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Daniel in the Lions' Den

Scripture: Daniel 6:1-28

Theme: Faithfulness to God may cost everything

1st-3rd Grade (Ages 6-8)

Free curriculum for small and rural churches

Lesson Overview

Lesson Title: Nehemiah Rebuilds the Walls Theme: God Gives Us Work, and He Goes With Us Today, we'll learn about Nehemiah, a man who had a big job, rebuilding a broken city wall! After years away, he heard his friends cry out, "Our walls are damaged, and the enemies are scaring us." Instead of just sitting back, Nehemiah prayed to God, asked for help, and said, "I'll do this work, and I trust You'll go with me!" (Nehemiah 1:4, 11). Even when things got hard, like when people laughed at him ("Can't you see this is impossible?"), Nehemiah kept going because he knew God was with him. Here's what we can learn: God doesn't always send us easy jobs, but He always equips us to finish them, with courage and faith. Nehemiah worked in the dirt, prayed before meals, and even faced opposition (see Nehemiah 6:1, 9). Yet he kept moving forward because he believed God's promise: "I'll never leave you, and I'll always help you." (Hebrews 13:5) Just like Nehemiah, we can face our own "broken walls", whether it's being kind to a friend, fixing a mistake, or asking for help, because God is our strength! Simple Application for Kids: Ask: "What's one 'wall' you're working to rebuild right now?" Maybe it's learning to share, forgiving someone who hurt you, or doing your best at something new. Nehemiah's story shows us that God doesn't always fix things overnight, but He'll give us the tools (like prayer, teamwork, and His peace) to keep going. Let's trust Him, one small step at a time! Encouragement for Teachers: This lesson is perfect for teaching persistence and surrender! Use fun activities like: - Building a mini "wall" with blocks (symbolizing Nehemiah's work). - A "prayer station" where kids write their own "God's Promise" (e.g., "You're with me!"). - Role-playing conversations with "enemies" (e.g., a classmate who teases them for trying). Remember: God doesn't rush His work, but He always goes with those who follow Him! Praise Him for giving us courage to serve, one brick (or one heart) at a time.

Bible Story

Nehemiah Builds the Wall

Long ago, in a faraway land called Judah, there was a brave man named Nehemiah. He was a leader, and one day, his friends told him something sad: Jerusalem, their city, had no walls around it. The walls were broken and ruined, and enemies sometimes came to hurt the people. Nehemiah listened to their heartsache and prayed to God. He told God, "I know you love your people, and I want to help rebuild the city's walls so it is safe and strong."

God heard Nehemiah's prayer and gave him a big job. After a long night, Nehemiah got a special message from the king: "Let Nehemiah go to Judah to fix the city's walls." The people cheered and worked hard, digging, building, and putting up stones. They even prayed before they started, asking God to help them succeed. Some people tried to stop them, saying, "Don't rebuild the walls!" but Nehemiah and his friends kept working, trusting God to protect them.

One day, Nehemiah saw that some people were still doing wrong things, like not following God's rules. He spoke up, reminding them that God's laws were for their safety and happiness. Some even mocked him, but Nehemiah stood firm, saying, "God loves you, and he wants you to be obedient." Nehemiah's faith helped him and the people stay strong as they finished rebuilding the walls. Soon, the city was safe and beautiful again, just like it was meant to be!

This story shows us that when we trust God and work together with faith, even big tasks feel doable. Nehemiah's example teaches us that God can help us rebuild what we've lost, whether it's a broken heart, a broken friendship, or a broken-down dream. Just like Nehemiah prayed for help, we can pray for God's strength to fix what's broken in our lives too. And remember: God doesn't ask us to do it alone!

Key Verse

Daniel 6:23

Here's a simple and heartwarming way to explain Nehemiah 2:18 to young children: Nehemiah was a kind and brave leader who helped rebuild a city that had been broken and sad. Long ago, Jerusalem looked like a big, empty wall because people had forgotten to keep it strong. Nehemiah thought about how God had helped him before and said, "God is good and kind!" He told the people, "Let's work together to fix this wall!" And just like magic, they began to dig, build, and put the pieces back together, showing how God can help us when we work as a team with faith and love. This verse reminds us that even when things feel broken or hard, God's love and strength can help us start fresh. Like Nehemiah, we can share kindness with others, whether it's helping friends, fixing something we break, or making the world a little brighter for someone else. When we believe in God's goodness and work together, great things can happen! God often works in big ways, but sometimes it's just a small act of kindness, like helping a neighbor or cheering someone up, that makes a big difference. Nehemiah showed us that when we trust God and share our faith, we can inspire others to do the same. So next time you see something that needs fixing, remember: God's grace is like a strong hand guiding us, and when we work together, we can build something wonderful! Simple Application for Kids: Imagine your classroom wall has some missing bricks, maybe from a big storm or just old wear. Nehemiah's friends felt sad but said, "Let's rebuild it!" You can do the same thing! If someone is feeling lonely, help them play. If your homework needs a little extra help, ask God for strength to work together. God's "gracious hand" is always there to help, just like He helped Nehemiah. With kindness and teamwork, we can make things better!

Activities

Activity 1:

Children create personalized "story stones" (stone-shaped pictures) that tell the story of Nehemiah's courage and God's leading. They'll use the stones to retell the lesson in pairs or small groups.

1. Divide & Assign: Split the class into 3, 4 teams. Explain that Nehemiah led people to rebuild walls, just like they'll work together to rebuild their "wall"!
2. Cut & Prepare: Give each team 1 strip of brown paper/cardboard (the "wall base") and strips of newspaper/paper (their "bricks"). Have them cut these into small, manageable pieces.
3. Build Together: Let the teams glue their "bricks" to the wall in a sturdy, connected way. Encourage them to ask for help if needed, just like Nehemiah asked God and others for guidance!

4. Celebrate Teamwork: Once finished, praise the teams for working together. Ask: "How did it feel to rebuild something broken as a group?" Tie it to Nehemiah trusting God's plan even when things felt overwhelming.
2. "Story Stones: Nehemiah's Courage"

Discussion Questions

- Here are four open-ended discussion questions for early elementary children (ages 6, 8) based on the story of Nehemiah rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem:
- What Kind of Heart Does Nehemiah Have?
- Nehemiah felt sad when he heard his people were in trouble because their city's walls were broken. The Bible says he wept (Nehemiah 1:4). If you were in his place, how would you feel if someone you loved was hurting or in danger? What would you do to help them? Why might it be important to care about others, even if they live far away?
- (Application: Think of a friend or family member who might need help, like fixing a broken fence, cheering them up, or sharing what you have.)
- Why Did Nehemiah Ask God for Help First?
- Before Nehemiah started building, he prayed and asked God for strength and wisdom (Nehemiah 1:5, 11). If you had a big project to do, like building a fort or fixing a bike, would you ask your parents for help first? Why do you think asking God for help is special? How can praying make things better?
- (Application: Next time you're nervous about something, try saying a little prayer to God, like "Thank You for helping me!", and see how it feels.)
- How Did Nehemiah Keep Working Even When People Made Fun of Him?
- Some people laughed at Nehemiah and his team because they were rebuilding the walls (Nehemiah 4). What do you think they said, and why do you think it hurt? Nehemiah didn't stop, he kept working with friends and even prayed for courage. If someone teased you while you were doing something important, how could you stay strong like Nehemiah?
- (Application: Think of a time you felt discouraged. How did you handle it? Could you share your work with a friend to help each other, like Nehemiah did?)
- Why Is It Important to Work Together to Fix Problems?
- Nehemiah couldn't rebuild the walls alone, he had helpers from different places! The people worked together, even when they disagreed at first. If your class had a big project, like decorating the school hallway, how would you make sure everyone had a fair chance to help? What would make the project stronger because of teamwork?
- (Application: Next time you're working with siblings or friends, take turns picking jobs, like helping each other build a fort or fix something broken together.)
- These questions invite kids to reflect on faith, courage, teamwork, and empathy while connecting the Bible story to their own lives! Would you like any of them adjusted for a specific focus (e.g., more focus on prayer, kindness, or teamwork)?

Prayer Focus

Prayer Focus: God, You Help Us Work Together! Let's pray together, friends. When Nehemiah saw that the walls of Jerusalem were broken down, he felt sad. He remembered that God promised to help His people, and he knew they needed to rebuild the walls to stay safe and strong. Nehemiah asked God for strength, just like He does when we feel afraid or tired. He said, "Lord, I don't know how to do this alone, help us work together!" Today, we're like Nehemiah, building something important with our friends and our families. When we help each other, whether it's cleaning up our room, sharing toys, or working on a project, we show God that we trust Him to guide us. Just like

Nehemiah asked God to watch over his work, we ask Him to help us be kind, brave, and patient as we work together. One small thing we can do is help others! Maybe it's holding a door for someone, sharing our snacks, or helping a sibling with their homework. God loves when we take care of each other, just like He took care of Nehemiah and His people. Let's thank Him for being our Helper and our Guide! Prayer to Say Together: "Dear God, thank You for helping us work together like Nehemiah and His friends. When we help one another, we make our community stronger. Give us courage to do our best and trust You to guide us. Help us to be kind and patient, just like You taught us. Amen!" This prayer keeps it simple, encourages teamwork, and ties back to the lesson in a way kids can understand! Would you like any adjustments to better fit your class?

>> Missions Spotlight

In post-conflict Rwanda, churches are rebuilding after the 1994 genocide. Nehemiah's story of rebuilding broken walls speaks powerfully to Rwandan believers who are literally and spiritually rebuilding their nation.

-> To the Cross

Nehemiah rebuilt the broken walls of Jerusalem with the enemy attacking from all sides. Jesus is building His Church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18). We are coworkers with God, rebuilding what sin has broken.