



NEHEMIAH REBUILDS THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM

NEHEMIAH 1-13

GOAL

▶ To help children understand the power of prayer through the example of Nehemiah.

CHARACTERS

▶ **Nehemiah:** In faith, he resigned his important job and traveled to the dangerous territory of his homeland to rebuild the wall. His life is marked by faith and prayer.

MEMORY VERSE

▶ **John 14:14:** If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

OVERVIEW

▶ **Read Nehemiah 1-13:** Nehemiah was an exiled Israelite living in Persia. He tested the food and drink to make sure it was safe for the king of Persia to eat. When Nehemiah learned that there were still some Israelites living in the destroyed city of Jerusalem, he could think of nothing else. He asked the king for permission to return to the city to rebuild the walls that surrounded it. The king provided Nehemiah with building supplies and a letter bearing the king's seal, which would protect Nehemiah as he made the dangerous journey back to Jerusalem. When he arrived, they began rebuilding the wall immediately. On several occasions, leaders from neighboring lands threatened Nehemiah and the others, and they plotted to stop their work on the wall. No matter what these leaders planned, all of their schemes failed because they were fighting God's plan. Nehemiah and the Israelites finished the wall and celebrated and worshiped God, as it was Him who made their efforts successful.



SUGGESTIONS

▶ Despite the danger associated with rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, Nehemiah saw a problem and sought to fix it. How did Nehemiah withstand all of the opposition he faced during this enormous task?

1. Dependence: Nehemiah knew that he alone, or even with the help of the Israelites still living in Jerusalem, could not complete a job as big as rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem. Nehemiah drew his strength of body and mind from the Lord.

2. Trust: When leaders of the surrounding nations began to threaten Nehemiah, he didn't worry—he turned to God. He knew he was doing God's work, and that God would protect him. Because he trusted in God, Nehemiah didn't have to worry about protecting himself; he could just keep working on the wall.

3. Vengeance: Rebuilding the wall made some people angry. They tried many ways to stop Nehemiah's progress. Rather than getting angry, dwelling on their hatred, and plotting ways to get back at these people, Nehemiah prayed that God would remember them and what they had tried to do: "My God, remember Tobiah and Sanballat, according to these their works, and the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who would have made me afraid" (Nehemiah 6:14).

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PRE-LESSON ACTIVITY

▶ **One-Handed Wall Building | Supplies:** a number of cardboard boxes

Have the children build a wall using the cardboard boxes; however, they must do so with one hand behind their back. "Those who built on the wall, and those who carried burdens, loaded themselves so that with one hand they worked at construction, and with the other held a weapon" (Nehemiah 4:17).



MEMORY
VERSE
MEANING

- ▶ **John 14:14:** Nehemiah knew this, and it is what gave him the strength and confidence to take on the huge task of rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem. God always listens to our prayers, and He answers them in one way or another.
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POST-LESSON
ACTIVITY

- ▶ **Prayer Brick | Supplies:** paper or cardboard cut into brick-like shapes, markers, crayons, and art supplies.

Give each student a "brick" to decorate. On one side, have them write the memory verse. On the other side, have them write their prayer requests.

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TAKE
HOME

- ▶ Nehemiah was a man of prayer. He knew that God hears and answers prayers. This knowledge was the key to his success in life and in his endeavor to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem. How can prayer help us?

1. Strength: Sometimes we face big tasks or trying situations. If we pray for help, God can give us the strength to accomplish our goals and to make it through hard times.

2. Trust: The more we pray, the more we can see God act in our lives. The more we know God is there for us, we can more easily and confidently face anything that life throws our way.

3. Peace: Many of us have people in our lives who make things difficult or uncomfortable. We are called to peace, which sometimes feels like we are letting these people get away with their actions. Through prayer, God will help us figure out how to handle these situations. Scripture tells us, "Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord'" (Romans 12:19).



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 1



Q1a: What made Nehemiah sad?

A1: Nehemiah was sad because he learned people were living in the ruined city of Jerusalem.

Q1b: Have you ever heard of the Red Cross?

TN: The Red Cross is an organization made up mostly of volunteers who go to disaster sites to help people who have been affected. Their mission statement says their goal is to "prevent and alleviate human suffering in the face of emergencies." Their volunteers are very like Nehemiah in that they see people in need, and they feel moved to help.

SLIDE 2



Q2a: What did Nehemiah ask the king?

A2: He asked for permission to return to Jerusalem, building materials, and a letter for protection.

Q2b: How can you tell if someone is sad?

TN: Besides seeing someone cry, it is possible to tell if someone is sad. There are some vague signs that can help tip us off, such as suddenly becoming more quiet than usual and the expressions on their faces. When we see a friend who seems sad, we should ask if they would like to talk about it or ask if there is anything we can do to help.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 3



Q3a: What surrounded the ruins of Jerusalem?

A3: Nothing surrounded the ruined city; the wall had been destroyed.

Q3b: Have you ever visited or seen pictures of the ruins of ancient cities?

TN: Most of us have at least seen photos of ruins. Most of these cities have been abandoned and in ruins for centuries. Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem about 70 years after the city was destroyed, and people were still living there. While Jerusalem may not have been as bad as some of the ruins we can visit today, it was still in bad shape. Nehemiah came to change that.

SLIDE 4



Q4a: Did Nehemiah wait to start building the wall?

A4: No, work began immediately.

Q4b: Have you ever built anything?

TN: Ask the students whether they had help, either in the way of someone assisting them or instructions on how to assemble the project. When making something we've never made before, we usually want the assistance of someone with experience or instructions. Before taking on this task, Nehemiah prepared and tested food for the king. He had never built a wall before! But, with the help of God and the Israelites still living in Jerusalem, Nehemiah knew he could do it.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 5



Q5a: What did the leaders of nearby countries threaten to do?

A5: They threatened to kill the Israelites.

Q5b: You decide you want to build a house. What challenges might you encounter?

TN: That's a really big project. Maybe we'd be discouraged by the size of the project or our ignorance of how to actually accomplish something like this. Maybe we'd be discouraged by people around us telling us that we aren't capable of doing something like this. Nehemiah probably experienced these same feelings, but he was called by God to do it. If we are called to do something, God will give us the strength, help, and encouragement we need to be successful.

SLIDE 6



Q6a: Why did Ezra read the Law of Moses?

A6: So the Israelites wouldn't fall into sin again.

Q6b: A new kid at school is from a different country. He greets you by slapping your face. How do you react?

TN: How rude! But it wasn't meant to be rude; that's how people greet each other in his home country. He doesn't understand that it is not a nice way to greet new people here. He needs to be taught about what is considered acceptable behavior here. In Nehemiah's time, the people had been living in exile for a long time. Many of the people had forgotten the Law of Moses, and it wasn't reasonable to expect them to live without falling away from God if they didn't understand what was and wasn't acceptable. Ezra read the Law, and other priests translated it ensure that everyone understood. It was important that everyone started off with an understanding of what was expected of them.



**MEMORY
VERSE**

▷ **John 14:14:** If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

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BIG IDEA

▷ God answers prayers; all we need to do is ask!

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**CLOSING
PRAYER**

▷ Dear Lord, thank You that prayer works. Thank You for the Bible and its many examples of answered prayers. Help us to believe and to build a strong prayer life like Nehemiah. We ask these things in Jesus' name, Amen.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 1



The people of Israel were exiles in the land of Persia. As punishment for the Israelites' ongoing sin and disobedience, God took away His protection from them. The Persians came and destroyed the city of Jerusalem and took the Israelites as their slaves. One of these Israelite slaves was a man named Nehemiah. His job was to serve food to the king and to make sure it was safe to eat. Though most of the Israelites lived in Persia, there were a few who survived and were living in the ruined city of Jerusalem. Nehemiah heard about them and was very sad. He missed Jerusalem and wanted to go back and help those people.

SLIDE 2



Nehemiah could not stop thinking about and praying for Jerusalem. He was sad all the time. One day, while Nehemiah was before the king, the king asked, "Nehemiah, why are you so sad? Are you sick? Is something troubling you?" Nehemiah could not hold it in any longer. "O King, live forever! My home country, my father's land, is in ruin." The king was concerned and offered to help Nehemiah. "What do you want me to do?" the king asked. Nehemiah told the king that he wanted to go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the city and the walls around it. Nehemiah asked the king for building supplies. He also asked the king to write a letter that he could show to anyone on his journey back to Jerusalem. This letter bore the seal of the king and protected Nehemiah as he traveled back to Jerusalem.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 3



It was a long and dangerous journey, but Nehemiah was excited to go back. As they neared Jerusalem, they could see its ruins in the distance. The beautiful city of Jerusalem was a broken mess, and no wall surrounded it for protection.

SLIDE 4



Work began immediately. Nehemiah wasted no time and gathered all the men to help rebuild the wall. He assigned each group a task to rebuild sections of the wall. It was a big task that was going to take a long time.

SLIDE 5



As Nehemiah and the men rebuilt the wall, many leaders from nearby countries tried to stop them. They threatened to kill the Israelites. Nehemiah prayed to God for protection so they wouldn't have to stop working. Each day they worked harder and harder, and the wall became stronger and stronger.

SLIDE 6



After months of hard work and danger, the job was complete. Ezra, a scribe and prophet, read the Law of Moses so that everyone there would understand how to live according to God's will. This was done so the Israelites wouldn't fall into sin, which was what led to the city's destruction in the first place. The Israelites celebrated with singing, dancing, and feasting; but most of all, there was praying and praising. God was the one who gave them success in their endeavor. God was the one who deserved praise and glory for the finished job.