



INITIATIVE | WEEK 1 | SEPTEMBER 5, 2021

4th-5th Lesson

Makin' Plans

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

Bible Story: Makin' Plans (Nehemiah Plans to Rebuild the Wall) • Nehemiah 1:1–2:18

Key Question: What around you needs to be done?

Bottom Line: Don't wait for someone else to do what needs to be done.

Basic Truth: I am made for a purpose so the Holy Spirit will help me do big things now.

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.

Key Question: What around you needs to be done? Often it seems like preteens are in their own world, where everything revolves around them. We kick off the month with this question because initiative starts with noticing a need in the first place. We hope that preteens will begin to see beyond themselves to see what's going on around them.

In our first week, we start at the beginning of Nehemiah's story in **Nehemiah 1:1–2:18**. We discover that Nehemiah was working for King Artaxerxes when his brother brought news from the exiles living in Judah. When he heard about the devastation in Jerusalem, Nehemiah was heartbroken. He recognized the vast need, but before he did anything, he prayed. Nehemiah knew that whatever he would do, he'd need God's help to accomplish it.

Bottom Line: Don't wait for someone else to do what needs to be done. When kids see something that needs to be done, they might think that someone else will take care of it. But what would happen if our kids saw they could be part

of the job? We want kids to realize that when they know what needs to be done, God might be telling them they can be the one to do it. And if they can't do it all on their own, they can ask someone they trust for help.

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.

HOST: 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...

Let’s kick off today by playing a game!

LARGE GROUP GAME

THE FLOOR IS LAVA

(Long Wooden Beam, Floor Mats, Bins)

We’re blasting off this morning, launching into what I think is the coolest thing we’ve done here yet—exploring the vast unknown and charting mysterious and fascinating new discoveries. It’s almost as if we’re...”

The lights suddenly go off.

(AUDIO: “INTERSTELLAR JOURNEY” FROM MUSIC FOR SPACE)

*The LGL flips on the flashlight, shining it around the room “...on a mission!”
Move around the room slowly, as if in outer space. Talk to the group and shine the flashlight on those who give responses to questions.*

“I love space—the bigness, the majesty of it! It’s the easiest way for me to feel the overwhelming size and scope of just how massively creative God is! Is there anyone out there who would love to go to space? Where would you go? (Pause for responses) Do you think it’s dangerous? What do you think is out there? (Pause for responses).”

“Space is pretty cold and, for the most, part pretty empty—but we’re told there are *lots* of dangers we just don’t know about and probably can’t even imagine. For example, scientists have discovered a planet called K2-141b where it rains rocks and the oceans are literally made of lava! Wait, did someone just say lava? Oh yeah, I did!

Let’s play a game! It’s called The Floor Is Lava. Oh, yes, you’ve heard of it!

Reveal the Lava Obstacle Course in the center of the room.

“OK, we have all of these elements of our Lava Obstacle Course to play the game. Here is a long balance beam, over here are mats to hop onto and finally over here are some upside-down bins. ALL of these will protect you from the floor which is completely filled with lava!

Each person will have to complete this Lava Obstacle Course without touching the ground! If you do, go back to the start and try again! When you finish it, be sure to cheer on the rest of your astronaut friends!

Got it? OK, let’s play The Floor is Lava!

Line up the kids and play the game. Be sure to spread out their starts so that they have space to jump, etc...

(AUDIO: “ODIN’S SWORD”)



“You did it! You survived K2-141b! And only a few sings to your clothes! OK, let’s worship! Let’s sing out to the Creator of all the planets!”

WORSHIP

(VIDEO: GOD IS FOR US, ALIVE)

INTRODUCE THE SESSION

(SLIDE: LIFE APP)

(No Supplies)

That was some great singing! Well, it’s a new month so we are talking about a brand-new Life App. Remember, a Life App is something that God does within us to change the world around us...and the Life App we are learning about this month does just that! This month we are talking about INITIATIVE.

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

‘Let me ask you—and I want you to be honest—how many of you would just walk by a cup, or a napkin, or trash on the ground or in your own house because it’s not yours to throw away?’ *(Pause for hands up or a few responses.)*

“What about a shopping cart you find in the middle of a parking lot? Or a playground that is falling apart? What kinds of things would you walk right past because you think, ‘Eh, they’ve got people who take care of that stuff. It’s not my problem.’”

“I’m sure there are lots of times when we’ve all thought to ourselves, they’ll take care of it. And whatever we happen to be seeing at the time, that can be classified as an S.E.P. *(Pause.)* That stands for ‘Someone Else’s Problem.’ Someone else, some ‘they,’ will handle it. It’s not yours, after all. You didn’t make the mess. Not your fault. It’s an S.E.P.”

“Let’s be honest. We can be pretty selfish sometimes. We care about our own needs and don’t even see what might need to be done around us. Dishes in the sink, a pile of laundry, that stuff outside your room or on the stairs that’s been literally sitting there for months and you step over it every time—you see it but do nothing. Sometimes, we might even see what needs to be done but assume that someone else will take care of it. It’s not our job, right? ‘They’ll’ take care of it. *(beat)* It’s an S.E.P.”

“But what if you were ‘they’? Hear me out. What if you were the one who saw something and did something about it? What if you didn’t wait for someone else to take care of the problem staring you in the face? Could you even make a difference? Could one person actually make things better?”

“These are great questions, and they’re at the heart of the Bible story this morning. It’s so important to God’s One Big Story that this guy even has a book in the Bible named after him. His name is Nehemiah; let’s check it out!”

BIBLE STORY

(VIDEO: SO & SO SHOW; SLIDES: KEY QUESTION, BASIC TRUTH)

(VIDEO: SO & SO SHOW)



“I think one of the coolest things about this story is how God was with Nehemiah the whole time. He gave him the right words to say to the King. He helped him across the hard journey to get to Jerusalem. He moved on the hearts of the officials and the people of Jerusalem to inspire them to help with the wall.”

“And God was going to help Nehemiah create a plan to make it all happen. God was with Nehemiah, and He was helping him accomplish a humungous task. God’s with us, too, and He can do big things through us just the same! Our Basic Truth is this...

(SLIDE: BASIC TRUTH) “I am made for a purpose so the Holy Spirit can help me do big things now.”

The Holy Spirit is God and when we decide to ask Jesus to be our Friend and Savior, the Holy Spirit comes and helps us grow into people that love God, love others, and love the life that He has given us.

“The first step? Noticing that something needs to be done. The next step? Doing something about it. Showing initiative means getting things done, not waiting for someone else to do it. That’s what Nehemiah did when he started rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem. Don’t just see what needs to be done, do something about it.”

“When Jesus saw a need, He did something about it. He healed people who needed healing. He taught people who needed to learn. And Jesus took care of our greatest need when He died on the cross for our sins.”

“See a need, fill a need. Jesus did it for us. Now we can do it for others.

Before we go to small groups, think on this question...

(SLIDE: KEY QUESTION) “What around you needs to be done?”

What projects could you do that would fix a problem? What things, like the wall, are lying in ruins that you could take care of?

“Before you head to small groups, let’s go over our new monthly verse.”

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, NIRV)

“We can take initiative to do what needs to be done—and we can work at it with all of our hearts! Sounds like a plan, don’t you think?”

PRAYER

“Dear God, thank you for the story of Nehemiah. It’s so cool to see how Nehemiah trusted you and took initiative to help the people of Jerusalem. He showed them how they could work together to fix the problem with your help. Please help us trust you like he did. Help us look around for ways that we can show initiative... and help us take action instead of waiting for someone else to help. We love you, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

DISMISS TO SMALL GROUPS

SMALL GROUP

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VERSES TO TAKE WITH YOU

(Index Cards, Pens, Bibles)

What You Do:

- Ask kids to look up Colossians 3:23a.
- Hand out the note cards and pens.
- Appoint one of the kids to slowly say the verse as kids write it out on their cards. (The kid saying the verse should also write it out.)
- Say the verse together as a group to help kids learn it. They can read it from their card if they need help.
- Challenge kids to say the verse as a group—each kid saying one word at a time.
 - The catch is that they must speak in random order, not around a circle or in any particular order.
 - If two kids speak at the same time or if there is more than a two-second pause between the words, they must start over.
 - Kids can speak as many times as they like but all kids must participate.
- Choose someone to begin and then let kids take some “calculated initiative” to recite the memory verse.
- Kids can look at their note cards if they need help remembering the verse.
- Think through the meaning of the verse.
 - In Colossians 3:23a, do you think the word *everything* literally means EVERYTHING? Explain why or why not.
 - What are some examples of the “everythings” we do?
 - How can we do each of those things as if working for the Lord?
 - What does it look like to do some of the following activities as if “working for the Lord” AND what it looks like to not?
 - school work
 - playing a sport
 - helping at home
 - going to church
 - hanging out with friends
- Remind kids that we can show initiative by stepping up to help wherever we can to get a job done. When we do it without complaining, without being asked, without applause, and without a selfish motive, we’re doing it for the Lord.

TAKE A SNAPSHOT

(Paper, Scissors, Small Prizes - Optional)

What You Do:

- Let kids choose partners.
- Give each kid a sheet of paper and a pair of scissors.
- Ask kids to hold out their right hand with fingers outstretched in front of their partner.
- Direct kids to carefully observe the size and shape of their partner's fingers and hand for 10 seconds.
- Instruct kids to turn around and use the paper and scissors to cut out the shape of their partner's hand from memory. The goal is to come as close as they can to the actual hand size and shape.
- *NOTE: To keep kids from mindlessly cutting out something that barely resembles a handprint, be clear about the goal. If desired, encourage kids by offering a prize to the kids whose cut-outs are the closest match.*
- When finished, let kids place their hands on the cut-outs their partners made.
- Determine which ones closely match their actual hand. (*Award prizes if desired.*)
- Let kids compare handprint cut-outs and arrange themselves in order from the largest to the smallest.
- Beginning with the kid whose handprint is the largest, let kids take turns sharing about an opportunity they have had recently in which they were able to lend a hand, meet a need, or step up and help in some way.
 - Did they enjoy doing it?
 - Was it a task they were made to do or was it something they did without being asked?
 - Was the job their responsibility or were they doing it for someone else?
 - Were they rewarded or thanked or was it something no one (except God) noticed?
- If time allows, let kids compare handprints to find one that most closely matches theirs then invite them to pair up with and find out what chores or responsibilities that they both have in common.

DISCUSSION

Ask the following questions and lead the group to discuss:

- Sometimes we ignore a job that needs to be done because it's not technically OUR responsibility—not OUR problem. Is there anything wrong with that way of thinking? Why or why not?
- How would things be different if Jesus had taken on that way of thinking?
- When you think of people who have shown initiative (seen what needs to be done and doing it), who comes to mind? What do you appreciate or admire most about them? What can you learn from them?
- What can you do if you see something that needs to be done but you don't know what to do? How can you figure out where to start?

PRAY AND DISMISS

(Preteen GodTime Card - 1 per kid)

What You Say:

"Heavenly Father, thank you for the story of Nehemiah and his willingness to help, even when it was a big job. This week, help us see what needs to be done and get busy helping. Thank you for loving us, always. In Jesus' name we pray, 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.