



UNIT 18 | SESSION 2 | FEBRUARY 8-9, 2020

## 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Lesson

# The Walls Rebuilt

**Bible Passage:** Nehemiah 1-6

**Story Point:** God used Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem's walls.

**Key Passage:** "The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast." 1 Peter 5:10

**Christ Connection:** God protected us from being separated from Him by sending Jesus. Jesus makes it possible for us to have a relationship with God.

**Big Picture Question:** Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth.

**KID CONNECT:  
10 MINUTES**

**LARGE GROUP:  
30 MINUTES**

**SMALL GROUP:  
20 MINUTES**

## LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Nehemiah was a Jew living in Persia. He served as the king's cupbearer. When the Persian Empire conquered the Babylonians, King Cyrus allowed God's people to return to Judah. Two or three million Jews had originally been deported, but only a remnant—50,000 people—returned. They set up their homes and rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem.

But when God's people faced opposition in rebuilding the rest of Jerusalem, they stopped. Some 70 years passed, and the walls and gates around the city were still ruined.

City walls and gates were very important in Bible times. Thick walls protected a city from its enemies and provided a sense of safety and security. Gates were the center of city life, the meeting place for commercial and social transactions. Without these structures, the surviving remnant of God's people struggled and was vulnerable to attack.

Nehemiah traveled from Persia to Jerusalem to lead the effort in rebuilding Jerusalem's walls. His

leadership was effective. Nehemiah 3 describes all the people working together to rebuild the gates and walls. But it wasn't long before Nehemiah met opposition from local governors. God's people armed themselves and kept working. They completed the wall in just 52 days.

Note how their enemies reacted: "All the surrounding nations were intimidated and lost their confidence, for they realized that this task had been accomplished by our God" (Neh. 6:16).

Now God's people were protected from their enemies. Help kids see that God provided the way for us to be protected from our enemies, sin and death: He sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins. When we repent and trust in Jesus, He frees us from sin and death. We still sin, but we are no longer slaves to sin. (See Rom. 6:17-18.) We may die a physical death as a result of sin, but we have eternal life. (See John 11:25-26; Rom. 6:23.)

## KID CONNECT

### WELCOME TIME

(VIDEO: INTRO/OUTRO MUSIC)

Greet each kid as he or she arrives and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to talk about the hardest thing they have ever accomplished. (Examples: finishing a tedious chore, turning in a difficult school assignment, winning a basketball game, and so on.)

How did they feel when they finished? What kept them from giving up?

## LARGE GROUP

### COUNTDOWN

(VIDEO: COUNTDOWN)

Show the countdown video as you transition to Large Group. Set it to end as the session begins.

### LARGE GROUP GAME

(SFX: GAME INTRO MUSIC, CG: BUILD THE BASEPLATE IMAGE, SFX: FUN MUSIC)

#### BUILD THE BASEPLATE

(2 LEGO Baseplates (halfway completed), 1 Bucket full of LEGOS, 2 Blindfolds, Table)

SAY • It's game time again! I need 4 volunteers, 2 boys and 2 girls. (*choose 4 kids*) Ok, but we're going to switch things up this time. Rather than boys vs. girls, we are going to have you two (*point to a boy and girl*) be on a team going against you two (*point to the other boy and girl*). Yep! Let's find out which team is better at building with LEGOS! Here's how this will work, each team will have one of these (*hold up LEGO Baseplate*), as you can see, we have already completed part of it for you. Your job is to finish the rest where we can't see any of the green baseplate anymore...but all the pieces have to fit perfectly - AND you have to work as a

team! One person from each team will be the “LEGO Finder” and have to search through this bucket to find the right pieces and pass them to their teammate who we will call the “LEGO Builder”. Oh, and did I mention that the “LEGO Finder’s” will be blindfolded? Yep! We couldn’t make this TOO easy! Ok, whichever team is the first to fully cover their baseplate is the winner! Got it? Let’s Build the Baseplate!

## WORSHIP

(VIDEO: NOT AFRAID, VIDEO: GOD IS FOR US)

SAY • Let’s worship God!

## INTRODUCE THE SESSION

(CG: WALL IMAGES 1-5)

(No Supplies Needed)

SAY • Hey guys. So last week we talked about games where you can build stuff. This week I want us to focus specifically on walls. I’m going to show you some pictures of different video games with walls and if you know it, yell out which game it is.

*WALL IMAGE 1: FORTNITE*

*WALL IMAGE 2: MINECRAFT*

*WALL IMAGE 3: MARIO KART*

*WALL IMAGE 4: PAC-MAN*

Good job! Why are walls important? *Take responses from the kids.* Yes, walls are important mainly as a barrier of protection. Also, my wall at home is important because it holds my board games. Check it out!

*WALL IMAGE 5: HUGE BOARD GAME LIBRARY*

The walls around Jerusalem were important, too. They helped keep God’s people safe. Let’s take a look at this week’s Bible story.

## BIG PICTURE QUESTION

(CG: BIG PICTURE QUESTION)

SAY • Nehemiah was heartbroken when he heard that the walls around Jerusalem had been destroyed and that God’s people were in danger, but the king was kind to Nehemiah and allowed him to go to Jerusalem to help rebuild the walls. This was not a coincidence; God knew that His people would need help. Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth.

## GIANT TIMELINE

(CG: GIANT TIMELINE)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

**SAY** • Last week, we learned about Esther and the Jewish people who remained in Persia while the temple was being rebuilt in Judah. God made Esther queen to protect His people in Persia. Several years went by after Esther saved the Jews from Haman’s evil plan. Some of God’s people, including Nehemiah, continued to work for the king of Persia.

In today’s Bible story, Nehemiah learned that the walls and gates around Jerusalem had been destroyed and were no longer keeping God’s people safe. Their enemies were a real threat, but God had a plan for His people. Check it out.

## WATCH THE BIBLE STORY

**(VIDEO: THE WALLS REBUILT, CG: BIBLE STORY PICTURE, CG: STORY POINT)**

**(Bible)**

Show the Bible story video “The Walls Rebuilt.”

**SAY** • Have you ever watched a friend go through something hard but weren’t sure how to help? That is probably similar to how Nehemiah felt when he heard that God’s people were in danger. But the king of Persia was kind to Nehemiah and sent him to Jerusalem to help the Jews rebuild the wall around the city.

That was not the end of their trouble, though. Other people did not want the walls rebuilt. God’s people had to trust that rebuilding the walls was God’s plan for them. They trusted that God would keep them safe while they obeyed Him.

When God asks us to do something, He doesn’t guarantee that it will be easy or that everyone will agree. We can listen to God through His Word and trust that His words are true. When we trust God, we will obey Him—even when other people try to get us to stop. God’s people knew that they needed to rebuild the wall, even when their enemies were surrounding them. God empowered them to continue, even in a difficult situation. God used Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem’s walls.

## CHRIST CONNECTION

**(CG: CHRIST CONNECTION)**

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

**SAY** • Nehemiah led the people to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem to protect them from their enemies. God had a plan to protect His people in Jerusalem and He has a plan to protect us. God protected us from being separated from Him by sending Jesus. Jesus makes it possible for us to have a relationship with God.

## KEY PASSAGE

(CG: KEY PASSAGE)

(Bible)

Show the key passage slide. Open the Bible and lead the kids to read 1 Peter 5:10 together.

**SAY** • Do you notice the word restore in the middle of the key passage? Restore means “to repair” or “to bring something back to what it originally was.”

In today’s story, God helped Nehemiah restore the walls around Jerusalem. But did you know that God can restore us too? Because of sin, people have a broken relationship with God. But God sent Jesus to take the punishment for our sins. When we trust in Jesus as our Savior, He restores our relationship with God.

## PRAY AND DISMISS TO SMALL GROUPS

### SMALL GROUP

**Bible Passage:** Nehemiah 1-6

**Story Point:** God used Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem’s walls.

**Key Passage:** “The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.” 1 Peter 5:10

**Christ Connection:** God protected us from being separated from Him by sending Jesus. Jesus makes it possible for us to have a relationship with God.

**Big Picture Question:** Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth.

## HEART PRAYER MAGNETS

(Cardstock Heart, 1 per kid, Adhesive Magnet, 1 per kid and SGL, Crayons, Colored Pencils, Larger Cardstock Heart, 1 per SGL)

Provide each kid with a colored cardstock heart of their choice. Have the kids write their first name on the heart, decorate it, and attach an adhesive magnet to the back of their heart. As kids finish, talk about how when we pray for others it helps to encourage them. Have each kid exchange their heart with someone else in the group. Tell the kids to take their friend’s heart home, attach it to the refrigerator or a place it in their room as a reminder to pray for them. Leaders should write the names of everyone in their group on the larger heart and make a prayer reminder magnet for themselves.

**SAY** • In our story we see that God’s people needed each other’s help to rebuild the wall. They could not have done it on their own. Praying for each other is one way you can help encourage and support others. We know that God hears us when we talk to Him. Use this heart as a reminder to pray for each other.

## DISCUSSION

(Bibles per group)

Distribute Bibles. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Nehemiah 1. Explain that the books of the Bible fit together to show the big story of how God saves people through His Son, Jesus.

The Book of Nehemiah teaches us that God protects His people, and His people should be obedient and faithful to Him. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Nehemiah 1:3-4.

**SAY** • When Nehemiah heard that God’s people were in danger in Jerusalem, he was sad. Nehemiah wanted to help, but he was in Persia which is far from Jerusalem.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

What was the first thing Nehemiah did after hearing about Jerusalem? *Help kids find Neh. 1:4, which says Nehemiah “mourned and fasted and prayed.” Nehemiah had the greatest tool of all—prayer! We can approach every situation with prayer. God hears us when we pray. (Option: Choose a kid to read 1 Thess. 5:16-18.)*

What feelings might prompt you to pray? *Suggest that kids can pray through all of their feelings—joy, sadness, confusion, and so on. Point out that in his prayer, Nehemiah thanked God and praised Him. Nehemiah prayed even though he was sad and confused. God heard Nehemiah’s prayers and answered them. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ps. 34:17.)*

What situation do you need to pray about this week? How can you remind yourself to pray? *Encourage kids to share their thoughts. Emphasize that God wants us to pray about everything! God knows all things, but He welcomes us to come to Him with all of our questions, cares, and concerns. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Col. 4:2.)*

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY: REMNANT REMAINING

(No Supplies Needed)

Instruct everyone to stand in a circle. Read a list of criteria, one statement at a time. Kids who meet that criterion must keep standing, and those who don’t will sit down. Continue reading the statements until only one person remains standing. (Sample criteria: born in this city, owns a pet, has a brother, likes video games, can play a musical instrument, is on a sports team, and so forth)

**SAY** • Two to three million Jews were taken into captivity in Babylon. But only about 50,000 people returned to Jerusalem. That’s not very many! *A remnant* is a small remaining number of people. Do you think it surprised God that only 50,000 people were left of the nation of Israel? Of course not. *Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth.* God was even in control over the number of Jews who returned to Jerusalem. He would work through those people to fulfill the promise He had made to Abraham so many years earlier to send the Messiah, Jesus.

## REFLECTION AND PRAYER

(Journal Page - 1 per kid, Pencils)

Ask the kids the following questions:

What does this story teach me about God?  
What does this story teach me about myself?  
Who can I tell about this story?

Make time for prayer requests and pray for your group. If time allows, have kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session.

## **CONNECT WITH PARENTS/INFLUENCERS**

**(Older Kids Activity Page, 1 per kid)**

Hand each 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> grade kid an Older Kids Activity Page and encourage them to do it at home with their family this week.