

Jerusalem's Walls Were Rebuilt

BIBLE PASSAGE: Nehemiah 3:1–6:16

MAIN POINT: God led Nehemiah to rebuild the walls.

KEY PASSAGE: Lamentations 3:22-23

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Does God keep His promises? Yes, God is always faithful.

SMALL GROUP OPENING

(15–20 MINUTES)

PAGE 134



LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY

(10–15 MINUTES)

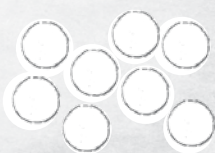
PAGE 136



SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

(20–25 MINUTES)

PAGE 138



4

Leader BIBLE STUDY

When the Babylonians took God's people to Babylon, they destroyed Jerusalem. God's people returned years later to rebuild the temple, but when they 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. Walls were built to be several feet thick. They 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. Nehemiah's 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 who planned to attack God's people. 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 preschoolers 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.)

4



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Jerusalem's Walls Were Rebuilt

Nehemiah 3:1–6:16

Nehemiah (NEE huh MIGH uh) wanted to help the people in Jerusalem. The walls around the city were broken, and they needed to be fixed. Nehemiah and the people worked together to fix the walls and the gates in the walls.

The walls and the gates had special names. Some of the people worked on the Fish Gate. The Fish Gate was the entrance to the fish market. Some people worked on the Sheep Gate. The Sheep Gate led to the place where people went to sell sheep.

Other workers fixed parts of the walls, and some of them fixed towers in the wall. The workers put in doors. They added bolts and bars. They cut stones and stacked them on the wall. Some of the people filled in holes in the wall. **Everyone in the city worked together on the walls. Before long, the wall was halfway rebuilt!**

Some men who lived nearby were angry about the walls being rebuilt. They **did not like God's people, and they did not want them to have new walls to keep them safe.**

The men made fun of God's people. **They said, "These people cannot rebuild the walls. They are too broken to be fixed."** But that wasn't true. God's people could rebuild the walls because God was helping them.

Nehemiah prayed. God's people kept working on the walls, but their enemies made a plan to attack them. God's people chose men to guard the walls all day and all night, but they were still afraid. "Our enemies are everywhere," they said.

Nehemiah did not want the people to be afraid. **"God**

is great and powerful!” Nehemiah said. “If our enemies attack us, God will fight for us.”

So God’s people kept working. Some of the men stood guard with weapons, and others worked on the wall. The people were always ready to fight, just in case.

Nehemiah was a good leader for God’s people. He helped them when they had problems, and he told them to trust God. **Before long, the wall was finished!** The gates and the walls were fixed, and **God’s people were safe. The people’s enemies were afraid because they knew that God was with His people.**

Christ Connection: Nehemiah helped God’s people fix the walls around their city. The walls protected the people from their enemies. Jesus protects us from our enemies. When we know and love Jesus, He keeps us safe and we will live with Him forever.



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD’S WORD?
GET
MORE!**

Invite preschoolers to check out this week’s devotionals to discover that enemies tried to stop God’s people from building. Nehemiah and the Jews trusted in God. We can trust in God to save us. (Ps. 56:3) Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Small Group OPENING

SESSION TITLE: Jerusalem's Walls Were Rebuilt

BIBLE PASSAGE: Nehemiah 3:1–6:16

MAIN POINT: God led Nehemiah to rebuild the walls.

KEY PASSAGE: Lamentations 3:22-23

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Does God keep His promises? Yes, God is always faithful.

Welcome time

- “God Keeps His Promises” song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert download
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play the unit theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- “Repair the Wall” activity page, 1 per child
- pencils or crayons

Invite preschoolers to draw a line connecting each broken piece with where it goes on the wall.

SAY • The walls around Jerusalem were broken, and they needed to be fixed. God sent Nehemiah to help His people. Nehemiah and the people worked together to fix the walls and the gates in the walls. Some people were not happy about God's people rebuilding their walls. Listen to today's Bible story to find out what happened.

Sing a song

Sing to the tune of “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star”:

“God keeps all His promises; we can trust all that God says!



God hears His people when they pray; He will save us in His way!

God keeps all His promises; we can trust all that God says!”

SAY • Who remembers our big picture question and answer? *Does God keep His promises? Yes, God is always faithful.* God promised the Israelites that He would keep them safe and give them a home. In today’s story, we will hear how God helped His people rebuild the wall and gates around the city He gave them.

Look at protective items

Gather protective items such as a bike helmet, ear plugs, adhesive bandages, safety goggles, sunscreen, life jacket, sunglasses, rain boots, and so forth. Place the items in a pillow case or other opaque bag. Invite preschoolers to pull one item out of the bag at a time. Ask preschoolers how the items protect them.

- pillow case
- bike helmet
- ear plugs
- adhesive bandages
- goggles
- sunscreen
- life jacket

SAY • All of these items protect us. In Bible times, the wall around a city was very important. The city wall protected the people by keeping enemies out. The walls around the city of Jerusalem were broken down, but in today’s Bible story Nehemiah and the people worked together to fix the walls.

Transition to Bible study

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, flip off the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Invite preschoolers to move to Bible study while pretending to watch out for enemies.

- countdown video (optional)

Large Group LEADER

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Introduce the Bible story

• blocks

Give each preschooler a block and lead them in putting the blocks together to form a wall.

SAY • You all worked together to build a wall! In our Bible story today, God's people worked together to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. Some people did not like what they were doing. Let's hear what happened.

Watch or tell the Bible story

• bookmark

• Bible

• "Jerusalem's Walls Were Rebuilt" video

• Bible Story Picture Poster

Place a bookmark at Nehemiah 3 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • The Bible is a treasure. It is the only book with God's words, and all God's words are true. Today's Bible story comes from the Book of Nehemiah.

Show the Bible story video "Jerusalem's Walls Were Rebuilt," or tell the Bible story in your own words using the script provided. Use the bolded version for younger preschoolers.

Talk about the Bible story

• Main Point Poster

• Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

SAY • **God led Nehemiah to rebuild the walls.** Nehemiah helped God's people fix the walls around their city. The walls protected the people from their enemies.

Jesus protects us from our enemies. When we know and love Jesus, He keeps us safe and we will live with Him forever.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline or big story circle as you ask the following review questions:

1. Who worked on the walls? (*everyone in the city*)
2. Why could God's people rebuild the broken walls? (*because God was helping them*)
3. When did the men guard Jerusalem's walls while they were being fixed? (*all day and all night*)
4. Who did Nehemiah say would fight for the people if their enemies attacked? (*God*)
5. Why were the enemies of God's people afraid? (*They knew that God was with His people.*)

Learn the big picture question

SAY • Our big picture question asks, ***Does God keep His promises? Yes, God is always faithful.*** God cared for His people. He was faithful to protect them from their enemies. We can trust God to keep us safe, too. One day we will be safe with God forever.

• Big Picture Question Poster

Practice the key passage

Open your Bible to Lamentations 3:22-23. Read the key passage aloud several times. Sing together the key passage song, "Great, Great, Great."

• Key Passage Poster
• "Great, Great, Great" song

SAY • Our key passage reminds us that God is merciful and faithful. When God's people turned to Him, He forgave their sin and kept His promise to bring them back home.

Transition to small groups

Small Group ACTIVITIES

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- blocks
- timer (optional)

Work together to build a wall

Lead preschoolers to line up shoulder to shoulder. Place a stack of blocks at one end of the line. When you say, “Go!” the first preschooler in the line should pass a block to the next preschooler. Preschoolers should continue passing blocks down the line.

When a block reaches the last preschooler in line, she should place it on the floor. As she receives each block, she should place it with the others so as to form a “wall.” Change up the line and play again. Consider timing older preschoolers and challenging them to see how quickly they can pass the blocks and build the wall.

SAY • You worked together to build a wall. Nehemiah helped God’s people work together to fix the walls around Jerusalem. **God led Nehemiah to rebuild the walls.** The walls protected the people from their enemies. A wall cannot protect us from our greatest enemy—sin. Only Jesus can do that. When we know and love Jesus, He forgives our sin and we will live with Him forever.

- various colored foam sheets
- scissors

Work “fill in the holes” puzzles

Cut different size holes out of a foam sheet. Invite a

preschooler to fill in the holes in the sheet by placing the pieces you cut out back in. Make several puzzles out of different colored foam sheets.

SAY • God led Nehemiah to rebuild the walls around

Jerusalem. Everyone had a different job to do in rebuilding the walls and gates. One of the jobs was to fill in the holes in the walls. Nehemiah helped God’s people fix the walls around their city. The walls protected the people from their enemies. Jesus protects us from our enemies. When we know and love Jesus, He keeps us safe and we will live with Him forever.

Invite a construction worker to class

Invite someone who works in construction to visit your class. Encourage the guest to bring pictures of construction projects he or she has worked on. Give time for the preschoolers to ask the guest questions.

• guest

SAY • The enemies of God’s people did not want them rebuilding the wall. They did not want God’s people to be safe, but **God led Nehemiah to rebuild the walls.** The people’s enemies were afraid because they knew that God was with His people. Jesus protects us from our enemies. When we know and love Jesus, He keeps us safe and we will live with Him forever.

Guard the wall

Stack cardboard boxes or plastic cups to form a wall. Use tape to mark a “base line” a good distance from the wall. Choose four preschoolers to be guards. Lead the guards to stand around the wall. Explain that the other children are the people’s enemies. When you say “go,” the enemies will

• cardboard boxes or plastic cups
• soft balls
• tape

throw soft balls at the wall to try to knock it down. The guards should try to protect the wall by blocking the balls. If a guard catches a ball, the enemy who threw it must stop and then go touch the base line before trying again. Choose new guards and play again.

SAY • God led Nehemiah to rebuild the walls. Some of the men stood guard with weapons while others worked on the wall. God's people were ready to fight, but God protected them from their enemies. Jesus protects us from our enemies. When we know and love Jesus, He keeps us safe and we will live with Him forever.

Repair cardboard walls

- large cardboard box
- toy tools

Set up a large cardboard box such as an appliance box. Provide toy tools for preschoolers to play out repairing the wall. Review the Bible story as preschoolers play.

SAY • God led Nehemiah to rebuild the walls. Nehemiah helped God's people fix the walls around their city. The walls protected the people from their enemies. God protects His people. God sent Jesus to protect us from our enemies. When we know and love Jesus, He keeps us safe and we will live with Him forever.

Snack

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Guide preschoolers to clean their areas. Take a restroom break and wash hands. Gather preschoolers for snack time. Thank God for the snack.

Serve fish-shaped crackers for snack. Remind preschoolers that one of the gates in the wall was called the Fish Gate. The Fish Gate was the entrance to the fish market. Talk about how God kept His promise to His people. When God's people turned back to Him, He brought them home and helped them rebuild their city.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- snack food
- paper cups and napkins

Transition

When a child finishes her snack, guide her to throw away any trash. She may select a book or puzzle to examine, play quietly with play dough or a favorite toy, or color the Bible story coloring page.

Offer the journal page and invite preschoolers to draw a picture of something they are afraid of. Remind preschoolers that Jesus protects us from our enemies. Pray for the children.

SAY • God, thank You for protecting us from our enemies. You defeated our greatest enemy—sin—when Jesus to died on the cross and rose again. Thank You that when we know and love Jesus, He keeps us safe and we will live with Him forever. Amen.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- books
- puzzles
- play dough
- Journal Page printable, 1 per child
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- *Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers*