

LESSON 78

Nehemiah

NEHEMIAH 1 – 6



BIBLE TRUTH

GOD WORKS THROUGH PEOPLE TO ACCOMPLISH HIS REDEMPITIVE PLAN

LESSON SNAPSHOT

- 1. **OPENING REVIEW** 5 MIN
Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.
- 2. **BIBLE STORY** 10 MIN
Read Nehemiah 2 from the Scriptures or read story 78, "Nehemiah," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.
- 3. **OBJECT LESSON 1** 10 MIN
What a Little Opposition Will Do
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ two large packages of foam coffee cups
 - ✓ masking tape
 - ✓ eight-foot table
- 4. **TEACHING/DISCUSSION** 10 MIN
- 5. **OBJECT LESSON 2** 15 MIN
God's Larger Plan
- 6. **WORD BIBLE MEMORY** 5 MIN
- 7. **ACTIVITY TIME** 10 MIN
Coloring Activity
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ coloring page 78—one copy for each child
- 8. **CLOSING PRAYER** 5 MIN
- 9. **BONUS OBJECT LESSON** 10 MIN
Walls Are Important for Protection
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ wooden or large plastic building blocks
 - ✓ small plastic figures like army soldiers
 - ✓ plastic baseball or other small, lightweight ball

TOTAL 80 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Nehemiah prays for his people—Even though the temple has been rebuilt, the walls of Jerusalem are still broken down, and the city can easily be attacked. Nehemiah holds an important position in the court of King Artaxerxes. When news of the broken-down walls reaches him, Nehemiah mourns, prays, and fasts for days. The humble prayer in Nehemiah 1:4–11 is probably only a summary of Nehemiah’s prayers during that time.

But what can the prayers of one person do? As we will see, if you are called by God to a certain purpose, one person’s prayers can do a lot!

God gives Nehemiah favor with the king—Though Nehemiah is afraid at first to speak to the king, God gives him courage to explain why he is sad. When Nehemiah boldly asks about rebuilding the city, God gives him great favor with the king. With the king’s permission, Nehemiah goes to Jerusalem and secretly inspects the walls. He motivates the people with the testimony of what God has done through King Artaxerxes. The people agree to help Nehemiah rebuild the walls.

Earlier we learned how God moved King Cyrus to return the people to Judah. Later, God moved in the heart of King Darius to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. Here, God selects another king to use for his purposes. King Artaxerxes is used to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Nothing will ever stop the plan of God.

The people build the walls in faith—At this time, Sanballat is apparently governor of Samaria. He hates the idea of the walls of Jerusalem being rebuilt. But God’s purpose cannot be opposed. Even though Sanballat has a plan to attack the people working on the wall, Nehemiah learns about it and prepares for it so well that the attack never comes.

There are many things that seem to be working against Nehemiah as he tries to rebuild the wall. But he and the people know God has called them to do it. They keep praying, working hard, behaving wisely, and relying on God for the outcome. Eventually, they succeed. The walls of Jerusalem are completely rebuilt!

WHERE IS JESUS?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Read Mark 15:22–24.

One day Jesus would minister in the restored city of Jerusalem. Although the people of Israel rebelled against God, God had a plan to redeem his people through Christ.

Part of that plan was to restore the walls of the city of Jerusalem. Jesus was crucified just outside those city walls. Jesus walked through the Judgment Gate in the wall that led to Golgotha, also called the Place of the Skull, where he gave his life for the atonement of our sins.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Nehemiah 2 from the Scriptures or read story 78, "Nehemiah," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

What a Little Opposition Will Do

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ two large packages of foam coffee cups
- ✓ masking tape
- ✓ eight-foot table

Use this object lesson in conjunction with reading the Bible story from *The Gospel Story Bible*. Remember, the whole story is over five chapters long, so if you read from the Bible you will need to figure out ahead of time which portions to read.

The object of this exercise is to help the children visualize the rebuilding of the wall and how opposition can thwart the work.

Tape a line across one eight-foot table to indicate the location where the wall should be rebuilt. Scatter the cups all around in front and behind the tables. The cups represent the stones needed to rebuild the walls.

Choose eight volunteers to be the workers to rebuild the walls. Assign one of the eight to be Nehemiah to direct the work. Workers can only carry one cup at a time and must work to rebuild the wall.

While you are explaining the work to the eight, have another teacher or helper choose two others to represent Sanballat and Tobiah. Tell them to go up to the table and one by one (not more than one cup at a time) knock the wall down again.

Start the exercise and just as the builders get real frustrated, stop the exercise, and then tell the story of the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem.

After you tell the story, try the exercise again but this time post four of the workers as guards. As soon as the intruders approach the table, have the guards cut off their attack. When the intruders have been opposed, tap them on the shoulder and say, "You can't win, they have weapons to defend themselves." Have the intruders sit down. Then have the class encourage the rebuilding to continue until all the cups are used and there are no gaps in the wall. Then have the whole class celebrate the completion of the wall through their applause.

TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2 15 MIN

God's Larger Plan

Read the following verses to the class and help them connect what God did in Nehemiah's time with God's larger plan to use Jerusalem in his redemptive plan.

- Matthew 16:21 John 2:23
- Matthew 20:17 John 5:1-9

Mark 11:1–11	Acts 1:4–5
Luke 2:22–30	Acts 6:7
Luke 2:41	Acts 8:1
Luke 4:9	Revelation 3:12
Luke 24:33–47	

Then ask the class the following questions:

- **How does hearing all these passages affect your view of what God did to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem in the days of Nehemiah?**
(Hearing all those verses helps us to see God’s future plan that he had in mind all along.)

- **How much of God’s plan did Nehemiah understand?**
(Nehemiah did not know all of what God was going to do; in fact, he knew very little.)

- **Knowing how little Nehemiah knew of God’s plan, how can that encourage us to obey God and do what he is calling us to do?**
(We know so little of how God will use the good works we do for his glory and his kingdom. We never know if the next person we share the gospel with will become a great leader in the church or a great evangelist. We, like Nehemiah, need to remain faithful knowing that God is working all that we do in accordance with his great plan of redemption.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page 78—one copy for each child

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- **Read Nehemiah 4:7–23. Why do some of the Israelites in the picture have weapons?**
(They had weapons for protection because Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the men of Ashdod planned to attack them.)

- **What did Nehemiah tell the people to encourage them?**
(*He told them, "Our God will fight for us."*)
- **Can you think of another story where God helped his people win in battle?**
(*David and Goliath, Israel fleeing from Egypt, the walls of Jericho, etc.*)

CLOSING PRAYER **5 MIN**

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON **10 MIN**

Walls Are Important for Protection

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ wooden or large plastic building blocks
- ✓ small plastic figures like army soldiers
- ✓ plastic baseball or other small, lightweight ball

Divide the children into two groups. Divide the blocks and the plastic army soldiers equally between the teams. Tell the children to set up their men and then use the blocks to make a wall to protect them. Explain that in a moment you are going to allow each team to roll a ball against the other's city to see who has the strongest wall.

When their creations are complete, take turns *rolling*, not throwing, the ball. The walls should protect against attack. This will demonstrate to the children why it was important for Jerusalem to have walls.

Now take an equal number of blocks away from each team and repeat the exercise. When the ball penetrates a break in the wall, the soldiers are destroyed!

Finally, take away one team's whole front wall. Tell the opposing team to try to roll the ball against the open city. Stand nearby and grab their first roll. Take the ball away and explain that even though Jerusalem's wall was unprotected, God frustrated the enemy so they could not attack until the walls were completely rebuilt.

