QUESTION 1, CG: QUESTION 2)

(Bible)

Show the Bible story video “God’s People Repented.”



SAY • Did you all notice how much respect the people showed for God’s words? Men, women, and children came to hear Ezra read God’s Word. What are some ways the people showed how much they loved God’s words? (They stood for hours, listened carefully, lifted their hands, and bowed their faces to the ground.) The people did not even understand the words at first, but the people knew God’s words were important. Some of the leaders explained God’s words.

The words they heard were not all happy words. As the people heard the law, they realized that they had not followed God’s rules; they had sinned. The people felt sad. Some of them even cried. They didn’t make excuses for their sin or ignore God.

Ezra helped the people understand that God still loved them and that they could repent and follow God. So God’s people repented and promised to be faithful.

When we repent, we turn away from sin and self, and we turn toward God and the things that honor Him.

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

SAY • Even when we make poor choices, God gives us the opportunity to repent and turn away from sin and turn toward Him. In today’s story, we saw that the people of Jerusalem turned away from their sin. God supported them, restored them, forgave them, and showed them grace.

QUESTION 2: How did the people react to hearing God’s words?

SAY • As the people heard the law, they realized that they had not followed God’s rules; they had sinned. The people felt sad. Some of them even cried. They didn’t make excuses for their sin or ignore God. Ezra helped the people understand that God still loved them and that they could repent and follow God. So God’s people repented and promised to be faithful.

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 • Our key passage says that God will support us. Even when we make poor choices, God gives us the opportunity to repent and turn away from those wrong choices and turn toward Him.

In today’s story, we saw that the people of Jerusalem turned away from their sin. God supported them, restored them, forgave them, and showed them grace.

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 • God's Word is powerful. When Ezra read God's Word, the people changed their ways and loved God more. The Bible says that Jesus is "the Word." Jesus has the power to change our hearts.

MISSIONS MOMENT

(CG: MISSIONS MOMENT)

(No Supplies Needed)

Show the missions moment slide.

SAY • Before you go into your small groups, I wanted to take a minute to talk about missions. Does anyone know what a missionary is? *take responses from kids* Yes, it all started with something that Jesus said before He went back to heaven. He said to his disciples in Matthew, "So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And you can be sure that I am always with you, to the very end." This is known as the Great Commission. In fact, it's where we get the word mission from!

In KidCity, we want to obey Jesus and do what He said, which is to go and make disciples. That means we should tell other people about what Jesus did for them so they can be a follower, too. So, every month we are going to have a Missions Moment and highlight some awesome stories and people that are doing just that. At Hope, we send people on mission trips to places in America as well as all over the world! It's really great to hear their stories and it can encourage us to be missionaries too...in our neighborhoods and at your schools and everywhere that we go.

PRAY AND DISMISS TO SMALL GROUPS

SMALL GROUP

Bible Passage: Nehemiah 8-13

Story Point: God's people repented and promised to be faithful.

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MISSIONS ACTIVITY

("God Loves You" Label, 1 per kid, Bottle of Water, 1 per kid, Crayons, Markers, Colored Pencils)

Give each kid a label and encourage them to decorate it however they desire. Instruct the kids to stick the label on a bottle of water and give it to someone who needs to know God loves them. Collect the water bottles until the end if they become a distraction.

SAY • Today in Large Group we learned a little about missions. Did you know every follower of Jesus is a missionary? That's right! If you have decided to follow Jesus, you have a purpose to tell others about God's love and share what God has done in your life. We will be hearing about some awesome things happening here and around the world but, remember that God wants to use you right where you are in your community.

Give this drink to someone that needs to know God loves them and use the opportunity to tell him or her what you've been learning about today in KidCity.

DISCUSSION

(Bibles)

SAY • At the end of our Bible story, God's people praised Him and agreed to worship God alone. We praise God not only for what He has done, but for who He is. We can praise Him for His character, His love, and His faithfulness.

- What should you do when you've done something wrong?
- Why is it often hard to confess that we've done something wrong?

Distribute Bibles. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Nehemiah 8. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Nehemiah 8:2-3. Tell kids that God's people gathered to hear Ezra read the law. When they heard God's words, they understood that they had turned away from God. They needed to repent and turn back to God. God's people repented and promised to be faithful.

Choose another volunteer to read aloud Nehemiah 8:2-3 again. Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

- How did Israel's view of God's Word help them make the right choice?
The Israelites trusted God's Word, stood when it was read, listened attentively, and praised God. They respected God's Word and trusted that it was true, even when it showed they needed to repent and make changes in their lives. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 2 Tim. 3:16-17.)
- How does God's Word change us today?
Lead kids to recognize that the Bible is inspired by God and can be used to teach, rebuke, correct, and train people to follow God. The Bible is trustworthy and can speak to every area of our lives. We can respect, follow, and trust the Bible because it comes from God. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Neh. 8:5-6.)
- What are some ways people should respond to God's Word today?
Invite kids to discuss. Point out how people responded to God's Word in today's story. They responded physically by kneeling, but they also responded spiritually by repenting and turning away from bad choices and turning toward God. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 15:4.)

PRAY

Invite volunteers to share prayer requests. Then pray, thanking God for giving us the Bible to help us follow Him. Ask Him to open our eyes to where we need to repent and turn away from sin and self.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY: CELEBRATION MURAL

(Large Sheet of Paper, 1 per group, Markers, Colored Pencils)

Display a large piece of paper and invite kids to draw pictures of their family's traditions for celebrating different holidays or accomplishments. (Christmas, Easter, the Fourth of July, birthdays, first/last day of school, good report card, and so forth) Invite volunteers to share their drawings with the group.

SAY • Every family has different traditions for celebrating special days. In today's Bible story, the people of Jerusalem celebrated when the walls and city gates were finished. They celebrated by listening to the God's Word and having a big feast. They were not only excited that the walls were finished, they were excited that they understood God's words!

REFLECTION

(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.