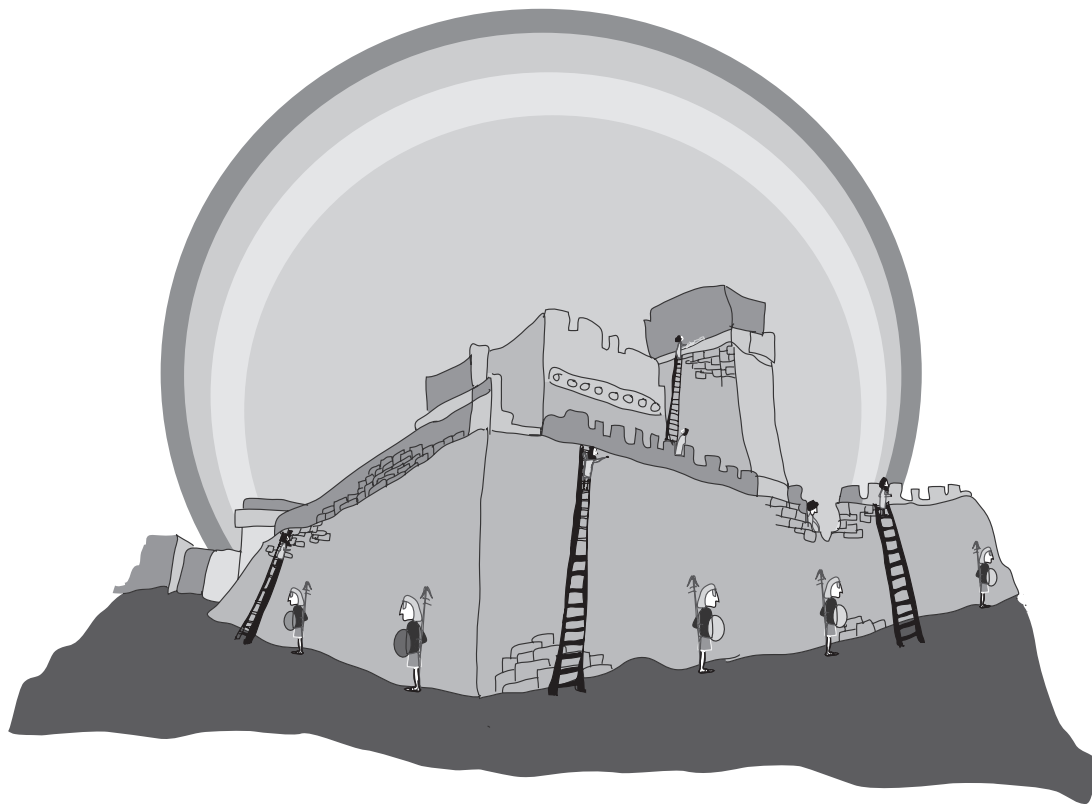


LESSON 78

Nehemiah

NEHEMIAH 1 – 4



BIBLE TRUTH

GOD WORKS THROUGH MEN TO ACCOMPLISH HIS REDEMPITIVE PLAN

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: *The Gospel Story Bible* (story 78)

3. BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION 5 MIN

Where Is Jesus?

SUPPLIES: Bible (ESV preferred); Review “Where Is Jesus?” to prepare

4. SNACK QUESTIONS 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: Snack food/water

5. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5-10 MIN

6. ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS (CHOOSE ONE OR MORE) 20-30 MIN

Coloring Page 78

SUPPLIES: markers/crayons

Rebuilding the Wall

SUPPLIES: building blocks

Why Rebuild the Wall?

SUPPLIES: two sticks tied together in the shape of a cross

7. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

TOTAL 60-75 MIN

THE LESSON

OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

In today’s lesson the children will learn how Nehemiah led the Israelites to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

Imagine if your own house had no walls and no doors, just floors and a roof. Would that be a good thing or a bad thing?

What bad things could happen if your house had no walls? (Accept any correct answer: things stolen, open to the weather, etc.) What if a kangaroo came through your neighborhood? Would you be able to keep him out of your house without walls or doors? (no) What do the walls of your house do for you? (They protect you.)

At this point ask for six to eight volunteers. Have the volunteers form a wall by standing side-by-side and locking arms. Have two other children play the role of the kangaroos. Tell them to try and get through the wall. (Manage this so your kangaroos don’t get too aggressive.)

Now break the chain by removing some of the children, thus creating gaps in the wall. Then have the kangaroos try again. Talk about the two walls and how a completed wall worked to keep out the kangaroos, but the wall with holes did not.

Ask the children if they would rather live in a house with walls or without walls and why?

Finally, explain that the city of Jerusalem was surrounded by walls to protect the people from attack. The problem for the people returning to Jerusalem was that the walls of their city were torn down while they were exiles. In today’s Bible story we are going to learn about Nehemiah, the man who led the project of rebuilding Jerusalem’s wall.

Pray for the remainder of the class time before moving forward with the lesson.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read story 78, “Nehemiah,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION 5 MIN

After reading the story, use the following questions to involve the children in a discussion:

- **What happened in this story?**
(Nehemiah heard that Jerusalem was in ruins. He decided to pray and then asked the king if he could return to Jerusalem to help. The king allowed him to go and gave Nehemiah additional help to rebuild Jerusalem.)
- **What did the enemies of Israel think of their work to rebuild the city?**
(They laughed at first but then planned an attack as the walls were rebuilt higher.)
- **What did Nehemiah tell the people who were afraid?**
(Nehemiah told the people that God would fight on their behalf.)

SNACK QUESTIONS 10 MIN

While the children are eating the snack, engage them by asking:

- **Why do you think Israel's enemies laughed at their attempts to rebuild the wall?**
(The wall was very large before it was broken down, and rebuilding it was a difficult job. The people rebuilding the wall were not expert builders but average people like you and me.)
- **Why do you think King Artaxerxes allowed Nehemiah to leave and rebuild the walls?**
(Nehemiah 2:8 says, "The king granted me what I asked, for the good hand of my God was upon me." Proverbs 21:1 tells us, "The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will." God directed the heart of Artaxerxes.)
- **Did you ever pray for God's help in performing a difficult task?**
(The Bible tells us that Nehemiah prayed before his conversation with the king and again in the moments before answering the king's question [Nehemiah 2:4–5].)

Where Is Jesus?

Please use the following comments connecting today’s lesson to the gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God’s greater plan of redemption.

Passage: 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 would have 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.

WORD BIBLE MEMORY 5–10 MIN

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

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS. 20–30 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.)

Rebuilding the Wall

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ building blocks

Have the children act out the two main groups in the story: the Israelites building the wall and their enemies. Have three of the children laugh at and then threaten the builders. Have a teacher play the role of Nehemiah, and help the workers remember that God was protecting them and helping them in their task. Use the following paraphrases of verses:

- We are in trouble if we don't build this wall. Keep going. If we get this wall built, we won't be embarrassed about our city anymore.
(from Nehemiah 2:17–18)
- God will give us success. Our enemies don't stand a chance as long as we are obeying God.
(from Nehemiah 2:20)
- I know the days are long but we can do this. We need you to do your part or we will all fail. Work with your spear in your hand so you can protect us.
(from Nehemiah 4:21–23)

Explain to the children how encouraging it was for the Israelites to remember that God was their provider and protector.

Why Rebuild the Wall?

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ two sticks tied together in the shape of a cross

Ask the children if they can guess why God wanted the wall rebuilt. Show them the cross and tell them it is a clue.

See if anyone mentions that Jesus would be dedicated in the temple that was rebuilt. If they do not guess that one reason God wanted the wall rebuilt was to prepare a way for Jesus, read Luke 2:21–40. Then ask the children again, “Why rebuild the wall?”

Connect this to Jesus to show that all of the Bible truly points to him.

PRAY **5 MIN**

Take time at the end of class to thank God for all you learned today. Include parts of your Bible lesson in your prayer as another way for the children to remember what today’s lesson was about.

