



4TH & 5TH SEPTEMBER WEEK 4

BIBLE STORY: I just Want to Celebrate - The Wall is Rebuilt - Nehemiah 3-4, 6:15-16, 8:1-17

BOTTOM LINE: Look for ways to celebrate what God has done.

MEMORY VERSE: “Work at everything you do with all your heart. Work as if you were working for the Lord.” Colossians 3:23a, NIV

ACTIVITY #1: Opening Activity

WHAT YOU NEED: Craft sticks

WHAT YOU DO:

NOTE: The secret to this game has nothing to do with the pattern or the 10 craft sticks that are used. The clue is the number of outstretched fingers you are showing. As you explain the game, don't reveal this secret. Keep your hands visible, but don't make the number of fingers you're holding out too obvious.

- Ask kids to kneel in a circle with their hands on the floor.
- Place 10 craft sticks in a random pattern in the middle of the circle on the floor.
- Tell kids that the craft stick pattern represents the number of friends you have invited to a party.
- Challenge kids to look at the formation of the craft sticks, then go around the circle giving their guess as to what number it is.
- When everyone has shared their guess, congratulate the kids who guessed correctly. Unless they know the secret of the game, it's most likely just a lucky guess.
- Rearrange the craft sticks and repeat with a different number.
- Ask kids who think they know the secret not to say what it is but to keep making correct guesses until everyone catches on or time runs out.
- Before moving on, share the secret of the game if kids were not able to figure it out on their own.

WHAT YOU SAY:

“Many families celebrate special days together—birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, and other special events. The next time you're at a family gathering or a party, you might have fun playing this game together. If you don't have craft sticks, you can use spoons or coins or 10 small objects of any kind.” [Transition] So, today we'll wrap up our story of Nehemiah. There's a happy ending and a celebration. No party tricks, but I think you're going to enjoy learning about it anyway.”

LARGE GROUP TIME - WORSHIP + LESSON

Please remember to encourage your group to engage in large group time as YOU engage in large group time!

ACTIVITY #2: Take A Snapshot

WHAT YOU NEED: No supplies needed

WHAT YOU DO:

- Ask kids if they know what a Time Capsule is and clarify if any kids are unsure.
- » (A time capsule is a container that holds present-day items, such as photos, letters, or any items that are a reminder of what is happening in our life or in the world right now. It's typically hidden away for our future self or someone of our choosing to find and open.)

- Invite kids to brainstorm what they would put in a Time Capsule that, if discovered in a year or so, would reveal what God is doing in their life right now. Something that they can praise and celebrate.
- If kids need a few ideas to get them started, share what you would put in your Time Capsule and stir their imagination with the prompts below.
 - » What is important to you right now? How is that a gift or blessing from God? What could you put in your Time Capsule to remind you of that?
 - » What's a favorite Bible verse you have? What could you put in your Time Capsule to remind you of it?
 - » What would you write in a THANK YOU letter to Jesus today?
 - » What people in your life are you most grateful for? What's something you could put in your Time Capsule that represents those people?
 - » What trips, activities, events, or experiences has God allowed you to have recently? What could you put in your Time Capsule to remind you of those?
 - » How has God answered a prayer, provided, cared for, encouraged, or helped you in some way? What could you put in your Time Capsule to remind you of that?
- Challenge kids to consider creating an actual Time Capsule this week by using a shoe box or other container.
 - » They might hide it in the back of their closet, garage, or other place where it might not be found for a while.
 - » Tell them to be sure to include a note with the date and purpose of the Time Capsule. When someone finds it or they rediscover it, they can celebrate what God has done in their lives.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What are some things you know about God's character that you can praise or celebrate right now?
- If we want to make a point of noticing what God has done in our life and remembering to thank Him, what might help us do that?
- When things don't turn out as we had hoped, why can we still celebrate?
- (Brainstorm some creative ways we can celebrate what God has done in our lives.)

ACTIVITY #3: Verse To Take With You

WHAT YOU NEED: Bibles, cardstock, art supplies

WHAT YOU DO:

- Invite one of the kids who enjoys reading aloud to look up and read Psalm 19 to everyone.
- Ask kids what the writer of this Psalm was celebrating and praising God for.
- Remind kids that celebrating God is something we should do all year long, not just on Christmas or Easter.
- Set out the supplies.
- Challenge kids to create a Praise Poster that represents their own personal celebration of God.
 - » It can be a collage of words or drawing, or the kids could also cut letter shapes out of the magazine pages (like ransom notes) to make their posters look interesting.
 - Get them started with a few ideas if needed.
 - » What praises did the author of Psalm 19 write about that you can identify with?
 - » What events can you look back on in your life or the life of others and see how God has helped in some way?
 - » How has God answered prayer?
 - » How has God helped you make wise choices?
 - » What has God provided for your family?
 - » What friends has God given you?
 - » In what unique ways has God created and gifted you?
 - » What part of creation do you find most awesome?
 - » What has Jesus done for you that no one else could ever do?
- Bring kids together and let them share their posters.