

SET APART TO HONOR GOD

Bible Basis: Ezra 7:1, 7, 10–11; Nehemiah 1:2–6, 11; 4:4–6, 13–23; 8:1–12

Bible Verse: [Nehemiah said,] “Don’t be afraid of your enemies. Remember the Lord. He is great and powerful.” —Nehemiah 4:14, NIV

Bible Point: Nehemiah knew God was on his side. God is on your side, too.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 21: “Set Apart to Honor God”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: yarn, string, or rope

Have children stand in a circle and pass around a ball of yarn so that each child is holding a part of the yarn and the yarn goes all the way around the circle. Or, for an extra challenge, hold a piece of yarn, then throw the ball of remaining yarn to someone across the circle. Continue until everyone is holding a section of the yarn. This will create a spiderweb-like effect.

Say, “**We each have a part in holding this yarn so it doesn’t touch the floor. I will call your name when you should let go of your yarn. Let’s see how many people can let go before the yarn touches the floor.**”

Ask alternating children around the circle to let go of the yarn. When everyone isn’t holding the yarn, it sags. Ask a few more children to let go of the yarn, until only you and one child are holding it. Then slowly ask individual children to hold the yarn again. Roll up the ball of yarn and have children sit down. Then ask:

- **When was it easiest to keep the yarn off the floor?** (*when we all worked together*)
- **When was it hardest to keep the yarn off the floor?** (*when only a few people worked together*)

Say, “**When everyone works together, it is easier to get the job done. In today’s Bible story, God sent an important man to help his people work together and finish a job.**”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

First, read aloud Chapter 21, “Set Apart to Honor God,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

Periodically, throughout the story, choose a child to come to the front of the room to create a human wall. Have children stand side by side with their hands at their sides. Pace your story so that by the

end of it, all the children are included in the human wall. If you have more than 10 or 12 children in your class, call them up 2 or 3 at a time. (You don't want to interrupt your story too many times or children will lose the story line.)

Say, **"As people build walls in our story, let's build a human wall. When I call your name, come up to the front to help make the human wall. We will begin now."**

God's people returned to Jerusalem, their home city. They built homes. They built God's temple. God's people had many things, but they were missing the wall around their city. In those days, if a city didn't have a wall around it, anyone could attack the city. God wanted his people to build a wall. He wanted them to be safe inside the city of Jerusalem.

God sent a man named Nehemiah. He was a servant for the king of Persia. Nehemiah explained about the wall to the king of Persia. He asked if he could return to Jerusalem and rebuild the wall. The king told him to go.

Nehemiah knew a city wall was important. He came to Jerusalem. He worked to build the wall. He wanted to work quickly, but he knew that if no one was guarding the city, enemies could attack while God's people worked. Nehemiah had a great idea. Half of the people in Jerusalem worked on the wall, while half of the people stood guard, ready to fight against any attack. Because the people worked together, the wall was finished quickly. God's temple and God's people were safe.

Nehemiah knew God was on his side. God is on your side, too!

After the Bible story, admire your human wall, and then have the children sit down. Ask:

- **What was wrong with the city of Jerusalem?** *(It had no walls.)*
- **Why was that a problem?** *(People could attack easily.)*
- **Who led the project to build the wall?** *(Nehemiah)*
- **What was his job before this?** *(servant to the king of Persia)*
- **How did he protect the city?** *(Half the people worked while half the people stood guard.)*
- **Did Nehemiah work alone on the wall?** *(No, God's people worked together.)*
- **Did Nehemiah know God was on his side?** *(yes)*

Say, **"Nehemiah knew that God was on his side. God wanted the people to rebuild the wall, so Nehemiah knew God would help them. What are some things God wants you to do? (obey your parents, obey the commandments, love and worship God) If these are things God wants you to do, will God help you do those things? (yes) Will God be on your side as you do them? (yes) Let's all say it together: God is on my side. (Repeat together.)"**

Pray for the children to follow what God wants them to do. Pray for God to help them do the right thing.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose any or all of these activities to help explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: BUILD THE WALL

Stuff you need: large cardboard bricks, shoe boxes with lids taped on, or large MegaBlocs or Duplo blocks

Preparation: Clear an area along a wall for children to build a wall.

Have children form a single-file line, and give each a block or brick. One at a time, have them cross the room and place their brick against the wall. After 3 or 4 children have had a turn, guide the next group to begin building upward to create a wall.

After the game, say, **“When we worked together, like the people of Jerusalem did, we all did a little bit of work, and we still built a big wall.”**

OPTION 2: THE CITY’S WALL

Stuff you need: butcher paper, red and brown construction paper, tape

Tape butcher paper across the front wall of the classroom. Give children construction paper that they can tear into the shape of stones. Tape the “stones” on the butcher paper to build a wall. Try to cover the butcher paper.

OPTION 3: REBUILDING THE WALL

Stuff you need: Rebuilding the Wall Activity Sheet, large sheets of sandpaper, unwrapped red and brown crayons

Give an activity sheet, a sheet of sandpaper, and an unwrapped crayon to each child. (The children can take turns and share crayons and sandpaper sheets.) Demonstrate how to place the sandpaper underneath the activity sheet, and then rub the activity sheet with the broad side of the crayons to create a rubbing of the sandpaper on the brick wall on the activity sheet. The rubbing will make the wall look like real bricks.

OPTION 4: THANK YOU, GOD!

Stuff you need: Thank you, God! Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child. Review the story of Nehemiah. Remind the children that Nehemiah knew God was on his side. Have them color the picture of Nehemiah working.

OPTION 5: WALL OF JERUSALEM

Stuff you need: Wall of Jerusalem Mobile Cards, white card stock, children’s plastic clothes hangers, round-tipped scissors, yarn or ribbon, crayons, adult scissors (to cut yarn), hole punch

Preparation: Photocopy the Wall of Jerusalem Mobile Cards onto white card stock.

Have children color and cut out the four cards or have adult volunteers help with the cutting. Punch a hole in each. Cut four strands of yarn or ribbon in varying lengths for each child. Help children tie the yarn onto the cards; then tie each piece of yarn onto the hanger to create a mobile.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 21*. Say, **“The front of this card will remind you that Nehemiah was sure of God’s power. Show your parents the back and tell them that God is on your side.”** Have them practice saying this before they leave.

Use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents’ Page.