

The BIBLE Story

The Walls Rebuilt

Nehemiah 1-6

God's people had lived in Babylon for 70 years. Then King Cyrus, the king of Persia, took over Babylon and let them go home. Some of God's people went home to Judah, but some of them stayed.

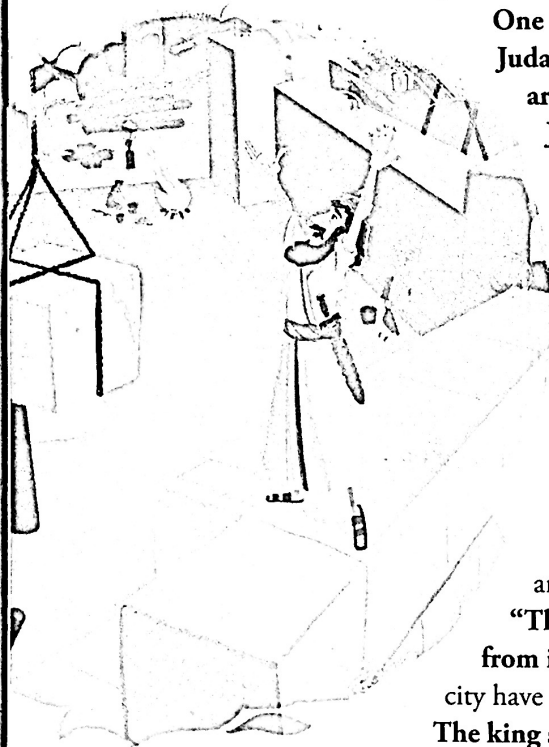
Nehemiah (NEE huh MIGH uh) stayed and worked for the king of Persia.

One day, some men came from Judah. Nehemiah asked, "How are God's people doing in Jerusalem?" The men had bad news: "The people are in trouble. The walls around Jerusalem are broken down, and the gates have been burned down."

Nehemiah cried. Then he prayed and fasted. The king noticed Nehemiah and asked, "What's wrong? Why are you sad?" Nehemiah was afraid; no one was supposed to be sad around the king. Nehemiah said, "The city where my ancestors are from is in ruins, and the gates of the city have been burned down."

The king sent Nehemiah to Jerusalem.

Nehemiah inspected the walls and led the people to start rebuilding the walls and gates. The workers put in doors, bolts, and bars. They cut stones and lifted them into place on the wall, and they filled in gaps and holes. All around the city, people worked



side by side. Soon the wall was half as tall as it had once been!

Not everyone was happy that Jerusalem's walls were being rebuilt. Some men who lived nearby were angry. God's people kept working on the walls, but their enemies made a plan to attack them and stop their work. God's people prayed and chose men to guard the walls all day and all night, but the people were discouraged. "Our enemies are everywhere," they said.

Nehemiah reminded the people that God was with them. "Don't be afraid. God is great and powerful!" Nehemiah said. "Be ready. If our enemies attack us, God will fight for us!" Enemies could threaten God's people, but they could not make God's people stop building. Their enemies were not in charge of rebuilding the wall; God was! So God's people went back to work. Some stood guard with weapons, and others worked on the wall. Some men worked with one hand and held a weapon in the other. They were always ready to fight, just in case.

Nehemiah was a wise and good leader for God's people while they worked. In just 52 days, the wall was complete! The gates were repaired, and the wall was restored. When all of Jerusalem's enemies heard that the wall had been rebuilt, they were afraid because they knew God was with His people.

Christ Connection: Nehemiah led the people to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem to protect them from their enemies. Jesus came to protect us from our greatest enemy, sin and death. He died on the cross and rose from the dead to rescue everyone who trusts in Him.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Use props:** Display a few simple tools and ask the kids to brainstorm what they could use them to build. Then lead kids to think about what it would take to build a wall around an entire city.
- **Invite participation:** Before you begin, give each kid a sticky note with a key word from the Bible story. Invite kids to place the sticky note on a focal wall when they hear their word.

APPLY the Story



SESSION TITLE: The Walls Rebuilt

BIBLE PASSAGE: Nehemiah 1–6

STORY POINT: God used Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem's walls.

KEY PASSAGE: 1 Peter 5:10

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- craft sticks
- markers
- masking tape

Provide craft sticks, markers, and masking tape. Help kids write the key passage on craft sticks. Then tape them together in the correct order.

SAY • God helped the Jews rebuild the wall. They could not have done it on their own. The Lord strengthened His people for the work He had called them to do. Sometimes God calls us to do hard things too. It could be something small like talking to the new kid at school and making her feel welcome. Or it could be something big like moving overseas to be a missionary. Either way, God always helps us do the things He has called us to do.

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster
- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970, optional)

Distribute a Bible to each kid. Help kids find Nehemiah 1–6. Ask a volunteer to tell you if Nehemiah is the Old Testament or the New Testament. (*Old Testament*) Explain that this book is in the historical division of the Bible. It tells a true story that actually took place when the Jews returned to their homeland. Point out the city of Jerusalem on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. (*H5*)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. What was Nehemiah's job before coming back to Jerusalem? (*He was the king's cupbearer, Neh. 1:11*)
2. What was the biggest challenge the Jews faced in rebuilding the walls? (*Their enemies tried to intimidate them to make them stop, Neh. 4:1-4*)
3. How many days did it take to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem? (*52, Neh. 6:15*)
4. Why do you think it was important to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem? *Help the kids understand that a city's walls and gates were important for the security of the people. Without walls they would be vulnerable to attack.*
5. Why do you think it is significant that the Jews were all working together? *Explain that the people needed each other. They worked together and mutually encouraged one another along the way. As believers, God calls us to be united and work together for His kingdom. We need each other!*
6. How can you be an encouragement to someone this week? *Guide kids to think practically. Discuss ways they can cheer for their friends at sporting events, show kindness to their siblings, or help their parents by doing chores and obeying joyfully. Discuss why encouraging others is important and how it can demonstrate God's love for people.*

SAY • **God used Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem's walls.**

Even though God was with His people while they rebuilt the walls, the work was still difficult. God doesn't promise that our lives will be easy. He does promise that He will be with us and He will supply the strength we need each day.

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

LOW PREP

• "Hite Family Photo" printable

Tip: Tell parents that you will be gathering new crayons, colored pencils, and other small classroom supplies to bring to a special needs class. Kids will wrap the supplies for this mission project in the coming weeks.

• paper
• pen

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Guess the object

Show kids the Hite family photo again. Ask kids if they know people who have special needs like Karis, Nathan, and Owen Hite. Be sensitive to kids in your group who have special needs or have family members with special needs.

SAY • Sometimes people with special needs have to do things a little differently. For example, Nathan and Owen can't speak with their mouths, but they communicate with special computers. The Hites help kids in Taiwan with special needs to know that God loves them and has a special plan for them.

Remind the group that we should be like Jesus in caring for and including people with special needs.

OPTION 2: A remnant remaining

Instruct everyone to stand in a circle. Read a list of criteria, one statement at a time. Kids who meet that criterion must keep standing, and those who don't will sit down. Continue reading the statements until only one person remains standing. (Sample criteria: born in this city, owns a pet, has a brother, can play a musical instrument, is on a sports team, and so forth)

SAY • Two to three million Jews were taken into exile in Babylon. But only about 50,000 people returned to Jerusalem. That's not very many! A *remnant* is a small remaining number of people. Do you think it surprised God that only 50,000 people were left of the nation of Israel? Of course not. *Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth.* God was even

in control over the number of Jews who returned to Jerusalem out of exile. He would work through those people to fulfill the promised blessing He had made to Abraham so many years earlier—sending the Messiah, Jesus.

Reflection and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper to each child. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure to send the sheets home with kids alongside the activity page so that parents can see what their kids have been learning.

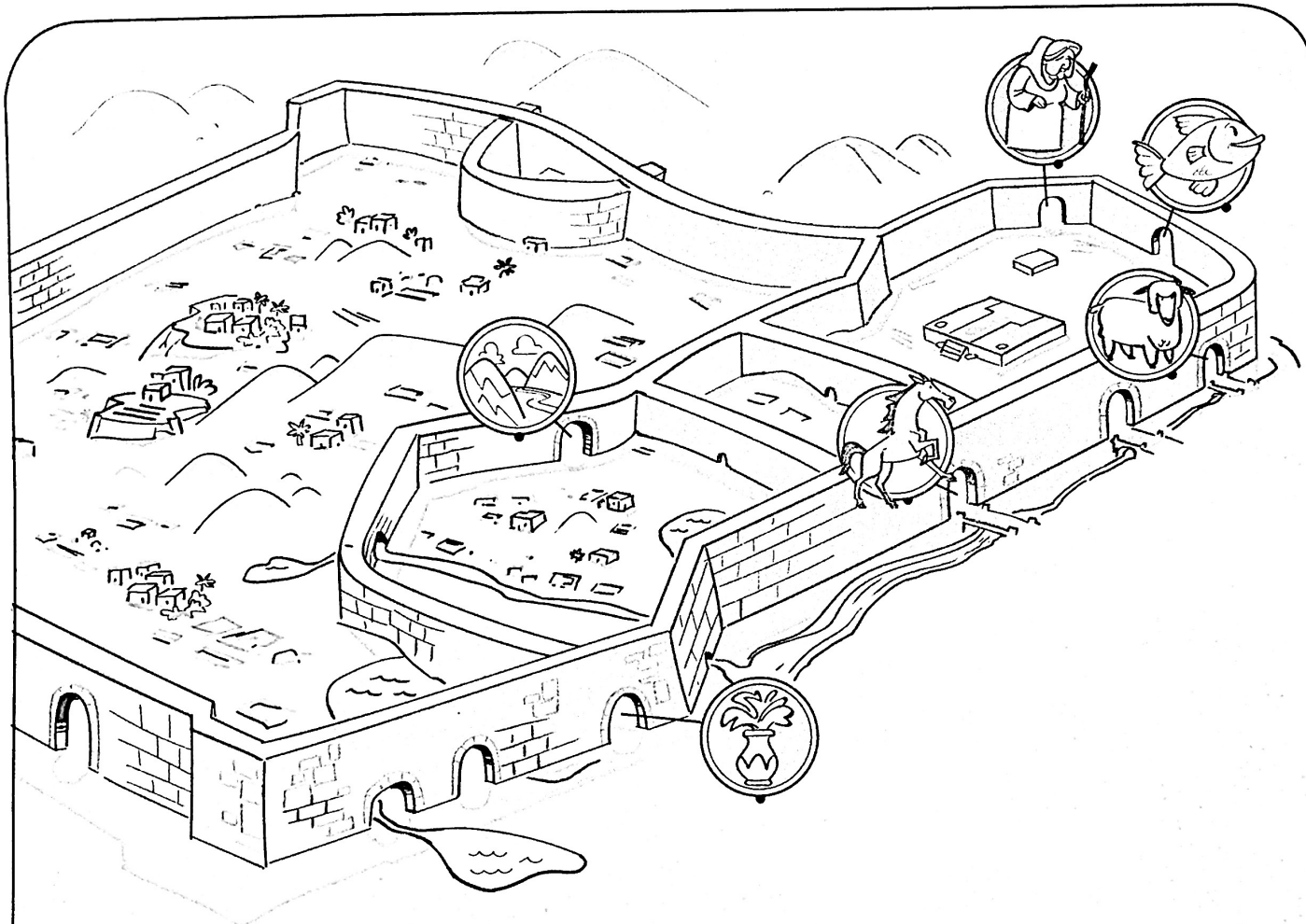
If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.

• pencils and crayons
• paper
• Bible Story Coloring Page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's Big Picture Cards for Families to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.

Name That Gate

INSTRUCTIONS: Use the picture clues to determine each gate's name.



• **Sheep Gate**

• **Valley Gate**

• **Old Gate**

• **Fountain Gate**

• **Horse Gate**

• **Fish Gate**

Younger Kids Activity Pages
Unit 18 • Session 2
The Walls Rebuilt

BIBLE STORY SUMMARY:

- Nehemiah wanted to go rebuild Jerusalem's walls.
- The king of Persia sent Nehemiah to Jerusalem.
- Enemies tried to stop God's people from building the walls.
- God used Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem's walls.

KEY PASSAGE: 1 Peter 5:10

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Who is in control of everything?
God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Why were walls so important in Bible times?
- How is Jesus similar to the walls Nehemiah built?
- What does Jesus protect us from?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Show your kids a picture or diagram of ancient Jerusalem's walls. Challenge them to make a model of Jerusalem using building blocks or plastic interlocking bricks. Discuss why and how Jesus protects us from sin and death.



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