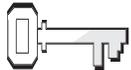


Nehemiah—God’s Builder



References

Nehemiah 1-4; 6;
Prophets and Kings,
pp. 628-645, 653-660



Memory Verse

“The gracious hand of
my God was on me”
(Nehemiah 2:8, NIV).



Objectives

The children will:
Know that through
His grace, God
empowers them to do
what He asks of them.

Feel confident that they can
follow God through the
power of His grace.

Respond by committing
themselves always to do
God’s will through His power.



The Message

God gives me the
grace and power
to do His will.

Monthly Theme

God keeps His promises.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Nehemiah, a Hebrew exile serving in the Persian court, hears about the hardships of the exiles who have returned to Jerusalem. He prays to God, who gives him the idea of going himself to help rebuild the walls and gates. King Artaxerxes sees Nehemiah’s sadness and asks about it. God helps Nehemiah know what to ask for. After Nehemiah reaches Jerusalem, enemies plot against the work. But God gives Nehemiah the wisdom and courage he needs to ignore the troublemakers and complete the work.

This is a lesson about grace.

Grace empowers us to do God’s will in all things. “As the will of man cooperates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 333).

Teacher Enrichment

“Nehemiah . . . occupied a position of influence and honor in the Persian court. As cupbearer to the king, he was admitted freely to the royal presence. By virtue of his position, and because of his abilities and fidelity, he had become the monarch’s friend and counselor” (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 628).

“Four months Nehemiah waited for a favorable opportunity to present his request to the king” (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 630).

“The faith of him who is constantly advancing does not weaken; for above, beneath, beyond, he recognizes Infinite Love, working out all things to accomplish His good purpose. God’s true servants work with a determination that will not fail, because the throne of grace is their constant dependence.

“God has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and purify our hearts. He provides opportunities and opens channels of working. If His people are watching the indications of His providence, and are ready to cooperate with Him, they will see mighty results” (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 660).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 5.

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	A. <i>Cupbearer's Relay</i> B. <i>Sad Faces</i> C. <i>Rainbow Handprints</i>	two serving trays, two plastic cups, Bibles paper, pencils, Bibles blue, indigo, or violet finger paints; rainbow wall banner started in Lesson 6; baby wipes or wet paper towels; Bibles
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	none <i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> piece of pottery from last week with a sign "God gives too." paper brick-shaped cutouts, pencils
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	fancy cup and tray, cardboard blocks or boxes for wall; imitation swords, spears, bows, and arrows; Bible-times costumes chalkboard or dry-erase board, chalk or dry-erase marker, eraser Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Scenario</i>	none
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	A. <i>Strengthening Hands</i> B. <i>Stress Ball</i>	modeling clay, Bible, plastic place mats or waxed paper, resealable plastic bags balloon for each child, flour, funnel

*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Encourage them to share experiences from last week's lesson study. Have them begin the Readiness Activity of your choice.

1

Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- two serving trays
- two plastic cups
- Bibles

A. Cupbearer's Relay

Say: **You are all going to be cupbearers.** Divide the students into two equal teams (more for a large group) for a relay. Say: **We're not going to fill these cups with anything because we might spill it, but we will put a cup on a tray and ask you to walk as fast as you can to the opposite side of the room, turn around, and walk back while trying to balance the cup on your tray. Then hand the tray to the next person in your line.** They repeat this. If the cup falls off the tray, the person carrying the tray has to pick it up and start over.

Debriefing

Ask: **Was being a cupbearer as easy as you thought? (no) Sometimes things that seem to be easy are hard to do. Today we're going to learn about a real cupbearer, Nehemiah, and how God helped him do something difficult. Let's read our memory verse, Nehemiah 2:8.** Read aloud. **The only way Nehemiah was able to do his difficult task was through God's grace and power. That's what today's message is about:**



GOD GIVES ME THE GRACE AND POWER TO DO HIS WILL.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- paper
- pencils
- Bibles

B. Sad Faces

Ask the children to remember a time they were really sad. Then ask them to draw the sad face they probably had during that time.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Who will share their face drawing and tell us why you were so sad? Today we will learn about Nehemiah and why he was sad. But we'll also learn about how he did something difficult and became happy. Let's read Nehemiah 2:8 to find out his secret.** Read it aloud. **Nehemiah was able to do his difficult task through God's grace and power. God still gives us His grace and power. Who will help us do what God wants us to do? Today's message tells us:**



GOD GIVES ME THE GRACE AND POWER TO DO HIS WILL.

Say that with me.

C. Rainbow Handprints

Continue creating the Rainbow Handprints wall banner started in Lesson 6. This week the children will finish with blue handprints and then indigo and/or violet.

Debriefing

Say: **How do you like our finished banner?** (It is pretty.) **Today we will hear how God gave some workers' hands power to do His will. Let's read Nehemiah 2:8.** Read aloud. **Our rainbow reminds us that God will keep His promise to do the same for us. Remember today's message:**



GOD GIVES ME THE GRACE AND POWER TO DO HIS WILL.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- blue, indigo, or violet finger paints
- rainbow wall banner started in Lesson 6
- baby wipes or wet paper towels
- Bibles

Prayer and Praise



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study and review the memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special warm greeting to all visitors.



Suggested Songs

- "He's Able" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 40)
- "Whisper a Prayer" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 96)
- "A Little Talk With Jesus" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 98)
- "Trust in the Lord" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 111)



Mission

Use a story from *Children's Mission*.



Offering

Ask: **What does God give?** (grace, power to do His will) **In response, let's give a gift to Him.**

You Need:

- piece of pottery from last week with a sign reading "God gives too."



Prayer

Say: **We will talk about bricks in our Bible story today. Write on your brick cutout the name of a person or situation that really needs God's grace and power. Then let's pray that God will be present in each of the situations you listed.** Invite one or two children to pray, then close with your own short prayer.

You Need:

- paper brick-shaped cutouts
- pencils

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- fancy cup and tray
- cardboard blocks or boxes for wall
- imitation swords, spears, bows, and arrows
- Bible-times costume for each child

Experiencing the Story

Characters: Nehemiah, Hanani, the king, army officers and soldiers, city leaders, Jewish workers, enemies

Tell the children that they are to act out today's Bible story as you read it. Assign volunteers to the persons or categories listed above, and dress them in Bible-times costumes.

Setting the Scene

Designate one corner of the room to be Jerusalem. In another area, have the king seated on a "throne" (chair) surrounded by army officers and soldiers. Near Jerusalem, to one side, seat the city leaders and the Jewish workers. On the other side, seat the "enemies."

Read or tell the story.

Nehemiah hugged his visiting brother Hanani. *[Nehemiah hugs Hanani.]* "How are you and the rest of the Jewish people surviving back in Jerusalem?"

Hanani looked sad. *[Hanani looks sad and shakes his head.]* "Not well," he said. "The wall around Jerusalem has been torn down. The gates have all been burned. The city is unprotected."

Nehemiah sank into a chair and dropped his head. *[Nehemiah sits down and hangs his head.]*

For days Nehemiah mourned. He fasted and prayed. *[Nehemiah kneels and looks as if he is praying.]* "O, Lord," he pleaded, "I am going to ask the king for a great favor. Please put it in his heart to be kind to me."

Nehemiah waited for the right time. One evening Nehemiah carried the king's

wine to him as usual. *[Nehemiah carries a fancy cup on a tray to the king.]* The king looked up. "Why do you look so sad tonight?" he asked. *[Nehemiah stands in front of the king, looking sad.]*

"Long live the king!" Nehemiah exclaimed. "I am sad because I found out that the city where my ancestors are buried is in ruins. The wall has been torn down. The gates have been burned."

"How can I help?" the king asked kindly.

Nehemiah prayed a quick, silent prayer. *[Nehemiah briefly looks up.]* Then he answered the king. *[Nehemiah "talks."]* "If you are pleased with me, your servant, please send me to Judah to rebuild the city where my ancestors are buried."

Not only did the king say that Nehemiah could go—he said yes to Nehemiah's request for a letter to the manager of the king's forest. "Tell him to give me wood so I can build the city gates, and the walls, and a house for myself," Nehemiah requested.

[The king "writes" a letter and gives it to Nehemiah.] And he ordered army officers and soldiers on horseback to go with Nehemiah and protect him on the long journey to Jerusalem. *[Nehemiah, army officers, and soldiers walk together toward a predesignated "Jerusalem."]*

Nehemiah finally reached Jerusalem. After staying there three days, he rode his donkey around at night to determine the damage. *[Turn out lights while Nehemiah walks and looks around "Jerusalem."]* He found that he couldn't even ride through some of the gates into the city because they were so plugged with fallen parts of the wall.

Then Nehemiah spoke to the city leaders. *[Nehemiah stands before city leaders and "speaks."]* He told them how God had helped him so far. "Let's rebuild the

wall of Jerusalem!" he exclaimed.

So the people began to work. *[Nehemiah, city leaders, and Jewish workers "work" on the wall.]* And they worked hard.

But their enemies *[turn toward enemies; enemies frown]* did not want God's people to build their protective wall again. *[Enemies laugh and point.]* "What do these people think? Their wall would collapse if even a fox walked on it."

But the Jewish people kept working. *[Workers continue working.]* The enemies made plans to attack the Jews. But the Jewish people prayed to God for protection. Then Nehemiah told them to get their weapons and to guard the wall with one hand and work with the other. *[Workers hold "swords, spears, or bows and arrows" in one hand and "work" with other hand.]* "Don't be afraid of the enemy! Remember the Lord!" Nehemiah encouraged them.

Many times the enemies tried to stop the rebuilding work. But Nehemiah prayed constantly, and God gave him the courage and wisdom to continue. And the wall that would help protect Jerusalem again was finished in just 52 days!

Debriefing

Ask: **Why was Nehemiah sad?**

What did the king do to help Nehemiah?

When did Nehemiah ride around the walls? What did he find? How would you have felt if you were trying to build the wall while worrying about being attacked? (scared)

How did God help them finish the project? (He protected, gave power, guided.) **What will God do for you when you are trying to do what He wants you to do? Let's remember our message:**



GOD GIVES ME THE GRACE AND POWER TO DO HIS WILL.

Memory Verse

Draw two large hands with the fingers extended, where all can see. Above each finger, write one word of the memory verse (1-**The**, 2-**gracious**, 3-**hand**, 4-**of**, 5-**my**, 6-**God**, 7-**was**, 8-**upon**, 9-**me**, 10-**Nehemiah 2:8**).

Read the verse aloud with the children. Ask a volunteer to erase one word. Then ask the class to read the verse, filling in the missing word. Repeat, erasing another word. Each time the verse is read, have the class do it differently—in a whisper, quickly, slowly, while standing on one foot, etc. Continue until all words have been erased and the children can say the entire verse from memory.

Bible Study

Ask: **Do you remember how many days it took for Nehemiah and his workers to finish rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem?** (52 days) **That is a short time for such a BIG project! Let's read why they were able to do this amazing thing.** Help the children find and read aloud Nehemiah 6:15, 16.

Say: **Now we're going to look up a story about a time that people were building but *didn't* finish their job.** Find and read Genesis 11:1-9 together.

Debriefing

Ask: **Why didn't the tower builders finish?** (because they were not doing God's will; they thought they could out-smart God)

In which group would you rather have been working? (Nehemiah's group) **Why?** (because God helped them)

When you have a big thing to do, what will you do? (Ask God to help me.) **Remember our message:**



GOD GIVES ME THE GRACE AND POWER TO DO HIS WILL.

You Need:

- chalkboard or dry-erase board
- chalk or dry-erase marker
- eraser

You Need:

- Bibles

3

Applying the Lesson

Scenario

Read the following scenario to the children.

At first José was friendly and nice, but Pablo listened to another friend, and together they teased and taunted José. Now José says unkind things and acts tough. Pablo wishes he'd stop. Pablo is sorry he was unkind to José, but he's afraid to admit it to him. Pablo has talked to his parents about it, and they have prayed together.

Debriefing

Ask: **What does Pablo need to do?** (Ask for José's forgiveness.) **Is asking for**

forgiveness what God wants him to do? (Yes.) Is asking for forgiveness easy for you? (No.)

How can God help Pablo do what he should? (give Pablo courage and the right words to say; help José accept Pablo's apology)

Have you ever had to do something difficult? (yes, no) **If so, tell us about it.** Allow time.

When you need to do something that is very hard, what will you remember? (God will give me courage and will help me to say and do the right thing.) **Yes, let's remember . . .**



GOD GIVES ME THE GRACE AND POWER TO DO HIS WILL.

4

Sharing the Lesson

A. Strengthening Hands

Give each child a small ball of modeling clay and ask them to squeeze it in their hands while you read Nehemiah 6:9 aloud.

Debriefing

Say: **Do you feel as if you are strengthening your hands to do God's work?** (Yes, because exercise strengthens hand muscles.)

How else can your hands be strengthened? (God helping us, giving courage, the right words to say, etc.)

For what work do your hands need strengthening? (Wait for responses.)

Take the modeling clay with you today as a reminder of your work. You can share it with someone you can help. Tell them about the best way to strengthen their hands—to do God's will. Let's say our message again:



GOD GIVES ME THE GRACE AND POWER TO DO HIS WILL.

You Need:

- modeling clay
- Bible
- plastic place mats or waxed paper
- resealable plastic bags

B. Stress Ball

Do not blow up the balloon. Help each child fill their balloon with flour and tie a knot at the opening. The result is a "stress ball" that can be squeezed in times of stress.

Debriefing

Ask: **How many squeezes can you do without your hands getting tired?**
Allow time.

Plan to share your "stress ball" with a friend. Tell them that they do not need to be stressed, because God's grace can help them and empower them to overcome stress. Allow time for the children to decide and tell with whom they will share.

Remember, no matter how hard things may seem, God will give us the grace and power to do His will. Let's say our message again.



GOD GIVES ME THE GRACE AND POWER TO DO HIS WILL.

You Need:

- balloon for each child
- flour
- funnel

Closing

Close with prayer, asking God to strengthen the children's hands to do His will by giving them grace and power.

Nehemiah—God’s Builder

References

Nehemiah 1-4; 6;
Prophets and Kings,
 pp. 628-645,
 653-660

Memory Verse

“The gracious hand of my God was on me” (Nehemiah 2:8, NIV).

The Message

God gives me the grace and power to do His will.

“How come the pastor is always asking for money?” asked Jessica.

“Because our church family has outgrown our old church and we need a new one,” answered Dad. “It takes money and a lot of people willing to help build,” he explained. “It reminds me of Nehemiah rebuilding Jerusalem’s walls.”

“I’m so glad to see you again!” Nehemiah exclaimed, hugging his brother Hanani. Hanani had recently arrived with others from Judah. “How are you? How are the rest of the Jews surviving back in Jerusalem?”

The smile left Hanani’s face. “Not well,” he said sadly. “The wall around Jerusalem has been torn down. The gates have all been burned. Enemies could walk right in and attack God’s people.”

Nehemiah sank into a chair. Tears spilled down his cheeks.

For days Nehemiah mourned. He fasted, and he prayed. “Oh, Lord,” he pleaded, “listen to my prayer! I am going to ask the king for a great favor. Please put it into his heart to be kind to me.”

One evening Nehemiah went to work as usual. He carried the king’s drink to him at the dinner table.

The king looked up. “Why do you look so sad tonight?” he asked.

“Long live the king!” Nehemiah exclaimed. “I am sad because the city where my ancestors are buried is in ruins.”

“How can I help you?” the king asked kindly.

Nehemiah prayed a quick, silent prayer. Then he answered the king. “Please send me to Judah to rebuild the city where my ancestors are buried.”

Nehemiah took a big breath. He

had more to ask. “O, king, please give me a letter to the manager of your forest. Tell him to give me wood so I can build. I will rebuild the city gates, and the walls, and a house for myself.”

The king wrote the letter. Then he ordered army officers and soldiers on horseback to go with Nehemiah. They would protect him on the long, long journey to Jerusalem.

Nehemiah finally reached Jerusalem. After staying there three days, he rode his donkey around at night to look at the damage. He found that he couldn’t even ride through some of the gates into the city. They were plugged with big rocks that had been part of the wall.

Then Nehemiah spoke to the city leaders. He told them about the king, and how God had helped him so far. “Let’s rebuild the wall of Jerusalem!” he exclaimed.

So the people began the work. And they worked hard.

But their enemies made plans to attack and kill the Jews. The Jews prayed and asked God to protect them. Then Nehemiah told them to get their swords, their spears, and their bows and arrows. They would guard the wall with one hand and work with the other. “Don’t be afraid



of the enemy! Remember the Lord!" Nehemiah encouraged them.

Many times the enemies tried to stop the rebuilding work. Nehemiah prayed constantly, and God gave him the wisdom to know what to do. The work continued. And the wall was finished in just 52 days!

God blessed this project in many ways. He gave Nehemiah courage to ask the king for help. He gave the workers power to carry on their rebuilding. God truly led His people.

Daily Activities

Sabbath

- Go for a walk and find a wall (or fence). Look at how it is built. How long do you think it would take you to build a wall like that? Find a place nearby and read your lesson story together.
- Read and discuss Nehemiah 2:8 together. Whose hand is over you? Thank Him for it.
- Sing "A Little Talk With Jesus" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 98) before prayer.

Sunday

- During family worship, read and discuss Nehemiah 1. Practice being a cupbearer and take a drink of water to someone.
- Draw a picture of what the Jerusalem wall might have looked like. Write the memory verse on it and place it where you will see it often.
- Pray that God will fill you with His power.

Monday

- With your family, read and discuss Nehemiah 2. Look at verse 20 again. Whom did Nehemiah trust? Whom do you trust to help you?
- Start a family "Blessing Book." Talk about times God has helped your family and write about them. Add to it often.
- Review the memory verse. Tell what it means. Then thank God for blessing your family.

Tuesday

- Read and discuss Nehemiah 3 for family worship. Name the gates of Jerusalem. How many were there? What do you think each name meant?
- Look for something in your house that needs repairing. If possible, help fix it.
- Say your memory verse from memory.
- Gather some stones to build a wall. What else would you need?
- Thank God for a safe place to live.

Wednesday

- Read and discuss Nehemiah 4 with your family. Look at verse 10. Ask an adult if they ever feel discouraged. What do they do about it?
- Look at verses 17 and 18. Try to do something helpful with only one hand. Was it easy or hard? How do you think the workers felt?
- Review the memory verse; then sing "He's Able" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 40) before prayer. Thank God that He is able to meet your needs.

Thursday

- For worship, read and discuss Nehemiah 6 with your family.
- Play "Builders and Enemies." For three minutes, build a wall with blocks. The rest of your family will act like enemies and try to keep you from working. At the end of three minutes, switch roles. Tell your family what it was like trying to work while they bothered you. How did Nehemiah do it? Look again at verses 2 and 3.
- Look at verse 9. Have you ever felt nervous or scared by someone who may have been trying to hurt you? What did Nehemiah do when others tried to do that to him? Thank God for being with you when you are scared.
- Make up a tune for your memory verse and sing it together.

Friday

- Act out Nehemiah's story. Read Nehemiah 6:16 again. Ask your parents about work they have been able to do with the help of God. Add this to your family "Blessing Book."
- Say your memory verse together.
- Make a kitchen band of pots, pans, spoons, etc. Celebrate God's grace and power by singing and playing "The Joy of the Lord" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 92). Thank God for His help for your family.