

DECIDE TO MOVE FORWARD!

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

FOLLOW GLORY EVERYDAY LIFE OPPOSITION

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Nehemiah 2:17, 4:21

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help children understand that in everyday life we must decide to continue to follow God, even when we face opposition

MEMORY VERSE

“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:31, NIV*)

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

Nehemiah was king Artaxerxes’ cupbearer. One day Nehemiah heard that his hometown, Jerusalem, was in ruins. He was very sad and made the decision to help his people. He asked for the king’s support to go to the city with authorization to rebuild the walls. Upon arriving in Jerusalem, first, he observed the needs of the people, and then he gathered them to motivate them to do the work together.

The people were encouraged and they organized themselves so they could get to work. In order to complete this huge project, men of all socioeconomic levels and of all ages participated. Bible commentators say that the walls were so wide that a horse-drawn carriage could be driven on top of them.

They also needed to reconstruct the gates of the wall, which was not an easy task. But the people decided to obey God and they continued following Nehemiah’s instructions.

As Nehemiah and the people worked, three enemies arrived: Sanballat, governor of Samaria, Tobiah, the Ammonite official and Geshem the Arab. They came together to attempt to stop the construction of the wall because they were afraid that Jerusalem would rise up and be the most powerful nation.

Those three men challenged and threatened not only Nehemiah and the people but they also mocked God. They pressured the

workers to the point that they thought that they could not complete the work, and they wanted to stop working on the wall. That would mean that they would not fulfill the will of God.

However, the people of Israel succeeded in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem because they were obedient to God's commands and they worked together with Nehemiah, their leader. Then they could live safely, united to worship God, as a people chosen by him.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

Activity: Giving into pressure

In this activity, your children will see that they need to learn to make good decisions, even when they feel pressure from others around them not to. Say, "Will you give into peer pressure if your friends laugh at you? What about when they say they do not want to be your friend anymore?" At the bottom of Student Activity Sheet #269-A, have your students circle the number they think shows how they would respond to peer pressure. Encourage them to talk about a time when someone pressured them to do something that was not right.

TEACH THE LESSON

Let us rebuild the wall!

Tell the Bible story to your children.

"Nehemiah, why are you so sad?" asked King Artaxerxes.

Nehemiah replied, "Why should my face not look sad when the city where my ancestors are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?"

This city was Jerusalem. After king Nebuchadnezzar won the war against Judah, he burned God's temple and the doors into the city and tore down the walls.

The king asked Nehemiah, "What is it you want?"

Nehemiah prayed to God before he answered. He knew he had to be careful and say exactly what God wanted him to. "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it."

The king did not want Nehemiah to leave because he was his cupbearer and he liked Nehemiah. But he gave permission for Nehemiah to go. When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem, no one was told what he had come to do. And one night when the moon was shining brilliantly, Nehemiah went out to inspect the wall and saw that it was in total ruins: there were no doors for its inhabitants to defend themselves against enemies.

The next day, Nehemiah got the whole city together and told them, "You see the trouble we are in. Jerusalem is in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we'll no longer be in disgrace."

The people replied, "Let us start rebuilding." And they began their work. Soon, some leaders of neighboring kingdoms heard what was happening. They did not want Jerusalem to regain strength and be a secured city again, so they went and tried to stop the reconstruction.

They said, "What is this you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?"

Nehemiah answered, "The God of heaven will give us success."

When Sanballat heard that they were rebuilding, he got angry. He made fun of Nehemiah and the people working with him. He asked, "What are these feeble Jews doing?"

Tobiah was at his side and said, "What they are building – if even a fox climbed up on it, it would break down their wall of stones."

Nehemiah and the city prayed and asked God to help them. So, they rebuilt the wall until all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart.

But when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the people of Ashdod heard that the repairs to Jerusalem's walls had gone ahead and that the gaps were being closed, they were very angry. They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it.

But Nehemiah and the people prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat.

Nehemiah said, "Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes."

Afterwards, a few people from the city stayed on guard while others built the rest of the wall. Those who carried material did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other. They worked every day until the stars came out.

They finished the wall in 52 days. When word came to Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab and the rest of their enemies that Nehemiah had rebuilt the wall and not a gap was left in it, the other nations were humiliated and recognized that God had helped them in their work.

CONNECT THE LESSON

Activity: Let's build a wall of protection

Use Student Activity Sheet #269-B and #269-C to review the lesson.

Tell your children: "Just like the people of Jerusalem built the wall to protect themselves from their enemies, you need to prepare yourselves spiritually to protect yourselves from any pressure or opposition you may feel from others."

Ask: "Do you want to be strong to stay firm in what you know is good?" (allow a moment for the group to reflect on the question) Then, say: "We must build a wall now to protect ourselves!"

Give the group Student Activity Sheet #269-D and have the students look up these Bible verses and match the verses with the phrases:

1. Read and Study the Bible (C) James 1:22
2. Develop friendships and fellowship with other Christians (B) 1 Corinthians 15:33.
3. Pray Every Day (A) 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Ask a volunteer to read Nehemiah 6:15.

Remind them that Nehemiah had to pray and seek help from God to confront their enemies.

Now, ask the children to volunteer to write on the board what oppositions they face when they obey God. Emphasize that God will not leave us if we depend on him all the time. Obviously, we must do our part also.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

It is the last day for the children to memorize the verse for this unit. Ask some of them to say it aloud from memory. Remind them that this verse can help them when they have a decision to make, so they should not forget it. Remember to give each child who memorized the verse a small present for being in the Verse of the Month club.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Invite them to share their prayer needs. In your final prayer, mention each child by name and pray specifically for the needs of each one. Ask God to help the children follow him and do what is good, even when they are confronted with opposition.

Encourage

Encourage the group to always stand firm in their convictions with respect to God, and never let anything make them give in to the temptation to disobey God or do something he does not like.

Invite

Thank your children for their attendance and announce something about the next lesson to spur interest in them. If possible, prepare the following for a skit in the next lesson: Tunics/cloaks, a trashcan and bags to simulate suitcases or old suitcases. Ask your children if they have any of these items that they can bring to the next session.