



# NEHEMIAH - MAN OF FAITH

God's Incredible Plan • U9#3 1st-3rd Grade • Mar. 29, 2026

## Concept

God will accomplish His purpose and His plan.

## Goal

Students will learn that God will work through all situations to accomplish His incredible plan.

## Passage

Nehemiah 1:1-6; 1:10-2:8

Key Verse: "The God of heaven will give us success." Nehemiah 2:20

## Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
<p><b>Activity Stations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>2 decks of cheap playing cards</i></li><li>• <i>The Children's Guide to the Bible, Willoughby</i></li></ul> <p><b>Lesson:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>"Middle East 444 BC" 11" x 17" map</i></li><li>• <i>World map</i></li><li>• <i>Transparent tape</i></li><li>• <i>1 sheet of yellow construction paper</i></li></ul> <p><b>Learning Activity #2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>12 foam balls</i></li><li>• <i>5' of Velcro tape</i></li></ul> <p><b>Optional Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Books of the Bible CD</i></li><li>• <i>CD player</i></li></ul>	<p><b>Activity Stations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>OT/NT bookmark, 1/student</i></li><li>• <i>Hole punches</i></li><li>• <i>Markers</i></li><li>• <i>Yarn, 12"/student</i></li></ul>

### \*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

# Background Information/Teacher Helps

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"Quite clearly these two books (Ezra and Nehemiah) are more than a bare chronicle. Here are events to learn from, not only to learn about. There is indeed a certain kinship between this last stretch of narrative in the Old Testament and the last in the New, in that both bring the reader to a point of arrival which is a staging-post rather than a destination, and tacitly invite him to explore God's purpose further. With Nehemiah at Jerusalem, just as with Paul at Rome, the narrative breaks off abruptly, leaving us in no doubt of a stiff journey ahead, but also of a venture well launched and of great potentiality. 'The hand of our God' (to borrow a favourite phrase of Ezra-Nehemiah) has been much in evidence;...

"This divine steadfastness is the first thing that meets us in this pair of books. The whole train of events was set in motion to fulfil a promise (Ezr. 1:1). What is equally apparent is the divine sovereignty. There are no overt miracles, but one imperial decision after another is quietly initiated by the Lord, who 'stirred up the spirit of Cyrus' (Ezr. 1:1), 'put' a certain thing 'into the heart of Artaxerxes', and again saw to it that 'it pleased the king to send' Nehemiah to reverse a previous policy (Ezr. 7:27; Ne. 2:6). Equally, of course, it was God who roused the spirit of each volunteer, we are told, to return from exile (Ezr. 1:5), and 'put into' Nehemiah's heart to tackle first the wall (Ne. 2:12) and then the living human structure which it must serve (7:5).

"Finally, God is seen here working with as well as in His people, and against as well as through the men of power. The story of Nehemiah is famous for its marriage of the wholly spiritual with the unashamedly hard-headed. 'We prayed...and set a guard...against them day and night' (Ne. 4:9). 'Remember the Lord...and fight' (4:14). The excellent result is recorded with characteristic gratitude, making nothing of the fact that Nehemiah had outwitted the enemy, although he had, but rather that 'God had frustrated their plan' (4:15). This, after all, was the heart of the matter and the sign of greater things to come. So even the enemy perceived. When the wall was finished in a mere 52 days, the surrounding peoples 'fell greatly in their own esteem', not because they saw the Jews as disquietingly efficient, although again they were, but because 'they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God' (6:16)."[1]

[1] Derek Kidner, *Ezra & Nehemiah*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, D. J. Wiseman, General Editor, © Derek Kidner 1979 by InterVarsity Press, pp. 20, 21.

## Set Up

**Instructions: (OPTIONAL)** The teacher of the Lesson can draw puppets on their index finger and thumb to tell the story. Use "thumb-index-finger-side of hand" as puppets to tell the story. Draw a "sad" mouth on a small piece of paper and Nehemiah's face with a smile on your thumb; draw King Artaxerxes on your other hand. Make a paper crown for his head. Put it on the base knuckle of your index finger.

## Incorporation Lg. Group

### Activity Stations

- **Research – Nehemiah**
  - **Instructions:** Read pages 70-71, Children's Guide to the Bible and discuss how God accomplished His purpose and plan through Nehemiah.
- **Game – "Wall of Cards"**
  - **Instructions:** Divide into teams of four. Give each team ½ of a deck of cards. At the signal, each team will build a wall with their cards. The team with the highest wall at the end of 5 minutes is the winner.
- **Craft – OT/NT Bookmarks**
  - **Instructions:** Decorate the provided bookmarks. Hole punch the top and thread some yarn through the hole. As the students work, discuss the value of knowing the order of the books of the Bible and gradually learning how each book reveals God's Incredible Plan.
- **Mission Prayer**
  - **Instructions:** Talk about and pray for Oasis Giving campaign.

## Introduction Lg. Group

Today we are going to learn about someone who really believed that God is good and all-powerful. When you really believe God is good and all-powerful then you have the courage to do big things for God even if they seem hard. Why? Because you know that you have an awesome, strong, amazing God who will give you what you need to do what He asks you!

## Transition

Grab a Bible.

## Lesson Lg. Group

Today we are going to learn about a man named Nehemiah. Nehemiah was a Jewish man who loved God very much. He was one of the many Jewish people who were slaves in the land of Persia (show on map). He lived in the capitol city, Susa. But Nehemiah had it better than most Jews in Persia. He was the cupbearer to the king. This meant that he was responsible to make sure that none of the wine the king drank was poison. Before the king would drink any wine, the cupbearer would taste it (pretend to drink from cup—pit-tooey!). If the cupbearer didn't get sick or die, the king would drink the wine. Would you want that job? I wouldn't! But during Nehemiah's time this was an important job, if you had this job it meant you were really trusted by the king. Let me tell you what happened to Nehemiah. Open your Bibles to the book of Nehemiah.

**Instructions:** Use finger puppets to tell the story. (OPTIONAL)

Around the time of Nehemiah, almost 500 years before Jesus came to live on earth, the Jews were taken as prisoners to Persia (point to map). The dotted line on the map shows the distance from Israel to the city of Susa. You can see how very far the city of Susa is from Jerusalem. Look at the world map to get an idea of where these places are. Today Persia is called Iraq. Israel is still Israel.

Some people had been allowed to go back to Jerusalem by this time to rebuild the Temple because the Temple that Solomon built had been destroyed. While the people were building, their enemies told King Artaxerxes that it was a bad idea to let them rebuild their city because then they would probably fight back and cause trouble for him. So the king commanded them to stop their work.

One day, Nehemiah found out that the wall was still broken down and the city was still not finished. This made Nehemiah very sad (show "sad" Nehemiah). He turned to God and said, "Lord God of heaven, you are the great God who is to be respected... I am praying for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites have done against you. We have not obeyed the commands, rules and laws you gave your servant Moses...

Allow this king to show kindness to me." Then Nehemiah went in to see the king. (Show "king") The king asked, "Why are you so sad, Nehemiah?" Nehemiah said, "I am sad because my home, Jerusalem, is ruined." This was a very brave thing for Nehemiah to say because usually a sad face was not allowed in front of a king. The king said, "What do you want me to do?" Nehemiah replied, "Give me permission to go back and finish rebuilding it." The king said, "Okay" (show "happy" Nehemiah). Wow! This is the same king who had ordered a few years before that the work be stopped! God had certainly answered Nehemiah's prayer. Nehemiah knew that the king granted his request because the gracious hand of God was upon him. And God kept right on helping Nehemiah. Nehemiah went back to Jerusalem (show arrow path on map from Susa back to Jerusalem) and he organized the people to rebuild the wall. Turn to Nehemiah 2 and read verse 20 with me. He told the people that "The God of heaven will give us success," (Nehemiah 2:20). This is our key verse. As they worked on the wall their enemies plotted to attack them. Nehemiah told them to keep working with one hand and hold a weapon in the other. Their enemies made fun of them and threatened to lie to the king about what Nehemiah was doing so that he would stop the work again. They tried to frighten and discourage Nehemiah so the work wouldn't get done.

## Lesson Continued

But Nehemiah and the people kept right on working. You see, Nehemiah never forgot the great and awesome God who couldn't be bullied or discouraged. Nehemiah believed that God would help them finish their work. He said, "The God of heaven will give us success," (Nehemiah 2:20). Nehemiah was a man of great courage because He believed God. His courage was strengthened as he prayed to God and remembered that God is good and all-powerful. Nehemiah told the people, "The God of heaven will give us success," (Nehemiah 2:20). And do you know what? They finished it in just 52 days—less than 2 months! That was impossible without God's help.

All year we have heard about God's great miracles. And do you know that God wants to help you all the time? The very same awesome God who helped Nehemiah to build the wall will answer your prayers, too. Sometimes we don't even pray about things that are really bothering us because we don't believe that God will or can help. Nehemiah knew that "The God of heaven will give us success," (Nehemiah 2:20). Ask your mom or dad to read you the book of Nehemiah sometime. What you will notice is that Nehemiah always talked to God before he talked to people or did anything. He knew that if he depended on God nothing would be impossible for him. If God wanted the wall around Jerusalem to be built it would be, even if the king didn't want it. Nehemiah knew that he could get into trouble for even asking! Even though their enemies tried to keep them from building the wall, that didn't stop Nehemiah. He knew that God was so great and awesome that anything could happen! He knew that "The God of heaven will give us success," (Nehemiah 2:20). All of the enemies who watched the building of the wall knew that it was God who helped them build it.

### Good News

In order to receive God's help you first have to ask Him. In order to ask Him, you must know Him. Can anyone tell me how you start a relationship with Him? (Jesus died on the cross to pay for your sin. Ask for Jesus' death to pay for your sins). When you ask God to forgive you, you become a Christian. Then as you get to know Him and His love, you will learn and remember like Nehemiah not to be afraid because the Lord is great and awesome. He will help you to do impossible things to accomplish His Incredible Plan.

Let's get into small groups to talk about ways we can learn to depend on God.

- Sometimes things seem hopeless, but God knows exactly what is happening and exactly how it will turn out. Think about it, if you really believed that, is there something you'd be willing to do that you're afraid to do now?

## Transition

## Learning Activity#1 Lg. Group

## Learning Activity#1 Continued

- When you talk to God how would your prayers be different if you really believed the God of heaven would give you success doing the thing He wants you to do?
- Nehemiah, like Esther, was willing to do something that could have resulted in his death. How do you think Nehemiah got to the point that he was so sure God would give them success?
- Is there something you believe God would like you to do? How can you make sure? How will you get the courage to do it?
- Let's pray.

## Transition

Now, let's have some fun playing wall ball.

## Learning Activity#2 Lg. Group

### Game - Wall Ball

**Instructions:** Divide the class into 2 teams. Line up team #1 against the wall. Put the Velcro tape on the floor about five feet from the wall. Have team #2 line up along the tape. Give team #2 the foam balls. At the signal team #2 will throw the foam balls at team #1. Team #1 players may not touch the balls. Team #2 players must stay behind the Velcro tape. Depending on the class size, choose 1 or 2 "retrievers" on team #2 to retrieve the balls that fall between the Velcro tape and the wall. When a team #1 player is hit, he/she sits down behind team #2. When everyone in team #1 is hit, the teams will change places and repeat the game.

## Optional Activities

Play Wall Ball again.

Finish bookmarks.

Practice the books of the bible song. Stop at certain books and ask students to tell you what they know about that book.