



INITIATIVE | WEEK 4 | SEPTEMBER 26, 2021

2nd-3rd Lesson

I Just Want to Celebrate

Life App: Initiative—Seeing what needs to be done and doing it.

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.

Basic Truth: I am loved by God no matter what so I can trust God to guide me.

Memory Verse: Work at everything you do with all your heart. Work as if you were working for the Lord.
Colossians 3:23a (NIRV)

**KID CONNECT:
10 MINUTES**

**LARGE GROUP:
30 MINUTES**

**SMALL GROUP:
20 MINUTES**

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

God took the initiative by sending Jesus to show us how much He loves us and fix the relationship between us. When we see a need and choose to do something about it, we reflect God's image in us. Through our initiative, others can see the reality of God's love for them. As kids discover more about how we can reflect God's character through taking initiative, they'll spend the month studying the life of Nehemiah. Nehemiah's life is a perfect example of someone who heard about a need, decided to check it out, trusted God, and dropped everything to finish the project. We can't wait to see how God helps your kids discover how they can show initiative in their lives.

In our final week, we head to **Nehemiah 3–4, 6:15-16, and 8:1-17** and read that God helped Nehemiah and the people finish the wall in only 52 days! They celebrated what God had done for them, not only during those 52 days but throughout their history as His people. They heard God's word and remembered how God had been faithful to them. They had a lot to be thankful for!

Bottom Line: **Look for ways to celebrate what God has done.** When we realize that God is doing amazing things in our lives, we can't help but thank Him. We pray that throughout this month, looking at Nehemiah's story, kids will see how God helps them every day. We hope they learn to celebrate God's continued work in their lives.

KID CONNECT

WELCOME TIME

(VIDEO: INTRO MUSIC)

Play intro music and greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group.

OPENING ACTIVITY:

(No supplies)

During this time, concentrate on getting to know your group and building a relationship between you all. Create a place where they feel like someone knows them and that they belong. A great way to do that is to pull them into an activity (coloring, LEGOs, etc.) and ask them questions. Here are some suggestions:

- What school do you go to?
- What do you like to do for fun?
- If you could ride on any animal, what would be the most fun/most difficult?
- Do you have any siblings/pets? What are their names?
- If you could build anything, what would you build?
- What is the worst smell in the world?

LARGE GROUP

COUNTDOWN AND WELCOME

(VIDEO: COUNTDOWN, SLIDE: KIDCITY EXPECTATIONS)

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

*The Large Group Leader has lots of energy as he or she welcomes everyone to KidCity. The LGL is relatable and inviting. LGLs can talk about something that happened culturally throughout the week like a big sports game, movie opening, a viral video on YouTube, holiday, etc. The LGL tells them how excited he or she is that they're there and briefly runs through what they can expect. This is especially helpful for first-time guests to make them feel like they know what's happening. **Baptisms are the fourth Sunday of the month. Take a minute on that Sunday to ask if anyone is getting baptized and celebrate with them if they are.***

LGL: Welcome everyone! I'm so glad you are able to come hang out with us in KidCity today. My name is [INSERT NAME]. We are going to have a lot of fun today by playing a game, singing some incredible songs that worship God, and then we are going to hear an amazing true story from God's Word, the Bible.

But first, let's quickly go over our KidCity Expectations (rules) so we can make sure that we make the most of our time today: *(Don't dwell on these too long, but make sure you review them briefly so we can set everyone up for success.)*

1. Be Kind – We need to be kind with our words and actions to our friends, leaders, and the space that we are using
2. Be Safe – Make wise choices with your actions and words
3. Have Fun – Participate in what we are doing! It's no fun just sitting there...

Now that we know our expectations, let's kick off our day with a game!

LARGE GROUP GAME

PAPER COMETS

(Paper, Pens or Pencils, Bin)

All month long, we've talked about initiative.

(SLIDE: LIFE APP) "Initiative is seeing what needs to be done and doing it.

(SLIDE: THEME)

"When you have initiative, you're 'ready for launch!' You're on the lookout for things that need to be done at home, at school, or in your neighborhood. And when you see something that needs to be done, you do something to help! God has given each of us the ability to take initiative and make things better for the people around us.

"I've got a fun game for us that will require some initiative . . . and some paper-balling skills, too!

(Hold up the stacks of paper.) "First, here's the paper. Leaders, can you please hand out one piece of paper to each kid in your group?"

Hand a stack of paper and some pens or pencils to each Small Group Leader. Give them a chance to pass out a piece of paper to each kid in their group.

"Okay, everyone. When you get your paper, go ahead and put your name on it. And THEN go ahead and ball it up into a comet—like this.

Hold up your pre-made paper comet. Give the kids some time to make their paper comets. After they finish, ask the leaders to collect their group's pens or pencils, then go around to collect them from everyone before you move on.

"All right! If your comet is complete, hold it in the air. *(Pause and look around.)* Great! When I call your small group, you'll bring your paper asteroid up here to the throw line. *(Point to the tape line on the floor.)* We'll all count, 'three, two, one, LAUNCH,' and everyone in the group will throw their comets and try to land it inside the landing zone.

Toss your paper comet toward the hula hoop on the floor to demonstrate.

"After all groups have a turn, we'll open the comets that successfully landed in the landing zone, and we'll find out who they belong to. Are you ready? Let's get started. First up, [leader's name]'s group!

(AUDIO: FUN MUSIC)

Have the first group stand behind the throw line. Let them throw their comets (on your cue) and try to land them inside the hula hoop.

Let each small group have a turn—one group at a time.

After all groups have their turn, pick up the comets inside the hula hoop. Read the names of the kids who made it into the landing zone.

"That was incredible! All of you did a great job making your paper comets. Can you help me put them in here before we move on to worship?"

Get the kids to help you collect the remaining paper comets in the plastic bin.

“Thanks so much! Now, let’s sing to God and thank Him for being so good to us.”

WORSHIP

(VIDEO: GOD IS ON THE MOVE, LET IT BE KNOWN)

BIBLE STORY

(SLIDES: LIFE APP, BOTTOM LINE, MEMORY VERSE, BASIC TRUTH; VIDEO: BIBLE STORY)

(Bible)

LGL: This is our last week talking about initiative. I hope you all have learned as much as I have! Let’s all say the definition together one last time.

(SLIDE: LIFE APP) **“Initiative is seeing what needs to be done and doing it.”**

We’ve been looking all month at the story of Nehemiah. (*Hold up Bible.*) And today, we get to see how it all turned out!

“When we started, Nehemiah was living in the land of Persia. He had an important job as cupbearer to the king. But then he heard that the city walls of Jerusalem were broken, and the people weren’t safe. So, Nehemiah traveled to Jerusalem to see the broken-down walls for himself. He knew that something needed to be done . . . so he took initiative to help! He rallied the people of Jerusalem to help rebuild their city.

“The work must have seemed nearly impossible—especially when the workers faced trouble from people in the lands around them and when Nehemiah had to tell the officials to stop charging the people extra to pay for food. But through all those challenges, God was with His people. In the end, the people stayed focused on the job they had to do. In 52 days, they finished the city wall along with the towers and gates!”

Let’s see how the Israelites celebrated all of their hard work...

(VIDEO: BIBLE STORY)

“It must have been so amazing for God’s people to be able to celebrate like that—after all their hard work and all that they had been through together!

“But they weren’t just celebrating because they finished the job. Nehemiah encouraged the people to take time to honor God, because God had been so GOOD to them every step of the way. God had always been there to help them, just like He had helped their ancestors so many years before.

“There are so many reasons that we can celebrate what God has done in our lives. God has good plans for us, just like He had good plans for His people all throughout history. He helps us make wise choices. He helps us make things right with others. He LOVES us, and He’s always with us—no matter what!

“Every day, let’s remember to do this...

(SLIDE: BOTTOM LINE) **“Look for ways to celebrate what God has done.”**



“When we look back at God’s Story in the Bible (*hold up Bible*), we can see all the amazing things God has done in the past. We can see how God led His people through all kinds of challenges. We can see how He made each person in His image and how He has an important purpose for each and every one of us. We can see how God loved the world so much that He sent Jesus to be our Savior! Like our Basic Truth says,

(SLIDE: BASIC TRUTH) “I am loved by God no matter what so I can belong in God’s family forever.”

You can have a friendship with God—not just right now, but FOREVER. When you believe in Jesus and believe that He died to pay the price for your sins, God gives you life forever with Him! All you have to do is pray and ask God to be your friend forever and tell Him truthfully that you want to follow Him with your whole life. *If you want to make that decision, talk to your Small Group Leader about it when you go to small groups.*

“When we think of all that God has done, it makes us want to celebrate. We can take the initiative to do that, any time! It doesn’t have to be a holiday, like Christmas or Easter. Every day, we can choose to be grateful and tell God how thankful we are for His love.

Let’s go over our memory verse for this month one more time.

MEMORY VERSE

(SLIDE: MEMORY VERSE)

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

“Let’s pray.”

PRAYER

“Dear God, thank You for being so good to us. You’re always there to help us—just like You were with Nehemiah and the people as they rebuilt the city of Jerusalem. Help us take the initiative to celebrate all the things You’ve done in our lives AND all the things You’re doing in our lives, right now! Help us remember to thank You and give You the honor You deserve. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

Direct kids who may want to accept Jesus as their friend and Savior to talk to their small group leader.

DISMISS TO SMALL GROUPS

SMALL GROUP

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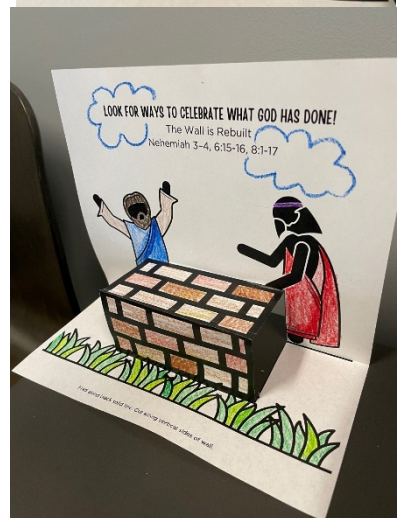
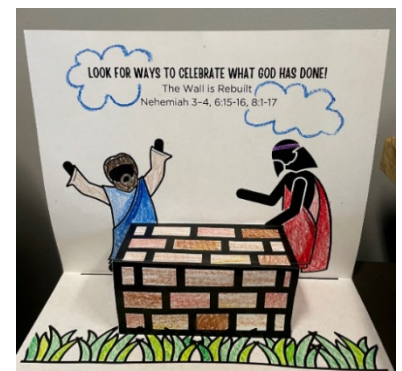
If you have a kid in your group who decided to follow Jesus, awesome! Be sure to loop their parents and your coach/coordinator into the conversation. Also, baptisms are this week. Take a minute to go over the Baptism Conversation Guide with your group.

I JUST WANT TO CELEBRATE

("I Just Want to Celebrate" Activity Page – 1 Per Kid, Crayons/Markers, Scissors)

What You Do:

- Review the story with your group. *Plot Points:*
 - Nehemiah traveled to Jerusalem, saw the broken-down walls, and rallied the people to start rebuilding.
 - They faced a LOT of challenges and distractions along the way, but through it all they kept working!
 - In 52 days, they completely finished rebuilding the wall, towers, and gates around the city.
 - What was the reason for their success? God! God helped them finish the work.
 - Nehemiah called the people together. They gathered at sunrise to hear from the prophet Ezra, and they praised God.
 - The prophet Ezra read God's Word from morning until lunchtime. When the people began to understand what they heard, they were sad because they hadn't been following God.
 - But Ezra, the church leaders, and Nehemiah encouraged them to celebrate instead of being sad because that very day happened to fall on a holy day! God didn't want them to be sad!
 - That day was the start of Sukkot, which is also called the Feast of Booths. It was a time when God's people remembered how He took care of them in the wilderness after He had rescued them from Egypt. During this holy day, everyone would build tents and booths to live in!
 - So, the people cut branches from trees and brought them back to the city. They built shelters and lived in them for a week as they celebrated what God had done.
 - When the people celebrated, they took the time to look back and see ALL that God had done
- Pass out the "I Just Want to Celebrate" activity page to each kid along with markers/crayons. Have kids write their names on the back.
- As kids are coloring, go around and help fold and cut their paper so the wall portion pops out (it should end up half folded, with the wall standing out like 3D. You may need to pinch fold in a couple of places). Kids can color at any point; they will just need to pop their wall out again if it goes flat.



What You Say:

"I love the pictures you've made! I think it's SO important that the people, who had worked so hard to rebuild the wall around the city, stopped to think about how God had helped them. Because they took the time to celebrate, they were able to think about how God loved them and had provided for them.

"We can do the same thing! It's important to stop and thank God for all He's done, especially when we think about how He sent Jesus! Gratitude reminds us that all good things come from God. So, this week, as you think about what we've learned this month, I want you to **[Bottom Line] look for ways to celebrate what God has done.**"

[Make it Personal] (Think of a time when you stopped to think about how God had helped you through a difficult season. How did you thank God? Did you spend time in prayer? Did you tell others about what He had done? Remember, kindergarteners and first graders are literal thinkers, so the more concrete the answers, the better!)

PUT A PRAISE ON IT

("Put a Praise on It!" Activity Pages, markers, kid scissors, plastic sandwich bags)

What You Do:

- Give every kid a "Put a Praise on It!" Activity Page, pair of scissors, and one plastic sandwich bag.
- Set out the markers.
- Instruct kids to decorate their coupons with markers.
- Direct kids to cut out their coupons and place them inside their sandwich bag to use throughout the week.
- Encourage kids to be on the lookout for ways to celebrate what God has done through the people around them this upcoming week.
- Each time they see God doing something good, tell them to write it down on their praise coupons and hang the coupon somewhere they can look at it all week long as they continue to remember what God has done.
- Remind kids that God is always working for the good of those who love Him, which means there's always something He's doing that they can celebrate!
- Once the kids have decorated and cut out their coupons, ask if they saw anyone showing initiative in the past week.
- Allow time for kids to share stories and encourage them to write something down on their first coupon.

What You Say:

"There are so many reasons to praise God if you just choose to **[Bottom Line] look for ways to celebrate what God has done.** Maybe you make a new friend this week and see God providing friends for you. Maybe you did well on your spelling test. You can thank God for giving you a brain and helping you remember how to spell your words. What if you celebrate God for giving you a home to live in, food on your table, or shoes on your feet—even if they aren't the ones you wish you had?

"We could also praise God for what He did by taking initiative and sending Jesus so we can have a relationship with Him. You can always **[Bottom Line] look for ways to celebrate what God has done.** **[Make it Personal] (Share about a time you celebrated what God has done in your life.)** This week, let's take initiative and look out for what God is up to and 'put a praise on it' every time we see Him in action!"

DISCUSSION

Ask the following questions and lead the group to discuss:

- 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.)

PRAY AND DISMISS

(2nd/3rd GodTime Card - 1 per kid)

What You Say:

“Dear God, today we don’t want to ask You for anything. We just want to celebrate who You are and what You have done! Not only did You send Jesus so we can have a relationship with You, but You continue to work in our lives each and every day. There are not enough words, songs, balloons, or streamers to celebrate all You have done! Because we know You are always at work, this week we will continue to **[Bottom Line] look for ways to celebrate what God has done.** We love You! And we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen!”

Pass out the GodTime Cards to each kid. If there’s spare time, encourage kids to start looking over their GodTime card and point out how it relates to today’s lesson.