



May 28, 2017

Dear Teacher,

This week we learn about Nehemiah. As we wind down our study of the Old Testament, Nehemiah is an important figure not to gloss over. His presence and leadership was integral to the Israelites rebuilding the wall surrounding Jerusalem. We see in Nehemiah's prayer, confession and repentance for sins committed both personally and by the whole nation of Israel. This is what God desired from His people long ago. This is why God's people were taken captive to start, but as they were slowly returning to Jerusalem, things were in complete disarray. But God used Nehemiah in a huge way to shepherd His people during these chaotic times. God used a faithful servant to show how He was going to keep His promises to His people.

We encourage all classrooms to engage with the story from the options provided in class. Teachers, tell the story using any of the provided helps (Vos, Jesus Story Book Bible, Gospel Story Book Bible or printed Handout). If you would like, read the selected Scripture passages aloud in class, discuss or explain what the passages mean, and use the questions below to help guide the discussion. Also, use time in class to teach the Scripture Memory and the Catechism Questions.

Morning Overview

Lesson: *Return:* Nehemiah

Lesson Objective: To communicate to children that God always keeps His promises despite circumstances and even our inability to trust Him. God wants us to trust Him and obey His commands.

Scripture: Nehemiah 1-4; 6:15-16

Story: Vos Children's Bible, Chapter 110 (Pages 259-262); Gospel Story Book Bible, Pages 156-157.

Teaching Summary:

- God's promises do not change despite circumstances, people and even our inability to believe them. God keeps His promises even when we do not trust Him or follow His commands.
- God alone is worthy of worship.
- God's people lived far away from home for a long time, but they were returning to Jerusalem and Judah.
- Nehemiah was a cupbearer in the king's court. Nehemiah was responsible for bringing the king his wine, and making sure it was safe to drink.
- Nehemiah heard about the conditions of Jerusalem from a friend. This news made him very sad.
- Nehemiah, upon an encounter with the king, was given permission to go back to Jerusalem to help rebuild the wall.
- Nehemiah guided the Jews to rebuild the wall despite opposition. They completed the wall in fifty-two days.

9:30am Sunday Schedule

For the Sunday Schedule, please see "Sunday Schedule for Preschool" found in Handbook on the teacher's table.

Cherub Church

- Kindergarten/5's – 9:35-10:00 (Classroom's: 162, 163, 121, 123, 124)
- 3's/4's – 10:05-10:30 (Classroom's: 166, 165, 164)

Craft: Rebuilding the Wall

Supplies: Peach cardstock, grey cardstock blocks, Nehemiah figure, sticker, glue, crayons/markers

Instructions:

1. Glue Nehemiah to peach cardstock
2. Add wall sticker
3. Glue grey pieces in stacked formation (wall)
4. Color if desired



Snack

11am Sunday Schedule

Craft: Shield

Supplies: Foam board shield, foil, paint brush, tape

Instructions:

1. Wrap foil around the shield shape (secure with tape on back if needed)
2. Make design on shield by gently pressing on the foil with the back end of the paint brush



Story: *Return:* Nehemiah

1. **PRAY** for your time and any requests the children may have.
2. **ASK** the transition question: Boys and girls, what do you want to be, or do as a job, when you grow up? [Allow children to answer] Well what if you could be a cupbearer? [Explain cupbearer; allow kids to react]. Our story today is about a man who was a cupbearer, but God used him in a big way to help His people. Let's find out more...
3. **TELL** the Story. Use the Vos Children's Bible, the Jesus Storybook Bible, the Beginner's Bible, or the story below to aid in telling the story. Feel free to edit and adapt to your own style. Include props and teaching aids as you see fit.
4. **REVIEW** the questions to help children understand the story.

Questions for Review

Scripture Memory (Nehemiah 1:5)

Catechism Questions (1-17)

Hymn of the Month: A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

Free Play

Questions for Review

Questions for Younger Children:

- Who was the king's cupbearer?
- What did a "cupbearer" do?
- Why was Nehemiah so sad?
- What did Nehemiah do when he was sad?
- Who helped Nehemiah and the workers build the wall around Jerusalem?
- What two ways did Nehemiah pray?
- What problems did Nehemiah and his workers have as they built the wall?
- How long did it take?
- How had God helped Nehemiah and his workers?

Questions for Older Children:

- What does the story tell us about God?
- What does this story tell us about God's faithfulness?
- What does this story tell us about worship?

Scripture Memory for May:

O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments. (Nehemiah 1:5)

Story

Transition

Boys and girls, what do you want to be when you grow up? [Allow children to answer] Well what if you could be a cupbearer? [Allow kids to react]. Our story today is about a man who was a cupbearer, but God used him in a big way to help God's people. Let's find out more...

Nehemiah's Job

Nehemiah had a special job; he was the cupbearer to the king. Now a cupbearer not only had an interesting job, but it was a very important one. The cupbearer's job was to choose and taste the king's wine to make certain that it was good. In those days kings had lots of enemies. Their enemies might try to put something in the king's wine or food that could make him sick. The cupbearer would make sure that didn't happen. He would choose the wine, pour the wine, taste the wine and then he presented it to the king. The king had to trust his cupbearer and he probably knew the cupbearer well.

But one day before Nehemiah went to his job as the cupbearer at the palace, he saw a friend that he had not seen for a long time. Nehemiah's friend told him some very sad news. The news was about the city of Jerusalem.

Nehemiah, an Israelite, was not living in Jerusalem. Many years before Nehemiah was a cupbearer to the king, an enemy had conquered Jerusalem and taken God's people far away. This happened because God's people had been disobedient. Nehemiah and many other Israelites lived far away from Jerusalem. But many Israelites were returning to Jerusalem.

Nehemiah's friend told him the bad news: "Those who are back in Jerusalem are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall that went around the city is broken down and the gates have been burned with fire." When Nehemiah heard those sad words, he sat down and started to cry. The city of Jerusalem meant so much to him. For days, he was very sad, so sad that he did not eat.

Nehemiah's Prayer

Nehemiah chose to do a most important thing; he prayed: Nehemiah started his prayer with praise: "O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his promises with those who love and obey his commands, hear the prayer of your servant for the people of Israel." Then Nehemiah told God he was sorry. "Hear the prayer your servant is praying to you day and night. I am praying for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites have done against you. My family and I have sinned against you. We have been wicked toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, rules and laws you gave to us."

Then Nehemiah remembered God's words: "If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations. But if you come back to me and obey my commands, I will gather your people. I will gather them from the far ends of the earth. And I will bring them from captivity to where I have chosen to be worshiped." Nehemiah continued to pray, "We are your servants and your people. You have saved us with your great strength and power. Lord, listen carefully to my prayer. I am your servant. And listen to the prayers of your people who love to honor you. Give me, your servant, success today. Allow this king to show kindness to me." Nehemiah needed the Lord's help. Some time had passed by since Nehemiah's prayer, and as normal one day Nehemiah went before the king. He was carrying the wine he had chosen and he presented it to the king as usual. Nehemiah had never been sad when he presented the wine to the king. The person who had that job was supposed to be happy, to make the king feel happy.

But that's not the way Nehemiah felt and he didn't make his face look any other way. The king asked Nehemiah, "Why does your face look sad? You are not sick. Your heart must be sad." When Nehemiah heard the king's words he was very afraid. Maybe the king would be angry because Nehemiah was so sad. He decided to tell the king what he was thinking, "May the king live forever! I am sad because the city where my ancestors are buried lies in ruins. And its gates have been destroyed by fire." Then the king asked Nehemiah something that was very nice, something that Nehemiah may not have expected: "What do you want?" In that moment, Nehemiah said a small prayer in his head. We know that the Lord hears everything. And He hears us anytime we pray!

After his small prayer, Nehemiah said to the king, "Send me back to where my ancestors are buried. I will rebuild the wall. Do this if you are willing and if I have pleased you." Certainly, the king did not have to let Nehemiah return to Jerusalem to build the wall. But God was working even if the king didn't know it and God had a plan for Nehemiah and for the wall that had once surrounded Jerusalem.

The Bible says the king sat on his throne with the queen beside him and he asked Nehemiah, "How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?" The king would let his cupbearer leave and go to Jerusalem to build the wall. Nehemiah gave the king a time when he would return. Then Nehemiah asked the king for another favor. He asked if the king would write him two letters. One letter he would give to the leader of another country. That leader would make sure Nehemiah was safe as he traveled. The other letter he would give to the keeper of the king's forest. That man would give Nehemiah wood from the trees – wood that Nehemiah would need to make repairs. The Bible says, "This was because God was showing kindness to me." The king even sent his soldiers to go with Nehemiah to make sure he was safe.

Nehemiah arrives in Jerusalem

When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem he waited three days. Then one evening he took a few men with him as he traveled through the city of Jerusalem carefully examining the walls. The wall had been broken down and the gates had been destroyed by fire. Without the wall and gates, any enemy could ride into Jerusalem. It was very sad and dangerous. After taking a very close look, Nehemiah told the men, "You see the trouble we are in. Jerusalem is ruined and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem and we will no longer be in disgrace." Then Nehemiah also told them what God had done and how the king had acted. "Let's start rebuilding," the men said. And they began to do this good work.

Opposition

The men started rebuilding the wall. But building the wall around Jerusalem was not an easy job. It was very hard work. Some of the people who heard that Nehemiah was leading the people to rebuild the wall made fun of them. They laughed and said mean words to the workers:

“What are those weak Jews doing? Will they rebuild their wall? Will they sacrifice to the Lord? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble that are all burned? Even if a little fox climbed up on that wall, he would break it down!” But Nehemiah kept praying and the people kept working day after day. Sometimes the job seemed so big that they thought they could never finish. Sometimes enemies would try to scare them to make them stop building. Sometimes the workers had to do their work with one hand and hold a weapon in the other. The Bible says the workers even had to wear their sword at their side as they worked.

The Wall Completed

But fifty-two days later, the wall was built again. The wall rose high around the city of Jerusalem. The Bible says that when the nations around Jerusalem heard that the wall was completed, they were afraid. They were afraid because they understood that this work had been done with the help of the Lord. They knew it couldn't have been done any other way.

God had certainly given Nehemiah and the workers help. God had kept His promise to Nehemiah and to His people!