

UNIT 18 | SESSION 1

THE WALLS REBUILT

NEHEMIAH 1-6



CHRIST CONNECTION: Like Nehemiah helped keep his friends safe, Jesus rescues us from sin and death. When we follow Jesus, He is with us and will give us life with God forever.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is the Bible about? The Bible is about God's plan to save people through Jesus.

KEY PASSAGE: These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah.
John 20:31

STORY POINT: God's people rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

In the first chapter of Nehemiah, we learn that Nehemiah's heart was broken when he heard that the walls around the city of Jerusalem were in disrepair. While Nehemiah was in a place of prestige and importance, he was willing to sacrifice that position, travel back to Jerusalem, and dedicate himself to rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah understood that without walls around the city, Jerusalem was in danger of being destroyed or ransacked again by other groups of people living around them.

Once Nehemiah began the work of getting the people together to rebuild the walls, opposition quickly came in the form of a neighboring group of people. The opposition leaders decided that they needed to stop the work by killing Nehemiah if necessary. When confronted with the opposition, Nehemiah refused to give up his place working on the wall. He said to his enemies, "I am doing a great work and cannot come down" (Nehemiah 6:3). The Bible tells us Nehemiah had to refuse their request five times. Despite this opposition and much more in the days ahead, God strengthened His people, and they completed the walls in only 52 days.

Nehemiah reminds us of the importance of staying focused on the task to which God has called us. It is so easy to get distracted in the world in which we live, and yet God calls us to be focused on doing His will. Point kids to see how they can ask God to help them remain focused on His will and His plan for their lives. Invite kids to ponder God's mercy and power, knowing He will help them accomplish whatever He calls them to.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10-15 MINUTES

Greet preschoolers and open the session



LEARN

25-30 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers the story of the gospel



LOVE

Lead preschoolers to love the God of the gospel

30-40 MINUTES



LIVE

Lead preschoolers to live the mission of the gospel



BONUS

60-65 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers for an additional hour



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a supply of the following items available during all teaching sessions: Allergy Alert, Bibles, washable markers, crayons, scissors (adult use), blunt-tipped scissors, construction paper, copy paper, glue sticks, glue, tape, baby dolls, blocks, play dough, and a beanbag.

WELCOME

Build a wall

- Big Picture Question Poster



LEARN

Tell the Bible story

- "The Walls Rebuilt" video (optional)

Review the Bible story

- Bible Story Picture Poster

Learn and practice the key passage phrase

- "Key Passage Cards" printable, 1 copy
- Key Passage Phrase Marker



LOVE

Play in a construction yard

- large shallow bin
- clean play sand
- large polished stones
- toy construction vehicles

Spell Bible story words

- index cards, 5
- alphabet blocks or wooden letter tiles



LIVE

Missions activity

- "Partner with Send Phoenix" missions video
- map of United States

Snack and transition

- hand sanitizer (optional)
- "Complete the Wall" activity page, 1 per child
- Big Picture Cards for Families



BONUS

Say the key passage phrase

- Key Passage Phrase Marker

Dress like a construction worker

- toy hard hats
- toy safety vests
- toy tools
- toy tool belts



WELCOME Preschoolers

Provide as many learning activities as possible from the Love and Live sections to give preschoolers choices to learn. Incorporate the Bible story, the Christ Connection, story point, and key passage phrase in your conversations as the preschoolers engage in learning activities throughout the session.

Use the following activity to greet children as they enter the room. Talk about the big picture question and answer. After each child completes the welcome activity, encourage him to participate in the activities provided from the Love and Live sections of the leader guide.

BUILD A WALL

Lay the Big Picture Question Poster on a preschool height table just inside the classroom door. Arrange blocks on the floor and table around the poster. As the children enter the room, kneel down and welcome them to the group. Guide the children to play with the blocks by inviting to work together to build a large wall on the table or on the floor. Challenge them to see how tall of a wall they can build, how long of a wall they can build, how thick a wall they can build, and so forth. As children build, show them the Big Picture Question Poster and read it to them several times.

SAY 🗨️ Welcome to church. I am glad to see your smiling faces today. Tell me about these walls you have been building. How big (high, thick) were you able to build them? **[Give children time to talk and to describe what they have built.]** In today's Bible story, we are going to hear about how God's people rebuilt some of the walls around Jerusalem. The walls had been broken down and the city was not safe. Like the story of how **GOD'S PEOPLE REBUILT THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM**, the Bible tells us many things. The big picture question and answer asks, **What is the Bible about? The Bible is about God's plan to save people through Jesus.** 🗨️

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





LEARN the Bible Story

1 GATHER BLOCKS

Before group time begins, scatter blocks around the room. Challenge the preschoolers to quickly pick up and bring the blocks to the group time area. Direct the children to create a pile with the blocks before being seated.

SAY “ Thank you so much for helping me. Today, we are going to hear how God’s people worked together to rebuild something really important in the city of Jerusalem. Listen very carefully. ”

2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Open your Bible to Nehemiah 1. Tell the Bible story using the following summary. You may choose to review the Bible story by showing the video.

THE WALLS REBUILT

SAY “ Nehemiah was one of God’s people. He lived in Persia and worked for the king. One day, some men came and told him that the city of Jerusalem where God’s people lived was in danger. The big walls around it were broken, so the city wasn’t safe.

Nehemiah felt very sad. He prayed to God for help. The king asked Nehemiah what was wrong. Nehemiah told him about the broken walls, and the king decided to help. He sent Nehemiah to the city to fix the walls.

When Nehemiah got to the city, he looked at the broken walls and told everyone, “Let’s fix them together!” They all worked hard; some people carried big stones, and others filled in the gaps. Soon, the walls were looking better and better!

But some people who didn’t like Nehemiah and his friends tried to make fun of them and said, “You can’t fix these walls!” But Nehemiah and his friends kept working because they knew God was helping them.

Nehemiah and his friends worked hard and stayed ready to protect themselves from their enemies. Finally, the walls were fixed, and the city was safe. Nehemiah was a great leader, and he showed the people how to trust and follow God. ”

Christ Connection: Like Nehemiah helped keep his friends safe, Jesus rescues us from sin and death. When we follow Jesus, He is with us and will give us life with God forever.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

3 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

Show the Bible Story Picture Poster to the children. Ask the children to pretend that the blocks are the broken walls of Jerusalem. Guide them to work together to rebuild the walls. As children place blocks, point to the story picture and ask several questions: Who did Nehemiah work for? (the king) Why was Nehemiah sad? (He heard Jerusalem’s walls were broken.) Who sent Nehemiah to Jerusalem to fix the walls? (the king) What did Nehemiah and the people do when other people made fun of them? (They kept working.)

SAY “Nehemiah was sad that the walls around Jerusalem were broken and that the city was in danger. He prayed to God for help, and the king decided to help. Nehemiah led God’s people back to Jerusalem to fix the walls so that God’s people would be safe. **GOD’S PEOPLE REBUILT THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM.** Like Nehemiah helped keep his friends safe, Jesus rescues us from sin and death. When we follow Jesus, He is with us and will give us life with God forever.”

4 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “God Is So Good”:

God’s plan is Jesus.
God’s plan is Jesus.
God’s plan is Jesus,
The Bible tells us so.

5 LEARN AND PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Before the session, print and cut apart the “Key Passage Phrase Cards” printable. Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker and the cards at John 20:31. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Remove the marker and read the phrase aloud. Show children the cards by laying them on the floor. Invite the children to help you place the cards in order by matching the pictures at the cards’ bottom corners. Repeat the key passage phrase together while pointing to each word. Shuffle the cards and have the children re-order them.

SAY “The entire Bible points us to Jesus. Our key passage phrase tells us that the Bible was written to tell us that Jesus is the Messiah who came to rescue us from sin—doing things our way instead of God’s way. In the Bible story, Nehemiah was a great leader who led God’s people to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem to keep God’s people safe. Like Nehemiah helped keep his friends safe by rebuilding the walls, Jesus rescues us from sin and death. When we follow Jesus, He is with us and will give us life with God forever.”

6 PRAY

Pray, asking God to help us do hard things like Nehemiah did.

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God because of what we learned

1 KNOCK DOWN BLOCKS

Gather a beanbag and several large blocks. Stack the blocks into a tower on the floor in front of a wall. Tape a line that is 3–4 feet away from the block stack. Lead children to stand behind the tape line. Give the first child the beanbag and direct him to gently toss it at the block tower so the blocks tumble down. (If needed, give the child several attempts.) Rebuild the block tower and give the next child in line the opportunity to knock down the blocks.

SAY “ Were you able to knock down the blocks with the beanbag? The walls around Jerusalem were knocked down and needed to be fixed. This made Nehemiah very sad because the people who lived in the city were not safe. He prayed to God for help. The king decided to help Nehemiah, and he sent Nehemiah to the city. **GOD’S PEOPLE REBUILT THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM.** ”

2 PLAY IN A CONSTRUCTION YARD

Place a bin on the floor or a sturdy table. Pour sand into the bin. Place stones and construction vehicles in the bin. Invite a child to play in the sandbox with the vehicles and the stones. Guide him to drive the vehicles around the sand’s surface and to stack the stones as if he is building a wall.

SAY “ What are you building today in our pretend construction yard? [Allow responses.] In today’s Bible story, **GOD’S PEOPLE REBUILT THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM.** Some people who didn’t like Nehemiah and his friends tried to make fun of them and said, ‘You can’t fix these walls!’ But Nehemiah and his friends kept working because they knew God was helping them. ”

3 SPELL BIBLE STORY WORDS

Before the session begins, write these words on the cards in large, capital letters, putting one word on each card: GOD, KING, WALL, SAFE, HELP. Place the words and either blocks or wooden letter tiles on a tabletop. Invite a child to spell words with you. Read each of the word cards aloud and prompt the child to select a card to spell. Lay the card flat on the table in front of the child. Help the child to select letters from the blocks or letter tiles that match the letters on the word.

SAY “ We are spelling words from our Bible story. In our story, we learned that Nehemiah worked for the king of Persia. Nehemiah was sad because the walls around the city of Jerusalem were broken, and God’s people were in danger. Nehemiah led God’s people to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem together so that the city was safe. Like Nehemiah helped keep his friends safe, Jesus rescues us from sin and death. When we follow Jesus, He is with us and will give us life with God forever. ”

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE for God out of love

1 CREATE A MOSAIC WALL



Before the session, cut construction paper into 2-by-2-inch squares. Write the key passage phrase across additional sheets of paper using a marker, making one per child. Place the paper squares, key passage phrase papers, and glue sticks on a table. Give the child a key passage phrase paper. Read the key phrase aloud. Then, encourage the child to arrange the cut squares on the page to resemble a wall. Once the child has finished, help her glue the squares onto the paper.

SAY “ Our key passage phrase says, ‘These words are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah. John 20:31.’ This means that the Bible is about God’s plan to save people through Jesus. ”

2 MISSIONS ACTIVITY

Gather preschoolers and point to the state of Arizona on a map of the United States. Show the “Partner with Send Phoenix” missions video.

SAY “ Brian and Brooke Bowman made Phoenix, Arizona, their home and started Valley Life Church in a movie theatre. Valley Life Church wants to help people learn more about the love of God and start more churches in the area. Let’s pray together for Valley Life Church and thank God for the Bowmans. [Lead a prayer.] ”

3 SNACK AND TRANSITION



Post an Allergy Alert. Serve the snack. As children eat, review and talk about the Bible story. When children finish their snack, lead them to complete the activity page. As they work, continue talking about the Bible story and emphasize the Christ Connection.

SAY “ Like Nehemiah helped keep his friends safe, Jesus rescues us from sin and death. When we follow Jesus, He is with us and will give us life with God forever. ”

Remember to communicate helpful information to the bonus teaching hour leaders. If parents are picking up children at this time, tell them something their child did well during the session. Distribute Big Picture Cards for Families. Encourage parents to engage with the family discussion starters and family activities during the week.



TEACHING HOUR

BONUS Teaching Hour Group Time

1 PLAY OUT USING TOOLS

Invite the children to play a game with you in the group time area. Say the name of a tool and lead the children to make noises and motions to match the tool being used. For example, you might say, “Hammer,” and then lead the children to play out using a hammer with their hands, while saying “Boom, boom, boom!” Other tool ideas to play out: saw, rake, shovel, screwdriver, jackhammer, drill, and so forth. When finished, guide preschoolers to be seated for the Bible story.

2 TALK ABOUT THE BIBLE STORY

Open the Bible to Nehemiah 1. Use the summarized points below to talk about the Bible story:

THE WALLS REBUILT

- Nehemiah learned that the walls around Jerusalem were broken, and the city was in danger.
- Nehemiah was sad. He prayed to God, and the king of Persia sent him to Jerusalem to fix the walls.
- Nehemiah gathered the people to work together on rebuilding the walls.
- Some people mocked them, but Nehemiah and his friends kept working, trusting that God was helping them.
- They finished fixing the walls to make the city safe. As a leader, Nehemiah showed the people how to trust and follow God.

3 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “God Is So Good”:

God’s plan is Jesus.
God’s plan is Jesus.
God’s plan is Jesus,
The Bible tells us so.

4 SAY THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at John 20:31. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Lead the children to make a fist with one hand and to pound it into the palm of their other hand while saying the phrase on each beat. Remind the children that God’s Word, the Bible, tells us about Jesus. Jesus came as the long-promised Messiah to rescue us from sin and death.

5 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for sending Jesus to show us how to follow Him.



TEACHING HOUR

BONUS Teaching Hour Activities

6 FIX THE ROOM

Invite the children to be seated in the center of the room. Prompt them to close their eyes while you count to 30 out loud. While you count, move around the room scattering blocks, knocking over books, and making the room a “mess.” When you finish counting, guide children to open their eyes and look at the mess. Lead the children to work together to fix the room.

SAY “ Thank you for working together to fix the room. In today’s Bible story, we heard how Nehemiah learned that the walls around Jerusalem were broken. Nehemiah went to the city, he saw the broken walls, and he led God’s people to work together to fix them. **GOD’S PEOPLE REBUILT THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM.** Even when some people made fun of Nehemiah and his friends, they kept working because they knew God was helping them. ”

7 DRESS LIKE A CONSTRUCTION WORKER

Display toy construction hats, safety vests, and tools. Invite a child to dress like a construction worker. Prompt the child to try on the hat and safety vest. Talk about the various tools a construction worker uses, what the tools do, and how they work.

SAY “ You look ready to build something important! When Nehemiah went to Jerusalem and saw that the city’s walls were broken down, he told everyone, ‘Let’s fix them together!’ Everyone worked hard. Soon the walls were fixed, and the city was safe. Like Nehemiah helped keep his friends safe, Jesus rescues us from sin and death. When we follow Jesus, He is with us and will give us life with God forever. ”

8 TRACE AROUND BLOCKS

On a piece of paper for each child, write the key passage phrase: *These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah.* John 20:31. Distribute blocks, papers, and markers to children. Show children how to lay blocks of different sizes and shapes on top of their papers. Demonstrate for the children how to hold down a block with one hand while tracing around it with a marker. Encourage children to trace around several blocks. When children are finished, read the phrase aloud.

SAY “ The Bible teaches us many things. It is the story of how God sent Jesus as the Messiah to save His people from their sin. This is what it means when our key passage phrase says, ‘These words are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah.’ ”

Release preschoolers to parents according to your church’s security procedure. Tell them something their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session.